Plato's *Statesman:* Useful Errors, a Fitting Image, and the Statesman's Art

Contemporary political science relies upon the assumption that political life includes much that is knowable with scientific certainty. But political science excludes many if not all the controversial and engaging problems. There are no scientific answers to questions like: What is the best way for human beings to live? If anyone ought to rule over others, who should? If no men or women, but only laws should rule, who ought to make them? Such things are recognized as unknown and unknowable. A lawgiver, of course, could be studied as the more or less tractable instrument of those who must submit to the laws. But the outmoded idea of the statesman, the sort of leader whose rarity provided one of the arguments for ratifying the U.S. Constitution, does not fit into the realm of political science. A statesman would wield political power with a beneficent purpose; he is no mere instrument of the ruled. He might or might not be a member of the city he governs. Plato's *Statesman* makes explicit two criteria for statesmanship; neither is consistent with modern academic standards. The true statesman must possess rare scientific understanding of the best way of life and he, unlike the political scientist, must be able to lead human beings in such a way that they become better if not good. There is no proof that a statesman worthy of the name has ever existed (cf. 301e). Neither is there an account in the dialogue of the goals of the city or of the common good.

While the statesman is described as a knower, the two participants in the dialogue do not seem to attain definitive knowledge about him. Rather, the dialogue is characterized by admitted errors and unjustified claims. It includes an assortment of bizarre and implausible statements and its order is obscure. The Stranger, who does most of the talking in this dialogue, claims that the

work of the statesman involves somehow blending, or weaving together the virtues of courage and moderation. These virtues, or parts of human virtue, are in tension with one another. They are the distinguishing traits of different kinds of human beings who must be combined to form a whole city. Arranged marriages are supposed to produce offspring more capable of citizen virtue – i.e., courageous and moderate just at the right times and in appropriate ways. The successful, completed city is never described, however. What, then, can a reading of the dialogue offer to the unscholarly reader who neither fully accepts the limitations of contemporary political science nor claims with confidence to know the goals of political life? What can it offer us?

One of the few ideas that emerge clearly in the *Statesman* is that the kind of knowledge the statesman possesses must be distinguished from other kinds. In particular, it is not mathematical. The statesman must make evaluations that no statistical accounts or measurements of more and less would support; they involve rather what is "fitting" for citizens and perhaps for human beings. The fitting, I infer, while not identical with the good introduced in Book VI of *The Republic,* must refer to what is good or right in relation to humans. The fitting is a slippery concept; it is subject to the objection that its character must vary depending upon what it is meant to fit. The fitting for a crook, for example, would be different from the fitting for an honest woman or man. I claim with conviction that being a crook is not fitting for a human being, but on what grounds? The dialogue addresses what is fitting in part by demonstrating what does not fit with the truth, that is, by means of illuminating errors. It has three parts. The idea of the fitting, or the non-mathematical mean, comes to the surface only in the third.

Each of the three parts of the dialogue is very different. In the first section, when the method of inquiry looks most precise and scientific, the statesman appears as a kind of herdsman who presumably rules unselfishly over the human herd. The interlocutors, a Stranger and a young

man named Socrates (from now on referred to here as "Young Socrates") who happens to be a friend of Theaetetus, fail to determine adequately the character of the human herd and the care the statesman offers it. They then make a new start that includes the Stranger's presentation of a cosmic myth. In the myth, the Stranger describes a divine herdsman who governs plant-like humans. (They are born directly from the earth.) This myth leads to a subsequent discussion that comprises fully half the dialogue. Here the statesman is the object of a kind of dialectical inquiry in which distinctions are made and likenesses are suggested. Much of the conversation is in fact about the art of weaving cloth. The method of inquiry seems less methodical than in the first section. The statements the two discussants agree to rely heavily on a sense that the statesman must be somehow like the humans he governs and at the same time unequivocally superior in knowledge. The idea of the fitting or the mean is articulated early in this section: the Stranger distinguishes between the measuring of numbers or amounts, on the one hand, and measuring with respect to "the mean, the fitting, the opportune and the needful" (284e) on the other. Since the statesman must aim at what is somehow good he cannot rely on counting alone. Since he must govern in accord with his knowledge, his art cannot rest on persistently ongoing discourse; for him inquiry is not an end in itself. It is crucial that there be some truth towards which statesmanlike inquiry intends. For the statesman to be, a kind of non-mathematical science of human things must be possible.

In this lecture I intend to explore the grounds for this claim and some of its implications. I will do so by discussing each of the three main sections of the *Statesman* in order. Then I will turn to a discussion of the fitting or the mean which emerges explicitly in the third part of the dialogue. The idea of the fitting alone provides coherence to the three oddly matched parts of the dialogue.

I. Part I of the Dialogue: Useful Errors and Revealing Cuts

The purported task of Plato's *Statesman* is to discover and articulate who the statesman is. There is a brief introduction, noteworthy especially for an error and a warning about possibly deceptive similarities. Just a few lines before the beginning of the search Theodorus, Theaetetus' and young Socrates' teacher, inadvertently raises the question of the worth of the discovery of the statesman relative to the discovery of the sophist and the philosopher. Socrates corrects Theodorus when he assumes they are of equal worth (257a). The question of worth is related to the issue of likenesses; gold filled jewelry might look like pure gold but is worth much less, and gold colored plastic is worth almost nothing. Socrates points out that young Socrates resembles him in name while Theaetetus resembles him in looks. Perhaps neither resemblance is very deep. In any case, young Socrates is chosen to continue the conversation with the Stranger purportedly in order to give Theaetetus a rest. After these introductory remarks, Theodorus and Socrates himself remain silent throughout the dialogue. Young Socrates agrees with the Stranger that the statesman must be some sort of "knower," and they begin by making "cuts" in the field of all sciences (*episteme*). The statesman's science is supposed to be part of a larger whole. The Stranger says they must separate the statesman's science from everything else in that whole and stamp (*episgraphisasthai*) a single look on it. The science they seek will not be evident as one thing even when it is found. Even if the search for the statesman and his science is not difficult, it may not be easy to recognize what one has found unless it is made visible through speech.

