Plato's Later Moral Epistemology

CACCIATORI, CARLO

Carlo Cacciatori

Abstract:

This Ph.D. thesis aims to provide a comprehensive account of the relationship between ethics and epistemology in Plato's late dialogues (specifically, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Philebus*, and *Laws*).

While scholars have been concerned with understanding the extent to which Plato's middle dialogues resonate with his early theory of ethical intellectualism (according to which knowledge is a necessary and sufficient condition for virtue), Plato's later moral epistemology has received much less attention. The few scholars who have worked on the subject have argued that Plato's late dialogues present a radical transformation of the epistemological and ethical ideas displayed in Plato's earlier works. The scholarly debate has almost unanimously concluded that Plato's late dialogues heavily revise the theory of ethical intellectualism that, arguably, features in the earlier works.

Through an in-depth analysis of the late dialogues' textual evidence, this thesis will show that the so-called Socratic theory of ethical intellectualism has not been abandoned by Plato in his late works. To this end, I will contend that the *Sophist*, the *Statesman*, the *Philebus*, and the *Laws* suggest that (philosophical) knowledge is the ultimate condition that a moral agent has to meet to be fully virtuous. In addition, taking for granted that philosophers alone can achieve a full and philosophical virtue, I will also show that Plato's later moral epistemology extends beyond philosophers. For, while achieving philosophical knowledge is presented as a necessary and sufficient condition for *being* virtuous, I will argue that Plato's late dialogues establish that opinion, if true, is sufficient for *acting* virtuously.

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Department of Classics and Ancient History

Carlo Cacciatori

First Supervisor: Dr Phillip S. Horky
Second Supervisor: Dr Giulia Bonasio

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A Mamma e Papà

Introduction

Famously, wisdom (σοφία) and knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) are presented in Plato's *Protagoras* as the most powerful forces in human activity[1]. Indeed, after having suggested that knowledge is a fine thing capable of ruling a person[2], the Socrates of the *Protagoras* shows that no human being 'willingly makes a mistake or willingly does anything wrong or bad'[3]. Thus, Plato's *Protagoras* ultimately conveys the idea that, if someone achieves knowledge of what is good and bad, then no affection (e.g., anger, pleasure, pain, love, fear) could ever make a moral agent act otherwise than knowledge dictates. Moreover, at *Men*. 87c-89a Plato has Socrates and Meno hold a philosophical argument that complements the one presented in the *Protagoras*. Indeed, after having assumed that (a) virtue is good[4], (b) all good is beneficial[5], (c) virtue is beneficial[6], and, finally, that (d) if something pertaining to the soul is beneficial, it is knowledge[7], Plato has Socrates and Meno conclude (albeit provisionally) that virtue is indeed knowledge[8].

Typically, scholars take this (and other) evidence to demonstrate that the Plato of the early dialogues – namely, those works which, as stylometric studies indicate[9], were written by Plato at the initial stage of his philosophical career – (a) adopts the so-called Socratic[10] paradoxes[11], according to

[1] Cf. *Prt*. 352c2-7. Plato also explains that intelligence (φρόνησις), just like wisdom (σοφία) and knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), is sufficient to save a person.

[2] See *Prt*. 352c2-7. For a similar idea – namely, for the view that a certain kind of knowledge, i.e., the knowledge of the good and bad, is both necessary and sufficient for virtue, see also *La*. 199d4-7, *Chrm*. 174c1-2, *Euthd*. 278e-282a, *Ap*. 29d2-30a1 (where Plato argues that the best possible state of the soul – namely, its virtue – depends on wisdom [σοφία] and truth), *Grg*. 467a1-468e5 and 509e5-7, *Prt*. 331e4-6, 359b6-7, and 361a6-b3. See SEGVIC 2000 and SHEFFIELD 2014, for an overview of the passages where the early Plato specifies that the moral agent has to achieve knowledge in order to be virtuous.

[3] *Prt*. 345e. For a similar idea, see *Men*. 77e1-2 (where Plato has Socrates and Meno conclude that those who appear to desire what is bad are ignorant about the object of their desire), *Hipp. Maj*. 296b, and *Grg*. 460a-c, 466a-469c (where Plato conveys the idea that, when the moral agent does not carry out actions for the sake of the good, such actions are involuntary. For only actions which pursue the good are made willingly: on this, see CENTRONE-PETRUCCI 2012, p. 193).

[4] See *Men*. 87d.

[5] Cf. *Men*. 87e-8a.

[6] See *Men*. 87e.

[7] Cf. *Men*. 88a-89a.

[8] See *Men*. 89a. The philosophical argument that Plato makes in the *Meno* so as to demonstrate that virtue is knowledge (and thus, that it can be taught) has been well illustrated by IONESCU 2007, p. 114, HARDY 2011, pp. 192-199, BLUCK 1961, p. 336, and BEDU-ADDO 1984, p. 9.

[9] Cf. BRANDWOOD 1990, who suggests that 'there were two broad developments in Plato's literary style: an earlier one which was slow and gradual and a later, starting when he was about sixty, which was sudden and rapid'. Accordingly, Brandwood concludes that the *corpus platonicum* should be divided into three groups ([1] early dialogues, [2] middle dialogues, [3] late dialogues).

[10] The reason why the paradoxes which ground the theory of ethical intellectualism are called "Socratic" is that they are thought to have been held by the historical Socrates (namely, the main character in Plato's early dialogues). DODDS 1951, p. 17, argues that the Socratic paradoxes were no novelties (and thus, it was not Socrates to "invent" them), but rather an explicit formulation of what had long been an ingrained habit of thought.

[11] If the theses (i.e., [1] no one does wrong willingly and [2] virtue is knowledge) which ground the theory of ethical intellectualism are called 'paradoxes', it is because, as Plato suggests at *Prt*. 353b1-c2, these controversial claims are rejected by most people. For Plato's Socrates explains in the *Protagoras* that most people think that 'someone can know that one course of action is better than another, but still be overcome by emotion, pleasure, pain, passion, or fear, so that he chooses what he knows to be worse' (IRWIN 1983, p. 183). Interestingly, Vincenzo Di Benedetto suggests in his *Euripide: Teatro e Società* that Euripides himself argues at *Hipp*. 373 ff. against the Socratic view according to which

which (1) no one does wrong willingly and (2) virtue is knowledge, and (b) is therefore committed to a theory of moral epistemology which is labelled as 'ethical intellectualism'[12]. Now, on an intellectualist theory of virtue, 'knowledge is not just important for virtue: knowledge (i.e., a certain kind of knowledge) is what virtue is'[13]. Hence, given that the early dialogues' theory of virtue indicates that the moral agent who achieves a wise knowledge will never go wrong (for [a] knowledge is never overcome by affections and [b] ignorance is the only possible cause for wrongdoing), scholars have generally concluded that the Plato of the early dialogues is indeed intellectualist.

Yet, while there is general consensus that the achievement of knowledge is presented in Plato's early works as a necessary and sufficient condition for attaining virtue (for he argues there that virtue is knowledge), scholars tend to disagree on whether or not the early works' intellectualist theory of virtue is re-stated in Plato's middle dialogues.

(a) On the one hand, some critics[14] argue that the fact that a new account of the human soul is introduced in such middle dialogues as the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus* suggests that the theory of ethical intellectualism that Plato endorses in the earlier works is rejected in the

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virtue is knowledge. In fact, on Di Benedetto's interpretation, Euripides suggests that irrational impulses, passions, *etc*. may prevent the moral agent who knows what the good is to perform a good action (see DI BENEDETTO 1971, pp. 5-23).

[12] See SNELL 1948, who, just like DI BENEDETTO 1971, acknowledges that Euripides polemically alludes to the Socratic theory of ethical intellectualism (which is grounded on the two paradoxes according to which [1] no one does wrong willingly and [2] virtue is knowledge). On these assumptions, then, Snell concludes that the theory of ethical intellectualism is first attested in the Euripides' *Hippolytus*.

[13] ROWE-BOYS-STONES 2013, p. 64. I am here adopting this minimalist definition of 'ethical intellectualism' that also other scholars (besides ROWE-BOYS-STONES 2013) accept (see e.g., GERSON 2020, p. 193, SHEFFIELD 2014, pp. 483 ff., BRICKHOUSE-SMITH 2002, p. 21, and RESHOTKO 2006, p. 89, DOYLE 2014, pp. 175 ff.). Yet, the theory of ethical intellectualism has been variously defined by scholars. To start with, BLACKSON 2015, EVANS 2010, and BUTLER 2012 suggest that the theory of ethical intellectualism dictates that a belief about the good always causes action. Next, scholars have described the so-called Socratic theory of ethical intellectualism as the doctrine according to which (a) intellect is in control (and hence, every moral error is due to an intellectual error) and (b) every action results from the desire for the good (for a similar view, see SEGVIC 2000, RESHOTKO 2006, PENNER-ROWE 2009, BRICKHOUSE-SMITH 2007, ROWE 2007b, 2009, and 2012b, FIERRO 2013, SEDLEY 2013, and KAMTEKAR 2018). Then, see VLASTOS 1969 (who purports that, on an intellectualist account of virtue, people cannot act contrary to their knowledge of the good), HARDY 2009 (who argues that, for an intellectualist, having knowledge of good and bad is necessary for attaining virtue – and hence, for acting virtuously), and NEHAMAS 1999b (who specifies that Socratic intellectualism is the theory according to which one has to know the definition of virtue in order to act virtuously).

[14] See VLASTOS 1988, pp. 99 and 105: according to the intellectualist theory of virtue that Plato presents in his early dialogues, no one (i.e., no one's rational deliberation) can be overcome by emotions and appetites. However, Plato's views on the subject change as soon as he writes down the Book IV of the *Republic*. For, by introducing a tripartite account of the human soul (and thus, by presenting irrational sources for moral action), Plato asserts that sometimes the irrational parts of the soul may prevail over reason. Cf. also FREDE 1992, p. XXX, who also points out that, by specifying in the *Republic* that the human soul is tripartite (and thus, [a] does not consist in just reason [as it is in the *Protagoras*] and [b] is made of irrational parts too), Plato clarifies that irrational desires may eventually overcome the dictates of reason. For a similar view, see also COOPER 1984, PENNER 2000, TAYLOR 2008 (esp. pp. 17-18), and DOYLE 2014. See also GROTE 1865 (pp. 399-400) and NEHAMAS 1999b (esp. p. 27), who highlight the fact that, as the early Plato was too preoccupied with intellect (and not with the character, habits, and dispositions of the moral agent), the middle Plato (a) decided to pay much greater attention to the moral agent's character, and, by doing so, (b) ended up rejecting the early works' ethical intellectualism. For a slightly different view, see CORNFORD 1933, IRWIN 1977 and 1979, and COOPER 1999, who argue that Plato had jettisoned Socratic moral psychology (and thus, the intellectualist theory of virtue) already in the *Gorgias* (namely, an early dialogue), where Plato would already assign a place to non-rational desires which must be trained so to be obedient to reason.

middle dialogues. For Plato maintains in the middle dialogues (especially in the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus*) that the human soul does not represent a unified reason, but is rather made of three parts (reason, spirit, and appetite) – two of which (that is, spirit and appetite) are irrational. On this scholarly view, then, the fact that the Plato of the middle dialogues (1) recognizes irrational sources of action (i.e., spirit and appetite), (2) establishes that irrational appetites may eventually overcome the dictates of reason, and (3) acknowledges that there are other motivating factors than reason as well (such as e.g., [irrational] appetites and desires), demonstrates that Plato's middle dialogues depart from the earlier works' theory of ethical intellectualism. Indeed, Plato's middle dialogues would seem to deny that virtue is essentially a property of reason.

(b) On the other hand, other scholars[15] maintain that knowledge is still central to Plato's account of virtue in the middle works. Christopher Rowe contends that it is not really the case that either the *Republic* or the *Phaedrus* innovate on the early dialogues' theory of the soul. Thus, given that (1) the human soul is still presented in Plato's middle dialogues as a unified reason and (2) no other motivating factor than reason is introduced, Rowe concludes that the Plato of the middle works is still committed to the intellectualist theory of virtue endorsed in the earlier dialogues[16]. Similarly, David Sedley argues that the Plato of the middle dialogues is still genuinely intellectualist. In fact, he suggests that, although it is the case that Plato's middle dialogues introduce a new account of the human soul, achieving knowledge is still presented as a necessary and sufficient condition for having the demands of the carnal world (namely, the irrational appetites) fade into the background[17]. Hence, given that virtue is still basically knowledge, Sedley concludes that

[15] See SHEFFIELD 2014, who argues that knowledge remains central to Plato's account of virtue in the middle works. Cf. WEISS 2007, who advances three objections against the view that, after having introduced at *R.* IV the new account of a multi-parted human soul, Plato departs from the moral psychology of the earlier dialogues. See also SEDLEY 2013, who argues that knowledge (informed by wisdom) is still presented in Plato's *Republic* as the only valid currency for real virtue. For a similar view, see O' BRIEN 1967, pp. 164 ff., who suggests that 'far from abjuring Plato's youthful intellectualism, the *Republic* sustains it by a psychological framework whose absence in earlier works has made that intellectualism seem to many to be out of touch with reality'. Cf. ROWE 2009, who indicates that (a) the *Republic*'s complex theory of the human soul is already present in the early works, and thus, (b) the Plato of the middle dialogues does not move very far from the early dialogues' moral psychology (and hence, from the so-called Socratic ethical intellectualism), and PENNER-ROWE 2009, who argue that, given that the Socratic paradox 'no one errs willingly' is reiterated even in the *Laws* (that is, Plato's last work), Plato remains intellectualist throughout his philosophical life (in spite of his acceptance of a parts-of-the-soul doctrine). Finally, see MOURACADE 2016, who agrees with CARONE 2001 in saying that, while the Plato of the *Republic* allows for reason to be ruled by the non-rational parts of the soul, he is still committed to the view that it is impossible for knowledge to be overcome by non-rational motivations in the soul. On this interpretation, then, even the middle Plato would still be intellectualist.

[16] See ROWE 2009 and *infra* p. iii fn. 15.

[17] Cf. SEDLEY 2013. For a compromise position, see BOBONICH 2002, p. 23, who argues as follows: 'In the early or Socratic dialogues, Plato characterizes virtue as knowledge of the good and he thinks that all human beings always act in accordance with what they know or believe to be best. In the *Republic*, Plato recognizes the possibility of acting contrary to one's belief about, and perhaps one's knowledge of, what is best, but he characterizes complete virtue as knowledge

the Plato of the middle dialogues is a genuine Socratic who still firmly ascribes to the theory of ethical intellectualism.

Curiously, however, while scholars have typically been concerned with understanding the extent to which Plato's middle dialogues reflect the early works' theory of moral epistemology, the scholarly debate has generally paid much less attention to how ethics and epistemology relate in those (late) dialogues that Plato wrote down at the end of his philosophical career. Still, those few scholars who have been working on this subject have determined that Plato's late dialogues present a quite radical transformation of the epistemological and ethical ideas displayed in the earlier Platonic works. Indeed, both Terry Irwin[18] and Chris Bobonich[19], having inferred that the Plato of the late dialogues no longer requires the moral agent to achieve knowledge in order to be genuinely virtuous, conclude that Plato's late dialogues heavily revise the theory of ethical intellectualism (according to which knowledge is a necessary and sufficient condition for virtue) that, arguably, features in the earlier works.

Given this general framework, this thesis aims to produce a novel picture of Plato's later moral epistemology, obtained by assessing whether or not Plato's late dialogues establish that, by achieving certain cognitive states, the moral agent secures for herself a genuine virtue – or, at the very least, a certain species of virtue. To achieve this goal, my analysis will be concerned with those late dialogues that are explicitly – albeit only in part – concerned with ethical issues. For this reason, then, my inquiry will not touch upon Plato's *Parmenides*, that is, a dialogue that, unless proved otherwise, could hardly be regarded as focused on ethical problems. Similarly, my investigation will not be concerned with Plato's *Timaeus* either. Indeed, the *Timaeus*' textual evidence seems to unequivocally suggest that this dialogue is committed to the (so-called Socratic) intellectualist theory of virtue. For Plato's *Timaeus* presents 'an adapted version of the old "Socratic" denial of akrasia, the paradox that nobody does wrong willingly (86d5-e3)'[20], and suggests that, while the moral agent can be defeated by (irrational) affections, the very notion of being defeated still entails unwillingness (just as the intellectualist theory of virtue dictates). This argument has been authoritatively supported by David

of what is good along with the dispositions that allow one to act on this knowledge. In both cases, being virtuous consists in knowing and pursuing what is best, that is, the right ultimate ends'.

[18] Cf. IRWIN 1995, pp. 339-345, who observes that Plato's *Statesman* and *Laws* depart from the *Republic*'s theory of moral epistemology. In the *Stateman*, Plato no longer requires the moral agent to acquire knowledge in order to be fully virtuous. Indeed, on Irwin's interpretation, achieving stable true opinion is presented in Plato's *Statesman* as a sufficient condition for having reason control the soul of a well-trained moral agent. As for the *Laws*, instead, Irwin contends that Plato would indicate that the ordinary citizens (just like philosophers) may attain genuine virtue by acquiring a wisdom of some sort (namely, a different kind of wisdom than the one attained by philosophers).

[19] See BOBONICH 2002, p. 90, who argues that the late Plato accepts that even non-philosophers (namely, those who have not achieved [philosophical] knowledge) are capable of being genuinely virtuous.

[20] SEDLEY 2019, p. 60.

Sedley. For Sedley argues in a recent and very influential article[21] that the *Timaeus* is a vehicle for Plato's doctrine and (despite his endorsement of tripartite psychology) preserves a degree of continuity with intellectualist-leaning dialogues like *Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, and *Meno*. Thus, starting from the assumption that it is indeed the case that, as Sedley maintains, the Plato of the *Timaeus* is actually intellectualist, this thesis aims to determine whether or not the other late dialogues[22] share with the *Timaeus* the same (intellectualist) theory of moral epistemology.

Accordingly, I shall first investigate in **CHAPTER 1 (*The Ethical Aspect of Plato's* Sophist)** the hidden[23] (but still prominent) ethical (and epistemological) aspect of Plato's *Sophist*. For, after having considered how Plato defines at *Sph.* 226b1-231b8 the noble sophistry, I will try to identify whether a sophist or a philosopher is described in the puzzling passage in question. Hence, by demonstrating the valuable ethical and epistemological significance of both the noble sophistry passage and the whole dialogue, I shall ascertain both the philosopher's and the sophist's (and the ordinary people's) ethical and epistemological nature. By doing so, I shall conclude that Plato's *Sophist* shows that there are two different modes of interaction between ethics and epistemology, both depending on what cognitive state is possessed by the moral agent.

Next, **CHAPTER 2 (*Woof and Warp: the* Statesman*'s Weaver*)** will concentrate on the elements of epistemological and ethical theory that Plato elaborates in the *Statesman*. Indeed, given that Plato declares at the very beginning of the dialogue that the person who is in charge of the city's government has to possess knowledge, I will first investigate both whether the statesman's knowledge is technical or theoretical and if the statesman's knowledge is actually ethically neutral, as some scholars purport. Having clarified this, I will then take into account the epistemological and ethical nature of the citizen body by evaluating if – and, eventually, to what extent – the citizenry benefits from the statesman's cognitive (and, potentially, moral) excellence. Ultimately, I will suggest that the statesman and the ordinary people attain two radically different epistemological and ethical states.

Then, I will assess in **CHAPTER 3 (*Ethics and Epistemology in Plato's* Philebus)** whether the *Philebus*' theory of pleasure tells us anything about the theory of moral epistemology endorsed by Plato in this dialogue. For, in considering that Plato has Socrates and Protarchus specify at *Phlb.* 66c4-7 that pleasures are pure insofar as they are attendant to either knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) or perception (αἴσθησις), I shall first endeavour to clarify what kind of knowledge is at stake at *Phlb.* 66c4-7. To achieve this goal, however, I will first need to determine how many senses the word

[21] Cf. SEDLEY 2019, who maintains that the *Timaeus* 'encodes in its cryptic opening lines Plato's confirmation that the dialogue represents his own views'.
[22] Due to the word-limit, my analysis will be limited to Plato's *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Philebus*, and *Laws*. I aim to consider the *Theaetetus* – which, though being part of the same trilogy as the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*, is still believed by some scholars not to be a late dialogue – in my forthcoming works.
[23] For scholars generally agree that the dialogue's project is chiefly onto-logical: see *infra* p. 1 fns. 30 and 32.

'ἐπιστήμη' takes on in Plato's *Philebus*. As soon as this task will be completed, I will then seek to establish what kind of cognitive state is associated with the αἴσθησις that some of the pure pleasures are attendant to. In considering the theory of moral epistemology which grounds this theory of pleasure, I will eventually clarify whether Plato's *Philebus* re-enacts the so-called Socratic theory of ethical intellectualism (according to which virtue is knowledge and no one does wrong willingly).

Finally, I shall analyze in **CHAPTER 4 (*The Theory of Moral Epistemology in Plato's* Laws)** the way in which epistemology relates to ethics in Plato's last and longest (but seldom frequented) work, the *Laws*. Firstly, I shall aim to establish whether or not Plato's *Laws* allows for the possibility that some people may eventually achieve a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms. Having clarified this, I will investigate the ethical nature of both those who are able to attain philosophical knowledge and those who are not. By doing so, I will conclude that Plato's *Laws* individuates three different modes of interaction between ethics and epistemology, each depending on the epistemological condition achieved by the moral agent.

Within this framework, I hope to show that:

(a) achieving knowledge is still presented in the *Sophist*, the *Statesman*, the *Philebus*, and the *Laws* (just as in the *Timaeus*) as the ultimate condition that a moral agent has to meet in order to be fully virtuous;

(b) Plato's late dialogues show a great interest in finding a way to allow those people who do not achieve knowledge to attain virtue.

CHAPTER 1: THE ETHICAL ASPECT OF PLATO'S *SOPHIST*

1.1. *Plato's* Sophist*: a polysemantic dialogue*

Among the many controversies surrounding Plato's *Sophist*, a central concern has always been represented by its philosophical scope. Indeed, although it is now a well-shared idea that this Platonic dialogue is a well-organized whole, scholars, in answering the question implied by the so-called basic problem of this dialogue[24], i.e. 'what is its philosophical σκοπός?', have for decades been divided into two schools of thought. Both employed ancient commentators to determine the nature of the philosophical problems faced in Plato's *Sophist*. However, they ended up with divergent results: some highlighted Plato's interest in metaphysics and ontology, whereas others stressed Plato's dramatic exigency of showing the sophist's identity.

One wing, of which Noburu Notomi was a central spokesman[25], approached the dialogue, following Proclus' method[26], by way of the so-called prologue. The frame narrative[27] reveals that 'defining the sophist becomes the project which leads and governs the whole dialogue'[28]. Therefore, according to this view, the ontological and metaphysical issues which the *Sophist* takes into account would be of secondary relevance[29].

Another way of interpreting the *Sophist* – which used to be much more widespread than the former among scholars[30] – extended Thrasyllus' perspective by including the *Sophist* among those Platonic dialogues, such as the *Statesman*, the *Cratylus* and the *Parmenides*, that describe Platonic logic[31]. For this very reason, the subtitle 'Περὶ τοῦ ὄντος' was later attached to the *Sophist*: thus, the dialogue's project would be chiefly onto-logical[32].

Hence, beyond the dramatic project of defining who the sophist is and the onto-logical issues, the scholarly debate has tended to assume that there are no other key topics in the *Sophist*[33]. The main aim of this chapter is to investigate an apparently hidden aspect of this dialogue which has been understudied by scholars. I will argue that a significant issue in Plato's *Sophist* is the relationship

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[24] Cf. NOTOMI 1999, p. 19.
[25] *Ivi*, pp. 21-22. See also COBB 1990 and MORGAN 1995.
[26] See Procl. *In Alc.* 18.13-19.10 and *In Prm.* 658.33-659.23: the prologue (προοίμιον) of a dialogue indicates its overall project.
[27] Cf. *Sph.* 216a1-218c1. Translations (with minor changes) of Plato's *Sophist* will refer to ROWE 2015a.
[28] NOTOMI 1999, p. 23.
[29] According to BURNET 1914, p. 223, the dialogue is divided into two separate parts: (1) the middle part (236d9-264b8) discusses ontological problems (such as, 'what is not', 'what really is', and falsehood); (2) the initial and final sections of the dialogue (i.e., 216a1-236d8 and 264b9-268d5), to be thought of as a unique dramatic whole, are concerned with finding a definition of the sophist. On the assumption that defining the sophist is Plato's main task in the *Sophist*, Burnet argues that the middle part of the dialogue merely is a digression from the most fundamental inquiry about the identity of the sophist. On this issue, cf. also NOTOMI 1999, pp. 27 ff.
[30] Many scholars highlight the relevance of the onto-logical project undertaken in Plato's *Sophist*. See, among the others, ALLEN 1965, BOSTOCK 1984, FREDE 1967, MIGLIORI 2006, REALE 1991, and TRABATTONI 2005.
[31] D. L. III, 58. Cf. also EL MURR 2010b, p. 115, who discusses the rationale which grounds Thrasyllus' arrangement.
[32] See CENTRONE 2008, pp. vi ff., about this issue.
[33] Only SOLANA 2013 seems to acknowledge that Plato's *Sophist* is also concerned with ethics.

between ethics and epistemology, which emerges when both the sophists' and, implicitly, the philosophers' nature is articulated by Plato. In doing so, I will also show the reasons why Plato's hunt for the definition of the sophist does not provide a philosophical context alien to Platonic ethical doctrine. To achieve these goals, then, I shall focus on a particular passage (*Sph.* 226b1-231b8) in order to briefly sketch out, as a first step, how the definition of noble sophistry is presented by Plato. Next, I will assess whether Plato is describing either a sophist or a philosopher in the puzzling passage in question: this clarification will be propaedeutic to an outline of the theory of moral epistemology exhibited by Plato throughout the dialogue. Then, I will analyse the interconnections between ethics and epistemology by taking into account some aspects of the noble sophistry passage. After demonstrating the valuable ethical and epistemological significance of this passage, I will move to consider a more general issue that emerges from our analyses. I will firstly ascertain the philosopher's moral and epistemological excellence in the whole of the dialogue. Next, I will focus on the sophist's ethical and epistemological nature to draw some conclusions pertaining to the ordinary human being. Finally, I shall conclude that Plato's *Sophist* shows that there are two different modes of interaction between ethics and epistemology, both depending on what cognitive state is possessed by the moral agent.

1.2. *The Sophistry of Noble Lineage (*Sph. *226b1—231b8)*

When Plato formulates at *Sph*. 226b1-231b8 the puzzling description[34] of the sophist, he has already made five[35] descriptive attempts[36]. Indeed, the sophist has been described as 1) a teacher of wealthy young men (on what virtue is and on how to be virtuous)[37], 2) a merchant, 3) a retailer, 4) a manufacturing trader of learnings[38], 5) an eristic, who fights and earns money in private arguments[39]. As is widely known, a seventh and conclusive definition is tacked on at the end: the sophist is depicted

[34] According to some scholars, the sixth definition of the sophist (which Plato provides us with at *Sph*. 226b1-231b8) is substantially different from all the previous ones (cf. KERFERD 1954, p. 84, and CORNFORD 1935, p. 177). On a different view, 'we can see some continuity from the previous definitions' (NOTOMI 1999, p. 65). I shall take a position on this debate in due course.

[35] As GIANNOPOULOU 2001, p. 102 fn. 2, points out, establishing how many definitions of the sophist Plato provides in the homonymous dialogue depends on whether or not we consider that the Eleatic Stranger, when resuming at *Sph*. 231d8-10 the definitions which had already been reached, divides the third one (originally made at *Sph*. 224 d4-e4) into two different definitions. Those scholars, like I-KAI 2017, p. 65, who think that Plato provides at *Sph*. 224 d4-e4 one single definition of the sophist consider the description of the sophist at *Sph*. 231d8-10 as the fifth – and hence, not the sixth – definition.

[36] Scholars generally regard these descriptive attempts as ultimately successful but still incomplete (because of the absence of a unifying core and class under which the nature of the sophist can be subsumed). For the definition of the sophist has been dispersed through several subclasses, rather than being finally caught in one: see GIANNOPOULOU 2001, p. 103. Cf. also EL MURR 2006, p. 8, KERFERD 1954, p. 46, and SAYRE 1969, pp. 152-153, on this matter.

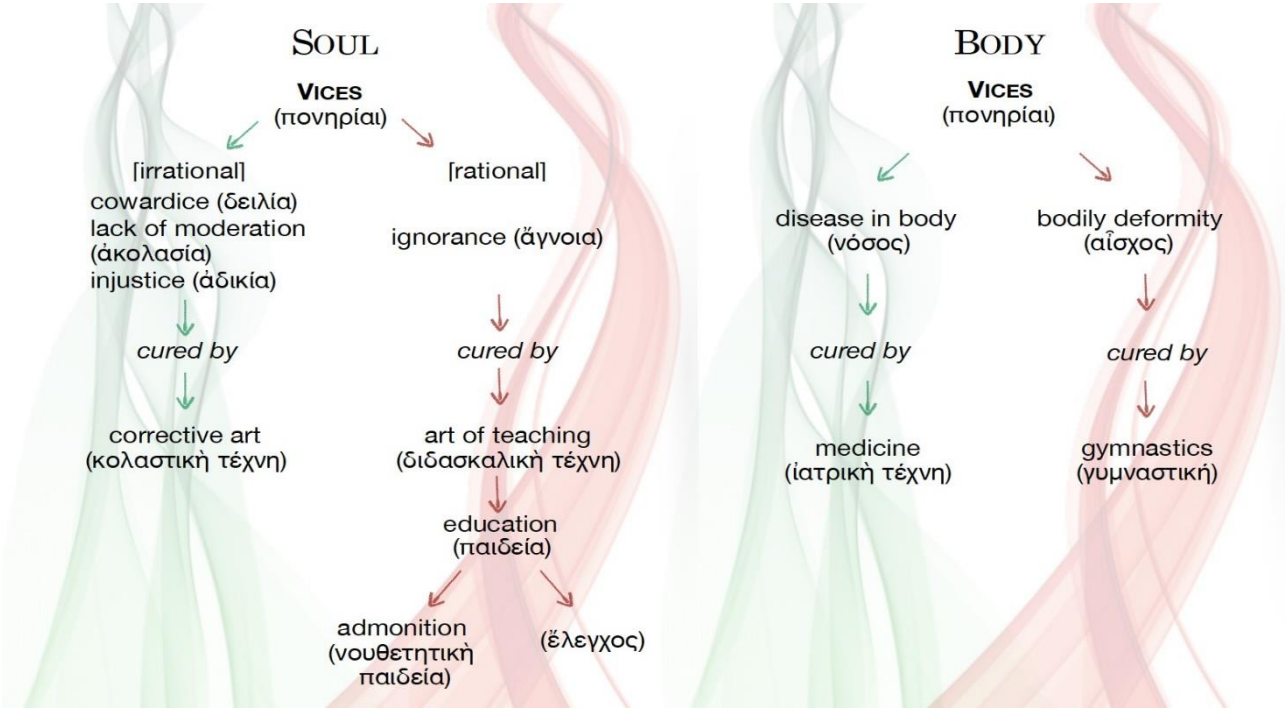
[37] See *Sph*. 221c5-223b8.

[38] The second, third, and fourth definitions of the sophist are presented in *Sph*. 223c1-224e5. Cf. BLANK 1985, who concludes that, after all, the second, third, and fourth definitions fashion the sophist in the same way (namely, as a person who earns money by selling his teachings while travelling around Greek cities).

[39] See *Sph*. 224e6-226a5.

as 7) 'an imitator of the wise'[40], namely a person who *appears* to be wise while not truly being so[41]. However, it remains to treat the sixth definition of the sophist. Indeed, before producing the seventh unified λόγος which defines the sophist in all his deceptive grandeur[42], Plato describes a complex beast[43], which causes perplexity among the *Sophist*'s readers.

Plato introduces his sixth attempt to define the sophist by representing his art as a cleansing type (τὸ καθαρτικὸν εἶδος) among the separative arts. Indeed, here Plato employs a body-soul analogy[44] to better distinguish baseness, or vice (πονηρία) from excellence, or virtue (ἀρετή).



The vices of the soul are divided, Plato says, into two species: some are comparable to the disease (νόσος) which occurs in a body[45], while others to bodily deformity (αἶσχος)[46]. Now, while ignorance (ἄγνοια) has to be understood as a sort of deformity (αἶσχος)[47], cowardice, lack of moderation and

[40] Cf. *Sph.* 268c1-d5.
[41] Cf. NOTOMI 1999, pp. 47-48, who summarizes Plato's definitions of the sophist in the *Sophist*. See also GILL 2012, p. 144, who explains how (i.e., through how many dialectical divisions) the final definition of the sophist is achieved.
[42] See GIANNOPOULOU 2001, p. 101.
[43] Cf. *Sph.* 266a6-7.
[44] See GIANNOPOULOU 2001, pp. 108-113 and I-KAI 2017, pp. 76-77, on the body-soul analogy.
[45] Cf. *Sph.* 228b1-4. The soul's discord (στάσις), analogous to bodily disease (νόσος), is presented as a sort of corruption between things which are naturally akin. A στάσις takes place in the soul when, for example, opinions (δόξαι) are at odds with desires, anger with pleasures, and reason (λόγος) with pains.
[46] See *Sph.* 228c1-d2. Bodily deformity is analogous to a sort of disproportion (ἀμετρία) in the soul. The latter occurs when things that are capable of movement, like the soul, set themselves some sort of target and, when trying to hit it, err and miss it.
[47] See *Sph.* 228c10-d2, where Plato says that no soul is voluntarily ignorant of anything, and that ignorance is nothing other than a deviation of a soul which is seeking the truth but wanders away from understanding (σύνεσις). Therefore, an unintelligent (ἀνόητος) soul is that which is deformed and lacks in proportion. Cf. *Ti.* 87c ff., where ignorance is said to be caused by an internal disproportion between a body – which shows a strong sense of corporeality – and intellect – which is too weak in comparison with the body's power. See also *R.* IV 444d8-11: 'Virtue seems, then, to be a kind of health, fine condition, and well-being of the soul, while vice is disease (νόσος), deformity (αἶσχος), and weakness'.

injustice are to be considered as a disease (νόσος) in us. In proceeding with the body-soul analogy, then, Plato suggests that, if gymnastics and medicine are the antidotes to bodily deformity (αἶσχος) and disease (νόσος), there should accordingly be correlative cures from the bad affections of the soul. Hence, a corrective (κολαστική) art is set out to curtail such vices as cowardice, lack of moderation, and injustice, while the art of teaching (διδασκαλική) is thought to be the cure from ignorance (ἄγνοια) taken as whole. More specifically, education (παιδεία) should be employed to remove the overbearing ignorance (ἀμαθία[48]), that is, a certain species of ignorance which, the Eleatic Stranger says, is 'important and troublesome', and also 'equal in weight to all the other parts together'[49]. Nevertheless, education is in turn divided into two different species, of which admonition (νουθετητικὴ παιδεία) is one. Indeed, since admonition is not sufficient to cure overbearing ignorance, the so-called elenctic method[50], through which one is to think that he knows only the things he does know and no more, is to be regarded as the most pleasing and effective liberation from ἀμαθία. Accordingly, the person refuted becomes, through this art of refutation, pure, clean and beautiful. For, she firstly removes those opinions (δόξαι) that obstruct the lessons (μαθήματα) to be learned, next she is challenged, and then she becomes ashamed of herself. Therefore, the art of refutation in *elenchus* is to be regarded as a noble sophistry, as Plato points out in these lines:

> ΞΕ. τῆς δὲ παιδευτικῆς ὁ περὶ τὴν μάταιον δοξοσοφίαν γιγνόμενος ἔλεγχος ἐν τῷ νῦν λόγῳ παραφανέντι μηδὲν ἄλλ' ἡμῖν εἶναι λεγέσθω πλὴν ἡ γένει γενναία σοφιστική.
>
> STRANGER: And of educative expertise, let the challenging that relates to empty belief in one's own wisdom, in the account that came up just now, be said to be nothing other for us than a sophistry ennobled by family.
>
> *Sph*. 231b5-9

1.2.1. *Is Socrates the Noble Sophist?*

Now, why is this sixth definition of the sophist traditionally thought to be puzzling? The answer comes from the Eleatic Stranger. Once he has presented the elenctic method as a fundamental tool to

[48] Cf. CENTRONE 2008, p. 61 n. 40: ἀμαθία is variously defined by Plato within his *corpus*. It is presented as a species of ignorance in the *Sophist* (see *Sph*. 229a9-c10). As unawareness of ignorance, ἀμαθία is always in contrast with Socratic wisdom (cf. e.g., *Ap*. 29b1-2) which consists of knowing not to know anything at all. Cf. *Ti*. 86b1-87b9, where a similar use of ἀμαθία as species of ignorance seems to be made by Plato (on this, see LAUTNER 2011: he argues that μανία and ἀμαθία indicate at *Ti*. 86b1-87b9 two different levels – not yet two distinct species – of the same disease, ignorance). Further, ἀμαθία is presented in the *Theaetetus* as a vice which perfectly coincides with generic ignorance (ἄγνοια) (see e.g., *Tht*. 176c5). Therefore, I will render ἀμαθία as 'overbearing ignorance' when appropriate (i.e., when I adopt a merely descriptive, and hence not interpretative, approach to the text). Nevertheless, I translate ἀμαθία as pure 'ignorance' when I take on this interpretative reading of the text.

[49] *Sph*. 229c1-3. The fact that Plato characterizes ἀμαθία in this way allows us to infer that it might coincide with generic ignorance (ἄγνοια). Indeed, although ἀμαθία is openly described elsewhere as a mere species of ignorance, Plato shows no interest in describing what the other species of ignorance consist of. Indeed, if ἄγνοια is made of two or more species, and ἀμαθία represents only one of them, it is curious to note that the other species are not even named by Plato (cf. CRIVELLI 2012, p. 19, on this particular matter). In this sense, how Plato features ἀμαθία is meaningful too: as an important species of ignorance, it is said to equalise all the others together by importance.

[50] Cf. KERFERD 1954, p. 88, and SOLANA 2013, pp. 78 ff., on how the *Sophist*'s ἔλεγχος works as a method of refutation.

extirpate the folly of ἀμαθία, he says: 'what are we going to call those who employ this expertise? For myself, I am afraid to say that they are sophists'[51]. So, is the Eleatic Stranger afraid of attributing the name 'sophists' to those who employ a philosophical method? Is it for this very reason, then, that a more cautious definition of this kind of sophistry as an art of noble lineage is chosen in the end? By addressing these questions, I will attempt to determine whether the elenctic method here mentioned pertains to the philosopher or the sophist.

There are two possible answers to the question of why all the Eleatic Stranger's cautiousness when defining the refuter: either Plato wants to highlight the excellence and the extraordinary ability of the sophists, or he is suggesting that the person he is describing is not a mere sophist[52]. The latter solution is endorsed by those who believe that a similarity between the person described in the sixth definition and a philosophical soul is undeniable: 'the sophist of noble lineage looks a lot like Socrates'[53], Mary Louis Gill says. Similarly, other scholars appeal to the sentence that follows ('Because to do so [that is, to call 'sophists' those who practise the cleansing art of refutation] would be to attribute too great a status to them' – Μὴ μεῖζον αὐτοῖς προσάπτωμεν γέρας) to argue that Plato is picturing a philosopher when describing the noble sophist. For giving the name 'sophists' to those who employ the noble art of refutation, the Eleatic Stranger says, attributes too great an honour to them (αὐτοῖς). Now, there are two ways of interpreting this αὐτοῖς. On my reading, however, both conclude that the noble sophist is a philosopher rather than a sophist. For the αὐτοῖς might have, on the one hand, an ironic tone, if taken as referred to the only plausible practitioners of the art of refutation, the philosophers[54]. By virtue of being φιλό-σοφοι, it might be argued, philosophers eternally strive for a wisdom they will never attain. Accordingly, since the σοφιστής is the master of a specific knowledge, it would be too great an honour to call 'sophists' the philosophers meant as practitioners of refutation. Indeed, the philosophers disclaim any title which implies the possession of any specific kind of knowledge[55]. On the other hand, the αὐτοῖς might be rather referred to the sophists described in the previous five definitions[56]. According to this interpretation, the Eleatic

[51] *Sph.* 230e5-231a1: 'ΞΕ. Τί δέ; τοὺς ταύτῃ χρωμένους τῇ τέχνῃ τίνας φήσομεν; ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ φοβοῦμαι σοφιστὰς φάναι'.
[52] Beyond those who consider the noble sophist as either a philosopher or a pure sophist, some scholars, like Beatriz BOSSI (forthcoming) (a) – see esp. pp. 2-3 –, propose an alternative view. The noble sophist represents a mixed type of person who does not fit into the two categories sketched above. Still, the noble sophist is closer to the philosopher than to the sophist since his goals are the same as the philosopher's. On a similar interpretation, the noble sophist signifies a hybrid compound of qualities which feature both the sophist and the philosopher (cf. ROSEN 1983, p. 131). Or, as José Solana puts it, the noble sophist is just a 'hybrid of half noble and half (ignoble) sophistry' (SOLANA 2013, pp. 82-83).
[53] GILL 2012, p. 145. For similar interpretations, cf. CORNFORD 1935, p. 181, DELCOMMINETTE 2013, p. 91, GIANNOPOULOU 2001, pp. 101-102, GILL 2010, pp. 180-181, and VITALI 1992, p. 177 fn. 101. For a slightly different interpretation, see CAPRA 2001, pp. 128-131: the sixth definition of the sophist would denote a certain facet of Socrates. Indeed, Plato would here allude to the fact that, if Socrates, as a philosopher, wishes to defeat the sophists by means of dialectic, he needs to assimilate himself to them.
[54] And hence, Socrates, the philosopher *par excellence*, to whom the idea of ἔλεγχος is strictly linked.
[55] See TAYLOR 1949 p. 381 fn. 1, and CORNFORD 1935, p. 180 fn. 2.
[56] See MOVIA 1991, pp. 171-174, who summarizes the scholarly debate on this very issue.

Stranger would be reluctant to call 'sophists' the practitioners of the method of refutation since too much honour would be devoted to the sophists. Indeed, they are not able to practise such a philosophical, and hence noble, art as cathartic teaching[57]. Whatever interpretation the αὐτοῖς is to obtain, then, the character involved in the description of the noble sophistry must be a philosopher. In this way, the cautiousness in defining 'sophists' the refuters is easily explained: mere sophists are not worthy of the 'noble' art of refutation.

The opposite scholarly position takes the sophists to be the only possible practitioners of the noble art. Accordingly, this sixth definition is to be regarded as a preliminary approach to the final description of the sophist. However, if any similarity with philosophy and philosophers should be found, this would not be surprising. Indeed, the sophists' activities would be regarded as preparatory to philosophy, as Kerferd argues[58]. Accordingly, the sophists end up imitating Socrates to the same extent that a counterfeit imitation resembles the genuine article[59]. Hence, a certain similarity between philosophers and sophists is still acknowledged by these scholars. However, such an association is questionable for two reasons. First, Socrates is always willing to be refuted, while the practitioners depicted at *Sph*. 226b1-231b8 are not like that. Second, these refuters are explicitly called educators (διδάσκαλοι), whereas Socrates would never tolerate being called so[60]. Therefore, sophists are called noble since they employ the philosophical and noble art of refutation, although they are not true philosophers. Thus, the Eleatic Stranger is afraid to call them 'sophists', because they are more than mere sophists, as they somehow practise the philosophical art of refutation.

Nevertheless, those who claim that Plato is describing a sophist – certain sophists, at least – when producing the sixth definition seem to ignore something particularly relevant. The context suggests that Socrates and the philosophers are the refuters described as noble sophists[61]. Curiously, Plato urges the reader at *Sph*. 231a6-b2 to be always on guard when similarities emerge. The most savage creature, that is, the wolf, quite resembles a dog, the gentlest among creatures. What is more, 'similarity', Plato has the Eleatic Stranger say, 'is the most slippery of kinds'[62]. The fact that Plato is here employing precisely this wolf/dog analogy must be taken into account. For the philosophers are

[57] Cf. CENTRONE 2008, p. 69, fn. 44.
[58] Cf. KERFERD 1954, p. 84.
[59] See BLUCK 1975, pp. 40 and 46.
[60] Cf. NOTOMI 1999, p. 66.
[61] Cf. NARCY 2013, p. 198, DORTER 1990, p. 48, BERNABÉ 2013, p. 42, TREVASKIS 1995, I-KAI 2017, p. 90. See also NOTOMI 1999, p. 65 fn. 72.
[62] See *Sph*. 231a6-b1: 'Yes, and a wolf has quite a resemblance to a dog – the most savage of creatures to the gentlest. To be safe, one must always be particularly on one's guard when it comes to similarities; for similarity is the most slippery of kinds. But still, let them stand as sophists; for the dividing lines on which the dispute will turn will, I think, be no minor ones, when they guard their territory as they should' (Καὶ γὰρ κυνὶ λύκος, ἀγριώτατον ἡμερωτάτῳ. τὸν δὲ ἀσφαλῆ δεῖ πάντων μάλιστα περὶ τὰς ὁμοιότητας ἀεὶ ποιεῖσθαι τὴν φυλακήν· ὀλισθηρότατον γὰρ τὸ γένος. ὅμως δὲ ἔστω· οὐ γὰρ περὶ σμικρῶν ὅρων τὴν ἀμφισβήτησιν οἴομαι γενήσεσθαι τότε ὁπόταν ἱκανῶς φυλάττωσιν). See also CRIVELLI 2012, p. 14, who argues that philosophers cannot be easily recognised throughout the *Sophist* due to misleading similarities, and BOSSI (forthcoming) (b), who attempts to collect all the qualities sophists and philosophers are said to share in the *Sophist*.

compared in Plato's *Republic* to dogs[63] which must protect[64] the flock from the dangerous wolves[65], understood there to be sophists[66]. With this in mind, we can infer that, when Plato warns against the slippery similarities at *Sph*. 231a6-9, he is urging the reader to be aware of the risk of misunderstanding who the sophist and the philosopher are respectively. Indeed, philosophers are the only worthy practitioners of the method of refutation, since they are divine creatures[67] who put the highest value on such things as knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), intelligence (φρόνησις), and intellect (νοῦς)[68]. Accordingly, they are the only ones able to manage the elenctic method wisely. Moreover, the moral characterization of the art of ἔλεγχος is significant. For it reassures us that philosophers, and not sophists, are those who Plato describes as 'noble' sophists. Indeed, those who undertake the art of refutation become less aggressive and more moderate towards others[69]. Curiously, this is a remarkably distinctive feature of the Socratic method: for it is said by Plato elsewhere in his *corpus* to inspire self-restraint – or, moderation – in the refuted[70]. In light of this, Kerferd's reluctance to acknowledge the noble sophists described at *Sph*. 226b1-231b8 as philosophers is not convincing. Indeed, he underlines that Socrates, as a philosopher, would disclaim the title of educator. Therefore, since the practitioners seem to give positive instructions and teachings, the noble sophists cannot be philosophers, at least according to Kerferd. However, I have argued that this interpretation is not entirely consistent with textual evidence. What is more, ἔλεγχος, as a species of education (παιδεία), aims to remove overbearing ignorance in order to prepare for wisdom. Accordingly, the elenctic method of education has no positive content: its aim is to purify people's souls from intellectual errors through a dialectical conversation. Therefore, the noble sophists are educators only to the extent that they purify souls through dialectic without showing off their own knowledge. And, curiously, this is exactly what philosophers' work consists of, according to Plato, and what Socrates does in every

[63] Cf. *R*. II 376a-c.
[64] In addition to the *Republic*'s passage, see also *Sph*. 231b1, where the word φυλάττωσιν is meant to remind the reader of the protective function played by the dog-philosophers.
[65] Cf. *R*. I 336b-d.
[66] See CENTRONE 2008, p. 71 fn. 45.
[67] Cf. *Sph*. 216a-c.
[68] See *Sph*. 249c10-d5.
[69] See *Sph*. 230b10-c1. Whether or not the refuted makes moral progress (ἐπιδιδόναι) also depends on his pre-disposition – and on god's permission too (see *Tht*. 150b6-d6). As a result, people who get cross with Socrates himself – and are eventually angry at him because of his pedantry – might even desire to sink their teeth into him (cf. *Tht*. 151c5-8). However, philosophers are able to both awaken and stop birth-pains. For they can give birth, when and if appropriate, to what people carry inside them. On the contrary, minor arts, like Prodicus' synonymic art, can only entertain those who do not seem (to the philosopher as refuter) to be either pregnant or able to benefit from philosophical refutations (see *Tht*. 151b2-6; cf. also TRABATTONI-CAPRA 2018, pp. 176-177 fn. 42). Accordingly, the refuter must be a philosopher (that is, being a philosopher for the refuter is a necessary – but not sufficient – condition), if the refuted wants to increase in virtue. Therefore, if the refuted becomes less aggressive and more moderate towards others, it necessarily follows that she has been successfully refuted by someone who can be nothing but a philosopher. See IRWIN 1995, p. 19, who remarks that 'engaging in the elenchos is a means to moral reform'.
[70] 'Le réfutateur de Platon, qui correspond sans doute à Socrate, ne pratique pas la réfutation pur la refutation, pour le simple plaisir de contredire une thèse, mais dans l'espoir de rendere son interlocuteur meilleur' (DORION 2000, p. 49). Cf. also GUTHRIE 1978, p. 128 fn. 4, and CENTRONE 2008, p. 67 fn. 41, on this: cf. *Tht*. 210c1 and *Grg*. 458a2-5.

dialogue in which he features as a main character, *Sophist* included. Indeed, he generally engages in dialectical conversations with other people so to refute their arguments – while also being willing to cross-examine himself[71].

To conclude, the only reason why the Eleatic Stranger is afraid of attributing the term 'sophists' to the refuters is that he wishes to prevent his interlocutor, Theaetetus, from confusing philosophers and sophists. For, by calling the practitioners of the elenctic method 'sophists of a noble lineage', the Eleatic Stranger aims to test Theaetetus' ability[72] to properly recognize who is who. But in doing this, he gives his younger friend a clue: the character described in the sixth definition has nothing in common with the sophists outlined in the former five definitions: by being nobler than them, he is a true philosopher[73].

1.2.2. *Moral evil and intellectual failure*

Given that the noble sophist is to be identified with a true philosopher, I will now focus on the sixth definition of the noble sophist in order to explore its moral relevance. This aspect has been seldom taken into serious consideration by scholars. However, those few who have been interested in it, like José Solana, take the moral argument as decisive when interpreting the noble sophistry passage[74]: it is conceivable, Solana observes, as a part of a general attempt to modify the Socratic doctrine known as ethical intellectualism[75]. Accordingly, Plato's aim in the *Sophist* would be to abandon the Socratic identification between vice and ignorance. Indeed, as Cornford argues, the new political theory[76]

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[71] See e.g., *Grg*. 458a2-5 where Socrates defines himself as one of those who would be pleased both to be refuted (ἐλεγχθέντων), in the case that he says something untrue, and to refute (ἐλεγξάντων) others, if someone were to say something untrue. Therefore, the philosopher is not at all less pleased to be refuted than to refute.

[72] Some may argue that, since the Eleatic Stranger is employing "eristic" tactics (for he tests his interlocutor's logical abilities, and, in so doing, he is not dialectically constructive), he is not a true philosopher himself. However, just as *Sph*. 216b7-c1 (as I will show later on) and the rest of the dialogue testify, the Eleatic Stranger is a true philosopher himself. For the Eleatic Stranger shows honesty, just as a true philosopher does, in declaring his own opinions. Moreover, he expects his interlocutor to do the same – and hence, to bring repair to the inconsistency that his opinion has been showing throughout the refutation. Therefore, it is not a mere test: both the Eleatic Stranger and his interlocutor cooperate in order to find out a true account of who the sophist is (on how the Socratic method of refutation works, with special regard to its aim and the role of the refuter, cf. IRWIN 1995, pp. 20 ff.). In this way, it should not sound surprising that the Eleatic Stranger, *qua* true philosopher, promotes practices which are not strictly related to philosophy. For, as the *Sophist* shows, many are the similarities between a sophist and a philosopher. What is more, if the Eleatic Stanger ends up employing unorthodox practices is just because he needs to understand whether or not the refutation will come to a happy end. In other words, he wants to see whether he has to give up with the refutation just as Socrates does in the *Meno* (cf. esp. *Men*. 99a-100a) once he acknowledges the poor intellectual quality of his interlocutors.

[73] 'Tra le definizioni del sofista che vengono proposte, tutte negative, ve n'è tuttavia una (quella della cosiddetta "sofistica purificatrice") che ritrae correttamente il metodo confutatorio di Socrate (230b-d)' (TRABATTONI 2016, p. 97).

[74] See SOLANA 2013, p. 80, who argues that the elenctic method has both a moral-religious and an epistemological significance. Accordingly, since the Socratic ἔλεγχος is meant to produce a moral effect, Solana concludes that, for this very reason, the method described by Plato in the *Sophist* can be only ascribed to philosophers like Socrates.

[75] See SOLANA 2013, pp. 72 ff. On the contrary, the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that such a moral theory is not only Socratic, but also Platonic (see e.g., GERSON 2014, who argues that the so-called Socratic intellectualism is thoroughly Platonic).

[76] As I show in other parts of my thesis (see *infra* p. 69 fn. 448), I do not believe that Plato introduces in the *Statesman* a new political theory. For I take the *Statesman* to basically ascribe to the same political theory as the *Republic*. In particular, Plato's *Statesman* merely sheds light on how the philosophical knowledge that is ascribed to philosophers in the *Republic*

allegedly elaborated in the *Statesman* – another late dialogue traditionally associated with the *Sophist*[77] – would require Plato to revise the theory of ethical intellectualism[78] too. Hence, it is worth reflecting on the moral tenor of the art of noble sophistry passage, in order to pave the way for a more general analysis of the complex shape which moral epistemology takes in the whole dialogue.

The first question which needs to be answered is whether there is a relationship between ethics and epistemology at *Sph*. 226b1-231b8. Scholarly views on this very issue are split: some scholars deny that a correlation between morality and knowledge is detectable in the passage (and throughout the dialogue), whereas others believe that epistemology and ethics go hand-in-hand. The former view, represented by Zina Giannopoulou, argues that 'the fact that in the *Sophist* Plato makes a clear-cut division between vice (πονηρία) and ignorance (ἄγνοια) signals the attempt of undermining the famous Socratic paradox "virtue is knowledge"'[79]. On this interpretation, Plato's *Sophist* shows that there are causes of wrongdoing other than the reason itself. Therefore, moral evil would not necessarily be generated by ignorance, that is, by an intellectual failure[80]. Indeed, since there are parts of the soul which are irrational, moral evil might be the result of a psychological conflict (στάσις), wherein the irrational parts of the soul rule over rationality. Accordingly, *Sph*. 227d-228e would present vice as a kind of disease in the soul, that is, as a result of psychological maladjustment. Therefore, such a psychological disorder would cause cowardice, lack of moderation, injustice, and moral evil, in general. On this interpretation, Plato would be here distinguishing wrongdoing due to ignorance – taken as a mere intellectual failure – from wrongdoing due to irrationality's domination over rationality[81]. As a consequence, ethics and epistemology would end up being compartmentalized into two topics which do not mutually communicate. Hence, the Socratic theory of ethical intellectualism would be abandoned.

Another scholarly position, however, contends that ethics and epistemology are connected and the noble sophistry passage speaks to this relationship. For the method of refutation is linked to the moral virtue of moderation to the extent that the refuters not only produce moderation in their interlocutors, but are also required to be moderate in their turn. On this interpretation, a connection between morality and knowledge is manifestly present here: one does not strive for knowledge without becoming moderate first. Moreover, one becomes moderate only if a cross-examination

may be (practically) applied to the city's everyday life. Hence, I assume Plato to describe in both the *Republic* and the *Statesman* the same most ideal constitution that might be ever thought of.

[77] 'There can be no doubt that the Platonic dialogues entitled *Theaetetus*, *The Sophist*, and *The Statesman* belong together – in that order and are meant to be a "trilogy", regardless of when they were written' (KLEIN 1977, p. 3).

[78] 'It is perhaps to prepare the way for this conception of statesmanship that Plato in our passage regards vice, not as ignorance, but as a political sedition in the soul, to be remedied by "the justice that chastens", the analogue of medical purgation of disease' (CORNFORD 1935, pp. 182-183).

[79] See GIANNOPOULOU 2001, p. 110 fn. 40.

[80] Cf. DODDS 1945, pp. 19 ff.

[81] See HACKFORTH 1946.

properly achieves the goal of getting rid of one's own ignorance[82]. This implies that: 1) wrongdoing always involves ignorance, and 2) the attainment of a moral virtue, e.g., moderation, depends on the purification of the soul from ignorance. Hence, on this line of thought, Plato is still consistent with his earlier views as he depicts ignorance as a moral evil, and not only as a mere intellectual failure[83]. On this interpretation, then, although the Plato of the *Sophist* shows himself to be a non-intellectualist[84], this does not imply that ignorance does not indicate a fundamental moral evil[85].

I will show that those who argue that ignorance cannot be conceived as a moral vice (which also implies that there is no positive interaction between knowledge and virtue) are not convincing. Indeed, the fact that Plato distinguishes in the *Sophist* two different kinds of vices (πονηρίαι/κακίαι) – cowardice, lack of moderation, and injustice on the one hand, and ignorance on the other[86] – might not necessarily imply that ignorance does not play any role in moral actions. A passage from the *Republic* reveals that ignorance – meant as a cognitive state of intellectual failure – might possibly have some moral relevance. Socrates is listing there the vices which are opposed to the so-called cardinal virtues[87] and treats ignorance as one of the moral vices which affect the human soul:

> Οὐκοῦν στάσιν τινὰ αὖ τριῶν ὄντων τούτων δεῖ αὐτὴν εἶναι καὶ πολυπραγμοσύνην καὶ ἀλλοτριοπραγμοσύνην καὶ ἐπανάστασιν μέρους τινὸς τῷ ὅλῳ τῆς ψυχῆς, ἵν' ἄρχῃ ἐν αὐτῇ οὐ προσῆκον, ἀλλὰ τοιούτου ὄντος φύσει οἵου πρέπειν αὐτῷ δουλεύειν, †τοῦ δ' αὖ δουλεύειν ἀρχικοῦ γένους ὄντι†; τοιαῦτ' ἄττα, οἶμαι, φήσομεν καὶ τὴν τούτων ταραχὴν καὶ πλάνην εἶναι τήν τε ἀδικίαν καὶ ἀκολασίαν καὶ δειλίαν καὶ ἀμαθίαν καὶ συλλήβδην πᾶσαν κακίαν.
>
> Mustn't it be a state of faction, as it were, among the three elements, a tendency to meddle or interfere in each other's roles – one part of the soul rising up against the whole with a view to imposing its own rule on it, contrary to its own nature, which fits rather for enslavement, and to enslaving the kind whose nature is to rule? These are the sorts of things we'll say, I think, and in general that it's the confusion of these elements in the soul, and their straying from their proper roles, that constitutes not only injustice but lack of moderation, cowardice, ignorance – in brief every form of badness.
>
> *R.* IV 444b1-8[88]

In this passage, ignorance (ἀμαθία)[89] is regarded as a moral vice to the same extent as cowardice, lack of moderation, and injustice – and, curiously, these same vices are listed at *Sph.* 228d6 ff. too as moral faults. However, when ignorance affects the soul, a domino effect occurs: the two irrational parts of the soul become vicious as well, and injustice is gained by the whole soul. Hence, what Plato states

[82] Cf. I-KAI 2017, pp. 84 ff.
[83] Cf. GOOCH 1971, pp. 131-132.
[84] According to GOOCH 1971, p. 133, the Plato of the *Sophist* is not intellectualist: since Plato introduces at *Sph.* 226a-1231b causes of evil other than ignorance, wrongdoing does not necessarily derive from ignorance, as the theory of ethical intellectualism dictates.
[85] Cf. GOOCH 1971, p. 131.
[86] See *Sph.* 228d6 ff.
[87] The so-called cardinal virtues are respectively proper to each part of the tripartite soul. However, justice is proper to the whole soul. That is why Plato lists four cardinal virtues, while the soul has just three parts: cf. CENTRONE 2008, p. 61 fn. 38.
[88] Translated by ROWE 2012a.
[89] See *infra* p. 4 fn. 48.

at *R*. IV 444b1-8 is that cowardice, lack of moderation, injustice, and also ignorance are all parts of the whole of vice. In this very sense, they can all be equally considered as moral vices. However, Plato is also suggesting something else here: whether the spirited and appetitive soul's parts are virtuous or not depends on the moral excellence of rationality[90]. Therefore, if we return to the list of the soul's vices made by Plato in the *Sophist*[91], it might be reasonably argued that Plato re-presents there the dichotomy which is implicitly developed at *R*. IV 444b1-8[92]. In this way, we discover that: (a) ignorance, cowardice, lack of moderation, and injustice are just different species, or forms, of vice, which, when combined, constitute vice as a whole, and (b) the vices of the rational and irrational parts of the soul are distinguished from one another just because ignorance is ontologically prior to cowardice, lack of moderation, and injustice[93]. Accordingly, if we take for granted that the description of the moral vices made at *Sph*. 228d6 ff. is reminiscent of the theory developed at *R*. IV 444b1-8, it can be inferred that the *Sophist*, like the *Republic*, shows that all moral vices arise out of ignorance[94].

Now, since all the moral vices ultimately arise out of ignorance, it is worth wondering whether the cognitive state opposite to ignorance, i.e., knowledge, necessarily implies virtue or not. Let us consider what the Eleatic Stranger says about the art of noble sophistry and its relation to ignorance:

> ΞΕ. Ἀλλὰ μὴν ψυχήν γε ἴσμεν ἄκουσαν πᾶσαν πᾶν ἀγνοοῦσαν. ΘΕΑΙ. Σφόδρα γε.
>
> STRANGER: We surely know that no soul is voluntarily ignorant of anything. THEAETETUS: We certainly do.

[90] Indeed, when ignorance affects the soul, the three parts of the soul do not obtain a harmonic relation. Therefore, an irrational part might eventually rise up against the whole and quite unnaturally impose its own rule on it. Accordingly, when this disorder takes place in the soul (that is, when the soul is primarily affected by ignorance), first injustice, and next the other forms of vice – such as cowardice and lack of moderation – arise. At any rate, all the forms of vice which affect an unjust soul (such as cowardice, lack of moderation, and ignorance) are respectively opposed to the so-called cardinal virtues (namely, courage, moderation, and wisdom) which occur in a soul provided with justice. Accordingly, when the rational part of the soul rules over the spirited and the appetitive, justice is firstly attained by the soul. As a consequence, the whole of virtue is also gained: each part of the soul minds its own business and therefore gains its own virtue. Therefore, Plato's *Republic* highlights the primacy of rationality – and, eventually, its relative vice – over the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul. Indeed, insofar as the rational part is not in command anymore, the soul becomes unjust. As a result, when the rational part of the soul is vicious, i.e., is affected by ignorance, also the spirited and appetitive parts become vicious.

[91] See *Sph*. 2287e13-229a10 ff.: cowardice, lack of moderation, and injustice are apparently separated from ignorance.

[92] Cf. ROWE 2015c and 2021, who argues that Plato's description of virtue and vice at *Sph*. 226b1-231b8 (especially, at *Sph*. 228) 'is intended to remind us of the main treatment of *aretê* and *kakia* in the *Republic*'.

[93] For one may be affected by cowardice, lack of moderation, and injustice only if she is ignorant.

[94] Indeed, rational and irrational parts of the soul are affected by different vices (cf. CENTRONE 2008, p. 61 fn. 38). However, as both the *Republic* (cf. *R*. IV 440b, 440d, 441a, 444b; see also VEGETTI 2007[4], ch. 2, esp. pp. 147-148) and the *Sophist* (cf. *Sph*. 230b1-e4; see also GOOCH 1971, p. 131) demonstrate, the irrational soul's parts become philosophically virtuous only if the rational part does rule over them – and a necessary condition for this is that rationality, in first place, is not affected by its peculiar vice, i.e., ignorance. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that, on the other hand, all the moral vices arise out of ignorance (cf. also *Sph*. 228c7-8). Now, one might wonder why, if all the moral vices arise out of ignorance, Plato thinks in the *Sophist* of two different methods for purifying the soul. Indeed, on the one hand, the corrective (κολαστική) art is meant to get rid of cowardice, lack of moderation, and injustice, while, on the other, education (παιδεία) – ἔλεγχος, in particular – is concerned with removing ignorance (ἀμαθία). I shall show later on in this chapter that there are two ways in which a moral agent can perform virtuous actions: philosophically and "demotically". In this sense, the corrective art is conceived of as a means to demotic virtue, while παιδεία and ἔλεγχος are the route to philosophical virtue.

As Bruno Centrone suggests, the Eleatic Stranger's adherence to the thesis of the involuntariness of ignorance is significant[95]. For Plato refers here to one of the so-called Socratic paradoxes which grounds the theory of ethical intellectualism[96]: no one errs willingly. Indeed, ignorance – beyond representing an epistemological condition – has been acknowledged to be a moral vice. Therefore, what Plato is stating here is that no one can be voluntarily vicious. As a consequence, knowledge, namely, the cognitive state opposite to ignorance, is still considered as a necessary and sufficient condition for distinguishing what is good (τἀγαθά) from what is evil (τὰ κακά)[97]. Therefore, if one knows what is good, he cannot desire what is evil for himself[98]. Accordingly, just as is suggested in the *Protagoras*, one can be overcome by excessive pleasures and pains only if he is ignorant (ἀμαθής) of the nature of goodness and evilness[99]. Hence, wrongdoers do not intend to do actions which they understand to be wrong. They are simply misguided by false opinion or ignorance. Therefore, virtue is knowledge to the extent that all the irrational desires, feelings and volitions are instructed by the knowledge that is virtue. Accordingly, the moral behaviour of the virtuous person is governed by the knowledge through which the moral good is necessarily grasped[100]. With all this in mind, then, we are in a position to conclude that, as *Sph*. 228c7-8 confirms, Plato re-states in the *Sophist* the theory – labelled as ethical intellectualism – according to which knowledge is virtue and no one does wrong willingly.

Therefore, the noble sophistry passage (*Sph*. 226b1-231b8) implies that ethics and epistemology are strictly related. Indeed, desires, pleasures, pains, and affections in general[101] deeply affect a moral agent only if she is initially affected by ignorance. Therefore, the Socratic theory of ethical intellectualism is further developed: the soul is tripartite and its two irrational parts might overcome rationality by imposing the rule of irrational affections over reason. Nonetheless, this happens only when rationality is affected by ignorance and, therefore, the soul is not controlled by

[95] Cf. CENTRONE 2008, pp. 53-55 fn. 33. See also DORION 2000, pp. 48-49, who argues that the definition of the noble sophist only apparently relates to sophists. For Plato provides what clearly is 'une parfait description de la procedure et des effets escomptés de l'*elenchos* socratique'. So, the refuter does not practice ἔλεγχος for the sake of it: if he refutes someone, it is just because he intends to make his interlocutor a better person. Now, since 'la doctrine de la vertu-science' is in the background of the description of the noble sophist, Dorion says, it can easily be inferred that ἔλεγχος has a pedagogical valence. It aims at purifying the souls from those *faux savoirs* which prevent people from acquiring that knowledge which is virtue, and hence, happiness.

