

‘JOBS FOR PHILOSOPHERS’:

**statecraft and the Stranger in the Statesman
in light of Socrates and the philosopher in the Theaetetus**

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Abstract

Considering the Theaetetus and Statesman together – as the two dialogues explicitly said to flank the Sophist -- both raises and suggests answers to questions about the relationship between philosopher and statesman, and the relationship between Socrates and the Eleatic Stranger. It is argued that aspects of the Theaetetus ‘Digression’ on the nature of philosophers serve to criticise the questions raised and answers given about philosophy and statecraft in the Republic (in particular, the question ‘is a king happy?’) and so to introduce the different analysis of these matters which will be given in the Statesman, which separates its inquiry into kingship or statecraft from its reflections on happiness in just the way called for by Socrates’ philosopher in the ‘Digression’. It is then argued that the ideal of a true statesman is one which Socrates could not have advanced, although aspects of the Theaetetus signal the need for such an ideal. And that ideal is one which may be lived out by a philosopher, but in becoming a statesman, crucial aspects of that philosopher are redefined (he loses leisure, he becomes essentially oriented to ruling in the city) such that the Statesman suggests that it is more correct to define him as a statesman than as a philosopher. Finally, it is suggested drawing on aspects of the preceding that the relationship between Socrates and the Eleatic Stranger is complementary in that both are committed to philosophy, although neither can define or exhibit it fully.

This paper primarily explores the relationship between the statesman and the philosopher in the Statesman, doing so by means of considering the discussion of the philosopher and the intimations about statecraft in and around the Digression of the Theaetetus (below, ‘the Digression’). A secondary purpose is to draw on the above discussion to speculate about the relationship between Socrates and the Eleatic Stranger (‘the ES’), although here the argument can only be suggestive rather than conclusive.¹ The justification for considering aspects of the Theaetetus and the Statesman is drawn from the textual sequence in which these two dialogues are placed in relation to the Sophist – the former to the beginning of the Sophist, the latter to its end. Although Socrates is the ‘dominant speaker’ of the Theaetetus and the Eleatic Stranger of the Sophist and Statesman, Socrates’ role in setting up the structure of the conversations of the latter dialogues provides a further basis for considering the three together. Moreover, the fact that Socrates is the ‘dominant speaker’² of both the Theaetetus and the Republic has encouraged many scholars who find substantive retrospective reflection in the former on the latter; I propose further, critical aspects of such reflection in the Digression.

I argue that Plato has Socrates in the Theaetetus reflect on the arguments he had made in the Republic about the connection between kingship and happiness, and point forward to a contrasting set of arguments about philosophy, statecraft, and rule which are made in the Statesman by the ES. The ES’s role in identifying an ideal statesman takes a step which Socrates, because of the nature of his self-appointed civic role in Athens, would not have been able to fulfill. Yet Socrates’ initiating presence in the ES dialogues is, while not possible to interpret with certainty, in light of this paper will appear to indicate a lack of fundamental conflict between him and the Stranger, insofar as both are presented as philosophizing, even though neither can be proven to be ‘a philosopher’ and there are several characteristics which they do not share.³

Before plunging into the argument, a word about the strategy of interpreting aspects of the *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Statesman* (which I shall call the ‘trio’⁴) conjointly may be helpful. The textual evidence linking the three will be rehearsed below. These links are explicit and sequential, as contrasted for example with the way in which other individual dialogues (*Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Phaedo*) are each located in relation to the phases of Socrates’ trial but are not otherwise explicitly textually linked to one another.⁵ The idea of the *Theaetetus* as in important respects a commentary on other dialogues is well-established. Many writers have debated the sense in which the midwifery image, for example, either underpins or undermines the method of the elenchus as practised on other dialogues. More specifically, David Sedley (2000, 793) has argued that the *Theaetetus* can be read as a retrospective justification of middle-Plato principles by showing how Socrates could have held them on the basis of religion rather than metaphysics. I argue here that the Digression of the *Theaetetus* also brings aspects of the political theory of the *Republic* under scrutiny, but does so in a critical vein, so indicating a need for just the kind of discussion of those aspects which appears in the *Statesman*. This makes the *Theaetetus* what might be called a ‘forward-looking’ as well as retrospective dialogue, putting into Socrates’ mouth a call for some of the points about politics and philosophy which the Eleatic Stranger will make.

The idea that aspects of certain dialogues are ‘forward-looking’ has been developed into a system of interpretation by Charles Kahn (1996), who argues against the idea of a ‘Socratic’ period in Plato’s writings by suggesting that those dialogues typically classed ‘Socratic’ are instead ‘proleptic’ of Plato’s own ideas. The suggestion here is not systematic in the way that his was; it depends only on two rather minimal assumptions. The first is the weak developmentalist assumption that the *Republic* precedes (at least in intended reading order) the *Statesman*, without presupposing any stronger claims about the extent to which their metaphysics or political theories

diverge. The second is on taking the explicit textual sequence of the trio to indicate that the Theaetetus should be read as ‘preceding’ (again, in intended reading order) the Statesman. Thus we can and will find that Socrates, who was the dominant speaker of the Republic, appears in the Theaetetus *inter alia* to criticise aspects of the Republic’s discussion and so to pave the way for a different approach to be taken in the Statesman. The explicitness of the textual links between the trio dialogues supports the limited forward-looking reference in this case, while the widespread, often tacit presumption among scholars that the Republic comes in some sense ‘before’ the Statesman is the only other support that is needed.

But while useful, the temporality embedded in this contrast of forward- and backward-looking references must be interpreted with caution. For all forward-looking references are really backward-looking references in disguise, insofar as they can only be fully appreciated in light of the later text to which they (can then be understood to) point. But this does not invalidate the meaningfulness of forward-looking writing strategies which trade at once on sequential reading and on the ideal of a ‘practised Platonic reader’⁶ who rereads the dialogues many times and so can bring them to bear on one another. In this context, claims in ‘later’ (in specified reading order) dialogues can plausibly be brought to bear on those in ‘earlier’ ones, just as points embodied in ‘earlier’ ones can be understood to evoke or suggest points in ‘later’ ones. In practice, intertextuality goes both ways. Nevertheless, explicit textual sequencing between dialogues guides the reader as to how to begin to unravel its threads.

