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PAPERS

The Missing Speech of the Absent Fourth: Reader Response and Plato's *Timaeus-Critias*

For Stanley Fish

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ABSTRACT

Recent Plato scholarship has grown increasingly comfortable with the notion that Plato's art of writing brings his readers into the dialogue, challenging them to respond to deliberate errors or lacunae in the text. Drawing inspiration from Stanley Fish's seminal reading of Satan's speeches in *Paradise Lost*, this paper considers the narrative of Timaeus as deliberately unreliable, and argues that the actively critical reader is "the missing fourth" with which the dialogue famously begins. By continuing *Timaeus* with *Critias*—a dialogue that ends with a missing speech—Plato points to the kind of reader he expects: one who can answer Critias' question (*Critias* 107a4-6): ὡς μὲν γὰρ οὐκ εὖ τὰ παρὰ σοῦ λεχθέντα εἴρηται, τίς ἂν ἐπιχειρήσειεν ἔμφρων λέγειν;

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Despite Diskin Clay's claim that "the great gaps in the universe of the Platonic dialogues… are beyond the reach of even speculation,"[1] Mary Louise Gill has recently published a fascinating book on Plato's missing *Philosopher*. In its Introduction she writes:

> Plato did not write the *Philosopher* because he would have spoiled the exercise had he written it. In finding the philosopher through the exercise, the student becomes a philosopher by mastering his methods, and thus the target of the exercise is internally related to its pedagogical purpose.[2]

At the heart of Gill's attempt to fill in this "gap" is the three-fold claim that Plato *deliberately* created the puzzle of the missing *Philosopher* for a *pedagogical* purpose, and, moreover, that he created that puzzle *for us*:

> Plato uses the devious strategy I have attributed to him [sc. he 'hides the pieces of the puzzle and its solution in plain sight'] because, by making his audience work very hard to dig out his meaning, he fosters in them (and us, his modern readers) a skill in reading and a competence in using dialectical techniques and developing new ones.[3]

Not only by leaving *Philosopher* unwritten, but also in any number of other ways, Gill's Plato both "provokes"[4] and "tests"[5] his readers, i.e., us. Although Gill's attempt to locate Plato's missing *Philosopher* in the astute reader's response to its absence is particularly germane to the subject of this paper, it is worth emphasizing that Gill's is but the most recent addition to a growing body of literature reflecting a new trend in Plato's reception: an increasing concern with the central role of *the*

reader's response in interpreting the dialogues. Two recent books on Plato's *Republic* are good examples;[6] Francesco Ademollo's magisterial commentary on *Cratylus* can also be cited as evidence.[7] In fact, Ademollo astutely points out that this trend can be traced at least as far back as the nineteenth century.[8] Finally, as David Sedley has documented, the commentary tradition on *Theaetetus* proves that this trend actually originated in antiquity.[9]

Although it is well beyond the scope of this paper to offer anything like a reception-study of this important aspect of Platonic hermeneutics,[10] I do need to introduce at the start a few distinctions relevant to my immediate purpose. To begin with, there is Gill's attempt to use the reader's response to a particular kind of Platonic provocation: e.g., why didn't he write *Philosopher*, *Hermocrates*, and leave *Critias* unfinished? Leaving the problem of the *Philosopher* in Gill's capable hands, I will here be applying a reader-response approach to *Timaeus*, and, more specifically, to the discourse of Timaeus. In doing so, I want to distinguish my approach both from that of Gill, and, on the other hand, from that of Ademollo, Grote, and the ancient commentators discussed by Sedley: it is not to Socrates, but specifically to Timaeus, another of "Plato's Philosophers,"[11] that I will be applying a reader-response approach. And I am doing so deliberately in the context of the paradigmatic representative of what is called "reader-response theory"[12] in literary criticism: the great Milton scholar, Stanley Fish.[13] Although I will be directly addressing the question of "the missing speech" of Zeus with which *Critias* conspicuously does not conclude—and making some remarks at the start about the missing *Hermocrates*—my principal claim is *not* that (1) we need to imagine for ourselves a missing *dialogue*, or (2) that we are being asked to respond to a *Socratic* provocation, but (3) that Plato intends us to read the discourse of Timaeus in much the same way that Fish claims we need to read the speeches of Satan.

To begin to substantiate this paradoxical claim, it is noteworthy that Fish explicitly connects his reading of *Paradise Lost* to Plato:

> *Paradise Lost* is a dialectical experience which has the advantage traditionally claimed for dialectic of involving the respondent in his own edification. On one level at least the poem has the form of a Platonic dialogue, with the epic voice taking the role of Socrates, and the reader in the position of a Phaedrus or a Cratylus, continually forced to acknowledge his errors, and in this way moving toward a confirmation in the Truth.[14]

But the Platonic parallel I see is not between Milton's "epic voice" and Socrates, but rather between Timaeus and Fish's Satan:

> One begins by simultaneously admitting the effectiveness of Satan's rhetoric and discounting it because it is Satan's, but at some point a reader trained to analyze as he reads will allow admiration for a technical skill to push aside the imperative of Christian watchfulness.[15]

Rather than imagining an extra-textual dialogue between the reader and a benignly provocative Socrates, my argument begins with the realization that Plato uses a variety of characters other than Socrates—including Timaeus, the Athenian, and Eleatic Strangers[16]—whose effective rhetoric, and admirable "technical skill," are sufficient to "push aside" a prior allegiance to Socrates, or rather to expose the weakness of that allegiance.[17] According to Fish, Milton's goal is not to make converts for

Satan. Instead, the poet deliberately exposes the reader to what Fish calls "the good temptation": a carefully created test "in a controlled situation."

> In the middle books (IV-IX) these same choices are structured into a series of scenes which provide a continuing test of the reader's steadfastness and honesty. The technique is again the technique of the 'good temptation' whereby the reader is left to choose, in a controlled situation, which of two roads he will take.[18]

Adding support to the contrast between Socrates and Timaeus *qua* cosmologist is the fact that, in Fish's memorable phrase, Satan is "an empiricist";[19] by contrast it is to a rather more idealistic Platonic ontology, to "what is real and truly beautiful,"[20] that Plato (like Milton), expects his chosen reader to be loyal.[21] In other words, it is central to my argument that Timaeus does not speak for Plato *and* that a correct interpretation of Timaeus depends on grasping that fact in all its force. Compare this with Fish's audacious claim:

> There is, however, only one true interpretation of *Paradise Lost*, and it is the reward of those readers who have entered into the spirit of Milton's 'good temptation' and so 'become wiser by experience': others 'sport in the shade' with half-truths and self-serving equivocations and end by accusing God or by writing volumes to expose the illogic of His ways.[22]

By analogy, the "one true interpretation" of *Timaeus* depends on recognizing the dialogue as Plato's "good temptation," and on recognizing Plato himself as what Fish elsewhere calls "the good physician": Timaeus' highly rhetorical speech functions as a test and achieves Plato's end only because of the reader's response to the dialectical text that contains it.[23] But it could not test the reader unless the reader already had been exposed to what Plato regards as true: it is therefore also central to my argument not only that *Critias* follows *Timaeus* but that *Timaeus* follows *Republic*: the extra-textual auditor of Timaeus' discourse is being led to what Fish calls "confirmation in the Truth." To use Milton's own lines, Plato's readers encounter Timaeus

> Complete to have discover'd and repulst
> Whatever wiles of Foe or seeming Friend
> For still they knew, and ought t' have remember'd[24]

In short: if Plato's readers are loyal to the lessons of the *Republic*, they will be able to respond, after *Critias*, to the blandishments of Timaeus with "the missing speech of the absent fourth."