The procedure that the Stranger favors - that of making cuts between two types within a broad category, makes sense if the object sought is part of a larger, more visible and given whole. The process of making the appropriate cuts to locate the statesman comprises the first part of the dialogue (258c-268e). The Stranger begins, with young Socrates' assent, by dividing the whole

of science into practical and cognitive sciences. He classifies statesmanship as cognitive, for one may be in possession of the science of statesmanship without in fact ruling (2458e-259d). In the course of this argument the royal science, household-management and the mastery of slaves are identified (259b). When the Stranger further divides cognitive science into two kinds, judging (*kritikon* ; SB: logistic) and commanding (*epitaktikon; SB:* injunctive), statesmanship falls into the latter category. It does intend to have an effect in the world. Since its effect necessarily involves others, it must include the task of making it apparent to them that it is worth their effort to act in the manner prescribed. Does it matter whether the statesman compels or persuades? The fact that the remaining divisions the Stranger makes (and which young Socrates accepts) presume no difference between rule over slaves and rule over free citizens makes this question pressing.

In identifying statesmanship with household rule and the mastery of slaves young Socrates knowingly ignores the difference of size and is apparently oblivious to other differences. But surely the statesman must know more than the petty slaveholder. Since he presumably governs men who are more than tools, is his knowledge even of the same kind as the slaveholder's? Young Socrates and the Stranger avoid any distinctions of respectability or worth in determining the kind of knowledge the statesman possesses.

Mathematics, young Socrates', Theaetetus', and their teacher Theodorus' field of study, belongs to the former category of the judging part of cognitive science. It involves unequivocal truths, like the number of objects of inquiry, and says nothing about their worth or desirability. Theodorus' mathematical training accounts for the mistake he makes at the opening of the dialogue: he assumes that an account of three types of men – the sophist, the statesman and the philosopher – would be worth three times the account of any one of them. Young Socrates and

the Stranger are making a similar mistake. In abstracting entirely from those who are ruled and how, they presume everything called "ruling" is one.

The dialogue proceeds with the understanding that careful discrimination of each succeeding narrower part of science into two divisions will allow for the proper labeling of each kind. It is never considered necessary to divide a category three ways. Presumably it is enough to separate the kind of science that includes statesmanship from all that it is not (cf.287c on the importance of dividing "as near as possible" into two). The work of the dialogue could be considered, then, as a careful revision of language so that one doesn't call the statesman's science by the wrong name or apply the name to the wrong object. When young Socrates wants to separate the herding of all other animals from the herding of humans he speaks in accord with his sense that all beings known as "human" are so superior to other animals that they belong to a separate kind. The Stranger responds by warning him not to rely on names but rather to "cut down the middle" (261e-262b). With respect to humans, he says, a proper division is between male and female (not between Greek and barbarian); young Socrates accedes. Names can mislead and careful dividing provides a means to correct misnomers. The Stranger's correction of young Socrates' suggestion leads to the rather suspect identification of humans as two-footed, non-cross-breeding, hornless herd animals (266e-267c). (As Seth Benardete points out, they might as well be plucked chickens or two-footed pigs (*Argument,* 361.)) The statesman is identified as the herdsman, or the practitioner of the "grazing science," for these undistinguished beings (267c).

The method of cutting "down the middle," without preference for one side or the other, seems intended to correct young Socrates' tendency to allow his prejudice in favor of his own species to affect the inquiry. The Stranger's method facilitates the acquisition of knowledge by not allowing opinion to stamp its character on the outcome. But the Stranger is making two

presuppositions: (1) that the truth about the statesman is an object with definite characteristics or boundaries and (2) that it can be located within the body of all sciences. The method is geometrical. Young Socrates' mathematical training makes him susceptible to trust in a geometrical approach. His education in mathematics may also have helped discipline his mind to accept that something is not true however much he wishes it to be so and therefore to the Stranger's criticism that he must not let unexamined pride seduce him into making a false division between humans and all other animals. But how does one assess the middle when the object of inquiry does not fall neatly into male and female halves? Are there equal amounts of science (or numbers of objects of scientific inquiry) on each side? Are sciences and their objects countable or measurable? The method of cutting *down the middle* in order to revise our use of names precisely to fit their objects entails ideas that might be false. Is the Stranger right to presume that the science of statesmanship is one science? If the material on which statesmanship works is the determining character that distinguishes it from other sciences (Cf. *Sophist*), does it matter that we do not recognize as human the two-footed, non-cross-breeding, hornless herd animal the two discussants have discovered? Is the Stranger even correct in seeking a definite species as the material of the science of statesmanship? These are not young Socrates' and the Stranger' concerns. The Stranger has put young Socrates on notice that assertions about the superiority of his kind, whatever that is, are ungrounded. Ironically, in this context he calls the younger man "manliest of all" (263d). The odd definition of the human herd, along with young Socrates' "manly" error, pointedly raises the question who the science of the statesman serves.

Once the distinctions that specify the particular kind of herdsman known as the statesman are listed, young Socrates seems to think the project of finding the statesman has been successful, The Stranger insisted earlier, though, that even though they reject the opinions of others, they

two must agree (260b). The series of cuts they have made do result in a definition*, but the Stranger insists they have not completed their task (268a). The problem, he says, is that the definition provides no adequate response to the claims of merchants, farmers, trainers and physicians that it is they who in fact provide appropriate care for humans. It seems obvious that the goal of such care matters to the inquiry, and the reader may expect here to examine whether the satisfaction of physical needs is the goal or whether the statesman aims at a goal that surpasses need. Perhaps a distinction could be made between herding men and educating them, for example, but that would undermine the whole line of cuts beginning with the location of statesmanship. The Stranger situated it within the kind of commanding cognitive science that ranges over domesticated animals, beings endowed with souls rather than "unsouled" (261b-c). Many questions naturally arise. I will mention a few: Are there different kinds of souls? If so, does possession of a soul of some kind, a soul that thinks and wills, perhaps, affect the possibility of herding beings together? Human beings sometimes behave like members of a herd, i.e., parts of some larger undistinguished whole, but surely not always and I want to say not characteristically. Is the only significant distinction within the kind "human" that between male and female, as the Stranger suggests? In calling now for a new beginning the Stranger may indicate some criticism of young Socrates – his manly pride seems to have vanished as quickly as it arose - but the ostensible reason for the new start is to provide a way of distinguishing statesmanship from other sorts of care for human beings.

Instead of going back to reexamine the crucial cuts, the Stranger introduces a myth and a new beginning. He does so with great fanfare, emphasizing that it is a "big myth," a story like those

* The statesman pursues the herd-nurturing science for two-footed, non-crossbreeding hornless herd animals (267c).

told to children. Putting the "manly" young Socrates in his place, he points out that it hasn't been long since he listened to such stories himself.

Part II: Mythmaking and the Divine Herdsman

The first two parts of the dialogue are shorter than the third; together they constitute about half the dialogue. The myth comprises the second part of the dialogue. This part is crucial because it enables young Socrates and the Stranger to proceed beyond the apparently arbitrarily definition of humans entailed in the first (pre-myth) account ("the barnyard section," according to Benardete). Once the myth has been presented the Stranger acknowledges that the preceding account involved "a very grand mistake" (274e). I will discuss the mistake in its turn. First I must present a rather quick examination of the myth.