Having referred to the explicit textual links between the Theaetetus and the ES pair of dialogues, let us recall them briefly here. Socrates concludes the Theaetetus by saying: ‘And now I must go to the King’s Porch to meet the indictment that Meletus has brought against me; but let us meet here again in the morning, Theodorus’ (Tht.210d).⁷ Theodorus opens the Sophist by saying: ‘We’ve come at the proper time by yesterday’s agreement, Socrates. We’re also bringing this man

who's visiting us. He's from Elea and he's a member of the group who gather around Parmenides and Zeno' (So.216a). And Socrates begins the Statesman by saying: 'I'm really much indebted to you, Theodorus, for introducing me to Theaetetus, and also to our visitor' (St.257a). So the three dialogues are placed not only in a dramatic sequence but also in an intertextual one, with cross-references to speakers and occasions between them. This differentiates them from the Euthyphro, for example, which although it might seem to intervene between Theaetetus and Sophist (since Socrates meets Euthyphro near the king archon's court, Euthyphr.2a) is lacking any intertextual connection to either of them (see n.4 above).

But what then of the fact that the Theaetetus opens with a frame discussion (Tht.142a-143c) between Euclides and Terpsion, set just after Theaetetus as an older man has received the injuries on military service which (it would seem) are those which actually killed him in 369 B.C., which prompts Euclides to order his slave to read out the notes which he (Euclides) had made from Socrates' own recounting to him on a visit of his (Euclides) to Athens (checked on subsequent such visits), of Socrates' conversation with Theaetetus as a youth, at which Theodorus and Young Socrates were also present? (My report of the frame is as deliberately convoluted as the frame itself.) This frame is left open at the end of the dialogue – it is never referred to again – and this in turn leaves open the possibility that the ES pair also are dialogues recorded by Euclides from Socrates' later recounting of them to him.⁸ The leaving open of this possibility does not only underscore the continuity between the three dialogues, which is in any case already sufficiently marked. It also suggests that Socrates may have himself chosen to recount the visit of the Eleatic Stranger. In light of the argument below, it will be suggested – though cannot be proved – that this indicates a harmonious relationship between the two.

There is another element of the opening Theaetetus frame which repays attention. This is the fact that the conversation between Euclides and Terpsion is set in Megara (Tht.142c1). Megara is one

of the two places (along with Thebes) which the ‘Laws’ of the Crito call ‘well governed’ but which they suggest would receive Socrates as a ‘destroyer of the laws’ and an ‘enemy to their government’ were he to escape death in Athens by fleeing to them (Cr.53b).⁹ This characterisation presents Megara as a city which sticks to its laws (arguably better than Athens, as the Crito¹⁰ hints that the Athenians have violated her laws in committing injustice against Socrates). Were he to escape prison in Athens, Socrates as a law-breaker would be received as an enemy to law-bound Megara. So the half-frame dialogue of the Theaetetus reminds the attentive Platonic reader of a city, Megara, which is well-governed to the extent that it sticks to the laws. But the reader who goes on to read the Statesman (reading her way through the trio as the trio invites her to do) will reflect on Megara in a further light. For by sticking closely to her laws, Megara appears in light of the Statesman (300a-303b) as a second-best city, one which sticks to the laws in the absence of a true statesman able to govern her with supreme authoritative flexibility.

The reference to Megara in the Theaetetus then in retrospect of the Statesman raises the question of whether such law-abidingness is the best possible political condition, or whether there can be a true statesman whose rule would be superior to that of fixed laws. The question of whether there can be such a true statesman may appear to be answered negatively in the Digression. For there Socrates draws a comprehensive contrast between ‘the philosopher’ and the clever, calculating ‘practical man’. The former occupies himself with the things that are, neglecting the body and the practices of the city; the latter is busy in the law-courts. Yet immediately preceding the Digression is a summary of the argument so far against Protagoras, in which Socrates insists that the Protagorean theory must admit at least for questions of interest that there is a real truth about what is in a city’s interest and what is not (172a). This suggests that there is indeed a need for someone with knowledge of the truth about civic interests, and so that Megara – sticking to her laws without any indication that those laws have been tested for the truth of the interests they

protect – could be improved upon. A logical space for true statecraft thus emerges, though it is not here stated whether this can be humanly filled.

Let us look more closely at the Digression itself (Tht.172c-177b). It arises as follows. Having pointed out that the truth of civic interest has to be accepted even by Protagoreans, Socrates observes that Protagoreans and others ‘who are not prepared to go all the way with Protagoras’, but who share similar sympathies, nevertheless insist that justice and piety are not subject to truth and falsity but are determined by popular (interestingly, ‘collective’) perception (Tht.172a-b). He then observes to Theodorus that they ‘are becoming involved in a greater discussion emerging from the lesser one’ (Tht.172b8-c1). Theodorus replies, ‘Well, we have plenty of time, haven’t we, Socrates?’ (Tht.172c1). And Socrates answers:

We appear to (phainometha)...¹¹ That remark of yours, my friend, reminds me of an idea that has often occurred to me before – how natural it is that men who have spent a great part of their lives in philosophical studies make such fools of themselves when they appear as speakers in the law courts (Tht.172c2-6).

He goes on to systematize the contrast between the philosophers and the ‘practical men’ who speak in law courts by drawing a ratio: the upbringing of a practical man is to that of a philosopher as the upbringing of a slave is to that of a free man (172d1). The key contrast between the two former groups, Socrates explains, is that the philosopher has what Theodorus ‘mentioned just now’: ‘plenty of time (skolē)’ (172d3). In contrast, the men of the lawcourts are defined as those who speak always ‘with lack of time/leisure (en ascholia)’ (172d9, my rough translation).

