

*The Argument from Benefit (169c3–175a8)*

The assumption that temperance is the source of very great benefits is found in every section of the *Charmides*. All three interlocutors share it, even though each understands it differently and relies on it in different ways and for different purposes. For instance, in the opening scene, Socrates relates that, according to Zalmoxis, temperance engendered in the soul by means of *logoi* is the source of physical and mental health and, generally, every good for man (156d3–157b6). Next, in the course of the conversation with Charmides, Socrates obtains the youth's assent to the premise that temperance is pre-eminently a *kalon*, one of the most admirable and most beneficial things (159c1–2, 160e6–7). Then, in the debate between Critias and himself involving the *technê* analogy (165c4–166c6), Socrates highlights the intuitive connection between the work of every first-order art and science and the benefits deriving from it,<sup>1</sup> and suggests that, likewise, the science supposed to be equivalent to temperance should have a distinct domain and accomplish a *kalon ergon* (165e1), an admirable and beneficial work worthy of such a cardinal virtue.

Critias too gives proof of his commitment to the idea that temperance is a great *kalon* for both those who possess it and the people governed by temperate rulers. Recall that, when he first crosses swords with Socrates over the definition of the virtue as 'doing one's own',<sup>2</sup> he relies on a view that he ascribes to Hesiod, according to which a temperate person is one who is doing his own deeds in an admirable and beneficial manner (*kalôs kai ôphelimôs*: 163c3). He takes good and benefit to be tied together in the successful performance of such deeds, and also he initially presupposes that agents' awareness of the value of their own actions is an inseparable component of having temperance. In fact, as we have seen, what made

<sup>1</sup> For instance, Socrates obtains Critias' ready assent to the claim that medicine is useful (χρησίμη: 165c11) and its achievement very beneficial (οὐ μικρὰν ὠφέλιαν: 165d1) in respect of its distinct object, namely health and disease.

<sup>2</sup> τὸ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν: 161b6.

Critias eventually abandon that definition was the implication, pointed out by Socrates, that doctors and other first-order experts may be temperate in the sense of acting well and beneficially without being aware that they are acting in that manner (164c5–d3). It is precisely this consideration that prompted Critias to claim that, in fact, temperance is knowledge of oneself (164d4).

Importantly, the debate over that knowledge and its object (165c4–166e3) revealed that Socrates and Critias began their conversation by making different assumptions about the benefits deriving from temperance and their ultimate source. On the one hand, Socrates' initial inclination was to assume that temperance is analogous to every other *epistêmê* or *technê* insofar as the benefits that it secures derive from a proprietary object and function distinct from that *epistêmê* itself. On the other hand, Critias argued against that assumption and was allowed to prevail. Unlike the other sciences, he contended, the *epistêmê* that is temperance has *epistêmê* as its only object: it is 'a science of itself and the other sciences and the absence of science' or, equivalently, a 'science of science' (166e7–8). This implies, or strongly suggests, that the benefits the latter is expected to yield come from its reflexive object, namely from the aforementioned science itself. In this crucial respect, Critianic temperance sharply differs from every other science or art: it is good for us by virtue of its strictly reflexive character, whereas the other sciences are useful for us by virtue of their aliorelativity, i.e. the property of being directed to objects or governing domains distinct from themselves.

As mentioned, the Argument from Benefit aims to answer the second horn of the puzzle motivating the interlocutors' 'offering to Zeus', namely the question of whether or not a 'science of science' would be good for us, if it is at all possible. Even though it is dialectical and therefore inconclusive, it is a devastating attack against Critias' conception of temperance and, in particular, his assumption that temperance as a 'science of itself and the other sciences and non-science' is supremely beneficial on account of the fact that it is strictly reflexive and directive of the other sciences, though not of their objects. Even though it raises conceptual and psychological issues, its main focus is ethical and political. Notably, it draws out and challenges the assumption of both interlocutors that the 'science of science' has epistemic content, as well as Critias' view that, in virtue of that higher-order content, temperate rulers would be able to distinguish experts from non-experts, correctly delegate tasks, successfully run the state, and secure the happiness of all concerned. According to the reading that I shall develop, this complex and controversial argument has the form of

a *reductio* that develops in five successive steps. They correspond to the five sections of this chapter and I shall discuss them in order.<sup>3</sup>

### I

And when Critias heard these things and saw that I was puzzled, he appeared to me to be compelled by my own state of puzzlement to be besieged and captured by puzzlement himself too, just as those who see people yawning in front of them have the very same sensation induced in them. And since he used regularly to make a good impression, he felt ashamed before the company, and did not want to concede to me that he was unable to go through the divisions that I was challenging him to draw, and made a vague comment which concealed his puzzlement. (169c3–d1)

According to the narrator, the effect of the Argument from Relatives on both interlocutors was *aporia*, perplexity. Socrates was perplexed for the reasons that he gave in the course of that argument, while Critias was apparently perplexed by proxy. He perceived Socrates' puzzlement and fell prey to it as well. The narration is strikingly physical and evokes images of compulsion and violence. Critias 'sees' the perplexity of his companion, as if it were something sensible. He 'catches' it from Socrates, as if it were something infectious, like a yawn. He is 'compelled' to surrender to the puzzlement, as a captured city is forced to surrender to the enemy (*halônai*: 169c6). While in the opening scene Socrates felt stalked and captured (*healôkenai*: 155e2) by the fearsome beast of sexual passion, on the present occasion the fearsome creature is the argument and the interlocutors have been caught by it. One wonders whether they will manage to save themselves or for how long.

The narrator relates something else as well, namely that when Critias found himself reduced to perplexity, he felt shame (169c7) and tried to hide from the audience the fact that he was unable to rise to the task assigned by Socrates to some 'great man': he was unable to draw the divisions necessary in order to settle the issue of whether there can be an *epistêmê* of itself.

Since Critias presumably used to emerge victorious in dialectical encounters, he felt embarrassed to concede defeat in this debate. On the one hand, this does not show that he is entirely indifferent to the truth<sup>4</sup> or completely lacks *sôphrosynê*.<sup>5</sup> Even though his perplexity is second-hand in

<sup>3</sup> To help the reader follow the argument and check the interpretation that I defend against Plato's text, I will quote the relevant passages in their entirety as I discuss them.

<sup>4</sup> So Schmid 1998, 101.

<sup>5</sup> So Hyland 1981, 122–3. The remarks by Tuozzo 2011, 237 and n. 1 are, I think, on the right track.

a way,<sup>6</sup> in another way it is not. For he has followed the Argument from Relatives in earnest and has conceded its conclusions. He has shown himself to have some degree of commitment to the epistemic objective of the search and, insofar as he has become aware of the difficulties surrounding the notion of a 'science of science', he has gained some self-awareness. He realises now, as he did not before, that there are problems with his definition of temperance, even though he does not want to acknowledge it in public. On the other hand, there is no doubt that Critias' *philotimia*, his love of honour and victory, is counterproductive with regard to the task at hand. Unlike Socrates, whose open acknowledgement of his perplexity motivates him to continue the search, Critias' sense of shame (*aischynê* or *aidôs*) causes him to hide rather than confront his *aporia*. Looking back to Charmides' second definition of temperance as *aidôs*, one appreciates the wisdom of the Homeric counterexample with which that definition was refuted: 'shame is not a good companion for a man in need' (I61a4). Critias would have done well to heed Homer's advice. Once again, then, Critias is portrayed as a complex character, whose urbane appearance conceals a tense psychological reality: an exceptionally intelligent but also proud man, who does not tolerate being exposed or misunderstood. For his own part, Socrates neither indulges nor condemns him. Rather, he finds a way to circumvent Critias' feelings of shame and pursue the investigation.