[96] See ROWE 2009, esp. pp. 36 ff.: Plato reiterates the Socratic paradoxes in his late dialogues (including the *Laws*).

[97] Cf. *Prt*. 352c2-7.

[98] See *Grg*. 509e2-7, *Men*. 76-8, *Prt*. 358c6-d4.

[99] Cf. *Prt*. 357e2-4.

[100] See SEGVIC 2000, esp. pp. 22 ff., for an overview of the so-called Socratic theory of ethical intellectualism.

[101] See *Sph*. 228b2-4: all these elements are responsible for the internal disagreement which takes place in the soul. As ROWE 2015a, p. 116 fn. 30, points out, in *Republic* IV (437b-441c) Plato grounds the argument through which he divides the soul into three parts on this internal disagreement within the soul. Cf. also DORTER 1990, esp. pp. 42-48, who suggests that, although there is no explicit reference to the tripartite soul in the *Sophist*, this dialogue marks out several indirect references to it.

reason. Indeed, a knowledge informed by wisdom[102] – that is, the virtue of the rational part of the soul – is necessary and sufficient for virtue as a whole. As a consequence, if a wise knowledge is achieved, not only is ignorance as a vice averted, but also all the other moral vices – such as cowardice, lack of moderation, and injustice – will accordingly be averted. Hence, the art of noble sophistry passage shows that the Socratic theory of ethical intellectualism has not been abandoned. It has rather been re-shaped by Plato in order to perfect the tripartite theory of the soul by providing a more precise account of the complexity of the embodied human soul[103].

1.3. *Being virtuous and acting virtuously*

At this point, I will consider the more general ethical and epistemological account which emerges from the whole of the *Sophist*. I will define in the following sections two different modes of interaction between ethics and epistemology: one is distinctive of philosophers, the other of ordinary people. Therefore, I will aim to determine the moral nature of philosophers and ordinary people by analysing their respective cognitive states.

1.3.1. *The philosophical souls in the* Sophist

At the very beginning of the *Sophist*, Theodorus meets Socrates – following the agreement they made the day before[104] – and Theodorus introduces a new interlocutor: the Eleatic Stranger. He is said to be a friend of the followers of Parmenides and Zeno ('ἑταῖρον δὲ τῶν ἀμφὶ Παρμενίδην καὶ Ζήνωνα [ἑταίρων]'); but, what is more, he is said to be 'very much a man of philosophy' (μάλα δὲ ἄνδρα φιλόσοφον)[105]. Then, Socrates asks if he is a kind of severe god who observes how bad humans are at making arguments and exposes them. Theodorus answers:

> ΘΕΟ. Οὐχ οὗτος ὁ τρόπος, ὦ Σώκρατες, τοῦ ξένου, ἀλλὰ μετριώτερος τῶν περὶ τὰς ἔριδας ἐσπουδακότων. Καί μοι δοκεῖ θεὸς μὲν ἀνὴρ οὐδαμῶς εἶναι, θεῖος μήν· πάντας γὰρ ἐγὼ τοὺς φιλοσόφους τοιούτους προσαγορεύω. ΣΩ. Καὶ καλῶς γε, ὦ φίλε.
>
> THEODORUS: That is not our visitor's way, Socrates. There are people who make it their speciality to win arguments, but he is more measured than them. Nor does the man seem to me a god at all

[102] See *Tht*. 145e6-7, where wisdom (σοφία) and knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) are said to be one and the same thing. Cf. also *R*. IV 442c6, where, as IRWIN 1995, p. 230, points out, Plato 'speaks of wisdom (*sophia*) and knowledge (*episteme*) as the virtue of the rational part and assumes that this is the virtue that produces the right instructions for the other parts of the soul'.

[103] See SEDLEY 2013, esp. pp. 82 ff., where he argues that Socratic intellectualism can still coexist with the theory of the tripartite soul. Indeed, Plato believes that the tripartite analysis of the soul is an advance over the inherited Socratic psychology: it allows the best possible account of the incarnate soul. On this interpretation, Plato never abandons the theory of ethical intellectualism: it is instead perfected. However, SEDLEY 2013, p. 87, does not believe, as I do, that those who have philosophical knowledge also gain a reasoned control over irrational and semi-rational drives. For he suggests that the ascent to a high level of understanding makes the demands of the carnal world simply fade into the background. Still, Sedley's interpretation agrees with mine on a fundamental assumption: knowledge plays a crucial role with reference to human moral behaviour. Cf. FIERRO 2013, who also focuses on how Plato conciliates the theory of Socratic ethical intellectualism with that of the tripartite soul.

[104] See *Tht*. 210d.

[105] *Sph*. 216a4.

> – which is not to say he is not divine; that is how I describe all philosophers! SOCRATES: Quite right too, my friend.
>
> *Sph*. 216b7-c1

This passage shows that philosophers like the Eleatic Stranger are more measured (μετριώτερος) than those who are merely competitive[106]. Accordingly, they are not like a severe god who observes from above and places blame on humans. Nonetheless, philosophers must still be regarded as divine people. Now, the first implication which intuitively emerges from this statement is that philosophers are the human beings closest to a state of perfection – which is what makes them worthy of being called divine. However, how might such a state of human perfection be achieved, if not through the attainment of the highest epistemological and moral states[107]? With regard to morality, we have already shown that philosophers, being wise, are necessarily virtuous[108]. However, human moral perfection, i.e., philosophical virtue[109], is often related to a state of complete happiness (εὐδαιμονία) in Plato's works[110].

Now, how does the *Sophist* tackle all these issues? At *Sph*. 230d-e – that is, when he is about to complete the sixth definition of the noble sophist –, the Eleatic Stranger explains what to do in order to reach happiness: those who want to be happy must be 'pure and beautiful to the greatest

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[106] Namely, the eristics: cf. *Sph*. 225e and ROWE 2015a, p. 99 fn. 3.

[107] As we learn from *Lg*. X 916d-e, the gods are said to know (γιγνώσκειν) everything and to be supremely good (ἄριστοι) – cf. also *Phd*. 80d5-8, where the gods are also described as wise (φρόνιμοι) and good (ἀγαθοί). See *Lg*. X 897b-899b, where self-moving souls are defined as divine since they are rational and connected with virtue; cf. also *R*. VII 518d-e, where the capacity (δύναμις) to think (φρονεῖν) is presented as something divine which never loses its power.

[108] See *Sph*. 228c7-8.

[109] That is, the virtue that is knowledge.

[110] Indeed, given that (a) gods are supremely good (ἄριστοι) – and hence, virtuous –, and (b) philosophers are divine, it then follows that (c) philosophers must somehow relate themselves to virtue. In fact, given what Plato has the Stranger say at *Sph*. 228c7-8, we should assume that, since they have knowledge, philosophers cannot do wrong willingly. In addition to this, a fairly considerable amount of textual evidence shows that humans who are divine (and virtuous – just like philosophers are) are also happy. For, the human soul is said at *Phd*. 80a-81a to become happy if it makes its way to the divine. At *Tht*. 176e3-4, instead, Plato indicates there that there are two different patterns in reality which humans may stick to: one is godless and most miserable, whereas the other is divine (θεῖον) and the happiest (εὐδαιμονέστατον). Finally, Plato states at *Ti*. 90b-d that the moral agent who has devoted himself to true thoughts ('ἀληθεῖς φρονήσεις') holds thoughts that are immortal and divine. Accordingly, 'inasmuch as he is for ever tending his divine part and duly magnifying that daemon who dwells along with him, he must be supremely happy' (ἅτε δὲ ἀεὶ θεραπεύοντα τὸ θεῖον ἔχοντά τε αὐτὸν εὖ κεκοσμημένον τὸν δαίμονα σύνοικον ἑαυτῷ, διαφερόντως εὐδαίμονα εἶναι). Interestingly, however, Platonic evidence more explicitly shows that the achievement of happiness is somehow related to the attainment of a full (philosophical) virtue. See *R*. I 353d9-354a2, where happiness is equated with doing well and living well – for a similar view, see also e.g., *Chrm*. 172a, 173d; *Cri*. 48b; *Grg*. 507b-c; *Euthd*. 280b6 (on this, cf. MEYER 2008, esp. p. 12). In turn, Plato specifies that a moral agent lives and does well (and hence, is happy) only when all his soul's functions are properly performed. Accordingly, since a soul is in harmony – and hence, all its functions are properly performed – only when justice and all the other so-called cardinal virtues are attained, the achievement of happiness is necessarily linked to the attainment of virtue. Conversely, the attainment of virtue necessarily implies the achievement of happiness. Now, some may point out that this view is endorsed only by the early Plato. On this interpretation, then, the co-implication between happiness and virtue disappears in the middle and late dialogues. On the contrary, as DEVEREUX 2017 points out, no massive change occurs: for middle and late dialogues just fill in gaps within, or simply clarify, arguments and theories which are left philosophically unpolished, or not properly developed, by the Plato of the early dialogues. As a matter of fact, the Plato of the *Philebus* argues that the best life, which is a compound of pleasure and intellect, entails happiness (see *Phlb*. 11d, 20c-d, 22d). As I demonstrate elsewhere in my thesis (see *infra* Chapter 3), the best life is equated by the Plato of the *Philebus* with a purely virtuous one.

extent' (καθαρώτατον καὶ κάλλιστον)[111]. Now, what do purity and beauty have to do with happiness? It is worth addressing this question by appealing once again to the noble sophistry passage. The noble sophist is to be understood there to be a philosopher, and his knowledge is there thought to imply moral virtue[112]. In addition to this, noble sophistry has also been depicted as a cleansing kind among the many separative arts. Hence, it first aims to extirpate from the soul anything that is in some way bad[113]. Now, when Plato states at *Sph*. 228a4-d4 that there are two different kinds of vice that affect the soul, he says that one is like a disease (νόσος) in the body, while the other is equivalent to bodily deformity (αἶσχος). Bodily deformity is in turn described as a kind of dissymmetry and disproportion (ἀμετρία). Curiously, ignorance (ἄγνοια) is similarly featured: it is nothing other than a deviation of a soul which is seeking the truth but wanders away from understanding (σύνεσις)[114]. Thus, since it is out of proportion[115], ignorance is said to be like bodily deformity. Therefore, since ignorance and bodily deformity are strictly linked, and ignorance is among the moral vices, then a pure and beautiful – and hence, happy – soul will be that which is no longer ignorant, and hence, vicious.

Now, from the noble sophistry passage we learn that the proposition 'virtue is knowledge' must be read as biconditional: the attainment of virtue always entails the achievement of a knowledge informed by wisdom[116], and a wise knowledge necessarily implies being philosophically virtuous[117]. For, if we were right in reading through the *Republic* Plato's distinction between two different kinds of vices in the *Sophist*, we are in a position to conclude that wisdom is all you need in order to gain virtue as a whole. Also, the refuters, *qua* wise philosophers, must be virtuous since they hold a knowledge informed by wisdom[118] and cannot do wrong willingly[119]. Therefore, the soul which is surely pure and beautiful – and hence, happy – to the greatest extent is that of the philosopher-refuter. For he is wise and cannot be vicious for any reason whatsoever.

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[111] Cf. *Sph*. 230d6-e3: 'STRANGER: For all these reasons, Theaetetus, we have to say that this challenging of people is in fact the greatest and most authoritative of all cleansings, and one must suppose that if someone goes unchallenged, even if he happens to be the Great King of Persia, his remaining uncleansed in the most important respects already renders him uneducated and ugly in the very respects in which the person who is genuinely going to be happy ought to be at his cleanest, purest, and most beautiful' (ΞΕ. Διὰ ταῦτα δὴ πάντα ἡμῖν, ὦ Θεαίτητε, καὶ τὸν ἔλεγχον λεκτέον ὡς ἄρα μεγίστη καὶ κυριωτάτη τῶν καθάρσεών ἐστι, καὶ τὸν ἀνέλεγκτον αὖ νομιστέον, ἂν καὶ τυγχάνῃ βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας ὤν, τὰ μέγιστα ἀκάθαρτον ὄντα, ἀπαίδευτόν τε καὶ αἰσχρὸν γεγονέναι ταῦτα ἃ καθαρώτατον καὶ κάλλιστον ἔπρεπε τὸν ὄντως ἐσόμενον εὐδαίμονα εἶναι).

[112] See *Sph*. 228c7-8. Cf. also *infra* pp. 11-13.

[113] Cf. *Sph*. 227d-e.

[114] See *Sph*. 228c10-d2: 'STRANGER: And ignorance, surely, is nothing but the deviation of a soul that is trying for the truth but wanders away from understanding' (ΞΕ. Τό γε μὴν ἀγνοεῖν ἐστιν ἐπ' ἀλήθειαν ὁρμωμένης ψυχῆς, παραφόρου συνέσεως γιγνομένης, οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν ψυχῆς, παραφόρου συνέσεως γιγνομένης, οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν παραφροσύνη).

[115] Cf. *Sph*. 228c1-7. See CENTRONE 2008, p. 57 fn. 35, about why ignorance is said to be out of proportion.

[116] See *infra* pp. 11-13.

[117] Cf. *Sph*. 228c7-8.

[118] See *Sph*. 216b7-c1 and 249c10-d5. See also *infra* pp. 6-8 and 11-13.

[119] Cf. *Sph*. 228c7-8.

However, what Plato says about the cross-examined soul is curious. Plato argues that, as far as they have been purified through a dialectical refutation, the cross-examined souls expunge the opinions (δόξαι) that obstruct the lessons (μαθήματα) offered (προσφερομένων) to them[120]. So, we somehow learn that opinions – some of them, at least[121] – might interfere with that activity of learning which is responsible for removing ignorance from the soul. Now, there are two possible interpretations – both plausible – of what Plato argues here. On the one hand, we might think that the refuted gets rid of ignorance by removing from the soul those false opinions which obstruct the lessons offered to them. We learn from Plato's *Republic* that opinion (δόξα) is neither ignorance (ἄγνοια) nor knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), being intermediate between them[122]. Moreover, the *Sophist* shows that opinion (δόξα) might be true as well as false[123]. Therefore, those who get rid of ignorance by removing false opinions from the soul do not necessarily become wise. Accordingly, we might not be able to exclude that, once false opinions and ignorance have been extirpated, a true opinion is the best achievement the refuted will be able to attain. Therefore, since (a) virtue is knowledge and (b) opinion – even if true – is a weaker cognitive state compared to knowledge[124], the holder of true opinions would be able to achieve only an incomplete or inauthentic kind of virtue. On the other hand, the alternative interpretation suggests that the properly refuted souls become appropriately philosophical. For, if the souls which extirpate ignorance by dismissing opinions as a whole finally manage to learn all the lessons "taught" to them[125], we might conclude that the souls which have been properly cross-examined are able to attain the truth[126]. Accordingly, if one is able to attain the truth, he would be also able to learn how he got there. Put differently, the one who knows the truth has command of the science of dialectic. He is worthy of being called a true philosopher, as the *cursus studiorum* thought for the philosopher-rulers in the *Republic* prescribes. As it turns out that those who want to be happy have to extirpate vice from the soul *to the greatest extent*[127], it is reasonable to

[120] See *Sph*. 230c-d.
[121] See *Grg*. 458a2-b2: there is no evil for a man as great as a false belief (ψευδὴς δόξα) about the objects of discussion. What ἔλεγχος aims for is just to get rid of this greatest evil.
[122] See *R*. V 477a-478b.
[123] Cf. *Sph*. 263d6-8.
[124] See *R*. VI 509d-511e: as the theory of the divided line shows, opinion (δόξα) signifies a cognitive state which relates to the visible realm – and hence, not to the intelligible realm whose understanding can be attained only by means of a philosophical knowledge (on this matter, see also *R*. V 477e). Accordingly, 'opinion accomplishes something uncertain while knowledge accomplishes something certain' (DORTER 2004, p. 11).
[125] I consider προσφέρω at *Sph*. 230c8 as having a relatively strong sense (namely, 'to teach').
[126] Indeed, you can only teach something you know. And, according to Plato, the truth is the only thing you can actually have knowledge of. Accordingly, only the truth can be taught, and, eventually, learned: cf. e.g., *R*. VI 485d3-4. However, it does not necessarily follow from this that the philosopher gives positive teachings to the person he engages with in a dialectical refutation. Indeed, he merely aims to purify people's souls from intellectual errors through a dialectical conversation. It is only to this extent, then, that philosophers (whose action is still informed by a philosophical knowledge of the truth), *qua* leaders of the dialectical refutation, can still be thought of as educators, and hence, teachers (cf. *infra* pp. 6-8).
[127] Cf. *Sph*. 230d6-e3.

assume that happiness must imply the achievement of a philosophical virtue, that is, of the virtue that is knowledge[128]. Hence, a cross-examined soul – i.e., that which might be purified from moral vices, and especially, from ignorance – will be happy to the greatest extent *only if* it ends up achieving a knowledge informed by wisdom.

Now, the philosophical tenet according to which holding the wise knowledge typical of the philosopher always implies the achievement of a philosophical virtue which is crucial for the sake of happiness is reinforced by another passage of the *Sophist* (233a3-4) which implicitly re-affirms that a knowledge informed by wisdom – that is, that which is virtue and therefore secures happiness[129] – is what both refuted and refuter must long for. The Eleatic Stranger and Theaetetus are discussing humans' capacity to possess a full knowledge of everything:

> ΞΕ. Εἰ πάντα ἐπίστασθαί τινα ἀνθρώπων ἐστὶ δυνατόν. ΘΕΑΙ. Μακάριον μεντἂν ἡμῶν, ὦ ξένε, ἦν τὸ γένος.
>
> STRANGER: Whether it is possible for some human being to know everything. THEAETETUS: This human kind of ours would certainly be blessed if it were.
>
> *Sph*. 233a3-4

Therefore, those who would be able to achieve a complete knowledge of everything should be regarded as blessed (μακάριοι) people[130]. We learn from Plato's *Laws*[131] that such a state of omniscience is assuredly met by the gods who both know everything and are always good. Now, it is debatable whether humans might eventually reach this highest stage. However, philosophers are the humans closest to the state of perfection typical of gods[132]. Therefore, even though they might not be able to know everything, they still possess the divine ability to grasp the Forms[133]. Indeed, only philosophers put the highest value on such things as knowledge, intelligence, and intellect (ἐπιστήμη, φρόνησις, νοῦς)[134], which are, in Platonic terms, the cognitive states required in order to become acquainted with such intelligible entities as the Forms[135]. For philosophers are well acquainted with the practice of dialectic, that is, what is described in the *Republic*[136] as the hardest part of the *cursus studiorum* for the philosopher-rulers, and which is similarly described in the *Sophist* as the greatest science (μεγίστη ἐπιστήμη)[137]. Now, the fact that dialectic is similarly presented both in the *Republic*

[128] Indeed, this is the only means through which vice can be averted *to the greatest extent*, as *Sph*. 230d6-e3 requires.
[129] See also *infra* pp. 10-12.
[130] *Sph*. 233a3-4 shows that, if there were someone able to achieve a full knowledge of everything, the human kind would be blessed (μακάριον). Accordingly, we may reasonably assume that those who would eventually be able to achieve such an omniscience would be blessed to the greatest extent.
[131] Cf. *Lg*. X 916d-e: see also *infra* p. 14 fn. 107.
[132] Indeed, philosophers are presented as divine people (see *Sph*. 254a-b and *Sph*. 216b7-c1).
[133] Cf. *R*. VI 500c9-d11 and *Phdr*. 249c6, where Plato explains that the philosopher is divine as he has an intellectual contact with the Forms. See CENTRONE 2008, p. 5 fn. 6, who explains that, the fact that philosophers are defined as divine in the *Sophist* suggests that they have knowledge of the Forms.
[134] See *Sph*. 249c-d.
[135] See *infra* p. 77 fn. 481, and pp. 78 fn. 491.
[136] Cf. *R*. VI 498a3.
[137] See *Sph*. 253c-d.

and the *Sophist* allows us to infer that dialectic retains in the *Sophist* the same moral relevance it has in the *Republic*. Accordingly, it is worth noting that the *Republic*'s philosophers use dialectic to attain the οὐσίαι[138], including, we might imagine, the virtues[139]. In this way, by acquiring a philosophical knowledge through dialectic, they arrive at the stage of *being* virtuous. Indeed, the wise (σοφός) person is one who has knowledge (ἐπιστήμη). But, what is more, a wise person is also good (ἀγαθός)[140]. Accordingly, since those who are wise are good, they are virtuous[141]. Similarly, the *Sophists*' philosophers, who are the noble masters of dialectic, are virtuous because they have a philosophical knowledge informed by wisdom. Accordingly, since they know what virtue is and are virtuous[142], they cannot be anything but happy[143]. Therefore, when Plato says at *Sph*. 230d-e that one must be pure and beautiful to the greatest extent in order to be happy, he is saying that a would-be wise person must seek for the philosophical knowledge that is necessary and sufficient for being virtuous, and hence, happy.

With all this in mind, we are now in a position to draw some conclusions about the moral and epistemological nature of the philosopher in the *Sophist*. First, a philosophical knowledge informed by wisdom implies *being* virtuous[144]. Second, being virtuous is necessary for being happy[145]. Third, since philosophers have a philosophical knowledge informed by wisdom – in particular, of what the essence of virtue is –, they *are* necessarily virtuous. Philosophical wisdom is, in fact, a necessary and sufficient condition for *being* virtuous. Indeed, even if irrationality strives in the soul to overcome rationality, philosophers necessarily employ their wise knowledge of the moral good to keep desires, pleasures, pains, and affections[146] controlled. For Plato commits in the *Sophist* to the Socratic principle that no (wise) man errs willingly[147]. By being virtuous, then, philosophers end up being happy too.

1.3.2. *Sophists and ordinary people in the* Sophist

[138] Cf. *R*. VII 523a.
[139] See e.g., *Lg*. XII 965c2, but also XII 966b6, where the Nocturnal Counsellors, *qua* philosophers, are said to achieve a (philosophical) knowledge of what virtue is by means of a dialectical investigation.
[140] See e.g., *R*. I 350b1-6.
[141] Cf. e.g., *Grg*. 506d2-4 and *Men*. 87e1, where Plato explicitly says that those who are good are necessarily virtuous. As WEISS 2001, p. 181 fn. 25, points out, 'if Socrates calls himself an *agathos*, he must believe he has virtue, *arête*. There is in Greek no other adjective but *agathos* to denote one who is virtuous; and *agathos* is related etymologically to *arête*, through the superlative form, *aristos'*.
[142] See *Sph*. 216b7-c1: since philosophers are divine creatures, they are close to a state of perfection. Therefore, they must have knowledge (as far as this is possible for humans), and hence, be virtuous (in fact, virtue is knowledge: see *Sph*. 228c7-8). Cf. *infra* pp. 10-13.
[143] Cf. *Sph*. 233a3-4, where Plato argues that those who know are blessed, and hence, happy. Cf. also *Sph*. 230d6-e3, where Plato states that those who want to be happy need to extirpate vice from the soul to the greatest extent. For my interpretation of that passage, cf. *infra* pp. 16-18.
[144] See *Sph*. 228c7-8 and cf. *infra* pp. 11-13.
[145] Cf. *Sph*. 230d6-e3. Cf. also *infra* pp. 17-18.
[146] See *infra* pp. 9-13.
[147] Cf. *Sph*. 228c7-8.

Now that Plato's *Sophist* has been ascertained to indicate that achieving a philosophical knowledge informed by wisdom[148] is a necessary and sufficient condition for being fully virtuous, it is worth wondering whether a virtuous moral state which does not depend on knowledge – but rather on some weaker cognitive state – is attested in the *Sophist*. The main question that I will therefore pursue to answer in this section is the following: is it possible for ordinary people – i.e., for those who have mere opinions and do not know what virtue is – to act virtuously?

A remarkable passage, which appears just before the final definition of the sophist, is apt. For *Sph*. 267c2-d2 seems to testify to the fact that Plato's *Sophist* does not allow for the possibility of doing virtuous actions without having a wise philosophical knowledge of what virtue is:

> ΞΕ. Τί δὲ δικαιοσύνης τὸ σχῆμα καὶ ὅλης συλλήβδην ἀρετῆς; ἆρ' οὐκ ἀγνοοῦντες μέν, δοξάζοντες δέ πῃ, σφόδρα ἐπιχειροῦσιν πολλοὶ τὸ δοκοῦν σφίσιν τοῦτο ὡς ἐνὸν αὐτοῖς προθυμεῖσθαι φαίνεσθαι ποιεῖν, ὅτι μάλιστα ἔργοις τε καὶ λόγοις μιμούμενοι; ΘΕΑΙ. Καὶ πάνυ γε πολλοί. ΞΕ. Μῶν οὖν πάντες ἀποτυγχάνουσι τοῦ δοκεῖν εἶναι δίκαιοι μηδαμῶς ὄντες; ἢ τούτου πᾶν τοὐναντίον; ΘΕΑΙ. Πᾶν.
>
> STRANGER: But what about the shape of justice, and of virtue taken together as a whole? Don't lots of people who are ignorant but have some sort of opinion about it try hard to be eager about making it appear that they have what they believe it to be, imitating it as closely as they can in what they do and say? THEAETETUS: Lots and lots. STRANGER: And are they all unsuccessful at seeming to be just when they are not so at all? Or is it the exact opposite of this? THEAETETUS: The exact opposite.
>
> *Sph*. 267c2-d2

Plato is here paving the way for the final definition of the sophist and sketches out some of his moral features. There are some people, he says, who are ignorant (ἀγνοοῦντες) of the shape (σχῆμα) of virtue: the opinions they have (*sc*. δοξάζοντες) are therefore likely to be false[149]. Accordingly, ignorance – or, false opinion – is the epistemological basis on which these people – that is, the sophists[150] – ground their morality. In fact, they imitate (μιμεῖσθαι) as much as they can what they falsely believe. In this way, they strive to make the false opinion they have about virtue apparent (φαίνεσθαι). Eventually, some of these people may even manage to successfully pretend to be just (δοκεῖν εἶναι δίκαιοι) – and hence, (to some extent) virtuous. However, the appearance of virtue that sophists generally give rise to is false. Indeed, the species of appearance that they generate merely

[148] That is, the philosophical knowledge that is possessed by a divine person who is able to (a) manage the elenctic method wisely and (b) grasp the knowledge of what is good – whose achievement, in turn, allows for being fully virtuous.

[149] Cf. *Sph*. 264d4-7: since speech (λόγος) and opinion (δόξα) are capable of being false, 'it is possible both for there to be imitations of the things that are, and for this to give rise to expertise in deception', i.e., expertise in making false imitations (cf. ROWE 2015a, p. 171 fn. 111). Interestingly, the sophist is ultimately defined as the person who is able to make false imitations of the philosopher. Hence, the opinions that sophists may have are likely to be false. See also *Prt*. 358c4-5, where ignorance (ἀμαθία – that is, ignorance) is said to amount to having a false opinion (ψευδὴς δόξα) on matters of importance. Cf. also *Lg*. IX 864b6-7, where ignorance (ἄγνοια) is described as 'the loss of expectations and true opinion about what is best'. Therefore, having a false opinion is to some extent connected by Plato to a state of ignorance.

[150] Cf. *Sph*. 268a7-8: the sophist is a dissembling (εἰρωνικός) imitator of the philosopher. For he pretends to be wise while he is desperately ignorant.

shows images (εἴδωλα). In turn, these images – which may still be taken as true realities (τὰ ὄντα) by those who are unable to distinguish what is real from what is apparent[151] – merely are false imitations[152] of virtue (namely, imitations which are inspired by ignorance – or, false opinions – about what virtue is).

Now, given that *Sph*. 267c2-d2 has shown that such people as the sophists (who do not have philosophical knowledge about what virtue is) can only implement false imitations of virtue, we may infer that Plato's *Sophist* denies that a moral agent may act virtuously without actually knowing what virtue is. This provisional conclusion seems to be confirmed by another passage that follows in the text the one quoted above. At *Sph*. 267d9-e4, Plato distinguishes two kinds of imitation: (a) the imitation accompanied by opinion – that is, the "opinion-imitative" (δοξομιμητική) imitation –, and (b) the investigative (ἱστορική) imitation – that is, an imitation accompanied by knowledge (ἐπιστήμη). Only the former is suitable for the sophist (who is conclusively defined as a dissembling [εἰρωνικός] imitator of the philosopher[153]). Indeed, a δοξαστική "knowledge"[154] – i.e., a "knowledge" which is only apparent – is what the sophist can at best achieve[155]. Hence, Plato seems to suggest at *Sph*. 267c2-d2 that any such people as the sophists – namely, those who can at best possess mere opinions about all things (virtue included) – can only pretend to be wise[156] by making illusory "opinion-imitative" imitations[157] of the philosopher (and of his virtue). Ultimately, then, Plato's *Sophist* appears to indicate that, if ordinary people are only able to enact a false imitation (of the philosopher, and hence, of his virtue) accompanied by a false opinion, they are not able to achieve virtue to any extent.

Yet, Plato argues at *Sph*. 263d6-8 that thought (διάνοια), opinion (δόξα), and appearance (φαντασία)[158] come about in the soul as false as well as true. Accordingly, there might still be a possibility for those who have opinions (true opinions, at least) to (a) properly imitate the object of their right opinion[159] and (b) generate a true appearance of virtue. To test how reasonable this

[151] See PALUMBO 1994, pp. 25-27. See also *Sph*. 216c4 ff., where philosophers are said to 'take on all sorts of shape (φανταζόμενοι) thanks to everyone else's ignorance (ἄγνοια) about them'. Hence, philosophers may appear (φαντάζεσθαι) (to others) to be either experts in statesmanship, sophists, or completely mad people. Yet, they are none of these things.
[152] Cf. *Sph*. 234c ff. See PALUMBO 1994, pp. 45-46.
[153] Cf. *Sph*. 268a7-8.
[154] See CENTRONE 2008, p. 81 fn. 54, about the nature of the sophist's δοξαστική "knowledge".
[155] See *Sph*. 233c10-12: the sophist could never give an account of the truth (which is something that only the philosophers, who are ἐπιστήμονες, can do). Cf. CRIVELLI 2012, pp. 23 ff., who analyzes the apparent omniscience of the sophist (who is indeed a master of appearance).
[156] Cf. e.g., *Sph*. 233c6-8.
[157] See *Sph*. 268c1-d5.
[158] Cf. CENTRONE 2008, p. 231 fn. 156: here, appearance is to be understood as a mere affection (πάθος) of the soul that is associated with perception.
[159] 'True' opinions and 'right' opinions refer to the same epistemological condition. See e.g., *Men*. 97e6-98c1; *Tht*. 206c3-e1, 207a9-b6, and 207b8-c4, where 'ἀληθής' and 'ὀρθή' are used interchangeably in association with δόξα.

assumption may be, I shall now analyse whether Plato's *Sophist* allows for the possibility that a true opinion may grant the moral agent with the capacity to (a) produce a true imitation of what he truly believes to be morally convenient, and hence, (b) act virtuously. To begin with, Plato first specifies in the *Sophist* that thought (διάνοια) and speech (λόγος) are one and the same thing ('Οὐκοῦν διάνοια μὲν καὶ λόγος ταὐτόν')[160]. Further, he explains that the former is 'an internal dialogue of the soul with itself that occurs without vocal expression, whereas the stream that passes from the soul through the mouth together with sound is called speech'[161]. Next, Plato points out that the internal dialogue – that is, the speech (λόγος) containing assertion and denial – that the soul silently entertains with itself in the form of thought (διάνοια) should be named 'opinion' (δόξα)[162]. For the latter is the completion (ἀποτελεύτησις) of the former[163]. Hence, since (a) opinion (δόξα) is the final stage, or outcome, of thought (διάνοια)[164] and (b) thought (διάνοια) is the same as speech (λόγος), we may infer that what makes speech and thought true applies to opinion too. If so, then, an opinion is true when it describes – just as a true speech does – the things that are as they are[165]: for a speech is true[166] when it properly links certain items – that is, verbs (ῥήματα)[167], which describe actions – to others – i.e., nouns (ὀνόματα), which specify who performs the action[168] –, both items being 'things which are'[169]. Thus, given that (a) a speech is true when it asserts of a subject a predicate ascribing to it something that *is* indeed (the case) about it[170], (b) speech is the same as thought, and (c) opinion constitutes the outcome of the activity of thinking, it follows that a true opinion, just as a true speech and thought, is that which makes a true assessment of the unstable sensible reality[171].

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[160] 'Plato offers an account of thought as inner silent conversation (263d6-264b5). This enables him to extend his results from speech to thought' (CRIVELLI 2012, p. 221).

[161] *Sph.* 263e3-9. See also *Tht.* 189e-190a and 206d1-5.

[162] Cf. *Sph.* 264a1-3: 'ΞΕ. Ὅταν οὖν τοῦτο ἐν ψυχῇ κατὰ διάνοιαν ἐγγίγνηται μετὰ σιγῆς, πλὴν δόξης ἔχεις ὅτι προσείπῃς αὐτό; ΘΕΑΙ. Καὶ πῶς […].'.

[163] See *Sph.* 264a8-b3.

[164] As David SEDLEY 2004, p. 131, points out, Plato is here providing a successful explanation of false belief as other-judging (which is something that he fails to prove at *Tht.* 189e4-190a8).

[165] Cf. *Sph.* 263a11-b6: 'STRANGER: But now we say that each and every instance of speech must necessarily be of a certain sort. THEAETETUS: Yes. STRANGER: So, of what sort must each of our two be declared to be? THEAETETUS: The second, presumably, false, the first true. STRANGER: And the true one says the things that are, as they are, about you. THEAETETUS: Obviously' (ΞΕ. Ποιὸν δέ γέ τινά φαμεν ἀναγκαῖον ἕκαστον εἶναι τῶν λόγων. ΘΕΑΙ. Ναί. ΞΕ. Τούτων δὴ ποῖόν τινα ἑκάτερον φατέον εἶναι; ΘΕΑΙ. Τὸν μὲν ψευδῆ που, τὸν δὲ ἀληθῆ. ΞΕ. Λέγει δὲ αὐτῶν ὁ μὲν ἀληθὴς τὰ ὄντα ὡς ἔστιν περὶ σοῦ. ΘΕΑΙ. Τί μήν;). On how 'ὡς ἔστιν' should be rendered in translation, see CENTRONE 2008, p. 227 fn. 151.

[166] See CRIVELLI 1990, pp. 81 ff., who widely explains how a speech may eventually become true.

[167] See *Sph.* 262a1.

[168] Cf. *Sph.* 262a1.

[169] Conversely, a speech is false when the two items (i.e., verbs and nouns) are mistakenly linked to one another. Just to reiterate the example that Plato makes at *Sph.* 262e13-263b13, 'Theaetetus is flying' denotes a false λόγος: for the verb 'is flying' ascribes an action which is not (the case) – i.e., is not real, and hence, is false (for an analysis of the reasons why the λόγος 'Theaetetus is flying' is to be rated as false, cf. CRIVELLI 1990, pp. 82 ff. and CRIVELLI 2012, pp. 233 ff.) – to Theaetetus (that is, the alleged performer of the action). On this issue, cf. also SEDLEY 2004, pp. 131 ff.

[170] On this, see GILL 2016.

[171] Plato's *Sophist* confirms the theory – which is also presented in other dialogues – according to which opinion (δόξα), even if true, lacks any epistemological stability (see *Sph.* 263d6-8, where Plato argues that opinion can be either false or

Now, given that Plato's *Sophist* shows that a true opinion (though representing an unstable[172] cognitive state) allows for a true assessment of sensible reality, we may (speculatively) argue that the moral agent who has true opinions (assumedly, about what is morally appropriate on certain occasions) is able to act virtuously. Indeed, I have already shown that *Sph*. 267c2-d2 suggests that the imitation of virtue that such people as the sophists carry out on the basis of a false opinion generates an inevitably false appearance of virtue – for they just pretend to be just and are not ultimately able to act virtuously[173]. Conversely, we may therefore speculate that, in the case that some ordinary people achieve an opinion which is true (rather than false, as in the case of the sophists), they may ultimately be able to perform virtuous actions by (a) carrying out a true imitation of virtue and (b) generating a true appearance of virtue.

To ascertain whether or not (and, eventually, to what extent) the text justifies this interpretation, I shall consider once again what Plato establishes in the noble sophistry passage (*Sph*. 228c7-229c3). First, Plato specifies that human vice can take four different forms (i.e., ignorance, cowardice, lack of moderation, and injustice). Next, he indicates that, even if the moral agent is not able to (a) expunge ignorance from her soul (by undergoing ἔλεγχος[174]) and (b) achieve philosophical knowledge (which allows people to attain a full virtue), such a person (who is therefore at best able to possess a true opinion) can still be to some extent cured of cowardice, lack of moderation (that is, the vices of the irrational part[s] of the soul), and injustice (i.e., the vice which affects the entire soul)

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true. Hence, opinion is presented as a less stable cognitive state than philosophical knowledge). On the contrary, philosophical knowledge is presented as an eternally stable cognitive state (see *Sph*. 253d-254b, where Plato argues that, while 'the sophist runs off into the darkness of what is not', the philosopher, with his pure and justified love of wisdom, 'is always engaged through reasonings with the form of what is'). For, given that (1) Plato draws elsewhere in his *corpus* an ontological distinction between (a) what is (always the same) and (b) what comes to be and never is (cf. e.g., *Ti*. 27d-28a, 29b-c), and (2) philosophical knowledge concerns what is always the same in all respects (i.e., the Forms: cf. *R*. VI 484b3-6), philosophical knowledge ends up representing a cognitive state which is as stable as its objects. Conversely, a true opinion, which occurs when someone rightly judges the *unstable* sensible reality, is *per se* an unstable cognitive state.

[172] Indeed, if I believe that 'Theaetetus is sitting' while he is sitting in front of me (t_{ime1}), I do certainly have a true opinion about sensible reality at t_1. However, if Theaetetus changes at t_2 his particular condition (e.g., he leaves), the true opinion I used to have about him is not true anymore. This is how I interpret what the Eleatic Stranger says at *Sph*. 262e13-263b13 (esp., at 263a2 and 263b4-5) – namely, that a speech (λόγος) like 'Theaetetus sits' (Θεαίτητος κάθηται) is true when it 'says the things that are, as they are, about you' (Λέγει δὲ αὐτῶν ὁ μὲν ἀληθὴς τὰ ὄντα ὡς ἔστιν περὶ σοῦ). Put differently, a speech (just like opinion and thought) is true when it provides a true assessment (which is worked out on the basis of perception) of the sensible reality. Hence, if I believe that Theaetetus sits (while he is actually sitting), I am ascribing to Theaetetus an action which is the case (for [a] Theaetetus is actually sitting and [b] the action of seating can be ascribed to Theatetus – i.e., Theaetetus is able to sit). Yet, even if I hold an opinion which says the things that are as they are about me at t_1, my opinion (which is true at t_1) may not be true anymore at t_2. For my act of believing is grounded on a (possibly) true assessment of the unstable sensible reality – and hence, not on a (stable) philosophical knowledge of what Theaetetus really is.

[173] Since, as we maintain, (a) virtue is knowledge (see *Sph*. 228c7-8) and (b) sophists are ignorant, sophists could never *be* philosophically virtuous (that is, they could never achieve the knowledge that is virtue).

[174] Since we are considering whether or not ordinary people – who may at best have true opinions (and thus, not the knowledge that is virtue) – may eventually attain an inauthentic virtue, we need to assume that, in the case of these people, ignorance has not been expunged from their soul through ἔλεγχος – but also through admonition, which, by the way, is not *per se* effective. For, in the case that the elenctic refutation had been fully successfully conducted, a philosophical virtue (that is, the virtue that is knowledge) would have been attained by the refuted.

by means of corrective art (κολαστικὴ τέχνη) – that is, by undergoing punishment. Now, to better understand whether or not Plato's *Sophist* suggests that a true opinion may be the key to a virtue of some sort, I shall analyse how punishment may eventually succeed in making the human soul courageous, moderate, and just. Plato does not explicitly address this issue in the *Sophist*. Yet, he seems to take this problem into account in an earlier dialogue (i.e., the *Gorgias*) where the same rhetorical strategy as the *Sophist*'s is used to shed light on his ethical account of the soul[175]. In the *Gorgias*, Plato explains that true political art is made of two parts (μόρια): on the one hand, legislation (νομοθετικὴ τέχνη) – which is to the soul what gymnastics is to the body – aims to save people from acquiring moral defects in the first place; on the other, justice (δικαιοσύνη) – which is to the soul what medicine is to the body – aims to cure the already corrupted souls[176]. Interestingly, Plato's *Gorgias* further clarifies that justice properly serves its own purpose when it prescribes criminals to undergo a just punishment (i.e., a punishment which ultimately improves the criminal's soul)[177].

Traditionally, scholars have been troubled by the fact that the *Gorgias* 'has so much to say on the subject of, and indeed about the necessity for, punishment'[178]. Indeed, Plato's *Gorgias* would seem to introduce two (apparently) inconsistent ethical theories. On the one hand, the *Gorgias*, like the *Sophist*, reiterates the paradoxes which ground the so-called Socratic theory of ethical intellectualism (according to which, virtue is knowledge and no one does wrong willingly)[179]. As a result, philosophical knowledge is presented as a necessary and sufficient condition to (a) distinguish what is (morally) good from what is (morally) bad, and thus, (b) be fully virtuous[180]. On the other hand, the *Gorgias*, like the *Sophist*, introduces also a moral theory that has been generally defined by scholars as "un-Socratic"[181]. In fact, by highlighting the ethical function of punishment, the dialogue in question would seem to convey the (strikingly, "un-Socratic") idea that (successfully) undergoing an elenctic refutation (and thus, achieving philosophical knowledge) is not sufficient for (a) keeping irrational desires under control and (b) attaining a full virtue[182]. In light of this apparent puzzle (i.e., the co-existence of "Socratic" and "un-Socratic" elements in the dialogue), scholars[183] have argued

[175] Interestingly, Plato clarifies the nature of virtue (as opposed to vice) at *Sph*. 228c7-229c3 by means of a body-soul analogy. Similarly, Plato's *Gorgias* explores the nature of virtue by exploiting a body-soul analogy (cf. *Grg*. 478a-b).
[176] See *Grg*. 464b-c: both legislation and justice take care of the soul with a view to what is (morally) best (βέλτιστον).
[177] Cf. *Grg*. 478a ff.
[178] ROWE 2007a, p. 27. Cf. also VLASTOS 1991, ch. 2, who argues that the *Gorgias* is indeed a transitional dialogue (namely, a dialogue which, unlike the earlier works, does not make any reference to ἔλεγχος as an essential means to philosophical knowledge). For a similar view, see FINE 2003, p. 1 fn. 1, who also counts the *Gorgias* as a transitional dialogue.
[179] Cf. e.g., *Grg*. 488a-b.
[180] See ROWE 2007a, p. 27. On the (so-called) Socratic theory of motivation for actions, see also PENNER 1991, who argues that, according to a Socratic moral theory, humans *only* desire what is *really* good for them.
[181] Cf. VLASTOS 1991, who argues that Plato's *Gorgias* looks like an "un-Socratic" political dialogue.
[182] See ROWE 2007a, pp. 26-29.
[183] Cf. e.g., ROWE 2007a and SEDLEY 2009.

that Plato's *Gorgias* does not feature any "un-Socratic" theory of moral epistemology[184]. For, on the assumption that punishment is analogous to ἔλεγχος, Plato's *Gorgias* would still convey the ("Socratic") idea that undergoing a cross-examination – which would constitute for the refuted a painful experience just as punishment is[185] – is a necessary and sufficient condition to completely purge the human soul from vice. On this interpretation, then, the Socratic tenor of Plato's *Gorgias* would be preserved: for ἔλεγχος (presented under the guise of punishment) would still be the only effective means to a full and philosophical virtue[186]. Now, it is beyond the scope of the present chapter to assess whether or not this reading of Plato's *Gorgias* is sound. Still, we may assume that, if punishment is to be taken as analogous to ἔλεγχος also in Plato's *Sophist*, it follows that punishment would be as effective a means as ἔλεγχος to a full and philosophical virtue (namely, to the virtue that is knowledge). Interestingly, however, not only is punishment clearly distinguished from ἔλεγχος in the *Sophist*[187], but ἔλεγχος is also presented as the only effective means to philosophical knowledge, and hence, to a full virtue (for ignorance – the worst disease in the human soul – could never be expunged from the soul through punishment).

Yet, if punishment (a) cannot be thought of as being analogous to ἔλεγχος in the *Sophist*, and hence, (b) does not allow one to achieve a full virtue (i.e., the virtue that is knowledge), how is punishment meant in the *Sophist* to cure the human soul of cowardice, lack of moderation and injustice? The fact that κολαστικὴ τέχνη is said to expunge from the soul all the species, or forms, of vice (but not ignorance!) is meaningful. Indeed, if (a) virtue is knowledge and (b) ἔλεγχος is the only effective means to achieve both (as my reading of Plato's *Sophist* suggests), it follows that corrective art – and hence, punishment – merely allows the achievement of an inauthentic virtue (namely, a virtue that is not knowledge). As a result, we may assume that punishment holds in Plato's *Sophist* a merely "legal" meaning. On this interpretation, the *Sophist* would therefore anticipate the "theory of punishment" that Plato more widely explores in his *Laws*. Indeed, Plato's *Laws* establishes that the lawgiver has to issue laws[188] whose purpose is to either persuade (πείθουσα) the citizens to fulfil their

[184] For a different view, see IRWIN 1979, p. 218, who more generally acknowledges that 'Socrates' previous argument', (i.e., *Grg*. 448e), 'against the value of rhetoric assumed the truth of the Socratic Paradox. The defence of temperance and continence', (i.e., *Grg*. 491d; 505b-c), 'assumes the falsity of the Paradox. The conclusions of these two main lines of argument in the dialogue are never satisfactorily reconciled'.
[185] Cf. SEDLEY 2009, esp. pp. 58-59.
[186] See ROWE 2007a, esp. p. 151.
[187] See *Sph*. 228c7-229c3. While it is the case that the *Gorgias* and the *Sophist* share many similarities, it is still true that these two dialogues are different in some other respects. In the *Gorgias*, the art of legislation is said to be worthier than justice. Similarly, then, gymnastics is nobler than medicine. On the contrary, Plato's *Sophist* establishes that ἔλεγχος (which is for the soul what medicine is for the body) is the most effective means for purging the human soul from vice.
[188] See SCHOFIELD 2010, p. 23, who notices that the Athenian Stranger states at *Lg*. IX 853b that laws are not framed for heroes or sons of gods. Hence, laws (and thus, the punishment that comes along with the laws) are set for people who are prone to vice.

civic duties[189] or punish (κολάζουσα) with violence and justice those on whom persuasion (initially) has no effect[190]. On a closer look, however, we see that punishment – as I will more extensively show later on in this thesis – is presented in the *Laws* as a means for persuasion by itself[191]. Indeed, the painful experience of punishment undergone by the criminals (assumedly) makes both the criminal himself and those acquainted with him[192] fear to suffer that same pain in the future. As a consequence, both these people, who end up being persuaded (by their fearful feelings) to refrain from injustice in the future[193], (a) achieve a true opinion about what is convenient to do on some occasions, and (b) get the habit to do what ought to be done so to avoid the risk of being painfully punished in the future.

Now, if it is the case that Plato's *Sophist* anticipates the *Laws*' theory of punishment, it follows that the *Sophist* allows for the possibility that ordinary people (who do not know what virtue is) may still perform virtuous actions by carrying out a true imitation of virtue. For, by (directly or indirectly) undergoing a painful experience of punishment in the everyday life, even non-philosophers may achieve a true opinion about what is morally profitable (i.e., somehow courageous, moderate, and just) on certain occasions. Yet, these people do not know the ultimate reasons why the virtuous actions they perform (by imitating the object of their true opinion[194]) are good. Indeed, they have just been habituated to perform moral actions which do not call for any punishment. Therefore, if my argument is correct, a conclusion is at hand: Plato's *Sophist* (more or less explicitly) suggests that people who are not fully wise but have opinions – true opinions, at least – can still *act* virtuously (but not *be* fully virtuous) by achieving an inauthentic virtue (i.e., a virtue that is not knowledge).

Interestingly, the idea that a non-philosophical virtue may be attained by ordinary people is introduced in earlier Platonic dialogues. To begin with, Plato has Socrates explain in the *Phaedo* that

[189] See BOBONICH 1991, pp. 369 ff., and ANNAS 2010, p. 87, who believe that the laws, as Plato shows in his *Laws*, aim to persuade people to obey the demands of their reason.
[190] See *Lg*. IV 718b1-c6. Cf. also ZUCKERT 2013, esp. pp. 170 ff, who widely explains Plato's analogy at *Lg*. IX 875c6-e1 between legislators and doctors.
[191] For a different interpretation, see BOBONICH 1991, p. 386, and STALLEY 1995, p. 478, who suggest that punishment is needed *solely* when persuasion fails. Also, Stalley argues that the view that punishment merely has a deterrent effect is supported by the language the Athenian Stranger uses at *Lg*. IV 721d in his specimen law on marriage.
[192] For both these people will 'either be filled with hatred for the unjust behaviour, or at any rate more or less recover from this affliction' (*Lg*. XI 934b1-3). Translations of Plato's *Laws* are borrowed from GRIFFITH-SCHOFIELD 2016.
[193] As STALLEY 1995, pp. 478-450, argues, both those who are justly punished and those who see them suffering become better through fear.
[194] Some scholars (cf. e.g., STALLEY 1995, p. 479 fn. 45 and SAUNDERS 1991, p. 165) argue that Plato has Socrates point out at *Phd*. 68-69 that the kind of virtue which (a) consists in exchanging one fear for another and (b) merely is 'a painted imitation of virtue' is indeed slavish and has nothing healthy, or true, about it. On this issue, I follow PETRUCCI 2018: 'philosophers will act courageously, or with temperance, because their acting is dictated by a qualified internal state, shaped by φρόνησις, while non-philosophers will act courageously, or with temperance, because their acting is determined by the calculation of pleasure, pain, desire, and fear. In this sense, non-philosophical virtue is just a σκιαγραφία: it is a bad imitation of true virtue inasmuch as the former, albeit sharing the descriptive aspect with the latter, lacks its fundamental core, that is its motivational basis'. Accordingly, Petrucci concludes that, given that *Phd*. 68-69 should be interpreted in light of *Phd*. 82a (namely, where Plato introduces the notion of 'demotic' virtue), the so-called slavish virtue presented at *Phd*. 68-69 is nothing but a demotic virtue. As I show on (*infra*) p. 26 fn. 195, a demotic virtue is an inauthentic virtue which is achieved by practice and habit, and without knowledge.

a virtuous action may still be performed even if stirred by non-philosophical motivations. As a matter of fact, a moral agent may still act virtuously by practice (μελέτη) and habit (ἔθος). Nonetheless, such a moral agent would not be fully virtuous: for, given that he does not know the reasons why he performs good actions, he is not ultimately able to achieve a philosophical virtue (namely, the virtue that is knowledge). As a result, he may only attain a kind of inauthentic virtue which Plato calls 'demotic'[195]. Plato also argues in the *Meno* that a moral agent may act virtuously without having a wise philosophical knowledge about what virtue is. For Plato has Socrates point out that both those who have philosophical knowledge and those who have mere opinions can equally perform the same virtuous action[196]. Indeed, a true opinion might be 'in no way a worse guide to correct action than knowledge'[197]. As a result, both those who know where Larissa is and those who merely have a true opinion about that are said to be able to reach Larissa. Nonetheless, there is a significant axiological difference between these two actions – analogous to moral actions: given that true opinions are epistemologically unsteady, the holder of true opinion may eventually fail to reach Larissa in the future; on the contrary, the one who has knowledge will always be able to reach Larissa.

To conclude, there are two different ways in which epistemology and ethics relate in Plato's *Sophist*. On the one hand, the knowledge informed by wisdom which pertains to philosophers only is presented as a stable guarantee for *being* fully virtuous. On the other, non-philosophers appear to be able to attain an inauthentic, i.e., a demotic, virtue. Indeed, the *Sophist*, just like other Platonic dialogues, (more or less explicitly) implies that a true opinion may still allow one to *act* virtuously.

1.4. *Conclusions*

This chapter has shown that a particular passage of such a polysemantic dialogue as the *Sophist* has an extraordinary ethical relevance. Besides the ontological interest in defining what really is and the project of describing the sophist, Plato shows that ethics too is an implicitly significant topic in this dialogue.

As I argued, the *Sophist*'s art of noble sophistry passage (226b1-231b8) shows that, although knowledge is not thought of as the only cause of moral actions – indeed, desires, pleasures, pains, and affections are in a sense contributory causes of moral behaviour –, a knowledge informed by wisdom is still required in order to: a) rule over irrationality and b) make all the contributory causes profitable for the sake of virtue as a whole. Accordingly, the Socratic theory of ethical intellectualism is not

[195] Cf. *Phd*. 82a10-b3, where Plato defines "demotic" virtue as a sort of virtue which (a) stems out of habit (ἔθος) and practice (μελέτη), and (b) is attained without neither wisdom (σοφία) nor intellect (νοῦς).
[196] In the *Meno*, Plato re-asserts the theory according to which virtue is knowledge. Indeed, scholars generally agree that this theory is only apparently rejected by Socrates (see SCOTT 2006, pp. 161-175 and 186-193).
[197] *Men*. 97c1-2. Cf. also *Men*. 96e7-97c5. On the interweaving between virtue, knowledge, and true opinion, see PETRUCCI 2011.

abandoned, as some scholars have argued, but is rather further developed in the *Sophist*, to the extent that it provides a more precise account of the complexity of the embodied human soul.

Additionally, the *Sophist* sheds light on two different ways through which virtue can be somehow attained by the moral agent. Philosophers, as divinities, and some ordinary people ground their moral actions on two different cognitive states. Philosophers perform as moral agents in virtue of their stable and wise knowledge about essences (οὐσίαι), virtue included. Now, since the *Sophist* explicitly reiterates one of the Socratic paradoxes – the one according to which no one errs willingly – which ground the theory of ethical intellectualism, no wise man might ever do wrong. Hence, philosophers *are* necessarily virtuous because they know what virtue is. On the other hand, ordinary people are not good enough to achieve a philosophical knowledge informed by wisdom. Nevertheless, this does not imply that they are necessarily condemned to vicious life. Indeed, those who have true opinion about reality – about virtue, in particular – can still *act* virtuously by properly imitating the shape (σχῆμα) of virtue they have just an opinion about.

To conclude, Plato's *Sophist* establishes that a philosophical knowledge informed by wisdom is a *necessary* and *sufficient* condition for *being* virtuous – as the theory of ethical intellectualism, more widely systematized in other dialogues, prescribes. However, opinion, if true, is still *sufficient* for *acting* virtuously. For a true opinion about what is truly thought to be proper to particular circumstances may eventually imply virtuous actions.

CHAPTER 2: WOOF AND WARP: THE *STATESMAN*'S WEAVER

2.1. *Plato's* Statesman*: a methodological note*

> ΞΕ. ἀλλὰ δὴ μετὰ τὸν σοφιστὴν ἀναγκαῖον, ὡς ἐμοὶ φαίνεται, πολιτικὸν [τὸν ἄνδρα] διαζητεῖν νῷν· καί μοι λέγε πότερον τῶν ἐπιστημόνων τιν' ἡμῖν καὶ τοῦτον θετέον, ἢ πῶς; ΝΕ. ΣΩ. Οὕτως.
>
> STRANGER: Well then, after the sophist, it seems to me that the two of us must search for the statesman. Now tell me: should we posit in the case of this person too that he is one of those who possess knowledge, or what assumption should we make? YOUNG SOCRATES: That's what we should assume.
>
> *Plt*. 258b2-5[198]

This passage, which is located at the beginning of Plato's *Statesman*, clarifies the scope of the dialogue. The stated aim of this work amounts to addressing the (so-called Socratic)[199] τί ἐστι question, having the figure of the πολιτικός as its object of interest. Interestingly, for the first time within the context of philosophical and non-philosophical literature[200], the noun 'πολιτικός' is here used by Plato to indicate the person who is responsible for taking care of the management of the city. What is even more important to note, however, is that *Plt*. 258b2-5 has another fundamental message to deliver. As it turns out, these lines shed light on the fundamental assumption which grounds Plato's inquiry: the statesman is assumed to be 'one of those who possess knowledge'.

From the very beginning of the *Statesman*, then, Plato establishes that the person who will be in charge for the city's government has to meet a specific epistemological requirement: he has to possess knowledge. Now, one of the main concerns of this chapter will be to assess what exactly this knowledge amounts to. In doing so, I will clarify whether or not the kind of knowledge that the statesman is assumed to possess is to any extent of a technical sort. In addition to this, I will also evaluate if, and, eventually, to what extent, the citizenry benefits from the statesman's cognitive (and, potentially, moral) excellence. My investigation will therefore focus on three main points: 1) the first section will be devoted to a reconstruction of the most important tenets that Plato presents in the *Statesman*. In doing so, I will concentrate on the elements of epistemological and ethical theory that Plato works out in this dialogue. As a consequence, I will touch upon the *Statesman*'s political theory

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[198] Translations (eventually, slightly modified) of Plato's *Statesman* are borrowed from ROWE 1997.

[199] Although Plato is not trying to find out what *something* is – rather, he is interested in discovering who *someone* like a statesman is like –, a specific method of investigation is being employed by Plato. Indeed, as some scholars have already argued, this kind of investigation (which proceeds by addressing the "what is x" question) characterizes the dialectical method of inquiry which is employed by the Socrates of Plato. On this very issue, see also VEGETTI 2007[4], p. 38, who argues that the Socratic form of dialectic (namely, that which [a] had been practised by the historical Socrates and [b] is attested in the early Platonic dialogues) aims to answer the 'τι λέγεις' question. On the contrary, Platonic dialectic (being opposed to Socratic dialectic) aims to address the 'τί ἐστι' question. On this interpretation, then, Platonic dialectic seeks to find out the λόγος τῆς οὐσίας, that is, an exhaustive account of the essential features of the investigated object.

[200] Philosophical and non-philosophical literature used to use a varied range of terms to indicate the person who is in charge for the city's government (e.g., 'ῥήτωρ', 'πολιτευόμενος', 'σύμβουλος', but also 'ῥήτορες καί στρατηγοί'). The term 'πολιτικός' was used for the first time by an orator, Aeschines, to refer to a statesman in 343 BC (and hence, almost five years after Plato's death) in the oration *On the False Embassy* (184) (cf. HANSEN 1983, pp. 36-39).

only tangentially; 2) in the next section, my analysis will focus on the figure of the πολιτικός in a twofold manner: (a) after having ascertained what exactly the cognitive nature of the statesman consists of, (b) I will assess whether it is the case or not that, as commentators have noted, Plato's *Statesman* shows that there are 'no requirements for the statesman to be an ethically virtuous person'[201]; 3) then, I shall evaluate if – and, eventually, to what extent – the epistemological and ethical nature of the citizen body benefits from the statesman's excellence.

2.2. *The* Statesman*'s weaver*

> ΞΕ. Τὴν δὲ πασῶν τε τούτων ἄρχουσαν καὶ τῶν νόμων καὶ συμπάντων τῶν κατὰ πόλιν ἐπιμελουμένην καὶ πάντα συνυφαίνουσαν ὀρθότατα, τοῦ κοινοῦ τῇ κλήσει περιλαβόντες τὴν δύναμιν αὐτῆς, προσαγορεύοιμεν δικαιότατ' ἄν, ὡς ἔοικε, πολιτικήν.
>
> STRANGER: Whereas the one that controls all of these, and the laws, and cares for every aspect of things in the city, weaving everything together in the most correct way – this, embracing its capacity with the appellation belonging to the whole, we would, it seems, most appropriately call statesmanship.
>
> *Plt*. 305e2-6

This passage starts off the concluding section of the dialogue and provides a definition of what the art of statesmanship is in relation to other forms of expertise (πρὸς ἄλλα). Indeed, *Plt*. 305e2-6 shows that the statesman is the person who is provided with the capacity (δύναμις) to (a) control (ἄρχειν) the other arts and the laws and (b) 'weave everything together in the most correct way'. Now, what are the other arts which the statesman is called to supervise? What does Plato mean when he specifies that the statesman is expected to 'weave everything together'? And, finally, what is the art of statesmanship in itself (καθ᾽αὐτήν)? Is it inspired by some specific kind of knowledge? To answer all these questions, it is worth analysing both the *Statesman*'s argumentative structure and its argument in itself.

As some scholars have already noted[202], the argument that Plato presents in his *Statesman* shows a peculiar structure that is meant to help out with fulfilling the dialogue's stated project. A long series of divisions (which aim to define the πολιτικός and his art of ruling) and a cosmological myth (that brings divisions to a more advanced state) aim to highlight the excellence of the statesman in 'weaving together' the citizen body. Now, to better understand what the method of division consists of, we must first consider that the exchange between Socrates, the Young Socrates, the Stranger and Theodorus is explicitly said to happen on the same day as the dialogue which is described in the *Sophist*[203]. Interestingly, the two dialogues show a high degree of consistency, if we consider the

[201] BARTNINKAS 2014, p. 131. For a similar view, see also SCHOFIELD 1999, p. 174, CHERRY 2012, p. 123, and GRISWOLD JR. 1989, p. 152, *contra* WEISS 1995, p. 222.
[202] See e.g., ROWE 2000, p. 233.
[203] See *Plt*. 258a2-6, where Plato specifies that (a) the dialogue represented in the *Theaetetus* took place on the day before the facts described in the *Statesman* happen, and (b) what is narrated in the *Sophist* has just happened (hence, just a while ago).

method of inquiry which is employed by Plato in these two works. For both the *Statesman* and the *Sophist* employ the same dialectical method[204] (which had already been theorized in the *Phaedrus*[205]) to seek for a definition of their respective objects of investigation – namely, the sophist and his art of sophistry on the one hand, and the statesman and his art of statesmanship on the other. Dialectic, as Plato argues in *Plt*. 285a7-b6[206], features two different steps: (1) collection (συναγωγή), which consists in the bringing together of a multiplicity into a unity, and (2) division (διαίρεσις), which is used for the subdivision of the unity into the various parts that naturally make up that unity[207]. As such, the method of dialectic envisages the involvement of one kind, or class (εἶδος, or γένος), which, being very large, will be divided into parts: among these parts, those which are deemed to be irrelevant for the sake of the aimed definition will be discarded[208]. Accordingly, in the *Statesman*, the definition of the πολιτικός and his art of statesmanship will be obtained by means of a series of divisions through which the relevant parts – that is, those which will not have been discarded – will be put together as to form the definition of the object under investigation[209].

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[204] According to Julius Moravcsik, the dialectical method of investigation (especially, the dialectical method of division) comes to be associated with a refined ontological theory only in Plato's late dialogues. On this interpretation, then, the dialectical method of division which is presented in Plato's late works would mark out a development in the Platonic Theory of Forms (cf. MORAVCSIK 1972b, p. 159). For an analytical introduction to Plato's method of division, see CAVINI 1995.

[205] Cf. *Phdr*. 265d3-266b1.

[206] Actually, διαίρεσις is said at *Plt*. 285a7-b6 to take place just before συναγωγή. More generally, Plato's dialectical method prescribes to collect first and then divide the collected unity. Cf. DE-CHIARA QUENZER 1998, esp. pp. 98 ff, who argues that collection and division are not equal partners in the practice of the philosophical method of dialectic. Indeed, although collection is a necessary part of dialectic, it is only a minor part of it.

[207] Cf. ACCATTINO 1997, p. XV. For a definition of the dialectical method used by Plato in the *Statesman*, cf. IONESCU 2014, pp. 29-37. CORNFORD 1941 and SKEMP 1952 argue that collection can only take place before starting dialectical divisions up. HACKFORTH 1945, however, suggests that collections are held at various times. For a deeper investigation about Plato's διαίρεσις, see CHERNISS 1944, pp. 1-82, ACKRILL 1970, LLOYD 1965, MARTEN 1968, and FRONTEROTTA 2007, pp. 36-65.

[208] With reference to the terminology used by Plato to indicate 'kinds', 'parts', and 'classes', a passage from the *Statesman* appears to be revealing. For *Plt*. 263a2-b10 (namely, where [a] the Younger Socrates asks for the difference between kinds [γένη] and parts [μέρη], and [b] the Stranger replies in terms of classes [εἰδή] and parts [μέρη]) shows an identity of sorts between εἶδος and γένος – which therefore seem to be used by the Plato of the *Statesman* as two interchangeable terms. On Sayre's interpretation, a kind/class (εἶδος/γένος) individuates a group of entities which are considered by taking into account the features that are shared among all. In turn, a part (μέρος) indicates a group of entities which are considered without making reference to the features which are shared among all the entities. Put differently, while a kind/class is individuated by reference to the Platonic Forms (that is, all its parts are expected to participate in that same Form), participating in the same Form is not required in the case of mere parts (e.g., 'all constituents of the kind of odd number participate in the Form Oddness, whereas a subset of numbers thrown together randomly will share in no common Form other than number itself' [SAYRE 2006, p. 228]). If so, all the kinds/classes would be parts, whereas a part would not necessarily constitute a kind/class: see SAYRE 2006, pp. 223-228.

[209] Cf. ROWE 2000, p. 234. In the *Statesman*, Plato clarifies what exactly the criterion through which divisions should be carried out is like. An undefined criterion of 'naturalness' is meant to guide the entire process of division. In *Plt*. 262c10-263a1, Plato associates divisions such as those which distinguish between odd and even numbers (i.e., divisions which are held to be correct) with divisions that can only distinguish either between the number ten-thousand and all the others or between Greeks and all the other barbarian people. Such examples are meant to highlight the fact that divisions act upon natural kinds/classes. Indeed, at *Plt*. 287c3-5, Plato argues that divisions are carried out 'at the level of joints' (thus, according to a principle of "naturalness"). Still on the method of division, it is worth wondering whether or not the kind/class which is to be divided into parts contains parts, or is rather made of parts. On the latter case, a kind/class would be nothing but a mere sum of parts. On the contrary, if the kind/class (i.e., the whole) contains no parts, it would be something more than a mere collection of parts. However, *Plt*. 278a8-278c1 (where Plato denies that a syllable is a mere

Now that I have clarified (in brief) how the dialectical method of division works from a theoretical point of view, it is worth explaining what kind of results such a method of inquiry obtains within the context of the *Statesman*. I have already established that a fundamental premise is advanced by Plato at the very beginning of his investigation[210]: the statesman is assumed to be a person who possesses knowledge (ἐπιστήμη). As a consequence, a criterion according to which a πολιτικός can be recognized is possession of ἐπιστήμη[211]. Plato's next step will be to show what kind of knowledge the statesman's ἐπιστήμη consists of. Thus, Plato has the Stranger use, for the first time within the dialogue, the dialectical method of division[212]. Indeed, all cases of ἐπιστήμη are divided by the Stranger in such a way that two parts of knowledge are found in the end: a practical (πρακτική) knowledge is presented as being opposed to a purely theoretical (γνωστική) knowledge. Having specified that the statesman's knowledge and the statesman, on the one hand, and the king's knowledge and the king, on the other, must be regarded as one and the same thing[213], Plato establishes that the king, and hence, the statesman, is more closely related to the theoretical sort of knowledge than to the manual, or generally practical, species of ἐπιστήμη[214]. Now that the knowledge of the statesman has been determined as a theoretical kind of ἐπιστήμη, Plato carries out a second division at *Plt*. 261c-d. Hence, having divided theoretical knowledge into two parts – referring to one as the directive (ἐπιτακτικόν) part and to the other as that which makes judgments (κριτικόν)[215] –, Plato establishes at *Plt*. 261c-d that the statesman is expected to rear – and hence, to issue directions for the sake of – living creatures (collectively, and not individually). Therefore, a first definition of the statesman's ἐπιστήμη is provisionally advanced: the πολιτικός's knowledge consists of a knowledge

sum of letters) shows that, according to Plato, a kind/class is more than a mere sum of parts. Therefore, as the method of division culminates in the 'weaving' together of the parts which have not been discarded, it follows that the final definition (λόγος: see e.g., *Sph*. 268c5-6) that is achieved by the end of the 'weaving' of the remaining parts does not constitute a mereological unity (on this issue, see MORAVCSIK 1972b, pp. 158-167). On the *Statesman*'s dialectic, cf. also EL MURR 2010b, p. 125, who argues that 'statesmanship is a model for dialectic inasmuch as the very processes (discrimination and combination) involved in the art of the true statesman are the exact same ones the dialectician ought to display. The only difference, but it is a crucial one, is that political interweaving aims at the simple resolution of contrariety, indispensable to the unification of the city, whereas dialectic, being the "science of free men" (*Soph*., 253c), seeks to articulate forms in *logoi* according to their multiple relations of communication in order to reach a given target'.