The Stranger describes two alternating times – the time of Chronos and the time of Zeus. The myth situates human life as we know it in the time of Zeus, while perfect harmony reigns in the time of Chronos (272b). Without artful guidance, nothing but trouble and disharmony would reign in our time. The harmonious era must give way to times like ours because the cosmos involves matter and material things become corrupt, for it is "...fitting *(proseikei)* for only the most divine things of all to be always the same and in the same state ...." (269d). It is apparently "fitting" in some sense for human beings along with other material substances to deteriorate. The deterioration is described as an unwinding, as of a spring. We are encouraged to think that the divine work of rewinding the cosmos will eventually reverse time and restore harmony. The cosmos will then reacquire life and receive "an artificial immortality" (270a), only to lose it again.

The people who live in the age of Chronos differ from us in crucial respects. Time goes "backward" for these beings: they get forever "younger" rather than aging. For those of us over 40 or so, this feature of the mythical harmonious time is rather attractive. Moreover, no conflicts arise for there are no unmet needs. As far as I can tell, however, there is also little if any consciousness. As the account proceeds, I find it more and more unappealing. Temperate conditions and abundant food permit the god to treat men like sheep: the Stranger cheerfully asserts that "....they were grazed much of the time outdoors, naked and without bedding....." (272b). He asks whether men in our time or the earlier time were happier and young Socrates, a man who presumably likes order – at least he takes some satisfaction in finding definitive solutions to mathematical problems - is so skeptical (272b) that he avoids pronouncing on the matter. When young Socrates won't answer, the Stranger claims that "if they were to discourse," the earth-born men would be happier "by a thousand fold" (272c). He is imagining these humanoid plants devoting their leisure to philosophy. It is difficult to conceive even of what would provoke the earth-born to utter meaningful speech. Would they have any questions that would sustain conversation? Since there would be no ambiguity or duplicity, knowledge of the beings that compose this orderly cosmos would be as readily available as the food that grows without tending. Happy or not, one must wonder whether any of the beings ruled by the gods are what we would call "human." The people who live then seem unlike contemporary humans in every way but their shape. According to the myth they spring fully formed from the earth (272a). Even so, were it not for the alternation of this harmonious age with an age in which time goes "forward," it is unclear whether the cosmos in the divinely ruled age would even include beings of mature human form. Old folks at least could have come from nowhere but the previous disorderly age. The Stranger acknowledges that in the process of becoming younger their seeds

fall into the earth and "the earthly genus" will at some point be "used up" (272e). And yet as the cosmos unravels some human-like beings remain, for we are told they need protection from the now-savage animals (274c). Their needs provide the occasion for the development of arts.

If there were ever a time and place in which the Stranger's cutting method was appropriate to any sort of inquiry, the myth suggests that it is in the divinely-ruled and orderly cosmos when time runs in reverse. Mathematical precision about the human things belongs not merely to the gods but to a mythical pre-historical (and sub-human) stage of existence. The myth seems, then, to promote a distinction between precise mathematical thinking and some other kind appropriate to human things in the time of Zeus. While the cosmos is most orderly when the distinctions among plants, animals and humans are blurred, the human whole known as a city requires distinction and even the threat of conflict. Humans of the current age tend to live in a disorderly mass where animals, and probably other humans, threaten men and women and they must invent arts to protect and care for themselves. Gods (Prometheus, Hephaestus and Athena are named) give gifts to facilitate this work, but the art of statesmanship is evidently of human invention. Later (292b-e) the Stranger and young Socrates revive the claim that the true statesman must possess a science, but for now the emphasis is on the human quality of the statesman's rule. The difference between an art and a science is not explicitly explored in the dialogue. I would like to offer the following tentative suggestions.

In general, human beings develop arts in response to needs they recognize but cannot easily satisfy: farming, medicine and weaving provide examples. These activities involve knowledge but do not depend on precise deductive reasoning. Their practitioners make use of what they know to facilitate, enhance or direct natural processes (as in farming and medicine, for example). Sometimes they use natural materials to fabricate anew (as in weaving) something that benefits

themselves and others of their kind. Although they make use of natural phenomena that can be investigated by separate sciences, the knowledge of each art does not differ from the knowledge of others as parts of a given whole. The arts, after all, are productive of something not already given. If statesmanship is an art perhaps it facilitates the creation of citizens out of men and women who need to live together to thrive but who do not know how to do so. At the end of the myth the Stranger outlines needs that might justify the remaking of individual men and women into citizens, but the statesman would have to know more than that these people need protection. Given the intractability of his subjects and the tensions among them, he would have to know at least how to justify his rule.

If statesmanship is a true art it must involve a definite and yet a less accessible set of standards than the other arts I have mentioned. Health may be almost as difficult to articulate as a well-ruled city, but it is easier to recognize when one has it unless one's standards for the city are quite low. Similarly we can put personal preference aside and recognize that a wide variety of woven materials serve to protect us from the elements and their relative effectiveness can be measured. But not just anyone who protects women and men from physical danger as long as they obey him would be a statesman. Knowledge of some standard beyond protection against physical dangers must distinguish the statesman from others who assert their ability to govern, and that standard must be defensible. Perhaps the art of the statesman differs from the success of a tyrant simply in persuading his subjects that he rules for their good. The activity of ruling would then involve knowledge of nothing beyond the particulars of each city or group of individuals that compose it, along with the ability to speak persuasively. The Statesman and young Socrates do not take this possibility seriously. Although shortly after the myth the Stranger specifies that the political art is "the voluntary herd-grooming of voluntary two-footed

animals "(276e), later he and young Socrates explicitly deny that voluntary submission provides the standard for good government (293 b-d).

The myth leads immediately into the Stranger's critique of the first part of the dialogue. The cuts, he says, involved a very great error that the myth enables him to expose and a smaller one as well. The big myth reveals that the herdsman who was identified in the portion of the dialogue preceding the myth was a god rather than a human ruling other humans. Moreover, he must have ruled in a time when perfect harmony prevailed and humans were born from the earth, like plants. There was an additional, smaller mistake in that the manner of rule over humans was not described (275a). It is not at all clear, to me at least, how that mistake is separable from the former, how they are two mistakes rather than one, or that it is smaller than the first. Furthermore, the Stranger acknowledges that the previous account was mistaken "at the very final point" (276c) in that it confused the king and the tyrant (276e). I am not sure what the Stranger means here by "the very final point (*telos*)". It is clear that any human ruler who thought he was a god ruling over beast-like humans unable to recognize their own good, would rule tyrannically. However that may be, the Stranger did include in the first set of cuts a reference to the statesman's ruling by means of intelligence and strength of soul rather than through physical means (259c). He could not have been ruling by force alone. But with knowledge as a standard tyranny and compulsion differ (see 277e).