And so, in order for our argument to go forward, I said: 'alternatively, Critias, if it seems to you a good idea, let us for now make the following concession, that there may possibly be a science of science, but we shall investigate whether or not this is so some other time. Come then, consider: assuming that this science is perfectly possible, why or how does it make it any more possible for one to know what one knows and what one doesn't? For this is exactly what we said is to know oneself or<sup>7</sup> be temperate. Did we not?' (I69d2–8)

Socrates' initial move is to propose that they concede the possibility of reflexive knowledge<sup>8</sup> and, on the basis of that concession, try to answer the

<sup>6</sup> Schmid 1998, 101, denies that Critias' perplexity is genuine: 'the narrative is potentially misleading, for it is evident that Critias was not "caught by perplexity" in the full sense of the phrase. Critias' perplexity was . . . like that of someone whose sneeze is derived: he experienced an imitation perplexity, not a real one'.

<sup>7</sup> I take the *καί* as epexegetic.

<sup>8</sup> By proposing a concession, Socrates does not step out of his role as a questioner, nor does he compromise the dialectical character of the investigation. The argument will proceed only if and only after Critias agrees, as indeed he does. A comparable situation occurs in the *Euthyphro*, when Socrates propels the argument forward by asking his baffled interlocutor to consider the idea that piety is part of justice (11e–12e). In this case too, the enquiry begins only after Euthyphro endorses that view as his own. 'This is the kind of thing I was asking before, whether where there is piety there is also justice,

question why that sort of knowledge would make it *any more* possible (*mallon*: 169d6) for its possessors to know what they know and what they don't.<sup>9</sup> Given that he intends to address the second leg of the *aporia* (167a9–b4), i.e. whether Critianic temperance would be beneficial, the way in which he phrases his proposal shows that he intends to problematise an assumption that both he and Critias have shared up to this point, namely that the benefits of the 'science of science', whatever they may be, depend primarily on its substantive content: not merely knowing *that* one knows and doesn't,<sup>10</sup> but chiefly knowing *what* one knows and doesn't.<sup>11</sup> Granting that the 'science of science' is possible, the question he wishes to ask is this: why or how does Critias' temperate man, who is the only kind of person endowed with the 'science of science', have *more* or *greater* substantive knowledge, i.e. knowledge of *what* he knows and doesn't know, than other people have?

This question brings again to the fore the debate between Socrates and Critias in respect of the analogy between the *epistēmē* equivalent to temperance and the other *epistēmai* or *technai*, and also the implications of the positions held respectively by the two interlocutors (165c4–167a8). As we recall, there Socrates had defended the view that a science or art is beneficial in respect of its proprietary object or domain or function, which is distinct from the science or art itself. According to Socrates, the benefit of every *epistēmē* or *technē* has to do with its aliorelative character: the fact that it is directed to an object or subject-matter distinct from itself. Moreover, we may infer that, on that view, the constitutive relation of a science to its own aliorelative object determines *what* experts are supposed to know and *how* they differ from non-experts with regard to their science. The doctor knows about health and disease and, by virtue of that knowledge, he is able to treat

but where there is justice there is not always piety, since the pious is a part of justice. Shall we say that or do you think otherwise? – No, I think like that, because what you suggest seems to be right' (12e–d).

<sup>9</sup> Here, Socrates respects Critias' sensitivities and allows him to save face. For he leaves it up to Critias to decide whether or not to make the aforementioned concession: they will take that option only if Critias thinks it is a good idea (εἰ δοκεῖ: 169d1), otherwise not. Also, Socrates suggests that they leave aside the issue of the possibility of a 'science of science' for reasons of argumentative strategy, without referring to Critias' evident incompetence to draw the necessary divisions as a 'great man' would. As he puts the matter, they may want to consider making the proposed concession at present (νῦν: 169d3) and revisit the issue of possibility some other time (169d4–5).

<sup>10</sup> For reasons that will become clear, I call this discriminatory knowledge or knowledge-that.

<sup>11</sup> I call this substantive knowledge or knowledge-what. As mentioned, the expression 'what one knows and doesn't know' is ambiguous between (a) the indirect question 'what it is that one knows and what it is that one doesn't know' and (b) the relative clause 'those things of which one has knowledge and those things of which one does not'. On my reading, the Argument from Benefit concerns both (a) and (b).

patients and, when possible, cure them. As Socrates had suggested, something similar ought to hold for the *epistêmê* equivalent to temperance as well.

In the passage quoted immediately above, Socrates' use of the comparative term '*mallon*', more (169d6), highlights a point of particular interest: he and Critias need to determine not only the content of the temperate person's knowledge, but also, importantly, the extent to which this latter is cognitively superior to other people. For his own part, Critias does not object. Even though, in the aforementioned debate, he has maintained that temperance is unlike the other sciences in respect of having a reflexive and not an aliorelative object, nonetheless he too has taken it for granted that, if temperance or the 'science of science' is to be profitable, it must have substantive content. Therefore, at the present stage of the enquiry, he too wishes to examine just how the temperate man is better equipped than other people with regard to scientific understanding. However, Critias does realise at first that, at this point, Socrates intends to question the assumption that they both have made about the substantive content of the 'science of science' and, notably, his (sc. Socrates') own articulation of that notion in terms of 'knowing *what* oneself and others know or do not know' (cf. 167a1–7).<sup>12</sup> Therefore, he attempts to address Socrates' query as follows:

Very much so, he said.<sup>13</sup> And indeed, Socrates, this must surely follow. For if someone has a knowledge or science which knows itself, he himself would be of the same kind as that which he has. Just as whenever someone has swiftness he is swift, and whenever someone has beauty he is beautiful, and whenever someone has knowledge he is knowing, so whenever someone has knowledge that is of itself, he will then, surely, be knowledgeable of himself. (169d9–e5)

While, earlier in the dialogue, Critias assumed without argument that knowledge or science of oneself (*to gignôskein heauton*: 165b4) implies knowledge or science which is of itself and every science (cf. *epistêmê heautês*: 166c3), now he claims that the entailment holds in the opposite direction: knowing itself entails its possessor knowing himself.<sup>14</sup> He

<sup>12</sup> On this point, see the excellent discussion by Tuozzo 2011, 239.

<sup>13</sup> Thus, Critias emphatically confirms their agreement that to know oneself and/or be temperate is equivalent to knowing *what* one knows and doesn't.

<sup>14</sup> This passage does not provide justification for Critias' controversial transition from γινώσκειν αὐτὸν ἑαυτὸν, knowing oneself (165b4), το αὐτὴ τε αὐτῆς ἔστιν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν ἐπιστήμη, a science of both itself and the other sciences (166e6). (On this point, see also Tuozzo 2011, 240.) We should note that Critias appears to oscillate regarding the nature of the relation between knowing oneself and the 'knowledge of knowledge'. While he occasionally suggests that the relation is an identity, in the present passage he treats this relation as an implication: knowledge of itself entails knowledge of oneself. In most instances, he appears to assume that the 'knowledge of

suggests that if a person has quickness, he is quick; if he has beauty, he is beautiful; if he has knowledge, he is knowing; and if he has knowledge which is of itself, he will know himself.<sup>15</sup> This reply can be considered a logical truism, but other readings are available as well. On the one hand, Critias may be pointing to a physical or psychological fact: to have a certain physical or psychological character *Fness* entails being that sort of person, i.e. a person marked by *Fness*.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, his response can be read in metaphysical terms: as an individual participating in the Form of Quickness will be quick, and in the Form of Beauty beautiful, and in the Form of Knowledge knowing, so a person participating in the Form of Reflexive Knowledge will be reflexively knowing; he will be knowing the knowing thing, i.e. himself.<sup>17</sup> Whatever we take to be Critias' meaning, Socrates sets the record straight.