We will return to the general implications of this contrast. But first it is relevant to note that there are question marks over the extent to which Socrates' description of the philosopher here excludes himself. The first is precisely in relation to leisure. Socrates' enigmatic response of phainometha to Theodorus' ingenuous suggestion that they have plenty of time foreshadows the very immediate demand on his time which is noted at the end of the dialogue: the requirement that he go to the King's Porch to answer the indictment laid against him by Meletus (Tht.210d1-3).¹² Although only the Crito requires of Socrates that he make a decision in a limited time frame (Lane 1998a, 313-14), all of the dialogues related to the trial show him under a cloud of at least potentially curtailed time. (Admittedly, Socrates illustrates the leisure of the ideal philosopher in the Digression by saying that 'it is so with us now' as they begin a third new discussion topic (172d5-6) – is this in the retrospect of the end of the dialogue an example of Socratic irony?)

The second major question mark raised by Socrates' description of the philosopher in relation to himself, is in his claim that the philosopher is indifferent to political matters because 'it is only his body that lives and sleeps in the city', while his mind spurns the usual matters of public life in its quest to understand 'the entire nature of each whole among the things that are' (173e-174a). While this philosopher's indifference to the ordinary concerns of civic life does not in principle rule out some kind of alternative civic role for him, the tenor of the description does not invite such a thought. Socrates as the 'gadfly' of Athens, appointed by the Delphic oracle to pursue his useful questioning of the Athenians, does not fit this model, even though he is equally distinct from the 'practical men' whom he here denigrates. This portrait of the philosopher is not, whatever else it may be, a portrait of Socrates.

But these claims are only startling if one assumes that (Plato wishes to show that) Socrates takes himself to be the model of the philosopher. Frequenting the market-place, being distinguished by knowing that he does not know, being presently under indictment, and being the 'gadfly' of

Athens made such by obedience to the Delphic oracle, are characteristics of Socrates which are not, or not necessarily, characteristics of philosophers as such. Here in the Digression, Socrates is made to point out that he is not the unique pattern of the philosopher. Indeed to expect a pattern (paradeigma) of the philosopher is to have the wrong kind of expectation. What distinguishes philosophers is not what they are personally or individually like but rather what they love and strive for. The true patterns (paradeigmata) are not the philosophers themselves, nor even in this passage any moral Form, but rather, as David Sedley has argued, god (Sedley 2000, 794). So Socrates in the Theaetetus opens the way for the ES by indicating that there may be many different philosophers, all of whom belong to one kind (loving and aspiring to divine goodness) but who may appear and act in superficially quite different ways.¹³

So far we have seen that although Socrates in the Digression draws a stark contrast between philosophers and practical men, he himself is an example of a blurring of those lines in two ways. First, he is about to lose the leisure which defines the philosopher even though he may still be able to enjoy the experience of it in the moment of speaking. Second, he plays a kind of civic role in Athens, albeit an idiosyncratic and self-appointed one as its ‘gadfly’ (Ap.30e). He goes so far in the Gorgias as to call himself the only person in Athens ‘to take up the true political craft and practice the true politics (epicheirein tē hōs alēthōs politikē technē kai prattein ta politika) (G.521d), though it is crucial that his explanation of this self-description refers solely to the nature of his speeches as aiming ‘not...at gratification but at what’s best’ (G.521d-e). Socrates is not engaged in active ruling, and his speeches are made outside the context of political institutions in which he did not voluntarily participate (although he presumably made speeches when serving his turn on the Council). In light of the Apology, the Gorgias passage invites reading as a paradoxical reformulation – Socrates is saying that what he does (which is not ruling, but speaking) is the true political art, not laying claim to possess the authoritative political knowledge which the Statesman envisages as characterizing the true statesman. Socrates does not

appear even in the Gorgias to share the features of the governing, authoritative, and expert ‘true statesman’ of the Statesman. (One implication is that Megara would not have been saved from its second-best status had Socrates actually fled there from prison, because he would not have had the positive knowledge needed to rule it as a true statesman, in addition to the secondary suggestion in the Crito (53b) that the Megarians would perceive him in that context as a lawless law-breaker rather than as the ideal statesman kind of law-breaker.)

These points about Socrates in relation to philosophy and statecraft will return at the end of the article. Now we need to observe that in the same way as the mention of Megara at the beginning of the Theaetetus intimates (in light of the Statesman) the need for a true statesman – who is not Socrates, but whom the ES will define -- so too do other aspects of the dialogue. This is so despite the fact that the major thrust of the Digression is to oppose philosophers to existing practical men. For the Digression arises at a specific moment of the dialogue.

Socrates’ argument against Protagoras had before the Digression reached the point of asserting that a city’s interests are a matter of truth and falsity, so implying that statecraft must aim at identifying and pursuing true as opposed to false interests (a point he develops at length after the Digression: 177c-179b). Whereas in the Theaetetus Socrates limits himself to talking about true interests as what all cities aim to pursue, sometimes succeeding and sometimes failing, the implication (especially for practised readers conversant with the search for a ‘ruling art’ in other dialogues) is that an ideal statecraft would always advance true interests (as well as justice and piety, mentioned before the Digression).