As we will soon see, the Stranger and young Socrates agree on a strict hierarchy of possible regimes. Rule by a true statesman turns out to be superior to all the six known regimes – monarchy, aristocracy and democracy and their abuses. It is a seventh regime in light of which each of the others must be understood. This section is brief but crucial: the Stranger acknowledges there that even the distinction between the best and the worst of the inferior

regimes deserves their attention, for "...perhaps everything all of us do is for the sake of something of the sort" (302b). The criterion that determines better or worse rule is knowledge, but knowledge of what? It is not clear how the correct standard of government is knowable, much less known. If statesmanship is a science, I contend it must belong to a non-mathematical kind that involves purposes or ends. Statesmanship requires that citizen-making have an end that includes and goes beyond protection against various threats. The myth clears the way to seek knowledge of that end.

The Stranger does not claim to exemplify the art or science of the statesman, but he clearly recounts his "big myth" with a definite purpose in mind. He acknowledges that he means to make use of it to point out the errors in the previous discussion (274e). But why could the errors not simply be stated? Somehow the myth or more precisely the myth along with the conversation that follows it enables young Socrates to defend the fitness of the statesman to rule even unwilling subjects for their betterment. If the myth is designed especially for the sake of young Socrates, apparently the fantastical story of a period of divine rule over a perfectly harmonious cosmos and its unraveling is necessary to motivate this mathematically trained young man to engage in the rest of the inquiry. He would not have continued the inquiry into statesmanship beyond the series of cuts in the first part of the dialogue unless he saw the need. The disorder described at the end of the myth suffices. The myth prepares for the Stranger to introduce a new method of inquiry using images and analogies, a non-mathematical way of inquiring that reminds one of young Socrates' namesake and his habits of speech in other dialogues (think of the *Republic* in particular).

Part III: Paradigms, Analogies and Properly Measured Speech

The remainder of the dialogue, which I am calling part III, has several subsections. It begins with the earlier mistakes and leads into a discussion of what would constitute a complete account of the statesman. This leads in turn to the claim that "each of us knows everything as if in a dream (277d)" which if true would seem to make the task possible. The reference to dreaming recalls both the Stranger's role as storyteller and Socrates' myth of recollection in the *Meno.* Unlike Meno, the manly young Socrates does not complain that he feels as though he has been stung by a sting-ray. Still, after the myth which stirs up difficulties the cutting method alone is inadequate to resolve, he must evidently be inoculated against Meno's paradox before they go on. The idea that each of us has full access to the truth from birth is of course open to question. Even if we have such access translating dream- knowledge into a waking state may be overwhelmingly hard. The Stranger claims that paradigms help. A discussion of how one learns to read follows. It in turn leads to a lengthy discussion of weaving. Then, after an account of the various regimes the statesman is described as a kind of weaver of natural courage and moderation. I will by no means give an adequate account of each of these parts, but I will try to capture the way the dialogue proceeds through them.

The Stranger marks this section by criticizing both the earlier parts of the dialogue. To distinguish statesmanship from the other arts and activities that provide care for men and women the two participants in the dialogue must first recognize that the herdsman they defined in the first part would belong to the age of Chronos. The divine herdsman has the ability and exerts the effort required to keep the cosmos wound up in the direction of resistance to the tendency of the whole to deteriorate. He turns out to be unlike his herd in almost every respect. But the men the Stranger describes in the big myth need little if any care. Since these so-called "human"

creatures have no needs that are not immediately satisfied and no conflicts, the herdsman who tends them needs little if any art. By contrast, the artful beings who currently govern unruly men do not differ from them in kind. Moreover, the men who must be artfully ruled are not indistinguishable herd animals. If humans are one kind, it is odd for a human to be a herdsman of humans, and the statesman the Stranger and young Socrates seek is human. The myth enables the two discussants to distinguish nurture and defense of the undistinguished mass from the sort of care that would make men into citizens.

Even the myth is subject to the Stranger's critique: he complains that "...in the belief that it was fitting (*prepein*) to make up for the king great paradigms, we raised up an amazing bulk of the myth and were compelled to make use of a greater part of it than we should have" (277b). This complaint launches the paradigm or analogy section of the dialogue. The myth is compared to a statue and handicraft in general is said to be inferior to speech. In any case, neither the myth nor the account of the statesman has achieved completion, the Stranger claims (277a-b). Young Socrates approves of the new definition of the political art as "the voluntary herd-grooming of voluntary herd animals" (276e) But just when he thinks for the second time that he sees the end of their inquiry on the horizon (277a), the Stranger begins this new portion of the inquiry using spoken analogies to gain access to knowledge difficult to attain. He tells his young colleague that "...for those capable of following, it's more fitting (*mallon prepei*) to make plain every animal by means of ... speech rather than by painting and every kind of handicraft, but for all the rest who are incapable, to do it through handcrafted works" (277c). (Apparently the statesman *is* an animal of some kind.) The Stranger depends upon young Socrates' pride to keep him from settling for an inadequate picture rather than an adequate account.

The post-myth attempt to come up with an articulate account of statesmanship relies heavily on the use of analogies. First the Stranger describes reading as a paradigm of coming to know what we already know "as if in a dream" (277d). Like the method of division, the Stranger's use of the paradigm of learning to read presumes that, just as there is a definite set of distinct letters that make up the various words we read, there are distinct elements of being that can be correctly identified. The inference that knowledge is accessible with effort relies on there being a definite number of elements, akin to letters, that can be arranged in a great (in fact an infinite) variety of ways. Unlike the method of cutting, however, the analogy between reading and thinking here allows for the elements to appear in a jumbled, perplexing fashion, although it seems to assure that with diligence they can be sorted out. As the Stranger asks, "For how else would one be capable, my dear, in beginning from a false opinion to arrive at even some small part of the truth and acquire intelligence?" (278e).