I do not dispute this point, I said, namely that when someone has the very thing which knows itself he will know himself. However, what sort of necessity is there for the person who has it [sc. that which knows itself] to know *what* he knows and *what* he does not know? – Because, Socrates, this knowledge is the same as the other. – Perhaps, I said. But I am afraid I am always in a similar condition. For I still do not understand how knowing *what* one knows and doesn't is the same (as that other knowledge). (169e6–170a4, emphasis added)

The issue that Socrates wants to raise is not how the man who has reflexive knowledge reflexively knows himself. For it seems fair to say that if you have self-knowing knowledge, then, since self-knowing knowledge is in you, in knowing *itself* it also knows an aspect of *you*.<sup>18</sup>

Rather, Socrates is asking how knowing knowledge entails knowing a specific content. Earlier in the argument, in elaborating Critias' position at 167a1–8, he treated knowledge of oneself and 'knowledge of knowledge' as mutually entailing or as amounting to the same thing; and both he and Critias took it for granted that knowledge of itself is equivalent to or entails knowing-what. Now, however, he questions that move. Why assume, as both he and his interlocutor have assumed, that the possessor of reflexive

oneself and the 'knowledge of knowledge' are biconditionally related: knowledge of oneself obtains if and only if 'knowledge of knowledge' obtains. The fact that he saw no need to defend the transition from knowledge of oneself to knowledge of itself (cf. 165b4–166c3), taken together with his current claim that whoever has knowledge of itself is bound to know himself, supports that suggestion.

<sup>15</sup> On this point, see TUOZZO 2011, 240–1.

<sup>16</sup> The point could be extended to inanimate beings as well. <sup>17</sup> See Kahn 1996, 192–4.

<sup>18</sup> Even so, however, it is not clear how we get from that to full self-knowledge.

knowledge must also, by some sort of necessity, know *what* oneself and others know or do not know? Or supposing, as Critias momentarily does (170a1), that reflexive knowledge is identical to knowing-*what* (*tauton*: 170a1), on what grounds can one defend that assumption? To put the point in a different way, Socrates does not contest the principle according to which whoever possesses the property of reflexive knowledge will also acquire the character distinctive of that property. He problematises the assumption that the 'science of science' better enables its possessor to judge what his knowledge or ignorance is *about*.<sup>19</sup> Like the Argument from Relatives, the elenchus that will follow will be adversarial in form. It will not examine whether knowing oneself enables one to judge what one knows and doesn't, but whether the 'science of itself and the other sciences' entails knowing what one knows and doesn't. Far from 'fading into insignificance',<sup>20</sup> the strictly reflexive nature of Critianic temperance remains central to the dialectical debate between Critias and Socrates. Does Critias' 'science of science' entail substantive knowledge? If it does not, in what way is it good for us? Or, if it does, what benefit do we derive from it?

## 2

The core of the Argument from Benefit occupies approximately five Stephanus pages (170a6–175a8) and constitutes a paradigmatic case of dialectical reasoning. As we walk through it, it may be useful to keep in mind certain preliminary remarks bearing on the interpretation that I propose.

First, the interlocutors consistently treat the 'science of science' as strictly reflexive, but all the other sciences as strictly aliorelative. The former is only of itself and every other *epistêmê* insofar as it is *epistêmê*, whereas the latter are only of their own proprietary objects, which are

<sup>19</sup> Socrates puts his query in two different ways which are determined in part by his interlocutor's reactions. First, he asks, assuming that one can have that which knows itself, what sort of necessity is there for that person to have also knowledge-what, namely knowledge of what he knows and doesn't (169e6–8)? Then, in response to Critias' contention that 'knowledge of knowledge' and knowledge-what are the same (*tauton*: 170a1), Socrates asks just how they are the same (170a2–4). Possibly, the former formulation of the question corresponds to Critias' initial suggestion that knowing-itself *entails* knowing-what, whereas the latter formulation corresponds to Critias' claim that knowing itself is *the same thing as* knowing-what. If the elenchus shows that reflexive knowledge does not entail knowledge-what, there will be no need to examine separately the question of whether they are the same.

<sup>20</sup> See Tuozzo 2011, 243.

invariably distinct from the corresponding sciences themselves. Neither Socrates nor Critias ever oscillates in this respect: they are concerned exclusively with what we may call strict reflexivity and strict aliorelativity, and do not examine the possibility that a science may be both of some distinct object and of itself. Second, the interlocutors sometimes designate temperance by ‘*epistêmê epistêmês*’ (genitive singular: science of science), but other times they use the expression ‘*epistêmê epistêmôn*’ (genitive plural: science of sciences). We shall not linger over their choice of formula, for, as we shall see, it is not philosophically significant.<sup>21</sup> Third, it will become clear that the distinction that the interlocutors draw between knowing *that* one knows and knowing *what* one knows, which is pivotal to the Argument from Benefit, does not correspond to modern distinctions between propositional and non-propositional knowledge, knowing *that* and knowing *how*, knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintance.<sup>22</sup> Rather, as we shall see, Socrates contrasts the power to recognise *that* someone is knowledgeable with the capacity to identify *what* particular sort of knowledge one’s knowledge is: medicine and not architecture, architecture and not navigation, and so on. However, although this latter distinction plays a crucial dialectical role in the argument, it does not necessarily follow that Socrates or Plato would endorse it in its own right.<sup>23</sup>

Fourth, as in the previous argument, so in this one, Socrates draws attention to the doxastic nature of the premises and the essentially dialectical nature of the investigation. For instance, not only does he repeatedly stress the hypothetical standing of the ‘science of science’ and of Critias’ definition of temperance in these terms, he also appeals to the plausibility of certain premises (e.g. *eikotôs*: 170b9) rather than their necessary truth,

<sup>21</sup> While certain interpreters do attribute philosophical significance to Socrates’ choice of formula, others do not. For instance, Schmid 1998, 111–12, is puzzled by the fact that Socrates refers to temperance in different ways and suggests that ἐπιστήμη τῆς ἐπιστήμης at 170a6 picks out a feature associated with Critian self-certainty: ‘a claim to knowledge of knowledge which, however, ignores the fearful, self-critical element, the knowledge of ignorance’. As for ἐπιστήμη ἐπιστημῶν at 170c6, according to Schmid, it picks out another element especially associated with the Critianic model, namely the hegemony of the ‘science of science’ over the other sciences. On the other hand, although Tuckey 1951, 58–9, registers these variations, he does not regard them as philosophically important.

<sup>22</sup> See the relevant remarks by Tuozzo 2011, 245.