[210] See *Plt*. 258b2-5.

[211] Cf. STERN 1997, p. 267, who observes that, in the *Statesman*, 'it is repeatedly claimed that ruling requires science alone, all other qualifications being unimportant'. For a different interpretation, cf. MARQUEZ 2007, p. 44, who argues that the Stranger's choice of words at *Plt*. 259c6-8 'strongly suggests that the true statesman's effectiveness in the world as a possessor of theoretical knowledge depends not on his *knowledge* but on his *charisma* (should he have it), that indefinable "strength" of the soul that great leaders have; and this means that the gap between his theoretical knowledge and the world of practice is not to be bridged entirely by his knowledge'.

[212] Cf. *Plt*. 258e4-5.

[213] See *Plt*. 258e8-9 and 259d3-5.

[214] Cf. *Plt*. 259c10-d1.

[215] See *Plt*. 260b3-6.

of the collective rearing of human beings (‘ἀνθρώπων κοινοτροφικὴν ἐπιστήμην’)[216]. As a result, the πολιτικός is presented as a shepherd of humans[217].

Now, although a satisfactory definition of political knowledge seems to have been already achieved, Plato’s *Statesman* shows that such a characterization of the statesman’s knowledge proves to be misleading. Indeed, a similar description of the statesman’s knowledge is not decisive. For the same kind of ἐπιστήμη (that is, a knowledge of the collective rearing of human beings) could be equally ascribed to other experts, such as farmers, merchants, bakers, sports teachers and doctors, who possess technical abilities. Undoubtedly, all these individuals could indeed claim – even more reasonably than the statesman could – to be leaders of people, being their shepherds. For all these experts are engaged (more than anyone else) in the nurture (τροφή) of human beings, statesmen included[218]. Therefore, given the inadequacy of this definition of the statesman’s knowledge as knowledge of the collective rearing of human beings, the Stranger urges the Young Socrates to ‘travel some other route, starting from another point’ (Πάλιν τοίνυν ἐξ ἄλλης ἀρχῆς δεῖ καθ’ ἑτέραν ὁδὸν πορευθῆναί τινα)[219]. As a consequence, Plato pauses the dialectical method of investigation to insert a cosmological myth[220]. By narrating a mythological story which reworks some of Greek literature’s most fundamental topics[221], then, Plato intends to highlight the inadequacy of the provisional definition of the statesman’s knowledge just reached. The cosmological myth describes a significant discrepancy between a golden age (the Cronus’ age) and the present time (the age of Zeus)[222]. Hence, this *topos* describes a golden age in which humans live under the guidance of a god, Cronus. During this era, people are born from earth[223], the god (who is also the creator of the world) looks after the universe and its rotation from East to West, and peace and abundance spread all over in the universe as the animals (human beings included) are entrusted to the care of divine demons. Therefore, the golden age of Cronus is presented by Plato as an era in which these demons act as shepherds, as it

[216] *Plt*. 267d11.
[217] For a similar conception of the πολιτικός, see X. *Cyr*. I 1 and VIII 2, 14; but also X. *Mem*. I 2, 32 and III 2.1, where Xenophon assimilates the good king to a shepherd.
[218] Cf. *Plt*. 267e7-268a3.
[219] *Plt*. 268d5-6.
[220] The myth is reported by Plato in *Plt*. 268d5-274e4. For an analysis of the Platonic myths in relation to the Homeric and Hesiodic models, see YAMAGATA 2010, pp. 72-83. On the *vexata quaestio* concerning the issue of how many cosmic cycles are represented in the *Statesman*’s myth, see EL MURR 2010a and ROWE 2010a. For an interpretation of the philosophical arguments that the Plato of the *Statesman* grounds on the myth, see KAHN 2009.
[221] E.g., Hesiod, in his *Works and Days*, opposes a golden age to the present era of humans.
[222] See *Plt*. 269a1-8. See also *Plt*. 272b3 and 272c5, where Plato presents the age of Zeus as ‘our’ (namely, the current) era. See also *Plt*. 275b8-c4, where Plato indicates that ‘the statesmen who belong to our present era’ (νῦν ὄντας πολιτικοὺς), being different from the shepherd god, ‘are much more like their subjects in their natures and have shared in an education and nurture closer to theirs’. In these lines, Plato indicates the *Statesman*’s pragmatic σκοπός: he provides the statesmen of his current age with a guideline so as to help them (a) achieve political knowledge and (b) act in accordance with it. Against the view that the era of Zeus represents Plato’s world, cf. NIGHTINGALE 1996, p. 86, who argues that both the ages of Zeus and Cronus are fictional.
[223] Cf. *Plt*. 271a ff.

were, over the world. Within this "heavenly" context, then, the art of statesmanship (including "pre-political" institutions such as families) is revealed to be totally useless. Furthermore, agriculture, handicraft, and all the other similar kinds of expertise turn out to be unnecessary, as fruits spontaneously arise from earth[224]. However, as soon as the god (as the steersman of the universe) 'lets go – as it were – of the bar of the steering-oars and retires to his observation-post'[225], humans move from this golden age of Cronus to the era of Zeus. As a result, the universe starts rotating in the opposite direction (from West to East), and human beings stop being guided by divine demons. In this way, humans become responsible for their own sustenance. Unfortunately, however, humans appear (at least, at an early stage of the Zeus' era) to be unable to (a) protect themselves from the hostility of the other ferocious animals, and (b) maintain themselves in a state of total self-sufficiency (due to the scarcity of food). It is only at a later stage, then, that the gods finally intervene and bestow upon humans the gift of the many crafts which are crucial for the salvation of the human kind[226].

Now, a reading of the *Statesman*'s cosmological myth[227] concerned with the scope of the dialogue suggests[228] that its main function is to amend the mistakes made at *Plt*. 267d11 when defining the πολιτικός's ἐπιστήμη as the knowledge of the collective rearing of human beings (ἀνθρώπων κοινοτροφικὴν ἐπιστήμην). For the myth shows that the only entity which is worthy of being called 'shepherd of humans' is a god or a demon. As a consequence, defining the statesman as a shepherd of men is revealed to be mistaken. Indeed, the statesman is human – and not a god at all[229].

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[224] Cf. *Plt*. 271a1-272b4.

[225] *Plt*. 272e3-5.

[226] See *Plt*. 274a-e. Cf. ACCATTINO 1997, pp. XVIII- XXI and ACCATTINO 1995, pp. 203-204, for an analysis of the way in which the Plato of the *Statesman* talks about the introduction of technology in the human society during the age of Zeus.

[227] Many and various scholarly interpretations of the *Statesman*'s cosmological myth have emerged over the years. [1] One interpretation consists in identifying the divine shepherd of the age of Cronus with the philosopher-ruler of the *Republic*. On this reading of the myth, Plato would reject in the *Statesman* the idea that one needs to be a philosopher to rule over a city (for such a controversial view, see GRUBE 1980, p. 279). [2] Alternatively, Christopher Rowe argues that, if the myth has a specific message to deliver, this is surely marked out by the intention of presenting a sharp distinction between divine and human reason: human reason (in the age of Zeus) is able to grasp only with great difficulty what the god (during the golden age of Cronus) grasps with no effort at all (cf. ROWE 2000, p. 241). [3] Another interpretation of the myth holds instead that the myth is deployed by Plato to play the dramatic function of separating the dialogue off into two parts – one "Socratic", the other "un-Socratic" (for this interpretation, see WEISS 1995; for a more radical view, cf. SCODEL 1987, pp. 161-162, and ARRIGHETTI 1995, p. 226 [*contra* ROWE 1996, pp. 171-172]). [4] Then, the myth's function has been interpreted in light of its political significance: humans' life in the age of Zeus would be presented in such a way that the danger of heteronomy – and hence, of the human dependence on a third-party authority – would be clear to the reader. For a different political interpretation, see EL MURR 2014, pp. 148-149 (and, similarly, BRISSON 1995 and CARONE 2004), who argues that the myth may be thought to mark out a distinction between a golden age (which humans can only imitate) and a typically human age, which is highly political (during which, however, gods may still guide humans). [5] Finally, (a) IONESCU 2014, p. 38, argues that the myth is meant to display 'a metaphysical model in four terms: the Demiurge, the Forms, the particulars, and the "indefinite sea of unlikeness" (ἀνομοιότητος ἄπειρον ὄντα πόντον, 273d6-e1)', and (b) NIGHTINGALE 1996 claims that the myth's value is to show that gods must allow evil into the universe so as to have humans possess free will.

[228] See *Plt*. 268d5-e1.

[229] Cf. *Plt*. 275b8-c4, where Plato specifies not only that 'this figure of the divine herdsman is still greater than that of a king', but also that 'the statesmen who belong to our present era are much more like their subjects in their natures'.

Thus, given also that many human beings (that is, farmers, merchants, bakers, sports teachers and doctors) are all equally concerned – as much as the statesman is – with the rearing of human beings[230], the myth shows that a more highly differentiated definition of the statesman, his art, and his knowledge must be sought.

To achieve this goal, Plato brings the method of dialectical division back into play. Indeed, Plato has the Stranger urge the Young Socrates to divide into two parts the art of the carer by using the distinction between what is enforced and that which is voluntary[231]. Having clarified that the expertise that relates to subjects who are forced is called tyrannical, and that 'the herd-keeping that is voluntary and relates to willing two-footed living things' constitutes an expertise that belongs to statesmanship[232], Plato argues that 'it is a hard thing […] to demonstrate any of the more important subjects without using models'[233]. Thus, having established the further premise that 'the things that are without body, which are finest and greatest, are shown clearly only by reasoning (λόγῳ) and by nothing else'[234], Plato clarifies once and for all that seeking for a definition of the statesman, his knowledge, and his art with only one aid of sensible images (that is, by associating statesmanship with a sensible image of this art) constitutes an unfortunate enterprise which leads to no result[235]. As a consequence, Plato has the Stranger urge his younger interlocutor to acknowledge that a comparative model[236] can actually help out with finding out a definition of the statesman (and his knowledge)[237]. In this way, the art of weaving[238] is taken as a model (παράδειγμα) of the art of

[230] See *Plt*. 267e7-268a3.
[231] See *Plt*. 276d8-11.
[232] See *Plt*. 276e11-13.
[233] *Plt*. 277d1-4: 'Χαλεπόν, ὦ δαιμόνιε, μὴ παραδείγμασι χρώμενον ἱκανῶς ἐνδείκνυσθαί τι τῶν μειζόνων'.
[234] *Plt*. 286a5-6.
[235] 'But I think the majority of people fail to recognize that for some of the things that are, there are certain perceptible likenesses which are there to be easily understood' (*Plt*. 285d10-e1).
[236] That is, a model that involves – even on a very small scale – the same kind of activities – and hence, the same essential structure – as the art of statesmanship.
[237] See *Plt*. 278a-e. See MOORE 2016, who argues that, 'on the account of the *Statesman*, by offering an opportunity for i) practicing abstraction in preparation for the dialectical method of collection, ii) developing a desire to know the intelligible principles of our experiential understanding, and thereby iii) cultivating the affective *ēthos* of the dialectician, examples serve a psychagogic function'.
[238] It is worth wondering why Plato focuses on just the art of weaving (and not on one among the many other human arts). In the classical Greece, the activity of weaving represents a pervasive metaphor for political activity. Just to make an example, Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* - which, as we may suppose, Plato was perfectly acquainted with – shows that the art of weaving is taken as a model for political activity. Still, the art of weaving is unequivocally associated by Aristophanes with the feminine world. Indeed, it is by weaving that women show men how they should manage their own affairs. Interestingly, the art of weaving is not associated with the feminine world in the *Statesman*. For the political weaving of the statesman is always associated with men. Thus, why would Plato still assume the art of weaving as the model of the art of statesmanship? On this very issue, many interpretations have been advanced by scholars. On the one hand, some scholars suggest that, although women were ideologically associated with domestic work in the classical Greece, male weavers existed as well (see e.g., SCHEID-SVENBRO 1996, p. 23, who argue that the fact that male weavers do live in the Greece of Plato is proved by Plato himself in his works: see e.g., *Hp*. *Mi*. 368c4, *Phd*. 87b and *R*. VI 369d.). On the other hand, the art of weaving may also be thought to be implicitly associated with women in the *Statesman* (Plato's *Republic* shows that philosopher-queens may exist just as philosopher-kings). Therefore, by associating the art of statesmanship with the (feminine) art of weaving Plato may be thought to convey the idea that he does not reject in his *Statesman* any

statesmanship, namely, as a model through which the essential nature of statesmanship will be better understood[239]. In particular, the analysis of the model constituted by the weaving of a woollen cloak is meant by Plato to help clarify the role that the art of weaving (conceived of as just one of the many arts involved in the creation of a woollen cloak) plays throughout the productive process[240]. By means of this analogy, then, Plato aims to achieve two theoretical outcomes: (a) finding out that – and, eventually, how many – other arts contribute to take care of the human race together with the art of statesmanship, and (b) providing a definition of what such an art is in relation to other forms of expertise (πρὸς ἄλλα) – by discovering what special role the art of statesmanship plays in the process of giving a peaceful and ordered structure to the city.

Hence, having ascertained that studying the model of weaving allows for unveiling the nature of the statesman, his art, and his knowledge, Plato establishes that not all the arts that contribute to the production of the garment from wool play the same function throughout the productive process[241]. Accordingly, Plato has the Stranger make a further division which aims to identify two sorts of expertise 'in relation to all the things that people do'. In this way, the Stranger and the Young Socrates end up distinguishing between a contributory cause of production and what is itself a cause[242]. As a result, those arts which do not make the thing itself – but rather provide tools for those that do – are said to be contributory causes (συναιτίαι). On the other hand, those arts which bring the thing itself to completion are defined as causes (αἰτίαι)[243]. Once this has been clarified, Plato specifies that the process of creating a woollen garment envisages three different steps: (1) at first, only the contributory causes are at play, providing the tolls which are necessary for the achievement of the final product; (2) next, the causes intervene to work the raw material out; (3) then, the art of weaving – which is the most beautiful and the most important ('καλλίστη καὶ μεγίστη') among all the arts involved in the creation of a woollen garment[244] – brings the whole process to completion by intertwining woof and warp[245].

Now, once the analysis of the art of weaving (conceived of as the most important expertise in the achievement of the final product) is finished, Plato gets back to the art of statesmanship which, just as the art of weaving, is said to be guided by a specific criterion, due measure (μέτριον). For it is

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of the theoretical outcomes achieved in the *Republic*. Finally, an alternative interpretation suggests that the association of the art of weaving with femininity would just be neutralized in the *Statesman* (see LANE 1998, pp. 163-169).

[239] For an alternative interpretation, see DOS SANTOS 2018, p. 179, who claims that 'weaving, in the *Statesman*, would be an analogy for a particular aspect of the soul, the activity of thinking', with a special reference to 'its ability to establish relations, and to identify, from such relations, identities and differences, which constitutes the capacity of the λογιστικόν, *par excellence*'.

[240] See *Plt*. 279a7-b5.

[241] Cf. *Plt*. 281c6-d4.

[242] See *Plt*. 281d8-11.

[243] On the distinction between causes and contributory causes, cf. *Ti*. 46c-e, but also *Phd*. 99a4-d3 and *Phlb*. 27a.

[244] Cf. *Plt*. 281c7-d3.

[245] See *Plt*. 283a3-8.

only by avoiding what is excessive that good and fine things may be produced[246]. With this premise in mind, and having distinguished causes and contributory causes[247] of the city's government, Plato reminds the reader of a provisional (and still incomplete) definition of the πολιτικός's knowledge that had been reached earlier on in the dialogue[248]. The art of statesmanship[249] individuates a knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) which is concerned with making judgments (κριτική) and controlling (ἐπιτακτική)[250]. Interestingly, the kind of knowledge which is indicated by the art of statesmanship (just as for the art of weaving) is said to constitute the most difficult and the most important thing to acquire. For the statesman must be wise (φρόνιμος), and only a few people manage to be so[251]. Now, such an epistemological characterization of the statesman allows us to clarify that the art of statesmanship can be properly performed only when a man who is provided with wisdom (μετὰ φρονήσεως)[252], and who is indeed σοφός and good (ἀγαθός)[253], rules with virtue (ἀρετή)[254] over the city (making it better than it was before[255]) on the basis of his knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) and sense of justice (δίκαιον)[256]. However, what the good and wise statesman does in practice still remains to be seen. To shed light on this aspect, Plato appeals to the model of the art of weaving. The art of statesmanship is compared to the

[246] Cf. *Plt.* 284a5-b2.

[247] It is by considering the ἔργον of the art of statesmanship that Plato distinguishes between causes and contributory causes. In *Plt.* 287c-289c, Plato enumerates those seven arts which can be thought of as contributory causes for the city's government: 1) the art which produces tools (including here all the contributory causes of weaving); 2) the art which creates receptacles; 3) the art that produces the objects which provide support to those people who use them; 4) the art of defence; 5) the art that provides entertainment; 6) the art that produces materials which can be used by other arts; 7) the art that manages food. What these seven contributory arts produce is not directly made by the art of statesmanship, but is still necessary for the sustenance of the city (see *Plt.* 287d-3-4). As for the arts which can be deemed to be causes (namely, those which show a close resemblance to the art of statesmanship: see *Plt.* 303d-311c), Plato specifies that they are three: (1) political oratory (see COOPER 1986, p. 91, about this); (2) strategy (see SINCLAIR 1988, pp. 81-82, about an alleged attack on the strategists who live in Athens at the time of Plato); (3) the judicial art (interestingly, Plato specifies that in the just cities neither judges nor laws should supervise and regulate the political activity of the statesman: cf. *Plt.* 298e5-299a6; see also DUFFY 2020, p. 15, who argues that Plato specifies in the *Statesman* that 'the ideal ruler may and will sometimes act against even an ideal law-code'. As a matter of fact, Plato's *Statesman* makes the rule of law the 'second-best': cf. SORENSEN 2018, esp. pp. 412 ff. about this issue; on the intrinsic limits of law, see EL MURR 2014, esp. pp. 236-239); (4) public education. These arts which are causes are guided by the statesman to the same extent as the weaver supervises all the contributory arts. See COOPER 1986, p. 92 and 103-104, who provides a summary of the causes and contributory causes of the good city's government.

[248] Cf. *Plt.* 258b ff.

[249] Actually, Plato says 'kingly rule' (βασιλικὴ ἀρχή). However, given what he specifies at *Plt.* 258e8-9 and 259d3-5 (i.e., where he associates the king [and his knowledge] with the statesman [and his knowledge]), what he says with reference to kingly rule is likely to apply to statesmanship as well.

[250] See *Plt.* 292b6-10.

[251] Cf. *Plt.* 292d2-293a1.

[252] See *Plt.* 294a8.

[253] Cf. *Plt.* 296e3.

[254] See *Plt.* 301c6-d6, where Plato says that a man who is willing and able to rule with virtue (ἀρετή) and knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), 'would be prized and would govern a constitution that would alone be correct in the strict sense, steering it through in happiness'.

[255] Cf. DUFFY 2020, pp. 12-13, who comments on *Plt.* 293d4-e2 (in particular, on the very lines where Plato specifies that the statesman, who is provided with knowledge and a sense of justice, preserves and improves the city 'so far as he can'), and argues that the 'so far as he can' clause does not indicate that the statesman is not a wise ruler. On the contrary, Plato conveys the message that it may not be possible to preserve, or improve, the city if circumstances are sufficiently bad. Even in that case, however, the statesman would still try to act so as to improve the city as much as possible.

[256] See *Plt.* 293d4-e5.

art of weaving to the extent that both of them coordinate the arts which are subordinate (ὑπηρέται). In fact, the true art of statesmanship, just as the art of weaving, 'must not itself perform practical tasks, but control those with the capacity to perform them, because it knows when it is the right time (ἐγκαίριος) to begin and set in motion the most important things in cities, and when it is the wrong time (ἀκαίριος)'[257]. As a result, the art of statesmanship – which, just like the art of weaving, controls the subordinate arts – appears to have the authority to weave everything together in the most correct way[258].

Yet, what the statesman intertwines by means of his art and knowledge – and hence, what the art of statesmanship really is in itself (καθ᾽αὐτήν) – still remains to be clarified. At *Plt*. 306a-307c, Plato explains that the statesman, as a weaver, deals with a material which is characterized by two contrasting virtues. Indeed, a part (μέρος) of virtue (courage) is said to be in a certain sense different from another species (εἶδος) of virtue[259] (moderation). As a matter of fact, these two parts of virtue are 'extremely hostile to each other and occupy opposed positions in many things'[260]. Therefore, as the citizens embody these two contrasting virtues, the statesman needs to order the subordinate political arts to educate people so that they could be prepared to have a share in a disposition that is courageous and moderate – in other words, in all the things that tend to some extent to virtue[261]. In addition to this, *Plt*. 311 b7-c6 also demonstrates that the statesman is then expected to intertwine these educated people – for all the others, that is, those who are either characterized by an evil nature or affected by great ignorance and baseness, are either killed, sent into exile, and punished with the most extreme forms of dishonour, or brought under the yoke of the class of slaves.

> ΞΕ. Τοῦτο δὴ τέλος ὑφάσματος εὐθυπλοκίᾳ συμπλακὲν γίγνεσθαι φῶμεν πολιτικῆς πράξεως τὸ τῶν ἀνδρείων καὶ σωφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἦθος, ὁπόταν ὁμονοίᾳ καὶ φιλίᾳ κοινὸν συναγαγοῦσα αὐτῶν τὸν βίον ἡ βασιλικὴ τέχνη, πάντων μεγαλοπρεπέστατον ὑφασμάτων καὶ ἄριστον ἀποτελέσασα [ὥστ᾽ εἶναι κοινόν] τούς τ᾽ ἄλλους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι πάντας δούλους καὶ ἐλευθέρους ἀμπίσχουσα, συνέχῃ τούτῳ τῷ πλέγματι, καὶ καθ' ὅσον εὐδαίμονι προσήκει γίγνεσθαι πόλει τούτου μηδαμῇ μηδὲν ἐλλείπουσα ἄρχῃ τε καὶ ἐπιστατῇ.
>
> STRANGER: Then let us say that this marks the completion of the fabric which is the product of the art of statesmanship: the weaving together, with regular intertwining, of the dispositions of brave and moderate people – when the expertise belonging to the king brings their life together in agreement and friendship and makes it common between them, completing the most magnificent and best of all fabrics and covering with it all the other inhabitants of cities, both slave and free; and holds them together with this twining and rules and directs without, so far as it belongs to a city to be happy, falling short of that in any respect.

[257] *Plt*. 305d1-4.
[258] See *Plt*. 305a-e.
[259] Cf. *Plt*. 306a8-10: these lines may suggest that 'εἶδος' retains a twofold sense in Plato's *Statesman*: for 'εἶδος' indicates (1) the kind, or class, which has to be divided into parts by means of dialectical divisions, and (2) the species which, being equivalent to a part (μέρος), may come out of the dialectical division of a class, or kind. See *Plt*. 262a8-b2, where Plato argues as follows: 'let the part (μέρος) bring a real species (εἶδος) along with it'.
[260] See *Plt*. 306b9-11.
[261] Cf. *Plt*. 308e4-309a3.

This very concluding passage of the dialogue show that the statesman, through his art and knowledge, aims to bind together two natures (φύσεις) which are characterized by opposite tendencies (or characters [ἤθη]) – namely, the natures of those who strain more towards courage (whose firm disposition is, as it were, like the warp) 'and the ones of those who incline towards moderation, who produce an ample, soft, and – to continue the image – wooflike thread'[262]. Ultimately, then, *Plt.* 311b7-c6 provides an accurate definition of what the art of statesmanship is in itself (καθ᾽αὐτήν): the statesman's own job, being inspired by his own knowledge, consists of a kingly intertwinement[263].

However, as the statesman-weaver cannot stretch the courageous and the moderate people on a frame as if on Procrustean bed[264] – and hence, given that people cannot be tied together as thread can be –, Plato clarifies the way in which the statesman brings to completion his act of interweaving. There are two kinds of bonds that the statesman has to create. On the one hand, a divine bond (consisting of a firm true opinion [ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως][265] about what is fine [κάλον], just [δίκαιον], and good [ἀγαθόν], as well as of the opposite of these[266]) will function on the level of soul. Put differently, a divine[267] firm true opinion (about what is fine, just, good, and their opposites) will be generated in the soul of the courageous and moderate people. Indeed, it is up to the statesman's music[268] to fit together that part of the citizens' soul that is eternal with this divine bond (namely, a true and firmly settled opinion). On the other hand, if the statesman has to get rid of any source of discord (στάσις) within the city[269], he has to perform his interweaving abilities at the level of body too. Indeed, the statesman has to ensure that people bind themselves together (through marriage) in a correct way with respect to the procreation of children[270]. It is, therefore, by means of these two bonds (one divine, one human) that the statesman succeeds in weaving together the dispositions of

[262] See *Plt.* 309a8-b7.
[263] See *Plt.* 306a1 and EL MURR 2021 on this.
[264] See LANE 1998, p. 173.
[265] Cf. *Plt.* 309c6.
[266] See *Plt.* 309c5-d4 and 310e6-7.
[267] Cf. *Plt.* 309c5-8: the divine (θείαν) firm true opinion concerning the (sensible) objects that imitate the Forms comes to be in the class of what is more than human.
[268] See *Phd.* 60e5-61a4 (translated by Alex Long in SEDLEY-LONG 2011), where Plato has Socrates say what follows: 'The same dream has often visited me in my past life, appearing in different guises at different times, but saying the same things. "Socrates," it said, "compose music and work at it." In the past I used to suppose that it was encouraging me and cheering me on to do what I *was* doing, like those who cheer runners. I took the dream to be cheering me on in the same way to do just what I was doing, composing music, on the grounds that philosophy is the greatest music, and that that was what I was doing'. I will ascertain later on in this chapter whether or not the music of the statesman consists of his philosophical knowledge as Plato's terminology in the *Phaedo* would apparently seem to suggest at first sight.
[269] Cf. *Plt.* 308c6-7.
[270] See *Plt.* 310b2-5. The idea of applying a eugenic policy to the citizenry has already been envisaged by Plato in his *Republic*. For a detailed study of this aspect of the *Republic*'s Καλλίπολις, cf. VEGETTI 2003d, p. 296. On the extent to which the statesman's interweaving may be effective, cf. BENARDETE 1984, pp. 147-148, who says that 'the lawful education of moderate and courageous natures does not alter the nature of either [...]. Intermarriage and common opinion cannot eliminate but can only soften the brutal resolution of conflicting interests which would otherwise occur'. For a similar interpretation, see ROSEN 1995, pp. 187-188.

courageous and moderate people, never allowing moderate dispositions (and people) to be alienated from the courageous[271].

2.3. *The statesman's excellence*

As the section above has shown, the kind of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) that is ascribed to the statesman is presented as a theoretical (γνωστική)[272] ἐπιστήμη which is concerned with making judgments (κριτική) and controlling (ἐπιτακτική)[273]. However, as some scholars have argued, the -ικος suffix in the name 'πολιτικός' would rather suggest that the statesman is someone who is provided with a technical, and hence, practical, form of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη). Indeed, this technical ἐπιστήμη is that which allows the statesman to perform his art (τέχνη)[274]. On this interpretation, the cognitive term 'ἐπιστήμη' would have to be considered as being equivalent to 'τέχνη'[275]. Indeed, the kind of knowledge that the statesman achieves would not amount to a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms[276]. On the contrary, the πολιτικός's ἐπιστήμη would rather signify a sort of practical knowledge[277]. The next section of the present chapter will therefore be devoted to testing this disputed reading of Plato's *Statesman*. For I will aim to determine what specifically the kind of knowledge which is possessed by the πολιτικός consists of. Next, I shall analyse how Plato highlights the relationship between the πολιτικός's knowledge and virtue. Accordingly, my investigation will aim to ascertain whether or not being virtuous is presented in the *Statesman* as bound together with knowledge (that is, with a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms).

2.3.1. *The πολιτικός's knowledge in the* Statesman

I have already shown the way in which Plato characterizes the πολιτικός's cognitive nature at the very beginning of his *Statesman*. For Plato specifies at *Plt*. 258b2-5 that the statesman should be assumed to be 'one of those who possess ἐπιστήμη'. This piece of evidence should therefore be taken to prove that the cognitive state which has to be ascribed to the statesman consists of an ἐπιστήμη of some sort. Now, what kind of ἐπιστήμη the statesman possesses would appear to be revealed by a passage where Plato describes the nature of the πολιτικός's knowledge in a very peculiar way. Indeed, taking for granted that – to the extent already specified – the king (and his knowledge) and the

[271] Cf. *Plt*. 310e5-311c6.
[272] Cf. *Plt*. 259c10-d1.
[273] See *Plt*. 292b6-10.
[274] See ACCATTINO 1997, p. VIII.
[275] See ACCATTINO 1997, p. 163, who observes that these two terms, that is, ἐπιστήμη and τέχνη, are used interchangeably in the *Statesman*. For a similar interpretation see e.g., ANNAS-WATERFIELD 1995, p. 3 fn. 5, SØRENSEN 2018, p. 406, NEIMAN 2007, pp. 405 ff., GILL 1995, p. 294, GRISWOLD JR. 1989, p. 162 fn. 6, LANE 1998, p. 23.
[276] See e.g., OWEN 1973, LANE 1998, ZUOLO 2007, and GIORGINI 2018.
[277] Cf. GRISWOLD JR. 1989, esp. pp. 152 ff. See also CASERTANO 2018, p. 83, who argues that the science of the statesman amounts to opinion.

statesman (and his knowledge)[278] are associated with one another within the context of the *Statesman*, it is interesting to note that *Plt*. 300e7-9[279] presents the statesman's knowledge as being both an ἐπιστήμη and a τέχνη.

> ΞΕ. Οὐκοῦν εἰ μὲν ἔστι βασιλική τις τέχνη, τὸ τῶν πλουσίων πλῆθος καὶ ὁ σύμπας δῆμος οὐκ ἄν ποτε λάβοι τὴν πολιτικὴν ταύτην ἐπιστήμην.
>
> STRANGER: Then if some sort of kingly expertise exists, neither the collection of people that consists of the rich, nor all the people together, could ever acquire this expert knowledge of statesmanship.
>
> *Plt*. 300e7-9

This bit of textual evidence appears to testify to the fact that the two terms, ἐπιστήμη and τέχνη, are used interchangeably in the *Statesman*. For we see that Plato shifts at *Plt*. 300e7-9 from one term to the other with no difficulty at all. Hence, as the statesman's expertise is presented as an ἐπιστήμη ↔ τέχνη, one may argue that the epistemological condition of the πολιτικός amounts to a technical expertise which provides the ability to perform some kind of activity. Indeed, the Greek term 'τέχνη' generally individuates a complex of technical abilities which, being inspired by an incomplete understanding[280] of the sensible world, allows one to perform some practical activities. Therefore, if we assume that this is also the way in which we should conceive of τέχνη in the *Statesman*, it follows that the πολιτικός is to be acknowledged as someone who possesses the technical ability (ἐπιστήμη ↔ τέχνη) to practically perform his art of statesmanship[281]. In this way, given his partial insight into the sensible world (i.e., an insight which is limited to the art of statesmanship's domain of action – that is, what is sensible), the statesman should be identified as someone who merely knows how to make the most careful use of the art of statesmanship so to provide the city with the best government possible. Thus, if it is indeed the case that the πολιτικός's knowledge retains this technical meaning, it follows that the kind of expertise that the statesman possesses is of a practical (and hence, not theoretical, as Plato explicitly states at *Plt*. 259c9-d1) sort. Indeed, the kind of knowledge that the statesman would on this interpretation possess would have to be analogous to the kind of expertise that, for example, the shoemaker is provided with. For as the shoemaker knows what to do in order to produce (or just repair) shoes (being good at performing his art), so the statesman too knows what he has to do in practice in order to safeguard the city (being good at performing this art).

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[278] See *Plt*. 258e8-9 and 259d3-5.
[279] Cf. e.g., *Plt*. 287d1-4 and 296c4-6.
[280] This is also the case of mathematics which, being a (dianoetic) τέχνη (see *infra* pp. 75-77), can only seek for – indeed, it is not able to achieve – a complete, and hence, philosophical, understanding of what really is.
[281] See ROWE 1995a, p. 178, who explains that, in his translation of Plato's *Statesman*, τέχνη is generally rendered as '(kind of) expertise', while ἐπιστήμη as 'knowledge' or 'expert knowledge'. Having made this premise, he then specifies that 'the difficulty with "art", and the other standard translations of τέχνη/επιστήμη, is that – unlike the Greek terms – they tend to refer to certain sub-types of specialisms, and the central point in the *Statesman* is usually about what is in common between all τέχναι – i.e., that they involve expertise or specialized knowledge'.

Thus, scholars would be reasonable in taking for granted that ἐπιστήμη and τέχνη are used in the *Statesman* as two interchangeable terms and arguing that the statesman's knowledge (ἐπιστήμη ↔ τέχνη) is of a practical sort. Indeed, Plato would appear to describe the πολιτικός as a man who is mainly focused on human affairs. If so, the statesman would not share with the *Republic*'s philosopher-ruler his distinctive cognitive condition – that is, one which is primarily directed at understanding the intelligible Forms. On this interpretation, the *Statesman*'s πολιτικός appears as a political manager who knows what to do in practice in order to look after the city[282]. Interestingly, this idea would apparently seem to be confirmed by Plato at *Plt*. 294a6-7. For it is argued there that 'the art of the legislator belongs to that of the king'. Therefore, the statesman (↔ king)'s art would appear to be chiefly concerned with practical tasks (that is, issuing laws)[283]. The recognition of a practical aspect of the statesman's art even led John Stuart Mill to argue that Plato derives this idea of the statesman as a man who is concerned with merely practical tasks from Socrates[284]. For Xenophon has Socrates argue that kings, that is, those who rule, are to be conceived of as those who know how to perform their political role by being aware of what has to be practically done in the context of the city's daily life:

> Βασιλέας δὲ καὶ ἄρχοντας οὐ τοὺς τὰ σκῆπτρα ἔχοντας ἔφη εἶναι οὐδὲ τοὺς ὑπὸ τῶν τυχόντων αἱρεθέντας οὐδὲ τοὺς κλήρῳ λαχόντας οὐδὲ τοὺς βιασαμένους οὐδὲ τοὺς ἐξαπατήσαντας, ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἐπισταμένους ἄρχειν.
>
> Kings and rulers, he said, are not those who hold the scepter, nor those who are chosen by the multitude, nor those on whom the lot falls, nor those who owe their power to force or deception; but those who know how to rule.
>
> X. *Mem*. 3. 9. 10. 1 - 3. 9. 11. 1[285]

Now, if we assume, as Mill does, that Plato recovers the Socratic account of ἄρχειν that is evidenced in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, it follows that the *Statesman*'s πολιτικός, who is the king of the city, is not required to have a full understanding of what really is (that is, the Platonic [metaphysical] Forms). In other words, if it is the case that the statesman only knows how to rule (e.g., he knows how to prepare laws) by means of a merely technical knowledge (ἐπιστήμη ↔ τέχνη), it follows that his activity is not inspired by a philosophical (and hence, complete) grasp of the basic constituents of

[282] Cf. SCHOFIELD 2006, pp. 136-178 and COOPER 1986, pp. 90-102. On how the statesman approaches the city, see LANE 2005, p. 336.

[283] Cf. GRISWOLD JR. 1989, pp. 152-153, who argues that the statesman's knowledge amounts to 'the "practical" knowledge of how to produce a polis that will withstand the challenges of the age. It is the knowledge of what to do and when in order to keep the polis safe'. See GIORGINI 2018, pp. 265-266, who tends to agree with MILL 1978 in claiming that the statesman's knowledge is different from the metaphysical knowledge which is proper to the philosopher-rulers of the *Republic*. Rather, it would be a knowledge applied to practical matters. For a similar interpretation, see also JOWETT 1875[2], p. 308 and SAUNDERS 1992 (who claims that the *Republic*'s ideal statesman, who rules with insight into Forms, retreats to the wings in the *Statesman* – i.e., where Plato presents the statesman as someone who is provided with practical experience).

[284] See MILL 1978, p. 432. See also SCHOFIELD 2006, pp. 142-143.

[285] Translated by MARCHANT-TODD 2014.

reality – namely, the intelligible Forms. Curiously, this account of the statesman's knowledge seems to be consistent with an assumption that some scholars have made in interpreting Plato's *Statesman*. Indeed, they argue that the existence of the Platonic Forms is denied – or, at the very least, Forms are not explicitly mentioned – in Plato's *Statesman*[286]. Accordingly, if the intelligible Forms are not at play in the *Statesman*, then the statesman could never be presented as a man who performs his art of statesmanship in light of a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms.

Yet, two objections should be raised against the view that the statesman's knowledge merely consists of a technical expertise that only aims to complete practical tasks (while ignoring the intelligible Forms). First of all, it is worth recalling the definition of the statesman's knowledge which Plato comes up with near the end of his work. He clarifies at *Plt*. 259c10-d1 that the kind of ἐπιστήμη that is ascribed to the statesman does not individuate a practical knowledge. For the πολιτικός's knowledge is presented as a theoretical (γνωστική) – rather than practical (πρακτική) or manual (χειροτεχνική)[287] – ἐπιστήμη (though being still to some extent concerned with performing practical tasks, such as making judgments and controlling[288]). Therefore, the πολιτικός's knowledge cannot be deemed to be merely practical[289]. Secondly, what is even more important to note is that, when Plato describes the cosmological myth, he makes clear that the age of Zeus (which is to be thought of as Plato's current era) is the happiest of all the ages. Indeed, the age of Cronus, which may apparently seem to indicate an ideal condition, is to be – quite paradoxically – conceived of as an era during which people are less happy than people in the age of Zeus are. For Plato establishes that 'the ultimate criterion for people's happiness is the degree to which they engage in philosophy'[290]. Hence, the more people do philosophy[291], the happier they are. Thus, if the nurslings of Cronus engaged in philosophy (given also the heavenly condition of the surrounding framework), they would have been far happier than those who live in the age of Zeus[292]. Yet, given that the nurslings of Cronus, contrary to those who live during the Zeus' era, do not sufficiently engage in philosophy, humans living during the age of Zeus are happier than those living in the age of Cronus. If this speculative interpretation holds, then the people who are more likely to be concerned with the noble philosophical investigations would be those who are kings and rulers – namely, the most authoritative men living in the city during

[286] Cf. e.g., OWEN 1973, LANE 1998, e.g., pp. 16 ff., ZUOLO 2007, and GIORGINI 2018.
[287] Cf. *Plt*. 259c10-d1.
[288] See *Plt*. 292b6-10.
[289] Cf. EL MURR 2014, pp. 263 ff., who also states that the statesman's knowledge is not of a practical sort.
[290] IONESCU 2014, p. 40.
[291] Plato clarifies at *Plt*. 272b8-d2 that everyone may engage in philosophy just by 'talking both with animals and with each other, and inquiring from all sorts of creatures whether any one of them had some capacity of its own that enabled it to see better in some way than the rest with respect to the gathering of wisdom'.
[292] Actually, Plato does not refer to 'those living during the age of Zeus' but rather to 'those who live now'. However, we have already assumed that textual evidence (cf. *Plt*. 269a1-8, 272b3, and 272c5) allows us to conclude that there is an equivalence of sorts between the age of Zeus and Plato's current era.

the age of Zeus. If so, then, taking for granted that the πολιτικός who is defined in the *Statesman* is assumed by Plato to be someone who lives (or, will hopefully live) during the age of Zeus (namely, his current era), we should conclude that such a statesman would be a true philosopher. On this interpretation, then, the statesman's ἐπιστήμη would individuate a more valuable knowledge than the merely technical one.

What we have so far assumed as a result of mere speculation appears to be confirmed by textual evidence. To start with, Plato argues at *Plt*. 292d2-293a1 that the statesman is wise (φρόνιμος). For the art of statesmanship is by Plato said to be properly performed only when a man, who is provided with wisdom (μετὰ φρονήσεως)[293] and is indeed a σοφός[294], rules on the basis of his knowledge (ἐπιστήμη)[295]. Now, what seems to emerge from this epistemological identikit of the good statesman is that he is indeed a philosopher. As a matter of fact, all these cognitive terms (φρόνησις, σοφία, and ἐπιστήμη) are generally used by Plato to make reference to philosophy. Indeed, Plato specifies at *R*. VI 511b3-e5 that the science of dialectic, being an ἐπιστήμη, allows one to contemplate (θεωρεῖν) what is intelligible (νοητός)[296]. Similarly, Plato establishes at *Phlb*. 58a1-6 that dialectic, *qua* the truest and purest species of ἐπιστήμη[297], is concerned with being (τὸ ὂν) and with what really is (τὸ ὄντως) in every way eternally self-same ('τὸ κατὰ ταὐτὸν ἀεὶ πεφυκὸς πάντως')[298]. In turn, φρόνησις, just as the truest and purest species of ἐπιστήμη, is described in the *Phaedo* as a condition (πάθημα) in the soul through which 'the soul investigates by itself' and 'passes into the realm of what is pure, ever existing, immortal and unchanging'[299]. Finally, σοφία is variously defined by Plato. For it is (a) sometimes made synonymous with φρόνησις[300], (b) said to be the same thing (ταὐτόν) as knowledge (ἐπιστήμη)[301], and (c) thought to co-implicate νοῦς, namely the cognitive state of those

[293] See *Plt*. 294a8.
[294] Cf. *Plt*. 296e3.
[295] See *Plt*. 293d4-e5. Based on *Plt*. 258e-259d, EL MURR 2018 argues that the *Statesman* considers a slightly more complex scenario than merely repeating the *Republic*'s view of philosopher-kings: for he maintains that, either the ruling king is a philosopher – and he is a true statesman –, or he is advised by a philosopher – who is the true statesman – and then rules by true opinion only. I believe that *Plt*. 258e-259d, which considers the possibility that a private individual may eventually possess the king's expert knowledge, merely shows that such a private citizen (who would be able to give advice to a king) should he himself be acknowledged as a true king. Thus, the true statesman still is, as *Plt*. 293d4-e also testifies, the person who achieves philosophical knowledge.
[296] Cf. also *Phlb*. 58c7-d8, where dialectic, *qua* the truest type of ἐπιστήμη, is similarly defined as the soul's capacity (δύναμις) to love the truth and to do everything for its sake. See *infra* p. 78 fn. 489.
[297] At *Phlb*. 58a1-6, Plato observes that the fact that dialectic is the truest and purest among all the other kinds of knowledge is to be acknowledged by anyone with any share in νοῦς. As a consequence, a direct link between dialectic and νοῦς (i.e., the cognitive state [ἕξις] of those who contemplate [θεωρεῖν] what is intelligible [νοητός] through intellection [ἐπιστήμη/νόησις/φρόνησις]: cf. *R*. VI 511b3-e5) is established by Plato. See *infra* p. 78 fn. 486.
[298] Cf. *infra* p. 74 fn. 466: this is exactly what philosophical knowledge is concerned with, according to Plato.
[299] See *Phd*. 79d1-7.
[300] Cf. e.g., *Phd*. 69a10, c2, 79d6; *Smp*. 202a5-9; *R*. IV 433c8, VI 505b6; *Men*. 97c1-2, 98d10-12. However, as I will show in the *Laws*' chapter (see *infra* esp. pp. 110-122), φρόνησις does not always indicate a philosophical kind of knowledge within the context of Plato's *Laws*.
[301] See *Tht*. 145e6-7. On this, see *infra* p. 87 fn. 522.

who contemplate (θεωρεῖν) the intelligible Forms[302]. Therefore, this review of Plato's use of φρόνησις, σοφία, and ἐπιστήμη shows that all these terms – especially when they are explicitly associated with one another – individuate the same epistemological condition. Indeed, φρόνησις, σοφία, and ἐπιστήμη can all be used to refer to an eternally stable philosophical knowledge[303]. For only a philosophical knowledge (which is always true) allows for achieving a full understanding of the intelligible Forms[304], i.e., of what is always the same in all respects[305]. As a consequence, given that φρόνησις[306], σοφία, and ἐπιστήμη are all ascribed as cognitive conditions to the πολιτικός in the *Statesman*, it follows that the statesman is a man who possesses a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms[307].

Nonetheless, although it would appear that the *Statesman*'s πολιτικός is someone who is able to achieve a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms, confidence in such a conclusion is problematized by the fact that the intelligible Forms have been thought not to be at play in Plato's *Statesman*[308]. For, if Forms were not at play in the *Statesman*, it would immediately follow that the πολιτικός's ἐπιστήμη is not philosophical. Now, to evaluate whether or not the Forms are at play in the *Stateman*, I shall consider how exactly Plato describes the tasks that the statesman aims to complete. Having compared the art of statesmanship with the art of weaving, Plato specifies that the art (τέχνη) which belongs to the statesman 'must not itself perform practical tasks, but control those with the capacity to perform them, because it knows (γιγνώσκειν)[309] when it is the right time (ἐγκαίριος) to begin and set in motion the most important things in cities, and when it is the wrong time (ἀκαίριος)'[310]. Now, one might wonder how a passage which is concerned with the statesman's τέχνη could allow us to establish whether or not the intelligible Forms are at play in Plato's *Statesman*. Indeed, an art (τέχνη) – in this very case, the art of statesmanship – is unlikely, according to Plato's philosophical system, to be based on the understanding of the intelligible Forms. For an artist (e.g., a

[302] Cf. *R.* VI 511b3-e5.
[303] See *Sph.* 253d-254b: while 'the sophist runs off into the darkness of what is not', the philosopher, with his pure and justified love of wisdom, 'is always engaged through reasonings with the form of what is'. On this, see *infra* pp. 21-22 fn. 171.
[304] Cf. *R.* VI 484b3-6.
[305] See e.g., *Phd.* 78c6-8, where Plato argues that the Forms always remain in the same state. See *infra* p. 78 fn. 488.
[306] Cf. SPELIOTIS 2011, who observes that statesman's φρόνησις 'is a knowledge that comprehend[s] precisely at the same time for everyone the best (ἄριστον) and the most just and commands the best (βέλτιστον)' (294a-b)'. To have φρόνησις (i.e., the knowledge of statesmanship which is also described in the dialogue as the knowledge of the mean, the fitting, and the timely) 'means to understand the true nature of things (272c)'. Being so, 'truly wise (φρονίμη) statesmanship (see 294a), the knowledge and enjoining of the fitting, will recognize both the subjects' nature'
[307] For a similar view, cf. KAHN 1995, who argues that the statesman's ἐπιστήμη ↔ τέχνη is to be associated with the *Republic*'s philosopher-ruler's σοφία (for both these dialogues show the same commitment to a dichotomic ontology – Being vs. Becoming).
[308] Cf. e.g., OWEN 1973, LANE 1998, ZUOLO 2007, and GIORGINI 2018.
[309] See *infra* p. 14 fn. 107, where I show that, the gods, who are said at *Lg.* X 916d-e to know (γιγνώσκειν) everything, are also described as wise (φρόνιμοι) at *Phd.* 80d5-8. Therefore, γιγνώσκειν potentially individuates the highest kind of knowledge – and hence, not necessarily a merely technical one.
[310] *Plt.* 305d1-4.

painter), who possesses a merely technical knowledge, is not moved to action (i.e., she does not perform her own art) on the basis of a wise knowledge of the metaphysical Forms[311]. However, the important message that Plato conveys at *Plt*. 305d1-4 is that the statesman's art (τέχνη) is not responsible for carrying practical tasks out. Yet, I have already shown that the art of statesmanship is still expected to produce some effective outcome. Indeed, the art of statesmanship is expected to coordinate the subordinate arts. Interestingly, Plato explains at *Plt*. 305d1-4 the reason why the statesman is worthy enough to take control of the subordinate arts. The statesman knows (γιγνώσκειν) when it is the right time (καιρός) to do, or not do, something in the interest of the city[312]. Thus, it is because the statesman holds this knowledge that he stands out as the only good practitioner of the art of statesmanship. As a consequence, it is not simply that, as some scholars have argued[313], the *Statesman*'s ἐπιστήμη is synonymous with τέχνη. Rather, Plato co-implicates ἐπιστήμη and τέχνη when he defines what the art of statesmanship consists of, who the statesman is, and, finally, what he does in virtue of his art. Indeed, the statesman can properly perform his controlling (ἐπιτακτική)[314] art (τέχνη) only because he possesses an ἐπιστήμη of the καιρός.

In order to determine whether or not the intelligible Forms are at play in the *Statesman*, I shall analyze the object of the statesman's knowledge. To this end, I will seek to ascertain whether or not the καιρός could ever stand for an intelligible Form, the understanding of which the statesman grasps by means of a philosophical knowledge. To start with, the καιρός is associated at *Plt*. 284e6-7 with what is in due measure (μέτριον), what is fitting (πρέπον), and what is as it ought to be (δέον) – or, in a few words, with 'everything that removes itself from the extremes to the middle'[315]. Now, Sylvain Delcomminette[316] argues that, in order to better understand whether or not καιρός, μέτριον, πρέπον, and δέον relate to metaphysical Forms, it is worth (a) examining what Plato states with reference to them in the *Statesman* and (b) comparing it with what he states about the Form of Good in the *Philebus*[317] (a dialogue usually thought to have been composed in the late period of Plato's life, just

[311] On the contrary, the expertise of the painter, the shoemaker, *etc*., is only directed at the sensible world.
[312] Cf. EL MURR 2014, pp. 265 ff., who explains why 'le savoir du politique est un savoir du *kairos*'.
[313] Cf. *infra* p. 39 fn. 275.
[314] See *Plt*. 292b6-10.
[315] Actually, Plato divides at *Plt*. 284e2-8 the art of measurement (μετρητική) into two parts: one encompasses 'all those sorts of expertise that measure the number, lengths, depths, breadths and speeds of things in relation to what is opposed to them', while the other relates to all those sorts of expertise that measure in relation to what is in due measure, what is fitting, the right time, and what is needful. On this issue, cf. LAFRANCE 1995, SPELIOTIS 2009, pp. 217-219, and FISHER 2018.
[316] See DELCOMMINETTE 2005.
[317] See DELCOMMINETTE 2005, pp. 348-350, who points out that Plato himself associates his *Statesman*'s analysis with the inquiry pursued in the *Philebus*. At *Plt*. 284d1-3, Plato has the Stranger say that 'we shall need what I referred to just now for the sort of demonstration that would be commensurate with the precise truth itself'. Having assumed that 'what I referred to just now' makes reference to *Plt*. 284b-c (namely, where Plato is concerned with 'compelling the more and the less […] to become measurable […] in relation to the coming into being of what is in due measure'), Delcomminette concludes that Plato indicates that he will provide a clearer demonstration that would be commensurate with the precise

like the *Statesman*). Strikingly, Delcomminette argues that Plato's *Philebus* presents what is in due measure (μέτριον) – and hence, καιρός, πρέπον, and δέον too[318] – as an essential aspect of the Form of Good[319]. Hence, by knowing what is μέτριον, καιρός, and the like, the *Statesman*'s πολιτικός would become to some extent acquainted with the Good itself. On this interpretation, the statesman would arrange the city in accordance with his understanding of what is intelligible (namely, the Form of Good in all its aspects – i.e., μέτριον, καιρός, πρέπον, and δέον)[320]. I will not at this stage seek to argue, as Delcomminette would appear to do, that the καιρός that the statesman knows, being an essential aspect of the Form of Good, stands in the *Statesman* for the Form of Good itself. Still, I will contend that the analysis of what Plato says in the *Statesman* about the καιρός is crucial for understanding whether or not intelligible Forms are at play in the dialogue in question. Indeed, after having specified that (a) the art of statesmanship, just as the art of weaving, has to preserve what is in due measure (μέτριον)[321], and that (b) what is in due measure (μέτριον) is associated with what is in the right time (καιρός), what is fitting (πρέπον), and what is as it ought to be (δέον)[322], Plato establishes that it is up to the art of measurement (μετρητική) to determine what is μέτριον, καιρός, πρέπον, and δέον. Next, Plato observes at *Plt*. 285a3-c2 that, to properly perform the art of measurement, one needs to be able to 'carry on investigations by dividing according to real classes'. Now, I have already clarified that the person who is able to properly collect a variety into a class/kind and then divide the kind/class obtained into parts/species is the dialectician[323]. What is more, I have shown that φρόνησις, σοφία, and ἐπιστήμη – that is, the cognitive states of the statesman – are closely related to dialectic, namely the discipline that allows one to achieve knowledge of the intelligible Forms[324]. Also, I have specified that Plato observes at *Plt*. 285a3-c2 that the art of measurement can be properly practised only by a good dialectician. Therefore, the καιρός – i.e., something which (a)

truth itself in a later dialogue, that is, the *Philebus* (i.e., where he will achieve the goal of ranking all those goods which are necessary for humans in order to make their own lives the best possible: cf. *Phlb*. 66a4 ff.).

[318] Cf. IONESCU 2016, p. 81, who rightly observes that καιρός, πρέπον, and δέον are strictly connected to μέτριον. Indeed, what is in the right time (καιρός), what is fitting (πρέπον), and what is as it ought to be (δέον) shed light on the many aspects of what is in due measure (μέτριον).

[319] See IONESCU 2016, p. 79, who argues that 'the concept of due measure elaborated in the *Statesman* seems to require the existence of Forms, and among them, specifically of the Form of the Good. For due measure turns out to be a reflection or a manifestation of the Good in the context of shifting circumstances of particular things that are subject to becoming and generation'.

[320] Cf. DELCOMMINETTE 2005, pp. 363-364, where he states that it is only by knowing how the Form of Good relates to the sensible world (i.e., how human life is made good and happy by appealing as a model to the Form of Good) that the statesman achieves a truly complete knowledge of the Form of Good (for he also has to be aware of the impact that the intelligible Form of Good has on the ever-flowing world of becoming).

[321] See *Plt*. 284a5-b2.

[322] See *Plt*. 284e2-8.

[323] Cf. *infra* pp. 29-30.

[324] See *infra* pp. 43-45.

the statesman has to know[325] and (b) needs to be measured by means of a μετρητικὴ τέχνη[326] – can only be understood through dialectic[327]. As a consequence, given that dialectic, being associated with philosophical knowledge[328], is concerned with understanding the intelligible Forms, it follows that what the statesman is expected to know (i.e., the καιρός) indicates a metaphysical Form[329].

Accordingly, the πολιτικός in the *Statesman* turns out to be someone who achieves through dialectic a philosophical ἐπιστήμη[330] of the intelligible Forms[331]. Indeed, the καιρός (i.e., the object of the statesman's knowledge) is implicitly assumed by Plato to fall under the ontological domain of what remains in the same state and condition, being permanently the same. In this way, the καιρός is assumed to partake to a condition which belongs only to the most divine things of all[332], that is, the

[325] Cf. *Plt*. 305d1-4.

[326] Cf. PEIXOTO 2018, p. 261: although 'the wise man is not himself a man of action, he can still inspire the action of politicians, contributing considerably to the good order of the city. His contribution comes particularly from the possession of the *metretike techne*, i.e., of the just measure, which supports the notion of the aforementioned appropriate time. *Metron* and *kairos* are therefore the ingredients that give authority to the true science'. For a similar view, see also MILLER 1980 and MONSERRAT-MOLAS 2018. See also BOBONICH 1995b, p. 322, who points out that 'Plato has repeatedly emphasized that only the scientific ruler will have knowledge (292e1-9, 297b7-c2), only he will receive a philosophical education'.

[327] See BRISSON-PRADEAU 2003, pp. 49-50, who also attribute a metaphysical valence to μέτριον – and hence, to καιρός, πρέπον, and δέον too – on the basis of the fact that it can be known only by means of dialectic. For a similar view on the metaphysical valence of μέτριον, see also FRAISSE 1988, p. 439 and GUILLAMAUD 1988, p. 370.

[328] See *infra* pp. 43-45.

[329] *Contra* this view, see GRISWOLD JR. 1989 and ZUOLO 2007, who argue that the καιρός, like the μέτριον, represents what is appropriate for the occasion. Indeed, the καιρός and the like are said at *Plt*. 285a2 to be immersed in becoming – and not in being, as the Forms are. Accordingly, as the καιρός does not represent a Form (but rather, a quality of the sensible world), the one who knows the καιρός is not meant to achieve a philosophical knowledge. On this issue, however, I follow DELCOMMINETTE 2005, who argues that the statesman knows the καιρός both as a metaphysical principle and as a Form which is instantiated in the sensible world. Therefore, it is only because the statesman knows the Forms of what is in due measure that he can apply his art of measurement to what is in becoming (that is, the sensible world). For a similar view, cf. LANE 1998, pp. 139-142 who, though denying that the Forms are at play in the *Statesman*, explains that the καιρός gives the statesman a mean (μέτριον), a standard, which reveals actions that are required in a given situation.

[330] On this, I agree with MARQUEZ 2012, p. 179, who argues that 'the term *epistēmē* is specially reserved in the *Statesman* for those forms of knowledge that have something to do with the good, the just, and the noble – that is, those forms of knowledge that can justly lay claim to the title of "wisdom" (*sophia*) –, and is never used of the art of the sophist'. Curiously, Marquez also suggests that only a few scholars (e.g., SAYRE 1969, p. 149 and pp. 175-179) have noted that the statesman's knowledge does not individuate a merely technical knowledge. For a slightly different view on the issue, see EL MURR 2010b, 2014, and 2018 (and, similarly, PEIXOTO 2018), who claim that it is not simply that the *Statesman* recalls the position held by Plato in the *Republic* (according to which the philosophers are the only true statesmen). Indeed, the *Statesman* would convey the idea that either the statesman is provided with knowledge (and hence, he is a philosopher himself), or he rules on the basis of a true opinion which is guided by a true philosopher. For an interesting point of view, see ROWE 2015b, who argues that Plato thinks of the *Statesman* – and, similarly, of the *Sophist* – as a dialogue which has to illustrate the sort of "account" that needs to be added to true belief in order to give substance to knowledge (thus, both the *Statesman* and the *Sophist* would rescue from its apparent failure the *Theaetetus*' third account of knowledge). As a consequence, Plato's *Statesman* would show that the essential ingredient that was missing from the *Theaetetus*' third account of knowledge is the method of collection and division. Therefore, the stateman's ἐπιστήμη would amount to a true opinion which succeeds (by means of dialectical investigations) in providing the account of what is correctly believed.

[331] See ROWE 2015b, IONESCU 2014, IONESCU 2016, who also argue in favour of the idea that the Platonic Forms are indeed at play in Plato's *Statesman*. EL MURR 2014, pp. 162 ff., observes that textual evidence suggests that Plato proves in the *Statesman* to believe in his typical ontological system. Indeed, he suggests at *Plt*. 269d6-7 and 269d5-6 that what is divine and incorporeal is ontologically different from what is bodily. By arguing in this way, then, Plato alludes to the existence of the intelligible Forms (which are indeed divine and incorporeal).

[332] Cf. *Plt*. 269d5-7.

Forms[333]. Thus, the art (τέχνη) of statesmanship (which, as I have shown, is still expected to produce some factual outcome) can be properly performed only by the statesman who acts on the basis of a philosophical ἐπιστήμη[334] of the intelligible Forms.

2.3.2. *Is the statesman (fully) virtuous?*

Now that it is established that the *Statesman*'s πολιτικὸς ἐπιστήμων is provided with a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms (for he knows through dialectic the Form of the καιρός and the like), it is worth wondering whether or not the cognitive and epistemological excellence of the statesman has an impact on his moral nature. In this regard, some scholars claim that the statesman's knowledge appears to be ethically neutral. On this interpretation, being able to measure according to the mean – an expertise that, as I have shown, constitutes a crucial aspect of the statesman's competence – does not generate any ethical benefit. Indeed, 'attaining to the mean is necessary not only for statesmanship but also for all arts and speeches. In other words, the Stranger's concept of the mean is ethically neutral in that it is pursued equally by the sophist and the statesman'[335]. In addition to this, those who argue that the statesman's knowledge is ethically neutral also notice that Plato's *Statesman* fails to mention 'the importance of choosing a morally good life based on the knowledge of the Ideas'[336] – this being, by contrast, a claim that Plato repeatedly makes in his *Republic*. Therefore, since Plato never has the Stranger (or any of his interlocutors) emphasize that knowledge is crucial for a morally good life, it follows, so they claim, that the statesman's knowledge does not imply a morally good life[337]. On the contrary, another scholarly view[338] maintains that the statesman's knowledge of what is in due measure makes him a well-balanced human being. Furthermore, scholars who advance this view claim that, by knowing what is μέτριον, καιρός, πρέπον, and δέον, the statesman becomes the living example of virtue. Given this scholarly dispute, I will seek in the following section to address the issue so as to clarify whether or not the statesman's knowledge is presented in the *Statesman* as a mean to virtue.

In order to pursue this analysis, I will shed further light on the arguments of those scholars who deny that the statesman's knowledge of the καιρός and the like (and hence, more generally, of what is in due measure) has any ethical impact. The arguments of those who uphold the view that the statesman's knowledge has no ethical impact revolve around two main theses (which I shall call the **a**$_{\textbf{Thesis}}$ and the **b**$_{\textbf{Thesis}}$). As to the **a**$_{\textbf{Thesis}}$, scholars argue that knowing what is in due measure and acting

[333] See *infra* pp. 43-45.
[334] As the statesman's ἐπιστήμη is properly directed at intelligibles, it can also be properly directed at sensibles (for Plato co-implicates ἐπιστήμη and τέχνη in his *Statesman*).
[335] CHERRY 2012, pp. 122-123.
[336] GRISWOLD JR. 1989, p. 166 fn. 24.
[337] Cf. GRISWOLD JR. 1989, p. 166 fn. 24. For a similar view, cf. also BARTNINKAS 2014 and SCHOFIELD 1999.
[338] See e.g., GIORGINI 2018, p. 277.

in accordance with this concept is not peculiar of the πολιτικὸς ἐπιστήμων only. For the sophists too are inspired by what is measured when they give their speeches in change of money. As a consequence, the sophists and the statesmen, as artists, would make the same use of due measure. Therefore, as the sophists are condemned to vicious life[339], it follows that having knowledge of the καιρός and the like does not imply being virtuous. As for the **b**$_{\textbf{Thesis}}$, scholars highlight the fact that Plato's *Statesman*, unlike the *Republic*, does not emphasise at all the fact that a wise knowledge of the intelligible Forms is necessary for living a virtuous life. As a consequence, in the *Statesman* Plato would no longer believe that one has to be wise (and hence, achieve a philosophical knowledge) in order to be virtuous.

Now, it has to be conceded to those who endorse the **a**$_{\textbf{Thesis}}$ that statesmanship and sophistry appear to share the same status in one sense. For both statesmanship and sophistry are τέχναι[340]. However, the sophist and the statesman perform their own arts in two different ways. Indeed, the sophist is ultimately defined by Plato as 'an imitator of the wise'[341]. Hence, the sophist represents a person who appears to be wise when he performs his art of sophistry. Nonetheless, he is not truly wise – for he just appears to be so[342]. As a matter of fact, the imitation of the wise that the sophist carries out by means of his τέχνη is, as I discuss elsewhere in this thesis[343], merely "opinion-imitative" (δοξομιμητική). As a consequence, the sophist's art turns out to be inspired by an opinion which cannot be anything but false[344]. Therefore, since Plato shows at *Prt*. 358c4-5 that ignorance amounts to having a false opinion[345], it follows that the sophist performs his art being inspired by ignorance. Accordingly, even if the sophist's speeches happen to be measured (e.g., they end up being measured in tone), they are so as a result of mere accident[346]. Indeed, the sophist's action of writing his speeches down is not guided by a wise knowledge of what is in due measure. By contrast, I have suggested earlier on in this chapter that the statesman's τέχνη is inspired by what has turned out to be a

[339] As I suggested in my *Sophist*'s chapter (cf. *infra* pp. 19-26), sophists can only make an imitation of virtue when they perform their art. However, since they can only have false opinions about virtue, it follows that sophists can only generate an inevitably false appearance of virtue – for they just pretend to be just. In sum, sophists are able neither to be virtuous nor to act virtuously.
[340] Cf. e.g., *Sph*. 236c4, where sophistry is defined as a φανταστικὴ τέχνη (appearance-making art). On the contrary, I have already shown that the art of statesmanship is both τέχνη and ἐπιστήμη.
[341] See *Sph.* 268c1-d5.
[342] Cf. *infra* pp. 2 ff.
[343] See *infra* pp. 20 ff.
[344] For sophists are δοξόσοφοι: they think to know while they know nothing. It is just for this reason that sophists are (and will always be) irremediably ignorant, and hence, vicious. Cf. *infra* pp. 4 ff., where I focus on the sophists' false conceit of wisdom.
[345] See *infra* p. 19 fn. 149.
[346] The fact that the sophist may accidentally produce good (and hence, virtuous) actions does not imply that he is able to act virtuously, though not being fully virtuous. Indeed, a moral agent has to achieve at the very least a demotic virtue for acting virtuously. In turn, a demotic virtue can be attained only by practice and habit (out of which, an unstable true opinion may eventually arise). Therefore, sophists are still condemned to an irremediably vicious life. Indeed, acting virtuously as a result of mere chance does not imply being at any extent attached to virtue.

philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms[347]. Hence, when the statesman performs his art of statesmanship, his action of ruling over the city is inspired by a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms. As a consequence, it is only because the statesman has scientific knowledge of what really is in due measure that the sensible world (in this case, the city), over which he applies his knowledge, ends up being measured. Accordingly, the statesman's art does not make the same use of μέτριον, καιρός, and the like as the sophist's art. Indeed, the sophists and the statesmen deal with what is in due measure in two radically different ways: on the one hand, the sophists deal with what is in due measure only accidentally, on the other, the statesmen make a scientific use of μέτριον, καιρός, and the like. As a consequence, the **a**$_{\textbf{Thesis}}$ – according to which the statesman's knowledge is ethically neutral in light of the fact that sophists (who are irremediably vicious) and statesmen make the same use of what is in due measure – is invalidated.

Yet, it still seems to be true that, as those who endorse the **b**$_{\textbf{Thesis}}$ claim, Plato's *Statesman* does not explicitly show any strong commitment to the theory according to which one has to achieve a philosophical knowledge in order to be virtuous, as Plato had argued in other dialogues. Therefore, some scholars have inferred that, by the time that Plato writes the *Statesman* down, he no longer ascribes to the theory of ethical intellectualism (according to which virtue is knowledge)[348]. Now, I will tackle this issue by considering Sylvain Delcomminette's focused analysis of the *Statesman*'s concept of what is in due measure. By doing so, I will definitively assess whether or not what is in due measure in the *Statesman* is related to the Form of Good. What is more, exploring Delcomminette's argumentation will help us find out a method through which we will be in a better position to (1) address the concerns of those who endorse the **b**$_{\textbf{Thesis}}$ and (2) evaluate if their arguments are cogent.