In using reading as an analogy for thinking the Stranger imitates the elder Socrates who uses the same paradigm in his earlier conversation with Theaetetus in the dialogue of the same name. There the subject is knowledge. No precise and adequate definition of knowledge is reached in that dialogue, although Socrates and Theaetetus try out many formulations and explore several images. In the *Theaetetus* Socrates points out the paradox that we claim to know syllables and words composed of letters or elements which in turn are unknowable and unknown. At least no account can be given of them. Perhaps young Socrates thinks that letters are like numbers and that numbers are immediately intelligible. Here the Stranger does not focus on elements. Rather, he presents reading as an example of the way that paradigms function to help us see "the bigger things" (277d). (He calls reading a "paradigm of paradigms.") He intends the example to help young Socrates see the need for paradigms and analogies in the effort to bring into focus what is

knowable about the statesman. While reading offers an analogy for knowing that corresponds to the correct naming and definitive calculation that characterizes mathematics, especially arithmetic, the use of an analogy itself points to a different way of reasoning. Moreover, the fact that letters can appear jumbled and unintelligible sometimes requires that the reader actively construe their meaning in pursuit of intelligibility. It is not clear that young Socrates has a clue that the Stranger intends the distinction between counting or naming and active construction, but he does accede to the Stranger's subsequent use of the example of weaving, an art in which what is known definitively plays only a part.

The task the Stranger has set himself is difficult (cf. 306e), and so he suggests to young Socrates that they practice the new kind of discourse that will enable them to distinguish statesmanship from its competitors by using an easier paradigm. Much depends on how well suited the paradigm is to the task. Before returning to the problem of how to articulate the science of statesmanship and after developing the analogy between reading and learning, the Stranger discusses weaving in great, I might say tedious and pedantic, detail (279bff). He locates weaving in speech through the method of cutting; in particular he separates the contributing causes of weaving from its direct causes, the treatment and making of wool. (Cf. dividing according to species (kind or *eidos*: 286e and "as if it were a sacrificial victim" 287c). Before he recounted the "big myth" the Stranger announced the need to separate statesmanship from its contributing causes, and the separations he makes between weaving and its contributing activities will serve as a model (*paradeigma)*. The homely art of weaving is presumably easier to distinguish from its contributing causes than statesmanship, (279b-283a) while weaving fulfills a purpose all can recognize as necessary and desirable. But the Stranger chooses the example of weaving with another plan in mind. He says it has "the same business as the political" (279a). He is

accustoming young Socrates (and us) to take the example seriously in anticipation of his later use of weaving as an image of the proper combining of the virtues of courage and moderation. Weaving provides the image for the statesman's method of governing to achieve the virtue of the citizen, perhaps of the human being in general. Moreover, the Stranger makes use of the protracted discussion of weaving to bring up the distinction between mathematical measure and measure with respect to the fitting.

The fitting *(to prepon)* came up first in the dialogue in the context of the evaluation of the myth (277b), but it becomes a focus for the conversation here (283b- 284e) for the Stranger must justify the lengthy and somewhat cumbersome discussion of the weaving art. He insists they divide the art of measurement into two parts: one part includes "...all the arts that measure number, lengths, depths, widths, and speeds relative to their contraries, ...the other...all the arts relative to the mean *(to metron)*, the fitting *(to prepon)*, the opportune, and the needful, and everything settled toward the middle and away from the extremes "(284e; see also 283d). To deny the second kind of measuring would destroy the human arts in general, and the political art in particular, for it is "...by preserving the mean that they produce everything good and beautiful" (284b). The mean or the fitting must determine the proper length for a speech. The Stranger emphasizes three times that they must remember this distinction (285c; 286c and d). Similarly they must remember why they undertook the discussion of weaving (286b). The reason is complex: while all speech must be evaluated in accordance with its ability to make those who converse more capable of dialectic (287a), they must apply the paradigm of weaving to the political art in particular (287b). It is unclear what relation dialectic has to the political art. (*Is one a part of the other?*)

The issue of the mean is at the very heart of this dialogue. It accounts for the length and apparent disorder of the speech – each part, however error-ridden, helps the discussants to focus on the object they seek. Moreover, the ability of the statesman to discern the proper goal of his governance depends upon his knowledge of the mean. If the statesman is a knower (284c), the mean must be real and knowable. When human beings are surrounded with threats the mythic harmony of the divinely-ruled cosmos is at best a dim memory. In the face of disorder the statesman must provide for and protect the possibility of living well, which probably means living harmoniously, but even that is not yet clear. If it were enough that he provide time-bound humans protection from the savagery of the beasts he could achieve it in a variety of ways, including tyranny. After all, safety usually comes with a price. But the Stranger and young Socrates expect the rule of the statesman to be more than accepted or even legitimate; it must be just. The justice of the statesman's governance depends upon his making the citizens better (297b). The Stranger uses the language of justice only late in the dialogue (296d; 297b; 299b; 301d; 305d, for example).

If the truth about human things is not knowable at all, if there is no science of statesmanship, there is no natural limit to the kinds of regimes that may be successfully imposed and no justice. It would follow that the force or persuasiveness of those who pretend to political expertise would alone justify their claims to rule in various cities, and the statesman would be indistinguishable from the sophist (291c).The Stranger is determined to remove this possibility. The "partners," the Stranger says, of all the regimes but the statesman's "...must be removed ... on the grounds that they are ...seditionaries, and being the patrons of the greatest images they are ...of the same sort [namely imitations], and being the greatest imitators and greatest enchanters, they prove to be the sophists of sophists" (303c). The Stranger uses somewhat overblown language to

emphasize the urgency of distinguishing an image from the true regime it reflects. The difficulty is that one apparently requires knowledge of the truth to make proper use of an image, just as one must know what kind of thing one seeks to choose an appropriate paradigm. Or is the ranking of regimes somehow defensible by us, who are no statesmen? When the Stranger claims that democracy is the best of the lawless regimes while monarchy is the best of the lawful (303a-b), are we moved merely by familiarity and prejudice to agree or dispute the claim? None of the regimes in which one, few or the many rule, however, can be as good as the rule of the statesman. All others are to be seen as better or worse imitations of his rule. This claim follows from the Stranger's insistence that the laws must reflect scientific understanding or they fail (293e).

We learn from the *Sophist* that imitation is of two kinds (*235d-236c*). Apparitions (*phantasiai*), the kind of images that facilitate sophistry, are images detached from truth and designed to make an impression of some kind on the viewer, while likenesses (*eikasiai)* include images more straightforwardly proportional to the objects of imitation and thus better suited to aid in the pursuit of truth. Laws that do not look toward scientific statesmanship are sophistic. Any group of citizens who think they are as good as anyone else at legislating for themselves, and maybe better, are sophists and enemies of statesmanship. If the statesman turns lawgiver, the implication is that his laws should be firmly upheld because no laws could surpass them in imitating the science of the statesman or in facilitating the citizens' good. But how does the difference between true and false or imprecise images work here? Not even the Stranger suggests that a body of citizens will use the laws to acquire the art and the knowledge of the statesman himself.