<sup>23</sup> A related remark concerns the cognitive vocabulary of the Argument from Benefit. While in the earlier stages of the debate the interlocutors mostly use ἐπίστασθαι and its cognates in order to refer to the ‘science of science’, in the Argument from Benefit Socrates sometimes uses indiscriminately ἐπίστασθαι, γινώσκειν, εἰδέναι, and their cognates. The reason could be that, in this argument, the interplay between Critias’ conception of a ‘science of science’ and the Socratic conception of self-knowledge becomes subtler and blurrier. Notably, as we shall see (Chapter 12, 273–86), some of the objections that Socrates raises in his final summary of the argument also affect, albeit obliquely, his own philosophy and method.

and infers what *seems* to him to be the case (e.g. *hōs eoiken*: 170d2, 7) rather than what *is* the case. Although his hand becomes increasingly firmer as the argument develops, he remains epistemically cautious regarding both the interim and the final conclusions to be drawn. Fifth, the Argument from Benefit exposes the implications of the stance that Critias defended vis-à-vis Socrates in the debate about a crucial aspect of the *technê* analogy, i.e. the issue of whether or not temperance is analogous to the other arts and sciences in respect of having an object distinct from itself (165c4–166e3). We should keep that question alive in our mind until the end of the argument, when we shall be in a position to judge whether or not it is true that, in the *Charmides*, Socrates (as well as Plato) rejects the analogy between virtue and the arts once and for all. Let us now switch our attention to the text.

How do you mean? he asked. – I mean this, I said. Supposing that perhaps there is a science of science, will it really be able to distinguish anything more than that, namely that of two things, the one is science but the other is not? – No, just that much. – Then, is the science or lack of science of health the same thing as the science or lack of science of justice? – Certainly not. – Rather, I think, the one is the science of medicine, the other is the science of politics, and the science we are talking about is of nothing but science. – It must be so. – And if a person does not have additional knowledge of health and justice but knows only knowledge because he has knowledge of only that thing, namely *that* [*hoti*] he knows something and that he has some knowledge, he would also probably know that he has some knowledge both about himself and about others. Isn't that so? – Yes. – But how will he know *what* [*ho ti*]<sup>24</sup> he knows by virtue of that knowledge? For he knows, of course, health by virtue of medicine and not of temperance, harmony by virtue of music and not of temperance, building by virtue of the art of building and not of temperance, and the same holds for all cases. Or not? – It seems so. – But if temperance is indeed a science only of sciences, how will [the temperate person] know that he knows health or that he knows building? – He won't know it in any way. (170a5–c8, emphasis added)

Socrates explains why he finds himself in an aporetic state and argues dialectically towards the conclusion that, in fact, the 'science of science' cannot be knowledge of a specific content. He relies on his initial intuition concerning the aliorelative nature of all arts and sciences (165c4–166c3) in order to reason as follows: every science is identical to itself and different

<sup>24</sup> Contra van der Ben 1985, 64, there is no reason to emend the mss. reading ὅ τι. Nor, as I hope to show, are there any grounds for accepting the claim by Rosenmayer 1957, 89, i.e. that Plato's treatment of knowing-what and knowing-that is chaotic and that, in fact, he cannot make up his mind as to whether temperance is equivalent to the former or the latter.

from every other science on account of its proprietary object, which is typically distinct from that science itself. Medicine is the science it is in virtue of knowing health, and politics is the science it is in virtue of knowing justice. Also, medicine is the science of health and not of justice, while politics is the science of justice and not of health. Furthermore, every science involves expert understanding of both its proprietary object and the negative object corresponding to this latter: e.g. medicine knows health and disease, politics knows justice and injustice.<sup>25</sup> Hence, every first-order science is able to distinguish both expertise and the lack of expertise regarding its own domain, and to assess what does qualify as scientific knowledge of its own subject-matter and what does not (170a10–b11).

We should note that, here, Socrates reintroduces into the discussion the privations or negative objects of *epistêmê* and the *epistêmai*. He does so in order to emphasise that every science, insofar as it is a science, must define its realm and its limits.<sup>26</sup> Also, he strongly suggests that the first-order sciences can do so precisely because they are aliorelative. Both the domain of a given science and the substantive claims belonging to that domain are determined by what that science is a science *of*: something distinct from the science itself. Health and disease determine what medicine is and what it consists of. And number determines arithmetic and the constituents of that art. Similar observations hold for the first-order experts, in accordance with the principle that, if a person has a property Y possessing a certain character F, then that person will possess the character F just in virtue of possessing Y (169d9–e8). For instance, if the science of medicine can *only* distinguish expertise or the absence of expertise regarding health and disease, the person who possesses that science, i.e. the medical doctor, will *only* be able to judge whether a claim qualifies as a medical claim, whether it is a correct medical claim, and whether the person who makes it is a true doctor. He won't be able to judge expertly or scientifically anything else, although he will of course make all sorts of non-expert judgements about many things.

On the other hand, according to Critias, temperance differs from every other *epistêmê* precisely on account of the fact that its proprietary object is not distinct from *epistêmê* but the same as *epistêmê* itself. Because

<sup>25</sup> Note that, earlier in the dialogue, Socrates uses the term '*anepistêmosynê*', non-science or absence of science, to articulate Critianic temperance as 'a science of itself and the other sciences as well as of non-science' (166e7–8, 167b11–c2), but on the present occasion he employs '*anepistêmosynê*' to designate the negative objects of first-order sciences.

<sup>26</sup> Socrates does not distinguish between ways of knowing the object of a science and ways of knowing its privation. However, in the present context, there is no philosophical need to do so.

temperance is a science only of science, it can discern only science simpliciter from non-science simpliciter, but can make no expert judgement about anything else. As Socrates puts it, temperance entails only knowing-*that*: it can only tell that someone knows something or has some sort of knowledge. But temperance cannot disclose anything more about *what* someone knows: e.g. it cannot tell you that the knowledge that one has is *medical* knowledge, nor can it tell you how to treat a disease and restore health (170b6–d4).<sup>27</sup> Thus, the distinction between temperance and the first-order sciences becomes sharper and more extreme. While the ‘science of science’ is discriminatory knowledge (knowledge-that) by virtue of which the temperate person can tell *only* that there is a knower of some sort, each of the first-order sciences is substantive knowledge by virtue of which an expert can discern other experts in his own discipline and can attend in a scientific manner to the object of this latter.

Consider now what this view entails for the temperate person as opposed to the first-order experts. Assuming that what holds for temperance or for the first-order sciences also holds for the corresponding experts, on the one hand, first-order experts can discern *only* scientific knowledge or ignorance of their own objects, and they differ from experts in the other sciences just in virtue of that capacity. Doctors have scientific knowledge of health and disease and, just in virtue of that knowledge, they differ from statesmen, who have expert knowledge of justice. On the other hand, in virtue of possessing temperance, the temperate person will be able to identify experts and distinguish them from non-experts. But he won’t be able to tell *what* experts are experts *in*, unless he himself happens to be an expert in a particular field *in addition to* being an expert in temperance (170b6–10). He will be able to judge what someone knows or doesn’t know about health and disease only if, *in addition to* having ‘knowledge-of-knowledge’, he *also* has medical knowledge (*prosepistêtai*: 170b6).<sup>28</sup> And he will be capable of assessing what a person knows or doesn’t know about justice only if, *in addition to* being temperate, he *also* masters the art of politics.