How would such true statecraft relate to philosophy? The Digression and the Theaetetus leave this unanswered: by drawing such a sharp distinction between philosophers and practical men, between the leisure of the one group and the pressures on the other, the Digression does not do

much to advance a positive vision of ideal statecraft as an expertise. But it does raise a profound challenge to such a vision. Describing the amusement of the philosopher upon hearing people praising a tyrant or a king, amusement which strikes others as idiotic, Socrates says:

When he hears the praises of a despot or a king being sung, it sounds to his ears as if some stock-breeder were being congratulated [lit: ‘and said to be happy’ – eudaimonizomenon, 174d5-6] -- some keeper of pigs or sheep, or cows that are giving him plenty of milk. Only he thinks that the rulers have a more difficult and treacherous animal to rear and milk, and that such a man, having no spare time, is bound to become quite as coarse and uncultivated as the stock-farmer. (174d3-e2)

The stock-breeding imagery itself is evocative of the Statesman, where such an image of political rule is both advanced and criticised as inadequate by use of the ‘story’ or myth – Socrates’ philosopher here seems to take a jaundiced interest in such imagery, not dissimilar from the critical use which the ES will make of it. Yet the more important point for our purposes in this passage is its definition of rulers in general – both turannon and basilea (and note that basilikēn, politikēn, and oikonomiken are asserted by the ES in Statesman 259c to be interchangeable as names) – as having ‘no spare time’. On the face of it, this refers to the Digression’s general contrast between the philosopher and the practical man which we have been considering, in which the lack of spare time is marked as a feature (and a demerit) of the latter. But in commenting that the ruling of men – as either ‘a despot or a king’ – implies the absence of free time, Socrates is also saying something relevant to any ruler and not only to the existing practical men whom he in the Digression so despises.

It follows from this definition of the ruler that if a philosopher should become a ruler – as the Republic (487eff.) argues is necessary for a city to possess the virtues and be saved from evils – it

follows that in so ruling, the philosopher will lose the free time which had precisely defined him against the practical man. In devoting himself to the practice of politics, the philosopher loses one feature (having free time) which had defined him against the practical man, and takes on instead the practical man's negative version of that feature instead (lacking free time). This embodies a challenge to the idea that philosophers can and should rule, especially to the form of that idea advanced in the Republic. How can a philosopher rule if doing so makes him no longer a philosopher? The conundrum of forcing philosophers, metaphorically, back into the cave is a familiar one to students of the Republic. The Digression sharpens its contours, while the context in which the Digression is embedded raises the need for a solution – for an ideal statecraft in which true interests are rightly judged, which somehow resolves the problem of the leisured philosopher becoming the unleisured ruler. The effect of this double manoeuvre is to open the door to what the ES will do in the Statesman. There, philosophers will not be forced to rule, but rather an integral statecraft will be described in which knowledge and rule are welded together, transforming the character of both.

Before spelling out how the Statesman addresses this challenge, however, let us identify another way in which the Digression criticises the Republic and raises the need for a move made in the Statesman. When the philosopher gets the practical man ('our friend with the small, sharp, legal mind', 175d) to engage in discussion, one example of the kind of discussion the philosopher will seek to engage him in, 'draw[ing] him' to a 'higher level' (175c1) is this:

[getting] him to leave such questions as 'Is a king happy?' or 'a man of property?' for an inquiry into kingship, and into human happiness and misery in general... (175c4-6).

Now Glaucon and Adeimantus had pressed precisely the question 'Is a king happy?' in Republic II. Indeed, taking 'king' as a synonym for 'ruler' (as the Statesman itself does, 259d3-4), this

question can be said to be the fundamental guiding question of the main body of the Republic. Glaucon sets up that question by presenting Gyges' ancestor as a man who uses a magic ring to act supremely unjustly but to maintain a reputation for justice; contrasting him with the just man who is universally believed to be unjust; and challenging Socrates to join him in judging 'which of them is happier' (Republic II, 361d3). In Republic IX (580c) Socrates concludes his answer to this challenge by establishing that Glaucon now agrees with him that the tyrant, being supremely unjust, is in fact supremely unhappy. But having made Socrates dedicate himself to answering that question in the Republic, Plato here has him voice a criticism of that very question as not philosophically sufficiently fundamental. For the Republic did not answer the question of what kingship or rule is in itself. It focused on the question of who should rule, and whether those who rule will be happy, rather than on the nature of rule per se. That is precisely the topic of the Statesman.

Put another way, the Republic said that the philosophers should rule, and wondered whether they would be happy in ruling – but it did not define a specific role of 'statesman' nor art of 'statecraft'. Despite the expectation from the elenctic dialogues that ruling should turn out to be an art (technē), the Republic makes remarkably little use of this idea per se (though it makes great play of the technē analogy in other respects). Indeed, the Republic's vision of philosophy seems to make it far greater and more comprehensive than any single technē.

By contrast, the Statesman dedicates itself to a definition of the statesman by means of his technē or epistēmē (using both terms interchangeably though preferring the latter: Lane 1998, 3 n.7). And, because as noted above, the dialogue explicitly takes 'statesman' and 'king' to be interchangeable, its principal inquiry can indeed be defined as an 'inquiry into kingship' that is exactly the kind of inquiry praised by Socrates in the Theaetetus. The Statesman also, though less self-evidently, can be considered to raise the question of 'human happiness and misery in

general'. This is in connection with the 'myth' or story, when the Stranger asks which life – that lived in the time of Kronos, or that lived in the time of Zeus, is 'more fortunate' (Cooper) or, as we might equally well translate, 'happier' (eudaimonesteron, 272b3-4). He essays an answer to his own question, by saying that it would depend on whether those living under Kronos 'used all [their] advantages to do philosophy, 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', or on the contrary 'spent their time gorging themselves with food and drink and exchanging stories with each other and with the animals of the sort that even now are told about them...' (St.272c-d). If doing philosophy in the way described is to be 'fortunate' or 'happy', then gorging on food and drink and so forth would seem to be miserable.¹⁴

Whatever the correct answer to the question of what the denizens of the age of Kronos did, the crucial point for our purposes is the striking insulation of this question from the dialogue's main search for a definition of statecraft and the statesman. The question about happiness is buried in the details of the myth, and is raised not about the statesman but rather about the people living in the age of Kronos. So the Statesman carefully segregates its 'inquiry into kingship' from its 'inquiry into human happiness and misery in general', never mixing them into what Socrates of the Theaetetus considers the more superficial practical man's question of 'Is a king happy?' . In this respect it is clearly the Statesman, not the Republic, which best practises that which the Socrates of the Theaetetus preaches that the philosopher should seek.