But before using "(3)," i.e., Fish's type of reader-response theory to account for the missing speech of the *Critias* in relation to *Timaeus*, some remarks about what might be called "the text-imminent" significance of that speech are in order. Paradoxically, perhaps, it is this path that leads to increased concern for the missing *Hermocrates* as per "(1)."[25] To put the same point a different way: before interpreting the missing speech in relation to the flawed ontology[26] presented by Timaeus in *Timaeus*—the equivalent, on my account, of Satan's temptation of Adam, and thus the reader, in *Paradise Lost*—it needs first to be interpreted in relation to *Critias*, and, more specifically, to the flawed politics of the Atlantids there. Three points about the political interpretation of the missing speech of Zeus need to be emphasized from the start: (i) the parallel between Athens and Atlantis creates the following analogy:[27] Atlan-

tis : "Ancient Athens" :: Alcibiades' Athens of 415 B.C. : the Syracuse of Hermocrates, (ii) as indicated by "(i)," the patriotic Sicilian federation against Athens justifies the silent presence of Hermocrates of Syracuse,[28] who organized it, and points to the probable content of the missing *Hermocrates*,[29] and (iii) the political interpretation of the "speech of Zeus," along with "(i)" and "(ii)," depends entirely on Thucydides. In addition to supplying the background that allows the reader to connect "modern" Athens with the Atlantids,[30] Thucydides has given us three speeches that suggest the general contours of the missing speech of Zeus at the end of *Critias*: the two speeches of Nicias[31] that failed to persuade the Athenians to reject the proposal of Alcibiades to invade Sicily, and the speech of Diodotus ("the gift of Zeus")[32] that persuaded the Athenians not to put the men of Mytilene to death.[33] Despite the name "Diodotus," it is clearly the failed speeches of Nicias that offer the clearest parallel, especially because it is only in the context of a failed speech by Zeus that the presence of Hermocrates is justified, and the probable content of the missing *Hermocrates* can be divined. It is thus a text-imminent approach to the missing speech that points forward to the missing *Hermocrates*. To put it another way: by not writing *Hermocrates*, Plato justifies an approach to the missing speech that is not what I am calling "text-imminent."

Of course the importance of Thucydides in the political interpretation of the missing speech proves that this interpretation of Plato's *Critias* is — despite the fact that it ignores the cosmology of Timaeus in its companion dialogue—scarcely text-imminent. As indicated in many dialogues but proved by his *Menexenus*, Plato expects his readers to know Thucydides.[34] And no careful readers of Thucydides — especially no readers who, despite her crimes and errors, still maintain their loyalty to Athens — desires to hear more from Hermocrates: Thucydides gives him the opportunity to say and do a great deal to the detriment of Athens and many thousands of Athenians.[35] Nor are any loyal Athenians particularly keen on hearing much more from Critias, the enemy of democracy who parleyed the errors and crimes of democratic Athens into the even worse crimes and errors of the Thirty.[36] Least of all do critics of Critias desire to hear him insert a speech into the mouth of Zeus: there is piety to be considered, and mere atheism is pious in comparison with an atheist's appropriation of God for political ends. Leaving aside the question of whether Plato's Critias is the atheist of the Thirty, there is unquestionably a pious reason for eliding or censoring the speech of Zeus: the structure of the political interpretation demands that the speech of Critias' Zeus *fails* to achieve its goal.[37] To put it bluntly: the purpose of the divine speech is to restore the Atlantids to a sense of proportion; had it succeeded, there would have been no war. To be more specific, Plato refuses to allow Critias to create for Zeus a speech that Critias' theme—the ancient war between Atlantis and "Athens"—requires to have failed, and Plato does so for the same reason that he does not write a *Hermocrates*: the Syracusan's only known discourses likewise depend on the failure of Critias' "Zeus" to restrain the Athenian "Atlantids" from the Sicilian Expedition.

It is not my purpose simply to reject the political interpretation of Plato's *Critias*. In fact, that interpretation is perfectly consistent with the reader-response approach I will be taking to interpret the *Timaeus-Critias* dyad. Although I am going to argue that the *primary* reason that *Critias* ends with a missing speech is because the dialogue *begins* with the inadequacies of the cosmology presented in *Timaeus*, there is no doubt that Plato has a secondary reason an-

chored in the political interpretation: he expects any philosopher-statesman to imitate Diodotus and succeed where Nicias had failed. To put it boldly: every democratic statesman who enters politics in order to arrest the slide of her city into tyranny must be able to give the missing speech of Zeus. In that sense, the political interpretation of the missing speech of the absent fourth is *practical*: it points forward to what the truly Platonic philosopher must be able to do.[38] But for the same reason that the Allegory of the Cave depends on the prior ontological division between Being and Becoming in order to illuminate just political *action* as the temporary abandonment of philosophy and the return to the shadows, so also Plato's conception of just political practice depends entirely on ontology. It deserves mention that Plato creates *multiple* openings in *Timaeus-Critias* for the reader to supply what he has deliberately withheld. By far the most popular of these openings has led to the search for Atlantis conceived as a literal place, and, as a denizen of Atlantis-reborn, I am perfectly comfortable with even this kind of reading. But in addition to the political interpretation I have sketched in the last three paragraphs, I will argue in the balance of this paper that *prior* to the political speech Plato is demanding from some future Atlantid statesman—the missing "speech of Zeus" that will restrain her benighted citizens from invading some second "Sicily"—he *first* requires that same Atlantid, *qua* philosopher, to bring his *Republic* to life by fighting Timaeus, i.e., by supplying "the missing speech of the absent fourth."

Consider, to begin with, the text that forms the basis of the political interpretation, i.e., the last words of Plato's *Critias*:

> But as Zeus, god of the gods, reigning as king according to law, could clearly see this state of affairs, he observed this noble race lying in this abject state and resolved to punish them [δίκην αὐτοῖς ἐπιθεῖναι] and to make them more careful and harmonious [ἐμμελέστεροι] as a result of their chastisement.[39]

With careful attention to the Greek expressions found at the end of *Critias*, the reader is now asked to reconsider the beginning of that dialogue, which begins with a speech of Timaeus that proves he is speaking immediately after *Timaeus*.

> My prayer is that he [sc. "that god who had existed long before in reality, but who has now been created in my words"] grant the preservation of all that has been spoken properly; but that he will impose the proper penalty [δίκην τήν πρέπουσαν ἐπιθεῖναι] if we have, despite our best intentions, spoken any discordant note. For the musician who strikes the wrong note the proper penalty is to bring him back into harmony [ἐμμελῆ].[40]

The verbal echoes are precise, revealing, and deliberate: just as Zeus undertakes to punish— δίκην ἐπιθεῖναι —the Atlantids and render them more harmonious (ἐμμελέστεροι), so too does Plato's "Timaeus," using the exact same expressions, point the way forward, immediately after concluding his speech, for *us* to distinguish the discourse of Timaeus from Plato's. In short: by leaving room for a missing speech at the end of *Timaeus-Critias*, Plato not only invites the reader to supply the missing speech of Zeus in the context of *Critias* alone (i.e., the political interpretation), but first and foremost to bring the discourse of Timaeus back into tune by distinguishing "all that has been spoken properly" from that which has not.[41]

And there are further clues in Critias' first speech in *Critias* that the primary subject of the missing speech is the discourse of Timaeus as presented in *Timaeus*. In the course of his rude and self-serving explanation of why his task is more difficult than that of Timaeus,[42] Critias uses the analogy of a painting: a critic will naturally be more critical of the portrait of a person than the accurate depiction of the background, a background that Critias likens to the cosmology of Timaeus. In this analogy, Critias uses the same word (ἀπατηλῷ at 107d1) to describe the technique used by those who paint "all of heaven and the bodies that exist and move within it"[43] that the Goddess in Parmenides uses to describe "Doxa" at B8.51: "the cosmos of my words" is ἀπατηλός.[44] Critias further complains that "we do not examine these paintings too closely or find fault with [ἐλέγχομεν] them" at 107c7-d1; this word recalls the need for a Guardian who is προθυμούμενος ἐλέγχειν ("eager to refute") at *Republic* 534c1. And most importantly, having dropped the painting analogy, Critias likewise uses the same crucial word to attack directly discourses like those of Timaeus—"about the heavens and things divine" (107d6-7)—that Timaeus famously used to *defend* his coming "myth": εἰκότα at *Timaeus* 29d2.[45]

> We embrace what is said about the heavens and things divine with enthusiasm, even when what is said is quite implausible [σμικρῶς εἰκότα]; but we are nice critics of what is said of mortals and human beings.[46]

By placing this harsh appraisal of the cosmology presented in *Timaeus* in his *Critias*, the dialogue that immediately follows it, Plato draws attention to the famous words that Timaeus uses to introduce his discourse, words that have recently received increased attention thanks to Myles Burnyeat.