To start with, Delcomminette notices that Plato explicitly (though subtly) associates his *Statesman*'s concept of what is in due measure with his discussion of due measure and other goods in the *Philebus*[349]. Indeed, he points out that Plato has the Stranger specify at *Plt*. 284d1-3 that what he and his interlocutors have just said about the concept of what is in due measure will be discussed again at some point in the future (ποτε). Having made the assumption that the 'ποτε' refers to the time when the dialogue reported in the *Philebus* (will) take place, Delcomminette analyses the *Philebus*' concept of what is in due measure in order to shed light on the *Statesman*'s discussion of what is μέτριον, καιρός, πρέπον, and δέον. As a consequence, he first explores the *Philebus*' ranking of goods and notes that what is in due measure (μέτριον, καιρός) is presented in the *Philebus* as the most

[347] Cf. *Plt*. 305d1-4, where Plato explains that the statesman performs his art, and hence, takes control of the subordinate arts, because he knows (γιγνώσκειν) when it is the right time (καιρός) to do, or not do, something in the interest of the city. See *infra* pp. 44-47.
[348] Cf. GRISWOLD JR. 1989, p. 166 fn. 24. For a similar view, cf. also BARTNINKAS 2014 and SCHOFIELD 1999.
[349] See *infra* 45 fn. 317.

important aspect of the Form of Good. Indeed, the first rank of goods – that is, the goods which are the most necessary for humans to make their own lives as good as possible – is said at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 to include measure (μέτρον) and its cognates, i.e., what is in due measure and what is in the right time (μέτριον, καίριον). Also, Delcomminette points out that Plato declares at *Phlb*. 65a1-5 that beauty, proportion, and truth (κάλλος, συμμετρία, ἀλήθεια) are the Forms (ἰδέαι) which constitute the unity of the Good itself (ἀγαθόν)[350]. Therefore, given that (a) what is well-proportioned (σύμμετρον) and beautiful (κάλον) constitute the second-ranked goods, and (b) the second-ranked goods are goods insofar as they are individuated by means of the criterion of what is in due measure (μέτριον, καιρός), it follows that the first-ranked goods (that is, what is in due measure – μέτριον, καιρός) are to be primarily associated with the Form of Good. Now, Delcomminette observes that Plato already alludes in the *Statesman* to the *Philebus*' discussion about the concept of what is in due measure. For what is μέτριον, καιρός, πρέπον, and δέον seems to be bound together with the Form of Good in the *Statesman*. Indeed, Plato specifies at *Plt*. 283e5-6 that being aware of what is in due measure allows us to distinguish what is good from what is bad. Similarly, also *Plt*. 284b1-2 conveys the idea that it is only by preserving measure that good and fine things may be produced. Interestingly, the Form of Good, as Delcomminette suggests, is associated with the concept of what is in due measure also in other (earlier) Platonic works, such as the *Gorgias*[351], the *Protagoras*[352], and the *Phaedo*[353]. Therefore, Delcomminette concludes that the *Statesman*'s concept of what is in due measure (i.e., what is μέτριον, καῖρος, πρέπον, and δέον) is indeed thought by Plato to be associated with the Form of Good (as it is more widely argued in other dialogues). Nonetheless, he points out that the Plato of the *Statesman* is not interested in providing a broad explanation concerning the nature of the link between what is in due measure and the Form of Good. Indeed, he would just point the reader to the more extensive demonstration (as to the fact that what is in due measure is essentially related to the Form of Good) that he has already provided – or will provide – in his other works.

Now, taking for granted that, as Delcomminette argues, the *Statesman*'s concept of what is in due measure is (more or less explicitly) associated by Plato with the Form of Good, this does not imply *per se* that, by knowing the καιρός (that is, the essential aspect of the Form of Good), the statesman is (and could never fail to be) virtuous. Indeed, if the Plato of the *Statesman* thinks that the

[350] Cf. *Phlb*. 65a1-5: see *infra* pp. 85-86.
[351] See *Grg*. 503d6 ff., where the good man, i.e., the man who speaks with regard to what is best, is said to 'say whatever he says not randomly but with a view to something'. Similarly, all the artists, who give some shape to their products, 'place what they do into a certain organization, and compel one thing to be suited for another and to fit to it until the entire object is put together in an organized and orderly way'.
[352] Cf. *Prt*. 356c4 ff., where, among the other things, the art of measurement is said to play a fundamental function for the sake of the humans' salvation in life. Interestingly, the art of measurement is presented in this passage, just like the expertise of the *Statesman*'s πολιτικός is, as both a τέχνη and an ἐπιστήμη.
[353] See *Phd*. 99c5-6, where δέον is explicitly associated with the Good itself.

knowledge of the καιρός (i.e., an ontological object which is essentially associated with the Good itself) implies being virtuous, we would expect him to openly endorse this ethical theory. Put differently, we would expect him to reiterate in the *Statesman* (just as he does in other late dialogues, such as the *Sophist*[354] and the *Laws*[355]) the so-called Socratic paradox (already presented in earlier works, such as, e.g., the *Gorgias*[356] and the *Protagoras*[357]) according to which 'virtue is knowledge'. Therefore, given that the *Statesman*'s πολιτικός has been shown to possess a philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms (and hence, assumedly, of the Form of Good too), we would expect Plato to openly declare that the statesman's knowledge of the Good itself grants him a full virtue[358]. Nonetheless, we do not find in the *Statesman* anything like such a strong commitment to the intellectualist theory of virtue. Still, we may assume that, just as for the concept of what is in due measure, the *Statesman* implicitly suggests that the attainment of virtue depends on the achievement of knowledge. Actually, two passages appear to testify to this dependence: (1) *Plt*. 272b1-d2 and (2) *Plt*. 301c6-d6. At *Plt*. 272b1-d2, Plato has the Stranger assess whether or not the nurslings of Cronus are happier than the people who live during the age of Zeus. Hence, the Stranger establishes that, if those who lived under Cronus had done philosophy, they would have been far happier than those who (now) live during the era of Zeus. As a result, the idea is conveyed that that the more people do philosophy, the happier they are. Now, given that (a) the *Statesman*'s πολιτικός has a philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms and (b) happiness depends on the degree to which one engages in philosophy, it follows that the statesman is happy to the greatest extent. For not only does he engage to some degree in philosophy, but he is also able to finally achieve a complete knowledge of the intelligible Forms (Form of Good included). Now, I have shown in the preceding chapter of this thesis[359] that Plato endorses in the *Sophist* (a dialogue "chronologically" and "philosophically" related to the *Statesman*[360]) a theory that he repeatedly claims for also in other earlier works: namely, that (a) having a philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms is crucial for the attainment of a complete virtue and (b) human moral perfection, i.e., complete virtue[361], is related to a state of complete

[354] Cf. *Sph*. 228c7-8.
[355] See *Lg*. V 731c1-7 and IX 860d5-9.
[356] Cf. *Grg*. 466a4-468e2.
[357] See *Prt*. 345c4-e6 and 352 c 2-7.
[358] Cf. e.g., *Prt*. 352c2-7, where knowledge is presented as a necessary and sufficient condition for distinguishing what is good (τἀγαθά) from what is evil (τὰ κακά).
[359] See *infra* pp. 10-13, where I argue that ignorance is presented also in the *Sophist* (just as in the *Republic*) as the most fundamental moral vice from which all the others arise.
[360] See *Plt*. 258a2-6, where Plato specifies that the dialogue represented in the *Sophist* has just happened. To this extent, then, the two dialogues are chronologically related. As for the "philosophical", and hence, theoretical, link, see *Plt*. 284b7-8, where Plato has the Stranger say that 'with the sophist we compelled what is not into being as well as what is'. Therefore, this mention that Plato makes shows that the *Statesman*'s argument relies on the philosophical theory which Plato has been developing in the *Sophist*. As a consequence, the two dialogues are also "philosophically" related.
[361] That is, the virtue that is knowledge.

happiness (εὐδαιμονία)[362]. Thus, given the philosophical and chronological proximity[363] between the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*, we may assume that, when Plato implies at *Plt.* 272b1-d2 that achieving happiness depends on whether or not the moral agent engages in philosophy, the *Sophist*'s ethical theory is still in the *Statesman*'s theoretical background. If so, Plato would already assume at *Plt.* 272b1-d2 that doing philosophy is necessary for being happy. Indeed, the achievement of a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms (and, especially, of the Form of Good) entails the attainment of a full and complete virtue, which is crucial for achieving the greatest happiness. Hence, we can therefore provisionally conclude that Plato's *Statesman* implicitly alludes to the fact that achieving a wise philosophical knowledge (of the Form of Good, in particular) implies being fully virtuous.

Plt. 301c6-d6 supports our claim that, according to the ethical theory that Plato has in mind when he writes the *Statesman*, having a philosophical knowledge implies being fully virtuous. Indeed, after having established that the ideal statesman is a man who is provided with wisdom ('μετὰ φρονήσεως')[364], and who is indeed 'σοφὸς καὶ ἀγαθὸς' (wise and good)[365], Plato has the Stranger draw further emphasis on the fact that only this kind of statesman, namely a man who is able to rule with virtue and knowledge ('μετ᾽ἀρετῆς καὶ ἐπιστήμης ἄρχοντα'), will be able to succeed in governing 'a constitution that would alone be correct in the strict sense, steering it through in happiness'[366]. Therefore, *Plt.* 301c6-d6 (along with *Plt.* 296e3 – that is, where Plato specifies that the good statesman is σοφὸς καὶ ἀγαθὸς[367]) more or less explicitly shows that virtue and knowledge co-implicate[368]. Moreover, there would be an equivalence of sorts between ἀρετή and ἐπιστήμη if we assume that, when Plato states at *Plt.* 301c6-d6 that the good statesman rules 'μετ᾽ἀρετῆς καὶ ἐπιστήμης', the 'καί' gets an epexegetic value. On this interpretation, the virtue that the statesman

[362] See *infra* p. 14 fn. 110, where I argue that Platonic evidence (cf. e.g., *R.* I 353d9-354a2; *Chrm.* 172a, 173d; *Cri.* 48b; *Grg.* 507b-c; *Euthd.* 280b6) shows us that the achievement of happiness implies being virtuous.
[363] See *infra* p. 52 fn. 362.
[364] See *Plt.* 294a8.
[365] Cf. *Plt.* 296e3.
[366] See *Plt.* 301c6-d6.
[367] See *infra* p. 18 fn. 141, where I observe that scholars agree on the fact that there is in Greek no other adjective but ἀγαθός to denote one who is virtuous.
[368] See MISHIMA 1995, p. 312, BOBONICH 1995b, p. 313 fn. 2, and BOSSI 2018, p. 288, who all agree on the fact that, since Plato establishes at *Plt.* 301c6-d6 that the ideal statesman rules with virtue and knowledge, it has to follow that he possesses all the virtues. Indeed, since he has knowledge of the Good itself, he cannot do wrong (for no one does wrong willingly). See also MARQUEZ 2012, p. 320, who establishes that 'only the statesman has complete virtue, since his valuation of various things, and in particular of the policies appropriate to a city *vis-à-vis* external threats, is dependent only on knowledge of the good, the just, and the noble, as well as the available facts of the situation. For the Stranger as for Socrates, genuine virtue is knowledge'. See also GIORGINI 2018, p. 268, who agrees with PENNER 1992 and MCCABE 2016, and argues that the statesman, who holds the science of good and evil, achieves the whole of virtue, that is, a philosophical, and hence, complete, virtue.

attains turns out to be knowledge. As a result, the statesman's virtue does consist of knowledge, as the so-called Socratic theory of ethical intellectualism requires[369].

To conclude, Plato's *Statesman* shows that the statesman's knowledge is not ethically neutral, as some scholars have argued. Indeed, I have clarified that it is not the case that irremediably vicious people (i.e., the sophists) and the statesman possess the same kind of knowledge. Hence, I have suggested that it is incorrect to argue that the same kind of knowledge inspires two radically different ethical behaviours (one vicious, the other virtuous). On the other hand, I have acknowledged that, as some scholars contend, Plato's *Statesman* does not show a strong commitment to the theory according to which one has to possess knowledge if she is to be virtuous. However, I have also suggested that some philosophical theories are only alluded to in certain Platonic dialogues, as they are more exhaustively presented in others, such as in Plato's *Statesman*. Indeed, textual evidence (more or less explicitly) shows that Plato alludes in various ways[370] to the fact that he still believes in a central aspect of the theory of ethical intellectualism, whereby virtue is knowledge. For I have shown that the *Statesman*'s πολιτικὸς ἐπιστήμων (who holds a wise philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms – the Form of the Good itself included) is fully virtuous, as virtue is thought to be knowledge. As a result, I have determined that the Plato of the *Statesman* is still consistent with a key aspect of the theory of ethical intellectualism that he has more exhaustively developed and presented in other dialogues.

2.4. *The* Statesman*'s ordinary people*

I have ascertained that Plato's *Statesman* is mainly concerned with the figure of the πολιτικὸς ἐπιστήμων. Indeed, I have shown that the *Statesman* ultimately achieves the aim to define the πολιτικὸς's knowledge (for it is ultimately presented as a philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms). In addition to this, I have also suggested that the statesman's knowledge is (more or less explicitly) presented as having a significant impact on his ethical behaviour. Indeed, as virtue is still thought to be knowledge, I have determined that Plato's *Statesman* establishes that the statesman is a fully virtuous person. However, although the dialogue's scope is mainly concerned with the figure of the πολιτικὸς ἐπιστήμων, we can still detect, as Christopher Bobonich has argued[371], 'an increased

[369] After all, that (a) virtue is knowledge and (b) holding a wise philosophical knowledge implies being virtuous is something that Plato (more or less explicitly) suggests at *Plt.* 296e3. For the statesman is said to be 'σοφὸς καὶ ἀγαθὸς'. Therefore, the statesman is wise *and* (καί, that is to say '*and hence*', if we assume that this 'καί' gets an epexegetic value) virtuous. Therefore, also *Plt.* 296e3 suggests that virtue and (philosophical) knowledge co-implicate. See BOSSI 2018, p. 301, who argues that Plato conceives of the statesman 'as somebody who has reached the level of philosophical wisdom which implies all the genuine virtues'.

[370] That is, (1) by establishing a chronological connection between the *Statesman* and the *Sophist*, (2) by alluding in the *Statesman* to the ontological theory that has been more widely explored in the *Sophist*, and (3) by (more or less explicitly) showing that he still believes in the *Sophist*'s ethical theory (cf. *infra* Chapter 1, where I analyse the *Sophist*'s ethical theory).

[371] See BOBONICH 1995b, p. 313.

interest in the nature and capacities of ordinary people, that is, non-philosophers' in the *Statesman*, as well as in other late dialogues. Thus, I will try to evaluate in the following sections Plato's presentation of ordinary people in his *Statesman*. Accordingly, I will first consider how ordinary people are characterized from an epistemological point of view. Secondly, I will investigate if, and, eventually, to what extent, their cognitive state has an impact on their ethical behaviour. By doing so, I shall be in a position to finally assess whether or not Plato remains consistent throughout the *Statesman* with the ethical theory that he has been endorsing in his whole *corpus*.

2.4.1. *The ordinary people's cognitive state*

If it is actually the case, as it is sometimes argued, that Plato's late dialogues are (additionally) concerned with the ordinary people, we would expect Plato's *Statesman*, as a late dialogue, to focus on this kind of figure. The aim of this section will therefore be to evaluate how ordinary people are presented by Plato in his *Statesman* from an epistemological point of view. In so doing, I will assess whether or not (and, eventually, to what extent) the statesman's knowledge – which has been proved to be a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms – has an impact on the ordinary people's cognitive state.

To begin, we may consider what Plato actually says about ordinary people in the *Statesman*. After having suggested that the art of statesmanship, just as the art of weaving, takes control of all the subordinate arts[372], Plato has the Stranger and the Young Socrates clarify at *Plt*. 308d1-309a7 that, at a very initial stage, the statesman engages with ordinary people only indirectly.

> ΞΕ. Οὐδ' ἄρα ἡ κατὰ φύσιν ἀληθῶς οὖσα ἡμῖν πολιτικὴ μή ποτε ἐκ χρηστῶν καὶ κακῶν ἀνθρώπων ἑκοῦσα εἶναι συστήσηται πόλιν τινά, ἀλλ' εὔδηλον ὅτι παιδιᾷ πρῶτον βασανιεῖ, μετὰ δὲ τὴν βάσανον αὖ τοῖς δυναμένοις παιδεύειν καὶ ὑπηρετεῖν πρὸς τοῦτ' αὐτὸ παραδώσει, προστάττουσα καὶ ἐπιστατοῦσα αὐτή, καθάπερ ὑφαντικὴ τοῖς τε ξαίνουσι καὶ τοῖς τἆλλα προπαρασκευάζουσιν ὅσα πρὸς τὴν πλέξιν αὐτῆς συμπαρακολουθοῦσα προστάττει καὶ ἐπιστατεῖ, τοιαῦτα ἑκάστοις ἐνδεικνῦσα τὰ ἔργα ἀποτελεῖν οἷα ἂν ἐπιτήδεια ἡγῆται πρὸς τὴν αὐτῆς εἶναι συμπλοκήν. ΝΕ. ΣΩ. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν. ΞΕ. Ταὐτὸν δή μοι τοῦθ' ἡ βασιλικὴ φαίνεται πᾶσι τοῖς κατὰ νόμον παιδευταῖς καὶ τροφεῦσιν, τὴν τῆς ἐπιστατικῆς αὐτὴ δύναμιν ἔχουσα, οὐκ ἐπιτρέψειν ἀσκεῖν ὅτι μή τις πρὸς τὴν αὐτῆς σύγκρασιν ἀπεργαζόμενος ἦθός τι πρέπον ἀποτελεῖ, ταῦτα δὲ μόνα παρακελεύεσθαι παιδεύειν· καὶ τοὺς μὲν μὴ δυναμένους κοινωνεῖν ἤθους ἀνδρείου καὶ σώφρονος ὅσα τε ἄλλα ἐστὶ τείνοντα πρὸς ἀρετήν, ἀλλ' εἰς ἀθεότητα καὶ ὕβριν καὶ ἀδικίαν ὑπὸ κακῆς βίᾳ φύσεως ἀπωθουμένους, θανάτοις τε ἐκβάλλει καὶ φυγαῖς καὶ ταῖς μεγίσταις κολάζουσα ἀτιμίαις. ΝΕ. ΣΩ. Λέγεται γοῦν πως οὕτως. ΞΕ. Τοὺς δὲ ἐν ἀμαθίᾳ τε αὖ καὶ ταπεινότητι πολλῇ κυλινδουμένους εἰς τὸ δουλικὸν ὑποζεύγνυσι γένος. ΝΕ. ΣΩ. Ὀρθότατα.
>
> VISITOR: In that case, neither will what we have decided is by nature truly the art of statesmanship ever voluntarily put together a city out of good and bad human beings. It's quite clear that it will first put them to the test in play, and after the test it will in turn hand them over to those with the capacity to educate them and serve it towards this particular end. It will itself lay down prescriptions for the educators and direct them, in the same way that weaving follows along with the carders, and those who prepare the other things it needs for its own work, prescribing for and directing them, giving indications to each group to finish their products in whatever way it thinks

[372] See *Plt*. 305a-e.

suitable for its own interweaving. YOUNG SOCRATES: Yes, absolutely. VISITOR: In just this very way, it seems to me, the art of kingship – since it is this that itself possesses the capacity belonging to the directing art – will not permit the educators and tutors, who function according to law, to do anything in the exercise of their role that will not ultimately result in some disposition which is appropriate to its own mixing role. It calls on them to teach these things alone; and those of their pupils that are unable to share in a disposition that is courageous and moderate, and whatever else tends to the sphere of virtue, but are thrust forcibly away by an evil nature into godlessness, excess and injustice, it throws out by killing them, sending them into exile, and punishing them with the most extreme forms of dishonor. YOUNG SOCRATES: At least it is put something like that. VISITOR: And again those who wallow in great ignorance and baseness it brings under the yoke of the class of slaves. YOUNG SOCRATES: Quite correct.

Plt. 308d1-309a7

As *Plt*. 308d1-309a7 shows, the superordinate πολιτικὸς has to firstly use his τέχνη so to hand the citizens over to those with the capacity to educate them. For the statesman lays down prescriptions for the subordinate teachers and directs them[373] so that all the ordinary people will be tested through 'play' (παιδιᾷ). Through this process, then, the statesman ends up knowing who is able to be educated and who is not (i.e., those people who either show an irremediably vicious nature or are affected by great ignorance and baseness). As a result, only those who the statesman acknowledges as being able to (a) receive an education and (b) share in a disposition which is courageous and moderate (and in all the other things which tend to virtue) are allowed to remain in the city. For the statesman expels all the other (irremediably vicious) people from the πόλις.

Hence, as soon as the remaining citizens complete their educational process, the statesman more directly deals with all these people who, having been educated, can commingle with each other and so be directed towards nobility[374].

ΞΕ. Τοὺς λοιποὺς τοίνυν, ὅσων αἱ φύσεις ἐπὶ τὸ γενναῖον ἱκαναὶ παιδείας τυγχάνουσαι καθίστασθαι καὶ δέξασθαι μετὰ τέχνης σύμμειξιν πρὸς ἀλλήλας, τούτων τὰς μὲν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀνδρείαν μᾶλλον συντεινούσας, οἷον στημονοφυὲς νομίσασ' αὐτῶν εἶναι τὸ στερεὸν ἦθος, τὰς δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ κόσμιον πίονί τε καὶ μαλακῷ καὶ κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα κροκώδει διανήματι προσχρωμένας, ἐναντία δὲ τεινούσας ἀλλήλαις, πειρᾶται τοιόνδε τινὰ τρόπον συνδεῖν καὶ συμπλέκειν. ΝΕ. ΣΩ. Ποῖον δή; ΞΕ. Πρῶτον μὲν κατὰ τὸ συγγενὲς τὸ ἀειγενὲς ὂν τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτῶν μέρος θείῳ συναρμοσαμένη δεσμῷ, μετὰ δὲ τὸ θεῖον τὸ ζῳογενὲς αὐτῶν αὖθις ἀνθρωπίνοις. ΝΕ. ΣΩ. Πῶς τοῦτ' εἶπες αὖ;

VISITOR: Then as for the others, whose natures are capable of becoming composed and stable in the direction of nobility, if they acquire education, and, with the help of expertise, of admitting commingling with each other – of these, it tries to bind together and intertwine the ones who strain more towards courage, its view being that their firm disposition is as it were like the warp, and the ones who incline towards the moderate, who produce an ample, soft, and—to continue the image—wooflike thread, two natures with opposite tendencies; and it does so in something like the following way. YOUNG SOCRATES: What way is that? VISITOR: First, by fitting together that part of their soul that is eternal with a divine bond, in accordance with its kinship with the divine, and after the divine, in turn fitting together their mortal aspect with human bonds. YOUNG SOCRATES: Again, what do you mean by this?

[373] Just as weaving follows along with the carders: cf. *Plt*. 308d1-e2.

[374] *Plt*. 309a8-b2. See DIXSAUT 1995, p. 264, who observes that, if education aims in the *Republic* at achieving a stable character by the mixing of courage and moderation within a selected number of individuals, this is also the aim that the *Statesman*'s education is meant to achieve.

Plt. 309a8-c4

At *Plt*. 309a8-c4, Plato suggests that the statesman, as a weaver, deals with a material (that is, the citizen body) which is constituted by people who embody two contrasting virtues, courage and moderation. Therefore, given that the ordinary people who live in the statesman's city embody these two contrasting virtues, the statesman's main concern consists of (at the very least[375]) mitigating this contrast by harmonizing as far as possible these two classes of people (i.e., those who are chiefly courageous and those who are chiefly moderate). To achieve this goal, then, the statesman uses two different kinds of bond so to intertwine the two opposite natures (φύσεις) of the courageous and of the moderate people. As a consequence, a divine bond (which has to be fit together with the part of the educated citizens' soul that is eternal and divine) is deployed along with a human bond (involving marriage arrangements)[376].

As for the divine bond (i.e., the only bond that is relevant for the sake of the present inquiry), Plato further clarifies at *Plt*. 309c5-d5 that what the statesman fits (through his music [μούσα][377]) together with the eternal (and divine) part of the citizens' soul consists of a firm true opinion (ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως)[378] about what is fine (κάλον), just (δίκαιον), and good (ἀγαθόν), as well as the opposite of these[379]. As a result, a divine firm true opinion about what is fine, just, good, and their opposites, comes to be in the soul of those who belong to the class of what is more than human (i.e., in the soul of all the educated ordinary people who the statesman allows to live in the πόλις).

> ΞΕ. Τὴν τῶν καλῶν καὶ δικαίων πέρι καὶ ἀγαθῶν καὶ τῶν τούτοις ἐναντίων ὄντως οὖσαν ἀληθῆ δόξαν μετὰ βεβαιώσεως, ὁπόταν ἐν [ταῖς] ψυχαῖς ἐγγίγνηται, θείαν φημὶ ἐν δαιμονίῳ γίγνεσθαι γένει. ΝΕ. ΣΩ. Πρέπει γοῦν οὕτω. ΞΕ. Τὸν δὴ πολιτικὸν καὶ τὸν ἀγαθὸν νομοθέτην ἆρ' ἴσμεν ὅτι προσήκει μόνον δυνατὸν εἶναι τῇ τῆς βασιλικῆς μούσῃ τοῦτο αὐτὸ ἐμποιεῖν τοῖς ὀρθῶς μεταλαβοῦσι παιδείας, οὓς ἐλέγομεν νυνδή; ΝΕ. ΣΩ. Τὸ γοῦν εἰκός.
>
> VISITOR: I mean, whenever it comes to be in the souls, the opinion with firmness which is really true concerning beautiful things, just things, good things, and their opposites, something divine comes to be in the class of what is more than human. YOUNG SOCRATES: That's certainly a fitting view to take. VISITOR: Then do we recognize that it belongs to the statesman and the good legislator alone to be capable of bringing this very thing about, by means of the music that belongs to the art of kingship, in those who have had their correct share of education – the people we were speaking of just now? YOUNG SOCRATES: That's certainly reasonable.
>
> *Plt*. 309c5-d5

Now, this overview of what Plato says in his *Statesman* with reference to ordinary people may already appear to exhaust the scope of the present inquiry. Indeed, Plato explicitly specifies what kind of cognitive state ordinary people achieve. For the citizens' epistemological condition is presented as

[375] Cf. EL MURR 2014, p. 271, and ROWE 2018, p. 314, who highlight the fact that courage and moderation are by nature at odds. As a consequence, El Murr argues that the contrast between the two corresponding classes of people cannot be wholly eliminated.
[376] See *infra* pp. 39-40.
[377] Cf. *Plt*. 309d1-4.
[378] Cf. *Plt*. 309c6.
[379] See *Plt*. 309c5-d4 and 310e6-7.

a firm true opinion (ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως). Therefore, as Plato is still committed – as I have argued[380] – to the ontological theory according to which the eternal, immutable, and intelligible Forms are opposed to the unstable sensible reality, it seems to follow that the citizens' opinion (δόξα, namely a cognitive state through which only the sensible reality can be to some extent assessed)[381] is inferior to the statesman's philosophical ἐπιστήμη (that is, a wise knowledge of what really is – i.e., the Forms)[382]. Indeed, the statesman's authority has been shown to be basically grounded on epistemology. As a matter of fact, if the πολιτικὸς is what he is (that is, the leader of ordinary people), this is just because he (a) is ἐπιστήμων (i.e., he has a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms) and (b) performs the art of statesmanship in light of his philosophical ἐπιστήμη. However, many issues remain that need to be clarified. To start with, why are the people who the statesman has to intertwine (i.e., the courageous and the moderate people) opposed to each other? Next, however the quarrel between them originates, how is a firm true opinion meant by Plato to resolve the original antagonism? Then, to what extent is this true opinion firm? And, more generally, what kind of cognitive state does this firm true opinion consist of?

First of all, then, it is worth clarifying the reasons why the moderate and the courageous people are presented as being opposed to each other. Plato has the Stranger establish at *Plt*. 307b5-7 that actions that occur at the wrong time (that is, actions which are ἄκαιρα) must be censured. For actions which are either manic or lethargic turn out either sharper or too slow than is timely (καιρός)[383]. More importantly, people who are more akin to either set of qualities (that is, either to what is manic or to what is lethargic) 'praise (ἐπαινοῦντες) some things as belonging to their own kin, and censure those of their opponents as alien'. As a consequence, these people end up not only performing excessive (ἄκαιρα) actions but also engaging 'in a great deal of hostility towards each other'[384]. For they are

[380] See *infra* pp. 44-47.

[381] See e.g., *R*. VI 509d-511e, where the so-called theory of the divided line shows that opinion (δόξα) signifies a cognitive state which relates to the visible realm of reality. See also *Ti*. 27d5-28a4, where Plato has first Timaeus distinguish between what always is and never becomes and what becomes and never is. Next, Timaeus connects each of these two ontological realms with a specific epistemological condition: what always is is grasped by means of an understanding (νόησις), which involves a reasoned account (λόγος), while what never is is understood by means of opinion (δόξα), which involves unreasoning sense perception (αἴσθησις ἄλογος).

[382] Cf. GRISWOLD JR. 1989, p. 143, who argues that the Stranger 'seems to want to distinguish between true opinion and *episteme* (e.g., 301a10b3)'. For a radically different view, see CASERTANO 2018, p. 83, who argues that the divine, really true, and firm opinion about what is fine, just, and good, and the opposite of these, (that is, the divine opinion which comes to be in the soul of a daemonic man: see *Plt*. 309c5–d4) is equated by Plato to the statesman's knowledge. Therefore, Casertano concludes that the true opinion of a daemonic being who lives in truth is exactly the same thing as the statesman's divine science. See also GIORGINI 2018, p. 280, who points out that Plato's *Statesman* 'marks a clear departure from the hard and fast distinction between knowledge (*episteme*) and opinion (*doxa*) of the *Republic*'. For a more moderate view, cf. BOBONICH 1995b, p. 322, who suggests that, given that Plato claims at *Plt*. 309e5-7 that, if the moderate people achieve a divine true and firm opinion, they become 'truly moderate and wise, so far as the state is concerned' (I will more widely discuss this passage in the following section). As a result, Bobonich argues that 'the precise meaning of this qualification is not clear: what the moderate (and presumably the courageous) have is not the sort of wisdom a philosopher has, but it must be a quality that has some serious claim to resemble wisdom'.

[383] See *Plt*. 307b9-c7.

[384] See *Plt*. 307c9-d4.

inspired by strong desires (ἔρωτα[385], ἐπιθυμίαι[386]) which make them disagree on the most important things (for they are inclined towards opposite ends)[387]. Therefore, these two classes of contrasting people are basically hostile to each other because their actions are inspired by radically different desires. Indeed, the desires of the moderate people make them long for achieving an end which is incompatible with what the courageous people desire to achieve. In this way, the courageous and the moderate people end up (mistakenly) thinking radically different things to be καιρός, and hence, to a certain extent good[388]. In a word, if the moderate and the courageous people end up being hostile to each other, this is because their actions are incompatible. For their desires make them differently think of (and hence, have radically different opinions about[389]) what the καιρός is, and hence, what is to be generally thought to be good[390].

Thus, the statesman has to harmonize this disordered citizen body by mixing up these two contrasting classes of citizens (i.e., that of the moderate and that of the courageous people). To achieve this goal, the statesman binds all the citizens' soul with an ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως (that is, a firm true opinion) which is explicitly declared by Plato to be divine. Indeed, such a divine firm true opinion is akin to the eternal (and hence, divine[391]) part of the soul with which it is intertwined. Hence, by having their eternal soul's part intertwined with a divine and firm true opinion, all the citizens succeed in recognizing a set of common values (such as, what is κάλον, δίκαιον, and ἀγαθόν)[392]. In this way, the divine ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως that the statesman intertwines with the eternal part of the citizens' soul provides at the very least[393] one (alleged[394]) benefit. In fact, the divine bond

[385] Cf. *Plt*. 307e1-308a2.
[386] See *Plt*. 308a4-9.
[387] Cf. *Plt*. 308b2-4.
[388] See *infra* pp. 50-51, where I explain that the καιρός represents an essential aspect of what the Good really is.
[389] Cf. *Sph*. 264a8-b3 and *Tht*. 189e4-190a6, where Plato specifies that thinking (διανοεῖσθαι), and hence, thought (διάνοια), are to be identified with a talk (λόγος) that the soul entertains with itself. The final outcome of this speech – which is internal to the soul – amounts to an opinion (δόξα).
[390] See BOBONICH 1995b, pp. 314 ff., who argues that courage and moderation constitute two character-states which involve tendencies to praise different and incompatible sorts of qualities (307d1-4) and to have incompatible desires (307e1-308a9). In turn, then, each character state involves certain judgments about what is best. Thus, the judgments of the courageous are inconsistent with the judgments of the moderate people. Therefore, Bobonich concludes that, in the courageous and moderate people, there is an opposition between logically inconsistent judgments of goodness as well as a concomitant incompatibility between the desires and emotions connected with these judgments. See also EL MURR 2014, p. 271, who points out that courageous and moderate people are opposed to each other as to their understanding of the καιρός (on the basis of which they carry their actions out).
[391] See ARONADIO 2015, who suggests that the notion of kinship (συγγένεια) gets a positive sense at *Plt*. 309e6. For the divine bond is said to be imposed in accordance with συγγένεια. Thus, Aronadio argues that both the eternal part of the soul (which is bound together with firm true opinion) and the firm true opinion itself are akin to one another as they are both divine.
[392] See *Plt*. 309c5-d4 and 310e6-7.
[393] In the following section, I will assess whether or not the divine bond has also an effect on the inner state of the individual soul.
[394] I say 'alleged' because Plato does not explicitly indicate the extent to which the divine bond may be beneficial. However, I agree with EL MURR 2014, pp. 279-281 on this issue. For he argues that the divine bond of firm true opinion allows all the citizens to believe in a shared set of values. Indeed, the same true opinion is held by all the citizens (for it is intertwined with the eternal part of each citizen's soul). As a consequence, all the citizens end up rating the same thing

that the statesman binds together with the divine part of all the citizens' souls allows all the ordinary people to recognize what is generally appropriate and good (i.e., what is κάλον, δίκαιον, and ἀγαθόν, but also, and most fundamentally, what is καιρός). As a result, the eternal part of the soul of each and every citizen indicates the same thing to be good. Hence, the divine bond of firm true opinion which is imposed by the statesman on the eternal part of the citizens' soul has the effect to unite the divine part of each citizen's soul to the divine part of any other citizen's soul. In this way, the statesman's music (μούσα)[395] (which is responsible for [a] bringing the divine firm true opinion about and [b] intertwining it with the part of the educated citizens' soul that is eternal) has all the citizens think in the same way and hold the same values. Accordingly, given that Plato's *Phaedo* similarly defines philosophy as the greatest music[396], we may further conclude, as some scholars also do[397], not only that (a) the statesman's music is indeed his philosophical knowledge, but also that (b) it is in virtue of the statesman's philosophical knowledge that the ordinary people's divine true opinion is firm[398].

Still, how exactly does the statesman's philosophical knowledge make the ordinary people's true opinion firm? To start with, the statesman, who has a philosophical knowledge of all the intelligible Forms, perfectly knows what really is κάλον, δίκαιον, and ἀγαθόν. Therefore, the statesman knows what ultimately makes a fine, just, and good thing just what it is. As a consequence, he is not only able to recognize when the Form of what is fine, just, and good is instantiated in the sensible world, but he can also give an account of what makes something that is κάλον, δίκαιον, and ἀγαθόν what it really is. On the contrary, the ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως that the statesman binds together with the eternal part of each citizen's soul should be only taken to allow ordinary people to recognize when something in the physical world is κάλον, δίκαιον, and ἀγαθόν[399]. Hence, the citizens' acts of thinking (which culminate in a true opinion that is in them inculcated by the statesman[400]) should be assumed to be firmly guided by the statesman's philosophical knowledge. Indeed, the wise statesman indicates to the citizens the physical instantiations of the intelligible Forms. Thus, the

to be good. For the rational part of the soul of all the citizens indicates the same thing to be good. In this way, the divine bond of firm true opinion which is imposed by the statesman has also the desirable effect to unite the divine part of each soul to the divine part of any other soul. In fact, the divine bond allows each citizen to recognize the kinship that unites him to every other citizen.

[395] Cf. *Plt.* 309d1-4

[396] See *Phd*. 60e5-61a4.

[397] Cf. ACCATTINO 1997, pp. 183-184 fn. 195, and ROWE 1995a, p. 243.

[398] See ROWE 1995a, p. 243, ROWE 2018, p. 317 fn. 35 and EL MURR 2014, p. 278 fn. 1, who all agree on the fact that the citizens' divine true opinion is made firm (for it is 'μετὰ βεβαιώσεως') by the statesman's knowledge.

[399] Indeed, ordinary people who undergo the process of education 'are capable of becoming (καθίστασθαι) composed and stable in the direction of nobility (γενναῖον)' (see *Plt.* 309a8-b2). Still, δόξα represents the cognitive state through which only the sensible reality can be to some extent assessed (see *infra* pp. 57-58, esp. fn. 381).

[400] See *infra* p. 59 fn. 389.

citizens are instructed by the statesman to truly assess the sensible reality on a permanent basis[401]. Still, although the statesman allows the ordinary people to properly judge the sensible reality, they cannot give an explanation of what the statesman's knowledge make them truly believe. As a consequence, ordinary people are not as wise as the statesman-philosopher is. Indeed, the citizens, being ultimately granted with a mere δόξα, are ignorant of the intelligible Forms[402] and cannot achieve understanding of what is that which makes something what it really is.

To conclude, the ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως that the citizens welcome in the eternal part of their soul allows them to correctly think (and hence, to have a true opinion) about what is καιρός, κάλον, δίκαιον, and ἀγαθόν within the context of the sensible world. For the wise statesman indicates to the citizens the physical instantiations of the intelligible Forms. Also, the statesman binds the citizens with the capacity to properly assess the sensible reality on a permanent basis. Yet, as the ordinary people's true opinion ultimately relies on the statesman's philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms, they are not able to fully understand what it is that makes a certain physical thing fine, just, and good. Indeed, ordinary people cannot achieve the philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms. As a consequence, although ordinary people can properly assess the sensible reality in virtue of the statesman's instructions, they cannot explain why what they find to be καιρός, κάλον, δίκαιον, and ἀγαθόν in the sensible world is what it really is.

2.4.2. *How do ordinary people behave?*

The ordinary people's cognitive state has been ascertained to consist of a true opinion (about what is κάλον, δίκαιον, ἀγαθόν, and their opposites) which is made firm by the statesman's philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms. Indeed, the eternal part of the citizens' soul is bound by the statesman's knowledge with the capacity to acknowledge when the Form of what is κάλον, δίκαιον, and ἀγαθόν is instantiated in the sensible world. Yet, ordinary people have been shown not to be able to understand what is that which makes a sensible "object" the thing that it is. For ordinary people have been presented as being unable to achieve a philosophical knowledge of the basic constituents of reality, that is, the Forms. Accordingly, the firm true opinion which is granted to the citizens has

[401] Indeed, the ontological domain of δόξα is individuated, as I have already suggested, by the sensible reality. Therefore, someone who is not able to get access to the philosophical knowledge of the basic constituents of reality (that is, the Forms) can at best aim to truly assess the sensible reality by means of achieving a true opinion.

[402] For a similar view, see MARQUEZ 2012, pp. 328 ff., who suggests that the ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως that the citizens welcome in the divine part of their soul consists of an inductive and inarticulate form of "knowledge". For it individuates 'a catalog of propositions rather than a deeper understanding of the underlying forms'. Therefore, if it is the case that firm true opinion is different from philosophical knowledge, Marquez argues that it must also be the case that firm true opinion is different from the merely true opinion. Indeed, unlike the opinion which is merely true, a firm true opinion is true in a wide range of circumstances. For a radically different view, cf. BOBONICH 1995b, pp. 322-323, who argues that the citizens' firm true opinion is firm as it constitutes a reasoned opinion. On this interpretation, then, moderate and courageous people end up being able not only to grasp the reason why they truly believe something, but also to (a) understand these explanations and (b) integrate them with the rest of their beliefs. Being able to do so, then, non-philosophers would be able to do more than unthinkingly accept what they are told to believe.

turned out to be epistemologically inferior to the πολιτικὸς's ἐπιστήμη, which consists of a wise knowledge of the intelligible Forms. What is more, I have also suggested that, since the statesman possesses a philosophical knowledge, he is fully virtuous. Indeed, Plato's *Statesman* has been taken to be (more or less explicitly) committed to the theory of ethical intellectualism according to which virtue and knowledge are mutually co-implicated (for virtue is knowledge and knowledge is virtue)[403]. Now, given that the ordinary people's firm true opinion has been shown to be less worthy than the statesman's philosophical knowledge, it is worth wondering whether or not, and, eventually, to what extent, the (epistemologically) inferior cognitive state of the citizens affects their moral capacities. Accordingly, my analysis will assess the impact that the firm true opinion that the citizens welcome in their souls may have on their ethical behaviour.

To start, it is useful to return to an aspect that I have briefly explored in the preceding section of this chapter. Indeed, I have already suggested that the educated ordinary people who are not yet bound by the statesman with an ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως are said in the *Statesman* to be in contrast with each other. Indeed, we are told that there are parts (μόρια) of virtue of no small importance (presumably, courage and moderation) which are by nature (φύσει)[404] at odds with each other[405]. Hence, ordinary people, who embody these two contrasting virtues, (a) are inspired by desires (ἔρωτα[406], ἐπιθυμίαι[407]) which make them think differently of (and hence, have radically different opinions about[408]) what is appropriately good[409] and (b) perform actions under the guidance of radically different thoughts and opinions (which are, in their turn, inspired by radically different desires). In sum, ordinary people[410] are ultimately presented as being hostile to each other, given that they pursue contrasting aims.

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[403] See also *infra* pp. 55 ff. See *infra* pp. 13-18, where I argue that the proposition 'virtue is knowledge' (which is central to the theory of ethical intellectualism) must be read as a biconditional.

[404] EL MURR 2021, p. 241, rightly observes that 'because this conflict is natural and because, for that very reason, the difference between these two parts of virtue is unlikely to disappear, the statesman will resolve this conflict by making it possible for opposites to become compatible, by transforming, as it were, antagonism into complementarity. This very process crucially involves education, which is the sole concern of one page or so of the *Statesman* 308b10-309b7'.

[405] Cf. *Plt*. 307c9-308b8: these two parts of virtue (i.e., moderation and courage) are associated with some qualities. Speed, sharpness, and vigorousness are linked to courage, while their opposites are related to moderation. Now, the fact that Plato has the Stranger characterize in this way courage and moderation has been taken by some scholars (see ROWE 2018, pp. 316 ff., and BOSSI 2018, pp. 304 ff.) to be meaningful. For the fact that courage and moderation are (a) associated with qualities which characterize the humans' everyday life, (b) said to be *naturally* opposed dispositions, and (c) meant to produce slavery and destruction, persuades that neither courage nor moderation indicate fully developed, or genuine, virtues. Indeed, courage and moderation would fit unproblematically together in the case of a person who holds a philosophical knowledge and attains the whole of virtue. Therefore, the fact that these two parts of virtue are said to be at odds does not imply that virtue, being divided into two parts, cannot be understood as a unity which equates to knowledge. Indeed, Plato's *Statesman* suggests, as I have already shown, that the unity of virtue is maintained in the case of a philosophical virtue.

[406] Cf. *Plt*. 307e1-308a2.

[407] See *Plt*. 308a4-9.

[408] Cf. *infra* p. 59 fn. 389.

[409] See *infra* p. 59 fn. 390.

[410] Actually, Plato is not here concerned with individuals. Rather, he focuses on two classes of people (i.e., the class of the courageous and that of the moderate people) which end up being hostile to each other. However, I have shown (see

Therefore, it is in light of this opposition between the moderate and the courageous people that the statesman needs to intertwine these two classes of citizens so to have them live in harmony. Now, the most effective[411] means to intertwine these two classes of citizens consists, as I have already suggested, of a divine bond that is attached by the statesman to the eternal part of all the citizens' souls. As a consequence, this divine bond, consisting of a firm true opinion (ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως) about what is fine (κάλον), just (δίκαιον), and good (ἀγαθόν), and the opposites of these, allows all the ordinary people to recognize what is fine, just, and good in the context of sensible reality. What is more, the divine bond binds the eternal parts of all the citizens' souls together. In this way, the divine firm true opinion which is attached to the eternal part of each citizen's soul allows all the ordinary people to acknowledge their kinship and then to live in the respect of each other[412].

However, it is worth wondering now to what extent ordinary people become so civilized to manage to live a peaceful life. To investigate this, I will consider what Plato has the Stranger say about the divine bond. Having specified that the divine bond is divine to the extent that it is akin to the eternal part of the soul with which it is intertwined, the Stranger specifies that this divine firm true opinion 'comes to be in the class of the more than human'[413]. In this way, the divine ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως (that the statesman binds together with the eternal part of the ordinary people's souls) is said to be welcomed in the souls of people who belong to a divine (δαιμονίῳ) kind (γένει). Now, how could such people as the citizens – who are not able to achieve a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms – be divine? Indeed, Plato specifies elsewhere in his *corpus* that epistemological (and moral) excellence is achieved by those who are worth being rated as divine people. For he clarifies in his *Sophist* that those who are surely worth being called divine[414] are those who (a) put the highest value on such things as knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), intelligence (φρόνησις), and intellect (νοῦς)[415] and (b) are therefore virtuous[416]. As a consequence, the divine people come out to be those who manage to (a) achieve a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms, and (b) keep their irrational desires, pleasures, pains, and affections under control by means of rationality (that is,

infra pp. 55-58) that these two classes exhaust all ordinary people in the *Statesman*. For all those people who are not able to be educated so as to share in a disposition which is moderate and courageous are expelled by the statesman's city.

[411] See *Plt*. 308e4-309a3 and *infra* pp. 37-38: the statesman first needs to order the subordinate political arts to educate people so that they could have a share in a disposition that is courageous and moderate.

[412] Thus, the divine bond appears to have an impact on the human soul which is both intra (see *infra* pp. 58-60) and inter psychic.

[413] Cf. *Plt*. 309d1-4.

[414] Cf. *Sph*. 216a-c. See also *infra* pp. 13 ff., where I argue that a state of human perfection, which amounts to be divine, is achieved only through the attainment of the highest epistemological (and moral) condition. As a consequence, only philosophers can be divine.

[415] See *Sph.* 249c10-d5.

[416] Cf. *Sph*. 228c7-8, where virtue is said to be knowledge. Therefore, if you have knowledge, you are fully virtuous.

by means of the reason's virtue, σοφία[417])[418]. Hence, given that the citizens' firm true opinion has turned out to be less worthy than σοφία[419], it would seem to follow that ordinary people lack the rational capacity to achieve a philosophical virtue, and hence, to take a rational control of the irrational desires. Therefore, given that a philosophical knowledge and a full virtue appear to be the main qualities of those who are worth being considered divine, why are ordinary people (who welcome in their souls a mere ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως) still said to belong to a divine kind? Put differently, is it actually the case that the citizens' divine firm and true opinion does not allow them to achieve a full virtue and keep irrational desires under control?

To address this issue, it is worth investigating the effect that the divine bond has on the citizens' moral behavior. In this regard, I have already suggested that the reason why moderate and courageous people are opposed to each other is that their actions are not mutually consistent. For these are inspired by radically different desires[420]. According to this picture which Plato provides us with, the courageous and the moderate people's ethical behavior appears to be basically determined by the citizens' (irrational[421]) desires. Now, the divine firm true opinion that the statesman binds together with the eternal part of each citizen's soul is declared to be divine, as I have just shown, because it is akin to the soul's part with which it is attached[422]. Interestingly, one scholar has noticed that 'the idea that only part of the soul is eternal is already conveyed by Plato in *Ti.* 69 c ff. (cf. also *R.* X 611 b-612 a)'[423]. More specifically, the part of the soul that is defined as eternal in Plato's *Timaeus* is reason itself. On this interpretation, then, the soul's part which is said in the *Statesman* to be eternal should be similarly assumed to consist of the rational part of the citizens' soul[424]. Thus, on the assumption that the *Statesman*'s eternal soul's part is reason, *Plt*. 309c1-8 should be taken to show that a firm true opinion is bound with the rational part of the ordinary people's soul. If so, then, the

[417] See *infra* pp. 43-44, where I explain that σοφία, just as φρόνησις and ἐπιστήμη, generally indicates a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms in Plato's works.
[418] See *infra* pp. 8-13, where I argue that the philosopher, who achieves all the virtues (and hence, the virtue proper to rationality too – i.e., wisdom), manages to keep irrationality under the control of reason.
[419] See *infra* pp. 43-44, where I explain that σοφία, φρόνησις, and ἐπιστήμη, being ascribed to the *Statesman*'s πολιτικὸς, individuate a philosophical knowledge.
[420] Cf. *Plt.* 307e1-308a9.
[421] Indeed, they do not long for the good but rather for what is bad and controversial. Indeed, the ordinary people's desires make them perform actions which aim to opposite ends.
[422] Cf, *Plt*. 309c1-2. Cf. BOBONICH 1995b, pp. 322-33, and GIORGINI 2018, p. 279, who argue that the citizens' firm true opinion is called divine because it is akin to the immortal part of the soul. In this regard, Bobonich observes that, although we should not read into the *Statesman* the *Republic*'s theory of a tripartite soul, it is interesting to note that, according to the *Timaeus* (69c-71a) and the Book X of the *Republic* (611a ff.), the immortal part of the soul is presented as the rational (λογιστικόν) part.
[423] See ROWE 1995a, p. 243, who suggests that the idea that only part of the soul is eternal had already been conveyed by Plato in *Ti.* 69 c ff. (cf. also *R.* X 611 b-612 a). Therefore, the Plato of the *Statesman* has the Stranger make reference to a theoretical background which is not explicated. As a result, the part of the soul which is presented in the *Statesman* as eternal has to be thought of as the reason itself. See also EL MURR 2014, esp. pp. 278-281, who also relies on the idea that the eternal part of the soul which Plato refers to at *Plt*. 309c1-2 is reason.
[424]. See ROWE 1995a, p. 243 and EL MURR 2014, esp. pp. 278-281.

statesman binds the citizens' reason together with the firm capacity to truly assess the sensible reality[425]. In addition to this, however, the divine bond that the statesman intertwines with the rational part of the citizens' soul may also be assumed to have a further impact on the inner state of the individual souls[426]. Indeed, as soon as an ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως is bound together with the ordinary people's reason, ordinary people may be assumed to become able to act virtuously[427]. For the divine firm true opinion which is attached to each citizen's reason allows all the ordinary people to live in the respect of each other[428]. On this interpretation, then, the divine bond that the statesman intertwines with the rational part of each citizen's soul would allow rationality (which is informed by the ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως that the statesman binds together with reason) to rule over the irrational desires within each citizen's soul.

Actually, textual evidence suggests that what we have so far assumed as a result of speculation is indeed the case. For the divine firm true opinion that the statesman provides ordinary people with appears to allow people to perform virtuous actions (namely, actions which are inspired by the same good desire – that is, a desire for the good of the whole city). Indeed, those who originally were courageous and used to perform manic actions[429] are said to become tamed and 'especially willing to share in what is just' as soon as they welcome in the eternal part of their soul the divine bond[430]. Similarly, those who originally were moderate and used to perform lethargic actions[431] are said to become 'genuinely moderate and wise (ὄντως σῶφρον καὶ φρόνιμον), so far as wisdom goes in the context of life in a city (ὥς γε ἐν πολιτείᾳ)'[432], as soon as the eternal part of their soul is attached by the statesman to the divine bond. Therefore, it is indeed the case that people who used to be driven by misleading desires to perform bad actions become to some extent attached to virtue as soon as the statesman intertwines the divine bond (consisting of a firm true opinion) with their rational soul's part. As a result, if it is the case (as it is) that the originally moderate and courageous people used to

[425] See *infra* pp. 60-61.
[426] See ROWE 2018, p. 317, who points out that the statesman is concerned with 'fitting together that part of their soul that is eternal with a divine bond, in accordance with its kinship with the divine' (cf. *Plt.* 309c1-2). As 'the part in question is presumably reason (which is immortal, being opposed to the mortal irrational parts, as e.g. at *Timaeus* 69c–70b), the "fitting together" is either of the reasoning part of each soul (assuming that it can be divided against itself); or of the reasoning parts of the members of the two groups; or of both)'. On my part, I am here suggesting an alternative reading (namely, that the divine firm true opinion that the statesman binds together with the citizens' reason has the effect of reason taking control of the immortal part(s?) of the human soul).
[427] For I have shown that the divine bond of firm true opinion which is imposed by the statesman on the eternal part of the citizens' soul has the effect to unite the divine part of each citizen's soul to the divine part of any other citizen's soul. Therefore, the statesman's music has all the citizens rate the same thing to be good and act accordingly (that is, virtuously and for the sake of the good of the whole city). See *infra* pp. 60-61.
[428] See *infra* p. 61.
[429] Cf. *Plt.* 307b9-c7.
[430] See *Plt.* 309d10-e3.
[431] Cf. *Plt.* 307b9-c7.
[432] Cf. *Plt.* 309e5-8.

perform vicious actions because of their irrational desires[433], it follows that the ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως that the statesman binds together with the citizens' reason makes their reason harness the irrational desires. Indeed, the firm true opinion appears to allow ordinary people (a) to be to some extent attached to virtue, and hence, (b) to act virtuously.

Thus, ordinary people appear to act virtuously because they keep (just as philosophers do) their irrational desires in control by means of the firm true opinion that the statesman binds together with their reason. Therefore, the citizens' poorer cognitive state (if compared to the statesman-philosopher's epistemological condition) would seem not to affect at all their moral capacity: for ordinary people are still able to achieve virtue to some extent. However, it is worth wondering whether it is indeed the case that the kind of virtue that ordinary people attain is the same kind of virtue as the statesman's. In this regard, some scholars[434] suggest that, to the extent that ordinary people's rationality overcomes irrationality (just as in the case of true philosophers), the citizens should be assumed to attain the same kind of full and genuine virtue that the statesman (as a true philosopher) achieves. On this interpretation, *Plt*. 309e5-8[435] is to be taken to convey the message that, as soon as ordinary people acquire the divine firm true opinion, they become *truly* (ὄντως) moderate and wise. As a result, even if the kind of virtue that the moderate (and, presumably, the courageous) people attain on the basis of their firm true opinion is not exactly the sort of philosophical virtue that the statesman achieves, it should still be a quality that has some serious claim to resemble that. On the contrary, the fact that Plato has the Stranger establish at *Plt*. 305e5-8 that the people who welcome the divine bond in their souls become truly moderate and wise only insofar as it is required to be wise within the context of the city's everyday life ('ὥς γε ἐν πολιτείᾳ') is really meaningful. For these Plato's words indicate that the kind of moderation (σωφροσύνη) and wisdom (φρόνησις) that ordinary people attain on the basis of their firm true opinion is different from the genuine moderation and wisdom that only the statesman-philosopher can achieve. Indeed, ordinary people are declared to be able only to carry moderate and wise actions out within the context of the city's everyday life[436].

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[433] See also *infra* pp. 61-62.

[434] Cf. e.g., BOBONICH 1995b, pp. 322-323.

[435] 'VISITOR: And what of the case of the 'moderate' sort of nature? If it gets a share of these opinions, doesn't it become genuinely moderate and wise, so far as wisdom goes in the context of life in a city, while if it fails to get a portion of the things we're talking about, doesn't it very appropriately acquire a disgraceful reputation, for simple-mindedness? YOUNG SOCRATES: Absolutely.'. (ΞΕ. Τί δὲ τὸ τῆς κοσμίας φύσεως; ἆρ' οὐ τούτων μὲν μεταλαβὸν τῶν δοξῶν ὄντως σῶφρον καὶ φρόνιμον, ὥς γε ἐν πολιτείᾳ, γίγνεται, μὴ κοινωνῆσαν δὲ ὧν λέγομεν ἐπονείδιστόν τινα εὐηθείας δικαιότατα λαμβάνει φήμην; ΝΕ. ΣΩ. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν.).

[436] See ACCATTINO 1997, p. 184 fn. 196. For a similar view, see ROWE 2018, p. 319, who suggests that Plato's *Statesman* would indicate that there are four levels of virtue: (1) virtue as we encounter in ordinary life; (2) virtue resulting from primary education; (3) virtue as resulting from the acquisition of the divine bond of firm true opinion; (4) a level of virtue above that – that is, one that involves a wisdom which is nobler than the wisdom which is conceived of within the context of the everyday life (ὥς γε ἐν πολιτείᾳ) (see. *Plt*. 305e5-8). According to Rowe, the *Statesman*'s ordinary people, who do not practice φιλοσοφία and do not have νοῦς, are guided by the state educators, under the control of the wisdom of the statesman.

Curiously, when Plato talks about the education that ordinary people have to undertake, he clarifies that the statesman, by having people educated, aims to prepare them for having a share in a disposition that is courageous and moderate, and in all the other things which tend (τείνοντα) towards virtue[437]. Therefore, ordinary people appear to be able to share in a disposition that does not comprise the whole of virtue but only tends towards virtue. Indeed, the ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως granted by the statesman to the citizens only allows them to act in accordance with what they truly believe. As a consequence, the ordinary people's firm true opinion turns out to be a sufficient condition to *act* virtuously. Yet, it does not allow the moral agent to *be* fully virtuous. Indeed, to be truly virtuous, one needs to (philosophically) know what virtue is, and hence, to know why the action that the moral agent performs is what it is (i.e., virtuous).

Now, as the ordinary people's firm true opinion has turned out to be only a sufficient condition to act virtuously, the kind of virtue that the citizens attain – being non-philosophical – appears to resemble the kind of virtue that, as Plato explains in his *Phaedo*, can be attained 'ἄνευ φιλοσοφίας τε καὶ νοῦ'[438] (i.e., without philosophy and intellect). Indeed, a demotic, that is, a civic ('δημοτικὴ καὶ πολιτικὴ')[439], virtue can be achieved even in the case that the moral agent, being ignorant of the intelligible Forms, is guided by mere true opinion to perform good actions[440]. For Plato shows in the *Meno* that both those who know where Larissa is and those who have a mere true opinion about where it is located can still reach Larissa[441]. Nonetheless, there is still an axiological difference between these two actions – analogous to moral actions. For the one who has mere true opinions about where Larissa is located might eventually get to Larissa. However, since true opinions are epistemologically unsteady (for they merely assess the unstable sensible reality), it is not sure whether or not he will get there next time. On the contrary, the wise philosopher will always be able to reach Larissa in virtue of his firm philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms.

Hence, while the kind of virtue that the *Statesman*'s ordinary people attain closely resembles the account of demotic virtue that Plato presents throughout his *corpus*, it is still worth noting that the *Statesman*'s account of demotic virtue apparently seems to be slightly modified. Indeed, while Plato's

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[437] Cf. *Plt.* 308e4-309a3.

[438] See *Phd.* 82b2. See ROWE 2018, pp. 319 ff., and MARQUEZ 2012, pp- 324 ff., who agree on the fact that, ordinary people, being unable to achieve a philosophical knowledge of virtue (and hence, to be fully virtuous) still manage to achieve a partial virtue, and hence, to act virtuously. Indeed, being their habit and practice guided by the expertise of the state educators (in their turn, controlled by the statesman's wisdom), ordinary people succeed in achieving a civic, or demotic, virtue. For a slightly different interpretation, see BOSSI 2018, p. 289, who argues that those who reach virtue through a divine firm true opinion attain a more genuine virtue than demotic virtue.

[439] Cf. *Phd*. 82a11.

[440] See *Men*. 96e7-97c5 and 97c1-2, where Plato has Socrates point out that both those who have knowledge and those who have mere opinions can equally perform the same virtuous action. For a true opinion might be 'in no way a worse guide to correct action than knowledge'. Similarly, Plato argues at *R.* VI 506c6-10 that those who hold a true opinion, being not provided with a philosophical knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), are like blind people who might still happen to travel the right road.

[441] See *infra* p. 26, where I more deeply analyze the *Meno* account of demotic virtue.

Meno establishes that demotic virtue (being grounded on a mere true opinion) constitutes an unstable moral achievement[442], the *Statesman* shows that those who act virtuously (by means of a firm true opinion that the statesman binds together with their rational soul's part) belong to a divine (δαιμονίῳ) kind (γένει)[443]. Furthermore, Plato has the Stranger clarify that the divine bond will be firmly implanted (ἐμφύεσθαι) in the citizens' soul so as to become a stable (μόνιμος) feature[444]. Therefore, as the divine bond, which is firmly implanted in the citizens' souls, constitutes a sufficient condition to act virtuously, it follows that ordinary people will *always* be able to achieve a demotic virtue, and hence, to act virtuously. In this way, the *Statesman*'s demotic virtue appears to be a more stable moral achievement if compared to the *Meno*'s civic virtue. However, the reason why Plato characterizes the *Statesman*'s demotic virtue in this way does not entail that Plato's notion of demotic virtue is changed. By discussing this point in detail, I will also address an issue which has so far been left unanswered. For a sufficient discussion of this issue provides an explanation as to why ordinary people are still depicted as divine (just as philosophers are) – despite the fact that they do not reach the philosophers' epistemological and moral excellence[445].

I have already suggested that ordinary people (whose bad actions used to be driven by misleading desires) become to some extent attached to virtue as soon as the statesman intertwines the divine bond (consisting of a firm true opinion) with their reason. I have accordingly concluded that, as the moderate and courageous people used to perform vicious actions because of their irrational desires, then the ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως (that the statesman binds together with their reason) allows the citizens' reason to rule over their irrational desires. Additionally, I have also suggested that the ordinary people's true opinion is firmly inspired by the statesman's philosophical knowledge[446]. Therefore, if ordinary people manage to stabilise their irrational desires – and hence, to act virtuously by achieving a stable demotic virtue –, this is ultimately due to the statesman's knowledge[447]. As a result, ordinary people belong to a divine kind with a certain stability because the statesman's knowledge grants them a *firm* true opinion which constitutes the key for acting virtuously (for it allows keeping the irrational desires under control). As a consequence, the *Statesman*'s account of demotic virtue does not appear to be modified. True opinion is still meant to be a sufficient

[442] Indeed, it is possible that the holder of true opinions will not get to Larissa when he will try to go there next time.
[443] See *Plt.* 309d1-4.
[444] Cf. *Plt.* 309e10-310a5: it is through legislation (which the statesman takes care of) that the divine bond becomes a stable feature of the citizens' soul. Ultimately, then, it is through the statesman's knowledge that the divine bond will be firmly implanted in the ordinary people's soul.
[445] See *infra* p. 63 (esp. fn. 414): epistemological and moral excellence appear to be required in order to be divine.
[446] See *infra* pp. 60-61.
[447] For it is up to the statesman's knowledge to bind the eternal part of the citizens' soul together with the divine bond consisting of a firm true opinion. Therefore, if it is the case that the citizens act virtuously (and hence, keep their irrational desires under control) on the basis of their firm true opinion, then the ordinary people's demotic virtue ultimately depends on the statesman's knowledge.

condition for achieving a demotic virtue, and hence, for acting virtuously. However, as I take the *Statesman* to basically ascribe to the same political theory as the *Republic*[448], I assume that Plato aims to describe in both works the most ideal constitution that might be ever thought of. Yet, I also take Plato to (slightly) refine the *Republic*'s political and ethical theory by making all the non-philosophers able to permanently attain the best kind of virtue possible. Therefore, the Plato of the *Statesman* grounds the citizens' cognitive state in the statesman's σοφία/ἐπιστήμη because he needs to enable ordinary people to achieve a stable demotic virtue so as to develop an account of a truly virtuous city. In this way, the statesman's philosophical knowledge becomes the ultimate guarantee for a stable demotic virtue (which would be *per se* unstable as it is grounded on a mere true assessment of the sensible reality) Accordingly, Plato does not modify his account of demotic virtue in his *Statesman*. Rather, he is accommodating to the *Statesman*'s dramatic context the account of demotic virtue that he has more widely investigated throughout his *corpus*.

To conclude, the divine bond, consisting of an ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως, has been found to allow all the ordinary people to act in accordance with what they truly believe. Indeed, I initially suggested that the firm true opinion that the statesman binds together with the citizens' eternal (and hence, rational) part of the soul has a desirable impact on the inner state of the individual souls. For I indicated that ordinary people act virtuously – and hence, keep their irrational desires under the control of reason – thanks to the divine firm true opinion. Next, I determined that textual evidence suggests that the divine bond makes all the citizens tend to some extent to virtue. Indeed, I showed that ordinary people are said at *Plt*. 309d6-e8 to become virtuous just as far as is required in the context of the city's everyday life. Then, I concluded that the kind of virtue that the citizens attain is a merely demotic virtue (for it is achieved without philosophy). For ordinary people are only able to act virtuously (indeed, they are not able to be fully virtuous as the statesman-philosopher is). Finally, I maintained that the fact that ordinary people are (implicitly) meant to be able to act virtuously on a permanent basis does not imply that Plato modifies in the *Statesman* his account of demotic virtue from prior dialogues. For I contended that he is just accommodating the notion of demotic virtue that he has more effectively defined in other dialogues to the *Statesman*'s dramatic context.

2.5. *Conclusions*

[448] My view is that Plato's *Statesman* sheds light on the practical effects that the statesman's philosophical knowledge (that Plato has more widely considered in the *Republic*) has on the city. Accordingly, I do not think that Plato introduces in the *Statesman* a new political theory. Rather, I believe that the Plato of the *Statesman* is concerned with refining the *Republic*'s constitutional project. For example, when the Plato of the *Statesman* clarifies that those people on whom education has no effect must be either exiled or even killed, I assume that he is just making the *Republic*'s Καλλίπολις (which already was an ideal standard) an even more ideal city. Indeed, in suggesting that only people who are to some extent virtuous (that is, at the very least able to attain a demotic virtue) are allowed in the city, Plato relies on the (even more idealized) *Republic*'s account of the ideal city.

This chapter initially showed how the argument that Plato presents in his *Statesman* is structured. It demonstrated that it is through a long series of dialectical divisions and a cosmological myth that Plato defines the πολιτικός and his art (τέχνη). Having ascertained that the art of statesmanship is associated with a knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) that is used by the statesman to make judgments and keep control, it argued that the statesman is in the end defined as a weaver who intertwines two different classes of people (i.e., the courageous and the moderate), as if they were woof and warp.

Next, my analysis focused on the statesman's theoretical (γνωστική) ἐπιστήμη. Having advanced the idea that the statesman's ἐπιστήμη of the καιρός allows him to properly perform his τέχνη, I suggested that the *Statesman*'s πολιτικός is someone who is able to achieve through dialectic a philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms. Secondly, I showed that the statesman's knowledge is not ethically neutral. For, as Plato's *Statesman* is still (more or less explicitly) committed to the theory of ethical intellectualism (according to which virtue is knowledge), it is the statesman's knowledge that allows him to be fully virtuous.