In the course of the post-myth discussion of the statesman the Stranger explicitly refers to the sophist four times (see 284c, 286b, 291c, 303c). In the first of these passages he refers furthermore to the dialogue that bears the sophist's name, saying "just as in the case of the sophist we compelled 'that which is not' to be, ... so also now, in turn, mustn't the more and the less be compelled to become measurable relative not only to one another but also to 'the becoming of the mean (*to metron*)'" (284c)? The analogy between the two cases is not obvious. It makes sense that the mean is sometimes hard to see. It was hard also to follow the Stranger's guidance earlier in the dialogue and cut down the middle (262b). In this (later) part of the dialogue the Stranger emphasizes the need to make cuts not "down the middle" but "according to species" (285a); he identifies the skill in doing so as "dialectics" (286d-287a). Perhaps, if non-being is not, the more and the less would be limited to a measurable continuum or to numbers of distinct beings knowable and countable but not knowable by kinds. The ability to count would enable one to cut with equal numbers of beings or of arbitrary measures to the left and the right, but it would not help in assessing the truth about what is, especially when what is somehow falls short. Goals that are not yet achieved are not, but they are not nothing. Assessing priorities is dependent on assessing what is. But perhaps it is also true that one must know something about priorities and therefore goals in order to access the truth about beings. This dialogue illustrates the point by demonstrating the failure of the method of cutting in the first portion of the dialogue, when the mean or the good for human beings was ignored. Once the Stranger and young Socrates attend to the importance of the mean they are better able to recognize the statesman, especially to distinguish him, however formulaically, from mere imitators (291c-305d). This task turns out to be at least as important as the process of separating the statesman from different kinds of caregivers such as farmers, merchants, doctors and physical trainers, the competitors

named before the Stranger turned storyteller (267e-268a; cf. 287c-290e). Cutting suffices for distinguishing the statesman from other arts that serve the city and in a well-governed city they will be part of the whole. But only by recognizing the mean can one distinguish a well-run city from a more or less adequate imitation.

Without knowing precisely what it means to be "better" young Socrates can see that the improvement of the city as a whole (and even of particular citizens), not popularity or legitimacy, must characterize the rule of the statesman and differentiate it from tyranny. The ranking of regimes is complicated by the pride of citizens who think they are quite as good as the statesman because they fail to recognize his knowledge. As a reader of the *Statesman* I too am unable to articulate whatever it is the statesman knows, but I must agree that there are better and worse citizens and in general that human beings display both virtues and vices. It is not hard to see that the behavior and even the characters of humans must be measured with respect to some mean.

According to the Stranger's account, the statesman must know precisely how to identify virtue and vice, or at least the natural tendencies toward each, in his subjects. Just as the weaver uses only appropriately selected and prepared yarns, the true statesman can accomplish the proper combining of courageous warp and moderate woof only when he has appropriate materials with which to work. Unsuitably reckless men (and women, I presume) are excluded from the city, while excessively soft people are enslaved (308e-309a). Two kinds of human beings, those characterized by the virtues of courage and moderation, are appropriate potential citizens. The statesman combines them in marriages ("human bonds") to produce the most suitable members of the city, citizens who display both virtues when they are called for. Anyone who knows his blood relations must see that the idea that arranged marriages would inevitably lead to such a

mixture is preposterous. When offspring turn out to combine the best characteristics of their parents it is a serendipitous occasion to rejoice. Moreover, erotic passions do not submit to law with any consistency. Even if we ignore those two issues, there is the problem that the virtues of courage and moderation are in tension to such a degree, according to the Stranger, that they resist combination. The statesman must inculcate true opinions ("divine bonds") in citizens to ameliorate this problem. Good citizens must display both courage and moderation, and to do so they would have to have more than true opinions. They would have to have prudence enough to recognize which situations demand courageous action and when to respond moderately. It may not be going too far to say that they would have to be virtuous simply. The city ruled by the statesman would finally be composed of such citizens. But why would such people need to submit to laws or governance at all? If they lack good judgment, by contrast, there is no reason to think any laws would offer sufficient guidance to make them act well.

The account of the combining of courageous and moderate citizens brings us to the end of the dialogue and the final definition of the statesman's art. Through it the statesman brings " ...the life of courageous and moderate human beings interwoven by direct weaving ... together into a common one by unanimity and friendship and ... holds them together with this weave and, to the extent that it befits a city to become happy, both rules and supervises." (311c) This definition is inadequate unless we are convinced that the statesman justly excludes people from the city and justly compels those who remain to marry spouses they ordinarily would not choose. But his authority cannot be just unless at a minimum the statesman and he alone can recognize good and choiceworthy behavior of human beings as well as how to achieve it. In other words, what is suitable or "fitting" is crucial to the work of the statesman and to the proper identification of the beings over whom he rules. My only hope to justify our devoting this evening together to Plato's

Statesman is to give some account of the fitting and how it informs the elusive art of statesmanship.

IV. The Fitting

The dialogue is awkward and ungainly. When the Stranger focuses on the fitting with respect to length the reader cannot help but notice that the dialogue is made up ill-proportioned parts that form no obvious whole. But perhaps the dialogue's awkwardness and even its apparent incoherence serve a purpose. The proper length of a speech about matters that are at first unclear depends upon three things: the difficulty in gaining clarity about the matter discussed, its importance, and the particular needs of the discussants. The account of weaving could have been shorter, the Stranger remarks, if he and young Socrates could recognize earlier that weaving is nothing but "a plaiting of woof and warp" (283b), but they only discerned that fact in the context of many other observations about the purposes of weaving and the activities that contribute materials for it. Young Socrates is not impatient: earlier he expressed the willingness not only to pursue the longer speech but to engage in it and the shorter speech as well (265a). He and the Stranger were still seeking to clarify the character of the human to be herded by the statesman. Patience is not one of the virtues the statesman weaves into his citizens, unless it is a version of moderation, but it seems useful as long as it is combined with the drive to understand something that matters.