In his influential 2005 article "'Εικὼς Μῦθος,'" Burnyeat draws an important distinction between internal and external coherence in the case of Plato's *Timaeus*,[47] and the lack of textual basis for this distinction will strengthen my claims about the applicability of reader-response theory to the dialogue. While internal coherence is required from Timaeus—and this claim is crucial for Burnyeat's argument about the meaning of εἰκώς μῦθος—*external* coherence is not; in other words, while an account cannot be εἰκώς if it contradicts itself,[48] a *series* of accounts can be inconsistent *with each other* without losing the more positive sense for the word εἰκώς that Burnyeat's article is intended to secure for it.[49] The question of external incoherence arises because immediately prior to Timaeus' introduction of the term εἰκὼς μῦθος at 29d2, he makes the remarkable admission that discourses like his—discourses about copies as opposed to exemplars—may well be inconsistent *with themselves* (ἑαυτοῖς at 29c6); this admission momentarily complicates Burnyeat's case. Relying on the authority of John Burnet's editorial decisions[50] and a creative rendering of the Greek,[51] that case turns on the question of whether Timaeus' discourse is best understood as a single μῦθος or λόγος (on the one hand) or—and this is Burnyeat's claim—it is best understood as a series of λόγοι that are each *internally* coherent but are not collectively so.[52] Burnyeat obscures the fact that there is incontrovertibly a Timaean λόγος of λόγοι, wherein these λόγοι, each in itself "a complex of statements standing to each other in some logical relation,"[53] is in turn merely one of those "statements" that collectively constitute some larger λόγος, in this case, that singular εἰκὼς μῦθος, i.e., the words with which he famously describes his discourse.

Not surprisingly, Burnyeat begins the relevant passage by emphasizing instances of the plural λόγοι: "My second comment is on the plural λόγοι at 29c6 (which I would set beside the plural εἰκότων μῦθων at 59c6)."[54] The problems here are three. First of all, the later passage from *Timaeus* 59c6 refers to "pursuing *the idea* of εἰκότων μῦθων" (translation and emphasis mine);[55] it is therefore the idea that there is a *form* or genre of εἰκότες μῦθοι that leads Timaeus to employ the plural beginning at 29b4 because he is distinguishing between two types of *discourses*, some of which can be characterized in one way, and *others* in another. The second problem is that Burnyeat chooses not to cite a parallel instance of the plural—here the reference is to τὴν τῶν εἰκότων λόγων δύναμιν at 48d2—immediately before referring to his own discourse in the singular, indeed as εἰκότα at 48d3. And of course the greatest weakness in Burnyeat's case is the remarkable equation: "ἑαυτοῖς here = ἀλλήλοις": "with themselves" does not mean the same thing as "with one another."[56] As if acknowledging the problematic nature of this interpretation, Burnyeat concludes the passage on a more modest note: "I trust that everyone will agree that this interpretation is preferable to one that understands Timaeus to mean that a given account may be internally inconsistent, at variance with it itself."[57]

Despite the fact that she refers to "Burnyeat's seminal paper"[58] in her recent book *Nature and Divinity in Plato's* Timaeus (2012),[59] Sarah Broadie has discovered an internal incoherence in Timaeus' discourse of that undermines Burnyeat's analysis. Her discovery originates in the following hymn to sight at 47a1-b2:

> As my account has it [κατὰ τὸν ἐμὸν λόγον], our sight has indeed proved to be a source of supreme benefit to us, in that none [οὐδεὶς] of our present statements about the universe could ever have been made if we had never seen any stars, sun, or heaven. As it is, however, our ability to see the periods of day-and-night, of month and of years, of equinoxes and solstices, has led to the invention of number, and given us the idea of time and opened the path to enquiry into the nature of the universe. These pursuits have given us philosophy, a gift from the gods to the mortal race whose value neither has been nor ever will be surpassed.[60]

Broadie comments as follows:

> Whatever the intention of the passage, Plato must have regarded his point here as well worth making: for it comes with a cost of which he can hardly have been unaware. If the chief benefit of vision depends on contemplating *all* the visible regularities of the heavens, Timaeus' physics of vision cannot be adequate. The theory that postulates an optic fire that coalesces with daylight can explain only daytime vision (45b4-d7). By itself it cannot explain how we see the moon and stars by night.[61]

Here then is Broadie's internal incoherence claim, a claim that rests on the fact that *some* of "the visible regularities of the heavens" are only visible *at night* and therefore that Timaeus' sun-based account of vision is inconsistent with a hymn to it that depends primarily on astronomy. There can be no question here of external incoherence, Broadie points out, due to the close proximity of the two inconsistent claims: "Almost as soon as Timaeus has uttered his account of how vision works, it turns out

to sit badly with the ultimate purpose of the faculty [n. 22]."[62] And it is in n. 22 that Broadie mentions Burnyeat:

> Burnyeat, 2005, suggests that internal but not external coherence is a necessary condition for a Timean *logos* (i.e. section of the cosmology on a specific subject-matter) to be *eikôs*. The vision example casts doubt on this if (as I am supposing) it is internally incoherent—unless Plato missed the difficulty.[63]

The careful reader will observe that the possibility that Plato "missed the difficulty" contradicts the first sentence of Broadie's incoherence claim,[64] quoted above. Because this sentence opens the door to the central theme of this paper, I will quote it again, this time for purposes of analysis:

> Whatever the [1] intention of the passage, [2] Plato must have regarded his point here as [3] well worth making: for it [4] comes with a cost of which [5] he can hardly have been unaware.

The sentence's first part, [1], calls attention, in an admirably open-minded manner, to the possibly elusive *proper* interpretation of Plato's text; far more important than the internal inconsistency that Broadie discovers here is the remarkable hymn to vision and the visible, a hymn that could only strike the student of *Republic*—and in particular, the careful student of its central images, the Sun, the Divided Line, and the Cave—as peculiar. I want to suggest, then, that Broadie's open-minded manner of expression in [1] opens the door to the possibility that the proper interpretation of "Timaeus' remarks about the chief benefit of vision" in Plato's text is that they are precisely the remarks of the *character* "Timaeus" and not necessarily those of Plato. It is for this reason that I draw attention to Broadie's reference to *Plato* at [2]; despite any latitude that [1] may offer for separating Timaeus from Plato, her own approach is to assume that Timaeus' remarks are actually Plato's as well and, indeed, that these are remarks that Plato in particular believed were [3] "well worth making." Broadie's proof for this statement is not simply based on the implicit assumption that since Plato made these remarks—albeit through Timaeus—he *ipso facto* considered them "well worth making"; instead, her proof of [3] is that making these remarks [4] "comes with a cost."[65] What Broadie means, of course, is that Timaeus' remarks about vision are internally incoherent and thus that the proof that Plato regarded them as worth making is that they are made at the cost of internal incoherence. Indeed it is to explain this incoherence that Broadie is writing the paragraph: she elucidates it in the remainder of it. But in the context of n. 22, her claim at [5] that Plato was aware of the incoherence is made at the cost *of her own coherence* because Broadie raises the possibility that "Plato missed the difficulty" (n. 22) whereas she claims at [5] that "he can hardly have been unaware" of the same fact, i.e., that Plato's position "is internally incoherent." The important point, however, is that Broadie's problem disappears when we discriminate between Timaeus—whose discourse *is* "internally incoherent"—and Plato, who, as Broadie rightly senses, "can hardly have been unaware" of the fact. On this reading, it is Timaeus who is unaware of the difficulty, not Plato.[66] To put it another way: (1) if Broadie is correct in her initial sense that it is not the case that "Plato missed the difficulty" (as I believe she is), and (2) if Timaeus' account of vision is "internally incoherent" (as I believe it is), then (3) Burnyeat's argument becomes doubtful.[67]

By distinguishing Plato from Timaeus and attributing the incoherence to the latter but not the former, Broadie is not contradicting herself precisely because Burnyeat is wrong. Unfortunately, proving Burnyeat wrong is only a small first step; there is a more important kind of incoherence to be considered where Plato's *Timaeus* is concerned: the discourse of Timaeus is inconsistent with what we find in other Platonic λόγοι, and in particular with *Republic*, which precedes it.[68]

When Plato began *Timaeus* with the enigmatic words "One, two, three, but where is the fourth," he must have anticipated that his readers would ask themselves: "Who is this missing fourth?"[69] But if Plato answers this question in the dialogue that follows, he hid the answer carefully because it isn't obvious.[70] What is a reader to do after failing to get an answer to this question? By this I mean: what do *you*, as a thoughtful reader, do? One obvious thing is to read a paper that gives every appearance of offering an answer to this question. Once having heard that answer—and I will be offering an answer—you will consider it, testing whether or not it is plausible or likely. But long before that, I want to emphasize that it is a question that Plato has deliberately posed to everyone who tries to understand this dialogue: it is a puzzle deliberately constructed for a pedagogical purpose. It is therefore the elusive Plato who poses this question, not his Socrates, not Timaeus, and not I. By this opening, Plato might be thought to make himself *more* elusive but this is really a misconception: Plato here reveals himself as a writer who has deliberately provoked us to raise this question and then to search for his hidden answer; that's why he placed it at the very threshold of his *Timaeus*. And to approach this puzzle in a second way that leads to the same place, when any one of us raises the question: "Who is the missing fourth in Plato's *Timaeus*?" it is really a question about *Plato's* identity, not simply the identity of some fourth missing person: "*What was Plato about* when he began *Timaeus* in this way? What did he mean?" Plato wants us to solve the mystery: he wants *you* to look for him.