In fact it is remarkable that the question of whether the ruler will be happy, which is treated as a deep and important question in the Republic, is never raised in the Statesman about the eponymous statesman at all. And this unites the two issues which we have identified as raised by the Digression and addressed in the Statesman: it links the need to separate discussion of kingship

from discussion of human happiness, to the relation of the un leisured statesman to the leisured philosopher. In the Statesman, the statesman is defined in terms of his knowledge, and that knowledge is a knowledge of ruling, even though the statesman may exercise it by advising rather than by ruling, or may not exercise it at all (259b). So the statesman's expertise is, unlike philosophy, in essence practical.

This is confirmed by closer textual analysis. Charles Griswold has noted that the original division between gnōstikē and praktikē (St.259c10-d1) is tacitly abandoned in the summary of the divisions made in the discussion of the appropriate criteria of rule (292b-c)¹⁵, and it has been widely observed that the category of gnōstikē is anyway complicated by the introduction of the category of epitaktikē (260b) which involves ordering that things be done. For ordering (like ruling) is a kind of doing, and since it defines statecraft not only in the initial divisions but also in the final definition (archousan, as well as the practical verbs epimeloumenēn and sunuphainousan, at 305e2-6), it follows that statecraft differs from philosophy not only in being a part of the whole, but in its essentially practical orientation.¹⁶ So the very definition of the statesman and of statecraft includes the notion of ruling within it, which is not true of the definition of the philosopher in the Republic – or indeed in the Theaetetus, which intimates the need for an ideal statesman while clinging in the Digression to an opposition between philosopher and practical man.

In the Republic, being a philosopher means that you are able to apply your philosophical knowledge to rule, but will not inherently desire to do so. This is what raises the problem about how the philosophers can be made to rule which is prefigured in Book I's discussion of why wise men will be willing to rule (347a-e) and which occupies so much of Book VII. In the Statesman, being a statesman means not only that you know how to rule, but also that a relationship to ruling is part of the very definition of your role. The Republic philosopher-rulers have to escape from

the city; the Statesman's statesman is defined in terms of his relation to the city. In this light, once the nature of statecraft (or, as the Statesman interchangeably calls it (258e) 'kingship') is fully understood, in a way in which it was not in the Republic, the question 'is a king happy?' does genuinely fall away. It is revealed to rest on a superficial understanding of the statesman, in which statecraft is just something that the philosopher might do, as opposed to a genuine technē or epistēmē in its own right.

Yet it is true that in order to possess the epistēmē of statecraft, a statesman will need to know the kairos, which involves knowledge of what it is good and right to do at a given moment (see Lane, 1998, 125-46). And he is characterised at one point in the Statesman as someone who is 'willing and able to rule with virtue and expert knowledge, distributing what is just and right correctly to all'.¹⁷ If the statesman has to know 'the good' in order to be able to judge the 'better' (St.296b2, b6) – which is shown by the dialogue to be the proper political aim, since any political art must start with some given material and so at best only improve on it – then does he not have to be the philosopher after all?

To this rhetorical question – and to the lapidary claim of M.M. McCabe: 'If the statesman is the person who knows, he will be the philosopher' (1997: 98) – the correct answer is both yes, and no. "Yes", in the sense that the statesman does have to share in at least the most important part of the philosopher's knowledge (the definition of the good and the virtues), and it is arguable that on the conceptions of knowledge developed in all three of the trio dialogues, it would be impossible for him to have some such philosophical knowledge without having the whole. But "No", in the sense that the Statesman precisely defines the statesman as someone who is defined by his knowledge of ruling and whose relationship to the task of ruling therefore differs from that of the pure philosopher. The question which arises for the philosopher -- of whether he or she will be motivated, or happy, to rule -- does not arise for the statesman. In serving as (and so becoming) a

statesman, the philosopher does not merely apply his knowledge when forced by necessity to do so. Rather, a central element of his nature and education is transformed by this new role definition – as shown earlier, he loses the leisure which in the Theaetetus is part of what defines him – and he must now take on an essentially practical orientation which his self-definition as philosopher utterly lacked. Statecraft is not just a day job for a philosopher. It is a profession, (re)defining the philosopher who undertakes it according to its own requirements and persona, to the extent of earning him, rightly, a new name.

Let me illustrate this point by explaining the title of this paper.¹⁸ The American Philosophical Association used to entitle its newsletter giving details of vacant positions ‘Jobs in Philosophy’. But when an American county asked to post details of a position as ‘sheriff’ for which the county wished to attract someone with philosophical skills and training, the Association changed the title of the newsletter to ‘Jobs for Philosophers’. To be a statesman may be a job for a philosopher, but it is not a job in philosophy. It is, further, not just an ordinary job, but a kind of professional calling, which changes the appropriate description of the person who fills that calling. A sheriff, even a philosophical one, is better defined as a ‘sheriff’ than as a ‘philosopher’. Likewise, insofar as the philosopher is serving as a statesman, it is the burden of the Statesman to show that it is more accurate to define him as ‘statesman’ than to call him (as McCabe would do) ‘philosopher’. The statesman is a philosopher in the sense of having philosophical knowledge, but he is not a philosopher if the question is how he is best defined. For he is best defined, precisely, as a statesman.

We might say that the statesman both is and is not a philosopher. And this perhaps also provides the reader with a model answer to the question of whether Socrates and the Eleatic Strangers are, or are not, philosophers. There is some opening byplay of the Sophist which needs to be cleared out of the way before a considered answer to this question can be given. This begins with the fact

that Theodorus actually calls the ES a ‘philosopher’, or rather, ‘mala de andra philosophon’ (So.216a4), and also says that the ES is ‘more measured than the eristics’ (So.216b8). But rather than proving that the Stranger is a philosopher, these remarks show only how very unphilosophical is Theodorus. To say that someone is ‘very much a philosopher’ is redundant, and to be ‘more measured’ will be shown in the Statesman (283c-284e) to involve a conception of relative measurement less valuable than measurement according to the mean.