Young Socrates' patience may be excessive: in fact, he is rather passive in the course of the dialogue. He does not display obvious awareness of what is at stake. When the Stranger alludes to courts of justice and the danger that they will judge citizens charged with crimes according to inadequate laws and standards, young Socrates does not at first seem very concerned. His

namesake, who listens in silence to the entire dialogue, is soon to be tried; the tension between the laws of Athens and (old) Socrates' pursuit of the truth about human things will be unavoidably obvious. But Young Socrates responds with intense concern shortly after the reference to law courts. He considers life not to be worth living, he claims, if there is no standard above the laws for any art (299e). He probably reacts so vehemently because all arts, not just statesmanship, would suffer if rules overrode the pursuit of what is best. Even the mathematical pursuit of truth would suffer if restricted to what is already known and codified. The knowledge of mathematics, like other knowledge, is an art to the extent that it is still in development and depends upon its practitioners' striving for perfection. Any rigidly rule-bound art would stagnate. But in the immediate context the problem is that if there is no reliable way to claim that a law is unjust, there are no reasonable grounds for the distinction between just rule and tyranny. To young Socrates, evidently, vehemence seems appropriate, or fitting, when arbitrary rule must be challenged (cf. Thrasymachus). The length of the dialogue results partly from the difficulty in eliciting young Socrates' passion for art and making it serve to justify the statesman against the possible charge of tyranny.

Earlier in the discussion (293e) young Socrates objected when the Stranger claimed the statesman would govern in accord with his knowledge and without law. Young Socrates' manliness made him want to recognize for himself the laws that command submission. He has been willing throughout the dialogue to submit to the Stranger's guidance, but he does want to preserve the distinction between voluntary submission and slavish subservience. When he surrenders his objection to rule without laws in favor of a scientific statesman his deference to the Stranger is especially apparent. He has been persuaded that there must be knowledge about the governance of humans and that such knowledge is crucial for statesmanship. Young Socrates

might seem to be rather a snob for thinking that very few people are capable of grasping the statesman's science; after all, he observes, there are not even many good draughts players in any city (292e). But he has surely noticed, too, that great skill in mathematics is rare. His pride in his art makes him alert to the need to keep it free from the rigid application of rules. His pride resembles only superficially the pride of those who obstinately refuse to submit to another's rule simply because it is not their own.

Once admonished for the pride that led to his error in distinguishing the herding of human beings from the herding of all other animals, young Socrates has become a defender of arts in which human beings earn the pride that comes with distinction. When he vehemently defends the pursuit of the arts he is submitting to the Stranger's guidance but he is acting in accord with his self-awareness as the practitioner of an art. Such pride does not belong to the pig-headed; rather, it requires that one defer to the truth. Submission to the art of statesmanship does not demean men; rather it facilitates their ability to distinguish themselves.

While the dignity of humans requires a distinction between voluntary and involuntary submission- violent compulsion is generally wrong and in good times unnecessary – this distinction does not determine just rule. The Stranger makes much of the superiority of a physician who cures the patient using compulsion to one who fails to cure. Similarly, he argues, the statesman must strive to improve those he governs even against their will (296d). Evidently he does not object to violent means to the right end. Similarly, the participants in this dialogue must recognize their errors and correct them. They provide a softened image of statesmanship at work. When young Socrates allows the Stranger to criticize and correct him, he allows his manly resistance to arbitrary rule to be transformed into an insistence that the true statesman alone

make and modify laws. The Stranger himself is not rigid throughout the course of the dialogue: he corrects his early line of cuts and initiates a fresh start after the myth.

Error, as I pointed out earlier, is characteristic of this dialogue. Error facilitates scientific inquiry when it is identified and corrected. Like images, errors that are recognized as such point to the truth they fail to match. The problem of appropriate rule, of the fitting in general, is precisely the problem of how to identify errors and correct them. The statesman is the master-corrector. He possesses the art that is responsible for evaluating all the other arts and their place in human life. If images facilitate even the non-statesmen's abilities to see their failings as well as their successes it is because one has somehow a sense of the truth about the object the image reflects. We can see that the divine herdsman is not an image of the statesman, for he has no waywardness to correct until his rule fails, and then he must give way and allow humans to fend for themselves. The Stranger, for all his guidance and his effort to correct young Socrates, is a flawed image: he has only young Socrates and not a city to guide, and while it is clear that young Socrates' pride has been educated in the course of the dialogue it is unclear how much or how enduringly he has improved. Moreover the statesman's most difficult task is to get the behavior of a collection of humans, not necessarily and not merely their understanding, to correspond to his knowledge of what is right. Perhaps then the weaver *is* the most fitting image of the statesman the dialogue has to offer. But it seems odd that the best image of a citizen should be a collection of worked over and thoroughly inanimate strands of sheep's wool.

The paradigmatic image of weaving serves to illustrate how little prepared to be citizens most human beings are by nature. The process of blending warp and woof to correct by compensating for the defects in each resembles the statesman's art as the Stranger describes it. Like any good herdsman, the statesman seems to be devoted to improving his stock. But perhaps the

statesman's art is necessary to achieving not just a superior herd but the true character of the human. This would imply that the human being is not by nature distinguishable from other animals – we are first of all nothing but plucked chickens or two-legged pigs. But if the best citizens are the best humans, surely they ought also to strive knowingly for what is excellent and the image of the statesman as a weaver is then seriously flawed. If the Stranger cannot govern a city and submission to the laws of a master-weaver serves at best to give us an image of the excellent human, how can the dialogue help us see what the statesman knows?

Although only the statesman has the scientific understanding that allows him to rule simply well, rule is of particulars. When the statesman is available he must adjust any precepts of governance he might formulate to suit the particular individuals and circumstances. Only when the statesman is unavailable does the rule of law makes sense. The Stranger in the *Statesman* uses the term "second sailing" to justify the rigid adherence to laws that reflect the statesman's presumably complete understanding of the human on its own terms. This use of the term invites juxtaposition with Socrates' "second sailing" as he describes it in the *Phaedo* (99d-101a). There Socrates is describing his turn away from the attempt to account for human behavior in accord with materialistic causal accounts. His turn leads him to challenge conventions (*nomoi*) including the laws of the city. In his second sailing he presumes as a hypothesis that the most "compelling" end is given and investigates in words or arguments *(logoi)* (not in images) what then must be true (for example, that justice is good). The statesman's laws must be the best laws if one assumes two grand and questionable hypotheses: 1) that he has definitive knowledge of the best way of life for humans and 2) that he can formulate laws to secure the existence of a city fully in accord with that way of life. The perfection of the science of statesmanship – its unique ability

to discern the fitting for humans - is a two-fold hypothesis upon which the entire discussion of the dialogue relies.