It follows that, contrary to what Critias and Socrates had supposed,<sup>29</sup> the temperate man would not be able to do (except accidentally) the work previously assigned to him, namely to test people’s claims to expertise and judge scientifically whether such claims are true or false of the people who

<sup>27</sup> Especially, see the following lines: οὐκ ἄρα εἴσεται ὃ οἶδεν ὁ τοῦτο ἀγνοῶν, ἀλλ’ ὅτι οἶδεν μόνον (170b9–10, my emphasis).

<sup>28</sup> On the interpretation of προσεπίστηται, see the comments by Dyson 1974, 108, and van der Ben 1985, 69 n. 8.

<sup>29</sup> See again Socrates’ elaboration of Critias’ definition of temperance at 167a1–7.

make them. For since he won't have substantive knowledge of the object of each science,<sup>30</sup> he won't be able to reliably distinguish genuine experts from those that merely play the part. If we glance back to the opening scene of the dialogue, we may be tempted to read this as a joke at Critias' expense. There, Critias thought he was using a ruse when he told Charmides that Socrates was a doctor. But, according to the present argument, he really could not have known whether his claim was false or true. In the sequel of the investigation (170e3–171c10), Socrates slightly changes perspective<sup>31</sup> in order to explain further the implication that, since the temperate person has no access to substantive content,<sup>32</sup> he/she is unable to distinguish in an expert manner between real and fraudulent claims to knowledge.<sup>33</sup>

Let us consider the matter from a different starting point. If the temperate man or anyone else is going to discriminate between the person who is truly a doctor and the one who is not, won't he behave as follows? Surely, he will not discuss with him about medicine – for, as we have said, the doctor has knowledge of nothing other than health and disease. Isn't that so? – It is. – But he knows nothing of science; instead we have assigned that to temperance alone. – Yes. – Therefore, the medical man knows nothing of medicine either, since medicine is in fact a science. – True. – Thus, the temperate man will know that the doctor possesses a certain science. But when he has to test which one it is, will he consider anything other than what things it is a science of? Or is it not the case that each science is defined not merely as a science but also as a particular one,<sup>34</sup> by virtue of this, namely its being of certain specific objects? – Surely it is. – And medicine was defined as being different from the other sciences by virtue of the fact that it was the science of health and disease, right?<sup>35</sup> – Yes. – So, mustn't anyone wishing to enquire into medicine enquire into what domain [*en toutois*] medicine is found in [*en ois*]? For he would presumably not enquire into domains external to these in which it is not found. – Of course not. – Hence it is in the domain of health and disease that the person who enquires in the correct manner will enquire into the doctor *qua* doctor. – It seems so. – Won't he enquire as to whether, in things either thus said or thus done, what is said is said truly and what is done is done correctly? – Necessarily. – Now, could a person pursue either of these lines of enquiry without the art of medicine? – Surely not. – Nor, it

<sup>30</sup> ἐπίστασθαι τι: 170d6 (my emphasis). <sup>31</sup> σκεψώμεθα δὲ ἐκ τῶνδε: 170e3.

<sup>32</sup> On this point, see the comments by Schofield 1973.

<sup>33</sup> Clearly, Socrates is not concerned with ordinary, haphazard distinctions between experts and charlatans, but rather with the ability to distinguish between these two in an expert, scientific manner.

<sup>34</sup> I change τις, the interrogative printed by Burnet at 171a6, to the indefinite pronoun τίς.

<sup>35</sup> I end the Greek sentence at 171a9 with a question mark, where Burnet has a full stop.

seems, could anyone else, except a doctor, nor indeed could the temperate man. For otherwise he would have to be a doctor in addition to his temperance. – That is true. (170e3–171c3)

As I understand the argument, it runs as follows: to expertly judge (*diagnôsesthai*: 170e5)<sup>36</sup> whether someone is, for example, a doctor, the temperate man would have to debate (*dialexetai*: 170e6) with the latter about medical matters. To be able to do so, the temperate person would need to have knowledge-what: substantive knowledge of medicine and of the matters falling within that sphere (*en toutois*: 171a11).<sup>37</sup> No expertise outside that sphere (*tois exô*: 171b2) would be relevant to the task at hand. However, assuming that the temperate man doesn't happen to also be a doctor, he will have no science of medicine, but only 'science of science'. So, he will be able to discern only whether one has or doesn't have science, but won't be capable of discerning whether the person who claims to be a doctor is a real doctor or a fraud. Conversely, the doctor who is to be tested is not an expert in *epistêmê*, but only in medicine. Assuming that he/she is a true doctor, he/she will have scientific understanding of health and disease, but not of *epistêmê* (or anything else). And he/she will be the only type of expert possessing the science of medicine. No other expert or layperson will possess the science of medicine, although some may pretend that they do.

Hence, Socrates concludes, it is very probable that, if temperance is only a science of science and of the lack of science, it<sup>38</sup> will not be able to distinguish either a doctor who knows [*epistamenon*] the subjects pertaining to his art [*technês*] from a man who does not know them but pretends or believes that he does, or any other expert of those knowledgeable in anything at all, except for the one who happens to have the same art as the temperate man himself [*hometechnon*: 171c8], as is the case with all other specialists as well. – So it seems, he said. (171c4–171c10)<sup>39</sup>

The upshot is, then, that the temperate person and, for example, the doctor have absolutely nothing in common. Both are subject to severe

<sup>36</sup> The choice of word seems deliberate: διάγνωσις and its cognates technically refer to the physician's diagnosis of the symptoms of a disease. On the basis of the diagnosis, the physician is able to tell whether or not one has a disease and what particular disease it is.

<sup>37</sup> Socrates' use of ἐν +dative (ἐν τούτοις: 171a11, ἐν οἷς: 171b1) is one way of indicating the subject-matter of a science (compare van der Ben 1985, 70). An expert's knowledge will fall within a certain sphere, as opposed to whatever knowledge lies outside it (ἐν τοῖς ἔξω: 171b1–2).

<sup>38</sup> Unlike Sprague *ad loc.*, I take σωφροσύνη to be the subject of διακρίναι. On this point, see van der Ben 1985, 71–2, and Lamb's translation *ad loc.*

<sup>39</sup> A particularly noteworthy feature of this passage is the interchangeable use of 'ἐπιστήμη' and 'τέχνη', and their cognates. Clearly, Socrates intends to cover expertise of all sorts, from temperance to medicine to the manual arts (cf. δημιουργοί: 171c9).

cognitive restrictions and neither can trespass into the other's territory. The former knows only about science itself and can make judgements only about science itself and its contenders. The latter knows about health and disease and distinguishes real medicine from fake medicine and real doctors from frauds. However, he knows nothing about medicine as a science, nor, probably, would he be able to tell *that* medicine is a science; for, as it seems, this latter is the privilege of the temperate man alone. The gap between the *epistêmê* equivalent to *sôphrosynê* and the first-order sciences and arts appears unbridgeable and its implications preposterous. The factor primarily responsible for this situation is the strict reflexivity of the 'science of science', i.e. the fact that the latter is supposed to relate only to science, which appears to prevent the 'science of science' from doing any specific work and from yielding any specific benefit.<sup>40</sup> However, in addition to the formal target of the elenchus, this stretch of argument provides grounds for challenging Plato's Socrates as well. If testing one's claim to expertise in medicine requires that the person who is doing the testing should have substantive knowledge of medicine, might it not be the case that the same holds about value? And if it does, how can Plato's Socrates cross-examine self-styled experts in the virtues even though he believes that he has no expertise in these latter? We shall return to this topic in connection with Socrates' final assessment of the search (175a9–d5).