I take it for granted that every thoughtful student of Plato agrees that the first words of a Platonic dialogue are significant but the *Republic* proves it.[71] But before considering the meaning of κατέβην,[72] it is necessary to point out that Plato has posed another mystery to his readers: how are we to understand the relationship between *Republic* and *Timaeus*?[73] While the summary of the previous day's conversation in *Timaeus* makes it obvious that this conversation *resembled* the conversation Socrates describes in *Republic*, it is equally obvious that plenty is missing.[74] In some sense, then, there are two similar problems at the beginning of *Timaeus*: we are asked to consider what is missing twice.[75] Certainly the *Timaeus* summary is missing the Allegory of the Cave, the Divided Line, and the Sun.[76] But given the accumulation of detail that surrounds the summary of what in *Republic* V is called "the Second Wave of Paradox"[77]—especially since the equal training the female Guardians for war ("the first Wave of Paradox") is present but treated more briefly[78]— it is pretty obvious that the first and most obvious thing the previous day's conversation is missing is "the third Wave of Paradox,"[79] i.e., the assertion that philosophy and political power need to be combined in one person.[80] This combination is quickly made conspicuous in a second way by attributing what is absent from the previous day's truncated "*Republic*" to Timaeus, Critias, and Hermocrates who—it should be made explicit—are precisely the "one, two, three" who precede the mention of the missing fourth.[81] Now the opening word of Plato's *Republic* is

"I went down" and the reason that word is of crucial importance to understanding Plato's *Republic* only becomes obvious when Socrates offers Glaucon the speech that the City's founders will address to the temporarily rebellious Guardians who presumably concur with Glaucon's protest that it would be unjust to compel them to return to the Cave. The most important passage in this speech is where Socrates compares the Guardians to citizens of other cities, who are justified in not returning to the Cave because their exit from it has been their own private affair.

> But you [ὑμᾶς] we [ἡμεῖς] have engendered for yourselves [ὑμῖν τε αὐτοῖς] and the rest of the city [τῇ τε ἄλλῃ πόλει] to be, as it were, king-bees and leaders in the hive. You have received a better and more complete education than the others, and you are more capable of sharing both ways of life. Down you must go [καταβατέον] then, each in his turn, to the habitation of the others and accustom yourselves to the observation of the obscure things there.[82]

I would like to suggest that just as the "you" to whom "we" are speaking in *Republic* is not really or, at the very least, not solely the hypothetical Guardians of a strictly imaginary City but rather, to put it baldly, *you*—citizens of what Socrates calls "the other city"—so also it is *Plato* who stands behind this "we"; it is he who has given you the best possible education and now he asks you as a philosopher to return to the Cave of political life.[83] It is this reading that determines my solution to "the Problem of the Missing Fourth" in Plato's *Timaeus*.

The parallel sentence in *Timaeus* occurs toward the end of Socrates' longest speech where he expresses an interest in seeing the City he constructed yesterday at war;[84] he wants to see its Guardians in action.[85] After having stated that he cannot accomplish this himself, he then explains why neither poets nor sophists are capable of doing so.[86] The inadequacy of this triad leaves only his audience,[87] who combine philosophy and political experience.[88] He then enumerates—and it is the first time he has explicitly done so—a second triad, and he discusses in turn the political and philosophical accomplishments of Timaeus, Critias, and Hermocrates.[89] The critical sentence follows:

> That's why even yesterday, bearing all this in mind, I [διὸ καὶ χθὲς ἐγὼ διανοούμενος] gratified you heartily [προθύμως ἐχαριζόμην] when you obliged me to go through matters of regime [ὑμῶν δεομένων τὰ περὶ τῆς πολιτείας διελθεῖν], since I knew that none would more adequately than you render the account next in order (that is, if you were willing) [εἰδὼς ὅτι τὸν ἑξῆς λόγον οὐδένες ἂν ὑμῶν ἐθελόντων ἱκανώτερον ἀποδοῖεν]; for by establishing all things proper to the city [καταστήσαντες τὴν πόλιν . . . ἅπαντ' αὐτῇ τὰ προσήκοντα], you would render her [ἀποδοῖτ' ἄν] engaged in a fitting war [εἰς γὰρ πόλεμον πρέποντα]—you alone of those now living [μόνοι τῶν νῦν]—and so, having spoken what was ordered [εἰπὼν δὴ τἀπιταχθέντα], I ordered you in return to take up [ἀντεπέταξα ὑμῖν] what I'm describing now [ἃ καὶ νῦν λέγω].[90]

I will discuss the critical sentence in Plato's Greek. It begins with the words διὸ καὶ χθὲς ἐγὼ διανοούμενος and these words raise the ambiguity of Plato's written "I": is ἐγὼ Socrates or Plato? As was the case in *Republic* VII, Plato and the reader will emerge simultaneously; he (as author) recovers from the "most majestic silence" of *Phaedrus* 275d6 at the same moment that *we* overcome the characteristic passivity of

the reader, the ἀσθένειά τις of 17a4.[91] "You"—the Missing Fourth—are introduced in the next set of words: ὑμῶν δεομένων τὰ περὶ τῆς πολιτείας διελθεῖν. This "you" is the insistent audience of *Republic*, and the same ambiguity arises that first emerged in the context of ἐγὼ: is it Socrates or Plato who is now addressing the Three or the reader?[92] Whoever this "I" is, he was eager to gratify his insistent audience because he *knew*—and for some, this will suggest Plato as opposed to Socrates[93]—that nobody could give him a more suitable return than "you," assuming, of course that "you" are "willing" to give him "the discourse that comes next."[94] Here's what Plato writes: προθύμως ἐχαριζόμην, εἰδὼς ὅτι τὸν ἑξῆς λόγον οὐδένες ἂν ὑμῶν ἐθελόντων ἱκανώτερον ἀποδοῖεν.[95] Given that *Critias* breaks off his narrative before the war between Atlantis and the City of Socrates—allegedly preborn as ancient Athens—can even begin, it is clearly not the Three who supply τὸν ἑξῆς λόγον; if Socrates is "I" and the Three are "you," then Socrates is disappointed in *Timaeus-Critias*.[96]

But if I am right, and this "I" is Plato himself, then it is entirely up to "you" to gratify him by offering "the discourse that comes next in order," described in three lines of verse:[97]

> —εἰς γὰρ πόλεμον πρέποντα
> καταστήσαντες τὴν πόλιν
> ἅπαντ' αὐτῇ τὰ προσήκοντα ἀποδοῖτ'
> ἂν μόνοι τῶν νῦν
> εἰπὼν δὴ τἀπιταχθέντα, ἀντεπέταξα
> ὑμῖν

Only if "you" are willing to supply the missing λόγος and lead the Socratic City, now internalized in your own soul with you as its Guardians,[98] by fighting an interpretive war against "the plausible myth" of Timaeus, does Plato's "now" become *now*; only when *you* yourself become "the missing fourth" will you realize that it is the elusive Plato who is saying: ἃ καὶ νῦν λέγω, "the things which even now I am saying." In short: the true reading of Plato's *Timaeus*—like the true reading of his *Republic*—depends on the reader's response. But in *Timaeus*, he provides his chosen reader—the reader who has responded appropriately to *Republic*, and who now becomes its city's philosophical Guardian—with an enemy far wilier than his Thrasymachus, "whatever wiles of Foe or seeming Friend." To put the same point another way: he now asks that reader to fight for the lessons learned in the critical sections of the πολιτεία deliberately deleted—since the reader alone can supply them—in Socrates' earlier summary of the previous day's discussion.