Then, I considered how ordinary people are characterized from an epistemological point of view. Additionally, I assessed whether or not the cognitive state that they hold has an impact on their ethical behaviour. Thus, I argued that the ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως that the citizens welcome in the eternal part of their soul allows them to correctly think (and hence, to have a true opinion) about what is καιρός, κάλον, δίκαιον, and ἀγαθόν within the context of the sensible world. Still, because the ordinary people's true opinion relies on the statesman's philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms, I suggested that the citizens are not able to achieve a full understanding of the intelligible Forms. As a consequence, I contended that the *Statesman*'s ordinary people merely achieve the kind of virtue that Plato defines as demotic in other (earlier) dialogues.

In conclusion, the *Statesman*'s textual evidence suggests that Plato remains consistent throughout this dialogue with the theory of moral epistemology according to which philosophical knowledge allows one to *be* fully virtuous, whereas a mere true opinion is a sufficient condition for *acting* virtuously.

CHAPTER 3: ETHICS AND EPISTEMOLOGY IN PLATO'S *PHILEBUS*

3.1. *Plato's* Philebus*: ἐπιστήμη and αἴσθησις*

> ΣΩ. Πέμπτας τοίνυν, ἃς ἡδονὰς ἔθεμεν ἀλύπους ὁρισάμενοι, καθαρὰς ἐπονομάσαντες τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτῆς, *ἐπιστήμαις*, τὰς δὲ *αἰσθήσεσιν ἑπομένας*; ΠΡΩ. Ἴσως.
>
> SOCRATES: And as fifth, the pleasures which we recognised and discriminated as painless, calling them pure pleasures of the soul itself: some of them ***are attendant to knowledge,*** others to *perception*. PROTARCHUS: Perhaps so.
>
> *Phlb*. 66c4-7[449]

While seeking to rank those entities which are to be admitted as goods (ἀγαθά), Plato provides at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 a curious description of those goods which are to be ranked as fifth. Indeed, Plato has Socrates claim in this passage that pure pleasures, *qua* fifth-ranked goods, are attendant to (ἑπομένας) either knowledge[450] (ἐπιστήμαις) or perception (αἴσθησις). Now, this statement is both puzzling and intriguing for a variety of reasons. (1) First, Plato has Socrates specify that pleasures are to be acknowledged as goods (that is, as pleasures which are pure) provided that they are attendant to either knowledge or perception. Strikingly, however, Plato does not further clarify this assertion. (2) Next, *Phlb*. 66c4-7 shows that 'ἐπιστήμαις' (and thus, not 'ἐπιστήμῃ') is what some of the pure pleasures follow. Hence, we may wonder whether Plato really means to argue that some pure pleasures are attendant to 'forms of knowledge'[451] or 'sciences'[452], or if he uses the plural form of 'ἐπιστήμη' to indicate a specific (singular) knowledge. (3) Then, the very fact that the passage in question suggests that those pure pleasures which are not attendant to perception follow ἐπιστήμαις is *per se* highly problematic. Indeed, the term 'ἐπιστήμη' is generally used in the Platonic *corpus* to indicate many different cognitive states. Thus, it is ultimately unclear what kind of ἐπιστήμη is at stake at *Phlb*. 66c4-7. (4) Finally, the argument (about pure pleasures) that Plato presents at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 seems to be grounded on an underlying theory of moral epistemology that requires more careful analysis. Indeed, the euporetic conclusion of the dialogue[453] suggests that enjoying pure[454] pleasures (ἡδοναί)

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[449] When not stated otherwise, translations (with minor changes) of Plato's *Philebus* will refer to HACKFORTH 1945.

[450] Actually, Plato says 'ἐπιστήμαις' (and thus, not 'ἐπιστήμῃ'). Yet, as I will more extensively argue throughout this chapter (see *infra* pp. 82-83), what Plato has here in mind is a specific form of ἐπιστήμη. Indeed, if he was here arguing that pure pleasures are attendant to ἐπιστήμαις, an unreasonable consequence would follow: if Plato actually meant to claim that pure pleasures are attendant to either (technical) sciences or αἴσθησις, he would have argued that pure pleasures follow two equivalent cognitive states (namely, cognitive conditions which would to the same extent be grounded in unreliable sense-perception). For these reasons, my translation follows HACKFORTH 1945 and FOWLER 2006, who both render 'ἐπιστήμαις' at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 as 'knowledge' (as if Plato wrote 'ἐπιστήμη'). For similar uses of the plural form of 'ἐπιστήμη' to indicate a specific (singular) knowledge, see *Tht*. 197e-200c, *Phd*. 75d4 (on this, cf. ROWE 1993, p. 175), and *Phdr*. 276c3.

[451] Cf. GOSLING 1975.

[452] See FREDE 1993 and DIÈS 1949.

[453] See *Phlb*. 61a1-d3, where Plato has Socrates and Protarchus agree that both pleasures (ἡδοναί) and intellect (νοῦς) are necessary for the best life.

[454] The reader may wonder whether or not 'pure' means 'purified'. If so, however, we would expect Plato to explain from what pleasures would have to be purified. However, this clarification is missing from the text. In this regard, CARPENTER 2015, pp. 187-188, suggests, in consideration of *Phlb*. 53a, that 'purity has been carefully defined as being truly or exactly

– and hence, attaining such goods – is necessary[455] for living the best life. In turn, *Phlb*. 11a1-d10 clarifies that a good (ἀγαθόν) is indeed a state (ἕξις) and a condition (διάθεσις) of the human soul which makes people's life happy. Thus, given that, for Plato, (a) happiness is related to virtue[456] and (b) pure pleasures – namely, those goods which contribute to the moral agent's best (i.e., happy and virtuous) life – are said at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 to be attendant to either knowledge or perception, *Phlb*. 66c4-7 may be taken to shed light on how ethics and epistemology are related in Plato's *Philebus*. Indeed, *Phlb*. 66c4-7 seems to imply that, in order to (a) enjoy pure pleasures, and hence, (b) seek for living the best (that is, a happy and virtuous) life, people need to meet a fundamental epistemological requirement (namely, either achieving knowledge or being able to follow perception).

Given all these issues, I shall therefore endeavour to address in this chapter the following questions: (1) to what extent are pure pleasures attendant to either knowledge or perception?; (2-3) what is the kind of knowledge that is at stake at *Phlb*. 66c4-7?; and, finally, (4) given that *Phlb*. 66c4-7 (assumedly) sheds light on the *Philebus*' theory of moral epistemology, can Plato's *Philebus* be thought of as re-enacting the so-called Socratic theory of ethical intellectualism (according to which virtue is knowledge and no one does wrong willingly)? To answer all these questions, I will first aim to find out what kind of ἐπιστήμη pure pleasures attend to. By doing so, I shall also demonstrate that the word 'ἐπιστήμη' is indeed used by Plato in different senses in the *Philebus*. Next, I will try to determine what kind of cognitive state may eventually be associated with the αἴσθησις that some of the pure pleasures are attendant to. Then, I will assess whether or not *Phlb*. 66c4-7 (and, more generally, Plato's *Philebus* as a whole) sheds light on a particular theory of moral epistemology. Eventually, I will conclude that Plato's *Philebus* indicates that there are two different ways of attaining virtue, each depending on the achievement of a specific cognitive state.

3.2. *Two different cognitive terms: ἐπιστήμη and αἴσθησις*

To start, *Phlb*. 66c4-7 shows that ἐπιστήμη and αἴσθησις indicate two different epistemological conditions. Indeed, Plato suggests that pure pleasures are attendant to *either* knowledge *or* perception.

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the very thing that one is. […] Purity marks the lack of any qualifying conditions, caveat or hedging when declaring something an exemplar of its kind, truly and entirely what it is'. On Carpenter's interpretation, then, pure pleasures are those which are only pleasant and never unpleasant. Later on in this chapter, I will suggest that, to be pure, pleasures need to meet specific requirements.

[455] However, enjoying pure pleasures is not presented by the Plato of the *Philebus* as a sufficient condition for living the best possible life. Indeed, *Phlb*. 61a1-d3 indicates that achieving intellect (νοῦς), *qua* epistemological good, is also necessary for attaining such a goal. Unlike (pure) pleasures, however, intellect is presented as a good (ἀγαθόν) *per se* (cf. e.g., *Phlb*. 13e4-5, where Plato has Socrates specify what follows: 'SOCRATES: I suggested intelligence, knowledge, intellect, and so on, as being good' (ΣΩ. Φρόνησίς τε καὶ ἐπιστήμη καὶ νοῦς καὶ πάνθ' ὁπόσα δὴ κατ' ἀρχὰς ἐγὼ θέμενος εἶπον ἀγαθά).

[456] See *infra* p. 14 fn. 110 and 53 fn. 362. Cf. *R*. I 353d9-354a2; *Chrm*. 172a, 173d; *Cri*. 48b; *Grg*.507b-c, where happiness is equated to doing well and living well. In turn, Plato specifies that a moral agent may live and do well only if her soul is fully virtuous.

Yet, what remains unclear is the sense in which Plato uses the term 'ἐπιστήμη' when he establishes that some of the pure pleasures are attendant to knowledge (ἐπιστήμαις). Thus, the first aim of this section is to outline the many cognitive states that the word 'ἐπιστήμη' indicates throughout the *Philebus*. Next, I will try to find out what kind of knowledge is at stake at *Phlb*. 66c4-7. To achieve this goal, I will then seek to (a) determine what kind of cognitive state αἴσθησις indicates at *Phlb*. 66c4-7[457] and (b) ascertain the extent to which αἴσθησις and ἐπιστήμαις indicate two different epistemological conditions (as *Phlb*. 66c4-7 would seem to suggest). Eventually, I shall conclude that *Phlb*. 66c4-7 establishes that pleasures are pure insofar as they are attendant to either philosophical knowledge or true opinion (through perception).

3.2.1. Philebus*' ἐπιστήμη: a polysemantic term*

At *Phlb*. 66c4-7, Socrates and Protarchus are still pursuing the goal of ranking all those goods which humans need to attain so as to make their lives as good as possible. Hence, when they come to consider the fifth-ranked goods, Socrates and Protarchus have already clarified that: (1) the first rank of goods includes measure (μέτρον) and its cognates – that is, what is measured and timely (μέτριον, καίριον); (2) what is well-proportioned (σύμμετρον), beautiful (κάλον), perfect (τέλεον) and self-sufficient (ἱκανόν) is to be ranked as second; (3) the third place is to be assigned to intellect (νοῦς) and intelligence (φρόνησις), while (4) the fourth is to be attributed to the soul's own properties – namely, sciences/kinds of knowledge (ἐπιστῆμαι), arts (τέχναι), and correct opinions (ὀρθαὶ δόξαι). Finally, Socrates and Protarchus establish at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 that (5) pure pleasures are the fifth-ranked goods. Hence, after having determined earlier on at *Phlb*. 51e7-52a3[458] that pure pleasures (a) are painless, (b) stem from the soul itself, and (c) 'fall into two sub-groups, pure colours, sounds, smells or geometrical shapes[459], and the pleasures of learning'[460], Plato has Socrates and Protarchus further clarify at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 the nature of the fifth-ranked goods. For Plato has Socrates and Protarchus establish that pure pleasures are attendant to either ἐπιστήμαις or αἴσθησις[461].

[457] Given that Plato does not take perception into account when he ranks all the goods which are necessary for a happy and good life, we may assume that αἴσθησις is nonetheless included in the ranking of goods under the guise of some other epistemological good. On this interpretation, then, αἴσθησις should be taken to indicate at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 one of the epistemological states that Plato has Socrates and Protarchus rank as goods.

[458] The whole sentence that Plato writes down at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 is governed by 'ἔθεμεν' – which indicates a back reference to *Phlb*. 51e7-52a3.

[459] See *Phlb*. 51b1-7.

[460] Cf. *Phlb*. 51e7-52a3. See LANG 2010, pp. 154-155.

[461] Cf. FLETCHER 2017, p. 202, who, though recognizing that Socrates actually divides pure pleasures into two species, suggests that the reason why pure pleasures are distinguished in two species has nothing to do with epistemology. For she argues that 'Socrates divides the pure and true pleasures into two species, (1) a very specific group of psychic pleasures that are taken in pure and absolutely beautiful objects of sight and hearing, and (2) the 'less divine' pleasures of smell, which are rare examples of bodily pleasures of restoration that are preceded by painless destructions'.

Now, to better understand what kind of cognitive state the word 'ἐπιστήμη' indicates at *Phlb*. 66c4-7, I shall first explore the many different senses that this word takes in the *Philebus*. To begin with, ἐπιστήμη is associated with arts (τέχναι) and correct opinions (ὀρθαὶ δόξαι) in Plato's *Philebus*. Indeed, as we saw above, ἐπιστήμη is said to form (together with τέχναι and ὀρθαὶ δόξαι) the class of the fourth-ranked goods[462]. Hence, these fourth-ranked (epistemological) goods (i.e., ἐπιστῆμαι, τέχναι, and ὀρθαὶ δόξαι) are to be considered as less worthy than νοῦς and φρόνησις (namely, the third-ranked goods). Indeed, ἐπιστῆμαι, τέχναι, and ὀρθαὶ δόξαι, being grounded on perception[463], are more distant from the truth than νοῦς and φρόνησις[464] (which are indeed said to be concerned with true being[465]). Ultimately, then, on the assumption that, throughout the *Philebus*, the term 'ἐπιστήμη' holds the sense it takes in the ranking of goods, it follows that the term 'ἐπιστήμη' is not used in this work to indicate a philosophical knowledge. In fact, while, elsewhere in Plato's *corpus*, a philosophical ἐπιστήμη is said to be concerned with true being – namely, what is eternal and self-same[466] –, the *Philebus*' ranking of goods (i.e., *Phlb*. 66a4-c7) assumes that ἐπιστῆμαι, just like τέχναι and ὀρθαὶ δόξαι, are not concerned with true being. Therefore, we may grant that, throughout the *Philebus*, the word 'ἐπιστήμη' is used by Plato to indicate a non-philosophical (and thus, more technical) knowledge which is to be associated with arts and true opinions. If so, then, *Phlb*. 66c4-7 would be conveying the idea that a non-philosophical (and thus, more technical) knowledge is what some of the pure pleasures (namely, those which are attendant to ἐπιστῆμαι) follow.

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[462] Cf. *Phlb*. 66c4-7.

[463] See *Phlb*. 39a1-b2, where Plato specifies that (a) true opinions – which are written, as it were, in the soul in the form of sentences – spring in the soul when memories and perceptions conjoin with affections, and (b) as soon as these opinions are "written" in the soul, a craftsman makes his intervention. Curiously, Plato also clarifies that a painter (who is within the human soul) paints pictures and attaches them to the opinions that spring in the soul. Thus, Plato's *Philebus* shows that both τέχναι – for painting constitutes a τέχνη: cf. *Grg*. 448c and *Prt*. 312d – and ὀρθαὶ δόξαι are strictly related to perception. What is more, given that ἐπιστῆμαι are associated with τέχνη and ὀρθαὶ δόξαι, *Phlb*. 66c4-7 should be taken to suggest that ἐπιστῆμαι (a) are associated with perception, and hence, (b) individuate a less accurate cognitive state than νοῦς and φρόνησις – which are indeed said to be concerned with the most stable and true among ontological entities, that is, true being.

[464] Cf. *Phlb*. 59d1-5 (but also *Phlb*. 65d2-10), where the third-ranked goods (i.e., νοῦς and φρόνησις) are presented as worthier epistemological goods than ἐπιστῆμαι, τέχναι, and ὀρθαὶ δόξαι. For νοῦς and φρόνησις are said to be closer to the truth.

[465] Cf. *Phlb*. 59d1-5: 'SOCRATES: And are not intellect and intelligence the names that command the greatest respect? PROTARCHUS: Yes. SOCRATES: Then these names can be properly established in usage as precisely appropriate to thought whose object is true being'. (ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν νοῦς ἐστι καὶ φρόνησις ἅ γ' ἄν τις τιμήσειε μάλιστα ὀνόματα; ΠΡΩ. Ναί. ΣΩ. Ταῦτ' ἄρα ἐν ταῖς περὶ τὸ ὂν ὄντως ἐννοίαις ἐστὶν ἀπηκριβωμένα ὀρθῶς κείμενα καλεῖσθαι).

[466] See *R*. VI 484b3-6: 'Since those who are able to grasp what is always the same in all respects are philosophers, while those who are not able to do so and who wander among the many things that vary in every sort of way are not philosophers' (ἐπειδὴ φιλόσοφοι μὲν οἱ τοῦ ἀεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὰ ὡσαύτως ἔχοντος δυνάμενοι ἐφάπτεσθαι, οἱ δὲ μὴ ἀλλ' ἐν πολλοῖς καὶ παντοίως ἴσχουσιν πλανώμενοι οὐ φιλόσοφοι). See also *R*. V 478a6-7, where philosophical knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) is said to be set over what is, to know it as it is. Indeed, dialectic – namely, the cognitive process of intellection (νόησις) that takes place in the soul (cf. also *R*. VI 511c3-e4) – aims at understanding the basic constituents of reality (that is, the intelligible Forms). Finally, cf. *R*. VII 533e7-534b2, where the term 'ἐπιστήμη' is used by Plato in the sense of 'νόησις' – for they both indicate the higher section of the divided line. Accordingly, both 'ἐπιστήμη' and 'νόησις' may be taken to signify the condition (πάθημα) in the soul which allows one to achieve a wise and noetic knowledge of the intelligible Forms (see *R*. VI 511b3-e6).

Textual evidence testifies to the fact that one of the possible senses that the term 'ἐπιστήμη' takes in the *Philebus* is indeed 'technical knowledge'. For Socrates and Protarchus are seeking to define at *Phlb*. 55c4-58a6 the truest and purest forms (or species) of νοῦς and ἐπιστήμη[467]. To achieve this goal, Protarchus and Socrates first take into account the sciences (μαθήματα) that are primarily related to ἐπιστήμη[468]. Hence, they agree that some of them are productive (δημιουργικός), while others are concerned with education (παιδεία) and nurture (τροφή). Next, in considering the productive sciences, Socrates and Protarchus agree that some of the (productive) manual arts (χειροτέχνικαι) are more accurate than others. For, after having established that the degree of accuracy which is proper to each manual art depends on whether or not counting, measuring, and weighing are employed as methods of reasoning[469], Socrates and Protarchus ultimately suggest that such manual arts as music, medicine, agriculture, navigation, and strategy are less worthy[470] than those (such as the arts of shipbuilding, housebuilding, and many other woodworking crafts[471]) which make frequent use of measures and/or similar mathematical standards of correctness[472]. Ultimately, then, this review of the more or less accurate forms of ἐπιστήμη that Socrates and Protarchus pursue at *Phlb*. 55c4-58a6 confirms that Plato relates the term 'ἐπιστήμη' to the χειροτέχνικαι. Accordingly, one of the possible senses that the word 'ἐπιστήμη' takes in the *Philebus* is indeed 'technical knowledge'.

Still, when Socrates and Protarchus conclude that some manual arts are worthier (i.e., more accurate) than others, they have not yet achieved the goal[473] of finding out what is the purest form of ἐπιστήμη. Hence, to lay the ground for the final definition of the purest form of ἐπιστήμη, Plato has Socrates and Protarchus clarify that the art of numbering (ἀριθμητική τὲχνη) is to be divided into two species: (1) the art of calculation and measure – which merely is the manual art that is employed by those common people who compute sums of unequal units (such as two armies or two herds of cattle)

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[467] For, by doing so, they aim to better understand the nature of the pure pleasures.

[468] Curiously, while Socrates and Protarchus manage to discover the nature of the truest type of ἐπιστήμη, they do not even try to determine what is the truest type of νοῦς. In light of this, we may speculatively assume that Socrates and Protarchus do not even seek for the definition of the truest kind of νοῦς given that they already accomplished that task. Earlier on in the dialogue, indeed, they determine that dialectical intellection (ἐπιστήμη-νόησις) – through which the intelligible Forms come to be known – is the noblest instance of ἐπιστήμη-νοῦς. Interestingly, νοῦς is presented in Plato's *Republic* as the cognitive state (ἕξις) of those who contemplate (θεωρεῖν) what is intelligible (νοητός) (cf. *R*. VI 511b3-e5).

[469] As CARPENTER 2015, pp. 189-191, points out: 'lacking measurement explains the lack of reliability or constancy, and the lack of clarity'. On Carpenter's interpretation, Plato is here introducing an epistemological theory which she calls 'paradeigmatist'. Indeed, Plato would here be ranking all the kinds of knowledge (from the lower to the higher). Hence, the more knowledge is stable the more it is accurate, clear, and accountable.

[470] For such manual arts as music, medicine, agriculture, navigation, and strategy (a) are conjectural, (b) do not use numbers (or any other mathematical standard) as tools of work, and (c) train human senses by experience and routine Indeed, just to make an example, numbers are not used by the musician to find a musical harmony (which rather results from practice – see *Phlb*. 56a, where Plato explains that musical harmony merely results from the observation of the vibrating strings).

[471] For all these manual arts use instruments like the straightedge and the compass as tools of work: cf. *Phlb*. 56b-c.

[472] On the art of building as a mathematical art, cf. STALLEY 2010, esp. p. 227. Cf. also HARVEY 2009, esp. pp. 280-281.

[473] For a complete overview of Socrates' and Protarchus' project of the defining the truest ἐπιστήμη, cf. *Phlb*. 55c4-58a6.

– and (2) the science of mathematical objects – which is employed by philosophers when practising geometry and doing calculations. Thus, Plato has Socrates and Protarchus specify that there is a notable difference between these two species of ἀριθμητική τὲχνη[474]. Strikingly, however, no explanation as to the reasons why these two species of the art of numbering are so different from one another is provided. Accordingly, we may assume that, when Plato argues that there are two different species of ἀριθμητική τὲχνη, he relies on a theoretical background which (a) is imported from other dialogues and (b) is left implicit in the *Philebus*. If so, then, we may assume that the ultimate reason why the philosophical ἀριθμητική τὲχνη is so different from the common people's art of calculation and measure is that these two species of the art of numbering serve different purposes. For the craftsmen's art of calculation and measure, on the one hand, serves a merely practical purpose. Indeed, just to make an example, a housebuilder merely calculates how much wood he needs for building a house. On the other, the geometry and calculation practised in philosophy (κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν) may be assumed (on the basis of what Plato indicates in the *Republic*[475]) to serve a completely different purpose. Indeed, the would-be philosophers, as Plato clarifies in his *Republic*, must get acquainted with arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy so as to be prepared to achieve a complete knowledge of the intelligible Forms[476]. For, it is by achieving a dianoetic[477] (i.e., mathematical)[478] knowledge that the would-be philosophers[479] become able to recognize the physical instantiation of the intelligible Forms (which, however, the διανοητής can only seek [ζητεῖν] to see

[474] According to CARPENTER 2015, pp. 192-193, the (manual) art of numbering that those who build ships, houses, etc., employ is only slightly accurate. On the contrary, the philosophical science of mathematical objects is much more precise.
[475] Generally, scholars argue that the project that Plato undertakes in the *Philebus* is not only consistent with, but also auxiliary to, that of the *Republic*. Apparently, indeed, Plato argues in both the *Philebus* and the *Republic* that some pleasures are truer than others (on this, cf. PARRY 2010, esp. pp. 221-223, but also OBDRZALEK 2010 and STALLEY 2010). Also, Plato distinguishes good from bad pleasures in the Book IX of the *Republic*. Similarly, he aims to achieve the same goal also in the *Philebus* (see REIDY 1998, esp. p. 343, who suggests that, as Plato is not happy with the results of his inquiry in the *Republic*, he decides to undertake a similar one in the *Philebus*; cf. also WARREN 2010, esp. p. 21, who argues that, as Plato maintains in the *Republic* that philosophers do not enjoy an endless intellectual ecstasy, he aims in the *Philebus* to discover those pure pleasures that philosophers enjoy once the intellectual ecstasy is over). Accordingly, scholars generally agree that these two dialogues are consonant with one another (see *infra* p. 74 [esp. fn. 466], where I also show that these two dialogues are both committed to the Theory of Forms). Given this general *consensus* on the topic, I will seek to assess the epistemological nature of the *Philebus*' mathematical, but still technical, knowledge employed by philosophers on the basis of the *Republic*'s epistemological theory (see CARPENTER 2015, esp. pp. 197 ff., who also reads through the *Republic* the *Philebus*'s theory of "knowledge").
[476] The *Republic* prescribes that those who are going to be philosopher (-rulers) must be prepared for νόησις through arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. These subjects allow in turn the access to a dianoetic method of reasoning (cf. *R.* VI 510c2-d3).
[477] Cf. *R.* VI 510c2-d3.
[478] Cf. *R.* VI 510c2-d3.
[479] For the διανοητής's capacity of understanding is limited to the ontological domain of the sensible reality. In fact, the διανοητής can at best use sensible figures (such as drawings, constructions, examples taken from experience) as images of the intelligible Forms.

[ἰδεῖν] at this stage[480] – for, to achieve a complete understanding of the intelligible Forms, a higher cognitive state than διάνοια is needed[481]).

Thus, the analysis that I have so far pursued has shown that Plato preliminarily clarifies at *Phlb*. 55c4-58a6 that:

(a) the term 'ἐπιστήμη' may eventually be ascribed to a technical knowledge – and hence, both to non-mathematical (i.e., music, medicine, agriculture, *et similia*) and mathematical arts (that is, all the arts of building and the philosophical science of mathematical objects);

(b_1) common people and (would-be) philosophers appeal to the art of numbering in two different ways;

b_2) the philosophical science of mathematical objects, as a technical knowledge, is epistemologically worthier (i.e., more accurate) than the common people's ἀριθμητική τὲχνη[482]. Indeed, on the assumption that the *Philebus*' philosophical science of mathematical objects is analogous to the *Republic*'s dianoetic (that is, mathematical) knowledge, we can conclude that the *Philebus*' philosophical science of mathematical objects, though being ultimately concerned with the deceptive sensible reality[483], still allows one to achieve an (incomplete[484]) understanding[485] of the intelligible Forms.

Yet, neither the (would-be) philosophers' ἀριθμητική τὲχνη nor any other kind of technical knowledge is ultimately presented by the Plato of the *Philebus* as the truest form of knowledge. Indeed, Plato has Socrates and Protarchus finally introduce dialectic as the truest and purest species

[480] See *infra* p. 121 fn. 711, where I show, on the basis of *R*. VII 527b9-11 and *R*. VII 527a1-b2, that (a) the *Republic*'s διάνοια draws the soul upwards (i.e., towards truth) and (b) geometry is practised for the sake of knowledge.

[481] To grasp a full knowledge of the intelligible Forms, achieving the epistemological condition which is signified by νόησις, ἐπιστήμη, or νοῦς is necessary. See *infra* p. 78 fn. 491, where I observe that νόησις, ἐπιστήμη, νοῦς, (but also σοφία and φρόνησις) indicate the highest epistemological condition – namely, the philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms.

[482] Although Plato does not explicitly maintain that the philosophical science of mathematical objects, *qua* technical knowledge, is epistemologically worthier (i.e., more accurate) than the common people's ἀριθμητική τὲχνη, we may still draw such a conclusion on the basis of the fact that, as I explain throughout this chapter, the *Philebus* is thoroughly consistent with the ontological and epistemological theory that Plato more widely illustrates in other dialogues. In particular, see *infra* p. 76 fn. 475, where I show that the *Philebus* shows a high degree of consistency with the *Republic*.

[483] Cf. *R*. VI 510c2-511a1. See BÉNATOUÏL-EL MURR 2010, pp. 43-57, who argue that Plato, while suggesting that the expert in geometry employs sensible figures as the objects of her reasoning, specifies that the target at which the expert in geometry aims consists in the Form of the sensible geometrical objects (assumed as images of the intelligible Forms). Yet, 'Socrate dit sans ambiguïté que le *logos* des géomètres porte sur (περί) les diagrammes qu'ils tracent'. Accordingly, the διανοητής, who can merely seek to understand the intelligible Forms, is ultimately able to focus on sensible objects only. On the contrary, the dialectician does not need to appeal to the sensible reality to grasp a full knowledge of the intelligible Forms. For a similar interpretation, see FERRARI 2017, p. 873, and SMITH 1981. For a slightly different view of the *Republic*'s διάνοια, cf. FRONTEROTTA 2006.

[484] For, on the assumption that the *Philebus*' philosophical science of the mathematical objects is analogous to the *Republic*'s dianoetic (namely, mathematical) knowledge, the person who is said in the *Philebus* to be able to manage the philosophical science of the mathematical objects should be then assumed to be able to make hypotheses (with respect to the existence of the intelligible Forms) of which, however, she is not able to give an account of.

[485] Cf. *infra* pp. 121-122 fn. 717: this understanding can at best be deductive. Indeed, one has to be a good dialectician in order to become perfectly acquainted with the intelligible Forms.

of ἐπιστήμη[486]. For dialectic is said to be concerned with being (τὸ ὂν) and what really is (τὸ ὄντως) in every way eternally self-same (τὸ κατὰ ταὐτὸν ἀεὶ πεφυκὸς πάντως)[487]. Hence, insofar as it allows one to achieve a complete understanding of the basic constituents of reality (i.e., the intelligible Forms)[488], dialectic is presented as the truest among all the species (or forms) of ἐπιστήμη[489]. Still, Plato's *Philebus* also shows that νοῦς and φρόνησις are names that command the greatest respect[490]. Indeed, νοῦς and φρόνησις, just like ἐπιστήμη *qua* dialectic[491], allow one to achieve a complete

[486] Cf. *Phlb*. 58a1-6, where Plato has Socrates claim what follows: 'the cognition of that which is, that which exists in reality, ever unchanged, is held, I cannot doubt, by all people with any share in νοῦς at all'. Thus, given that dialectic is indeed concerned with what really is ever unchanged, it follows that dialectic and νοῦς are strictly linked to one another. See also *infra* p. 75 fn. 468, where I show that νοῦς is indeed presented at *R*. VI 511b3-e5 as the cognitive state (ἕξις) of those who contemplate (θεωρεῖν) what is intelligible (νοητός).

[487] See *Phlb*. 58a1-6. Cf. *infra* p. 74 fn. 466, where I show that, according to Platonic epistemology, philosophers are those who are concerned with what is the same in all respects.

[488] HARVEY 2009, pp. 282-283, fn.7: 'Forms are indirectly referred to as τὸ ὄν at *Republic* vi 511c5, vii 533b7, and 533c1; there are several references to the forms by means of the adverb ὄντως, including *Rep*. x 597d2, *Phaedrus* 247c7, and 247e2-4; *Phaedo* 78c6-8 refers to the forms as always remaining in the same state. «…» Socrates' later description of the objects of dialectic as what is unmixed (ἀμεικτότατα, 59c4) matches *Symposium* 211e1, where the Beautiful itself is called unadulterated (εἰλικρινές), pure (καθαρόν), and unmixed (ἄμεικτον)'. Harvey also highlights the fact that VLASTOS 1965[2], p. 5, 'identifies the intensified expression 'really real' (ὄντως ὄν) as a Platonic innovation, and includes *Philebus* 58a1-6 alongside these other passages as referring to the Forms'.

[489] Dialectic is (epistemologically) worthier than all the other forms of ἐπιστήμη due to its (a) highest degree of clarity and precision and (b) closeness to the truth. For dialectic – that is, the truest type of ἐπιστήμη – is presented at *Phlb*. 58c7-d8 as a capacity (δύναμις) in the soul which allows people both to love the truth and to do everything for the sake of it. Curiously, a dialectical ἐπιστήμη is variously defined by Plato in his *corpus*. For it is defined as 'δύναμις', as 'πορεία' (see *R*. VII 532a1-b5), as 'πάθημα' (cf. *R*. VI 511b3-e6). However, all the definitions of dialectic imply that a dialectical ἐπιστήμη, just like νοῦς, allows people to achieve a complete understanding of the basic constituents of reality – that is, the intelligible Forms

[490] Cf. *Phlb*. 59d1-5, but also 65d2-10.

[491] Cf. *infra* p. 78 fn. 489, where I suggest that, although a dialectical ἐπιστήμη is variously defined by Plato (for it is defined as 'δύναμις' [cf. *Phlb*. 58c7-d8], as 'πορεία' [see *R*. VII 532a1-b5], as 'πάθημα' [cf. *R*. VI 511b3-e6]), it always indicates an epistemological condition which allows people to achieve an accurate knowledge of the truest ontological objects (i.e., the intelligible Forms). Interestingly, φρόνησις is similarly presented at *Phd*. 79d1-7 as a condition (πάθημα: cf. *infra* p. 74 fn. 466) in the soul which is fully activated 'when the soul investigates by itself' and 'passes into the realm of what is pure, ever existing, immortal and unchanging, and being akin to this, it always stays with it whenever it is by itself and can do so'. Similarly, νοῦς is introduced by Plato at *R*. VI 511b3-e5 as the cognitive state (ἕξις) of those who contemplate (θεωρεῖν) what is intelligible (νοητός) through intellection (ἐπιστήμη/νόησις/φρόνησις). Thus, Plato's use of such cognitive terms as 'ἐπιστήμη', 'νόησις', 'νοῦς', 'φρόνησις' (but also 'σοφία', as I shall show in due course) is somewhat ambiguous. Indeed, *R*. VI 511 b ff. shows that the first two, and highest, sections of the divided line are respectively named as 'νόησις' and 'διάνοια'. In turn, both νόησις and διάνοια are subsumed under the section marked by νοῦς. Interestingly, however, Plato names (at *R*. VII 533e7 ff.) the first two sections of the divided line 'ἐπιστήμη' and 'διάνοια' and specifies that both of them should be subsumed under the section marked by νόησις. Accordingly, given also what Plato says at *R*. VII 533d7-e2 (namely, that 'we won't dispute about a name when we have so many more important matters to investigate'), we may reasonably conclude that both in Plato's *Republic* and, more generally, in the Platonic *corpus*, all these cognitive terms (i.e., ἐπιστήμη, νόησις, νοῦς – but also, φρόνησις and σοφία) indicate the same epistemological condition (namely, that which is concerned with the intelligible Forms). With special reference to the *Philebus*, LANG 2010, pp. 154-155, argues that Plato's use of cognitive terms in this dialogue is somehow problematic: for 'νοῦς (reason), φρόνησις (intelligence) and ἐπιστήμη (knowledge)', he says, 'have until this point been used as alternates, but at 59d the first two are restricted to thought about true being and at 66b they are ranked third, while ἐπιστῆμαι (kinds of knowledge) are relegated to fourth place'. To understand how Aristotle (a) clarifies the epistemological meaning and the psychic foundation (within the rational part of the soul) of such cognitive terms as ἐπιστήμη, φρόνησις, νοῦς, and σοφία and (b) ends up filling a gap within Plato's epistemological terminology, see *EN* VI 1140a-1141b.

understanding of true being – i.e., the intelligible Forms[492]. Ultimately, then, the review of the truest forms of ἐπιστήμη that Plato has Socrates and Protarchus pursue at *Phlb*. 55c4-58a6 shows that the term 'ἐπιστήμη' is also used in Plato's *Philebus* to mark the same kind of philosophical knowledge that is also indicated by such cognitive terms as 'νοῦς' and 'φρόνησις'[493].

As a result, my analysis of *Phlb*. 66a4-c7 (i.e., the passage where Plato has Socrates and Protarchus rank the human goods) and *Phlb*. 55c4-58a6 (namely, where Plato has Socrates and Protarchus seek for the definition of the truest form of knowledge) has shown that it is indeed the case that the word 'ἐπιστήμη' is used in Plato's *Philebus* in many different ways[494]. Indeed, the term 'ἐπιστήμη' may indicate in Plato's *Philebus* a technical knowledge as well as a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms[495]. For, on the one hand, the term 'ἐπιστήμη' applies both to (a_1) the technical knowledge that common people use when they perform such manual arts as music, medicine, agriculture, *etc.*, and (a_2) the technical knowledge that the (would-be) philosophers who practise geometry and do calculations possess. On the other, (b) dialectic (which [a] is indeed associated with νοῦς[496] and φρόνησις and [b] allows one to achieve a wise and noetic[497] knowledge

[492] See *Phlb*. 58e4-59b6, where Plato says that νοῦς and φρόνησις deserve the highest honour as they give true insights into those objects which, being forever in the same state, meet the requirements of certainty, purity, truth, and integrity. On this, cf. also *Phlb*. 59d1-5.

[493] See *Phlb*. 13e4-5, where ἐπιστήμη, νοῦς, and φρόνησις are said to belong to the same (epistemological) "family" (cf. HACKFORTH 1945, p. 124 fn. 1, who suggests that these three words are used synonymously). See also *Phlb*. 22a ff., where intellect (νοῦς) and intelligence (φρόνησις) are presented as the most superior epistemological goods. Interestingly, however, νοῦς and φρόνησις are still to some extent different from one another. Indeed, while νοῦς is presented as a state of the soul, φρόνησις is introduced as a process, or condition, in the soul. Actually, Plato defines νοῦς at *R*. VI 511b3-e5 as the cognitive state (ἕξις) of those who contemplate (θεωρεῖν) through the science of dialectic (ἐπιστήμη/νόησις) what is intelligible (νοητός). On the other hand, φρόνησις is presented as a condition (πάθημα) in the soul through which 'the soul investigates by itself' and 'passes into the realm of what is pure, ever existing, immortal and unchanging, and being akin to this, it always stays with it whenever it is by itself and can do so' (see *Phd*. 79d1-7).

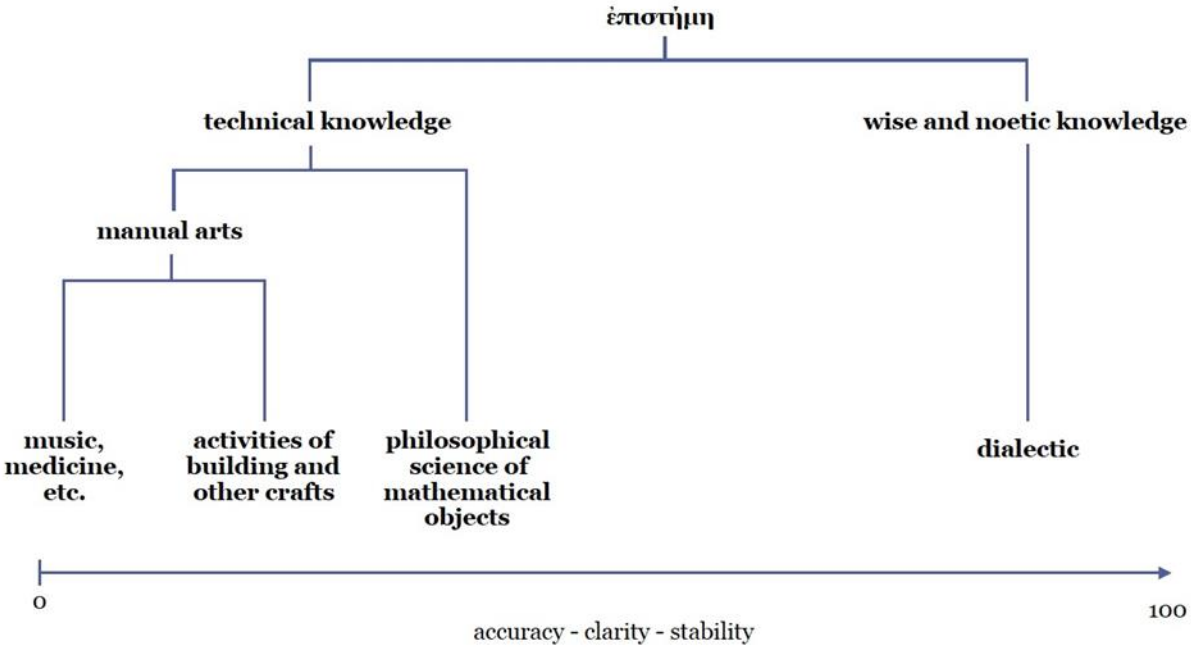
[494] Cf. CARONE 2005, p. 75, who, while commenting on Plato's *Philebus*, argues that the term 'ἐπιστήμη' 'embraces not only the precise knowledge of the Forms – a sense however that it keeps (as the "truer", 61d10-e4) – but is given also a broad sense (cf. 59b7, 61d10–e3), which allows everybody to participate in it'.

[495] See *Phlb*. 61d10-e4, where Plato openly declares that 'ἐπιστήμη' is used in the *Philebus* as a twofold cognitive term: 'And knowledge was of two kinds, one turning its eyes towards transitory things, the other towards things which neither come into being nor pass away, but are the same and immutable forever. Considering them with a view to truth, we judged that the latter was truer than the former' (trans. by FOWLER 2006). Thus, we may reasonably conclude that the term 'ἐπιστήμη' applies in Plato's *Philebus* to both a technical and a philosophical knowledge. Cf. NEHAMAS 1984, p. 31, who points out that the *Philebus* would show that ἐπιστῆμαι of changing things are less true than ἐπιστῆμαι of unchanging things.

[496] Cf. *Phlb*. 58a1-6. See also *infra* p. 74 fn. 466, p. 75 fn. 468, and p. 79 fn. 493.

[497] For the sake of clarity, I shall occasionally call the philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms 'wise and noetic knowledge'. By doing so, I aim to make it clear that I do not refer to the (still!) "philosophical" science of mathematical objects. Cf. *R*. V 477a6-478e6 and *Ti*. 51d3-52a7 ('Intellect [νοῦς] always involves a true account while true belief lacks any account. And while intellect remains unmoved by persuasion, true belief gives in to persuasion. And of true belief, it must be said, all men have a share, but of intellect, only the gods and a small group of people do').

of the intelligible Forms) is presented as the truest form of ἐπιστήμη.



To conclude, then, Plato's *Philebus* uses the word 'ἐπιστήμη' in two (main) senses – namely, in the sense of a) technical and b) philosophical knowledge. As technical knowledge, the word 'ἐπιστήμη' is ascribed to both a_1) manual arts and a_2) the philosophical (dianoetic) science of mathematical objects. Therefore, we may reasonably conclude that it is in the sense of dianoetic (i.e., mathematical) knowledge that ἐπιστήμη is associated at *Phlb*. 66a4-c7 with the fourth-ranked (epistemological) goods (namely, τέχναι and ὀρθαὶ δόξαι[498])[499]. Indeed, on the one hand, the common people's technical ἐπιστήμη – which serves a merely practical purpose – is not as worthy and (potentially) effective as true opinions (and arts) – which, as I shall show later on in this chapter, may even allow the moral agent to perform good and virtuous actions. On the other, wise and noetic knowledge constitutes an accurate cognitive state (for it allows one to achieve a complete understanding of the basic constituents of reality) which cannot be compared to ὀρθαὶ δόξαι (and τέχναι) – which at best allow people to provide a true assessment of the (deceptive) sensible reality.

3.2.2. *True opinions and αἴσθησις. Pleasures and ἐπιστήμη*

[498] Curiously, Plato's *Republic* shows that both the term 'ἐπιστήμη' (see *R.* VII 533e7-534a8 and *infra* p. 79 fn. 495) and 'τέχνη' (see *R.* VI 511c3-d5) are used by Plato to indicate a dianoetic knowledge. See also *infra* pp. 112-122, where I argue that a true opinion may be viewed as a species of dianoetic knowledge.

[499] See *infra* pp. 20-22 and 112-122, where I argue that a true opinion is the epistemological outcome of a dianoetic cognitive process. Hence, it is indeed the case that, elsewhere in his *corpus*, Plato associates διάνοια with ὀρθαὶ δόξαι (and thus, with τέχναι: see *infra* pp. 73-74).

Now that the word 'ἐπιστήμη' has been ascertained to take on different senses in Plato's *Philebus*, I shall aim to determine what is the kind of knowledge that some pure pleasures are attendant to. However, to be in a better position to achieve this goal, I first need to establish what kind of cognitive state αἴσθησις indicates at *Phlb*. 66c4-7. For, given that perception is said at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 to play such a crucial role (indeed, perception is what some pure pleasures follow), we would expect Socrates and Protarchus to include αἴσθησις in their ranking of goods. Yet, as αἴσθησις is not even mentioned in the ranking of goods, we may actually wonder whether, by saying that αἴσθησις is what some pure pleasures follow, Plato would rather imply that some pure pleasures are attendant to a (ranked) epistemological good which heavily relies on perception. To address this issue, I will first consider a passage, *Phlb*. 39a1-b2, where Plato explicitly argues that true opinions and perceptions are strictly linked to one another.

> ΣΩ. Ἡ μνήμη ταῖς αἰσθήσεσι συμπίπτουσα εἰς ταὐτὸν κἀκεῖνα ἃ περὶ ταῦτ' ἐστὶ τὰ παθήματα φαίνονταί μοι σχεδὸν οἷον γράφειν ἡμῶν ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς τότε λόγους· καὶ ὅταν μὲν ἀληθῆ γράφῃ [τοῦτο τὸ πάθημα], δόξα τε ἀληθὴς καὶ λόγοι ἀπ' αὐτοῦ συμβαίνουσιν ἀληθεῖς ἐν ἡμῖν γιγνόμενοι· ψευδῆ δ' ὅταν ὁ τοιοῦτος παρ' ἡμῖν γραμματεὺς γράψῃ, τἀναντία τοῖς ἀληθέσιν ἀπέβη. ΠΡΩ. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν δοκεῖ μοι, καὶ ἀποδέχομαι τὰ ῥηθέντα οὕτως.
>
> SOCRATES: It appears to me that the conjunction of memory with perception, together with the affections consequent upon memory and perception, may be said to write words as it were in our souls; and when this experience writes what is true, the result is that true opinion and true assertions spring up in us; while when the internal scribe that I have suggested writes what is false we get the opposite sort of opinions and assertions. PROTARCHUS: That certainly seems to me right, and I approve of the way you put it.
>
> *Phlb*. 39a1-b2

At *Phlb*. 39a1-b2, Plato has Socrates argue that, when perceptions conjoin with memory and affections, words are written, as it were, in the soul. In turn, in the case that this conjunction (of perceptions, memory, and affections) writes true words in the soul, true opinions – in the form of true assertions (λόγοι) – spring in the soul. As a result, *Phlb*. 39a1-b2 appears to suggest that a true opinion is the best epistemological condition which may eventually be attained through αἴσθησις[500]. On this interpretation, then, we may further infer that, when Plato maintains at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 that those pure pleasures which do not follow ἐπιστήμαις are attendant to αἴσθησις, he is rather suggesting that such pure pleasures are accompanied by true opinions (which are indeed presented as the fourth-ranked goods). Interestingly, a certain theory of perception that Plato introduces elsewhere in his *corpus* seems to suggest that it is indeed the case that αἴσθησις at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 actually indicates a true opinion. For Plato's *Timaeus* shows that those affections (παθήματα) which are so intense to disturb the soul may prevent the moral agent from properly assessing the sensible reality. As a consequence,

[500] See FLETCHER 2012, pp. 62-98, who argues that (a) Plato distinguishes two different species of αἴσθησις and (b) pleasures may be different from one another depending on what species of αἴσθησις they are attendant to.

αἴσθησις – which is the means through which παθήματα are felt by the moral agent[501] – is presented in Plato's *Timaeus* as being (potentially) responsible for (a) making the human soul unintelligent (ἄνους)[502] and (b) causing[503] excessive pleasures (i.e., the 'evil's most powerful lure') and pains (that is, those which make the human soul run away from what is good)[504]. Thus, Plato suggests in his *Timaeus* that pleasures which are attendant to αἴσθησις are not necessarily pure (for pleasures which follow perception may also be excessive). Accordingly, given that Plato argues at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 that pleasures are pure even if they are attendant to αἴσθησις, we may (speculatively) conclude that a good perception (namely, an αἴσθησις which, if combined with memory and affections, generates a true opinion, as Plato indicates at *Phlb*. 39a1-b2) is at stake here[505]. If so, then, the pure pleasures which are attendant to αἴσθησις are indeed those which follow a true opinion through perception.

Now that we have ascertained that *Phlb*. 66c4-7 (implicitly) suggests that pleasures are pure insofar as they are attendant to either ἐπιστήμαις or true opinion (through αἴσθησις[506]), we find ourselves in a better position to determine what kind of knowledge pure pleasures follow. For, as I previously argued, (1) Plato uses (in his *Philebus*) the term 'ἐπιστήμη' in two (main) senses: namely, as a) wise and noetic knowledge and b) technical knowledge; yet, I have also clarified that (2) the term 'ἐπιστήμη' is also ascribed to the most accurate species of technical knowledge – namely, to b1) dianoetic (i.e., mathematical) knowledge. Accordingly, given that the term 'ἐπιστήμη' is used in Plato's *Philebus* to mark radically different cognitive states, we now need to determine whether a philosophical, a dianoetic, or a (generically) technical knowledge is what some of the pure pleasures are attendant to. Now, given what we have so far concluded (with reference to both [a] the *Philebus*' ἐπιστήμη and [b] αἴσθησις at *Phlb*. 66c4-7), we can finally draw some definite conclusions as to what epistemological condition the term 'ἐπιστήμη' signifies at *Phlb*. 66c4-7. (1) First, pure pleasures which do not follow αἴσθησις are unlikely to be attendant to a dianoetic ἐπιστήμη. Indeed, if this were the case – namely, if some pure pleasures were attendant to ἐπιστήμη as dianoetic knowledge –, pure pleasures would have been said by Plato to follow two *equivalent* cognitive states. Indeed, on the one

[501] Cf. BRISSON 1999, pp. 152-161: affections become *reasoned* perceptions as soon as they hit the brain and are therefore transmitted to the seat of the φρόνιμον. However, when affections do not reach the rational part of the soul, their perceptions remain irrational.
[502] See *Ti*. 43e8-44b1, for Plato's account of how perceptions (and affections) may make the human soul unintelligent. On this issue, see also FRONTEROTTA 2018², p. 239 fn. 169, who argues as follows: 'Ecco perché la discesa nel corpo rappresenta per l'anima una condanna e una perdita di sé: le sensazioni (che dipendono dal corpo) sembrano infatti «dominarla» e sconvolgerla, muovendola da ogni parte'.
[503] Cf. *Ti*. 86b1-c2: those affections that cause folly (ἄνοια) constitute a disease in the soul. Accordingly, when a person is not able to properly see, or hear, he is not able to use his reason. As a consequence, such a person ends up feeling excessive pleasures and pains.
[504] See *Ti*. 69c3-d6. Cf. also WOLFSDORF 2014, pp. 133-134, who suggests that pleasures and pains which arise from irrational perception are those 'brute' pleasures (as he calls those) which result from nutrition, hydration and sex.
[505] Hence, memory may be taken at *Phlb*. 39a1-b2 to be responsible for connecting perceptions and affections to rationality (that is, the φρόνιμον in Plato's *Timeaeus*: see *infra* p. 82 fn. 501).
[506] See DELCOMMINETTE 2006, pp. 362-375, who actually argues that perception always entails opinion.

hand, αἴσθησις at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 indicates a true opinion. On the other, dianoetic ἐπιστήμη[507] represents an epistemological good which is associated with true opinions (and arts)[508]. Hence, given that Plato seems to keep ἐπιστήμη distinguished from αἴσθησις at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 (for he argues that pure pleasures are attendant to *either* knowledge *or* perception), it is unlikely that pure pleasures which do not follow perception are attendant to dianoetic ἐπιστήμη (which is, as an epistemological good, equivalent to true opinion)[509]. (2) Similarly, we should rule out that pure pleasures which do not follow perception are attendant to ἐπιστήμη *qua* the common people's technical knowledge. Indeed, the person who possesses this kind of technical ἐπιστήμη act on the basis of practice (namely, by taking advantage of his empirical experience). Hence, given that (a) the common people's technical ἐπιστήμη (just as true opinion, through αἴσθησις) heavily relies on perception[510] and (b) Plato seems to keep ἐπιστήμη distinguished from αἴσθησις at *Phlb*. 66c4-7, we are in a position to conclude that *Phlb*. 66c4-7 should not be taken to convey the idea that pure pleasures which do not follow true opinion (through perception) are attendant to ἐπιστήμη as technical knowledge. (3) Then, given what we have so far concluded, it has to be the case that Plato suggests at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 that those pure pleasures which are attendant to ἐπιστήμαις follow a philosophical knowledge. Ultimately, then, *Phlb*. 66c4-7 conveys the idea that pleasures are pure insofar as they are attendant to either true opinion (through αἴσθησις) or ἐπιστήμη as wise and noetic knowledge.

3.3. *Pleasure and Virtue*

After having established that (a) the word 'ἐπιστήμη' is used in Plato's *Philebus* as a polysemantic cognitive term (for it may mark a technical knowledge as well as a philosophical knowledge) and (b) αἴσθησις indicates at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 a true opinion (attained through perception), I have concluded that Plato's *Philebus* ultimately suggests that pleasures are pure insofar as they are attendant to either wise and noetic (that is, philosophical) knowledge or true opinion (through αἴσθησις). Yet, given that pure pleasures are said to be attendant to two radically different cognitive states, I shall now aim to clarify whether or not there is any axiological difference between (pure) pleasures which follow philosophical ἐπιστήμη and those which are attendant to true opinion (through αἴσθησις). To achieve this goal, I will aim to address in the next two sections the following question: 'are all the pure pleasures (namely, both those which follow philosophical ἐπιστήμη and those which are attendant to

[507] See *infra* pp. 75-77.
[508] Cf. *Phlb*. 66a4-c7: true opinions, arts, and ἐπιστήμη as dianoetic knowledge are to be viewed as the fourth-ranked (epistemological) goods.
[509] What is more, dianoetic knowledge is *per se* heavily grounded on perception. Indeed, a dianoetic knowledge is that which allows people to (a) acknowledge the physical instantiations of the intelligible Forms, and thus, (b) properly assess the sensible reality. Hence, we should rule out the possibility that the kind of ἐπιστήμη that is at stake at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 is dianoetic. For dianoetic knowledge represents an epistemological condition which heavily relies on αἴσθησις.
[510] Cf. *infra* p. 75 fn. 470, where I explain that *Phlb*. 56a shows that technical arts like music merely results from practice.

true opinion [through αἴσθησις]) equally pure and virtuous?'. In answering this question, I shall suggest that there actually is a slight difference between pure pleasures which are grounded on different cognitive states. Eventually, I will also shed light on the theory of moral epistemology which Plato seems to allude to when he argues at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 that pure pleasures (which are necessary for a happy – and hence, virtuous – life[511]) are epistemologically grounded.

3.3.1. *Philosophical ἐπιστήμη, pure pleasures, and virtue*

To ascertain whether or not pure pleasures which are attendant to philosophical ἐπιστήμη are good and virtuous, I shall consider the euporetic conclusion of Plato's *Philebus*. The message that this dialogue ultimately conveys is that humans may grasp the supreme good ('τὸ παντάπασιν ἀγαθὸν') only if they live their life by mixing the truest pleasures and the truest knowledge[512]. Thus, Plato's *Philebus* shows that enjoying the truest pure pleasures is crucial for living the supremely virtuous life[513]. In this regard, given that Plato distinguishes pure pleasures which follow a nobler cognitive state (namely, wise and noetic knowledge) from those which are attendant to a less worthy epistemological condition (that is, true opinion), we may reasonably assume that the truest pure pleasures which Plato refers to at *Phlb*. 61a1 ff. are those which follow the truest knowledge (namely, philosophical knowledge). If so, then, Plato's *Philebus* should be taken to convey the idea that achieving the truest ἐπιστήμη (i.e., a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms) is crucial for enjoying the truest pleasures – and thus, for living the most desirable life (namely, that which mixes up the truest pleasures and the truest knowledge). Now, to clarify whether it is actually the case or not that Plato's *Philebus* presents the achievement of a wise and noetic knowledge as a fundamental condition for enjoying the truest (i.e., the most virtuous?) pleasures and living the supremely virtuous life, I shall consider what Plato (more or less explicitly) says about pure pleasures throughout his *Philebus*.

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[511] Cf. *Phlb*. 11a1-d10 and *infra* p. 71 fn. 450 and pp. 71-72.

[512] Cf. *Phlb*. 61a1 ff.

[513] Cf. *infra* p. 18 fn. 141, where I show that 'being ἀγαθός' entails 'being virtuous'. See also *infra* pp. 71-72 (esp. fn. 453): a well-mixed life of pleasures and intellect is said in the *Philebus* to imply happiness. In its turn, the attainment of happiness implies the achievement of virtue (on this, cf. e.g., *R*. I 353d9-354a2). Hence, Plato's *Philebus* appears to deny both hedonism and anti-hedonism (on this, see COOPER 1999, pp. 150-164). Accordingly, although we may assume that the *Philebus* does not abandon the view that the life of a philosopher is god-like (and hence, that the philosopher lives an unmixed life of intellect – even though, as Aristotle will also argue in *EN* X, it cannot be god-like for a long time as Aristotle will also argue in *EN* 10), it should also be acknowledged that this work, being concerned only with analysing the best life available to humans, does not aim to show, as some scholars have argued, that the unmixed life of intellect is the best (on this, cf. FREDE 1993, p. xliii, FREDE 1992, p. 440 and TENKKU 1956, p. 219). For to live the best life, the moral agent still needs to enjoy pleasures (cf. CARONE 2000, pp. 261 ff., AUSTIN 2012). Yet, pleasures which are necessary for living the best life are those which are attendant to certain epistemological conditions. As a result, we may reasonably conclude that pure pleasures (namely, those which are necessary for the best life) are dependent goods (on this issue, see BOBONICH 1995a, esp., p. 122, but also MOORE 1903, esp. p. 90 – who argues that having an awareness of feeling real pleasures is necessary for enjoying pure and virtuous pleasures). For, in order to be pure, pleasures need to be attendant to either a wise and noetic knowledge or true opinions.

Having established that pure pleasures have their origin in virtue[514], Plato points out that these belong to the class of things that possess measurement (ἐμμετρία)[515]. Now, to ascertain the extent to which pleasures which are attendant to philosophical ἐπιστήμη are pure and virtuous, I will first consider what Plato says in his *Philebus* with reference to those goods which are ranked first and second. Interestingly, some of the second-ranked goods (that is, what is well-proportioned [σύμμετρον], beautiful [κάλον], perfect [τέλεον] and self-sufficient [ικανόν]) are presented by Plato as intelligible entities. For Plato argues at *Phlb*. 65a1-5 that beauty and proportion (κάλλος and συμμετρία) – plus truth (ἀλήθεια) – are the Forms (ἰδέαι) which constitute the unity of the good itself (ἀγαθόν)[516]. Thus, given that (at the very least, some of) the second-ranked goods represent intelligible Forms, we may reasonably assume that the first-ranked goods too, being higher-ranked than beauty and proportion, are to be thought of as intelligible Forms. If so, then, the first-ranked (ontological) goods – such as measure (μέτρον) and its cognates (namely, what is measured and the timely [μέτριον and καίριον]) – should be assumed as Platonic Forms[517]. As a result, given that (a)

[514] Cf. *Phlb*. 45e5-8.

[515] Cf. *Phlb*. 52c1-d1: 'SOCRATES: And now that we have fairly well separated the pure pleasures and those which may be pretty correctly called impure, let us add the further statement that the intense pleasures are without measure and those of the opposite sort have measure; those which admit of greatness and intensity and are often or seldom great or intense we shall assign to the class of the infinite, which circulates more or less freely through the body and soul alike, and the others we shall assign to the class of the limited' (ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ὅτε μετρίως ἥδη διακεκρίμεθα χωρὶς τάς τε καθαρὰς ἡδονὰς καὶ τὰς σχεδὸν ἀκαθάρτους ὀρθῶς ἂν λεχθείσας, προσθῶμεν τῷ λόγῳ ταῖς μὲν σφοδραῖς ἡδοναῖς ἀμετρίαν, ταῖς δὲ μὴ τοὐναντίον ἐμμετρίαν· καὶ <τὰς> τὸ μέγα καὶ τὸ σφοδρὸν αὖ <δεχομένας>, καὶ πολλάκις καὶ ὀλιγάκις γιγνομένας τοιαύτας, τῆς τοῦ ἀπείρου γε ἐκείνου καὶ ἧττον καὶ μᾶλλον διά τε σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς φερομένου [προσ]θῶμεν αὐτὰς εἶναι γένους, τὰς δὲ μὴ τῶν ἐμμέτρων). (Translation by FOWLER 2006). I take *Phlb*. 52c1-d1 (but also *Phlb*. 26b7-c1) to imply that pure pleasures belong to the class of things that possess measurement to some extent. Hence, I follow both HARVEY 2009, p. 15, and FREDE 1993, p. liv, who argue that pure pleasures are 'honorary members of the "limited" class'. Similarly, FLETCHER 2012, p. 205, maintains that 'Socrates' main criterion for evaluating things as good or bad in the *Philebus* is whether or not they exhibit measure (μέτρον), as a result of the imposition of limit'. On Fletcher's interpretation, then, while a debauched person enjoys excessive (i.e., false) pleasures, a sober-minded person enjoys measured (i.e., pure and true) pleasures in his very sobriety (12c-d). Similarly, I argue that virtuous people enjoy pleasures which are pure since they (a) are attendant to certain cognitive states (and thus, are different from those false pleasures enjoyed by foolish people) and (b) belong to some extent (as they are informed by a certain cognitive state) to the class of things that possess measurement. For a similar interpretation, cf. also IONESCU 2015. For a different view, cf. WATERFIELD 1986, who suggests that (a) reason represents the Limit, pleasures individuate the Unlimited, and (b) a well-mixed life (between Limit and Unlimited) is that which is characterized by pleasures and reason. Thus, Waterfield concludes that not only impure pleasures – but, actually, all pleasures – represent the Unlimited. *Contra* this view, I argue that *Phlb*. 27e-28a suggests that pure pleasures (unlike the excessive, and hence, impure, pleasures) belong to the class of things that are measured. In fact, if it is actually the case that pleasures and pains admit of the more and the less (for they belong to the class of indeterminate things), it is also the case that pure pleasures are to be distinguished from the impure ones. Indeed, pure pleasures are good and (to some extent) virtuous. Accordingly, as what is indeterminate could never be good, it follows that pure pleasures belong to some extent to the class of measurement.

[516] Cf. *Phlb*. 65a1-5: 'Then if we cannot hunt down the Good under a single form, let us secure it by the conjunction of three, beauty, proportion, and truth; and then, regarding these three as one, let us assert that *that* may most properly be held to determine the qualities of the mixture, and that because *that* is good the mixture itself has become so'.

[517] Before ranking all the goods, Plato focuses at *Phlb*. 66a4-8 on the ontological relevance of measure (μέτρον) and its cognates: these are (assumedly) presented as ontological objects that share an eternal nature. Accordingly, given that Plato's ontological theory dictates that only the intelligible Forms are eternal (see *R*. V 478a6-7 and VI 484b3-6 and cf. *infra* p. 78 fn. 488), we can therefore (reasonably) assume that the reason why measure and its cognates are presented as eternal (ontological) objects is that they are (implicitly) regarded as Platonic Forms. See also *R*. VI 486d8-9, where Plato suggests that μέτρον belongs to the realm of Platonic Forms. Indeed, since (1) the Forms (*F*) are necessarily true and (2) the truth (*T*) is akin (συγγενῆ) to what is measured (ἐμμετρία), then (3) what makes measured what is measured, i.e., the

the moral agent who possesses a wise and noetic ἐπιστήμη is perfectly acquainted with the Platonic Forms (Form of Measure included) and (b) pure pleasures belong to the class of measured things, we are in a position to draw some conclusions. (1) First, pleasures which are attendant to ἐπιστήμη are perfectly measured (i.e., they reliably belong to the class of measured things). Indeed, pure pleasures which are attendant to ἐπιστήμη are informed by the moral agent's philosophical knowledge of the Form of Measure. (2) Next, pure pleasures which are attendant to ἐπιστήμη are not only perfectly measured, but are also to be assumed as fully virtuous. For Plato argues at *Phlb*. 61a1 ff. that the supreme good – and hence, the supremely virtuous life – can be attained by the moral agent provided that she blends the truest pleasures and the truest knowledge. Hence, given that (a) philosophical ἐπιστήμη is indeed the truest knowledge (and hence, it is truer than the true opinion that some of the pure pleasures are attendant to) and (b) pure pleasures which follow philosophical ἐπιστήμη (as distinguished from those pure pleasures which are attendant to the less worthy true opinion) have been assumed to be the truest, we may conclude that the moral agent who possesses the truest knowledge (through which she informs her [truest] experiences of pleasure) is the one who (a) mixes truest pleasures and truest knowledge, and thus, (b) lives the supremely virtuous life. As a result, the (truest) pure pleasures that such a moral agent enjoys are to be conceived of as being good, pure, and virtuous to the greatest extent (for they are enjoyed by the moral agent who lives the supremely virtuous life)[518].

Ultimately, then, Plato's *Philebus* (more or less explicitly) suggests that possessing a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms (that is, the truest ἐπιστήμη) is crucial for (a) enjoying the truest (i.e., the purest and most virtuous) pleasures, (b) attaining the supreme good, and (c) living the supremely virtuous life. Moreover, textual evidence may be taken to further confirm that Plato's *Philebus* actually indicates that achieving philosophical knowledge is a necessary and sufficient condition for being fully virtuous. To begin with, Plato argues at *Phlb*. 30a ff. that 'there exists in the universe much that is "unlimited" and abundance of "limit"'. In turn, a presiding cause of no mean power is said to take care of combining limit and unlimited so as to create a harmonious universe. Curiously, however, Plato has Socrates specify at *Phlb*. 30c2-7 that this presiding cause (a) orders and coordinates years, seasons, and months, and, more importantly, (b) has every right to the title of νοῦς[519] and (καὶ) σοφία. If we are to conjecture that 'καὶ' features an epexegetic value, *Phlb*.

Measure itself (μέτρον) (*M*), is something true: [(*F* → *T*) (*T* → *M*)] → (*F* → *M*). Accordingly, μέτρον and its cognates, just like the intelligible Forms, are not only eternal, but also true.

[518] Cf. *Phlb*. 45e5-8, where Plato argues that pure pleasures have their origin in virtue. See also *Phlb*. 64e5-7, where moderation (μετριότης) and proportion (συμμετρία) are said to manifest themselves in all areas as beauty (κάλλος) and virtue (ἀρετή). Thus, given that pure pleasures which follow ἐπιστήμη are the truest (for they are perfectly measured), it follows that pure pleasures which are attendant to ἐπιστήμη are perfectly virtuous.