How plausible is the thesis that only a true doctor can distinguish between a real doctor and a charlatan? On the one hand, laypeople or experts in other fields may judge a physician's competence merely on empirical grounds. On the other hand, the interlocutors of the *Charmides* are not concerned with this sort of judgement, but with reliable discriminatory judgements made on the basis of expertise. Hence, the claim that only his *homotechnoi* (171c8), fellow-experts, can discern a true expert from a charlatan is defensible and may well be true. We all have opinions about doctors, diseases, methods of treatment, and drugs. We may be right or wrong about them and we may have better or worse reasons for holding such beliefs. But we have no scientific understanding of these matters, unless we happen to be competent physicians ourselves.

In any case, the argument discussed in this section suggests that, contrary to what Critias expected, the sphere of temperance is not vast, but vastly restricted. Consequently, he faces a tall challenge regarding the

<sup>40</sup> Also responsible, to some extent, for the aforementioned absurdities is an assumption that plays a fairly important role in this stage of the argument, namely that the first-order arts or sciences are strictly aliorrelative: they are only of their distinct proprietary objects but cannot ground any claims about science in general.

question of benefit. He needs to show that temperance is greatly profitable, even if the temperate person cannot access the content of the sciences and cannot reliably distinguish between genuine experts and their fraudulent counterparts. In the next stage of the elenchus, Socrates raises just this issue.

## 3

What benefit then, Critias, I asked, may we still derive from temperance, if it is of such kind? For if, as we supposed from the beginning, the temperate person knew *what* he knew and *what* he did not know, *that* he knows the former but *that* he does not know the latter, and if he were able to recognise another man who has found himself in this same condition, we agree that it would be greatly to our benefit to be temperate. For we would live our life free of error, both we ourselves<sup>41</sup> who would have temperance and all the others who would be governed by us. For neither would we ourselves try to do *what* we did not know, but rather would find those who do know and would hand the matter over to them, nor would we allow the other people governed by us to do anything different from *what* they would be bound to do correctly; and this would be what they would have knowledge or science of.<sup>42</sup> In just this way, then, a house administered by temperance would be well administered, a state would be well ruled, and the same holds for everything else governed by temperance. For, with error removed and correctness leading, it is necessary that the people who are in such condition will act in their every action in a fine and good manner, and that those who do act well will be happy. (171d1–172a3, emphasis added)

This is the first of the fictional societies sketched out by Socrates for the needs of the investigation. It is a society in which temperance reigns supreme. Strictly speaking, it is not a utopia, i.e. an ideal to which we ought to try to approximate.<sup>43</sup> It is best to interpret it, more broadly, as a thought-experiment: an imaginary construct that serves to isolate one or more features of temperance and study them separately from the others.<sup>44</sup> Significantly, Socrates chooses to examine Critianic temperance and those who have it in the context of the household and the state. Thus he brings to the fore a dimension of the ‘science of science’ which, up to this point, has

<sup>41</sup> I preserve the ms. reading καὶ deleted by Heindorf.

<sup>42</sup> Following van der Ben 1985, 72, at 171e5 I put a full stop after εἶχον.

<sup>43</sup> On the nature of political utopias in Plato, see Schofield 2006, 194–249.

<sup>44</sup> The notion of thought-experiment is broader than that of utopia. Every utopia is a thought-experiment, but not every thought-experiment qualifies as a utopia. For instance, although Hobbes’ *Leviathan* is unquestionably a thought-experiment, its author denies that it is a utopia but presents it as a proposal that, in principle, can be materialised.

mostly remained in the background:<sup>45</sup> it is conceived as an architectonic science conferring upon its possessor the exclusive privilege of delegating tasks, overseeing the activities of first-order experts, and thereby ruling the state.

In the fictional society of the thought-experiment, everyone enjoys freedom from error (*hamartia*) (171d7–8). Both the temperate rulers and their subjects act knowledgeably and are guided by *orthotês*, correctness, albeit for different proximate reasons and in different ways. On the one hand, as Socrates puts it, ‘we ourselves who would have temperance’<sup>46</sup> would be in a position to know what we don’t know<sup>47</sup> and, therefore, would abstain from such tasks and delegate them to experts (171d8–e2). According to his sketch, the scientific execution of the rulers’ work would be effected in three distinct temporal stages. First, the rulers would discover the experts in a certain field (*exeuriskontes*: 171e2). Next, they would delegate to each expert whatever task he/she is knowledgeable about (*paredidomen*: 171e2). And, finally, they would ensure that each expert would bring his/her work to successful completion (171e2–172a3).<sup>48</sup> No specifications are given about the implementation of temperance among the ruled. However, Socrates says that ‘we’, the rulers, would not permit our subjects to do anything different from what they are able to do expertly and correctly (171e3–5), and this suggests that the rulers of the imaginary society would use compulsion as well as persuasion to achieve the desired result.

These hypothetical rulers, then, govern in a way faintly reminiscent of the Guardians’ governance in the *Republic*, and they apply a principle that reminds us somewhat of the principle of specialisation in that dialogue. Notably, they don’t allow their subjects to do anything other than what they are competent in and can accomplish in the correct manner (171e3–5) and, in that sense, they compel them to ‘do their own’.<sup>49</sup> As for the subjects, it seems that they have as little choice regarding their professions as the producers of the *Republic*. But whether they do their jobs willingly or unwillingly, according to Socrates’ sketch, the benefit to be gained by the rule of temperance is no less than this: everyone, ruler or subject, will act finely and well in every case (*kalôs kai eu prattein*: 172a1–2) and will be

<sup>45</sup> See Rowe in press.

<sup>46</sup> We should note Socrates’ use of the first-person plural. He and Critias will examine the fictional society sketched above from the point of view of the temperate people who are supposed to govern it.

<sup>47</sup> ἃ μὴ ἐπιστάμεθα: 171e1. <sup>48</sup> On the temporality of the passage, see van der Ben 1985, 73.

<sup>49</sup> See also *Charm.* 162c1–164d3.

happy. Thus, Socrates' thought-experiment has political implications,<sup>50</sup> for it intimates that the citizens' happiness is the outcome of good government.<sup>51</sup> Only if Critianic temperance can achieve that result can it qualify as good rule. And only if the temperate rulers can ensure that their subjects will act well and be happy can they be deemed good rulers.

However, Socrates' sketch leaves unclear whether 'acting finely' and 'acting well' have specifically moral connotations, and hence it is difficult to figure out how 'acting well' (*eu prattein*: 172a2) necessarily<sup>52</sup> would make people happy (*eudaimonas*: 172a3).<sup>53</sup> In any case, it seems unlikely that temperance, as Critias defines it, could be responsible for bringing about happiness. For, as the immediately preceding phase of the elenchus has indicated, temperance as the 'science of science' does not entail knowing *what* one knows or doesn't know but only knowing *that* one knows or doesn't know: the 'science of science' is not substantive knowledge, but only discriminatory knowledge. It seems fairly clear that, in the thought-experiment under consideration, the knowledge enabling the temperate rulers to refrain from acting out of ignorance is, on the contrary, primarily substantive: they are cognisant of *what* they do not know and, on that basis, they avoid acting disgracefully and badly (171d2–e5). Compare the previous stage of the Argument from Benefit, according to which the temperate rulers would probably need to have substantive knowledge, if they were to delegate tasks to true experts and hinder non-experts from meddling with matters that they are ignorant about.