The notion that the City's Guardians will be required to fight the kind of interpretive[99] battles I am suggesting here is introduced in *Republic* VII.[100] Having already described the five mathematical sciences so prominent in *Timaeus*,[101] and now turning toward the training in dialectic[102]—the give and take of discussion conspicuous by its absence in the astronomer's discourse[103]—Socrates says:

> And is not this true of the good likewise—that the man who is unable to define in his discourse [τῷ λόγῳ] and distinguish and abstract from all other things the idea of the good [τὴν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέαν] and who cannot, as if in battle [καὶ ὥσπερ ἐν μάχῃ], through all refutations emerging, not eager to refute by recourse to opinion but to essence [μὴ κατὰ δόξαν ἀλλὰ κατ' οὐσίαν προθυμούμενος ἐλέγχειν], proceeding throughout in all of these with the discourse untoppled [ἀπτῶτι τῷ λόγῳ]—the man who lacks this power, you will say, does not really know the good itself or any particular good but if he joins himself in any way to some image [εἰδώλου]

> he does so by reputation [δόξῃ] but not knowledge [ἐπιστήμῃ].[104]

The "war" Plato has in mind by having Socrates make this demand of his "Guardians"—and by this, I mean *you*—will be waged, in the first place, against the previously mentioned "one, two, three" in accordance with the following calculus: if we really loved Athens,[105] we would hate Hermocrates who was most responsible for the deaths of the best and brightest in the quarries of Syracuse; if we really loved democracy or even a halfway decent moderation, we would hate the slippery Critias;[106] and if we really embraced the disjunction between Being and Becoming that emerges from the Third Wave of Paradox, and reaches its highest development in the Cave, we would discover in Timaeus the first of several "images" Plato will create in order to determine whether "you" will refute them μὴ κατὰ δόξαν ἀλλὰ κατ' οὐσίαν.[107] Were you to do so, you would find his discourse objectionable from just after the beginning to the end, from the absence of the Idea of the Good and the mixture of Becoming and Being in the World Soul,[108] through to the rebirth of Becoming as χώρα,[109] in turn made possible by the reduction of otherworldly Being to the status of exemplars for worldly things to copy,[110] thereby opening the door to Aristotle's critique that the Ideas of Plato needlessly reduplicate the world.[111]

It should go without saying that Plato's missing fourth is still for the most part "missing in action" as of today; those who are familiar with the literature on Plato's *Timaeus* are aware that the implicit premise of most of it is that Timaeus speaks for Plato,[112] and its dominant trope is to explain away and thereby make coherent all of the most obvious inconsistencies in his discourse;[113] the goal is to defend the consistency of Plato,[114] not to expose the myriad mistakes he has deliberately sown into his character's discourse.[115] It should surprise no Platonist that these solutions often depend on Aristotle.[116] But I have hope.[117] As previously mentioned, Socrates does briefly describe the First Wave of Paradox while summarizing the previous day's discussion.[118] Although this summary is a watered down version of what Socrates claims in *Republic*, any notion of the equality of the sexes is entirely absent from the discourse of Timaeus; he first asserts the superiority of men,[119] and then, at the very end of his discourse, he explains the "origin" of women:

> According to the plausible account, it was from men who had come into being—however so many as were cowards and had led their life unjustly—that women emerged, changed in the second genesis.[120]

Why should we accept this nonsense as Plato's?[121] It is amazing that more scholarly effort has been expended to prove that Socrates' arguments for the equality of the sexes in *Republic* V are not really designed to prove it[122]—and, for that matter, to prove that his arguments for the immortality of the soul in *Phaedo* don't work[123]—than to subject the discourses of Timaeus,[124] the Eleatic,[125] and the Athenian Strangers to the kind of critical dialectic *they* so richly deserve. I will therefore leave Plato's "missing fourth" with a provocation that I hope will arouse *your* fighting spirit:[126] by what standard of plausibility can Timaeus' account of the origin of women be called "likely"?

Let me return at the end to Milton, the poet who caused Fish to rediscover the central place of the reader's response in dialectical pedagogy. As Christians, readers of *Paradise Lost* know (or knew) from the start that Satan is evil. But such is Milton's artistry—and

so Platonic is his pedagogy—that even this "knowledge" proves insufficient: the poet replicates the fall of Adam by deliberately seducing the reader with Satanic rhetoric and technical skill. Without any tradition linking his Timaeus to evil, Plato certainly makes it far more difficult than Milton does for the reader to recognize that his "Satan" does not speak for him. But he scarcely makes it impossible: after all, it is not Socrates who describes the genesis of the cosmos nor, indeed, is such a project Socratic. To say nothing of the place that Parmenides gave to his cosmology, Plato's readers need only find Socrates' distinctly non-empirical account of astronomy at *Republic* 528e3-c4 compelling in order to avoid the tempting reversion to the central concern of the pre-Socratic physicists. Even when expressed in terms of Being, Becoming, and a generous demiurge, there are perfectly Platonic reasons for questioning the value of a science that depends entirely—as Cicero emphasized—on the dubious testimony of the senses (*Timaeus* 46e7-47b2). In addition to epistemological and ontological considerations, there are political ones as well: after all, Plato links Timaeus with Hermocrates and Critias, and the political implications of Timaeus' cosmology deserve more attention than I can give them here.[127] These connections can be ignored—as they were by the early Platonists who found "Plato's cosmology" compelling and frequently constitutive of the master's views[128]—but it is scarcely impossible to see that they can be read from an Athenian perspective as profoundly destabilizing. Even Broadie and Thomas Johansen, moderns who take it for granted that Timaeus speaks for Plato, readily admit that Critias does not do so.[129] But ironically, it is Critias to whom the playful Plato[130] entrusts his own critique of Timaeus in *Critias*. Despite Timaeus' claim that his discourse is εἰκώς in Burnyeat's sense—and I readily admit that Burnyeat is correct about the *character* Timaeus' sense of that word—Plato offers the reader an alternative: that discourse is plausible only to a tiny degree (σμικρῶς εἰκώς) at 107d7. And it is likewise through Critias that Plato poses his provocative challenge to the "missing fourth" in the form of an apparently rhetorical question:

> Now, who in his senses would undertake to maintain that your [sc. Timaeus'] speech was not an excellent speech?[131]

It is only Plato's chosen reader who will respond appropriately to this question, and it will be in the course of articulating this response that the absent fourth mentioned at the beginning of *Timaeus* will finally make the missing speech—unheard for centuries—introduced at the end of *Critias*.

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END NOTES

1 Clay 1987, 151: "The unwritten {*Philosopher*} and {*Hermocrates*} are great gaps in the universe of the Platonic dialogues, as is the missing conclusion of the *Critias* and the myth of Atlantis. These occupy vast interstellar spaces that are beyond the reach of even speculation." Cf. "the cosmos of the Platonic dialogues" (192-93) in Strauss 1989.

2 Gill 2012, 5-6.

3 Gill 2012, 5. With the parenthesis referring to "us," cf. 104 and 19 n. 3: "our grasp of Plato's views remains partial until we also take into account his conversation with his audience by means of the dialogue."

4 Gill 2012, 50, 126 n. 62, and 228. Cf. Miller 1995, 165: "There is, however, a second level of provocation and initiation as well: precisely by Socrates' exchange with his interlocutors, Plato challenges us, the listeners outside the dialogue."

5 Gill, 2012, 5: "Plato tests their competence by posing problems he does not explicitly solve." For an emphasis on Plato's "tests," see Altman 2012a.

6 In addition to Altman 2012a, see Weiss 2012, 2-3: "Inconsistencies in a Platonic dialogue are therefore not to be papered over or domesticated, but acknowledged and confronted. Plato counts on his readers to disentangle Socrates' exchange with his interlocutors from his own address to us."

7 Ademollo 2011, 245-46: "Moreover, Socrates at [*Cratylus*] 396e has promised a purification for the *following* day, while the refutation of Cratylus will take place almost immediately; indeed, the etymologies themselves already anticipate, to some extent, the later rebuttal of the naturalist thesis (see §5.2.2). Therefore it seems better—and is in any case much more natural—to take Socrates' references to inspiration as concerning the etymological performance *as such*. At the end of the dialogue the purification is, at best, still incomplete; we have, so to speak, to act as Socrates' purifiers, finding out what is wrong with the etymologies and assessing their real worth."