[519] Traditionally, scholars have always been puzzled by Plato's use of the term 'νοῦς' in the *Philebus*. HACKFORTH 1945, pp. 56-57 fn. 1, suggests that Plato distinguishes in his *Philebus* a transcendent νοῦς from an immanent νοῦς – the latter

30c2-7 is to be taken to suggest that νοῦς and σοφία are used interchangeably by Plato. Indeed, νοῦς and σοφία are co-implicated also some lines later – namely, where Plato considers the human soul (i.e., the microcosm) as being analogous to the universe (that is, the macrocosm). For Plato has Socrates establish at *Phlb*. 30c9-10 that 'there could be no wisdom, that is, intellect, without a soul' (Σοφία μὴν καὶ[520] νοῦς ἄνευ ψυχῆς). Still, why would the Plato of the *Philebus* associate these two cognitive states with one another? To answer this question, I shall appeal once again to what Plato argues elsewhere in his *corpus* with reference to this issue. For, given that the *Philebus* does not provide the reasons why νοῦς and σοφία are co-implicated[521], we may assume that Plato is here once again relying on a theoretical background which is imported from other dialogues and is not fully explicated (but rather just alluded to) in the *Philebus*. Interestingly, Plato openly declares in his *Theaetetus* that knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) and wisdom (σοφία) are the same thing (ταὐτόν)[522]. Now, on the assumption that Plato is here using the term 'ἐπιστήμη' in the sense of philosophical knowledge, we may already conclude that the reason why νοῦς and σοφία are co-implicated in Plato's *Philebus* is that σοφία, just like νοῦς and ἐπιστήμη (and also φρόνησις), individuates a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms. Yet, given the aporetic conclusion of the dialogue (which, indeed, does not achieve the goal of defining what ἐπιστήμη really is), we may doubt that Plato's *Theaetetus* ends up defining σοφία as a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms. Yet, we should still note that Plato repeatedly uses (throughout his *corpus* of works) 'σοφία' and 'φρόνησις' interchangeably[523]. Hence, on the assumption that (a) σοφία and φρόνησις represent two interchangeable cognitive terms (and states) in Plato's *Philebus* too, and in consideration of the fact that (b) φρόνησις and νοῦς are introduced by the Plato of the *Philebus* as two equivalent epistemological goods (which allow people to achieve a complete understanding of the Platonic Forms), we may conclude that the reason why σοφία and νοῦς are co-implicated in Plato's *Philebus* is that they mark the same cognitive state. On this interpretation, then, Plato's *Philebus* presents

being the self-projection of the former. On Hackforth's interpretation, then, Plato would be considering at *Phlb*. 30a ff. only the immanent νοῦς. On the role of the transcendent νοῦς in Plato's *Philebus*, cf. HACKFORTH 1936 and MENN 1995 (who argues that νοῦς plays the same function as the Demiurge in the *Timaeus*). For a different view, MASON 2014.

[520] Taking for granted that the 'καὶ' takes here an epexegetic value, the equivalence between σοφία and νοῦς is (even more decisively) highlighted by the 'μὴν'. On these assumptions, we can reasonably conclude that Plato is here suggesting that wisdom (σοφία) always implies intellect (νοῦς – i.e., the cognitive state of those who practice σοφία).

[521] Some scholars, like VOGT 2010, p. 254, argue that the Plato of the *Philebus* is not really interested in exploring the epistemological nature of σοφία. For, having first suggested that σοφία is not considered as an epistemological good which is worth being ranked among the goods which are necessary for a happy life, she argues as follows: 'The only plausible reason, I think, why wisdom does not figure in the ranking, is that wisdom is, compared to pleasure, a composite. Many things figure in wisdom – pleasures and pains, measure, the fine and proportioned, and our cognitive activities. Actually, as we see, *all* the items on the list are relevant to an account of wisdom, and probably also to an account of any of the other virtues'.

[522] See *Tht*. 145e6-7: for a complete overview of how scholars interpret this apparent equivalence between σοφία and ἐπιστήμη at *Tht*. 145e6-7, cf. FERRARI 2011, p. 218 fn. 25.

[523] Cf. e.g., *Euthd*. 281b6 and 281d8; *Smp*. 202a5-9; *R*. IV 433c7-d9. See *infra* pp. 110-122, where I argue that in Plato's *Laws* the term 'φρόνησις' is not necessarily used to indicate a philosophical knowledge.

wisdom (σοφία) – just like other Platonic dialogues do – as a cognitive process of (or, condition in) the soul which allows (just as νοῦς, φρόνησις, and [philosophical][524] ἐπιστήμη)[525] one to achieve a stable knowledge[526] of the intelligible Forms[527].

Now, after having ascertained that the *Philebus*' σοφία individuates – just like νοῦς, φρόνησις, and (philosophical) ἐπιστήμη do – a wise and noetic knowledge of the intelligible Forms, I shall analyse σοφία's ethical import according to Plato's *Philebus*. To this end, I will consider what Plato has Socrates suggest at *Phlb*. 49a1-3:

> ΣΩ. Τῶν ἀρετῶν δ' ἆρ' οὐ σοφίας πέρι τὸ πλῆθος πάντως ἀντεχόμενον μεστὸν ἐρίδων καὶ δοξοσοφίας ἐστὶ ψευδοῦς; ΠΡΩ. Πῶς δ' οὔ;
>
> SOCRATES: And of all the virtues, is not wisdom the one to which people in general lay claim, thereby filling themselves with strife and false conceit of wisdom? PROTARCHUS: Yes, to be sure.
>
> *Phlb*. 49a1-3[528]

In this passage, Plato has Socrates convey the idea that, while the conceit of wisdom (δοξοσοφία) constitutes a moral vice, wisdom (σοφία) is to be thought of as one among all the virtues. Similarly, after having clarified that such a cognitive fault as the conceit of wisdom – which ultimately consists of overbearing ignorance (ἀμαθία) – constitutes a species of ignorance (ἄγνοια)[529], Plato's *Sophist* suggests that (a) ignorance (all its species included) is a moral vice and b) the opposite cognitive condition – that is, wisdom (σοφία) – is to be deemed to be one among all the virtues (ἀρεταί). Now, on the assumption[530] that Plato's *Philebus*[531] and *Sophist*[532] share the same ethical theory, we should conclude that the *Philebus* (just as the *Sophist* and the *Republic*) suggests that: (a) ignorance is a moral vice to the same extent as cowardice, lack of moderation, and injustice, (b) the moral agent becomes fully vicious (namely, cowardly, immoderate, and unjust) as soon as he is affected by ignorance, and (c) achieving ignorance's opposite cognitive state (that is, wisdom [σοφία]) is crucial for attaining a full virtue. On this interpretation, then, Plato's *Philebus* ends up (more or less explicitly) indicating that achieving wisdom (σοφία) – that is, a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms – is a necessary and sufficient condition for being perfectly and fully virtuous.

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[524] See *Phlb*. 58c7-d8, where Plato uses the term 'ἐπιστήμη' to indicate a philosophical (and dialectical) knowledge.
[525] Cf. *Phlb*. 59d1-5, 65d2-10, 58c7-d8.
[526] See *infra* pp. 77-80. Similarly, Plato argues at *R*. IV 429a1-3 that σοφία – and hence, φρόνησις (for these two terms are usually used interchangeably throughout the Platonic *corpus*) – may be equated to knowledge (ἐπιστήμη).
[527] That is, what is always the same in all respects – namely, the Forms: see *Phlb*. 58e4-59b6.
[528] Translated by FOWLER 2006.
[529] Cf. *Sph*. 229c5-9.
[530] Making this assumption seems to be reasonable given that both the *Philebus* and the *Sophist* are late dialogues – namely, works which have been written down by Plato during (almost) the same period of time.
[531] See *Phlb*. 48c2, where Plato has Socrates say that 'surely ignorance (ἄγνοια) is a vice (κακόν)' (Translation by FOWLER 2006).
[532] Elsewhere in this dissertation (see *infra* pp. 10-13), I have suggested that Plato's *Sophist* re-presents in its turn the *Republic*'s ethical theory. See *infra* p. 76 fn. 475, where I show that the *Philebus* may similarly be taken as the prosecution of Plato's *Republic*. Thus, we may reasonably assume that some of the *Republic*'s philosophical tenets are implicitly reiterated also in the *Philebus*.

Ultimately, then, Plato's *Philebus* may be taken to suggest that the most fundamental requirement that a moral agent has to meet in order to live the supremely virtuous life is to achieve the truest knowledge (namely, the philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms). Indeed, attaining the truest knowledge has been acknowledged as a crucial means for (1) enjoying the truest pleasures (that is, the pure pleasures which, being attendant to ἐπιστήμη, perfectly belong to the class of measured things), and thus, (2) living the supremely virtuous life (by means of mixing truest pleasures and truest knowledge). Accordingly, given that Plato's *Philebus* has also been ascertained to (more or less explicitly) convey the idea that achieving philosophical knowledge is a necessary and sufficient condition for being fully virtuous, pure pleasures that are attendant to philosophical ἐπιστήμη are to be deemed as being supremely virtuous (for they [a] are informed by the moral agent's philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms – the Forms of Measure and Virtue included – and [b] contribute to the moral agent's supremely virtuous life).

3.3.2. *True opinion (through αἴσθησις), pure pleasures, and virtue*

The previous section has shown that pure pleasures which are attendant to ἐπιστήμη are perfectly virtuous. For, given that achieving a philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms has been ascertained to allow people to (a) be fully virtuous, and thus, (b) enjoy fully virtuous pleasures, I have concluded that pure pleasures[533] which are attendant to wise and noetic knowledge are induced by the moral agent's philosophical knowledge to entirely (πάντῃ) accompany (συνακολουθοῦσι) virtue[534]. However, Plato's *Philebus* suggests that pleasures are still pure (and hence, good and virtuous) even if they are attendant to a less worthy cognitive state than philosophical knowledge – namely, true opinion (through αἴσθησις)[535]. Hence, the aim of this section is to assess whether pure pleasures which follow true opinion (through perception) are as perfectly pure and virtuous as those which are attendant to (philosophical) ἐπιστήμη. In pursuing this goal, I shall also seek to clarify whether or not (and, eventually, to what extent) true opinion is presented in Plato's *Philebus* as an ethically profitable cognitive state.

To start, when Plato has Socrates say at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 that pure pleasures may also be attendant to αἴσθησις, he ultimately aims to suggest, as I have already shown[536], that pure pleasures may also follow true opinion (through perception). However, opinion individuates a less worthy cognitive state

[533] Such pure pleasures are the truest. For these pleasures are those which are perfectly pure (i.e., measured).
[534] See *Phlb*. 63e5-7, where Plato has Socrates argue that some of the pure pleasures entirely accompany virtue. Hence, I am here assuming that the pleasures which entirely accompany virtue are those which are attendant to philosophical ἐπιστήμη.
[535] See *Phlb*. 66c4-7.
[536] Cf. *infra* pp. 81-82.

than wise and noetic knowledge[537]. For, after having clarified that opinions (unlike [philosophical] ἐπιστήμη) may be as false as well as true[538], Plato appeals at *Phlb*. 39a1-b2 to a book-soul analogy so as to better explain the reasons why opinion individuates an unreliable cognitive state. Plato first likens the human soul to a book. Next, he specifies that, when perceptions conjoin with memory and affections, some words are, as it were, inscribed in the book-soul[539]. Then, he finally establishes that these words form opinions in the soul. Thus, this argument that Plato introduces at *Phlb*. 39a1-b2 appears to indicate that one person may eventually attain a true[540] opinion in the case that she investigates (through memory) past and present perceptions (and related affections)[541] so as to give rise to a true assessment of the perceived sensible reality[542]. Similarly, the epistemological theory that Plato consistently endorses throughout his *corpus* suggests that those who achieve a true opinion are able to carry out a true assessment of the eternally flowing (and hence, deceitful) sensible reality[543]. Yet, as both *Phlb*. 39a1-b2 and, more generally, the epistemological theory that Plato introduces throughout his *corpus* seem to indicate, achieving a true opinion (which results from perception conjoining with memory and affections) is not yet sufficient for attaining a complete understanding

[537] See e.g., *Phlb*. 38b6 ff., 39a1-b2, and *infra* pp. 80-83: while a philosophical knowledge (which can be nothing but true) is concerned with what is always stable and true (i.e., the Platonic Forms), opinions (which may be false as well as true) are merely concerned with the unstable sensible reality. Hence, given that sensible reality (and its perception) may be deceiving, it follows that opinion (δόξα), which is epistemologically grounded on perception, constitutes a less worthy (and accurate) cognitive state than philosophical knowledge.

[538] Cf. *Phlb*. 38c1-3. See GOSLING 1959, p. 51, who, while commenting on Plato's *Philebus*, argues as follows: 'in a perceptual situation my sensory experience, together with memories derived from previous ones, combine to enable me to form an opinion about my present one'. Still, given that opinions are concerned with sensible (i.e., unstable) objects, they are epistemologically unstable.

[539] See DERETIĆ 2009, who claims that 'our capacity to think' (διάνοια) contributes (just as memory, perceptions and affections) to writing sentences in the soul.

[540] On the contrary, the person who (a) looks at someone else from a distance and (b) still wants to make up his mind about what he sees is likely to (1) hastily misjudge the sensible reality, and hence, (2) held a false opinion. Indeed, just to reiterate the example made by Plato at *Phlb*. 38c5-d10, a false opinion is held when the perceiver sees a man beside a rock beneath a tree and mistakes him for a statue made by shepherds. Cf. KENNY 1960, p. 51 and ff., for an analysis of how false opinion is presented by Plato at *Phlb*. 38c5-d10.

[541] For example, if I (a) "perceived" in the past that chocolate is good to eat (e.g., by eating a measured quantity of chocolate) and (b) have a similar perception (and affection) in the present, my soul may end up comparing memories of past perceptions (and relative affections) and present perceptions (and relative affections). By doing so, my soul may eventually draw the conclusion that (a) chocolate is generally good to eat and (b) eating measured quantities of chocolate is pleasant. Thus, I (i.e., my soul) may eventually achieve a generally true opinion about sensible reality (i.e., about a particular aspect of chocolate). Yet, as I do not have a complete knowledge of what is pleasant and really good (to eat), I may possibly (a) eat too much chocolate in the future, and thus, (b) suffer from indigestion. Accordingly, the true opinion about sensible reality that I have achieved on the basis of my (past and present) empirical experience may eventually become false in the future. For such a true opinion is not grounded on a complete and perfect knowledge of the most basic constituents of sensible reality (i.e., the intelligible Forms).

[542] Cf. *Tht*. 186a10-b9, where Plato specifies that, by comparing past and present perceptions, a person (that is, her soul) may eventually become able to truly assess (κρίνειν) the perceived sensible world.

[543] See *infra* pp. 21-22, esp. fns. 171-172.

of the basic constituents of reality (i.e., the eternally true and stable[544] intelligible Forms)[545]. For the one who has true opinions is generally presented as a person who is able to provide a true assessment of the sensible reality, but not to understand the reasons why the sensible world has its (sensible) appearance. Thus, given that true opinions, *qua* fourth-ranked (epistemological) goods, are openly declared in Plato's *Philebus* to be less worthy cognitive states than wise and noetic knowledge[546], we may ultimately conclude that the reason why true opinion (which merely results from perceptions conjoining with memory and affections) is not as valuable as philosophical ἐπιστήμη is that the former cognitive state, unlike the latter, does not allow one for giving an account of the reasons why the perceived sensible reality is how, and what, it is.

After having further clarified how different true opinion and philosophical knowledge are as cognitive states in Plato's *Philebus*, I shall now consider what Plato has Socrates and Protarchus suggest at *Phlb*. 40c8-d10 – namely, that (a) enjoying pleasures (ἥδεσθαι) is analogous to having opinions (δοξάζειν)[547] and (b) the moral agent who perceives a pleasure which is not about anything real feels a pleasure which is not pure – but rather impure, and thus, false[548].

> ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ἦν δοξάζειν μὲν ὄντως ἀεὶ τῷ τὸ παράπαν δοξάζοντι, μὴ ἐπ' οὖσι δὲ μηδ' ἐπὶ γεγονόσι μηδὲ ἐπ'ἐσομένοις ἐνίοτε. ΠΡΩ. Πάνυ γε. ΣΩ. Καὶ ταῦτά γε ἦν οἶμαι τὰ ἀπεργαζόμενα δόξαν ψευδῆ τότε καὶ τὸ ψευδῶς δοξάζειν. ἦ γάρ; ΠΡΩ. Ναί. ΣΩ. Τί οὖν; οὐκ ἀνταποδοτέον ταῖς λύπαις τε καὶ ἡδοναῖς τὴν τούτων ἀντίστροφον ἕξιν ἐν ἐκείνοις; ΠΡΩ. Πῶς; ΣΩ. Ὡς ἦν μὲν χαίρειν ὄντως ἀεὶ τῷ τὸ παράπαν ὁπωσοῦν καὶ εἰκῇ χαίροντι, μὴ μέντοι ἐπὶ τοῖς οὖσι μηδ' ἐπὶ τοῖς γεγονόσιν ἐνίοτε, πολλάκις δὲ καὶ ἴσως πλειστάκις ἐπὶ τοῖς μηδὲ μέλλουσί ποτε γενήσεσθαι.
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> SOCRATES: Now we found that, though a person holding any opinion at all must hold it in fact, yet it might sometimes have reference to what was not a fact, either of the present, the past, or the future. PROTARCHUS: Quite so. SOCRATES: And there, I think, lay the source of our false opinion, of our holding opinions falsely. Did it not? PROTARCHUS: Yes. SOCRATES: Well then, should we not ascribe a corresponding condition, as regards these references, to pains and pleasures? PROTARCHUS: How do you mean? SOCRATES: I mean that though anyone who feels pleasure at all, no matter how groundless it be, always really feels that pleasure, yet sometimes it has no

[544] See *Ti*. 27d5-28a4, where Timaeus (a) distinguishes what always is and never becomes from what becomes and never is, and (b) connects each ontological realm with its relative epistemological domain. As a result, what always is and never becomes is associated with understanding (νόησις) and reasoned account (λόγος), while what becomes and never is is related to opinion (δόξα) and unreasoning sense perception (αἴσθησις ἄλογος).

[545] Cf. *Tht*. 186c7-e12 (and SEDLEY 2004, p. 111, who comments on this very passage) for the Platonic account of the epistemological limitedness of true opinion. See FERRARI 2011, p. 88, who suggests that the Plato of the *Theaetetus* argues that a person who perceives a sensible object is not necessarily able to achieve a reasoned assessment of the perceived sensible reality. On this, see FREDE 1999, p. 382, who suggests that 'we perceive the colour red, but we do not, strictly speaking, perceive that A is red'.

[546] Cf. *Phlb*. 66a4-c7, where νοῦς and φρόνησις (and thus, by implication, also [philosophical] ἐπιστήμη, and σοφία) are indeed presented by Plato as the third-ranked (epistemological) goods.

[547] See *Phlb*. 38b6 ff.

[548] See FREDE 1992, p. 443, who divides false pleasures into four species (for a similar interpretation, see also IRWIN 1995, p. 328 ff.; for a different view, see DYBIKOWSKI 1970 and DELCOMMINETTE 2003): (1) false pleasures (and pains) as propositional attitudes (36c-41b); (2) overrated pleasures (and pains) which end up being false (41b-42c); (3) states of freedom from pain which turn out to be false pleasures (42c-44d); (4) pleasures which are false as they are mixed with pains (44d-50e). On this interpretation, the false pleasure that I am considering in my analysis is of type (1). Indeed, the false pleasure that I am taking into account consists in a propositional attitude (namely, in an intentional mental state that is directed at an object). Yet, given that all false pleasures result from a cognitive error (on this issue, cf. GOSLING 1959, esp. p. 44), I assume that *Phlb*. 40c8-d10 is about false pleasures of all types.

> reference to any present or past fact, while in many cases, perhaps in most, it has reference to what never will be a fact.
>
> *Phlb*. 40c8-d10

This passage shows that a moral agent feels false pleasures in the case that his experiences of pleasure are grounded on something which is unreal. Hence, given that what is unreal not only does not exist at all in nature, but may also be mistaken for something else (due to a misleading perception of the sensible world)[549], *Phlb*. 40c8-d10 may be taken to show that the moral agent who mistakenly thinks[550] that she enjoys real experiences of pleasure actually feels pleasures which are ultimately false (i.e., neither virtuous nor pure)[551]. If so, then, *Phlb*. 40c8-d10 may also be taken to imply that, conversely, the moral agent who has a true opinion about sensible reality may eventually enjoy pleasures that are really true[552]. As a result, we may conclude that Plato (implicitly) argues at *Phlb*. 40c8-d10 that the moral agent who has true opinions[553] may eventually feel pleasures that are really true (i.e., to some extent virtuous[554] and pure).

Thus, while it is true, as my interpretation of *Phlb*. 66c4-7 indicates, that pleasures which follow true opinion (through αἴσθησις) are pure[555], it is also the case that such pure pleasures are to some extent different from those which follow philosophical ἐπιστήμη. Indeed, pleasures which are attendant to true opinion (through perception) are not authentically pure and virtuous. In fact, the moral agent who enjoys pure pleasures on the basis of his true opinion does not really know[556] the ultimate reason why the pleasures he feels are actually good and pleasant. However, as my interpretation of Plato's *Philebus* (especially, of *Phlb*. 40c8-d10) suggests, the moral agent who has

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[549] For example, a person who is colour-blind perceives an object which is red as a green one. Hence, although such a person may think to hold a true (and real) opinion about sensible reality, the opinion she has is false (and unreal). Similarly, a person affected by diabetics who takes pleasures from eating a considerable amount chocolate may think to enjoy true (i.e., real) pleasures (for she tastes a good food). Yet, her pleasure is not real (indeed, for a person affected by diabetics, chocolate is always harmful and never truly pleasurable).

[550] On the basis of his false opinion about a certain sensible object (or event) being a source of real pleasure.

[551] Indeed, a pleasure is not really pleasurable when it is impure – i.e., when it does not belong at all to the class of what is measured: see *Phlb*. 52c1-d1.

[552] See *infra* pp. 81-82: pleasures are false when the sentences written in the soul generate an opinion – which results from memory conjoining with perceptions and affections – are false (cf. *Phlb*. 41a ff.). Conversely, pleasures are true when a true opinion is generated in the soul (see *Phlb*. 38b2 ff.).

[553] Namely, the moral agent who [a] explores his memories of past perceptions [and relative affections], [b] compares them with present perceptions [and relative affections], and [c] acknowledges (that is, calculates), by exploring memories of past perceptions, which sensible objects (or events) are real sources of pleasure. By analogy, such a moral agent is able to acknowledge in the present a certain sensible object (or event) as a real source of non-destructive – but rather beneficial – pleasures (in fact, *Phlb*. 38b2 ff. shows that a true opinion results from perceptions conjoining with memories and affections). On Plato's conception of calculation (especially, in the *Theaetetus*), see SEDLEY 2004, pp. 109-11. On the nature of analogy as method of thinking, cf. FRONTEROTTA 2016, and AST 1956, p. 150 *s.v.* ἀναλογίζομαι.

[554] Interestingly, Plato clarifies at *Phlb*. 45e5-8 that all pure pleasures have their origin in virtue.

[555] Pure pleasures which are attendant to true opinion (through αἴσθησις) end up being inspired by a true assessment of the sensible reality (that is, by the moral agent's [empirical] acknowledgement of a certain sensible object being a real source of true [i.e., to a certain extent virtuous, pure, and measured] pleasures). Indeed, all pure pleasure are to some extent measured: cf. *Phlb*. 52c1-d1.

[556] Unlike the person who has philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms – the Forms of Measure and Virtue included.

true opinions about sensible reality (and hence, not about the [truest] philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms) is still able to (a) enjoy pleasures which – though not being as perfectly pure and virtuous as those which are informed by the moral agent's philosophical ἐπιστήμη – are still to some extent good, and thus, (b) to perform virtuous actions – but not to live the supremely virtuous life that only the really wise people can live[557]. Ultimately, then, true opinion is presented in Plato's *Philebus* as an ethically profitable cognitive state. Indeed, the theory of moral epistemology that Plato (more or less explicitly) presents in this dialogue shows that the moral agent who has true opinions about sensible reality, though not being able to attain the supreme good, may still attain the kind of imperfect virtue that is elsewhere in Plato's *corpus* defined as 'demotic'[558]. Indeed, Plato's *Philebus* (more or less explicitly) suggests that a moral agent may still to some extent participate in virtue (and hence, enjoy pleasures which, having their origin in virtue, are still to some extent pure) without philosophy[559].

3.4. *Conclusions*

This chapter has shown that *Phlb*. 66c4-7 represents a crucial passage for understanding the theory of moral epistemology that Plato (more or less explicitly) presents in this work. Indeed, after having established that the term 'ἐπιστήμη' is used in different senses in the *Philebus*, I have first suggested that Plato specifies at *Phlb*. 66c4-7 that pure pleasures are those which are attendant to either philosophical ἐπιστήμη or true opinion (through αἴσθησις).

Next, I have shown that those pure pleasures which follow ἐπιστήμη are informed by the moral agent's philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms (the Forms of Measure and Virtue included). Hence, after having established that Plato's *Philebus* suggests that achieving a philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms allows people to be fully virtuous (and thus, also to enjoy fully virtuous pleasures), I have argued that pleasures which are informed by the moral agent's philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms are perfectly virtuous and pure.

Then, I have suggested that Plato's *Philebus* shows that true opinion represents an ethically profitable cognitive state. Indeed, the *Philebus* may be taken to testify to the fact that the moral agent

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[557] See [Pl.] *Epin*. 977c1-d2: 'If the human race were deprived of number, we would never come to be φρόνιμοι in anything. We would be animals unable to give a rational account, and our soul would never obtain the whole of virtue. An animal that does not know two and three or odd and even, one that is completely ignorant of number, could never give an account of the things it has grasped by the only means available to it – perception and memory (αἰσθήσεις καὶ μνήμας). But while nothing prevents it from possessing the remainder of virtue – courage and moderation – no one deprived of the ability to give a true account can ever become wise'. Whoever the author of the *Epinomis* is, these lines confirm that, within the context of Platonic tradition, perception and memory – assumedly, the main components of a true opinion – are sufficient to act virtuously, but not to give a full account of virtue.

[558] See *R*. X 619c6-d1. See *Men*. 96e7-97c5: true opinion may be 'in no way a worse guide to correct action than knowledge'. Cf. PETRUCCI 2011 on this. Cf. *R*. VI 506c6-10 and *Men*. 96d1-97c4: those who hold a true opinion – and thus, not a wise and noetic knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) – are similar to blind people who happen to travel the right road.

[559] See *Phd*. 82a10-b7.

who has a true opinion (which results from perceptions conjoining with memory and affections) about sensible reality may eventually enjoy pleasures that are really true (i.e., to some extent virtuous and pure). Nonetheless, I have also argued that the moral agent who enjoys pure pleasures on the basis of his true opinion (and hence, not in light of his philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms) is not aware of the reasons why the pleasures he feels are somehow pure. Accordingly, after having established that pure pleasures which follow true opinion are therefore to some extent different from those which follow philosophical ἐπιστήμη, I concluded that Plato's *Philebus* presents true opinion as a means to an imperfect virtue (namely, to the kind of virtue that Plato defines as demotic in other dialogues).

Ultimately, then, my analysis has shown that Plato's *Philebus* establishes that achieving philosophical knowledge is a necessary and sufficient condition for *being* fully virtuous, as the so-called Socratic theory of ethical intellectualism[560], more widely systematized in other dialogues, prescribes[561]. However, attaining a true opinion (which constitutes a less worthy cognitive state than philosophical knowledge) is still presented as a sufficient condition for *acting* virtuously.

[560] Indeed, although Plato's *Philebus* is not explicitly committed to the so-called Socratic theory of ethical intellectualism (according to which, virtue is knowledge and no one errs willingly: cf. ROWE 2009, SANTAS 1964, and SEGVIC 2000), this dialogue (more or less explicitly) establishes that achieving a wise and noetic knowledge of the intelligible Forms allows people to *be* fully virtuous (and thus, to enjoy the truest pleasures).

[561] For a similar interpretation, see BUTLER 2007 and KENNY 1960, p. 52. For a different view, see EVANS 2007, esp., pp. 356 ff., and FREDE 1992, p. 430, who argue that, while rejecting in the *Philebus* a strong intellectualism, Plato endorses in this dialogue a weak intellectualism (according to which the mixed life – of pleasure and intellect – is the most choice-worthy). Yet, we may still assume that the Plato of the *Philebus* is genuinely intellectualist and Socratic (cf. ROWE 2009). Indeed, Plato's late dialogues generally reiterate the Socratic moral paradoxes which ground the theory of ethical intellectualism (see e.g., *Sph.* 228c7-8, *Lg.* IX 859c-864b [on this, see SAUNDERS 1968, who argues that no Socratic paradox is rejected in the late works], and *Ti.* 86d5-e3). Thus, why should Plato deny the intellectualist theory of virtue in the *Philebus* – which is, after all, a late dialogue as well?

CHAPTER 4: THE THEORY OF MORAL EPISTEMOLOGY IN PLATO'S *LAWS*

4.1. *Plato's* Laws*: an epistemological and ethical puzzle*

> ΑΘ. ἐπεὶ ταῦτα εἴ ποτέ τις ἀνθρώπων φύσει ἱκανὸς θείᾳ μοίρᾳ γεννηθεὶς παραλαβεῖν δυνατὸς εἴη, νόμων οὐδὲν ἂν δέοιτο τῶν ἀρξόντων ἑαυτοῦ· ἐπιστήμης γὰρ οὔτε νόμος οὔτε τάξις οὐδεμία κρείττων, οὐδὲ θέμις ἐστὶν νοῦν οὐδενὸς ὑπήκοον οὐδὲ δοῦλον ἀλλὰ πάντων ἄρχοντα εἶναι, ἐάνπερ ἀληθινὸς ἐλεύθερός τε ὄντως ᾖ κατὰ φύσιν. νῦν δὲ οὐ γάρ ἐστιν οὐδαμοῦ οὐδαμῶς, ἀλλ' ἢ κατὰ βραχύ· διὸ δὴ τὸ δεύτερον αἱρετέον, τάξιν τε καὶ νόμον, ἃ δὴ τὸ μὲν ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ ὁρᾷ καὶ βλέπει, τὸ δ' ἐπὶ πᾶν ἀδυνατεῖ. ταῦτα δὴ τῶνδε εἵνεκα εἴρηται.
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> ATHENIAN: Though if there were ever a member of the human race of satisfactory character, who by some divine allocation of talent was born with the capacity to assume such power, he would have no need of laws to rule over him, since no law or regulation is more powerful than knowledge. Nor is it right for mind to be the servant or slave of anything; rather (if it is the real thing, and its nature truly free) it should be the ruler over all things. As things stand, however – well, no such person exists, not in any place nor in any fashion, or only to a very limited degree. So we must opt for what is second-best: regulation and law – which can see the general picture, and have an eye to that, though they cannot see things in every detail.
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> *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6[562]

Lg. IX 875c3-d6 sheds light on a crucial aspect of the political theory that Plato works out in his final work, the *Laws*. For the passage in question suggests that neither law nor any other kind of regulation is more powerful (κρείττων) than knowledge (ἐπιστήμη)[563]. Thus, in the case that no such person provided with ἐπιστήμη exists, what is second-best (namely, a constitution which is regulated by laws) should be implemented. Now, this bit of textual evidence – as I argue in a separate article[564] – helps us to understand what is the most fundamental reason why the constitution of Magnesia (that is, the city that Plato has the Athenian Stranger, Cleinias from Crete, and Megillus the Spartan build

[562] Translations (with minor changes) of Plato's *Laws* will refer to GRIFFITH-SCHOFIELD 2016.

[563] The *Laws*' political theory is (at the very least, in this respect) consistent with the *Republic*'s. Cf. SARTORI-VEGETTI-CENTRONE 2011[4], p.744 fn. 16: Bruno Centrone, while commenting on *R*. IV 427a2-7, argues that the *Republic* shows that, insofar as the ruler has philosophical knowledge, and hence, virtue, a *corpus* of written laws is worthless. On Centrone's interpretation, Plato anticipates in the *Republic* some of the *Statesman*'s arguments (cf. esp. *Plt*. 293c-d and 300c-d). Accordingly, the philosopher-ruler is above the laws as he does not need any. For a different interpretation, cf. BOBONICH 2007, esp. pp. 161 ff.: even if the philosopher has knowledge of the Forms, some laws (which are inspired by the philosopher's knowledge: see e.g., *R*. VI 484c-d and *R*. VII 520c-d) still need to be issued.

[564] See CACCIATORI (forthcoming), where I argue that the *Republic*'s Καλλίπολις and the best and most perfect city outlined at *Lg*. V 739a3-740a2 indicate the same communistic city. I then conclude that the *Laws*' Magnesia, as a second-best city, constitutes an approximation of this communistic city. More specifically, I first contend that the old proverb, which (a) is ascribed by Plato (at *Lg*. V 739a3-740a2) to the best and most perfect city and (b) prescribes that 'the things of friends are in common', suggests that the best and most perfect city is that in which women, children, and all the material goods are shared among all the citizens. Now, some scholars deny that the *Laws*' best and most perfect city and the *Republic*'s Καλλίπολις indicate the same ideal city (for communism does not apply to all of the Καλλίπολις's citizens). Yet, I maintain, after VEGETTI 1999, that Plato provides at *Lg*. V 739a3-740a2 an inaccurate description of the socio-economic system of the *Republic*'s Καλλίπολις (*qua* the *Laws*' best and most perfect city) because he aims to cast doubt on the feasibility of such an ideal city where material goods are held in common provided that philosophers are rulers. By doing so, then, Plato justifies the need for a new (i.e., a second-best) constitutional project, namely one in which there is no philosopher who is able to gain political power. See also *infra* p. 96 fn. 567.

λόγῳ in the *Laws*) is only a second-best[565]. Indeed, *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 establishes that the best city is that in which a person provided with ἐπιστήμη has control. Hence, if we take for granted that ἐπιστήμη indicates in the *Laws* (as it usually does throughout the Platonic *corpus*) a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms[566], it follows that the best political constitution is that in which philosophers (that is, people who possess philosophical knowledge) are rulers[567]. Yet, the Athenian Stranger, Cleinias, and Megillus clarify at *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 that, given that, as things stand (νῦν), no one person provided with a fully philosophical knowledge exists (or, if he does, only to a very limited degree [κατὰ βραχύ]), a constitution regulated by law is what they choose to implement. Thus, the political theory that Plato has the Athenian present at *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 allows us to infer that the ultimate reason why Magnesia is merely a second-best is that no one person provided with a fully philosophical knowledge is expected to exist in the city that is being constructed λόγῳ in the *Laws*. As it appears, then, *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 has more than a merely political message to deliver. Indeed, the passage in question also suggests that a deliberate epistemological theory is being produced in Plato's *Laws*. For, on the assumption that the *Laws*' ἐπιστήμη indicates a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms, *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 implicitly suggests that philosophical knowledge represents an unattainable (epistemological) goal for all the Magnesians. If so, then, all the citizens of Magnesia would have to content themselves with a poorer cognitive condition than philosophical ἐπιστήμη.

Now, the general scope of this chapter is not only to investigate more deeply the *Laws*' epistemological theory, but also to determine how epistemology relates to ethics in Plato's *Laws*. Firstly, then, I shall aim to establish whether it is really the case or not that, as *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 implies, no philosopher is expected to exist in Magnesia. To this end, I will evaluate whether or not

[565] See CACCIATORI (forthcoming), where I argue (*contra* SCHOFIELD 2006, pp. 231-234, SAMARAS 2010, p. 177, and SCHOFIELD 2010, p. 16) that the reason why Magnesia is a second-best city is not that it does not enact a communistic policy (actually, *Lg*. V 739a3-740a2 shows that women, children, and all kinds of goods are shared among *all* the citizens in the best city). Indeed, *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 shows that the ultimate reason why Magnesia is a second-best city (thus, inferior to the *Republic*'s Καλλίπολις which Plato presents at *Lg*. V 739a3-740a2 as the best city – that the *Laws*' best city is to be identified with the *Republic*'s ideal city is also maintained by MÜLLER 1997, p. 228 fn. 2, BALLINGALL 2016, BARKER 1977[5], and KAHN 2013, *contra* MILLER 2013, BOBONICH 2002, esp. pp. 11-12, BOBONICH [forthcoming], and NATORP 1895) is that no philosopher is expected to exist in Magnesia (for a similar view, see LEVIN 2012, p. 362, and RASHED 2018, p. 120). Accordingly, Magnesia, being a second-best city, represents an approximation to the ideal city of the *Republic* (for a similar view, see KAMTEKAR 1999, p. 248). In this way, the *Laws*' foundation of Magnesia ends up constituting a more feasible constitutional project than the one that Plato presents in the *Republic* (for a similar view, see NIGHTINGALE 1993, p. 279, BROOKS 2006, FESTUGIÈRE 1936, pp. 423, 426, 444, LISI 2001b, LAKS 1990, LAKS, 1991, LAKS 2000, MOUREAU 2017, p. 385, ROWE 2010b, SAUNDERS 1970 p. 28, SIMPSON 2003, and STALLEY 1983, pp. 9-10; for a slightly different interpretation, see MEYER 2006, p. 380). Indeed, the aim of the *Laws* is to prescribe what to do in the case that philosophers are not in the position to become rulers (for a similar view, see KRAUT 2010, LAKS 2000, and PRADEAU 2002, and ROWE 2010b, *contra* BOBONICH 2002, BOBONICH [forthcoming], and KLOSKO 1986).

[566] Plato could never argue that no one person provided with a merely technical knowledge (ἐπιστήμη ↔ τέχνη) is expected to exist in Magnesia. Indeed, many people provided with technical expertise are expected to live in Magnesia (cf. e.g., *Lg*. VI 751a-752b and 758a-760a, where judges, agronomists, military officers, priests, *etc*. are said to be expected to live in Magnesia – see p. 37, where I show that Plato believes that a technical knowledge is possessed by such people as those mentioned above).

[567] Therefore, Plato never recants the *Republic*'s political theory. On this issue, see SCHOFIELD 1998, p. 241 and VLASTOS 1965[2], pp. 234-238, *contra* BARKER 1977[5], p. 340.

the members of the so-called Nocturnal Council possess a philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms. Having clarified this, I will (a) analyze the impact that the Nocturnal Counsellors' cognitive state has on their moral nature and (b) ascertain whether or not the *Laws*' political theory allows such people as the Nocturnal Counsellors to exist in a second-best city like Magnesia. Secondly, I will aim to more widely explore the complex theory of moral epistemology which Plato argues for in his *Laws*. Accordingly, I will first examine what kind of cognitive condition is at best achieved by those Magnesians who do not belong to the Council that meets at night. Next, I will consider what kind of virtue can be at best attained by such people. Then, I shall investigate how good moral actions may stem out of fear, law, and true λόγος, as *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 suggests.

4.2. *The epistemological and ethical excellence of the* Laws*' Nocturnal Counsellors*

To begin our analysis of the epistemological and ethical nature of the members of the Nocturnal Council, I will briefly analyze once again what Plato has the Athenian Stranger say at *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6. The Athenian suggests that, in the case that a person provided with ἐπιστήμη exists, he should be in charge of the government of the city. However, since no such person provided with ἐπιστήμη is assumed to exist in Magnesia[568], Magnesia – which is, indeed, a second-best city – has to be governed on the basis of a complex law code[569]. Thus, on the reasonable[570] assumption that the kind of ἐπιστήμη that is here at stake is philosophical, *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 implicitly shows that no one person provided with a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms exists in Magnesia.

4.2.1. *The Nocturnal Counsellors' philosophical (?) ἐπιστήμη*

Now, is it really the case that, as *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 implies, no philosopher is expected to exist in Magnesia? Apparently, a negative answer to this question should be provided. For the twelfth Book[571]

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[568] For *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 indicates that people who are at best ἐπιστήμονες to a very limited degree (κατὰ βραχύ) are those who are expected to live in Magnesia. Hence, as I take 'κατὰ βραχύ' to specify the "quality" (of the ordinary people's knowledge) – rather than the "quantity" of people who know –, I assume that *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 suggests that only people who are scarcely ἐπιστήμονες are expected to live in Magnesia. For a similar (qualitative) use of 'κατὰ βραχύ', see *Ti*. 27c1-2: 'TIMAEUS: That, Socrates, is what all do, who have the least portion of wisdom'. (TI. Ἀλλ', ὦ Σώκρατες, τοῦτό γε δὴ πάντες ὅσοι καὶ κατὰ βραχὺ σωφροσύνης μετέχουσιν) (Translated by CORNFORD 1937).

[569] *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 ultimately establishes that every city has to be ruled by a πολιτικὸς ἐπιστήμων, if it is to be the best city. Interestingly, the political theory that Plato works out at *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 reminds the reader of arguments that Plato had supported in earlier dialogues. To start with, Plato had argued in the *Statesman* that 'law could never accurately embrace what is best and most just for all at the same time, and so prescribe what is best' (*Plt*. 294b10-c2). Also, Plato's *Republic* suggests that it is crucial for every ruler to achieve a philosophical ἐπιστήμη. Indeed, having a philosophical ἐπιστήμη allows one to acknowledge what is good for each and every person on all the occasions (see *R*. VII 520a6-d4). Thus, Plato's *Republic* ultimately indicates that a πολιτικὸς needs to be ἐπιστήμων, if he is to rule for the sake of the common good.

[570] Plato's political philosophy suggests that philosophical ἐπιστήμη is the only kind of knowledge that is superior to (namely, above) the laws. For both the *Republic* and the *Statesman* show that those who have a merely technical ἐπιστήμη (even if it is of a mathematical sort) must respect the rule of law.

[571] As KLOSKO 2008, p. 4, points out, Plato first mentions the Nocturnal Council in the *Laws*' tenth Book (see *Lg*. X 908 and 909a). However, it is in the twelfth Book that he massively focuses on this political institution. Similarly, MORROW

of Plato's *Laws* seems to introduce people who closely resemble the philosophers[572]. In fact, the members of the Nocturnal Council are presented as divine people[573]. Curiously, Plato explains elsewhere in his *corpus*[574] that only the philosophers are worth being considered divine[575]. Indeed, Plato's *Sophist* establishes that philosophers – namely, those who put the highest value on such things as knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), intelligence (φρόνησις), and intellect (νοῦς)[576] – are divine people[577]. Also, Plato's *Republic* determines that philosophers, who spend their time with what is divine and ordered (i.e., the intelligible Forms), are indeed divine[578]. Therefore, given that (a) a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms is attained by those who are worth being considered divine and (b) the Nocturnal Counsellors are presented at *Lg*. XII 951b5 as divine people, we may already conclude that the Nocturnal Counsellors do possess a philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms.

Interestingly, the fact that philosophers and Nocturnal Counsellors share the same cognitive nature is further confirmed by textual evidence. For *Lg*. XII 962c8-d5 shows that the only worthy member of the Nocturnal Council is the person who has the capacity to focus on one target only and always shoot at this:

> ΚΛ. Οὐ δῆτα, ὦ ξένε, σαφῶς γε· εἰ δ' οὖν τοπάζειν δεῖ, δοκεῖ μοι τείνειν ὁ λόγος οὗτος εἰς τὸν σύλλογον ὃν εἶπες νυνδὴ νύκτωρ δεῖν συνιέναι. ΑΘ. Κάλλισθ' ὑπέλαβες, ὦ Κλεινία, καὶ δεῖ δὴ τοῦτον, ὡς ὁ νῦν παρεστηκὼς ἡμῖν λόγος μηνύει, πᾶσαν ἀρετὴν ἔχειν· ἧς ἄρχει τὸ μὴ πλανᾶσθαι πρὸς πολλὰ στοχαζόμενον, ἀλλ' εἰς ἓν βλέποντα πρὸς τοῦτο ἀεὶ τὰ πάντα οἷον βέλη ἀφιέναι.
>
> CLEINIAS: No, my friend, or not for sure. Mind you, if I had to guess, I suspect this line of argument points to that council which, you've just been saying, would need to meet at night. ATHENIAN: Right in one, Cleinias. This body, as our present discussion indicates, will need to manifest virtue in all its fullness – the ruling principle of which being not to be all over the place and aim at one thing after another, but to keep the eye fixed on a single target and consistently aim all its shafts at that.
>
> *Lg*. XII 962c8-d5

As *Lg*. XII 962c8-d5 establishes, to be part of the Nocturnal Council one has to meet a fundamental requirement: he must be able to attain a full virtue by looking to (βλέπειν) one single target[579]. At *Lg*. XII 962d7-963a4, Cleinias and the Athenian Stranger further clarify this assertion. Indeed, they argue

1960, pp. 501-502, argues that the Nocturnal Council does not appear suddenly in Book XII. Indeed, a number of allusions to the Council that meets at night can be found in the previous books of the *Laws*.

[572] For a similar view, see BRISSON-PRADEAU 2007, esp. p. 154, KRAUT 2010, MEYER 2006, O'MEARA 2017, and PRADEAU 2019, esp. pp. 219-224: they argue that the people who belong to the Council that meets at night guide the city on the basis of a fully philosophical knowledge.

[573] See *Lg*. XII 951b5: 'ἄνθρωποι ἀεὶ θεῖοί τινες'.

[574] See *infra* pp. 13-14 and 63-64.

[575] Cf. e.g., *R*. VI 500b8-d2 and *Sph*. 216a-c.

[576] See *Sph.* 249c10-d5.

[577] Cf. *Sph*. 216a-c. See also *infra* pp. 13 ff., where I argue that the state of human perfection (i.e., the state of those who are divine) can be attained only by means of achieving the highest epistemological (and ethical) condition. Accordingly, only philosophers can be divine.

[578] See *R*. VI 500c9-d2.

[579] Cf. also *Lg*. XII 945d1-e3, where Plato has the Athenian Stranger say that 'it is absolutely essential that the Counsellors should be remarkable for virtue in all its forms'. See FERRARI 2015, p. 1073 fn. 67, who observes that, as the future Nocturnal Counsellors need to aim at one single target, they must aim to know the one single Form of Virtue.

that the future member of the Council that meets at night (who is required to manifest virtue in all its fullness) has to understand that virtue is the only object that should be honoured pre-eminently and toward which everything else should look[580]. Thus, virtue constitutes the one single aim that the Nocturnal Counsellors must always have in view, if they are to be fully virtuous. Now, the way in which the Nocturnal Counsellors are supposed to achieve this goal is elliptically described at *Lg*. XII 963a1-9. For Plato has Cleinias and the Athenian Stranger explain in those lines the nature of virtue[581]: virtue consists of four parts and νοῦς (intellect) guides (ἡγεμόνα) them all. In fact, νοῦς[582] is the target which everything – and, especially, the three remaining parts of virtue – should look to (βλέπειν). As a consequence, achieving νοῦς (i.e., the most important part of virtue)[583] is crucial for those who are required to (a) look to virtue as one single aim, and thus, (b) attain a full virtue. Indeed, it is only by means of νοῦς that such people as the Nocturnal Counsellors[584] manage to know (συνιδεῖν) what virtue is, both in itself and in its parts[585]. Now, on the assumption that νοῦς indicates

[580] At *Lg*. XII 962d7-963a4, the Athenian Stranger specifies that those who think to be the wisest (σοφώτατοι) people – while they are not – are not able to acknowledge that there is one single target (i.e., one object of particular value) that everything else should look to. On the contrary, the Nocturnal Counsellors (who are required to be fully virtuous) are said to succeed in acknowledging the importance of virtue – which they, in fact, manage to assume as the one single target that everything else should look to.

[581] FERRARI 2015, pp. 1074-1075 fn. 70, observes that the way in which Plato treats virtue at *Lg*. XII 963a6-9 reminds the reader of arguments that Plato had already maintained in the Book I of his *Laws*. At *Lg*. I 631c-d, virtue is actually said to consist of four parts. For Plato has the Athenian Stranger distinguish lesser (i.e., human) goods – that is, (a) health, (b) good looks, (c) strength in running and other bodily activities and (d) wealth (which is not blind provided that it follows φρόνησις) – from greater (that is, divine – see GRIFFITH-SCHOFIELD 2016, p. 42 fn. 18, who argue that the decision to classify the greater goods as divine is 'best understood by reference to the treatment of reason or intelligence (*nous*) as a divine element in the human soul (4. 713e-714a)') goods – namely, (1) φρόνησις, (2) moderation (i.e., a rational state of soul characterized by self-control 'μετὰ νοῦ σώφρων ψυχῆς ἕξις'), (3) justice (that is, the combination of the first two with courage), and (4) courage: see *Lg*. I 631c1-d2. On the one hand, human goods are said to be good insofar as they look to (βλέπειν) the divine goods. On the other, the divine goods are good provided that they look to (βλέπειν) νοῦς – which is, in fact, presented at *Lg*. I 631d2-6 as the divine goods' guide (ἡγεμόνα). As a result, *Lg*. I 631c1-d6, just as *Lg*. XII 963a6-9, establishes that, to be φρονῶν/ἔννους (see *infra* p. 99 fn. 582), σώφρων, δίκαιος and ἀνδρεῖος (in a few words, to be fully virtuous), a moral agent must follow νοῦς. Therefore, achieving νοῦς (which is therefore the most important part of virtue) is crucial for being fully virtuous.

[582] For the sake of precision, I will refer to νοῦς as the part of virtue which guides all the others. However, when Plato presents the nature of virtue and describes what to do in order to attain a full virtue, he uses 'νοῦς' and 'φρόνησις' as two interchangeable terms. At *Lg*. I 631c1-d2, it is argued that the third ranked virtue (i.e, justice) consists of the combination of the first and second ranked virtues (that is, φρόνησις and moderation). Similarly, we may assume that the second ranked virtue (i.e., moderation) is combined with the first ranked virtue (namely, φρόνησις). Hence, given that, on the contrary, Plato openly declares that moderation consists of a σώφρων state of the soul that is associated with νοῦς, we should speculatively conclude that νοῦς and φρόνησις are used by Plato as two interchangeable terms. Interestingly, *Lg*. XII 963a8-9 and 964b3-6 confirm that νοῦς and φρόνησις are used interchangeably. For both νοῦς and φρόνησις are referred to as the part of virtue which guides all the others. Thus, νοῦς and φρόνησις are used as two interchangeable terms (which indicate the soul's rational virtue – namely, wisdom) within contexts which are philosophically pregnant (namely, where Plato considers the possibility that the second-best city may turn into the best city by having wise and purely virtuous philosophers rule over Magnesia).

[583] For νοῦς guides the three remaining parts of virtue (see *infra* p. 99 fn. 581).

[584] Cf. *Lg*. XII 963a10-c2, where Plato argues that only the statesman's ('πολιτικόν') νοῦς can state so clearly what virtue is. Therefore, the Nocturnal Counsellors, *qua* statesmen, are able to understand (through νοῦς) what virtue is, both in itself and in its parts.

[585] See *Lg*. XII 963c3-d2: 'ΑΘ. Τί δ' ὅτι δεῖ προθυμεῖσθαί τε συνιδεῖν αὐτὸ καὶ ἐν οἷς; ΚΛ. Οἷον ἐν τίσι λέγεις; ΑΘ. Οἷον ὅτε τέτταρα ἐφήσαμεν ἀρετῆς εἴδη γεγονέναι, δῆλον ὡς ἓν ἕκαστον ἀνάγκη φάναι, τεττάρων γε ὄντων. ΚΛ. Τί μήν; ΑΘ. Καὶ μὴν ἕν γε ἅπαντα ταῦτα προσαγορεύομεν. ἀνδρείαν γάρ φαμεν ἀρετὴν εἶναι, καὶ τὴν φρόνησιν ἀρετήν, καὶ τὰ δύο τἆλλα, ὡς ὄντως ὄντα οὐ πολλὰ ἀλλ' ἓν τοῦτο μόνον, ἀρετήν. ΚΛ. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν'.

in the *Laws* – as it does in the *Republic* – the cognitive state (ἕξις) of those who contemplate (θεωρεῖν) what is intelligible (νοητός) through intellection (ἐπιστήμη/νόησις/φρόνησις)[586], it follows that the Nocturnal Counsellors' νοῦς (as an intellectual virtue) allows them to achieve a complete knowledge of the intelligible Forms, and thus, of the one single Form of Virtue. On this interpretation, then, *Lg*. XII 962c8-963d2 would suggest that, to attain a full virtue by focusing on one single target[587], the Nocturnal Counsellors must first achieve νοῦς[588]. Indeed, it would be by means of νοῦς that the Nocturnal Counsellors would be able (a) to achieve an ἐπιστήμη of the highest kind (namely, a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms – Form of Virtue included)[589] and (b) to look to the Form of Virtue as the one single target[590] that they need to focus on if they are to be fully virtuous.

Interestingly, *Lg*. VII 817e5-818a3 suggests that the Nocturnal Counsellors are indeed prepared by education – just like true philosophers are[591] – to acknowledge the existence of the intelligible Forms.

> ΑΘ. Ἔτι δὴ τοίνυν τοῖς ἐλευθέροις ἔστιν τρία μαθήματα, λογισμοὶ μὲν καὶ τὰ περὶ ἀριθμοὺς ἓν μάθημα, μετρητικὴ δὲ μήκους καὶ ἐπιπέδου καὶ βάθους ὡς ἓν αὖ δεύτερον, τρίτον δὲ τῆς τῶν ἄστρων περιόδου πρὸς ἄλληλα ὡς πέφυκεν πορεύεσθαι. ταῦτα δὲ σύμπαντα οὐχ ὡς ἀκριβείας ἐχόμενα δεῖ διαπονεῖν τοὺς πολλοὺς ἀλλά τινας ὀλίγους—οὓς δέ, προϊόντες ἐπὶ τῷ τέλει φράσομεν.
>
> ATHENIAN: In that case there remain, for free people, three subjects of study: one subject is arithmetic, and everything to do with number; the second is measurement (of length, area, or volume), which can be treated as a single subject; the third deals with the wheeling of the stars, and the nature of their movements relative to one another. There is no need for the majority of the population to labour at these subjects in their entirety, in the minutest detail, but a small minority do need to. Who they are, we shall explain at the end of our discussion, that being the appropriate time to do so.
>
> *Lg*. VII 817e5-818a3

These lines show that all the citizens of Magnesia are required to learn the basics of three disciplines (i.e., arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy). However, the Athenian Stranger points out that, while all the Magnesians need to get acquainted with arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy[592], only a small minority of individuals is required to study these three subjects to a level of precision[593]. In this regard, the Athenian Stranger further clarifies that the identity of these people who are supposed to study

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[586] See *infra* p. 78 fn. 491, where I show that ἐπιστήμη, νόησις, and φρόνησις (but also σοφία) are indistinctively related to the intelligible world. For they all indicate a cognitive process, or condition in the soul, which, being inspired by intellect (νοῦς), allows one to know the intelligible Forms.
[587] Cf. *Lg*. XII 962c8-d5.
[588] Indeed, νοῦς is the chief part of virtue by means of which the whole of virtue is attained.
[589] See *infra* p. 100 fn. 586.
[590] Cf. *Lg*. XII 964a3-5. See also *Lg*. XII 965d4-7: the Nocturnal Counsellors are expected to know that the four parts of virtue are both one and the same and four different things.
[591] For we learn from the *Republic* (see *R*. VI 509d1-511e3 and VII 533c7-534a8) that only philosophers are able to manage so great a science as dialectic (see *infra* pp. 17-18). Indeed, only philosophers have already undertaken a specific education – made of gymnastics, music, and mathematics – which prepares them for dialectic (i.e., for achieving a stable knowledge of what really is and always remains the same – that is, the Forms).
[592] Cf. BARTELS 2017, p. 117 fn. 6, for a focus on the mathematical education that Magnesians are expected to undertake.
[593] See BARTELS 2017, p. 196.

arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy to a level of precision will be uncovered at the end of the *Laws*. As the twelfth and last Book of Plato's *Laws* focuses chiefly on the Nocturnal Counsellors, scholars have generally agreed that such a small group of people who need to study these three subjects to a level of precision is made of the Nocturnal Counsellors[594].

Yet, even if we take for granted that the Nocturnal Counsellors do undertake this *cursus studiorum* to a level of precision, why would this imply that such an education prepares them to acknowledge the existence of the intelligible Forms? I shall provide an answer to this question by appealing to other Platonic dialogues. To start with, Plato's *Republic* presents arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy as the subjects which characterize the μακροτέρα περὶοδος[595] – that is, the longer preparation which constitutes a necessary step to undertake in order for people to become true philosophers. What is more, Plato also establishes in his *Republic* that those who prove to be excellent in these three subjects end up being prepared for dialectic – i.e., the final stage of the *cursus studiorum* which is needed to become lovers of the sight of truth (φιλοθεάμονες τῆς ἀληθείας). Therefore, Plato's *Republic* treats arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy as introductory, so-called proemial, sciences: for they pave the way for dialectic[596] – namely, a science (ἐπιστήμη) that is associated with the cognitive process, known as νόησις[597], through which the intelligible Forms come to be fully known. Indeed, a dialectical method of inquiry, as we learn from Plato's *Phaedrus*[598] and *Statesman*[599], aims to find the definition of something by following a precise procedure. First, a dialectician carries out a collection (συναγωγή) – which consists in the collection of a variety into a unity. Next, he works out a division (διαίρεσις) – which aims to divide the unity into the various parts that naturally make that unity up[600]. Then, the dialectician keeps on dividing until, after eliminating various subdivisions, he finally achieves the definition that he was initially searching for[601].

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[594] 'The Athenian here indicates for the first time the provision he will in due course make for a council charged with the oversight of the workings of the whole social and political system that is being described: see 12. 961a-969d' (GRIFFITH-SCHOFIELD 2016, p. 282 fn. 86).

[595] Cf. *R*. VI 504b2 ff.: to achieve the finest view of all the virtues, a good guardian of the city needs to go round by a longer route, and work just as hard at his studies as he does in the gymnasium. This longer path encompasses the study of the so-called propaedeutic subjects (i.e., arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and harmony: see *R*. VII 536d6; for a focused analysis of these introductory sciences, see CATTANEI 2003) that prepare the student's soul for carrying νόησις out – i.e., for achieving knowledge of the οὐσίαι (cf. *R*. VII 523a). At a later stage, those in their thirties who will have successfully completed the introductory studies of mathematics will take an even longer route. By doing so, they will get acquainted with the greatest among all the disciplines, dialectic (see *R*. VII 539e; for a complete overview of the *cursus studiorum* that a good guardian of the *Republic*'s ideal city has to undertake, see VEGETTI 2003e, pp. 603-610).

[596] Cf. *R*. VII 536d5-8.

[597] See *R*. VI 511b3-e5, where Plato defines νοῦς as the cognitive state (ἕξις) of those who contemplate (θεωρεῖν) through the science of dialectic (ἐπιστήμη/νόησις) what is intelligible (νοητός). Therefore, the science of dialectic ('τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι ἐπιστήμη') turns out to be associated with the highest state of mind which can at best characterize the human soul, νόησις.

[598] Cf. *Phdr*. 265d3-266b1

[599] See *Plt*. 285a7-b6.

[600] See *infra* pp. 29-30.

[601] Cf. IONESCU 2014, p. 29.

Accordingly, the one who is able to pursue dialectical investigations of this sort finally achieves a stable knowledge of the most basic constituents of reality (that is, the intelligible Forms[602]) by becoming aware of the many facets that make up reality.

Interestingly, the Nocturnal Counsellors appear to be able to carry out investigations that closely resemble the inquiries that dialecticians, *qua* true philosophers, pursue[603]. Indeed, the members of the Council that meets at night are required to attain a full virtue by looking to (βλέπειν) one single target (i.e., virtue itself). To achieve this goal, however, they need to attain νοῦς[604]. Indeed, νοῦς, being the guide of the three other parts of virtue, allows them to know what virtue really is – *both in itself and in its parts*[605]. Hence, the Nocturnal Counsellors (namely, those who achieve νοῦς)[606] are able (just as dialecticians are) to acknowledge virtue both as single unity (i.e., virtue in itself – assumedly, through συναγωγή) and as a composite whole (that is, virtue in its parts – presumably, through διαίρεσις). Accordingly, given that (a) textual references suggest that the Nocturnal Counsellors undertake a specific *cursus studiorum* which is rooted in intensive mathematical studies[607], (b) the intensive study of arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy – as Plato shows elsewhere in his *corpus*[608] – paves the way for dialectic, and (c) the Nocturnal Counsellors are actually said at *Lg*. XII 965c2-3 to be able (just as dialecticians are) to look away from the things that are many and varied towards one single Form (μίαν ἰδὲαν)[609], we can draw a definitive conclusion: the Nocturnal Counsellors are prepared by an intensive mathematical education to achieve νοῦς and to manage dialectic[610]. On this interpretation, then, the *Laws*' Nocturnal Counsellors turn out to be able to achieve a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms. As a result, such people are also able to assume the one single Form of Virtue as the one single target which they must look to if they

[602] See *infra* pp. 29-30, for a complete overview of the method of dialectic.
[603] Cf. VERLINSKY 2016, p. 184: 'the Nocturnal Council should perform this role of the mind, and the goal of Magnesia, unlike that of all other states, is virtue. The knowledge of virtue entails the understanding of its unity and, simultaneously, of its fourfold character; this knowledge can be attained through the investigation of each of the four cardinal virtues, which should be defined, i.e., the senior members of the Nocturnal Council should master the dialectical method, making them real philosophers'.
[604] See e.g., *Lg*. XII 963a1-d2 and *Lg*. XII 964b3-d9 ff.
[605] See *Lg*. XII 963c3-d2.
[606] For they are required to attain a full virtue. To do so, they need to look to the guide of the three remaining parts of virtue – that is, νοῦς. Therefore, to attain a full virtue, the Nocturnal Counsellors must first achieve νοῦς.
[607] Cf. *Lg*. VII 817e5-818a3.
[608] See *R*. VII 536d5-8 and *infra* pp. 118-122.
[609] Cf. *Lg*. XII 965c2-3, where the Nocturnal Counsellors are said to be able to acknowledge virtue as a single Form ('μίαν ἰδέαν') which is made of multiple parts (for an account of virtue as a complex unity which is made of parts, see *Lg*. XII 963a1-d2 and 964a1-b1). See FERRARI 2015, p. 1083 fn. 78: the method of dialectic has one peculiar feature. Dialectic allows people to (a) acknowledge the existence of the many particulars that characterize the ordinary world and (b) achieve knowledge of the most basic constituents of reality (i.e., what is one and universal: the intelligible Forms). For a complete overview of the Platonic account of dialectic, see *R*. VII 537b ff., *Phdr*. 265d-266c, *Sph*. 255c-d, and *Phlb*. 15d.
[610] See *infra* p. 74 fn. 466, where I argue that Plato shows at *R*. VI 511c3-e4 that dialectic (a) is the only means through which the intelligible Forms can be fully known and (b) constitutes a process of intellection (νόησις) that takes place in the soul. See *infra* p. 100 fn. 586, where I explain that νόησις is inspired by νοῦς. Therefore, dialectic and νοῦς end up being mutually associated.

are to achieve the goal of being fully virtuous. Not surprisingly, then, Plato has the Athenian Stranger state at *Lg*. XII 966b6 that the real (ὄντως) guardians of the laws (that is, the members of the Council that meets at night) are able to grasp a knowledge of the truth (εἰδέναι τὰ περὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν)[611]. Indeed, by also specifying that (a) the truth is a fine and stable thing and (b) to persuade men of it certainly constitutes a difficult task[612], Plato implies that the Nocturnal Counsellors constitute the small minority of people who are able to achieve a philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the truth (i.e., of the intelligible Forms)[613], and thus, to assume the Form of Virtue as the one single target which they must look to in order to be fully virtuous.

4.2.2. *The Nocturnal Counsellors' ethical excellence*

The Nocturnal Counsellors have been determined to represent philosophical souls who are able both to pursue dialectical investigations and to achieve a complete understanding of the intelligible Forms (including the Form of Virtue). Moreover, my analysis of the Nocturnal Counsellors' cognitive condition has also indicated that epistemology and ethics seem to be strictly related in Plato's *Laws*[614]. Indeed, I have suggested that the Nocturnal Counsellors need to attain a complete knowledge of what virtue is if they are to achieve the goal of being fully virtuous. Hence, as the aim of this section is to more deeply analyze how epistemology and ethics relate in the case of the *Laws*' Nocturnal Counsellors, I will evaluate the extent to which the Nocturnal Counsellors' excellent epistemological condition has an impact on their moral status.

To start with, the *Laws* unequivocally shows that the members of the Nocturnal Council are required to be fully virtuous[615]. However, what does it mean for the Nocturnal Counsellors to be *fully* virtuous? At *Lg*. XII 963a6-9, Cleinias and the Athenian Stranger suggest that virtue is made of four

[611] See *Lg*. XII 967e4-968a1, where the Athenian Stranger seems to allude to the fact that the Nocturnal Counsellors are able (just as true philosophers) to give a reasoned explanation ('δοῦναι τὸν λόγον') of precisely those things of which an account can be actually provided. In this regard, see *Smp*. 202a5-9 and *Men*. 97c6-8 and 97e2-98a8, where Plato states that the fault of ὀρθὴ δόξα – if compared to philosophical knowledge – consists in the failure in giving an account (διδόναι λόγον). See MOSS 2014, esp. p. 182, who observes that the cognitive process that yields the account (λόγος) individuates an ἐπιστήμη of the highest kind.

[612] Cf. *Lg*. II 663e3-4: 'ΚΛ. Καλὸν μὲν ἡ ἀλήθεια, ὦ ξένε, καὶ μόνιμον· ἔοικε μὴν οὐ ῥᾴδιον εἶναι πείθειν'. Hence, *Lg*. II 663e3-4 indicates that it is not easy for humans to get acquainted with ἀλήθεια (i.e., with what really is, and hence, with the Forms). Thus, *Lg*. II 663e3-4 implies that only a small minority of people become as wise as philosophers are. Cf. *Phd*. 68c8-d1, *R*. V 475b4 ff., VI 493e2 ff., and VII 535a3 ff., where Plato clarifies how difficult is for humans to reach the (ideal) condition of the philosophers.

[613] See *R*. VI 506b ff, where Plato says that ἀλήθεια makes understandable what can be fully known (that is, the intelligible Forms). See also *Phd*. 78d1- 5, 76d, 76e, 92d9, and *Ti*. 27d-28a, 29b-c, where Plato says that what really is (i.e., the Forms) is eternal and stable.

[614] In this regard, BRISSON-PRADEAU 2007, p. 27, observe that the inquiries of various kind (i.e., political, epistemological, metaphysical, *etc*.) that Plato pursues in his *Laws* are all worked out for the sake of an ethical investigation that pervades the whole dialogue.

[615] See *Lg*. XII 962c8-963a4.

parts (εἴδη)[616] (i.e., intellect [νοῦς][617], moderation [σωφροσύνη], justice [δικαιοσύνη], and courage [ἀνδρεία])[618]. However, νοῦς is presented as the part of virtue which everything – and, in particular, the three remaining parts of virtue – needs to look to (βλέπειν)[619]. For νοῦς – which allows one to know (συνιδεῖν) what virtue really is (both in itself and in its parts)[620] – is meant to guide (ἡγεμόνα) moderation, justice, and courage. Accordingly, attaining νοῦς – that is, the part of virtue which all the others need to look to – is presented as a crucial condition for the achievement of virtue as a whole. Indeed, as νοῦς represents the target which the three remaining parts of virtue must look to (being the guide of them all), it follows that a moral agent cannot be properly moderate, just, and courageous if she has not achieved νοῦς yet. As a consequence, achieving νοῦς is the most fundamental requirement that the Nocturnal Counsellors have to meet if they are to achieve a full virtue (that is, a 'virtue in its entirety' [σύμπασα ἀρετὴ][621] which consists in the combination of all the four parts of virtue).