Likewise in the Statesman’s opening byplay, Theodorus shows himself not to grasp the question of proportionate worth measured by value in ‘geometric’ as opposed to ‘arithmetical’ terms (St.257a7). For even after Socrates has explained the contrast to him, the geometer -- ironically enough -- compliments him on his good memory of ‘arithmetic’ (St.257b7). Besides lacking this grasp of the significance of his own subject, Theodorus also seems to lack self-knowledge of the significance of his own status: he harps on the ES’s being a ‘stranger’ when he also is in Athenian terms one himself. And finally, he lacks even a basic sense of what philosophising would be. Having called the Stranger ‘very much a philosopher’, he goes on to commend him as having ‘heard a lot about the issue [which Socrates has proposed for discussion], after all, and [not] forgotten it’ (So.217b7-8): as if philosophy consisted in remembering testimony.¹⁹ (Similarly, he admits to Socrates at the end of the Theaetetus’ Digression that he would be happy to go on listening to such perorations rather than have to grapple with argument.)

Theodorus’ testimony that the Stranger is a philosopher is manifestly not to be taken seriously. And this bears on Socrates’ opening query in the Sophist as to whether the Stranger is a ‘god in disguise’ (216a-b). He explains his question by stating that it is no easier to distinguish (diakrinein) philosophers than gods, for the actual as opposed to fake philosophers take on all sorts of different appearances (phantazomenoi) because of the ignorance of other men (the types of such appearances will be discussed below). Those ignorant men cannot judge whether

philosophers are ‘worth’ (axioi) nothing or everything. To the non-philosopher, philosophers cannot be recognised or valued for what they are.

One attempt to make sense of Socrates’ claim in the Sophist that philosophers are difficult to distinguish from gods is to invoke his observation in the Digression of the Theaetetus that philosophers inherently love the divine pattern and attempt to assimilate themselves to it. Here, it is the extent to which philosophers do share in divinity that makes them hard to tell apart from gods. But this is not fully satisfying as an explanation of the original claim. For since no mortal can ever become fully godlike, philosophers will never be exactly identical with gods while alive, and so this strategy does not explain why they should be difficult to tell apart. It does however suggest another important point. This is that since no mortal can fully become godlike, no mortal can fully consummate and incarnate the aspiration of the philosopher to become like god. It follows that to be a philosopher is always to be incomplete in comparison with the ideal. We will return to this point below. Meanwhile, to explain why philosophers are difficult to distinguish, we need to focus on the difficulty that the non-philosopher will have in recognising them. There is no possible sign which the dialogues could manifest which would decide the issue. Any sign can be mistaken for a mere appearance by a non-philosopher. Philosophers will recognise one another. Nothing will guarantee that ignorant non-philosophers can recognise them.

This bears on the much debated question as to whether either Socrates, the ES, or both are meant to embody the absent ‘philosopher’ and so in their person(s) complete the seemingly uncompleted series of definitions of sophist, statesman, and philosopher intimated at the beginning of the Sophist. Although Socrates does include himself among those with a philosophic nature in Republic VI, we have seen that in the Theaetetus, his portrait of the philosopher in some ways excludes himself as he has actually become, being deprived of leisure as a result of his trial and acting meanwhile as Athens’ gadfly. As for the ES, Theodorus’ unreliable testimony does not

help us; the fact that he is from Elea may indicate that he is a kind of philosopher, yet his willingness to respond to Socrates' question about 'what people in Elea think' may itself indicate a willingness to expound testimony rather than do original philosophy – or is he expounding the views of the Eleatic philosophers as a form of philosophy? It may be meant to be impossible to tell.

In this light, we must reconsider probably the most persuasive attempt to date to answer the question of the missing Philosopher²⁰, which is Michael Frede's suggestion that the Theaetetus / Sophist / Statesman trio as a whole is 'the answer to the question what a philosopher is', and that these three dialogues are written in such a way as 'to give an example of philosophy, to show us paradigmatically what philosophy is' (Frede (1996) 150).²¹ The method of example or paradeigma in the Statesman is a method which works by using one technē or epistēmē as a model for another: weaving for statecraft is the dialogue's chief example of example. But philosophy is not one art among many. It is not a technē nor even an epistēmē in the sense in which these are discussed in the ES pair, in which individual arts or branches of knowledge are defined against others.²² If philosophy is something to do with understanding the whole or wholes, then it is not something which can be directly exemplified by the method of paradeigma.

While I agree, then, with Frede that the trio as a whole gives us some indication of what philosophy is, I would content that this indication is more like a fragment than a hologram. It is not philosophy in miniature, but rather an example of the kinds of miniatures which can be defined, yet which are not microcosms of the whole which encompasses them. So the method of the philosopher can be indicated, but its full results can be neither depicted nor articulated. Because the divine pattern is inexhaustible, no single smaller paradigm can be adequate. The dialogues indicate that a philosopher may be present and what philosophy would be like, without usurping the inexhaustible divine pattern to which it is impossible for mortals fully to assimilate.

One reason, then, that Plato may introduce the ES as an alternative dominant speaker to Socrates (and go on to add Timaeus and the Athenian Stranger in other dialogues) is to underline the point that no one possesses philosophy fully. Ruby Blondell is right to assert that this shows that for Plato, '[p]hilosophy is now greater than Sokrates [sic]' (Blondell (2002) 387). Conversely, while both Socrates and the Stranger philosophise, as figures who yearn for rather than exhibit philosophy in full they remain distinct. So this interpretation of the trio is compatible with its also indicating that philosophy will lose something irreplaceable when Socrates dies. The nameless Eleatic Stranger is the 'Other' philosopher as such, contrasted to the named, beloved, idiosyncratic, individual Socrates.

