Cosmology and Politics in Plato's Later Works by Dominic O'Meara (review)

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The Review of Metaphysics, Volume 74, Number 2 (Issue No. 294), December 2020, pp. 399-400 (Review)

Published by The Philosophy Education Society, Inc.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.1353/rvm.2020.0083

O'MEARA, Dominic. *Cosmology and Politics in Plato's Later Works*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Paper, $25.99—It goes without saying that Plato's late dialogues (such as *Laws*, *Sophist*, and *Philebus*) have experienced a renaissance in scholarship in recent years. Tying together previous and recent contributions on the subject, Dominic O'Meara's book provides a new, comprehensive survey of Plato's political philosophy set against the background of Plato's metaphysics and cosmology in the late dialogues. The book not only builds on recent scholarship but also does something rather new: O'Meara focuses on cultural, religious, and technical contexts in the dialogues, which are essential to illustrate the analogical connections that Plato draws between the two domains of cosmological and political structure—the world of nature that is, and the world of humans that should attempt to be. These concrete contexts in turn reveal a central thesis throughout O'Meara's book: The paradigms, or principles, that Plato discusses should be understood as generic sketches which imply a multiplicity of possible instantiations, both in the cosmos and in good cities.

O'Meara lays out his reading in two sections: the cosmological account in the *Timaeus* (chapters 1 through 4), and the city of the *Statesman* and the *Laws* (chapters 5 through 7). Chapter 1 discusses the symposium-style feast in which the *Timaeus* is situated, where the retelling of ancient Athens's victory over Atlantis throws into relief the presence of a virtuous Athens that no longer exists at the *Timaeus*'s own time: The cosmological story that Timaeus himself retells, O'Meara concludes, is intended to lead to the story of the excellent state and its exploits. This leads to O'Meara's second chapter on the world-maker's nature in Timaeus's speech in honor to an unnamed god—which O'Meara concludes is Zeus, although a very different "Zeus" from the familiar one of Greek mythology. This new, "reformed" conception of the world-maker should be reflected in the legislative, political sense of the very word for the maker, *dêmiourgos*, related to the term, *dêmios* ("public"). O'Meara concludes that Timaeus's speech is supposed to highlight the "craft," or skill, of the *dêmiourgos*, rather than the identity of the *dêmiourgos* itself, as most significant for the order of the world—and therein the conditions for the good city's emergence.

Chapter 3 considers what this "craft" is, that is the model (*paradeigma*) according to which the world is ordered by the *dêmiourgos*. This chapter is perhaps one of the book's most interesting analyses. O'Meara discusses blueprint plans (*paradeigmata*) used in ancient Greek architecture: The first, main plan provided only a generalized sketch of the building before the builders began their construction; then, a second set of plans (*paradeigmata*) would be drafted for specific parts not yet considered in the first plans. O'Meara argues for a parallel in the world-building of Timeaus's story: the world-maker's *paradeigma*, the Living Animal itself, is only a sketch from which the maker begins building the cosmos, while the second, detailed set of plans can be seen, for example, in the maker's mandate for the lower gods' subsequent production process. This leads to chapter 4's corollary to the relation of beauty and goodness in the cosmos,

where, though the two terms are closely interrelated, "beauty" in the world is the realization of the good manifested in the *paradeigma* sketched for the world.

This theme is brought out in chapter 5's discussion of "weaving"—as one sees in the new robe made for Athena in the Panathenaic festival—and its relation to the skill of statesmanship, as a directive science, albeit in a general, nonspecific sense—much like the cosmos's nondetailed *paradeigma*. Chapter 6 considers the necessity for the legislators of the *Laws*'s city to examine legislation continuously—as exercising this "weaving"—in relation to the goal of abiding by the persisting *paradeigma* of the city. And finally, chapter 7 considers the city's respective *paradeigma* from the *Laws*, where O'Meara spells out the specific parallelism between the cosmos's order and the city's: For example, the proportional relation between the soul and the four elements constituting unified bodies, as in *Timaeus*, is mirrored in the proportion distinguishing the city's inhabitants, which also constitutes the city's unification. In this paralleling, O'Meara especially focuses on the role of religion in the city as the central, unifying force that habituates the order paralleled in the cosmos: The three, main gods behind the city and its religion, whoever they may be, ultimately represent "the rationality which makes the universe good and beautiful, the knowledge of this rationality which legislators should have."

O'Meara's book, though relatively short, is a deeply interesting, penetrating, and innovative read that helps shed light on the broader vision of Plato's late period. It will certainly be a benchmark from which—one may hope—more work may be done on the intersection of politics and metaphysics, both in Plato's late dialogues and more generally in the Old Academy.—Jonathan Greig, *Austrian Academy of Sciences*[1]

PIEPER, Josef. *Rules of the Game in Social Relationships.* Translated by Dan Farrelly. South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2018. 61 pp. Cloth, $19.00; Paper, $11.00—Before achieving universal acclamation as professor of philosophical anthropology at the University of Munich, German philosopher Josef Pieper (1904–1997) was research assistant under Johann Plenge at The Research Institute for Organization Theory and Sociology from 1928 to 1932. The fruit of Pieper's work under Plenge was his 1931 *Grundformen sozialer Spielregln*, and two years later (in 1933) the simplified, second edition. For the first time in the English-speaking world, we have this second edition translated into English by Dan Farrelly under the title *Rules of the Game in Social Relationships*. The text

[1] The author would like to thank the European Research Council for their support in the production of this review, within the framework of the project, NeoplAT (ERC_CoG_771640).