8 Ademollo 2011, 102-3: "All this fits in very well with a general way of reading Plato, to which I am sympathetic, according to which Plato exploits the dialogue form to invite his readers to engage actively in the dialogue [cf. 103: 'Plato expects us, the readers, to criticize Socrates' claims'], as if they were present to it, by assessing the theses and arguments presented and thinking out for themselves the philosophical problems at stake [note 15]." After citing in the attached note Frede 1992 and Burnyeat 2000, Ademollo quotes to powerful effect Grote 1888, vol. 3, 333: "The Platonic dialogues require, in order to produce their effect, a supplementary responsive force, and a strong effective reaction, from the individual reason of the reader."

9 Sedley 1996, 103: "Their [sc. the ancient commentators] inspired diagnosis is that while the dramatic content of the *Theaetetus* takes the form of *failed* midwifery, performed by Socrates on Theaetetus, the dialogue's address to us, the readers, is also one of intellectual midwifery, this time on Plato's part."

10 Nevertheless, the wonderful conclusion (62) of Reeve 1985 deserves to be quoted: "We all know, of course, that Plato was a great literary artist and a great teacher as well as a great thinker. And we know that art is artful and that teachers often leave dangling puzzles to test their pupils' acumen. But we often read Plato as if his art and pedagogical purposes were extraneous to his thought. The result is that we often get the thought wrong."

11 Zuckert 2009 has pioneered a post-developmentalist reading of Plato that creates a dialectical coherence among the dialogues by distinguishing the views of Socrates from those of, e.g., Timaeus. For my review of Zuckert, see Altman 2010b.

12 See Habib 2005, 708-736.

13 Fish 1997; on Fish's place in reader-response theory, see Habib 2005, 733-36.

14 Fish 1997, 49.

15 Fish 1997, 12.

16 Note that Gill 2012 does not distinguish Plato from either Timaeus or the Eleatic Stranger at 244 (emphasis mine): "Plato's philosopher [sc. the Eleatic Stranger] aims for the good in two spheres: to understand the nature of things and to help others find it (*Stm*. 285d5-8, 286d4-287a6). He hunts, he weaves, *he often distorts*, but always with the good in view: to stimulate the audience to discover things." Cf. 35 n. 44: "As for *idea*, Plato [sc. Timaeus] uses the word in reference to an immanent character, as opposed to a (separate or immanent) form at *Ti*. 28a4-b1, 46c7-d1, 49c2-4, 50c7-e1, and 71a7-b1."

17 Fish 1997, 38: "The reader who falls before the lures of Satanic rhetoric displays again the weakness of Adam".

18 Fish 1997, 216.

19 Fish 1997, 251; note the scientific context of 259-51 and 123-28, especially on 128: "Humility is what he [sc. Milton] seeks to instill in his readers by exploding the promise of a terrestrial paradise which they may have accepted in the name of a secular faith."

20 Fish 1997, 270-71: "Here is the ultimate 'responsive choice', where the spiritual ideal, to which the reader's faculties should be answerable, is absent, and must be supplied by his own sense of what is real and truly beautiful."

21 Fish 1997, 184: "True virtue is a state of mind—loyalty to the best one knows [sc. the Idea of the Good]—and true heroism is a psychic (willful) action—the decision, continually made in a variety of physical situations, to maintain that loyalty." See also Fish 1981.

22 Fish 1997, 272.

23 See Fish 1972: as Table 2 on 19-20 suggests, Plato's dialogue embodies "dialectic" while the speech of Timaeus has the characteristics of "rhetoric and writing." For a parallel case of scientific rhetoric, one that equally leaves us "in the oxymoronic state of constant wavering" (554), see Fish 1989.

24 *Paradise Lost*, 10.12; on this passage see Fish 1997, 14.

Cf. 271: "in *Paradise Lost* we are asked to condemn the hero's [sc. Adam's] response, and, moreover, to condemn it because, at the moment of crisis, he is too much like ourselves."

25 Gill (unpublished) will extend her application of this approach.

26 See Kalkavage 2003, especially 140: "Just as the *Republic* takes us from Becoming 'up' to Being, so the *Timaeus* brings us back 'down'—back to the cave of the body, custom, opinion, and change." In this context, the word "psychology" could just as easily have been substituted for "ontology" as indicated by Johansen 2004, 157: "the human body appears less like a prison for the rational soul [sc. as in *Phaedo*] and more, as one might put it, like a rather comfortable hotel with quite a few research facilities built in."

27 Vidal-Naquet 1964, the view that Critias' myth of the ancient war between Athens and Atlantis "re-enacts the Sicilian expedition and it also re-enacts the Persian invasion putting Athens on the wrong side" is now being accepted by Anglophone scholars; for the quotation, see Broadie 2012, 140. This is partly due (cf. Broadie's note at 140 n. 45) to the publication of Vidal-Naquet 2007, a translation of Vidal-Naquet 2005.

28 Of great value on all such topics is Welliver 1977.

29 Note that while Hermocrates is competent to describe the modern re-enactment of the Atlantis myth—his role in defeating the disastrous Sicilian Expedition is well known from Thucydides—such a description is scarcely germane to Socrates' request: Syracuse was by no manner of means similar to the City described in *Republic*.

30 And the Persians: Thucydides is well aware of the other analogy between the Athens of Alcibiades and the Persian Empire at the time of Marathon; see the Melians at Thucydides 5.102.

31 Thucydides 6.9-14 and 6.20-23.

32 See Bruell 1974, 16. For a "post-Straussian" (463) reading of this passage, see Altman 2011, 464-66.

33 Thucydides 3.42-48.

34 See Altman 2010.

35 Thucydides 4.59-64, 6.33-34, and 6.76-80. But from an Athenian perspective, the crowning blow is struck at 7.73; in his teens at the time of the Sicilian Expedition, Plato doubtless knew many young men who would die as a result of Hermocrates' stratagem.

36 The view that the Critias of *Timaeus-Critias* is the Critias of *Charmides* and the Thirty Tyrants seems to be gaining ground; see Broadie 2012, 133-36 and n. 105 below.

37 Given the context of missing speech of Critias, and the fact that it is intended to chastise "Atlantis" and render its citizens "more melodious," it is the kind of speech that would have prevented Athens from attempting to conquer Sicily. See Clay 1997 for a sensible account.

38 Cf. Fish 1981, 530-31: "What I have been trying to show is that for Milton the impulse to ask that question [sc. 'what happened next?'] (which his verse often encourages but rarely answers) is symptomatic of a desire [sc. on the part of the reader] to displace responsibility for moral decision from ourselves onto the world of circumstance."

39 *Critias* 121b7-c2 (Diskin Clay translation).

40 *Critias* 106a4-b3 (Clay).

41 An anonymous reader, after pointing out that *Timaeus* itself contains a speech of the Demiurge to the lesser gods at 41a7-d3, then draws attention to its connection with *Critias*: "he tells them to get out there and do the work that he cannot do, by generating living beings (not so different from what Socrates had told the quartet on the day before, 19b). Who knows whether the enigmatic θεοὶ θεῶν at 41a7 might relate to θεὸς δὲ ὁ θεῶν Ζεὺς ἐν νόμοις (cf. 41e2) βασιλεύων [*Critias* 121b7-8]? But in any case the only point in summoning the gods together at all is if Zeus is going to say: 'You go and do this in that world of mortals.' And they have to be mortal, and yet have to have a future ἵνα γένοιντο ἐμμελέστεροι σωφρονισθέντες [*Critias* 121c1-2]." This connection reminds me of the Thirty: just as atheists can invoke "the gods," so also can the vicious speak the language of virtue. Cf. Lysias, *Against Eratosthenes* 5 (translation W. R. M. Lamb): "When the Thirty, by the evil arts of slander-mongers, were established in the government, and declared that the city must be purged of unjust men and the rest of the citizens inclined to virtue and justice, despite these professions they had the effrontery to discard them in practice, as I shall endeavor to remind you by speaking first of my own concerns, and then of yours."

42 *Critias* 107a3.

43 *Critias* 107c3-4.

44 Indispensible is Mourelatos 2008; I am citing his text (282).

45 And, likewise, that the Goddess in Parmenides had first used to describe the coming "Doxa" (εἰκότα at B8.60).

46 *Critias* 107d6-8 (Clay).

47 Burnyeat 2005, reprinted in the revised version of Partenie 2009, 167-186.

48 Burnyeat 2005, 155: "I trust that everyone will agree that this interpretation is preferable to one that understands Timaeus to mean that a given account may be internally inconsistent, at variance with it itself. That would give it zero probability, at once."

49 Burnyeat 2005, 158: "the standard aimed at is to be εἰκώς in the sense of reasonable or appropriate: as like what reason says *ought* to be as the materials allow."