This points to a more specific reason for the introduction of the ES as dominant speaker to define the sophist and the statesman in particular. It would seem that Socrates, in virtue of his negative and goading civic role, is not the person who could envisage or describe a full and positive true statecraft. We saw above that the quest in various dialogues by Socrates for a ruling art which possesses true wisdom becomes in the Republic the quest for knowledge of the forms, with the idea of 'ruling' there losing any specific content or function. Socrates is not the right person to define an independent and substantive ideal of statecraft, since his role in Athens is to goad rather than to rule -- he will never rule in his city, since even as the framed dialogue of the Theaetetus unfolds he stands already accused, and he is too much of a lover of Athens (cf. Tht.143d: 'I love Athens better than Cyrene') to seek to rule anywhere else.

It is therefore left to the ES to show how philosophy and statecraft could fit together in a positive rather than forced sense. No civic role for the Stranger is mentioned, and while it is not impossible that he has had or will have one at home in Elea, the very fact that he is visiting Athens sets his willingness to detach from his own civic context in contrast to Socrates' refusal

ever to leave Athens except on military service. This contrast evinces the different relationships to their cities, and to the city as such, of the two men. The ES is able to imagine an ideal statecraft, in which the philosopher can truly transform himself into a statesman, because he is able to detach himself from the flaws of any actual one. Socrates, bound to Athens, is bound to behave politically to her in relation to her imperfection, and so his statesmanlike activities there can only be negative ones (goading, stinging like a gadfly). He may not appear like a true statesman to the Athenians, but in his terms he is one, yet he is not the true statesman whom the ES describes.

It was argued above that the Statesman is best interpreted as fulfilling a need intimated in the Theaetetus. This is a need for a profession or vocation of statesman, one which is filled by a philosopher but which alters the very nature and name of the philosopher who occupies it. Statecraft is a ‘job for philosophers’ rather than a ‘job in philosophy’, but as such a job – a kind of profession -- it changes the definition of the person who masters it. This suggests the need for a careful interpretation of the way in which Socrates fills in the possible ways in which philosophers appear to non-philosophers (the general passage at So.217d was discussed above, but the range of appearances mentioned there was left for discussion here).

Socrates says that to the ignorant, ‘[philosophers] sometimes take on the appearance of statesman, and sometimes of sophists. Sometimes, too, they might give the impression that they’re completely insane (manikōs)’ (So.217d). Are all these mistaken appearances meant to be on a par? I think that the careful reader of the trio must dissent from such a suggestion. The sense in which philosophers appear as statesman has been explicated above: it is a positive transmutation of part of their identity into a new role-definition. The sense in which philosophers might appear to be sophists would require a fuller interpretation of the Sophist than can be given here (including an assessment of the ‘noble sophist’ passage). But it is clear that the appearance of the

philosopher as a sophist might be a negative one – the philosopher is misinterpreted as a sophist, in a sense in which he is not misinterpreted (though his definition is modified) when he appears as a statesman. The appearance of the philosopher as a madman is itself ambiguous – it might be a mote in the beholder’s eye similar to the appearance as a sophist, or it might betoken a genuine perception of the madness of the philosopher-lover as described in the Phaedrus. (This ambiguity in the appearance as madman may itself be a retrospective hint that the cases of statesman and sophist are not on a par.)

The relation between appearances and reality is itself complex and a matter for philosophical understanding; in the absence of such understanding, profound mistakes of recognition may be made. That is itself, Notomi (1999) has argued, a theme of the Sophist. We have sought here to identify its political significance – and to interpret the sense in which philosophers who appear as statesmen are to be recognised as such, by interpreting in tandem aspects of the two dialogues which narratively and sequentially frame the Sophist, and which we have shown to speak to each other in redefining statecraft as a job for philosophers.²³

¹ In Lane (1998) 8 I took ‘the liberty of identifying the Eleatic Stranger’s arguments with Plato’s’, while rejecting the ‘liberty of speculating...on the relationship between Socrates and the Eleatic Stranger, or Socrates and Plato’; see the similar identification of the ES with Plato in Rowe (1995) 10. I am attempting now to explore the relationship between Socrates and the ES. The question of whether the ES or Socrates speaks for Plato in any of these dialogues is not directly addressed here: I think now that the question may be ill-formed, since authors both speak through and in their work as a whole, and also may identify themselves more transiently with the twists and turns of the thoughts or arguments that they explore.

² I borrow the term ‘dominant speaker’ from Blondell (2002) passim.

³ Many authors have of course taken positions on this question. The diversity of views, which I cannot engage directly or refute decisively, but which need to be reevaluated in light of the argument of this paper, can be illustrated as follows (positions are summarised crudely for the sake of comparison). That the ES is essentially Socratic or reaches a rapprochement with Socrates in the course of the Statesman: Miller (1980); Stern (1997). That the ES seeks to take revenge on Socrates on behalf of Gorgias, though both also differ from their mutual proponent Protagoras: Nancy (1995). That the ES seeks to punish Socrates, but fails: Rosen (1983) 324, though note in Rosen (1995) 6-8 the claim that his very attempt to punish Socrates ultimately makes the ES indistinguishable from Socrates. That the ES is or advocates a superior philosophy to that of Socrates, at least in some respects: Cropsey (1995); McCabe (1997). That the ES is an inadequate philosopher compared to Socrates, at least in some respects: Kochin (1999); Rosen (1983), Rosen (1995). Some authors approach the question by focusing on the significance of the Stranger's being from Elea. For Notomi (1999) 21, the Stranger's Eleatic heritage indicates that he will examine Parmenides' philosophy. Bluck (1975) 32 (a reference I owe to Alex Long) suggests that the Stranger will put forward an 'enlightened or reformed' Eleatic philosophy which is identical for Plato with Platonism. Rosen (1995) 14 is less sure that the Stranger represents Eleaticism at all; for Long (2002) Elea represents philosophy as such, the position to which I am most sympathetic.