Therefore, the present thought-experiment is, I submit, counterfactual<sup>54</sup> and implies the following reasoning: if, against what has been shown, temperance were substantive knowledge (knowledge-*what*) as well as discriminatory knowledge (knowledge-*that*), and assuming that those who possessed it ruled the state according to that knowledge, both the rulers and

<sup>50</sup> See Schmid 1998, chapter 7, and Schofield 2006, 146–8. <sup>51</sup> See Schofield 2006, 148.

<sup>52</sup> I take it that the infinitives εὖ πράττειν at 172a2 and εἶναι at 172a3 both depend on ἀναγκαῖον at 172a2.

<sup>53</sup> Acting well (εὖ πράττειν) and faring well (attaining εὐδαιμονία) are very different things in English, but Greek tends to bring them closer together. Notably, Aristotle remarks that both the many (οἱ πολλοί) and intellectuals (οἱ χαριέντες) speak of the supreme good as happiness and consider living well (εὖ ζῆν) and acting well (εὖ πράττειν) to be the same thing as being happy (εὐδαιμονεῖν) (*EN* 1095a19). Aristotle also remarks that his own definition of happiness, according to which happiness consists not just in being good but in acting well, accords with the common conception of the happy man as one who lives well and acts well (*EN* 1098b21).

<sup>54</sup> Socrates draws attention to the counterfactual function of this sketch, at the grammatical level, by the counterfactual use of the imperfect + ἄν and, at the conceptual level, by explicitly referring to what 'we supposed from the beginning' (171d2–3). He retains the imperfect tense through his summary description of that society and occasionally uses the so-called philosophic imperfect in order to point back to the earlier passages. On this point, see van der Ben 1985, 72 and 75 n. 4.

their subjects would act faultlessly and correctly. If they acted faultlessly and correctly, they would necessarily act well. If they acted well, they would be happy. And if temperance (understood as a ‘science of science’ involving both substantive and discriminatory knowledge) secured happiness, then it would be a very great good. However, since both Socrates’ sketch and the reasoning that it involves rely on an assumption that has already been refuted (i.e. that temperance involves knowing-what: 172a3–5), its point is moot. Thus, Socrates proposes the following alternative:

But now you see, I said, that such a science has appeared nowhere. – I do, he said. – And so, said I, it may be that the science that we now find to be temperance, namely to know science and the lack of science, has this good attached to it: the person who possesses it will learn more easily whatever else he learns and will perceive everything more clearly, since, in addition to every particular thing that he learns, he also has science in view. And moreover, he will test others more reliably about whatever subjects he also has learnt himself, whereas those who test without having this advantage will do so in a weaker and worse manner. (172b1–8)

Drawing again on perceptual terminology, Socrates prompts Critias to confirm that, nonetheless, he does not see anywhere the appearance of the aforementioned science,<sup>55</sup> i.e. a strictly reflexive science involving substantive knowledge. Clearly, Socrates intends ‘nowhere’ (*oudamou*: 172a7) to mean ‘nowhere in the present investigation’, rather than ‘nowhere in the scientific objects or fields referred to earlier, namely justice, health, harmony, building, and medicine’.<sup>56</sup> For these latter do not constitute an exhaustive list, but serve as illustrations for the contentions that Socrates wanted to defend. In any case, now Socrates leaves aside the counterfactual hypothesis that temperance involves knowledge-what as well as knowledge-that (both substantive and discriminatory knowledge), makes the assumption that temperance is mere knowledge-that (discriminatory knowledge), and invites Critias to entertain the suggestion that the latter benefits the temperate person in three ways: he will have greater facility in learning subject-matters other than knowledge itself (172b3); things will present themselves to him in a clearer and more vivid manner (*enargestera*: 172b4) than to other people; and he will be a better judge of the expertise of others in respect of whatever field he too happens to be an expert in.

<sup>55</sup> νῦν δέ, ἤν δ' ἐγώ, ὁρᾷς ὅτι οὐδαμοῦ ἐπιστήμη οὐδεμία τοιαύτη οὐσα πέφανται; – Ὅρω, ἔφη (173a7–9).

<sup>56</sup> A different interpretation is proposed by van der Ben 1985, 77. As he notes, several translators, including Croiset and Sprague, leave οὐδαμοῦ untranslated.

Socrates does not indicate how these capacities might be related to each other. Perhaps the capacity of the temperate person to easily learn things depends on his prior understanding of what a science is. Alternatively, perhaps it depends on the exceptional clarity and vividness of his impressions, and perhaps both these features could account for the reliability of his judgements regarding the expertise of others.

I submit that, on this hypothesis, temperance or the ‘science of science’ plays a secondary and parasitic role with regard to the first-order sciences. It is an auxiliary *epistêmê* whose presence merely enhances the temperate person’s performance in whatever first-order expertise he/she happens to have. In the first place, it is supposed to be beneficial not in its own right, but because it makes its possessor a better learner in *whatever else* he learns<sup>57</sup> other than science itself (172b3). In the second place, the temperate person’s clearer and more vivid perceptions are not about ‘the science of science’ (which, as has been shown, probably has no substantive content), but about ‘every particular thing that the temperate person learns *in addition to* his prior understanding of science as such’<sup>58</sup> (172b5–6, my emphasis). In the third place, the temperate man is capable of testing experts in a particular field more thoroughly and more reliably than others *only if* he too happens to have expertise in that same field. His judgements will be better than those of other experts only insofar as they concern ‘things that he has also learned himself’ (172b6–8). In short, the intellectual advantages secured through temperance can manifest themselves *only if* those who have temperance *also* master some other, first-order science. Otherwise, these gifts are useless.

Socrates’ idea seems to be this. If temperance is merely discriminatory knowledge, it cannot provide a substantive domain of application for learning, perceiving, or judging. Rather, these capacities and the corresponding activities need to be situated within the realm of some substantive, first-order expertise. For instance, if the temperate man is also a doctor, he can understand medical matters more easily than other doctors, because he also has temperance. He can remember the symptoms and therapies for each disease more clearly than other doctors, because he also has temperance. And he can test other people’s claims to medical expertise in a firmer and surer manner than other doctors, because he also has temperance. But whatever cognitive superiority he enjoys with regard to his fellow-experts is just a matter of degree. While temperance enables him to be a better doctor in the aforementioned respects, it does not suffice to confer upon him the

<sup>57</sup> ὁ ἅν ἄλλο μαθάνῃ: 172b3.      <sup>58</sup> προσκαθορῶντι τὴν ἐπιστήμην: 172b5.

authority to judge doctors *as doctors* (or any other experts *as experts in their own fields*) without belonging to their ranks. On the face of it, this does not seem an unreasonable suggestion.

In principle, the intellectual advantages secured through temperance as knowledge—that are not negligible. The elenchus of Charmides' first definition of temperance as a sort of quietness (159b5) suggests that *eumathia*, learning quickly, is better than *dysmathia*, learning quietly and slowly (159e1–5). And if we look beyond the *Charmides* to the *Republic*, we find that facility in learning and a good memory bear on other mental and psychological features and jointly constitute the natural equipment that eventually enables the Guardians to contemplate the Forms and rule the state with a view to the Good. One might even be inclined to read the 'lesser advantages' of the 'science of science' in the *Charmides* as pointing deliberately to the intellectual qualities adorning the rulers of the Callipolis. For the latter share with the temperate man the capacities of learning easily and of thinking clearly. Also, it is tempting to compare the philosopher-ruler's twofold capacity to contemplate Forms and pay attention to the corresponding particulars with the temperate man's capacity both to understand science as such and to acquire expertise in some particular discipline.