However, is it only because it is the combination of all the four parts of virtue that the Nocturnal Counsellors' virtue is to be considered full? To address this issue, I shall consider what Plato has the Athenian Stranger state at *Lg*. XII 963e1-8. Interestingly, the Athenian Stranger argues that, although ἀνδρεία and νοῦς are a single thing (i.e., virtue), these two virtues are still given two different names. Indeed, while they are one and the same, they still differ to some other extent. On the one hand, courage has to do with fear and can be found in both animals and young children. Hence, the idea is conveyed that one may be to some extent courageous for erroneous reasons (i.e., through fear, and without a reasoned account, λόγος[622], of what virtue is). On the other hand, the Athenian points out that 'without the help of λόγος no soul ever has been, ever is, or ever will be in the future wise, and hence, possessed of intellect (φρόνιμός τε καὶ νοῦν ἔχουσα)'[623]. Therefore, what

[616] See *Lg*. XII 963c5.
[617] Actually, Plato says 'φρόνησις' (and not 'νοῦς'). However, I take 'φρόνησις' and 'νοῦς' to be used interchangeably within contexts (like *Lg*. XII 963a6-9) that are philosophically pregnant. For the sake of clarity, then, I will keep on referring to 'νοῦς' as the part of virtue which everything needs to look to. On this issue, cf. *infra* p. 99 fns. 581 and 582.
[618] See *Lg*. XII 964b3-6, where Plato presents the four particular virtues which make up the whole of virtue. This passage reminds the reader not only of the division into four cardinal virtues that Plato carries out in the *Republic*, but also of the *Protagoras*' discussion of the relation between the whole virtue and its different parts. According to CENTRONE 2008 and 2021 (esp. ch. 10), the Plato of the *Laws* endorses the same account of virtue as the *Protagoras*'. On this interpretation, virtue as a whole is to be conceived as a whole which is made of parts. Each part of virtue, however, makes its appearance only when the whole virtue is attained in the first place. In turn, the whole of virtue is achieved only when intellectual virtue (namely, wisdom: σοφία → νοῦς: cf. *infra* p. 100 fn. 586) is attained. Therefore, Centrone ultimately suggests that Plato's *Laws*, just like the *Protagoras*, establishes that virtue is knowledge.
[619] Cf. *Lg*. XII 963a8-9.
[620] See *Lg*. XII 963c3-d2.
[621] See *Lg*. I 630a7-b3: attaining the combination of all the four parts of virtue (i.e., a σύμπασα ἀρετὴ) is far better than achieving only one part of virtue (e.g., courage).
[622] With reference to this passage, I render 'λόγος' as 'reasoned account'. For I take Plato to suggest at *Lg*. XII 963e1-8 that a courageous action may be performed even if (a) the moral agent's reason (λόγος) has not achieved a complete knowledge of what courage is, and hence, (b) the moral agent cannot give an account (λόγος) of what courage really is. Yet, the virtuous action that this kind of moral agent will eventually be able to perform should not be regarded as *fully* courageous.
[623] *Lg*. XII 963e5-8.

Lg. XII 963e1-8 ultimately shows is that there are two ways of approaching virtue. In fact, one can be virtuous either with or without λόγος. In the case of the Nocturnal Counsellors, however, the kind of virtue that they attain should be deemed to be accompanied by λόγος. Indeed, the future members of the Council that meets at night attain a full virtue[624] by achieving νοῦς. Thus, given that, as Plato has the Athenian establish at *Lg*. XII 963e5-8, no soul possesses νοῦς without the help of λόγος[625], it follows that the Nocturnal Counsellors' virtue (which they attain by looking to νοῦς) is full also because it is accompanied by λόγος[626]. Accordingly, the reason why the kind of virtue that the Nocturnal Counsellors attain is to be considered full is twofold: (1) it is the combination of all the four parts of virtue and (2) it is accompanied by λόγος (for the members of the Council that meets at night [a] know the reasons why they are virtuous and [b] can give an account of the reasons why they act virtuously)[627].

Therefore, if the Nocturnal Counsellors end up attaining a virtue which is full, this depends on their excellent cognitive condition. Indeed, it is just because they first achieve νοῦς that the Nocturnal Counsellors manage to attain (a) the whole of virtue (namely, the combination of all the four parts of virtue) and (b) a complete virtue which is accompanied by λόγος (thus, not attained for erroneous reasons). Interestingly, the fact that the Nocturnal Counsellors achieve a stable[628] philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms has some further impact on their moral nature. Indeed, both *Lg*. V 731c1-7 and *Lg*. IX 860d5-9 demonstrate that the Plato of the *Laws* believes that no one can do wrong willingly[629]:

> ΑΘ. τὰ δ' αὖ τῶν ὅσοι ἀδικοῦσιν μέν, ἰατὰ δέ, γιγνώσκειν χρὴ πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ἄδικος οὐχ ἑκὼν ἄδικος· τῶν γὰρ μεγίστων κακῶν οὐδεὶς οὐδαμοῦ οὐδὲν ἑκὼν κεκτῆτο ἄν ποτε, πολὺ δὲ ἥκιστα ἐν τοῖς τῶν ἑαυτοῦ τιμιωτάτοις. ψυχὴ δ', ὡς εἴπομεν, ἀληθείᾳ γέ ἐστιν πᾶσιν τιμιώτατον· ἐν οὖν τῷ τιμιωτάτῳ τὸ μέγιστον κακὸν οὐδεὶς ἑκὼν μή ποτε λάβῃ καὶ ζῇ διὰ βίου κεκτημένος αὐτό.

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[624] For they are required to do so: see *Lg*. XII 962c8-d5.

[625] Cf. *Lg*. XII 963e5-8: 'ΑΘ. ἄνευ γὰρ λόγου καὶ φύσει γίγνεται ἀνδρεία ψυχή, ἄνευ δὲ αὖ λόγου ψυχὴ φρόνιμός τε καὶ νοῦν ἔχουσα οὔτ' ἐγένετο πώποτε οὔτ' ἔστιν οὐδ' αὖθίς ποτε γενήσεται, ὡς ὄντος ἑτέρου'.

[626] Hence, given that they attain moderation, justice, and courage by looking to νοῦς (which always comes along with λόγος), the Nocturnal Counsellors are properly moderate, just, and courageous. See MEYER 2006, who points out that the Nocturnal Counsellors need to know that virtue is the proper goal of legislation. To do so, they need to understand what virtue is and how the various particular virtues are related to each other. In brief, then, the Nocturnal Counsellors need to understand the account (λόγος) of virtue (see *Lg*. XII 964a-b).

[627] Indeed, the achievement of νοῦς allows the Nocturnal Counsellors not only to know the Form of Virtue, but also to (a) be competent to find words to properly explain what they know (i.e., the truth) and (b) support words with actions: cf. *Lg*. XII 966b6-7.

[628] See *infra* p. 91 fn. 544, where I show, on the basis of *Ti*. 27d5-28a4, that, to get acquainted with the ontological realm of what always is and never becomes, one needs to achieve a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms. See also *Phd*. 78d1- 5, 76d, 76e, 92d9, and *Ti*. 27d-28a, 29b-c, where Plato says that what really is (i.e., the Forms) is eternal and stable.

[629] The fact that the Plato of the *Laws* believes in the intellectualist theory of virtue (according to which no one does wrong willingly and virtue is knowledge) implies that the moral agent who possesses philosophical knowledge (which is *per se* stable) is, and will always be, virtuous. Indeed, the person who knows what is good cannot do wrong for any reason whatsoever.

ATHENIAN: But when it comes to people who do wrong, but the wrong-doing can be cured, then we have to realise – well, for a start, that no wrong-doer is a wrong-doer from choice. Nobody would ever choose to possess himself of any of the world's great evils, let alone store it among his most valued possessions.

Lg. V 731c1-7

ΑΘ. Ὡς ὁ μὲν ἄδικός που κακός, ὁ δὲ κακὸς ἄκων τοιοῦτος. ἀκουσίως δὲ ἑκούσιον οὐκ ἔχει πράττεσθαί ποτε λόγον· ἄκων οὖν ἐκείνῳ φαίνοιτ' ἂν ἀδικεῖν ὁ ἀδικῶν τῷ τὴν ἀδικίαν ἀκούσιον τιθεμένῳ, καὶ δὴ καὶ νῦν ὁμολογητέον ἐμοί· σύμφημι γὰρ ἄκοντας ἀδικεῖν πάντας.

ATHENIAN: That the unjust person is, I take it, bad, but the bad person is not that way intentionally. It can never make any sense for an intentional action to be performed unintentionally. So to anyone who holds the view that injustice is unintentional, the person who acts unjustly would seem to be doing so unintentionally. What is more, I would now have to go along with him, since I agree that all those who act unjustly do so unintentionally.

Lg. IX 860d5-9[630]

In both these passages, Plato explicitly reiterates[631] one of the so-called Socratic[632] paradoxes[633] which grounds the theory of ethical intellectualism[634]: 'no one can do wrong willingly'. The message that this paradox conveys is that, if one knows what is good, he cannot desire what is bad for himself[635]. Accordingly, a moral agent can be driven toward viciousness only if he ignores the nature of what ought to be done[636]. Hence, in the case that a moral agent has a stable philosophical knowledge (and thus, if he stably knows what is morally profitable), he is, and will always be, fully virtuous (for the Plato of the *Laws* believes that no one does wrong willingly)[637]. Therefore, since the Nocturnal Counsellors attain a stable philosophical knowledge of the Form of Virtue, they will *always* be granted with a full virtue – having no chance to fall into viciousness.

To conclude, this analysis of the way in which ethics and epistemology relate in the case of the Nocturnal Counsellors[638] has shed fundamental light on the *Laws*' ethical theory. For the Plato of

[630] See FERRARI 2015, p. 772 fn. 20, and pp. 778-779 fn. 22, on how the Socratic dogma (according to which wrongdoing is involuntary) is treated by Plato in these lines.
[631] Similarly, Plato re-states this so-called Socratic paradox in the *Sophist*: cf. *Sph*. 228c7-8 and *infra* pp. 11-12.
[632] Myrthe BARTELS 2017, p. 11, argues that 'the strongly Socratic tenor of these parts' (i.e., the Books I and II, where Plato focuses on the theme of ἀρετή and the four ἀρεταί) 'of the *Laws*, which had disappeared from other late dialogues, is in itself equally surprising'. However, this thesis has shown that all the late Platonic dialogues generally present (either implicitly or explicitly) strong Socratic (to use Bartels' terminology) echoes. Not surprisingly, then, even Plato's last dialogue, the *Laws*, presents a theory of moral epistemology which can be labelled as intellectualist.
[633] For a different view, cf. SCHOFIELD 2012, who argues that the Athenian upholds the 'Socratic paradox' that no one does wrong willingly without relying on 'Socratic intellectualism'.
[634] See ROWE 2009, esp. pp. 36 ff.: even the Plato of the *Laws*, who reiterates the famous Socratic paradoxes, identifies himself as a true heir of Socrates.
[635] See *Grg*. 509e2-7, *Men*. 76-8, *Prt*. 358c6-d4.
[636] Cf. *Prt*. 357e2-4.
[637] See *infra* p. 105 fn. 629.
[638] The Nocturnal Counsellors are not the only excellent entities that Plato's *Laws* presents as wise and fully virtuous. Indeed, the worthiest epistemological and ethical condition is ascribed to the gods. For, having presented the gods as the measure of all things (cf. *Lg*. IV 716c4-6), Plato clarifies at *Lg*. X 900c8-e9 and X 902e4-903a3 that the gods – who are not expected to play any active (political) role in Magnesia – are σοφοί and exercise intellect (νοῦς: PESCE 1978 argues that the divine νοῦς is always in contemplation of the Forms, and hence, of the Form of Good; CHERNISS 1944, p. 605, states, instead, that νοῦς is by Plato conceived to be either god or an essential characteristic of whatever deity may be). Now, as Plato's *Laws* establishes that virtue is knowledge and no one does wrong willingly, we expect the gods, which

the *Laws* has been determined to commit to the (so-called Socratic) theory of ethical intellectualism according to which virtue is knowledge[639] and no one does wrong willingly[640]. Indeed, the achievement of νοῦς (that is, of a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms – especially, of the Form of Virtue) has turned out to represent a crucial condition for the attainment of a full virtue (namely, one which [a] consists in the combination of all the four parts of virtue and [b] is accompanied by λόγος). Not surprisingly, then, for the Nocturnal Counsellors (who are required to manifest virtue in all its fullness) nothing is more important than following the rule of intellect (νοῦς) (for νοῦς allows the Nocturnal Counsellors to know what virtue is[641]).

4.2.3. *Are the Nocturnal Counsellors expected to exist in Magnesia?*

Plato's description of the epistemological and ethical nature of the *Laws*' Nocturnal Counsellors is striking. Indeed, the Nocturnal Council has turned out to be made up of people who are worthy of comparison with the *Republic*'s philosopher-rulers[642]. For, like the philosopher-rulers of the *Republic*[643], the divine members of the Council that meets at night are (more or less explicitly) said to achieve a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms[644]. Indeed, it is by achieving such an excellent cognitive condition that they also manage to attain a complete virtue in all its fullness[645]. Similarly, the *Republic*'s philosopher-rulers are said to attain a full virtue on the basis of their

are supremely wise, to be fully virtuous. Interestingly, this is what Plato clearly states at *Lg*. X 900c8-e9: in fact, the gods are said to be good (ἀγαθοί) with all manner of virtue.

[639] See CENTRONE 2021 (esp., pp. 306 ff.), who argues that the *Laws* advocates the idea that, as soon as intellectual virtue (i.e., wisdom: σοφία → νοῦς) is achieved, the whole of virtue is attained.

[640] See KAMTEKAR 2018, pp. 105-111, on how the term 'willingly' should be understood. On the same issue, see also SAUNDERS 1968, pp. 421-34, KAMTEKAR 2019, and TRELAWNY-CASSITY 2010.

[641] Cf. *Lg*. XII 963a1-d2 and *Lg*. XII 964b3-d9 ff.

[642] See ROWE 2010b, who argues that Plato's *Laws* does not recant the *Republic*'s political theory (according to which the best city is that in which philosophers are rulers). Similarly, KRAUT 2010 observes that the Nocturnal Counsellors constitute an élite which is made of people who, being able to attain wisdom and virtue in its entirety, are granted with political authority. O'MEARA 2017 argues that the Nocturnal Counsellors possess the political science. MEYER 2006 maintains that the future Nocturnal Counsellors, being the future legislators, need to achieve expert knowledge (*Lg*. XII 961e-962c) – in particular, the expert knowledge that pertains to the πολιτικός (see *Lg*. XII 936b). On this issue, see also BARKER 1977[5], pp. 406-10, KLOSKO 1988, and SABINE, 1950, p. 85.

[643] See *R*. VI 500c9-d11 and *Phdr*. 249c6, where Plato explains that the philosopher is divine just because he has intellectual contact with the Forms. Thus, if there is a Form of Virtue, the philosopher is able to become familiar with it.

[644] As Glenn MORROW 1960, pp. 510 ff., points out, the Council's knowledge would be a great help to the state. Indeed, the excellent knowledge – which, on this interpretation, allows the Council's members to understand the underlying principles of the laws – that the members of the Council possess would make the Nocturnal Council the savior of the state. For a similar point of view, see SAUNDERS 1962, p. 54, GUTHRIE 1978, pp. 370-371, BRISSON 2005, and PRADEAU 2004, p. 123. For a different interpretation, see KLOSKO 2008 and BARTELS 2017, pp. 189-197, who argue that the members of the Nocturnal Council individuate a *polis*-internal authority which is made of people who cannot be compared to the *Republic*'s philosopher-rulers (who, in light of their philosophical knowledge of the Forms, are indeed qualified to rule). MARQUEZ, 2011, p. 190, like MORROW 1960, recognizes that 'if there is to be some occasion on which the laws can be changed then it would be better if these changes were informed by the knowledge generated by an institution like the Nocturnal Council'.

[645] Cf. KRAUT 2010, who argues that the Nocturnal Counsellors approximate themselves to wisdom (σοφία → νοῦς). As a consequence, they attain a worthier virtue than the ordinary (that is, demotic) one.

philosophical knowledge informed by wisdom[646]. Thus, the *Laws*' Nocturnal Counsellors appear to be the twins of the *Republic*'s philosopher-rulers. Nevertheless, I have already noted that *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 suggests that no one person provided with philosophical ἐπιστήμη is expected to exist in Magnesia. As a consequence, *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 would seem to rule out the possibility that the Nocturnal Counsellors (who closely resemble the *Republic*'s philosopher-rulers) exist in Magnesia. If so, however, what would the value be of including an entire Book (i.e., the twelfth and last Book of Plato's *Laws*) which focuses on just such excellent people as the Nocturnal Counsellors? To (a) address this question and (b) finally establish whether or not such philosophical souls as the Nocturnal Counsellors are thought by Plato to be present in Magnesia, it is worth accounting for a passage (*Lg*. XII 969b2-7) at the end of Plato's *Laws*:

> ΑΘ. ἐάν γε μὴν οὗτος ἡμῖν ὁ θεῖος γένηται σύλλογος, ὦ φίλοι ἑταῖροι, παραδοτέον τούτῳ τὴν πόλιν, ἀμφισβήτησίς τε οὐκ ἔστ' οὐδεμία οὐδενὶ τῶν νῦν παρὰ ταῦθ' ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν νομοθετῶν, ὄντως δὲ ἔσται σχεδὸν ὕπαρ ἀποτετελεσμένον οὗ σμικρῷ πρόσθεν ὀνείρατος ὡς τῷ λόγῳ ἐφηψάμεθα, κεφαλῆς νοῦ τε κοινωνίας εἰκόνα τινά πως συμμείξαντες […].
>
> ATHENIAN: Anyway, if this divinely inspired council of ours does come into existence, my dear colleagues, we should hand the city over to it. On that point there is to all intents and purposes no disagreement among any of our present-day lawgivers. No, it really will be a kind of waking version of what we touched on a little earlier in our discussion – treating it as a dream – when we put together that composite picture, as it were, of the head and the mind […].
>
> *Lg*. XII 969b2-7

In these lines, Plato has the Athenian argue that, if a divinely inspired institution like the Nocturnal Council – which has turned out to be made of divine philosophers – comes into existence (γένηται), its divine members should (necessarily[647]) govern the city. Indeed, in the case that such philosophical souls as the Nocturnal Counsellors come into existence and take control of Magnesia, the perfect waking vision (ὕπαρ ἀποτετελεσμένον) of the dream (ὀνείρατος) that Plato has the Athenian Stranger, Cleinias and Megillus describe in the *Laws*' twelfth Book[648] would come into being as well. Consistently, Plato states at *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 that, if people who are able to assume the power of a philosophical ἐπιστήμη will ever exist in Magnesia, they will have to rule. Indeed, the best constitution is that in which people provided with philosophical ἐπιστήμη take control[649]. Still, Plato specifies at *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 that, in the case that no such person provided with ἐπιστήμη exists, what is second-best (i.e., a constitution which is regulated by laws) should be opted for. Hence, as the most

[646] See also *R*. IV 442c6, where the terms 'wisdom' and 'knowledge' are used interchangeably to indicate the virtue of the rational part of the soul. See *infra* p. 13 fn. 102, where I show the extent to which Plato believes that wisdom (σοφία) and knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) are one and the same.

[647] The fact that Plato uses the verbal adjective 'παραδοτέον' in the apodosis clause suggests that the condition stated in the protasis will have to necessarily take place in the future: see VAN EMDE BOAS-RIJKSBARON-HUITINK-DE BAKKER 2019, pp. 112 and 268.

[648] As the twelfth Book of Plato's *Laws* is concerned with describing the political institution known as Nocturnal Council, the Athenian Stranger and Clenias must be concerned with the Nocturnal Council when they make reference to 'what we have touched on a little earlier in our discussion'.

[649] Cf. *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6.

prominent feature of Magnesia's constitution (which is a second-best) is that it is governed by laws, it follows that the political theory that Plato works out at *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 implies that such excellent people as the Nocturnal Counsellors are not expected to exist in a second-best city like Magnesia[650]. On a closer look, this is also the message that Plato (subtly) conveys at *Lg.* XII 969b2-7. Indeed, the complex conditional sentence that features in *Lg.* XII 969b2-7[651] suggests not only that (a) it is possible that a political institution like the Nocturnal Council will come into existence in the future, but also, and more importantly, that (b) such excellent people as the Nocturnal Counsellors are not expected to exist at the moment of Magnesia's foundation[652].

However, given that both *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 and *Lg*. XII 969b2-7 indicate that such philosophical souls as the Nocturnal Counsellors are not expected to exist in Magnesia, why would Plato still dedicate an entire Book (meaningfully, the last one of his *Laws*) to these excellent people? Interestingly, Plato has the Athenian Stranger point out at *Lg*. XII 969b2-7 that he and his interlocutors have treated the possibility of having such philosophical souls as the Nocturnal Counsellors rule over Magnesia as a dream which will become real as soon as these divine Counsellors will come into existence. Plato similarly argues in his *Republic* that the project of founding the Καλλίπολις (i.e., an ideal city where philosophers are rulers and rulers are philosophers) represents a dream which *has become* (ἀποτετέλεσται) reality[653]. Hence, as soon as the Nocturnal Counsellors, *qua* true philosophers, will (a) come into existence and (b) become rulers, Magnesia will take on the appearance of the ideal city that Plato describes in his *Republic*. Accordingly, *Lg.* XII 969b2-7 ultimately shows that, even in the context of a second-best city (where no person provided

[650] See *infra* pp. 95-97: if the Nocturnal Counsellors existed, these people would have necessarily been required to take control of Magnesia. Similarly, Plato's *Republic* shows that philosophers are constrained to go back to the cave and rule over the ignorant πλῆθος. Therefore, as (a) the *Laws* seems to rely on the *Republic*'s political theory (according to which the best city is ruled by philosopher-rulers) and (b) Magnesia is ruled on the basis of a complex law code, it follows that such philosophical souls as the Nocturnal Counsellors are not expected to exist in Magnesia (as *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 also confirms).

[651] Namely, the conditional sentence that (more or less explicitly) conveys the idea that, if the divinely inspired Nocturnal Council comes into existence (γένηται), the dream [of having philosophers rule over Magnesia] will (ἔσται) come true.

[652] For the conditional sentence that features in *Lg.* XII 969b2-7 individuates a prospective condition type. Interestingly, prospective conditions (which have ἐάν + subjunctive in the protasis clause, and a verb form with future reference in the apodosis) are used by the speaker to present fulfilment of the condition as very well possible/likely. However, by using this type of condition, the speaker also means to indicate that it is only in the future that the condition will possibly be fulfilled (for the condition is not expected to be fulfilled at the present time): see VAN EMDE BOAS-RIJKSBARON-HUITINK-DE BAKKER 2019, pp. 552 ff.

[653] Cf. *R*. IV 443b7-c2: 'Our dream, then, has become reality – we said we had an idea, immediately we started founding the city, that we were probably stumbling, with a bit of divine help, into some preliminary outline of what justice might be' (Τέλεον ἄρα ἡμῖν τὸ ἐνύπνιον ἀποτετέλεσται, ὃ ἔφαμεν ὑποπτεῦσαι ὡς εὐθὺς ἀρχόμενοι τῆς πόλεως οἰκίζειν κατὰ θεόν τινα εἰς ἀρχήν τε καὶ τύπον τινὰ τῆς δικαιοσύνης κινδυνεύομεν ἐμβεβηκέναι). Translations of Plato's *Republic* are borrowed from ROWE 2012a. Now, the fact that *R*. IV 443b7-c2 indicates that the dream of founding an ideal city governed by wise philosophers has already become reality (ἀποτετέλεσται) is meaningful. Indeed, *Lg*. XII 969b2-7 conversely suggests that the dream of having such philosophical souls as the Nocturnal Counsellors rule over Magnesia is a dream which will possibly come true (ἔσται) in the future. Thus, while Plato's *Republic* suggests that the dream of founding the Καλλίπολις has already become real, the Plato of the *Laws* considers a completely different context (where philosophers are not expected [at least, at the very moment of the city's foundation] to become the rulers of the city).

with ἐπιστήμη is expected to exist at the moment of the city's foundation), it is still possible that such philosophical souls as the Nocturnal Counsellors will come into existence in the future[654]. Therefore, by dedicating the entire twelfth and last Book of his *Laws* to such excellent individuals as the Nocturnal Counsellors, Plato intends to set a target which those who live in the second-best city (i.e., people who are at best ἐπιστήμονες to a very limited degree [κατὰ βραχύ[655]])[656] must strive to approximate to as much as they can[657].

4.3. *Is it possible to live virtuously in a second-best city?*

Now that we have ascertained that no philosopher is expected to exist in Magnesia, a separate issue needs to be addressed: is it possible or not to live virtuously in a second-best city like Magnesia? Since (a) the Plato of the *Laws* is intellectualist and (b) no philosopher is expected to exist in Magnesia, it then follows that no Magnesian may eventually be fully virtuous[658]. Still, Plato makes at *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 an assertion that is worth deeper analysis. For he implies that only people who are at best ἐπιστήμονες to a very limited degree (κατὰ βραχύ) are going to live in Magnesia. Thus, I shall now aim to assess the extent to which the people who are expected to live in Magnesia can be thought of as being ἐπιστήμονες to a very limited degree. To this end, then, I will investigate the nature of a

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[654] In this way, Plato's *Laws* features a slightly more negative picture if compared to the *Republic*'s. Indeed, although the *Laws*' twelfth Book presents the Nocturnal Counsellors as the twins of the *Republic*'s philosopher-rulers, they are not expected to exist in Magnesia (at least, at the moment of its foundation). Yet, Magnesia still represents an approximation to the ideal city of the *Republic* (for a similar view, cf. KAMTEKAR 1999, p. 248). Indeed, while *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 suggests that no philosophical soul is (initially, at least) expected to exist in Magnesia, Magnesians still have to approximate themselves to a philosophical standard as much as they can. As a consequence, Plato's *Laws* does not aim either to replace nor to better (as BOBONICH 2002, BOBONICH [forthcoming], and KLOSKO 1986 argue *contra* KRAUT 2010, LAKS 2000, and PRADEAU 2002, and ROWE 2010b – who rather think that the *Laws* does not entail any substantial change in Plato's political theory) the *Republic*'s constitutional project. For Plato's *Laws* just prescribes what to do in the case that philosophers are not in a position to gain power and become rulers. Accordingly, the project of founding the second-best city of Magnesia ends up providing a more feasible political project than the *Republic*'s (for a similar view, see NIGHTINGALE 1993, p. 279, and BARTELS 2017, p. 18, esp. fn. 25, but also BROOKS 2006, FESTUGIÈRE 1936, pp. 423, 426, 444, LISI 2001b, LAKS 1990, LAKS, 1991, LAKS 2000, MOUREAU 2017, p. 385, ROWE 2010b, SAUNDERS 1970 p. 28, SIMPSON 2003, and STALLEY 1983, pp. 9-10. For a slightly different interpretation, see MEYER 2006, p. 380).

[655] Cf. p. 3 fn. 10.

[656] See *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6.

[657] What Plato says about dreams in other dialogues may be taken to support this kind of interpretation. At *Ti*. 71e2-72a2, Plato argues that god gave divination as a gift to human folly (ἀφροσύνη). For no one engages in divination if he is in his right mind (ἔννους): he can engage in divination only when his power of understanding is bound in sleep or by sickness. On the twofold assumption that (a) the Nocturnal Council plays within the city the same function that νοῦς plays within the soul (i.e., the Nocturnal Council guides the city just as νοῦς guides the whole soul: for this interpretation, see PRADEAU 2019, esp. p. 219-224, and VERLINSKY 2016) and (b) Magnesia is not ἔννους (for such philosophical souls as the Nocturnal Counsellors do not exist in Magnesia: cf. *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6), it follows that Magnesia (and its citizens) may benefit from the god's gift of divination – which Magnesia engages with while being asleep (that is, Magnesia engages with the gift of divination that appears under the guise of a dream). Interestingly, Plato clarifies that a dream 'allows the better element in the soul to investigate on its own, to reach out beyond itself and see what it does not know, whether something past, present, or future' (*R*. IX 572a1-3). Therefore, by describing the dream of having Nocturnal Counsellors take control of Magnesia, Plato may intend to provide the imperfect Magnesians with the gift of divination so that they could learn what has to be done in the future in order to (a) become they themselves philosophers and (b) turn the second-best city of Magnesia into the *Republic*'s ideal city (which is indeed governed by philosophers).

[658] For a similar view, cf. STRAUSS 1975, p. 133: 'if virtue is knowledge, *almost* all citizens lack genuine virtue, for they possess at best only true opinion'.

cognitive state that is widespread among the citizens of Magnesia (namely, φρόνησις). Next, I will establish whether or not the *Laws*' φρόνησις individuates an ethically profitable cognitive condition. Then, I shall investigate how good moral actions may stem out of fear, law, and true λόγος.

4.3.1. *What is φρόνησις in Plato's* Laws*?*

A common argument in the vast scholarly literature on the notion of φρόνησις in Plato's *Laws* goes as follows: throughout the dialogue, φρόνησις represents a form of attainable wisdom, namely, one that is interchangeable with σοφία (wisdom)[659] – that is, the most superior epistemological good which pertains to philosophers only and through which the intelligible Forms come to be fully known[660]. If so, then, given that (a) the divine members of the Nocturnal Council (who are the twins of the *Republic*'s philosopher-rulers) are authentically wise (σοφοί) philosophers[661] and (b) a cognitive state such as φρόνησις is widespread among the Magnesians[662], it would then follow that (at least some of)[663] the Magnesians are as wise as the *Laws*' Nocturnal Counsellors.

However, our inquiry has already clarified that no such people as the Nocturnal Counsellors (i.e., people provided with philosophical knowledge) are expected to exist in Magnesia[664]. Thus, this framework cannot be disregarded when defining what the *Laws*' φρόνησις consists of. Indeed, if philosophical souls are not going to be present in Magnesia, then φρόνησις – which individuates an

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[659] Cf. BOBONICH 2002, pp. 197-201; 520-521 n. 124 ('In the *Laws*, as elsewhere in his corpus, Plato frequently interchanges *phronesis* and *sophia* and their cognates: 689d2, d4, d5, d7, 696c8, and 710a6'), and PRAUSCELLO 2014, pp. 68-73. Cf. also BRISSON-PRADEAU 2007, esp. p. 154, where they define Nocturnal Council as 'la Maison du retour à la raison (σωφρονιστήριον)'. Finally, see MORROW 1960, pp. 564-565, who thinks of φρόνησις as philosophical wisdom (σοφία).

[660] Cf. *infra* p. 100 fn. 586, where I suggest that σοφία, just as ἐπιστήμη, νόησις, and νοῦς, indicates a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms.

[661] Cf. *infra* pp. 97-107. See also PRAUSCELLO 2014, p. 69, and MORROW 1960, pp. 564-565, who think that, since the Nocturnal Counsellors constitute the 'ruling elite' of the second-best city of Magnesia (for they excel both morally and cognitively), Magnesia represents a faithful reproduction of the *Republic*'s Καλλίπολις. On this issue, see also BARKER 1977[5], pp. 406-10, KLOSKO 1988, and SABINE 1950, p. 85.

[662] As Susan Sauvé Meyer points out, 'the Athenian regularly insists in Book 3 that *phronêsis* is a characteristic of the city (e.g., 693b), without specifying which citizens will possess it, or how it differs from correct opinion' (MEYER 2015, p. 119). See also FREDE 2010, p. 112, who argues that the guardians of the laws, that is, (non-divine) people who possess either φρόνησις or true opinion, are assigned with the job of saving the city's harmony. Accordingly, Frede concedes that at least some of the guardians of Magnesia's laws are provided with φρόνησις.

[663] Cf. PRAUSCELLO 2014, pp. 68-73, who argues that, while only a small minority of people (i.e., a few philosophers) are said in the *Republic* to be able to become rulers, *all* the citizens (being provided with a philosophical, or quasi-philosophical, knowledge) would be presented in the *Laws* as being potentially able to become rulers. On this interpretation, then, this would therefore be the most notable difference between Magnesia and the *Republic*'s Καλλίπολις. For a similar view, see BOBONICH 2002, pp. 197-201 and 520-521 n. 124, who maintains that the difference between the *Laws*' Nocturnal Counsellors (*qua* the *Republic*'s philosophers-kings' twins) and Magnesia's ordinary citizens is nuanced. Indeed, even those who do not belong to the Nocturnal Council would be able to grasp the objects' intrinsic value (just like the wise Nocturnal Counsellors do).

[664] See *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 and XII 969b2-7. Cf. also *infra* pp. 107-111. In this regard, see STALLEY 1983, pp. 92-93, who argues that the Plato of the *Laws* (differently from what the Plato of both the *Republic* and the *Statesman* suggests) does not believe anymore that humans may attain both epistemological and ethical excellence. Indeed, the reason why Magnesia is only capable of a second-best constitution is that such a wise ruler (πολιτικὸς ἐπιστήμων) as the *Republic*'s philosopher-ruler is not expected to exist in Magnesia. For a different view, see MILLER 2013. For a focused analysis of Magnesia as a second-best city, see KLOSKO 1986, pp. 211-237.

epistemological condition widespread among Magnesians[665] – is unlikely to indicate the same cognitive state as σοφία[666] (i.e., a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms[667]). By framing the discussion around this issue, I will endeavor to define what kind of cognitive condition is indicated by the *Laws*' φρόνησις. Hence, I will first test a provisional definition of φρόνησις as firm true opinion (ἀληθὴς δόξα βέβαιος) – as associated with a passage from the Book II of the *Laws*. Next, I will consider another option that emerges from *Laws* X – i.e., I shall account φρόνησις as thought (διάνοια). Then, I will conclude that Plato's *Laws* introduces a new notion of φρόνησις. For I shall show that the *Laws*' φρόνησις individuates a cognitive condition that encompasses both firm true opinion and διάνοια.

4.3.1.1. *Φρόνησις as firm true opinion (ἀληθὴς δόξα βέβαιος)*

To begin this analysis of the *Laws*' φρόνησις, I will first recall that no Magnesian is expected to be able to attain the epistemological condition indicated by σοφία (i.e., a philosophical ἐπιστήμη). Indeed, as the text implies[668], no philosopher exists in Magnesia. Thus, given that no such person provided with ἐπιστήμη lives in the city, we expect Magnesia to implement a second-best constitution (namely, one which is regulated by laws)[669]. Not surprisingly, then, those who live in Magnesia are presented by Plato as people whose life is heteronomously guided[670]:

> ΑΘ. Περὶ δὴ τούτων διανοηθῶμεν οὑτωσί. θαῦμα μὲν ἕκαστον ἡμῶν ἡγησώμεθα τῶν ζῴων θεῖον, εἴτε ὡς παίγνιον ἐκείνων εἴτε ὡς σπουδῇ τινι συνεστηκός· οὐ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτό γε γιγνώσκομεν, τόδε δὲ ἴσμεν, ὅτι ταῦτα τὰ πάθη ἐν ἡμῖν οἷον νεῦρα ἢ σμήρινθοί τινες ἐνοῦσαι σπῶσίν τε ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀλλήλαις ἀνθέλκουσιν ἐναντίαι οὖσαι ἐπ' ἐναντίας πράξεις, οὗ δὴ διωρισμένη ἀρετὴ καὶ κακία κεῖται. μιᾷ γάρ φησιν ὁ λόγος δεῖν τῶν ἕλξεων συνεπόμενον ἀεὶ καὶ μηδαμῇ ἀπολειπόμενον ἐκείνης, ἀνθέλκειν τοῖς ἄλλοις νεύροις ἕκαστον, ταύτην' εἶναι τὴν τοῦ λογισμοῦ ἀγωγὴν χρυσῆν καὶ ἱεράν, τῆς πόλεως κοινὸν νόμον ἐπικαλουμένην, ἄλλας δὲ σκληρὰς καὶ σιδηρᾶς, τὴν δὲ μαλακὴν ἅτε χρυσῆν οὖσαν, τὰς δὲ ἄλλας παντοδαποῖς εἴδεσιν ὁμοίας. δεῖν δὴ τῇ καλλίστῃ ἀγωγῇ τῇ τοῦ νόμου ἀεὶ συλλαμβάνειν· ἅτε γὰρ τοῦ λογισμοῦ καλοῦ μὲν ὄντος, πρᾴου δὲ καὶ οὐ βιαίου, δεῖσθαι ὑπηρετῶν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀγωγήν, ὅπως ἂν ἐν ἡμῖν τὸ χρυσοῦν γένος νικᾷ τὰ ἄλλα γένη. καὶ

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[665] See *infra* p. 111 fn. 664. It should also be noted that *Lg*. III 693d2-e3 shows that the city that is being constructed λόγῳ in the *Laws* needs to have φρόνησις (together with freedom [ἐλευθερία] and friendship [φιλία]) as its proper element. Thus, we should assume that at least some of the citizens of Magnesia are able to achieve such a cognitive state.

[666] See CENTRONE 2021, p. 298, who argues that φρόνησις indicates in the *Laws* a second-best cognitive condition which does not individuate the philosophers' divine knowledge. See also BARTELS 2017, p. 24, who concedes that it is not necessarily true that what the Plato of the *Laws* means by 'φρόνησις' is the same as what he means by using this word in the *Republic* (namely, an epistemological condition which, just as σοφία, amounts to a philosophical knowledge). On Bartels' interpretation, the *Laws*' φρόνησις represents 'an advanced stage, characterized by the presence of λόγος, of an innate capacity of human beings *qua* human beings' (BARTELS 2017, p. 113).

[667] Cf. e.g., *Phd*. 69a10, c2, 79d6; *Smp*. 202a5-9; *R*. IV 433c8, VI 505b6; *Men*. 97c1-2, 98d10-12: 'φρόνησις' is synonymous with 'σοφία' in contexts which are philosophically pregnant. On the contrary, in contexts where everything is second-best (just like the *Laws*' literary framework is), 'φρόνησις' generally indicates a less worthy cognitive condition than philosophical wisdom (σοφία).

[668] See *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 and *Lg*. XII 969b2-7.

[669] Cf. *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6, where Plato suggests that, in the case that no philosopher exists, a constitution regulated by laws should be implemented.

[670] For a similar description of humans as people who are governed by some external (and divine) entity, see also *Lg*. VII 803c4-5 ('ἄνθρωπον δέ, ὅπερ εἴπομεν ἔμπροσθεν, θεοῦ τι παίγνιον εἶναι μεμηχανημένον') and VII 804a4-b4 ('θαύματα ὄντες τὸ πολύ').

οὕτω δὴ περὶ θαυμάτων ὡς ὄντων ἡμῶν ὁ μῦθος ἀρετῆς σεσωμένος ἂν εἴη, καὶ τὸ κρείττω ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἥττω ἀρετῆς σεσωμένος ἂν εἴη, καὶ τὸ κρείττωέαυτοῦ καὶ ἥττω εἶναι τρόπον τινὰ φανερὸν ἂν γίγνοιτο μᾶλλον ὃ νοεῖ, καὶ ὅτι πόλιν καὶ ἰδιώτην, τὸν μὲν λόγον ἀληθῆ λαβόντα ἐν ἑαυτῷ περὶ τῶν ἕλξεων τούτων, τούτῳ ἑπόμενον δεῖ ζῆν, πόλιν δὲ ἢ παρὰ θεῶν τινος ἢ παρὰ τούτου τοῦ γνόντος ταῦτα λόγον παραλαβοῦσαν, νόμον θεμένην, αὐτῇ τε ὁμιλεῖν καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις πόλεσιν.

ATHENIAN: Well, let's think about it like this. Let's take the view that each of us living creatures is a puppet belonging to the gods, put together either as their toy or for some serious reason – that being something we don't know. What we do know is that these feelings[671] we have are all like tendons or strings inside us, drawing us but pulling in opposite directions, towards opposite actions, and in fact the demarcation line between human virtue and vice lies here. According to this account, there is one of the pulls which each of us must always follow, never letting go of that string, and resisting the other tendons; this pull comes from the golden and sacred string of calculation, which is called the public law of the city; the other strings are hard, made of iron – where this one is pliant, being made of gold – but resembling various kinds of things; and we must always cooperate with the finest pull, which is from the law, since calculation, fine as it is, is also gentle and non-violent, and therefore its pull needs helper to make sure the golden type of string within us overcomes the other types. In this way our story of human virtue, about us being puppets, would turn out to have achieved its effect, and the meaning of being 'more than a match for himself' or 'less than a match for himself' would become somewhat clearer, and the city and the individual – well, the individual needs to take the story of the puppet-strings to heart, as something true, and follow it in his life: and the city, receiving the story from one of the gods, or from this individual with knowledge of these things, should make it into a law for itself and other cities to live by.

Lg. I 644d6-645b8

In this passage, Plato presents a story (λόγος) of virtue according to which living creatures are to be conceived of as 'puppets of gods'[672]. Still, humans seem to be able to take advantage of some decision-making autonomy[673]. Indeed, they have (psychic)[674] emotions which (just as tendons do) drag them towards either vice (κακία) or virtue (ἀρετή). To live virtuously, then, humans ought to follow the golden and sacred string of calculation[675] – that is, 'the public law of the city'[676]. To better clarify this assertion, Plato has the Athenian Stranger establish that the function of the public law of the city – being inspired by either gods or someone who knows (γνόντος)[677] virtue and its λόγος[678] –

[671] Namely, pleasure and pain – which are defined at *Lg*. II 644c6-7 as a pair of mindless and opposed advisers. *Lg*. II 644d1-2 further clarifies that calculation presides over all this.

[672] Actually, what Plato says at the beginning of *Lg*. I 644d6-645b8 is that each of the living creatures is a divine (θεῖον) puppet ('put together either as their toy or for some serious reason'). At *Lg*. VII 803c5, Plato clarifies how that 'θεῖον' should be understood. For Plato indicates that the human being is designed by god as a kind of plaything ('θεοῦ τι παίγνιον εἶναι μεμηχανημένον'). Therefore, human beings should be conceived of as puppets which are handled by gods. As to the number of gods, MAYHEW 2010, pp. 209-210, argues that the Athenian moves back and forth between 'the god' and 'the gods'. Hence, this specific detail would suggest that, if the *Laws'* theology is concerned, it is of little importance whether we say that there is one god or more than one.

[673] As Schofield (see GRIFFITH-SCHOFIELD 2016, p. 59 fn. 40) rightly observes, *Lg*. I 644d6-645b8 appears to suggest that humans are able to resist, or cooperate with, the pulls of different string (for a similar point of view, cf. STALLEY 1983, p. 61). On this interpretation, humans would still be somewhat free to determine by themselves their moral actions.

[674] Namely, 'internal to the human soul'.

[675] Plato specifies that the golden and sacred string of calculation is a gentle and non-violent – in a few words, the finest – pull in the human soul. Yet, this pull is not able to overcome by itself the other tendons.

[676] For the golden and sacred string of calculation is to be identified with 'the public law of the city'.

[677] See *infra* p. 14 fn. 107 and p. 44 fn. 309, where I show that the verb 'γιγνώσκειν' may eventually indicate the highest kind of knowledge.

[678] Namely, the story according to which the golden and sacred string of calculation represents the pull that each of the living creatures should always follow.

is to persuade people to always follow the golden and sacred string of calculation (so as to carry out a calculation of pleasures and pains). Now, given that no one person provided with a (philosophical) knowledge of what virtue really is is expected to exist in Magnesia, it follows that the gods are the only entities which, by perfectly knowing virtue and its λόγος, may inspire the city's law[679]. Accordingly, the ultimate meaning of the story of virtue that Plato introduces at *Lg*. I 644d6-645b8 is that humans, *qua* puppets of gods, should always follow the golden and sacred string of calculation just as the civic law (which stems directly from gods) dictates[680].

Now, given that humans are expected to follow as strictly as possible the divine law, we may assume, at this stage of the analysis[681], that guardians of the laws[682] need to be appointed by Megillus, Cleinias, and the Athenian Stranger (i.e., the fathers [in speech] of Magnesia[683]). Hence, taking for granted that a search for human representatives in Magnesia of the divine law is to be carried out, we may further assume that such a selection process passes through an epistemological and ethical assessment of all the candidates. Indeed, as I have argued, virtue is still thought by the Plato of the *Laws* to be knowledge[684]. Also, I have ascertained that no philosopher exists in a second-best city like Magnesia. Therefore, the good guardian of the Magnesian laws should be assumed to be the person who most closely resembles the wise philosopher[685]. For Plato would have made a foolish move if he had Megillus, Cleinias, and the Athenian Stranger entrust the laws of the second-best city with completely dumb and vicious people.

Taking all these assumptions for granted, what would the best cognitive state be that we may expect the guardians of the Magnesian laws to attain? To address this issue, I will determine the highest epistemological condition ascribable to the citizens of Magnesia. By doing so, I will discover the cognitive state that at best pertains to the guardians of the laws – that is, the (assumedly) most talented people in Magnesia. To start with, I shall consider a passage from the *Laws*' Book III where

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[679] See *infra* p. 106 fn. 638.

[680] Cf. *Lg*. IV 709a7-c3. See KLOSKO 1986, p. 217, MORROW 1960, p. 544, and CLEARY 2001, p. 125, who argue that, since the gods appear to be 'the Kings' who are 'the supervisors of the All', they should be assumed to be the true creators of all beings, laws included.

[681] As I shall show in the next few pages, Plato openly acknowledges that (a) guardians of the laws need to be appointed (see e.g., *Lg*. I 632c5-d1 and *infra* pp. 117-118) and (b) they have to be exceptionally worthy people (see *Lg*. VI 753e5 and *infra* p. 114 fn. 685).

[682] Namely, people who, though not being as perfect (cf. *infra* pp. 107-110, where I suggest that no philosopher is [initially, at least] expected to live in Magnesia) as the lawgivers (that is, the gods: cf. *Lg*. X 916d-e, where the gods are said to be wise and virtuous; cf. also POWERS 2004, who observes that the gods are foundational to the city's law code) would still (a) be expected to be actually present (and politically active) in the city and (b) be able to guide the others in the name of the divine law.

[683] The issue of who is/are the legislator(s) in Magnesia is disputable. Dominic O'MEARA 2017, pp. 107-110, argues that Cleinias, Megillus, and the Athenian Stranger, as divinely inspired people, are the three legislators in speech. On the issue of whether or not these three interlocutors should be assumed as lawgivers, see also BARTELS 2017, pp. 140-150.

[684] See *infra* pp. 103-107.

[685] As a matter of fact, Plato states at *Lg*. VI 753e5 that the guardians of the laws are expected to be men of the highest caliber ('μάλιστα ἄκροι'), and 'of no little worth' (οὐ φαῦλοι).

both the worst cognitive state that humans may be affected by (i.e., ignorance, ἀμαθία) and ignorance's (good) epistemological counterpart (i.e., φρόνησις) are considered.

> ΑΘ. Φαμὲν δή νυν, καθ' ὁδὸν ἰόντες τὴν λοιπὴν τοῦ λόγου, τὴν μεγίστην ἀμαθίαν τότε ἐκείνην τὴν δύναμιν ἀπολέσαι καὶ νῦν ταὐτὸν τοῦτο πεφυκέναι ποιεῖν, ὥστε τόν γε νομοθέτην, εἰ τοῦθ' οὕτως ἔχει, πειρατέον ταῖς πόλεσιν φρόνησιν μὲν ὅσην δυνατὸν ἐμποιεῖν, τὴν δ' ἄνοιαν ὅτι μάλιστα ἐξαιρεῖν.
>
> ATHENIAN: Very well. Our claim, as we set out on the remaining part of the journey which is our argument, is that it was ignorance[686] of the highest order which destroyed that power in those days, and which still, in the natural order of things, has the same effect nowadays. In consequence the lawgiver, if that is how things are, must try and introduce whatever φρόνησις he can into cities and, as far as possible, eradicate folly.
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> *Lg*. III 688e3-8

This passage clarifies how dangerous ignorance could be for humans: for ἀμαθία is presented as one of the main causes of disruption for a city. Having established this, Plato has the Athenian Stranger specify that the lawgiver has to address the root causes of the disorder (potentially) generated by ignorance. Indeed, the lawgiver is expected to introduce (as far as he can) a specific cognitive state (namely, φρόνησις) in those cities over which he imposes his laws. Similarly, then, within the context of a city like Magnesia (which indeed receives its laws from a divine lawgiver), the lawgiver provides the citizens with as much φρόνησις (that is, the highest epistemological condition which the lawgiver may grant to the citizens of a second-best city) as possible[687]. By doing so, indeed, the lawgiver aims to prevent the city's people from being affected by the lowest cognitive state (ignorance [ἀμαθία]).

Apparently, then, φρόνησις individuates the best cognitive condition available to those who are expected to live in Magnesia. If so, φρόνησις would indicate the cognitive condition that the most talented Magnesians (i.e., the guardians of the laws) may at best achieve. As a result, the best guardians of the laws (i.e., the most brilliant among those who guide the city in the name of the divine law) should be labelled as 'φρονοῦντες'. Interestingly, *Lg*. III 690a1-c3 shows that people who do not achieve philosophical knowledge should respect the φρονοῦντες's leadership.

> ΑΘ. Εἶεν· ἀξιώματα δὲ δὴ τοῦ τε ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι ποῖά ἐστι καὶ πόσα, ἔν τε πόλεσιν μεγάλαις καὶ σμικραῖς ἔν τε οἰκίαις ὡσαύτως; ἆρ' οὐχὶ ἓν μὲν τό τε πατρὸς καὶ μητρός; καὶ ὅλως γονέας ἐκγόνων ἄρχειν ἀξίωμα ὀρθὸν πανταχοῦ ἂν εἴη; ΚΛ. Καὶ μάλα. ΑΘ. Τούτῳ δέ γε ἑπόμενον γενναίους ἀγεννῶν ἄρχειν· καὶ τρίτον ἔτι τούτοις συνέπεται τὸ πρεσβυτέρους μὲν ἄρχειν δεῖν, νεωτέρους δὲ ἄρχεσθαι. ΚΛ. Τί μήν; ΑΘ. Τέταρτον δ' αὖ δούλους μὲν ἄρχεσθαι, δεσπότας δὲ ἄρχειν. ΚΛ. Πῶς γὰρ οὔ; ΑΘ. Πέμπτον γε οἶμαι τὸ κρείττονα μὲν ἄρχειν, τὸν ἥττω δὲ ἄρχεσθαι.ΚΛ. Μάλα γε ἀναγκαῖον ἀρχὴν εἴρηκας. ΑΘ. Καὶ πλείστην γε ἐν σύμπασιν τοῖς ζῴοις οὖσαν καὶ κατὰ φύσιν, ὡς ὁ Θηβαῖος ἔφη ποτὲ Πίνδαρος. τὸ δὲ μέγιστον, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀξίωμα ἕκτον

[686] Cf. *infra* p. 4, esp. fn. 48: CENTRONE 2008, p. 61 fn. 40, argues that ἀμαθία is variously defined in the Platonic *corpus*. For it is presented as (1) a species (εἶδος/γένος) of ignorance in the *Sophist* (see *Sph*. 229a9-c10), as (2) unawareness of ignorance in the *Apology* and in the *Timaeus* (cf. *Ap*. 29b1-2 and *Ti*. 86b1-87b9), as (3) generic ignorance (ἄγνοια) in the *Theaetetus* (see *Tht*. 176c5). Throughout this chapter, I will assume that 'ἀμαθία' indicates in the *Laws*, just as it does in the *Theaetetus*, a generic ignorance. Therefore, I will keep on translating 'ἀμαθία' as 'ignorance'.

[687] The fact that Plato specifies that the lawgiver has to introduce as much φρόνησις as possible in those cities over which he imposes his laws suggests that he is concerned with a second-best (political) scenario. Indeed, the best city is that in which neither law nor any other kind of regulation are more powerful than philosophical knowledge.

ἂν γίγνοιτο, ἕπεσθαι μὲν τὸν ἀνεπιστήμονα κελεῦον, τὸν δὲ φρονοῦντα ἡγεῖσθαί τε καὶ ἄρχειν. καίτοι τοῦτό γε, ὦ Πίνδαρε σοφώτατε, σχεδὸν οὐκ ἂν παρὰ φύσιν ἔγωγε φαίην γίγνεσθαι, κατὰ φύσιν δέ, τὴν τοῦ νόμου ἑκόντων ἀρχὴν ἀλλ' οὐ βίαιον πεφυκυῖαν.

ATHENIAN: Very well. And claims to rule and be ruled? What kinds of claim are there? How many kinds, in cities large and small – and in households for that matter? Isn't one claim that of a father or mother? In general, wouldn't the claim of parents to rule their children be regarded as valid everywhere? CLEINIAS: Absolutely. ATHENIAN: Second to that, the claim of the high-born to rule the low-born. And third, after these two, the claim that the older should rule, and the younger should be ruled. CLEINIAS: Of course. ATHENIAN: Then again, fourth, that slaves should be ruled and their masters rule. CLEINIAS: Obviously. ATHENIAN: Fifth, I suspect, that the stronger should rule and the weaker be ruled. CLEINIAS: A form of rule with a compelling logic to it. ATHENIAN: Yes. And widespread, too, occurring naturally, as the Theban poet Pindar pointed out, throughout the animal world. But the strongest claim, by the looks of it, would be the sixth – that the person without knowledge should follow, whereas the person who has φρόνησις should lead and rule. Though even here, with all due respect to your wisdom, Pindar, I would hardly myself describe this as contrary to nature: it follows nature in being the rule of law over those who by their nature accept it willingly, and not under duress.

Lg. III 690a1-c3

Plato states in these lines that the one who is not able to get access to ἐπιστήμη is bound to follow the φρονῶν's guide. For the one who has φρόνησις must lead the ἀνεπιστήμονες. In this regard, the Athenian Stranger makes clear that this leadership is (a) according to nature and (b) exercised by means of law. Therefore, the φρονῶν is meant to rule over the ἀνεπιστήμονες on the basis of laws[688]. Ultimately, then, *Lg*. III 690a1-c3 suggests that, within the context of Magnesia (where no one person provided with [philosophical] ἐπιστήμη is expected to exist), φρόνησις individuates the second-best cognitive state, one which is on the same level as the laws which are second-best. Indeed, φρόνησις appears to be the highest epistemological condition which people who are not able to attain a philosophical ἐπιστήμη may at best achieve. Thus, φρόνησις has to be taken to indicate the cognitive state which at best pertains to the guardians of the laws – namely, to the most talented Magnesians who guide the others in the name of law.

Now that φρόνησις has been definitively acknowledged as the highest epistemological condition that Magnesians may achieve, one issue still remains to be addressed: what does φρόνησις precisely amount to as a cognitive condition? By exploring how Plato's *Laws* describes ignorance (i.e., the worst cognitive condition which humans may be affected by), I shall achieve *via negativa* a more accurate definition of φρόνησις (that is, the best epistemological condition which Magnesians may achieve)[689]. To start with, *Lg*. III 689b2-c3 provides us with a definition of ignorance:

ΑΘ. Τίς οὖν ἡ μεγίστη δικαίως ἂν λέγοιτο ἀμαθία; σκοπεῖτε εἰ συνδόξει καὶ σφῷν λεγόμενον· ἐγὼ μὲν δὴ τὴν τοιάνδε τίθεμαι. ΚΛ. Ποίαν; ΑΘ. Τὴν ὅταν τῷ τι δόξαν καλὸν ἢ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι μὴ φιλῇ τοῦτο ἀλλὰ μισῇ, τὸ δὲ πονηρὸν καὶ ἄδικον δοκοῦν εἶναι φιλῇ τε καὶ ἀσπάζηται. ταύτην τὴν διαφωνίαν λύπης τε καὶ ἡδονῆς πρὸς τὴν κατὰ λόγον δόξαν ἀμαθίαν φημὶ εἶναι τὴν ἐσχάτην, μεγίστην δέ, ὅτι τοῦ πλήθους ἐστὶ τῆς ψυχῆς· τὸ γὰρ λυπούμενον καὶ ἡδόμενον αὐτῆς ὅπερ δῆμός

[688] See *infra* pp. 112-114.

[689] Cf. *Lg*. III 688e3-8 and *infra* pp. 114-115, where φρόνησις is presented as ignorance's good epistemological counterpart.

τε καὶ πλῆθος πόλεώς ἐστιν. ΑΘ. ὅταν οὖν ἐπιστήμαις ἢ δόξαις ἢ λόγῳ ἐναντιῶται, τοῖς φύσει ἀρχικοῖς, ἡ ψυχή, τοῦτο ἄνοιαν προσαγορεύω, πόλεώς τε, ὅταν ἄρχουσιν καὶ νόμοις μὴ πείθηται τὸ πλῆθος, ταὐτόν, καὶ δὴ καὶ ἑνὸς ἀνδρός, ὁπόταν καλοὶ ἐν ψυχῇ λόγοι ἐνόντες μηδὲν ποιῶσιν πλέον ἀλλὰ δὴ τούτοις πᾶν τοὐναντίον, ταύτας πάσας ἀμαθίας τὰς πλημμελεστάτας ἔγωγ' ἂν θείην πόλεώς τε καὶ ἑνὸς ἑκάστου τῶν πολιτῶν, ἀλλ' οὐ τὰς τῶν δημιουργῶν, εἰ ἄρα μου καταμανθάνετε, ὦ ξένοι, ὃ λέγω.

ATHENIAN: And what might justifiably be described as ignorance of the highest order? See if you both agree with what I say. Ignorance of this kind, in my view. CLEINIAS: Is what? ATHENIAN: Is when someone does not love what he has decided is fine and good, but instead hates it, loving and favouring what he thinks is evil and unjust instead. This discord, I maintain, between pain and pleasure on one side and rational opinion on the other is the ultimate – and also the greatest – ignorance, because it affects the most populated part of the soul – the part which feels pain and pleasure being to the soul what the common people and population at large are to the city. When the soul opposes knowledge, opinion, rational argument – the things which should direct it – this I call folly. It's the same in a city, when the population at large does not obey the rulers and the laws – and equally in an individual man, when the fine arguments present in the soul count for nothing, but instead produce their exact opposite. All these are (forms of) ignorance which I personally would class as the most discordant both for a city and for each individual one of its citizens – not the ignorance of the uneducated, if you see what I mean, my friends.

Lg. III 689a5-c3

At *Lg*. III 689a5-c3, ignorance[690] is accounted for as the cognitive state of those people whose soul opposes knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), rational argument (λόγος), or opinion (δόξα). Now, given that, as things stand, (philosophical) ἐπιστήμη[691] is achieved by no Magnesian, it follows that an opinion flanked by rational argument – i.e., a true opinion[692] – constitutes the best epistemological achievement that a Magnesian (whose soul opposes ignorance) may achieve. What is more, since (a) φρόνησις is presented at *Lg*. III 688e3-8 as the good epistemological counterpart of ignorance and (b) a reasoned and true opinion is introduced at *Lg*. III 689a5-c3 (and, similarly, at *Lg*. IX 864b6-7)[693] as the best epistemological outcome which those Magnesians whose soul opposes ignorance may attain, φρόνησις should be then (provisionally) assumed to basically consist in a true opinion.

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[690] Plato actually says 'ἄνοια' – which should be rendered as 'folly'. However, ἄνοια is to be identified with ignorance (ἀμαθία → ἄγνοια: cf. *infra* p. 115 fn. 686). Indeed, Plato clarifies at *Lg*. III 689a5-c3 that, if someone does not follow the rule of what ought to be followed (that is, ἐπιστήμη, λόγος, or δόξα, in the case of individuals; νόμος, if a city is concerned), 'ταύτας πάσας ἀμαθίας' would occur. Therefore, those who do not follow what reason dictates to follow are affected by cognitive conditions which are all (forms of) ignorance. Accordingly, I believe, *contra* Schofield (see GRIFFITH-SCHOFIELD 2016, p. 119 fn. 34), that *Lg*. III 689a5-c3 does not convey the idea that ἄνοια is a (sub-) species (εἶδος, γένος) of ignorance (ἀμαθία, ἄγνοια). See *Ti*. 43e8-44b1, where the soul is said to become unintelligent (ἄνους) when it is governed by αἴσθησις. For, when the soul becomes unintelligent and is in a state of folly (ἄνοια), excessive pleasures and pains – which are fused with an irrational (ἄλογος) sense-perception – take place. Therefore, even if we assume that Plato treats ἄνοια at *Lg*. III 689a5-c3 in the same way as he does in the *Timaeus*, it follows that a soul which is ἄνους does not achieve knowledge of what is good or bad, and thus, is ignorant. Indeed, in the case of a soul that is ἄνους, reason does not manage to give direction to the soul.

[691] I take 'ἐπιστήμη' at *Lg*. III 689a5-c3 to indicate a philosophical knowledge.

[692] As no Magnesian is expected to attain philosophical knowledge, an opinion flanked by rational argument (that is, an opinion which is led by reason [λόγος] towards true epistemological outcomes) is the best epistemological achievement that a citizen of Magnesia may be actually expected to make.

[693] *Lg*. IX 864b6-7 suggests that ignorance (ἄγνοια) 'is the loss of expectations and true opinion about what is best' (ἐλπίδων δὲ καὶ δόξης τῆς ἀληθοῦς περὶ τὸ ἄριστον ἄφεσις). My translation follows GROU's (1769) emendation (which is also accepted by FERRARI 2015, *contra* PANGLE 1980 and SAUNDERS 1970). Thus, I read 'ἄφεσις' (loss), instead of the 'ἔφεσις' (striving) which has been handed down by the manuscripts.

To test this (provisional) definition of φρόνησις as true opinion, I will now take into account a passage from the *Laws*' Book I where Plato has the Athenian Stranger explicitly establish that φρόνησις is the cognitive state which pertains to some of the guardians of the Magnesian laws.

> ΑΘ. κατιδὼν δὲ ὁ θεὶς τοὺς νόμους ἅπασιν τούτοις φύλακας ἐπιστήσει, τοὺς μὲν διὰ φρονήσεως, τοὺς δὲ δι' ἀληθοῦς δόξης ἰόντας, ὅπως πάντα ταῦτα συνδήσας ὁ νοῦς ἑπόμενα σωφροσύνῃ καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ ἀποφήνῃ, ἀλλὰ μὴ πλούτῳ μηδὲ φιλοτιμίᾳ.
>
> ATHENIAN: Then the lawgiver will review his laws and appoint guardians to watch over all these things; some of these guardians will be guided by φρόνησις, others by true opinion, so that intellect can knit all these arrangements together and declare that they follow moderation and justice, not wealth or ambition.
>
> *Lg*. I 632c5-d1

In this passage, Plato describes φρόνησις as a cognitive state which pertains to *some* of the laws' guardians but not to others. Indeed, while some of the guardians of Magnesia's laws are φρονοῦντες, the others merely possess a true opinion. Now, as φρόνησις *and* true opinion are presented as the guardians' cognitive states, one may wonder whether φρόνησις actually consists in a true opinion, as our inquiry has provisionally determined. If so, however, why would Plato distinguish φρόνησις from true opinion at *Lg*. I 632c5-d1?

To shed light on the relationship between φρόνησις and true opinion – and hence, to ascertain whether φρόνησις is a superior form of true opinion or it is not a form of opinion at all –, I will appeal to a passage from *Laws* II where φρόνησις appears to be equated to a *certain kind* of true opinion:

> ΑΘ. Λέγω τοίνυν τῶν παίδων παιδικὴν εἶναι πρώτην αἴσθησιν ἡδονὴν καὶ λύπην, καὶ ἐν οἷς ἀρετὴ ψυχῇ καὶ κακία παραγίγνεται πρῶτον, ταῦτ' εἶναι, φρόνησιν δὲ καὶ ἀληθεῖς δόξας βεβαίους εὐτυχὲς ὅτῳ καὶ πρὸς τὸ γῆρας παρεγένετο· τέλεος δ' οὖν ἔστ' ἄνθρωπος ταῦτα καὶ τὰ ἐν τούτοις πάντα κεκτημένος ἀγαθά.
>
> ATHENIAN: Well, I maintain that with children, their first childish perception is pleasure and pain, and that it is in these that virtue and vice first make their appearance in the soul. As for φρόνησις, *namely* firm true opinion, which can be relied on, well, you're lucky if they make their appearance even in old age – certainly the person who has acquired them, and all the good things that go with them, is a complete human being.
>
> *Lg*. II 653a5-b1

Lg. II 653a5-b1 suggests that φρόνησις is not identifiable with true opinion *simpliciter*. For it appears to amount to a particular kind (namely, a superior form) of true opinion: φρόνησις consists of a *firm*[694] (βέβαιος) true opinion[695]. Hence, if, on the one hand, ignorance (ἀμαθία/ἄγνοια/ἄνοια) represents the greatest epistemological evil[696], on the other, φρόνησις as firm true opinion constitutes the highest epistemological good that Magnesians may achieve.

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[694] See MEYER 2006, who argues that *Lg*. II 653a suggests that a stable true opinion amounts to wisdom in the case of human beings (cf. *Lg*. III 688b and *Plt*. 309c). Cf. also MEYER 2015, p. 188, who points out that φρόνησις constitutes a more robust cognitive state than the one individuated by sense-perception, memory, and mere opinion.
[695] There is an equivalence of sorts if we assume the 'καί' with an epexegetic value, as I have done.
[696] See *Lg*. III 688e3-8 and *infra* pp. 114-115.

4.3.1.2. *Φρόνησις as thought (διάνοια)*

I have argued that the *Laws*' textual evidence suggests that φρόνησις (i.e., the epistemological condition which is at best attained by the guardians of the laws) consists of a firm true opinion (ἀληθὴς δόξα βέβαιος). Still, I have not clarified yet what makes this true opinion firm. To discover this, I will now focus on the education which is devoted to the guardians of the laws. By doing so, I will (a) determine the reason why the guardians' φρόνησις amounts to a true opinion which is firm and (b) assess the epistemological complexity of the *Laws*' φρόνησις.

To start with, I will recall what Plato states at *Lg*. VII 817e5-818a3[697]: while all the Magnesians are required to learn the basics of three disciplines (arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy), only a small minority of individuals is asked to study these three subjects to a level of precision[698]. I have already argued that this small group of people is made up of the Nocturnal Counsellors. Indeed, such people are presented as excellent individuals who are able (just as philosophers are) to manage dialectic[699]. Thus, given that Plato shows elsewhere in his *corpus*[700] that such an intensive study of arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy paves the way for dialectic, I have concluded[701] that the Nocturnal Counsellors, being true dialecticians, are those who are required to study arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy to a level of precision. Yet, I have also suggested that such excellent people as the Nocturnal Counsellors are not expected to exist in Magnesia. Not surprisingly, then, Magnesians (the guardians of the laws included) are depicted as 'not entirely wise' (μὴ πάνυ σοφοί) people[702].

Still, Plato also specifies that men of the highest caliber ('μάλιστα ἄκροι') and 'of no little worth' (οὐ φαῦλοι)[703] are expected to become guardians of the Magnesian laws. Thus, such worthy people may be assumed to be those who approximate themselves to the Nocturnal Counsellors' excellent state by being educated in arithmetic, geometry and astronomy[704] to a lower (but still sufficiently high) degree of precision than the Nocturnal Counsellors'[705]. Indeed, as such philosophers (and hence, such dialecticians) as the Nocturnal Counsellors are not expected to exist in Magnesia, it follows that the guardians' education cannot be so precise to grant them with the ability (which pertains to the Nocturnal Counsellors) to manage dialectic. As a result, the education that the

[697] See *infra* pp. 100 and ff.
[698] See BARTELS 2017, p. 196.
[699] See *infra* p. 102 fn. 609.
[700] See *R*. VII 536d5-8.
[701] I am able to draw such a conclusion since I assume that a specific theoretical background is imported in Plato's *Laws* from other dialogues. See *infra* p. 121 fn. 709.
[702] See *Lg*. VI 752c1.
[703] Cf. *Lg*. VI 753e5.
[704] Cf. *R*. VI 510c2-d3: interestingly, these three subjects (which pave the way for dialectic) are associated with διάνοια in the context of the Theory of the Divided Line in Plato's *Republic*.
[705] Still, the laws' guardians (especially, those who are φρονοῦντες) should be assumed to undertake this mathematical education to a higher level of precision than the other Magnesians.

guardians undertake can only prepare them for a less worthy cognitive state than the Nocturnal Counsellors' philosophical ἐπιστήμη (namely, an epistemological condition achieved by means of dialectic)[706]. Therefore, given that (a) the best guardians of Magnesia's laws are φρονοῦντες[707], (b) φρόνησις has turned out to indicate a superior form of true opinion – that is, a *firm* true opinion (ἀληθὴς δόξα βέβαιος) –, and (c) the guardians of the Magnesian laws (assumedly) undertake a mathematical education, we can speculatively conclude that what ultimately makes firm the true opinion that the guardians at best achieve is the *cursus studiorum* that they engage in. Ultimately, then, the guardians of the laws should be assumed to achieve the highest epistemological good which is available to Magnesians (i.e., φρόνησις as firm true opinion) by learning how to use the mathematical method of investigation which is proper to arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy (that is, the subjects that the guardians get acquainted with through their education).