⁴ Blondell (2002) 8 gives good reasons for questioning 'trilogy', as used e.g. by Klein (1977), as an overly strong description of the relations indicated in the Platonic text between Theaetetus and the ES pair. I use 'trio' more neutrally to indicate that there is some objective relationship indicated between the three, though the ES pair are clearly much more closely related to one another.

⁵ Howland 1993 and 1998 establish a seven-dialogue sequence by setting the dialogues in relation to the trial (which would make the Euthyphro intervene between the Theaetetus and Sophist), but

the point in the text about the lack of relation of these dialogues to one another seems to be important; I owe it to Verity Harte.

⁶ I borrow this idea from Schofield (2003) 3, who not only supposes that the Laws was written for such a reader, but goes on: ‘Indeed I suspect that by the time he composed the dialogue Plato had long been incapable of *not* writing with that practised reader chiefly in mind’.

⁷ This and all translations unless otherwise noted are quoted from the translations contained in Cooper 1997; the Rowe translation of the Statesman is quoted from Rowe 1996.

⁸ This is a possibility which Myles Burnyeat suggested to me many years ago.

⁹ All translations except where noted are taken from the translations in Cooper (1997).

¹⁰ Crito 54c1, though earlier the ‘Laws’ argue (in what seems in light of 54c1 to be a hypothetical vein) that if they did injure Socrates, he nevertheless should not retaliate (51a).

¹¹ The ellipses are not of course in the Greek, but are incorporated in the Levett translation revised by Burnyeat, I would imagine to intimate the enigmatic quality of Socrates’ response, on which see the text below.

¹² Observing this problematic relationship of Socrates to time as a ‘double-edged’ aspect of his description of the philosopher here by which we are meant to ‘be taken aback’, Myles Burnyeat (1990, 34-6) adds two other ways in which Socrates’ description seems not to fit himself: Socrates says that the philosopher does not know the way to the market-place (173d), and says that he ‘knows not even that he knows not’ (173e). But I would question Burnyeat’s confident assumption that the converse of the latter two descriptions apply to Socrates. Although it is often said that Socrates frequented the market-place, the term is not mentioned in any of the passages in the Apology or elsewhere where one would most expect it, and no extant dialogue is actually set in the market-place (Cooper (1997)’s index to the collected dialogues lists it being used only in the Eryxias and the Laws, in neither case with reference to Socratic activity). On the ‘knows not’ point, the reference is specifically to practical affairs – so although there may be an ironic verbal

play on Socrates' 'knowing that he knows not', the content of the not-knowing in the two cases is quite distinct.

¹³ See Blondell (2002) on the Stranger's namelessness (319) and lack of identifying features, which she argues makes him stand for the philosopher as such (321) and so for the fact that for Plato, '[p]hilosophy is now greater than Sokrates [sic]' (387). Alex Long (2002) 19 neatly suggests that the namelessness of Plato's two Strangers teaches the reader that what matters is not naming them, but 'recognising them as philosophers'.

¹⁴ On this passage compared with the age of Kronos passage in the Laws, see the excellent discussion of Van Harten 2003.

¹⁵ Griswold (1989) 145-6.

¹⁶ My inclination would be to say that statesmen in this respect share something with the gods which neither shares with the philosophers: that is, both statesmen and gods -- but not philosophers qua philosophers -- rule. But contrast M.M. McCabe's comparison of the god's ordering activity in the age of Kronos with the philosopher's (imitative) ordering activity in the age of Zeus (1997: 108-9).

¹⁷ Interestingly in light of the above discussion, the ES's definition of the statesman goes on to describe him 'steering it [the correct constitution] through in happiness' (301d) – but this implies the happiness of the ruled, not of the ruler.

¹⁸ I owe this story and helpful discussion to Peter Lipton.

¹⁹ I take this remark to be meant to illustrate Theodorus' unreliability as a judge of philosophy, rather than as evidence that the Stranger's method will be more didactic than exploratory, in contrast to the approach of Rowe (1996). On Theodorus' 'philosophical inadequacy', see similarly Blondell (2002) 315.

²⁰ A schematic sampling of views on this issue follows. That the Philosopher was simply and contingently never written: Castoriadis (2002) 14; Migliori (1996) 122. McCabe (1997) 95 n.6

observes that most contributors to Nicholson and Rowe (1993) and Rowe (1995) take it as given that the philosopher (and the Philosopher) are missing from the Statesman, with Ferber (1995) as an exception. That the philosopher can be identified positively with the statesman, or the (true) statesman with the (true) philosopher: Cropsey (1995); Frede (1996); McCabe (1997). That the statesman is in contrast inadequate compared to the philosopher: Griswold (1989) 163 n.13, observing that political science is not the same as philosophical knowledge of political science. That the philosopher can be identified but only negatively: Notomi (1999).

²¹ Compare Pradeau (2002) 78: ‘the mode of the enquiry is philosophical: to define a sophist and a statesman is, in itself, to demonstrate how philosophy should proceed’.

²² Dimitri El Murr asks me whether the conception of epistēmē in the Theaetetus is the same as that in the ES pair. This is a large question, which is not answered satisfactorily here, although it can be observed that in none of the trio is epistēmē identified with philosophy in any case – it is reserved for a more local conception of what a body of knowledge or expertise might be.

²³ An earlier and much more general attempt to address these same questions was presented at the Ecole Normale Supérieure conference on the Statesman in May 2003, organised by Monique Dixsaut and Dimitri el Murr. Both of them, together with the others at the meeting – in particular David Lefebvre, Denis O’Brien, Christopher Rowe, and Antoine de la Taille -- offered challenging discussion. Thanks again to Dimitri, and also to Verity Harte, Peter Lipton, and Alex Long, for discussing some of these questions with me subsequently. My greatest debts are to Antoine de la Taille and Annie Larivée for translating the original paper, to Fulcran Teisserenc for translating this new version, and to Dimitri El Murr for editorial advice on both.

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