50 Burnyeat 2005, 155: "The λόγοι we meet in the sequel are a series of well-marked units as displayed by the paragraphing in Burnet's Oxford Classical Text."

51 Burnyeat 2005, 155: "One such account is at variance with another (ἑαυτοῖς here = ἀλλήλοις)."

52 Burnyeat 2005, 155: "If these units are the type (ii) accounts which aim to be εἰκότες, they are the λόγοι about which we are warned not to expect them to agree with each other in absolutely every respect."

53 Burnyeat 2005, 155: "Each unit is a λόγος in the sense of a complex of statements standing to each other in some logical relation and dealing with a particular explanandum."

54 Burnyeat 2005, 155.

55 Donald J. Zehl translates the relevant passage: "As for going further and giving an account of other stuffs of this sort along the lines of the likely stories we have been following, that is no complicated matter." For the train of thought developed here, I have benefitted from Mourelatos 2010, especially 241-43.
56 *Phaedrus* 237c5.
57 Burnyeat 2005, 155.
58 Broadie 2012, 33 n. 14.
59 Broadie 2012, 180-81. For the explicit connection to Burnyeat, see 180 n. 22.
60 Cicero's translation of *Timaeus* breaks off here, and Sedley 2013, 200 effectively repels the notion that the translation—as opposed to the dialogue that would have contained it (brilliantly reconstructed on 204)—is incomplete. Although Lévy 2003 does not distinguish between Cicero and the character Nigidius—in whose mouth Cicero places the excerpt from Timaeus' discourse—it remains a valuable introduction to the problems involved. For Cicero's own position of the limited role of vision for apprehending realities, see *Orator* 8 (*neque oculis*) and 10 (*sub oculos ipsa non cadunt*).
61 Broadie 2012, 180. One of the remarkable aspects of this argument is its Parmenidean echoes: the two principles that inform "the Way of Opinion" are fire and night (Parmenides at Diels-Kranz, B8.56-59). And the interplay of night and light is crucial to the claim advanced by Mourelatos that it is not only light but also darkness that allowed Parmenides to deduce that the moon derived its light from the sun and that the morning and evening stars were one and the same; see Mourelatos 2011. Of course this does not touch Broadie's point about the stars and also, perhaps, the planets; cf. Johansen 2004, 152 n. 26. But it does establish a link between the λόγος of Timaeus and another cosmology intended by its ultimate creator to be both deceptive and incoherent; the best way to make "Timaeus' physics of vision" coherent with his claims about the knowledge that only nighttime vision bestows is found in the "Way of Opinion" in Parmenides. See Altman 2012b.
62 Broadie 2012, 180.
63 Broadie 2012, 180 n. 22
64 Note that I agree with Broadie on the main point: there is an incoherence.
65 Cf. Broadie 2012, 222 and 226.
66 Thereby rendering the following sentence more accurate (Broadie modified; emphasis mine): "Whatever the intention of the passage, Timaeus must have regarded his point here as well worth making: for it comes with a cost of which *Plato can hardly have been unaware*."
67 Although I will postpone an explanation of this argument until it arises later in Broadie's paragraph, it is important to grasp that: (¬3) if Burnyeat's argument is sound, and (2) Broadie is correct that Timaeus' "vision example" is "internally incoherent," then (¬1) "Plato missed the difficulty," thereby contradicting what Broadie said at [5] that Plato "could hardly have been aware" of just this "difficulty."
68 Inconsistencies of this kind have for far too long been explained by a variety of merely likely stories about "Plato's development," i.e., by developmentalism.
69 Beginning with the first *scholium* to the *Timaeus*; see Greene 1938, 277; all references to the text of *Timaeus* are based on Burnet 1902.
70 For a detailed attempt to identify a particular person, see Lampert and Planeaux 1998.
71 See Burnyeat 2012, especially 310-313.
72 Cf. Brann 2004, 116-21, 213-16, 244 and Altman 2012a, 37-45.
73 The latest to do so is Broadie 2012, 117-29.
74 For a good account, see Miller 2003, 20-21.
75 Of course avoiding the mystery is fashionable as well; see, for example, Johansen 2004, 7; he lets others consider the problem in notes 1 and 2. Johansen postpones discussion of "the missing fourth" until 197, in the last paragraph of his last chapter.
76 As indicated the title of Miller 2003: "*Timaeus* and the 'Longer Way.'"
77 *Timaeus* 18c6-19a5.
78 Cf. *Republic* 451d4-457b5 with *Timaeus* 18c1-4.
79 Introduced at *Republic* 473c6-e2, the "third wave" follows from Glaucon's interruption beginning at 471c4. Cf. Benardete 1971, 22: "His [sc. Socrates'] summary, at any rate, omits the rule of the philosopher-kings and the still-undiscovered sciences needed to educate them."
80 *Republic* 473d2-3.
81 See *Timaeus* 20a1-b1; the crucial sentence that follows (20b1-7) will be discussed below.
82 *Republic* 520b5-c3 (Shorey translation modified).
83 This is the thesis of Altman 2012a.
84 *Timaeus* 19b3-20c3; the fullest treatment of Socrates' speech is Reydams-Schils 2001; particularly valuable is her suggestion at 41 that Socrates' request is connected with his critique of writing in *Phaedrus*.
85 After speaking only of a city (*Timaeus* 19c1-8), Socrates adds its men at 19d2; the role of women in the City's wars is mentioned at 18c3.
86 *Timaeus* 19d3-e8.
87 *Timaeus* 19e8-20a1. For the careful articulation of this triad and identification of the fourth as οἱ ἀκροαταί ("the audience"), see Greene 1938, 278-79.
88 For the claim that Timaeus, Critias, and Hermocrates are not really instances of this combination, see Rowe 2004.
89 *Timaeus* 20a1-b1.
90 *Timaeus* 20b1-b7 as translated in Kalkavage 2001, 50.
91 At *Phaedrus* 275d4-e5, after making the comparison to painting also found at *Timaeus* 19b4-c2, Socrates famously claims that written texts "remain most solemnly silent" (translation Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff) and even "when it is faulted and attacked unfairly, it always needs its father's support; alone it can neither defend itself nor come to its own support." But when deliberately fashioned by its father to attack itself—as, for example, in this very text—a text comes alive by provoking *its readers* to come to the aid of the truth it suppresses (cf. Fish's "good temptation…in a controlled situation"); the passivity of the reader is the weakness

that prevents Plato's texts—and all text's that depend on reader-response—from coming to life. And even if only a few readers will overcome this passivity, they will prove that Socrates' claim that the text "doesn't know to whom it should speak and to whom it should not" is false; a deliberately provocative *text ipso* facto distinguishes between active and passive readers. Incidentally, anyone who has read any Platonic dialogue twice knows that no Platonic text says the exact same thing again and again (*Phaedrus* 275d9); Plato's writings have proved an enduring delight because we learn something new from them every time we read them and this is even more true when we teach them.

92 Hereafter, "the Three" will refer to Timaeus, Critias, and Hermocrates.

93 Cf. *Apology* 21b4-d7 and 29b6-7.

94 The phrase τὸν ἐξῆς λόγον reappears at *Critias* 106b7. Note that the first instance of "you" in the sentence is found in a genitive absolute (ὑμῶν δεομένων); the second instance (ὑμῶν ἐθελόντων), also in the genitive, appears to be another genitive absolute, but is really a genitive of comparison following ἱκανώτερον.

95 Note the echo of Cephalus' definition of justice; for its incorporation into Socrates' conception, see Irwin 1995, 314.

96 See Broadie 2012, 124-28, culminating with "Socrates will never be accorded the spectacle he longs for and which is beyond his competence to produce for himself." Cf. Morgan 2010, 268-72.

97 For galliambics, see the commentary on Catullus 63 in Quinn 1970, 282-297, especially 288 on line 12 for an example in Greek.

98 *Republic* 590e2-591a3.

99 Note the use of διερμενεύσις at *Timaeus* 19c7 in the context of Socrates' desiderated war, a war that will be fought with both actions *and words*, λόγοι that are explicitly said to call for translation or "thorough interpretation."