The dialogue does not present us with even one example of the laws worthy of the art of the statesman. I find myself in a position akin to young Socrates': I too lack the knowledge that justifies ruling and I wonder whether life would be worthwhile if the most important choices humans make are utterly without grounds. Since laws are only second best their justification comes from their imitation of what is unequivocally good for human beings. The hypothesis that there is a human good that laws must aim at would allow for an inquiry into whether there is a science of statesmanship. But in this dialogue the Stranger presumes that the statesman's art has been achieved. The Stranger thinks he knows that the statesman has already investigated the ends of his art and has clearly discerned them, something the Stranger could only know if he were the statesman himself. This dialogue therefore presents at best a spurious imitation of the Socratic second sailing; the inquiry begins from a hypothesis hardly different from the Protagorean assertion that man is the measure of all things. The Stranger is able to reconcile the insistence that there must be a science of statesmanship with the variety of actual regimes by claiming that good laws reflect truth and bad laws are sophistic. He knows humans are not by definition or by nature good citizens and that good citizenship is worthy of pursuit. Because it is needed, he assumes that the art or science of statesmanship exists and that it alone can achieve what natural humans lack.

It is clear why weavers weave cloth: they do so for gain of course but also to protect human beings from the elements and perhaps to provide them with flattering attire. The city must be arranged to protect citizens from threats from outsiders, both animal and human, and from one another. It is clear, then, why cities need generals and judges. The Stranger insists, though, that

the arts of the general and the judge do not stand alone. Something must guide them. There must be someone who can consistently make informed and accurate decisions about when to make war and against whom, and about which laws embody justice. Neither we nor, evidently, the Stranger can prove that such a man exists, but it is fitting that we do not deny the possibility that he does. Or to put it a bit differently, we probably would not want to deny that possibility. To do so would leave us no way to rank cities except in accord with their popularity and years of endurance. It would vitiate the distinction between tyranny and good rule unless, again, that distinction were reducible to popularity, and thus would render absurd the distinction between education and propaganda. It would be to deny that the laws of the city are images of something to which we can turn our attention and come to understand. And it would be to deny that there is such a thing as human excellence apart from numerable things like years of endurance, financial assets, or numbers of so-called "friends." Such denials would be immoderate.

Moderation, like courage, is good for political life. But courage and moderation are different and perhaps opposed human virtues. Perhaps they are parts of human virtue simply. To say this presumes that there is a whole virtue that includes both, a virtue the statesman presumably exemplifies but that we non-statesmen do not own. The dialogue between the Stranger and young Socrates indicates that the existence of such a man is necessary but cannot bring him into being. He must exist if non-theoretical human activity is intelligible. If the human good is knowable and, furthermore, if it is therefore achievable, the statesman would be the part of humanity that reveals the character of the species as a whole, the distinguishing character of the human. The Stranger warned young Socrates earlier that parts differ from kinds. They must not be confused. Humans are part of the larger group "animal" and not necessarily a species. But to govern as a statesman and not a mere herdsman presumes that a part of the human mass

exemplifies that which characterizes the human and distinguishes it from other animals. The individual who governs in such a way as to bring to light the distinguishing character of humans must see what is fitting for humans even when they fall short. The mean or the fitting renders intelligible the chaotic and conflicting characters of the subjects of the statesman's rule just as health allows one to discern healthy animals from the diseased and stunted, for example, and the good for man allows for the proper ranking of regimes. The dialogue does not display such an understanding; it assumes its existence.

V. Conclusion

The *Statesman* provides no image of the best city and its ruler. Instead it brings to light what we are assuming when we seek for them. The question whether that standard is fully knowable is never even asked. To take seriously the possibility that it is real and knowable, and not to assume it, is to be willing to submit to Socratic questioning. It is to be willing to embark with Socrates on the second sailing he describes in the *Phaedo*. For (old) Socrates, unlike the Young Socrates of the dialogue, rejects both the hypothesis that human things can be accounted for by matter in motion and the hypothesis that human needs determine what is.

For the most part we, unlike Socrates, rely more on images and examples than on speeches or reason. Images are like imitations – they may produce an effect or they may point to the truth, but without knowledge of the truth, how can we tell? Does inquiry that relies on images ever yield knowledge, or merely a variety of discussable responses? Even the trajectory of many Platonic dialogues depends to some extent on the examples and images chosen, perhaps because

of particular experiences and observations and the character of the interlocutors. My reading of *The Statesman* suggests the following response.

Human beings generally reason about very little without the use of images and examples. Images reflect only partially that of which they are images. Learning through images, then, is second or even third best in comparison with the immediate intuition of the way things are. Such intuition may be divine. We are left with a difficulty: While images are crucial to most if not all human learning, they pose a serious risk: an image may seduce one away from reasoned inquiry and thus from the truth. It is crucial, therefore, to recognize how images fall short or err. A thinker of integrity who recognizes images for what they are strives to use speech to correct that partiality, and in the course of correcting it becomes aware of his or her own assumptions and prejudices. There is no necessary end to the prejudices, hopes and yearnings that are illuminated by thoughtful reflection on images and the assumptions they reflect. This does not vitiate the claim that one strives to know the truth. It does raise the possibility that the knowledge one gains in striving to articulate the truth is primarily, perhaps exclusively, self-knowledge. The statesman of the dialogue differs from the thinker I am imagining, to be sure, for he must already possess complete self-knowledge as well as knowledge of the human beings whom he rules. It is not clear whether reason or some immediate and incommunicable insight informs his art.

The *Statesman* completes the group of three dialogues including the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*. The *Sophist* opens with the question whether the philosopher, the sophist and the statesman are three. In the dialogue called the *Sophist* there are several definitions of the man who bears the same name. There is no dialogue that explicitly takes up the question who the philosopher is. Is the philosopher visible by contrast with each of the other two? In the opening of the *Sophist* Socrates (old Socrates) suggests that the philosopher can appear as either a sophist or a

statesman. But, I infer, each provides an image that reflects and falls short of the philosopher. The sophist lacks the conviction (if he speaks honestly, he denies) that one can separate the being of things from their non-being and the statesman has somehow, inexplicably, completed the task. The philosopher, I infer, assumes neither that the science of human things is impossible, nor that it is attained.

In this lecture I have tried to articulate how the *Statesman,* a difficult and ungainly dialogue points to the presumptions that motivate the search for the statesman. I hope I have shed some light on the kind of non-mathematical knowledge that the statesman must master and that the interlocutors believe to be real. The use of images along with arguments to work towards an adequate account in speech of anything worth knowing is a peculiarly human endeavor. It is not the activity of a herd or for that matter of a divine herdsman. Whether it is the work of the philosopher or the statesman, or of both, I do not feel competent to decide. I hope that this lecture has served to indicate the compelling character of such questions for a life the earth-born beings of the Stranger's myth, and mainstream political scientists of the age of Zeus, do not even know enough to desire.