Interestingly, this definition of φρόνησις as a firm true opinion achieved by means of a mathematical method of investigation seems to be confirmed by a sentence that comes from the tenth book of the *Laws*. Indeed, Plato indicates at *Lg*. X 888b3-4 the kind of cognitive process which humans can at best implement:

> ΑΘ. […] μέγιστον δέ, ὃ νῦν οὐδὲν ἡγῇ σύ, τὸ περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς ὀρθῶς διανοηθέντα ζῆν καλῶς ἢ μή.
>
> ATHENIAN: […] the greatest thing, which at present you think is of no importance, is thinking correctly about the gods and thus living nobly or not.
>
> *Lg*. X 888b3-4

Lg. X 888b3-4 shows that what really matters when religion is concerned is to entertain a good relationship with gods. The best way to do so, then, is to think correctly about them ('περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς ὀρθῶς διανοηθέντα'). On the assumption that having correct thoughts is important no matter what the object of reasoning is (and hence, no matter whether or not gods are concerned), thinking (διανοεῖσθαι) – and, more specifically, having a correct (ὀρθή) thought (διάνοια) – turns out to be the best cognitive process available to the citizens of Magnesia. Accordingly, given that (a) φρόνησις is the highest epistemological condition which is attainable by the citizens of Magnesia and (b) διάνοια is the best cognitive process which Magnesians are able to work out, it follows that φρόνησις and διάνοια are mutually related[708]. Now, even if we take for granted that φρόνησις is associated with διάνοια in Plato's *Laws*, how would this confirm that the *Laws*' φρόνησις individuates a firm true opinion which is achieved by means of a mathematical method of reasoning?

[706] Hence, the *Laws*' guardians become in a sense *deficient philosophers*.
[707] See *Lg*. II 653a5-b1 and *infra* esp. p. 118.
[708] Interestingly, the education that those guardians of the laws who have φρόνησις (assumedly) undertake consists of arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy – that is, the three subjects that are associated in Plato's *Republic* with a dianoetic kind of thought (cf. *R*. VI 510c2-d3).

To address this question, I shall take for granted that Plato directs the reader of his *Laws* to arguments and conclusions reached in other dialogues[709]. On the basis of this assumption, then, I will take the *Laws*' διάνοια to indicate (just as it does in the *Republic*) an effective (but imperfect) epistemological condition. Indeed, Plato's *Republic* shows that the διανοητής (namely, a person who occupies himself with geometry, arithmetic, and everything else like that)[710] appeals to sensible figures (drawings, constructions, examples taken from experience) while working out his thoughts. Actually, such a person uses sensible figures as images of what he can only seek (ζητεῖν) to see (ἰδεῖν)[711]. In fact, the goal at which the διανοητής aims (i.e., the epistemological outcome which he can only seek to achieve) is a noetic knowledge of the intelligible Forms[712] (after all, he aims to make claims for the sake of the thing itself, i.e., the Form itself[713]). However, to grasp a full knowledge of the intelligible Forms, a higher cognitive state[714] than διάνοια is needed. For the διανοητής can at best aim to achieve an understanding[715] of the intelligible Forms by making hypotheses of which, however, he is not able to give an account of. Therefore, the fact remains that, as Bénatouïl and El Murr point out, the διανοητής's reasoning (λόγος) is still about sensible objects[716]. As a result, given that (a) the *Laws*' διάνοια and the *Republic*'s διάνοια (assumedly) share the same epistemological status and (b) διάνοια is associated with φρόνησις in the *Laws*, it follows that the *Laws*' φρόνησις, besides evoking a firm true opinion, also indicates a dianoetic (i.e., mathematical) thought process[717].

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[709] See ROWE, 2010, p. 35, and, similarly, O'MEARA 2017, p. 118, who argue that Plato's *Laws* implies a theoretical background which is imported from other dialogues.

[710] Cf. *R.* VI 510c2-d3.

[711] See *R.* VII 527b9-11, where the *Republic*'s διάνοια is said to draw 'a soul towards truth and bring about a philosophical cast of mind, directing upwards those elements in us that we now wrongly direct downwards'. See also *R.* VII 527a1-b2, where Plato says that geometry should be practised for the sake of knowledge (γνῶσις: see *R.* VI 508e1-509a5, where Plato associates γνῶσις with ἀλήθεια and γιγνώσκειν with ἐπιστήμη).

[712] Cf. *R.* VI 510c2-511a1. See *infra* p. 77 fn. 483: BÉNATOUÏL-EL MURR 2010, pp. 43-57, basically argue that the διανοητής, who aims to achieve an understanding of the intelligible Forms, is ultimately able to focus on sensible objects only. On the contrary, the dialectician does not need any sensible object to grasp a full knowledge of the intelligible Forms.

[713] Taking for granted that the guardians' φρόνησις is generally associated with the *Republic*'s διάνοια, the *Laws'* φρόνησις ends up being the only epistemological means through which the intelligible Forms may be somehow approached. Hence, insofar as the guardians have some indirect contact with the intelligible world, they may be thought of as those people who retain some small trace of divine nature (however much humans can share of gods' perfection, as Plato says at *Lg.* X 906b1-3). Indeed, although they do not have access to dialectical studies (and thus, cannot achieve a full knowledge of intelligible Forms), they can still aim to attain a deductive knowledge of what is intelligible by employing sensible figures as images of the metaphysical Forms.

[714] Namely, the epistemological condition that is individuated by νόησις, ἐπιστήμη, or νοῦς. See *infra* p. 75 fn. 468 and 77 fn. 481, where I observe that νόησις, ἐπιστήμη, νοῦς, σοφία (and also φρόνησις – at least, within contexts which are philosophically pregnant) indicate the highest epistemological condition – namely, that which pertains to philosophers.

[715] Deductive, at best. Indeed, to achieve a propositional knowledge of the intelligible Forms, one has to be a good dialectician.

[716] Cf. BÉNATOUÏL-EL MURR 2010, p. 54.

[717] Accordingly, the *Laws*' διάνοια (just as the *Republic*'s διάνοια) should be viewed as a hypothetical thought process that assumes certain hypotheses ('such as the odd, the even, the various figures, three kinds of angles, and so on': see *R.* VI 510c3-5) as the starting-points of the (dianoetic) reasoning. On this issue, see DORTER 2004, p. 13, and FERRARI 2014, p. 39. See also SARTORI-VEGETTI-CENTRONE 2011[4], p. 775 fn. 79: Centrone argues that a hypothetical method of investigation is proper to arithmetic, geometry, and the other disciplines of this sort (namely, astronomy and harmony). As for the hypotheses used in mathematics, Centrone observes that '*hypothesis* significa, prima che un'assunzione

Thus, the fact that Plato (more or less explicitly) associates φρόνησις with both ἀληθὴς δόξα βέβαιος and διάνοια should be taken to suggest that the *Laws*' φρόνησις indicates a cognitive condition which consists in a dianoetic (i.e., mathematical) cognitive process[718] whose epistemological outcome consists of a firm true opinion[719]. Ultimately, then, the *Laws*' φρονοῦντες should be thought of as people who are able to truly assess the sensible reality (for this is δόξα's ontological domain[720]) by exploiting their stable capacity (which their mathematical [i.e., dianoetic] education grants them) to acknowledge the physical instantiations of the intelligible Forms.

To conclude, then, Plato introduces in his *Laws* a new notion of φρόνησις[721]. For the *Laws*' φρόνησις does not represent the same cognitive condition as the philosophers' σοφία (as is typical in Plato's earlier works). Indeed, I have suggested that φρόνησις represents an epistemological condition which encompasses both a true opinion which is firm and διάνοια. Moreover, I have argued that the education that the *Laws*' φρονοῦντες receive grants them with the capacity to properly assess the sensible reality (and thus, to achieve a firm true opinion about the instantiations in the physical world of the intelligible Forms) – though they are not able to understand what it is that makes a certain physical thing the thing that it is (i.e., the intelligible Forms themselves).

4.3.2. *Φρόνησις and demotic virtue*

Now that we have ascertained that the best epistemological condition that Magnesians can attain is φρόνησις (i.e., a dianoetic cognitive process whose epistemological outcome consists of a firm true opinion), we should aim to clarify whether or not φρόνησις plays an ethical function within the

congetturale, letteralmente «ciò che è posto sotto, a base di un ragionamento» (cfr. 511b6). I matematici le assumono infatti come «evidenti a tutti» (d1). Il modo in cui le ipotesi sono menzionate («ipotizzando il pari e il dispari» etc.) non chiarisce ancora se si tratti di: a) concetti; b) ipotesi sull'esistenza di quelle realtà, che cioè esistano numeri pari e dispari, etc. […]; c) definizioni vere e proprie; d) conciliando (b) e (c), definizioni che implicano l'esistenza'.

[718] That is, a mathematical method of investigation which, though aiming at grasping some kind of understanding of the intelligible objects, is ultimately concerned with sensible figures. Interestingly, EL MURR 2015, p. 16, argues that *Plt*. 277e-279a shows that 'the use of the paradigmatic method allows people to secure the starting point of an enquiry, by methodically stabilizing opinion, because it is the procedure of drawing parallels and systematic comparison resulting from the dialectical use of paradigms that enables the soul to find the elements it judges rightly when these elements are transposed into more complex sets'. Thus, El Murr's analysis may be taken to confirm the idea that, as *Plt*. 277e-279a shows, a firm true opinion consists of a true act of thinking which allows people to (a) assume the right starting points of an enquiry, and hence, (b) achieve a true and stabilized opinion about the world's most complex elements.

[719] Platonic epistemology (see e.g., *Tht*. 189e4-190a6 and *Sph*. 264a8-b3) suggests that διάνοια and firm true opinion may actually conjoin so as to generate a complex and unified epistemological condition (such as e.g., the *Laws*' φρόνησις). For Plato specifies that thinking (διανοεῖσθαι) – and hence, thought (διάνοια) – is to be viewed as a talk (λόγος) that the soul entertains with itself. The final outcome of this speech – which is internal to the soul – is then said to consist of an opinion (δόξα) (see SEDLEY 2004, p. 130, who, in commenting on *Sph*. 263d6-264b3, argues that this theory of cognitive psychology is found both in Plato's later works [see *Sph*. 263d6-264b5 and *Phlb*. 38c2-e8] and in earlier ones [cf. *Chrm*. 166c7-d6 and *Grg*. 505c1-507b7]). Indeed, δόξα represents, as *Sph*. 264a8-b3 confirms, the completion (ἀποτελεύτησις) – that is, the final stage, or outcome – of thought (διάνοια)

[720] According to the *Republic*'s Theory of the Divided Line, opinion (δόξα) is by definition concerned with the sensible world. Similarly, I have shown that διάνοια too is ultimately concerned with sensible objects.

[721] By introducing this new notion of φρόνησις, then, Plato aims to make the *Theaetetus*' – and thus, the *Sophist*'s – account of διάνοια consistent with the one which he presents in the *Republic*'s Theory of the Divided Line (cf. *R*. VI 509d1-511e3 and VII 533c7-534a8).

context of Plato's *Laws*. Indeed, as the Plato of the *Laws* believes that (a) virtue is knowledge and (b) no philosopher is expected to exist in Magnesia, it is worth wondering whether or not it is possible to live (to some extent) virtuously in a second-best city like Magnesia. As a consequence, I shall now aim to understand whether or not the guardians' φρόνησις allows them to approach virtue to some extent.

To start with, *Lg*. II 654b11-d4 seems to suggest that the person who (correctly) thinks (διανοεῖσθαι) about what is morally beautiful is able to have a sufficiently good conduct of life[722].

> ΑΘ. "Καλῶς ᾄδει," φαμέν, "καὶ καλῶς ὀρχεῖται"· πότερον "εἰ καὶ καλὰ ᾄδει καὶ καλὰ ὀρχεῖται" προσθῶμεν ἢ μή; ΚΛ. Προσθῶμεν. ΑΘ. Τί δ' ἂν τὰ καλά τε ἡγούμενος εἶναι καλὰ καὶ τὰ αἰσχρὰ αἰσχρὰ οὕτως αὐτοῖς χρῆται; βέλτιον ὁ τοιοῦτος πεπαιδευμένος ἡμῖν ἔσται τὴν χορείαν τε καὶ μουσικὴν ἢ ὃς ἂν τῷ μὲν σώματι καὶ τῇ φωνῇ τὸ διανοηθὲν εἶναι καλὸν ἱκανῶς ὑπηρετεῖν δυνηθῇ ἑκάστοτε, χαίρῃ δὲ μὴ τοῖς καλοῖς μηδὲ μισῇ τὰ μὴ καλά; ἢ 'κεῖνος ὃς ἂν τῇ μὲν φωνῇ καὶ τῷ σώματι μὴ πάνυ δυνατὸς ᾖ κατορθοῦν, ἢ διανοεῖσθαι, τῇ δὲ ἡδονῇ καὶ λύπῃ κατορθοῖ, τὰ μὲν ἀσπαζόμενος, ὅσα καλά, τὰ δὲ δυσχεραίνων, ὁπόσα μὴ καλά; ΚΛ. Πολὺ τὸ διαφέρον, ὦ ξένε, λέγεις τῆς παιδείας.
>
> ATHENIAN: "He sings well", we say, "and he dances well". Should we add: "if the songs he sings are good, and the dances he dances"? Or not? CLEINIAS: Yes, we should. ATHENIAN: How about believing that the good things are good and the bad things bad, and treating them accordingly? Which we will regard as better – the person with the kind of education in dance and music that enables him, on any particular occasion, to give a satisfactory rendering, using his body and his voice, of what he conceives to be good, though he does not take pleasure in things which are good, and does not hate things which are not good? Or the one who, without being perfectly able to get his voice and his body right, in line with what he thinks, nevertheless does get pleasure and pain right, because he responds warmly to what is good, and cannot bear what is bad? CLEINIAS: There is no comparison, my friend, as far as education is concerned.
>
> *Lg*. II 654b11-d4

At *Lg*. II 654a-656c, Plato has Cleinias and the Athenian Stranger establish that the citizens need to receive a musical education from childhood. For music gives a correct discipline to pleasures and pains and creates order within human souls. Hence, after having determined that (a) 'the person who has been well educated would be able both to sing and to dance well'[723] and (b) the success of the music performer depends on whether or not she manages to convey moral beauty (τὸ καλόν)[724] – that is, virtue[725] –, the Athenian Stranger suggests at *Lg*. II 654b11-d4 that a person who is not perfectly (πάνυ) able to state in words and to express in gestures what he conceives (διανοεῖσθαι) to be good (that is, a person who is not completely able to convey moral beauty by singing and dancing perfectly well) may still be able to profit from the thoughts she has in mind. Indeed, such a person may still be

[722] Cf. STALLEY 1983, p. 125.
[723] *Lg*. II 654b6-7.
[724] Noteworthily, 'τὸ καλόν' is said to be opposed to 'τὸ αἰσχρόν' (i.e., what is shameful).
[725] Cf. *Lg*. 655b3-6: 'the melody and movements associated with virtue (ἀρετή) of soul or body – whether true virtue itself or some likeness of it – are in all cases good (καλά), whereas those associated with badness (κακία), by contrast, are entirely the opposite'.

able to have the right feelings of pleasure and pain based on what she thinks to be morally beautiful (καλά)[726].

Now, how could *Lg*. II 654b11-d4 help us figure out whether or not the *Laws*' φρόνησις individuates an ethically profitable cognitive condition? Interestingly, *Lg*. II 654b11-d4 seems to (implicitly) suggest that the person who (correctly) thinks (διανοεῖσθαι) about what is morally beautiful, even if he is not completely able to convey moral beauty by singing and dancing *perfectly* well, may still be good enough in conveying moral beauty by dancing and singing *reasonably* well[727]. Now, given that (a) a διάνοια (thought) is the product of the activity of διανοεῖσθαι (thinking) and (b) the *Laws*' φρόνησις consists of a διάνοια whose epistemological outcome is a firm true opinion, we may assume that *Lg*. II 654b11-d4 is about a person who has φρόνησις. On this interpretation, then, *Lg*. II 654b11-d4 ultimately suggests that the φρονῶν (that is, the educated person who carries out a correct διάνοια whose completion is represented by a firm true opinion about τὸ καλόν) is quite good at conveying with his actions what he correctly thinks moral beauty (τὸ καλόν) to consist of. If so, then, *Lg*. II 654b11-d4 shows that the *Laws*' φρόνησις individuates a cognitive condition which is to some extent morally profitable: for it allows one to perform fairly (but not perfectly[728]) good actions.

Actually, that the *Laws*' φρόνησις constitutes a crucial condition for performing fairly (but not perfectly) good (moral) actions seems to be further confirmed elsewhere in the dialogue. For *Lg*. II 653a5-b1 shows that the achievement of φρόνησις is fundamental for a human being to reach perfection.

> ΑΘ. Λέγω τοίνυν τῶν παίδων παιδικὴν εἶναι πρώτην αἴσθησιν ἡδονὴν καὶ λύπην, καὶ ἐν οἷς ἀρετὴ ψυχῇ καὶ κακία παραγίγνεται πρῶτον, ταῦτ' εἶναι, φρόνησιν δὲ καὶ ἀληθεῖς δόξας βεβαίους εὐτυχὲς ὅτῳ καὶ πρὸς τὸ γῆρας παρεγένετο· τέλεος δ' οὖν ἔστ' ἄνθρωπος ταῦτα καὶ τὰ ἐν τούτοις πάντα κεκτημένος ἀγαθά.
>
> ATHENIAN: Well, I maintain that with children, their first childish perception is pleasure and pain, and that it is in these that virtue and vice first make their appearance in the soul. As for φρόνησις, namely firm true opinion, which can be relied on, well, you're lucky if they make their appearance even in old age – certainly the person who has acquired them, and all the good things that go with them, is a perfect human being.
>
> *Lg*. II 653a5-b1

At *Lg*. II 653a5-b1, Plato shows that pleasure and pain are the first things that children perceive. Accordingly, pleasure and pain are responsible for having virtue and vice make their first appearance

[726] See STALLEY 1983, p. 125, who argues that *Lg*. II 654b11-d4 ultimately suggests that the person who has the right feelings of pleasure (who is still not able to express with a high degree of precision what he has in mind) is to be preferred to the person who, though being able to express what he thinks (διανοεῖσθαι) to be good, does not love the good or hate the bad.

[727] For such a person enjoys pure pleasure and 'responds warmly to what is good, and cannot bear what is bad'. See *infra* pp. 71-72, where I argue that pure pleasures, *qua* goods (ἀγαθά) which are means to happiness, must be somehow related to virtue. Thus, those who enjoy pure pleasure must be to some extent virtuous – and hence, in some way able to convey moral beauty.

[728] Namely, the person who has a (assumedly, correct) thought (διάνοια) about what is morally beautiful cannot perform the perfectly (i.e., fully) virtuous actions that only the divine, wise, and fully virtuous philosophers are able to carry out.

in the human soul. On the other hand, φρόνησις, *qua* firm true opinion, is said to make its first appearance in old age, if it does appear. Interestingly, the person who acquires φρόνησις – and all the goods that come along with it – is presented as a perfect (τέλεος) human being (ἄνθρωπος). Now, this very characterization of the person who acquires φρόνησις as a perfect individual is important. For the Nocturnal Counsellors, *qua* wise and (fully) virtuous philosophers who are perfectly able to find words to explain the truth and then to back up words with actions[729], are emphatically declared to be divine[730]. What is more, Plato implicitly determines at *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 that, as things stand, such excellent and divine people as the Nocturnal Counsellors are not expected to exist in Magnesia. Thus, the fact that Plato specifies at *Lg*. II 653a5-b1 that the person who is lucky enough to be φρονῶν (and not yet σοφός) is perfect *qua* ἄνθρωπος may be assumed to suggest that such a person is perfect to the extent that a human being may be τέλεος. On this interpretation, then, if we take for granted that being perfect entails the achievement of virtue[731], we should conclude that a Magnesian who is φρονῶν – and hence, worthy of being described as (humanly) perfect – is able to attain virtue according to his capacities. Thus, since the Plato of the *Laws* believes that (a) (full) virtue is (philosophical) knowledge and (b) no wise philosopher exists in Magnesia, it follows that the *Laws*' φρονῶν – that is, the most talented person in Magnesia, who is not able to achieve a philosophical knowledge of what virtue is – is unable to be as (fully) virtuous as the Nocturnal Counsellors. Yet, φρόνησις (i.e., the second-best cognitive state) should still be conceived of as the key to a second-best kind of virtue (i.e., a non-philosophical virtue). Therefore, given that (a) φρόνησις has been assumed to allow people to perform fairly (but not perfectly) good actions[732] and (b) philosophers are fully virtuous as they act virtuously and know the reasons why they are virtuous[733], *Lg*. II 653a5-b1 should ultimately be taken to suggest that φρόνησις represents a sufficient condition to perform fairly good actions, but not to be able to explain why the performed action is virtuous.

Now, this theory of the *Laws*' φρόνησις as a sufficient condition for the attainment of a non-philosophical virtue seems to be confirmed by *Lg*. II 653b2-6. After having clarified that φρόνησις – and all the goods that come along with it – makes a human being as perfect as possible, Plato has the Athenian Stranger specify that virtue consists of a consonance (συμφωνία) between reason (λόγος) and pleasure, pain, and similar feelings[734]:

> ΑΘ. ἡδονὴ δὴ καὶ φιλία καὶ λύπη καὶ μῖσος ἂν ὀρθῶς ἐν ψυχαῖς ἐγγίγνωνται μήπω δυναμένων λόγῳ λαμβάνειν, λαβόντων δὲ τὸν λόγον, συμφωνήσωσι τῷ λόγῳ ὀρθῶς εἰθίσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν

[729] Cf. *Lg*. XII 966b6-7.
[730] See See *Lg*. XII 951b5 and *infra* pp. 97-100.
[731] See *infra* pp. 13 and ff., where I argue that a state of human perfection can (assumedly) be achieved only through the attainment of the highest epistemological and ethical condition.
[732] Cf. *Lg*. II 654b11-d4.
[733] See *infra* pp. 103-107.
[734] See CARONE 2002, pp. 33 ff., who analyses the extent to which virtue may be thought of as a consonance between reason and pleasure, pain, and other feelings.

προσηκόντων ἐθῶν, αὕτη ’σθ’ ἡ συμφωνία σύμπασα μὲν ἀρετή, τὸ δὲ περὶ τὰς ἡδονὰς καὶ λύπας τεθραμμένον αὐτῆς ὀρθῶς ὥστε μισεῖν μὲν ἃ χρὴ μισεῖν εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς μέχρι τέλους, στέργειν δὲ ἃ χρὴ στέργειν, τοῦτ’ αὐτὸ ἀποτεμὼν τῷ λόγῳ καὶ παιδείαν προσαγορεύων, κατά γε τὴν ἐμὴν ὀρθῶς ἂν προσαγορεύοις.

ATHENIAN: If pleasure, friendship, pain, and hatred arise in the proper way in the souls of those who cannot as yet grasp the reason for them, and if, when they do grasp the reason, their feelings are consonant with that reason because they have been correctly trained by the appropriate habits, then this consonance in its entirety is called virtue, while the part of it which has had a proper upbringing where pleasure and pain are concerned, so that, from the very beginning to the very end, they hate what they should hate and love what they should love – well, separate off this part and give it the name ‘education’, and in my opinion at least you will be giving it the right name.

Lg. II 653b2-c4

Lg. II 653b2-c4 basically establishes that pleasure, friendship, pain, and hatred can be correctly trained by the appropriate habits provided that they are consonant with reason (λόγος). When this whole consonance between feelings and λόγος is reached, virtue (ἀρετή) is attained. Now, on the assumption that Plato’s *Laws* implies a theoretical background which is imported from other dialogues[735], we may further assume that reason (λόγος) at *Lg*. II 653b2-c4 indicates a specific part of the human soul, namely, the rational one. Hence, taking for granted that the *Republic*’s ethical account of the soul is also replicated in the *Laws*[736], it follows that the rational part can both achieve its proper virtue and be affected by its peculiar vice. If so, then, the soul’s rational part of the soul is virtuous when wisdom (σοφία) is attained, while it is vicious if it is affected by ignorance (ἄγνοια)[737]. However, as this investigation has clarified, no Magnesian is expected to attain σοφία. Indeed, φρόνησις (i.e., a second-best epistemological condition) is the best cognitive state that Magnesians can attain[738]. Thus, if we grant all the above, a conclusion emerges: the *Laws*’ φρόνησις should be assumed as the proper virtue of the rational part (λόγος) of the soul (for σοφία constitutes an

[735] See *infra* p. 121, esp. fn. 709.
[736] Interestingly, both *Lg*. III 689a5-b7 and IX 863e5-864a8 present ignorance (ἄγνοια) as one of the possible causes of immoderate actions. Indeed, while it is actually the case that spirit (θυμός) and pleasure (ἡδονή) are also presented at *Lg*. IX 863b-d as causes of moral faults, Plato specifies at *Lg*. V 731d6-732b4 that the excessive love of self – which, being the cause of all human faults, is the greatest of all evil – lies at the root of ignorance. Accordingly, Plato seems to re-state in the *Laws* that ignorance is to be conceived of as the greatest of all evil which causes all the kinds of moral faults (for a similar argument, see e.g., *Grg*. 458a2-b2 and *Ti*. 88a). On the basis of this textual evidence (especially, of *Lg*. III 689a5-b7 and IX 863e5-864a8), GERSON 2002, p. 153, has argued, *contra* BOBONICH 1994 and 2002, pp. 261-263, that an opposition within the soul is recognized in the *Laws* exactly in the manner that occasions the soul’s partition in the *Republic*. For a similar interpretation of the *Laws*’ tripartite soul, see IRWIN 2010, pp. 99-100, PFEFFERKORN 2020, and WILBURN 2013. For a different view, see (1) SASSI 2008 and BOBONICH 2002, pp. 263–4, who argue that Plato’s *Laws* introduces a bipartite account of the soul, (2) LAURENT 2006, who argues that the Plato of the *Laws* does not speak in terms of parts of the soul, and (3) BAIMA 2018 who stays neutral on this issue. See also PANGLE 2009, p. 459, who argues that the *Republic* and the *Laws* share the same account of justice. For justice would be presented both in the *Republic* and in the *Laws* as a state of the soul’s harmony which can be reached only by achieving a philosophical knowledge of the human good (see *R*. IV 435b-444e and *Lg*. IX 863e-864a). For a different view, cf. JOUËT-PASTRÉ 2006, who argues that there is no such an account of virtue as harmony between the soul’s parts in the *Laws* (namely, the same as the *Republic*’s). For an overview of the *Laws*’ “psychology”, see BARTELS 2017, p. 87 fn. 48, KAHN 2004, and MEYER 2015, pp. 172-173.
[737] See *infra* p. 126 fn. 736.
[738] Cf. *infra* pp. 110-122.

unattainable goal for any Magnesian)[739]. On this interpretation, then, *Lg*. II 653b2-c4 should be taken to ultimately suggest that the rational part (λόγος) of a human soul may (a) train pleasures, pains, and feelings of the like and (b) make them properly habituated (so as to hate what should be hated and love what should be loved) provided that the reason's proper virtue (i.e., φρόνησις) is first attained. Therefore, *Lg*. II 653b2-c4 is to be conceived of as conveying the idea that the attainment of virtue (which consists of having all the affections properly habituated) depends on the achievement of φρόνησις – that is, a second-best epistemological condition which, within the context of the second-best city of Magnesia, represents the proper virtue of the rational part (λόγος) of the soul.

Ultimately, then, *Lg*. II 653b2-c4 shows that φρόνησις is a crucial condition for attaining virtue by turning pleasures, pains, and similar affections into good habits[740]. Now, the fact that φρόνησις allows people to participate in virtue by habit suggests that the φρονοῦντες's virtue is indeed non-philosophical. For a virtue attained by means of habituation and without philosophy[741] is defined elsewhere in Plato's *corpus* as a demotic, or popular, virtue which is different from the full virtue that only philosophers attain. For a moral agent who does not have philosophical knowledge (especially, of what virtue is) can *act* virtuously (that is, for example, she can enjoy moderate pleasures[742] or be brave on some occasions) just as philosophers do[743]. However, as she is not fully aware of the ultimate reason why she acts virtuously (for she does not know what virtue really is), such a moral agent cannot *be* as (fully) virtuous as a philosopher can be[744].

Now, I have shown that the *Laws*' φρόνησις individuates an educated dianoetic thought whose completion is represented by a firm true opinion about sensible figures which are viewed as images of the intelligible Forms. Next, I have suggested that Plato's *Laws* presents the most talented people

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[739] Yet, it does not necessarily follow that the Plato of the *Laws* rejects the *Republic*'s ethical account of the soul. Indeed, Plato is just re-adjusting it in the *Laws* in light of the dialogue's dramatic context (which indeed describes a framework where whatever comes into existence can at best be a second-best). Thus, we may reasonably assume that, within contexts that are not philosophically pregnant, the *Laws*' virtue of the rational part of the soul is not wisdom (as it is in the case of wise, and fully virtuous, people), but rather a mere approximation to wisdom (i.e., the *Laws*' φρόνησις).

[740] See *Lg*. II 653b2-c4.

[741] Cf. *R*. VII 518d11: 'ἔθει ἄνευ φιλοσοφίας ἀρετῆς μετειληφότα'. Accordingly, the Plato of the *Laws* relies on philosophical theories that he had more widely argued for in his earlier works. Indeed, Plato had established in both the *Republic* and the *Phaedo* that there are two different ways to attain virtue (i.e., philosophically and demotically). See also e.g., *R*. VI 500d, X 619c, and *Phd*. 82a10-b3, where Plato defines demotic virtue as the virtue which stems out of habit (ἔθος) and practice (μελέτη), by needing no wisdom (σοφία) or intellect (νοῦς).

[742] See MOURACADE 2005, who argues (just like ANNAS 1999, CARONE 2002, and STALLEY 1983 do) that (a) Plato allows the moral agent who *is* virtuous to enjoy pleasures and (b) the *Laws* seems to allow for psychological hedonism (e.g., cf. *Lg*. II 663a8-b2, V 732e4-733a1). See also CARONE 2003, who maintains that Plato's *Laws* presents the most virtuous life as that which is the most pleasurable.

[743] See *Men*. 96e7-97c5 and 97c1-2, where Plato has Socrates establish that a moral agent can perform a good action even if she does not possess philosophical knowledge. Indeed, a true opinion may be 'in no way a worse guide to correct action than knowledge'.

[744] Since virtue is knowledge, a moral agent who acts virtuously without knowing what virtue is attains a virtue which is not full. Indeed, (a) she does not have (philosophical) knowledge (which is the necessary condition for attaining a full virtue – that is, the combination of all the parts of virtue), and (b) she is not authentically (that is, knowingly) virtuous (for she is not fully aware of the reason why she acts virtuously).

in Magnesia (i.e., the φρονοῦντες) as perfect people[745] who act virtuously and are able to get pleasures somehow right[746]. Then, I have argued that φρόνησις is a crucial condition for participating in virtue by habit[747]. Therefore, assuming that the Plato of the *Laws* is still faithful to the ethical theory according to which a demotic (i.e., a non-philosophical) virtue can be attained by means of habituation, we are in a position to draw a precise conclusion. The *Laws*' φρόνησις – which is (more or less explicitly) declared to allow people to act virtuously by means of habituation – individuates a morally profitable cognitive condition. Indeed, the achievement of φρόνησις (i.e., a *firm* true opinion which completes an educated dianoetic thought) implies attaining a (presumably, stable) demotic virtue[748]. For φρόνησις enables even non-philosophers to (a) permanently recognize the instantiations in the physical world of what is good (i.e., of the intelligible Form of Virtue) and then to (b) have a firm true opinion about those sensible figures which are to be viewed as images of the Form of Virtue. On the basis of this (stable) epistemological achievement, then, the φρονοῦντες, *qua* moral agents, (permanently) train their feelings and turn them into good habits. In this way, they get the habit to (permanently) act in accordance with what they are educated to (truly and firmly) believe. As a result, such people become able to *act* virtuously and to achieve an (assumedly, stable) demotic virtue[749]. Yet, the φρονοῦντες remain unable to *be* (fully) virtuous. Indeed, they (a) do not know what virtue is (and philosophical knowledge is needed for attaining the whole virtue[750]) and (b) are ignorant of the ultimate reason why the good actions that they have got used to perform are good[751].

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[745] See *Lg*. II 653a5-b1.

[746] Cf. *Lg*. II 653a5-b1, II 654b11-d4, and *infra* pp. 123-127.

[747] Cf. *Lg*. II 653b2-c4.

[748] As it is grounded on a mere true assessment of the unstable sensible reality (see e.g., *Men*. 96e7-97c5 and 97c1-2, where Plato argues that a demotic virtue may be achieved by means of a true opinion – that is, a mere true assessment of the ontologically unstable sensible reality), demotic virtue is *per se* unstable.

[749] See TARRANT 2004, p. 154, who argues that, within the context of Plato's *Laws*, 'virtues other than wisdom clearly do include much that is acquired by practice, the kind of quasi-virtue that often features in so-called early and middle dialogues' (e.g., *Men*. 88b, *Euthd*. 281c; *Phd*. 68a-69e, 82a-b). Actually, as both *Lg*. II 653b2-c4 and my analysis of this passage (see *infra* pp. 125-128) demonstrate, habituation, along with practice, plays a crucial role in the acquiring of the φρονοῦντες's demotic virtue. Indeed, the φρονοῦντες, by (a) becoming habituated to act in accordance with what they are educated to recognize as morally appropriate and (b) habitually practicing their actions in accordance with what they are educated to truly and firmly believe, are able to achieve a stable (see *infra* p. 128 fn. 748) demotic virtue.

[750] See *infra* pp. 112-118.

[751] Accordingly, the *Laws*' φρόνησις concerns actions, but not their motivations (for it does not allow anyone to achieve an adequate understanding of the Form of Virtue). Hence, the *Laws*' φρόνησις can be thought of as a sort of *practical wisdom* which allows one to *act* virtuously, but not to *be* (fully) virtuous. Curiously, a very privileged source to better understand this Platonic theory of φρόνησις as practical wisdom is offered by Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. To start with, Aristotle argues that φρόνησις is concerned with what is only for the most part true (see Arist. *EN* I 1, 1094b19-22). Next, having specified that the criterion of all the moral actions is 'what is intermediate', Aristotle defines ethical (ἠθική) virtue as 'a habitual state concerned with choice, lying in a mean relative to us, this being determined by reason and in the way in which the man of practical wisdom (φρόνησις) would determine it' (Arist. *EN* II 6, 1106b36-1107a3). Thus, Aristotle's φρόνησις represents the crucial key for a calculation of what is, in ethical terms, the 'right mean'. Likewise, the Plato of the *Laws* seems to be concerned with finding a way to allow non-philosophers to live a sufficiently virtuous life. Interestingly, this problem seems to constitute a matter of lively debate within Plato's Academy. Indeed, Xenocrates too is concerned with allowing ordinary people to live a sufficiently worthy life. For he distinguishes φρόνησις, which coincides with human wisdom, from purely theoretical wisdom (σοφία) (fr. 177 I.P.). However, given that Xenocrates points out that the Good is attainable by the wise man *alone* (fr. 152 I.P.), we may assume that the Xenocratean φρόνησις,

4.3.3. *Fear, law, true λόγος and demotic virtue*

The preceding section has shown that the *Laws*' φρόνησις is indeed a morally profitable cognitive condition. For φρόνησις allows one to achieve a demotic – i.e., neither philosophical nor full – virtue. As a result, I have been suggesting that, although the Plato of the *Laws* is committed to the intellectualist theory of virtue (according to which [full] virtue is [philosophical] knowledge), it is still possible to live to some extent virtuously (i.e., to act virtuously by habit on a permanent basis) in the second-best city (namely, in a civic context where no philosopher is expected to exist). Interestingly, however, the *Laws*' theory of moral epistemology shows that φρόνησις is not the only means through which an inauthentic virtue may be attained. Indeed, *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 determines that humans (ἄνθρωποι) – and thus, not divine philosophers[752] – may eventually perform fairly good actions through fear, law, and true λόγος[753] (i.e., not by means of the philosophical knowledge that only the fully virtuous philosophers possess)[754].

Now, to better understand (a) the extent to which the combination of fear, law, and true λόγος may grant the moral agent with a non-philosophical virtue and (b) whether the non-philosophical virtue attained through fear, law, and true λόγος is the same as the stable demotic virtue that the φρονοῦντες achieve, I will undertake a line-by-line reading of *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1.

> ΑΘ. Ὁρῶ πάντα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐκ τριττῆς χρείας καὶ ἐπιθυμίας ἠρτημένα, δι' ὧν ἀρετή τε αὐτοῖς ἀγομένοις ὀρθῶς καὶ τοὐναντίον ἀποβαίνει κακῶς ἀχθεῖσιν. ταῦτα δ' ἐστὶν ἐδωδὴ μὲν καὶ πόσις εὐθὺς γενομένοις, ἣν πέρι ἅπασαν πᾶν ζῷον ἔμφυτον ἔρωτα ἔχον, μεστὸν οἴστρου τέ ἐστιν καὶ ἀνηκουστίας τοῦ λέγοντος ἄλλο τι δεῖν πράττειν πλὴν τὰς ἡδονὰς καὶ ἐπιθυμίας τὰς περὶ ἅπαντα ταῦτα ἀποπληροῦντα, λύπης τῆς ἀπάσης ἀεὶ δεῖν σφᾶς ἀπαλλάττειν· Τρίτη δὲ ἡμῖν καὶ μεγίστη χρεία καὶ ἔρως ὀξύτατος ὕστατος μὲν ὁρμᾶται, διαπυρωτάτους δὲ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους μανίαις ἀπεργάζεται πάντως, ὁ περὶ τὴν τοῦ γένους σπορὰν ὕβρει πλείστῃ καόμενος. ἃ δὴ δεῖ τρία

being equated to human (rather than divine) wisdom, represents the minimal epistemological requirement that the moral agent has to meet so as to act virtuously (but not to be as perfectly virtuous as the moral agent who achieves a divine theoretical knowledge is). On the difference between theoretical (i.e., divine) and practical (that is, human) knowledge in Xenocrates, see HORKY 2018, esp. p. 43.

[752] See *infra* pp. 124-127.

[753] Cf. MOSS 2014, p. 196, who maintains that, when Plato says 'ἀληθὴς λόγος', by saying 'λόγος' he does not mean 'reason', but rather 'account', 'argument', or 'explanation'. Accordingly, 'when in his last dialogue Plato develops the notion of a right *logos* in connection with virtue, and does so in ways that closely anticipate Aristotle, he has this same general sense in mind: the virtue-conferring right *logos* is an account. More specifically, and in keeping with what we saw in the *Meno*, it is an account that both prescribes certain things as good and shows why they are good'. Similarly, both LORD 1914, p. 2, and GOMEZ-LOBO 1995, p. 20, agree that, when Plato says 'ἀληθὴς λόγος', 'λόγος' does not mean 'reason', but rather an 'account that shows why something is-to-be-done'. See *Ti*. 51d3-52a7, where Plato says that intellect (νοῦς) always involves a true account, while true belief lacks any account ('καὶ τὸ μὲν ἀεὶ μετ' ἀληθοῦς λόγου, τὸ δὲ ἄλογον'). However, since what Plato says at *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 applies to men (ἄνθρωποι) – and thus, not to divine philosophers – and (b) no philosopher is (initially, at least) expected to live in Magnesia, it follows that the kind of virtue that Plato introduces at *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 is not philosophical (namely, the kind of virtue which is attained by means of the ἀληθὴς λόγος that always comes along with νοῦς). Also, the fact that Plato specifies at *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 that this virtue is attained by habit (and by means of fear and law too) suggests that the virtue in question is not accompanied by a true account (for, as already shown, a true account would be sufficient to achieve a full virtue).

[754] Meaningfully, (philosophical) knowledge is not explicitly mentioned among the three great goods through which virtue is achieved (for Plato's account of virtue, see *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1). Thus, given that (a) Plato's *Laws* is committed to the intellectualist theory – according to which (full) virtue is (philosophical) knowledge – and (b) philosophical knowledge is not mentioned among the three great goods, it follows that the kind of virtue that Plato introduces at *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 is inauthentic.

> νοσήματα, τρέποντα εἰς τὸ βέλτιστον παρὰ τὸ λεγόμενον ἥδιστον, τρισὶ μὲν τοῖς μεγίστοις πειρᾶσθαι κατέχειν, φόβῳ καὶ νόμῳ καὶ τῷ ἀληθεῖ λόγῳ, προσχρωμένους μέντοι Μούσαις τε καὶ ἀγωνίοισι θεοῖς, σβεννύντων τὴν αὔξην τε καὶ ἐπιρροήν.
>
> ATHENIAN: I observe that all human actions spring from three needs or wants (resulting in virtue for those who are influenced in the right way, or its opposite for those who go astray). The three are: from the very moment of birth, (1) food and (2) drink – for which, in all their forms, all living creatures have an instinctive desire which drives them to distraction, and makes them deaf to the suggestion that they should do anything other than satisfy the demands of pleasure and desire for all these things, and so free themselves always from any kind of discomfort. Our third and greatest need – our keenest (3) lust – is the last to make its appearance, but sets people ablaze with frenzy, in a raging inferno of imperious desire to sow a new crop of humans. These three unhealthy impulses must be directed towards what is best, and not towards what is generally described as most pleasant, using the three great goods – fear, law, and true λόγος – to try and keep them in check, and calling also on the Muses and the gods of public competitions to damp down their growth and check their flow.
>
> *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1

Having clarified that 'what is balanced and in proportion is far better, in terms of virtue, than what is extreme'[755], Plato has the Athenian Stranger argue at *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 that humans who do not have a philosophical ἐπιστήμη may still perform virtuous actions provided that they take proper control of their needs and desires. There are three chief needs or wants (χρείας καὶ ἐπιθυμίας) – the desires for (1) food and (2) drink, and the need for (3) procreating – that, if not kept in check (κατέχειν), may turn into true diseases (νοσήματα). Yet, these three (potentially) unhealthy impulses may be kept in control by means of fear, law, and true λόγος. Indeed, these three great goods may still allow a moral agent to direct the three (potentially) unhealthy impulses towards virtue (ἀρετή) and what is best (τὸ βέλτιστον).

Hence, *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 shows that a moral agent may perform virtuous actions provided that she (a) follows the city's laws, (b) experiences fear, and (c) has a true λόγος. However, how exactly (and to what extent) may the combination of fear, law, and true λόγος allow one to act virtuously? To address this issue, I will first determine what kind of cognitive state 'true λόγος' at *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 is related to. Interestingly, λόγος[756] is identified with thought (διάνοια)[757] in both the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*. What is more, *Sph*. 263d6-8 clarifies that thought (διάνοια) – as well as opinion (δόξα) and appearance (φαντασία) – is generated in the soul as false as well as true[758]. Furthermore, opinion (δόξα) is said at *Sph*. 264a1-3 to be the completion (ἀποτελεύτησις) of thought (διάνοια). Accordingly, taking for granted that the *Theaetetus*' and *Sophist*'s epistemological theory is re-stated in the *Laws*, 'ἀληθὴς λόγος' at *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 should be taken to indicate a correct thought (διάνοια) which is completed by a true opinion. Thus, on the assumption that 'ἀληθὴς λόγος'

[755] *Lg*. VI 773a6-7: 'τὸ γὰρ ὁμαλὸν καὶ σύμμετρον ἀκράτου μυρίον διαφέρει πρὸς ἀρετήν'.
[756] See *Tht*. 189e4-190a6 and *Sph*. 263d6-264b3, where διάνοια is defined as a speech (λόγος) that the soul entertains with itself. See also *infra* p. 122 fn. 719.
[757] In turn, thought (διάνοια) is said to be analogous to the activity of thinking (διανοεῖσθαι).
[758] See *infra* pp. 20-22.

at *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 indicates a true διάνοια whose completion consists of a true opinion, 'true λόγος' individuates a cognitive condition which is different from the one signified by the *Laws*' φρόνησις. Indeed, while the *Laws*' φρόνησις consists of an educated dianoetic thought completed by a firm true opinion, 'λόγος' at *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 is emphatically said to be true, but not firm[759]. Therefore, 'ἀληθὴς λόγος' at *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 should be conceived of as a correct (but not educated) thought[760] whose outcome consists of a true (but not firm) opinion. As a consequence, what *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 ultimately shows is that the combination of true (but not firm) opinion, fear, and law allows one to achieve an inauthentic virtue (i.e., a non-philosophical virtue through which a moral agent performs virtuous actions by keeping potentially unhealthy impulses controlled).

Now, given that 'ἀληθὴς λόγος' indicates a different cognitive state than the *Laws*' φρόνησις, we may already conclude that the kind of inauthentic virtue which Plato is concerned with at *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 is not the same as the stable demotic virtue which the φρονοῦντες achieve. However, to better understand if this is really the case or not, I will more deeply investigate the function that the laws play within the context of the second-best city of Magnesia. To start with, Plato's *Laws* makes clear that, to preserve the city's harmony, a lawgiver is called to issue laws. In turn, these laws need to be followed by as many people as possible. Indeed, to the extent that as many Magnesians as possible follow the lawgiver's laws, the city's harmony is preserved[761]. Not surprisingly, then, Plato defines at *Lg*. VII 822e4-823a6 the best citizen possible as the person who strictly follows the instructions that the lawgiver gives.

> ΑΘ. γεγραμμένων δὴ ταύτῃ τῶν νόμων τε καὶ ὅλης τῆς πολιτείας, οὐ τέλεος ὁ τοῦ διαφέροντος πολίτου πρὸς ἀρετὴν γίγνεται ἔπαινος, ὅταν αὐτόν τις φῇ τὸν ὑπηρετήσαντα τοῖς νόμοις ἄριστα καὶ πειθόμενον μάλιστα, τοῦτον εἶναι τὸν ἀγαθόν· τελεώτερον δὲ ὧδε εἰρημένον, ὡς ἄρα ὃς ἂν τοῖς τοῦ νομοθέτου νομοθετοῦντός τε καὶ ἐπαινοῦντος καὶ ψέγοντος πειθόμενος γράμμασιν διεξέλθῃ τὸν βίον ἄκρατον. οὗτος ὅ τε λόγος ὀρθότατος εἰς ἔπαινον πολίτου, τόν τε νομοθέτην ὄντως δεῖ μὴ μόνον γράφειν τοὺς νόμους, πρὸς δὲ τοῖς νόμοις, ὅσα καλὰ αὐτῷ δοκεῖ καὶ μὴ καλὰ εἶναι, νόμοις ἐμπεπλεγμένα γράφειν, τὸν δὲ ἄκρον πολίτην μηδὲν ἧττον ταῦτα ἐμπεδοῦν ἢ τὰ ταῖς ζημίαις ὑπὸ νόμων κατειλημμένα.
>
> ATHENIAN: Once our laws, and the social and political system as a whole, have been written down in the way we are suggesting, our approval of the citizen who is outstanding in terms of virtue will not confine itself to saying that whoever is the best servant of the laws, and the most obedient to them – that this is the one who is good. A fuller description would be: 'whoever passes his whole life, consistently, in obedience to the writings of the lawgiver – both his laws and his (positive or negative) recommendations'. This is the most accurate form of words when it comes to praising a citizen, and it puts a corresponding onus on the lawgiver to do more than merely

[759] Also, 'λόγος' should not be taken to indicate the rational part of the human soul. Indeed, while a given part of the soul may be either virtuous or vicious, it makes no sense to say that a part of the soul is true (or false).

[760] Assumedly, the kind of λόγος ↔ διάνοια that Plato refers to at *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 is to be conceived of as being prepared by no education. This is the reason why 'λόγος' indicates at *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 a merely true opinion: for there is no education to make this epistemological achievement firm.

[761] Therefore, also the guardians of the laws are required to follow the strict rule of laws. Yet, they do not need to be threatened by the penalties envisaged by the laws for criminals. Indeed, although they are not able to give an account of the reasons why they act virtuously, they are still able to achieve a firm understanding of what ought to be done on certain occasions.

> write the laws; in addition to the laws he has to write down his views – say what he thinks to be good, and what not good – blended in with the laws. The perfect citizen should treat these views as immovable, no less than the ones which have the backing of the law and its penalties.
>
> *Lg*. VII 822e4-823a6

Lg. VII 822e4-823a6 stipulates, on the one hand, that the citizen who aims to be outstanding (διαφέροντος) in virtue (πρὸς ἀρετὴν) must not only obey the laws, but also live his whole life by following what the lawgiver 'praises and censures' (ἐπαινοῦντος καὶ ψέγοντος) in his writings. On the other hand, Plato has the Athenian Stranger point out that the lawgiver must not only write the laws down but also interweave them with writings which reveal 'what he thinks to be good and what not good'. Not surprisingly, indeed, the true aim of all correct legislation is to have people approximate as much as possible to a philosophical (i.e., full) virtue[762]. To this end, the lawgiver has to either persuade people to do (or not to do) some actions[763], or punish those on whom persuasion has no effect[764]. To this extent, then, the lawgiver has to issue laws[765] (which envisage penalties for those who are not respectful of them) and intertwine them with preambles (προοίμια). For, by means of preambles, the lawgiver – just as a doctor does when he converses with his patients about what is good for their health[766] – aims to convince the citizens that what his laws prescribe will surely have a good impact on their ethical life.

Ultimately, then, *Lg*. VII 822e4-823a6 suggests that the citizen who is outstanding in virtue is the person who (a) is not only aware of the punishments that she would undergo (in accordance with laws) if she was criminal[767], but also (b) persuaded of the laws' intrinsic rightness[768]. Now, some may argue that this theory of law which Plato presents at *Lg*. VII 822e4-823a6 introduces punishment as a 'kind of fallback or safety device which is needed when persuasion fails'[769]. Interestingly, however,

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[762] Cf. *Lg*. IV 718c8-10 and I 630a1-631b1.

[763] BOBONICH 1991, pp. 369 ff., argues that, when 'Plato in the *Laws* insists that the laws try to persuade the citizens, what he has in mind is rational persuasion: the citizens are to be given good epistemic reasons for the true beliefs that they are to adopt and for the course of action they are to follow'. Similarly, Julia Annas maintains that the *Laws*' citizens 'obey the demands of divine reason not only by habitually conforming to the laws but by coming to understand them' (ANNAS 2010, p. 87).

[764] See *Lg*. IV 718b1-c6. Cf. also ZUCKERT 2013, esp. pp. 170 ff, who analyses the legislator-doctor analogy (see *Lg*. IX 875c6-e1).

[765] See SCHOFIELD 2010, p. 23, who points out that the Athenian Stranger states at *Lg*. IX 853b that it is shameful to produce laws on crime in a city 'which we are saying will be well managed'. However, *Lg*. IX 853c–d clarifies the reason why laws are necessary: laws do not concern heroes and sons of gods. Indeed, laws – and hence, the penalties which come along with laws – are thought for people who, being not (philosophically) divine, may eventually be dragged towards vice (see *Sph*. 254a-b and *Sph*. 216b7-c1).

[766] See LEVIN 2012, who observes that, in the Book IX of the *Laws*, Plato shows that, in his dealings with the patient, the free doctor would be 'using rational, almost philosophical, arguments to get a firm grip on the disease from its origins, and then go further back into the whole nature of bodies in general' (*Lg*. IX 857d2-4). In turn, the doctor's arguments would be fully understood by the patient. Indeed, patient and doctor would mutually exchange λόγοι (i.e., rational accounts: *Lg*. IV 720c–d and IX 857d).

[767] See BARTELS 2017, pp. 134-140.

[768] Thanks to the laws' persuasive preambles.

[769] STALLEY 1995, p. 478. In addition to this, Stalley argues that the view that punishment has a deterrent effect is supported by the language that the Athenian uses at *Lg*. IV 721d in his specimen law on marriage. See BOBONICH 1991, p. 386, who claims that punishment is needed *solely* when persuasion fails. On the other hand, Trevor SAUNDERS 1991

Plato's *Laws* seems to suggest that punishment is by itself a means for persuasion[770]. Indeed, punishment is said at *Lg*. XI 934a7-b3 to benefit both the punished and those who see him being punished. For both these people will 'either be filled with hatred for the unjust behaviour, or at any rate more or less recover from this affliction'[771]. Assumedly, then, the painful experience of punishment undergone by criminals inspires fear in both the criminal himself and those acquainted with him. Indeed, while the punished is threatened by the idea of being punished again in the future, those acquainted with him fear to suffer the same painful experience of punishment. As a result, both the punished and those acquainted with him end up being persuaded to refrain from injustice in the future.

Now, this analysis of the *Laws*' theory of punishment[772] allows us to achieve a better understanding of the theory of moral epistemology that Plato argues for at *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 (namely, where the combination of fear, law, and true opinion[773] is said to grant the moral agent with an inauthentic virtue). Indeed, I have shown that both the person who undergoes punishment[774] and those acquainted with him become empirically aware[775] of which moral action is commendable and which is not[776] on certain occasions. For, by means of their (direct or indirect) painful experience of punishment, both of these people learn what should be done on certain occasions, so as not to suffer the pain of punishment in the future. Hence, the fear of being punished in accordance with the laws grants these people with a true opinion about what ought to be done on certain occasions. It is on the basis of this true opinion, then, that these people acquire the habit of doing what is appropriate to do, so to avoid the risk of being painfully punished in the future. Ultimately, then, *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1

argues that the *Laws* offers an entirely medical view of penology. Hence, punishment should be viewed as a means for curing the wrongdoer from afflictions. See also MACKENZIE 1981, who maintains that the analogy with medicine has a metaphorical value. Thus, Mackenzie agrees with Saunders about the fact that Plato's penology primarily aims at reforming (i.e., re-educating) the wrongdoer.

[770] See BARROS DA CUNHA 2018, who individuates two aspects of crimes: injury (βλάβη) and injustice (ἀδικία). She suggests that the former requires only restitution, whereas injustice calls for punishment – to be conceived of as a means for educating the human soul which, being affected by disordered emotions or ignorance, falls into injustice. On this interpretation, then, Plato would require punishment only for cases of injustice.

[771] *Lg*. XI 934b1-3.

[772] See TRELAWNY-CASSITY 2010, p. 231: 'Punishment originally was justified in the *Laws* by its ability to reform wrongdoers or to protect the community from those who are incurable; now punishment has developed an additional function, performing general and not just specific education. This is the first, but by no means greatest, change in the penology of the *Laws*'.

[773] As already suggested, true opinion appears at *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 under the guise of ἀληθὴς λόγος. See *infra* pp. 130-133.

[774] See e.g., *Lg*. I 646e-647d. Cf. also BUCCIONI 2007, who clarifies that punishment is meant by the Plato of the *Laws* to coerce obedience to the virtuous laws by serving as a threat to potential offenders.

[775] For both these people (who achieve a true opinion by means of the fear provoked by the punishment envisaged by the laws) end up being able to acknowledge, on the basis of their everyday experience, what should be done on certain occasions so as not to suffer the pains of punishment in the future.

[776] Cf. STALLEY 1995, pp. 478-450.

should be taken to convey the idea that a true opinion (which is not firm[777], but rather inspired by the fear of being punished in accordance with the laws) may allow one to participate in virtue by habit. Accordingly, *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 shows that the combination of fear, law, and true (but not firm) opinion may grant the moral agent with the sort of inauthentic[778] virtue which is called 'demotic', or 'popular', in the *Phaedo*[779] and in the *Republic*[780] (and, implicitly, in the *Meno*[781])[782]. Thus, as in the case of the φρονοῦντες, these people – who take control of their (potentially) unhealthy desires by means of a true opinion (inspired by the fear for the laws' penalties) – achieve a sort of virtue through habituation. Nevertheless, these people's demotic virtue is not as stable as the φρονοῦντες's popular virtue. Indeed, such people (unlike the φρονοῦντες) are not able to permanently act in accordance with what they are educated to recognize (i.e., the instantiations of the Form of Virtue in the visible world). For they can only occasionally acknowledge (on the basis of their empirical experience) what is lawful and what is not.

4.4. *Conclusions*

By plunging into the 'strange chaos'[783] of Plato's *Laws*, this chapter has shed light on the complex theory of moral epistemology that Plato argues for in his last work. Indeed, I first ascertained that the members of the so-called Nocturnal Council are prepared by an intensive mathematical education to achieve a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms. Also, having ascertained that Plato's *Laws* is committed to the intellectualist theory of virtue (according to which [full] virtue is [philosophical] knowledge), I argued that the Nocturnal Counsellors' philosophical ἐπιστήμη grants them with a full virtue. Nevertheless, I suggested that *Lg*. IX 875c3-d6 indicates that no philosopher exists in a second-best city like Magnesia. Indeed, I also noted that Plato (more or less explicitly) claims at *Lg*. XII 969b2-7 that such excellent people as the Nocturnal Counsellors (who closely resemble the *Republic*'s philosopher-rulers) are not expected to exist in Magnesia at the moment of its foundation.

[777] For they are not educated to (permanently) acknowledge the instantiations in the physical world of the intelligible Form of Virtue. They just learn to refrain from injustice by means of their (direct or indirect) painful experience of punishment.
[778] For it is not inspired by philosophical knowledge. See CAIRNS 1993, pp. 373-378, who argues that virtue is not conceived in the *Laws* in terms of (philosophical) knowledge. On the contrary, the *Laws*' virtue is motivated by education, habituation, and the fear of incurring disgrace.
[779] Cf. *Phd*. 82a10-b3.
[780] See *R*. VI 500d, X 619c.
[781] Cf. *Men*. 96e7-97c5. See also *infra* p. 127 fn. 743 and p. 128 fn. 748.
[782] See KRAUT 2010, who argues that demotic virtue is the kind of virtue that most citizens of Magnesia are at their best able to attain. For a similar interpretation, see also MOSS 2014 and PESCE 1978. For an overview of the Platonic demotic virtue, see KAMTEKAR 1998.
[783] NIGHTINGALE 1993, p. 279, who quotes WILAMOWITZ 1920, p. 655.

Next, I showed that, despite the fact that (a) the Plato of the *Laws* is intellectualist and (b) no philosopher is expected to exist in Magnesia, it is still possible to live to some extent virtuously in such a second-best city. Indeed, I explained that φρόνησις – i.e., the cognitive state which is proper to the most talented guardians of Magnesia's laws – constitutes a morally profitable cognitive condition. For, after suggesting that the *Laws*' φρόνησις (which is not synonymous with philosophical knowledge) indicates a dianoetic cognitive process whose outcome is represented by a firm true opinion, I showed that the φρονοῦντες, *qua* moral agents, are habituated to act in accordance with what they are educated to truly and firmly believe. As a result, I maintained that the *Laws*' φρόνησις allows one to attain a stable demotic virtue.

Finally, I claimed that, within the context of the second-best city of Magnesia, φρόνησις is not the only means through which a demotic virtue may be attained. Indeed, after briefly analyzing the *Laws*' theory of punishment, I argued that *Lg*. VI 782d10-783b1 shows that a true opinion (which is not firm, but rather inspired by the fear of being punished in accordance with the laws) may occasionally allow one to participate in virtue through habituation (that is, by being habituated to act in accordance with what is [empirically] found to be appropriate).

Conclusions

Those scholars who have been concerned with giving a complete account of the ethical and epistemological aspects of Plato's late dialogues have argued that, by the time that Plato writes down the *Sophist*, the *Statesman*, the *Philebus*, and the *Laws*, he no longer ascribes to the (intellectualist) theory according to which achieving knowledge is a necessary and sufficient condition for being fully virtuous. On the contrary, through developing a comprehensive and novel study of Plato's late dialogues, this dissertation has shown that Plato's later moral epistemology is generally consistent with what Plato endorses in his earlier works. I explained that Plato's later moral epistemology provides that:

(a) those who achieve a philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms can be nothing other than fully virtuous (just as the earlier works' ethical intellectualism dictates);

(b) those who are not able to achieve philosophical knowledge may still attain an inauthentic virtue (namely, the demotic kind of virtue that Plato more widely describes in the earlier dialogues), and hence, act virtuously (though being still unable to be virtuous in the sense of **(a)**).

Indeed, by investigating the (understudied) relationship between ethics and epistemology in Plato's *Sophist*, I first showed in **CHAPTER 1 (*The Ethical Aspect of Plato's* Sophist)** that achieving a philosophical knowledge informed by wisdom is presented in the dialogue in question as a necessary and sufficient condition for *being* virtuous. For, after having analysed *Sph*. 226b1-231b8, I suggested that Plato's *Sophist* shows that (a) ethics and epistemology are strictly related and (b) the so-called Socratic theory of ethical intellectualism has not been abandoned. Additionally, by investigating the more general ethical and epistemological account which emerges from the whole of the *Sophist*, I also showed that people who are not fully wise, but have opinions – true opinions, at least –, are presented by the Plato of the *Sophist* as being able to *act* virtuously: for they may eventually attain an inauthentic (that is, demotic) virtue.

Next, **CHAPTER 2 (*Woof and Warp: the* Statesman*'s Weaver*)** revealed that, within the framework of the political theory that Plato develops in his *Statesman*, the πολιτικός (namely, the person who has political power) is presented as a wise individual who has philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms. Having clarified this, I then considered some textual evidence so as to clarify whether or not the statesman's philosophical knowledge is indeed presented in Plato's *Statesman*, as some scholars suggest, as an ethically neutral cognitive state. Thus, I concluded that the Plato of the *Statesman* is consistent with the theory of ethical intellectualism endorsed in earlier dialogues. For I showed that the *Statesman*'s textual evidence indicates that having philosophical knowledge implies

being fully virtuous. Additionally, however, I determined that philosophical knowledge is not the only cognitive state that Plato considers in the *Statesman* to be ethically profitable. Indeed, I explained that, by accommodating the notion of demotic virtue (more explicitly defined in earlier dialogues) to the dialogue's literary context, the Plato of the *Statesman* determines that the ordinary people's firm true opinion (ἀληθὴς δόξα μετὰ βεβαιώσεως) – which (a) merely allows for properly judging the sensible reality and (b) is therefore less worth than philosophical knowledge – allows them to *act* virtuously.

Then, **CHAPTER 3 (*Ethics and Epistemology in Plato's* Philebus)** highlighted that a particular passage of Plato's *Philebus* is especially revealing as to the theory of moral epistemology endorsed by Plato in this work. For, after analyzing the many senses that the word 'ἐπιστήμη' takes in the *Philebus*, I showed that *Phlb*. 66c4-d3 (namely, the passage where pure pleasures are said to be attendant to either ἐπιστήμη or αἴσθησις) indicates that pleasures are pure insofar as they are attendant to either philosophical knowledge or true opinion (through perception). Hence, I argued that pleasures which are informed by the moral agent's philosophical knowledge of the intelligible Forms are perfectly virtuous and pure. For I determined that the *Philebus* suggests that achieving a philosophical ἐπιστήμη of the intelligible Forms allows one to *be* fully virtuous (and thus, also to enjoy fully virtuous pleasures). Still, I also established that pleasures may still be somehow pure – and hence, virtue can be somehow attained by the moral agent – through a subjective, but nonetheless true, calculation based on perception. Indeed, I showed that the moral agent who achieves a true opinion about the sensible reality is able to *act* virtuously (though he is not able to give an account of why the actions he performs, and the pleasures he enjoys, are to some extent virtuous and pure).

Finally, **CHAPTER 4 (*The Theory of Moral Epistemology in Plato's* Laws)** showed that Plato's *Laws* is committed to a very complex theory of moral epistemology. To start, after having ascertained that Plato's *Laws* is committed to the intellectualist theory of virtue (according to which [full] virtue is [philosophical] knowledge), I argued that the members of the so-called Nocturnal Council *are* fully virtuous: for their philosophical ἐπιστήμη grants them with a full virtue. Next, having suggested that Plato's *Laws* introduces a new notion of φρόνησις (which does not indicate philosophical knowledge – as it is usually the case in Plato's earlier works –, but rather a dianoetic cognitive process whose outcome is represented by a firm true opinion), I showed that the *Laws*' φρονοῦντες, *qua* moral agents, are able to acquire the habit to (permanently) act in accordance with what they are educated to (truly and firmly) believe. As a result, I maintained that the *Laws*' φρόνησις, as a cognitive state, allows one to *act* virtuously on a permanent basis. Then, I argued that φρόνησις is not the only cognitive state through which people who are not able to (a) achieve a philosophical knowledge and (b) be fully virtuous may eventually act virtuously. For, after having briefly analyzed

the *Laws*' theory of punishment, I showed that a true opinion (which is not firm, but rather inspired by the fear of being punished in accordance with the laws) may allow one to participate in virtue by habit.

In sum, the overall conclusions of this thesis can be summarised as follows:

(a) Plato is, throughout his life, a genuine intellectualist who believes that (1) virtue is knowledge and (2) a moral agent has to achieve (philosophical) knowledge, if she is to *be* virtuous;

(b) Plato's later dialogues are highly concerned with the problem of finding a way to allow ordinary people (namely, those who are not able to achieve philosophical knowledge) to *act* virtuously. Indeed, while it is the case that Plato introduces the notion of demotic virtue in the earlier works, this thesis has shown that it is in the late dialogues that Plato more decisively addresses the problem of granting ordinary people with a non-philosophical virtue.

Essentially, then, out of this analysis of Plato's late works a unitarian picture of his philosophy (and, especially, of his theory of moral epistemology) emerges. Indeed, to give an account of the complexity of the human soul, the Plato of the late dialogues relies on the intellectualist and the demotic theories of virtue that he had introduced in his earlier works. Thus, if the account I have provided is justified, the results of this thesis compel us to acknowledge that Plato was philosophically consistent throughout his works. What is more, this thesis also helps us to better understand the intrinsic nature of the theory of ethical intellectualism which Plato endorses throughout his *corpus*. Indeed, I established that, while conceding that irrationality may eventually overcome reason, the Plato of the late dialogues still (soundly) believes that achieving knowledge is a necessary and sufficient condition for attaining a full virtue. Hence, the analysis I developed throughout this thesis demonstrates that the introduction of irrational sources of action does not necessarily invalidate an intellectualist theory of virtue. Finally, if the nature of the only theory of moral epistemology that Plato endorses throughout his life has been decisively clarified by this analysis, it follows that this thesis sheds crucial light on the theoretical basis which Plato's disciples, *qua* philosophers, either departed from or adhered to. Thus, while further studies are required to answer such questions as, e.g., 'how do later philosophers, and philosophical schools, handle Plato's heritage?', 'is Aristotle's philosophical system especially inspired by Plato's late works?', 'to what extent does the Stoics' intellectualism resonate Plato's later moral epistemology?', this thesis represents a necessary starting point for a better understanding of not only how Platonism originates, but also of how it develops on the basis of Plato's entire *corpus*.

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