100 Note that Timaeus regards such battles as unhealthy at *Timaeus* 87e6-88a7 (Zeyl): "When within it [sc. the body] there is a soul more powerful than the body [when is this not the case where philosophers are concerned?] and this soul gets excited, it churns the whole being and fills it from inside with diseases, and when it concentrates on one or another course of study or enquiry [e.g., philosophy], it wears the body out. And again, when the soul engages in public or private teaching sessions [i.e., as politician or teacher] or verbal battles [μάχας ἐν λόγοις], the disputes and contentions that then occur cause the soul to fire the body up and rock it back and forth, so inducing discharges [ῥεύματα ποιεῖ] which trick most doctors into making misguided diagnoses [τἀναίτια αἰτιᾶσθαι]." Presumably the ῥεύματα in question are tears, sweat, and expectoration.

101 Note the conspicuous absence of the elementary "one" in Timaeus' account (cf. *Republic* 524d9-526b4; the elements of his cosmology are triangles and he further never mentions either lines or points.

102 Given the proclivity of the young to employ dialectic in a destructive manner (*Republic* 539b1-7) and given also the superiority of voluntary falsehood to the involuntary kind (535e1-5), Plato's pedagogical strategy is—like Milton's—to offer the budding dialecticians deliberately contrived falsehoods that will turn the aforementioned youthful proclivity to a good end. Not that the pedagogy in question is in fact the basis for the "true-false" type of question used everywhere today.

103 Cf. Johansen 2004, 177-78, particularly 178: "Surely Plato wants us to keep the *Republic* in mind and think about its relationship to the ideas contained in the *Timaeus*." Johansen's use of "ideas" here is revealing.

104 *Republic* 534b8-d1. On this important text, see Krämer 1966; cf. Altman 2012a, 346-48.

105 For a pious Athenian, "the Goddess" in the first sentence of *Republic* (cf. *Timaeus* 21a2) is Athena; see LSJ 791 and Greene 1938, 188; it is the Thracian Thrasymachus who is responsible for the view that ἡ θεός is the Thracian Bendis (*Republic* 354a10-11). Questioning the authority of Thrasymachus on this point weakens the attempt to disjoin *Republic* and *Timaeus* on chronological grounds: although detecting it depends on their deliberate juxtaposition, the real disjunction between the dialogues is philosophical.

106 Incidentally, the argument against identifying the Critias of *Timaeus-Critias* with the Tyrant on the basis of anachronism (see, for example, Lampert and Planeux 1998) can be short-circuited by an editorial decision: place the first set of quotation marks at 21b1 (instead of 21c4), marking the beginning of the narrative spoken to the modern Critias (he of the Thirty and of the *Timaeus-Critias*) by his grandfather Critias. Of course the quotation marks of 21c4 would be retained; they would mark a speech within a speech, i.e., the speech of a yet more ancient Critias (Greek has no word to distinguish grand-father from either great- or great-great-grandfather; hence παππός at 20e3 does not settle the matter) heard *in his youth* by the tyrant's grandfather and then relayed, within the speech that begins at 21b1, to the present speaker. Such narrative layering—a speech within a speech within a speech—is hardly without parallel in Plato; cf. *Symposium* where the speech of Diotima, as reported by Socrates, is being narrated by Apollodorus, who heard it from Aristodemus. *Apology of Socrates* 29d7-e3 must also be reckoned a speech within a speech within a speech.

107 I am referring primarily to the Eleatic and Athenian Strangers. Note that Socrates qualifies his praise for the philosophical attainments of Timaeus with the words κατ' ἐμὴν δόξαν ("according to my opinion") and uses the word οὐσία to refer to his *wealth* at *Timaeus* 20a1-5: Τίμαιός τε γὰρ ὅδε, εὐνομωτάτης ὢν πόλεως τῆς ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ Λοκρίδος, οὐσίᾳ καὶ γένει οὐδενὸς ὕστερος ὢν τῶν ἐκεῖ, τὰς μεγίστας μὲν ἀρχάς τε καὶ τιμὰς τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει μετακεχείρισται, φιλοσοφίας δ' αὖ κατ' ἐμὴν δόξαν ἐπ' ἄκρον [recalls *Seventh Letter* 344d3-7] ἁπάσης ἐλήλυθεν

108 As indicated by Plutarch, the World Soul was the primary subject of controversy although Sorabji 2003 is illuminating on the difficulties that Timaeus' physi-

calized account of the soul caused Platonists. Modern commentators are content to give the palm for solving the problem (sometimes without mentioning him) to Cornford 1937; see Johansen 2004, 138-39 (interesting on Plutarch; note the reference to Grube at 138 n. 1) and Broadie 2012, 92.

109 Modern debate has shifted to "the receptacle" and Sayre 2003 is a useful introduction. Johansen 2004, chapter 6, and Broadie 2012, chapter 6, are more representative of Anglophone discussion although perhaps the most compelling attempt at restoring coherence to this deliberately incoherent construction is Zeyl 2010. But the real challenge comes from the continent; with anti-Platonic intent, Jacques Derrida has argued that the χώρα undermines Plato's distinction between Being and Becoming, as indeed it does; see Derrida 2005, 87-127. Giannopoulou 2010 is an attempt to refute Derrida and thereby restore coherence where it does not belong.

110 See Miller 2003, 18-22.

111 Aristotle *Metaphysics* A.9.

112 Mohr 2010, 3: "Even the metaphysics of the *Timaeus* is spun out in the manner of a story. But virtually all critics now think that Timaeus' story about the universe, unlike Critias' about Atlantis, is one in which Plato advances his own views—to the extent, that is, that Plato's own views can be found in the dialogues. A lot of critics deny this latter position. . . . For the sake of full disclosure, though, let it be known that all the contributors here who write on the content of Timaeus' speech work on the unstated presumption that the speech represents Plato's views."

113 In addition to previously cited examples, see Harte 2010, especially "this is a puzzle I will set aside" at 134, Code 2010, especially "it can easily be made consistent" at 209, both in Mohr and Sattler 2010, and most recently Kahn 2013, 172, 192-93, and 199.

114 Cf. the golden sentence on Taylor 1928, 614: "When we find T. [sc. Timaeus] falling into inconsistency we may suspect that his creator is intentionally making him 'give himself away.'"

115 Cf. Dillon 1997.

116 For example, the answer to the question posed by Johansen 2010 is "no."

117 Zuckert 2009, 420-81, by implicitly reviving the explicit premise of Taylor 1928 that Timaeus does not speak for Plato, is particularly welcome.

118 *Timaeus* 18c1-4; cf. Miller 2003, 46 and 59 n. 66.

119 *Timaeus* 42a1-3; cf. Zuckert 2009, 448-49.

120 *Timaeus* 90e6-91a1 (translation mine).

121 Consider *Timaeus* 90e6-a1 in Zeyl's translation: "According to our likely account, all male-born humans who lived lives of cowardice or injustice were reborn [μετεφύοντο] in the second generation as women." By translating μετεφύεσθαι as "reborn" he changes the merely absurd into a self-contradiction. Cf. Bryan 2012, 157 n. 124 and Broadie 2012, 259 n. 32. But Broadie does note the contrast between Timaeus and Socrates at 86 n. 11.

122 See Annas 1999 (original 1976) and Spelman 1988, 19-36.

123 A good example is Bostock 1999.

124 See the remarks on Taylor 1928 in Cornford 1937, v-ix.

125 But see Bostock 1984.

126 Despite its brevity, Socrates' summary of the First Wave of Paradox includes the fact that they will be soldiers (*Timaeus* 18c3).

127 I am very grateful to an anonymous reader for drawing attention to this important point.

128 For the central place of *Timaeus* in the Academy's reception of the dialogues, see Merlan 1967.

129 In addition to "the Critias framed in this way is truly an anti-Socrates" at 169, a clearer critical distinction between author and character is found at Broadie 2012, 166: "This Critias of Plato's imagination is the personified paradigm of one sort of unreason." Cf. Johansen 2004, 42-47. Perhaps most revealing is Mohr 2010, 3: "Even the metaphysics of the *Timaeus* is spun out in the manner of a story. But virtually all critics now think that Timaeus' story about the universe, unlike Critias' about Atlantis, is one in which Plato advances his own views—to the extent, that is, that Plato's own views can be found in the dialogues."

130 See Greene 1920, de Vries 1949, and Ardley 1967, particularly on 240: "The serious and the playful are sisters. Through their association in contrariety, through the *aporiai* engendered thereby, the intelligence is set in motion. The proper handling of this ascending counterpoint is the key to education. The maintenance of the fugue is no easy matter; we so readily run after one contrary to the exclusion of the other." Plass 1967 usefully discusses "'playful' detachment from the lower, sensuous world" on 360.

131 *Critias* 107a4-6 (translation Diskin Clay).