Such associations, however, cannot be pushed too far for many reasons. Notably, while the understanding of the Guardians is fully substantive, the *epistêmê* of Critias' temperate person is not substantive at all. This is why, according to the argument, the advantages it procures are of small significance, if any.<sup>59</sup> Again, the root of this absurdity can be traced far back to the debate over the relation between temperance and the other sciences in respect of the nature of their objects and, specifically, the concession that while all the other sciences are of something distinct from themselves, temperance alone is a science only of science and of no distinct object. Precisely because the 'science of science' governs only science, it has been shown to entail only the discriminatory capacity to distinguish science from non-science. And precisely because it seemingly entails only that

<sup>59</sup> According to Tuozzo 2011, 263–4, Socrates contrasts the great benefits illustrated by the thought-experiment with the lesser ones concerning the mental capacities of the temperate man in such a way as to raise doubts in Critias' mind about the results achieved so far by the investigation. A different interpretation is proposed by van der Ben 1985, 78–9, who claims that the grammatical subject of ἔχου at 172c3 is σωφροσύνη, while οὕτως at 173c3 refers back to the moderate gains mentioned at 172b3–8 and taken up by τοιαῦτα at 172b8. On the other hand, in my view, Socrates' remark at 172c4–5 indicates that, at 173c3, Critias has agreed, albeit hesitantly, that the 'science of science' appears to offer only the lesser benefits, not the greater ones illustrated by Socrates' counterfactual thought-experiment at 171d2–172a3.

restricted capacity, it can function only in an auxiliary manner and benefit temperate people only in lesser ways. As one might expect, Socrates is strongly inclined to reject this conclusion and the argument reaches an impasse. In the interest of the investigation, he will propose another concession and a new start.

## 4

Perhaps, I said. But also, perhaps, we were enquiring about nothing of value.<sup>60</sup> My evidence is that certain strange things seem to me true of temperance, if it is such a thing. For let us examine the matter, if you wish, conceding that it is possible to know knowledge or science and, moreover, let us not withdraw but grant that temperance is what we said from the beginning it is, to know both *what* one knows and *what* one does not know. And having granted all this let us yet better investigate whether something, if it is of that sort, will also be of benefit to us. For what we were saying just now, that if temperance were such a thing, it would be a great good as our guide in the administration of both the household and city, we have not, I think, done well to agree to, Critias. (172c4–d5)

While in the previous phase of the elenchus Socrates points to the absurdity of the idea that temperance as mere knowledge—that brings only lesser benefits, he now concedes that temperance is also knowledge-what and expresses a far more serious doubt: that even if temperance as a ‘science of science’ has substantive content, it might do no good at all. ‘Really, Socrates’, replies Critias, ‘you are saying strange things’ (172e3). Critias’ reaction is especially revealing. For, in the first place, it intimates that he did not expect Socrates to question the relevance of scientific understanding to happiness: he considers Socrates an intellectualist, as other Platonic characters do. In the second place, Critias’ incredulity discloses his own commitment to the view that acting scientifically brings happiness and his reluctance to question that idea. Both interlocutors appear true to character. Critias reacts in accordance with the intellectualist inclinations that he has shown all along. As for Socrates, he points to the theme of self-care<sup>61</sup> and to his concern about carelessly supposing that he knows something that he in fact doesn’t know (166c7–d2). Even at the risk

<sup>60</sup> οὐδὲν χρηστόν ἐζητήσαμεν: 172c4–5. As Tuozzo 2011, 264 n. 17, remarks, some translators render the phrase in the way in which it is translated here, while others, e.g. Jowett, take χρηστόν as an internal accusative and render it accordingly (Jowett translates: ‘we have been inquiring to no purpose’).

<sup>61</sup> On this point, see Tuozzo 2011, 266.

of appearing to talk nonsense, he is determined to examine what seems to him problematic, as one should do ‘if one has even a small concern for oneself’ (173a4–5). Here too, the two conceptions of self-knowledge at play are poised against each other. And we have reason to suspect that, although the argument formally aims at a hypothetical feature of Critias’ ‘science of science’, insofar as it questions the value of knowing what oneself and others know or don’t know it can also imply a criticism against the Socratic mission and method.

The feature of Critianic temperance currently under scrutiny is, as indicated, the common assumption of both interlocutors that the ‘science of science’ involves both knowing *that* one knows or doesn’t and knowing *what* one knows or doesn’t (167a1–8).<sup>62</sup> Socrates now concedes that assumption and, subsequently, tries to explain the source of his worry by narrating to Critias what he calls a ‘dream’ (*onar*: 173a7). It is another thought-experiment depicting in some detail a society that is governed by one or more temperate rulers and that operates faultlessly under their guidance. The ‘dream’ is absolutely central to the Argument from Benefit and therefore deserves our attention.

Listen then, I said, to my dream, whether it has come through the gate of horn or through the gate of ivory. For supposing that temperance were as we now define it and completely governed us, absolutely everything would be done according to the sciences, and neither would anyone deceive us by claiming to be a navigator when he was not, or a doctor, or a general, nor would anyone else remain undetected if he pretended to know what he did not know. And from things being that way nothing else could result for us than that our bodies would be healthier than they are now, and that we would be safe when facing the dangers of sea-travel and war, and that all our vessels or utensils and clothes and footwear and all other things would be expertly made for us because we would use true craftsmen. And moreover, if you would like, let us concede that divination is the science of what is to be in the future, and that temperance, which oversees it, will turn away charlatans and establish for us<sup>63</sup> the true diviners as prophets of what is to be. I do admit that, if mankind were organised in that way, it would act and live scientifically. For temperance, being on guard, would not allow the lack of science to burst in and take part in our deeds. But that by acting scientifically we would also do well and be happy, this, my dear Critias, we cannot know as yet. – However, he retorted,

<sup>62</sup> This is the assumption that Socrates must have in mind when he expresses his fear that the enquiry has gone astray ‘if temperance is such a thing’ (τοιοῦτον: 172c6), as is evident from the passage that immediately follows (172c6–d1).

<sup>63</sup> I take ἡμῖν to be a dative of advantage, while most translators of the passage take it together with ‘prophets’ as a possessive dative and render the phrase by ‘our prophets’ (see, for instance, Lamb 1927, 79; Tuozzo 2011, 268).

if you discredit acting scientifically, you will not easily find some other goal of acting well. (173a7–d7)

This is an intensely intertextual passage, whose ethical importance is underscored by a uniquely early reference to the moral *telos* (173d6–7). On the one hand, it stretches back to earlier sections of the *Charmides* and, on the other, it looks forward to other dialogues, notably the *Republic*, the *Theaetetus*, and the *Statesman*. Presently, Socrates sketches out another fictional society which, like its earlier counterpart, is intended to single out certain features that are especially relevant to the issue under consideration. However, unlike Socrates' earlier thought-experiment (171d2–172a3), the 'dream' is not grounded on a counterfactual hypothesis, but on the interlocutors' recent concession that temperance entails knowledge-what as well as knowledge-that, substantive as well as discriminatory knowledge. Once they agreed that temperance involves substantive knowledge, Socrates went on to sketch an imaginary society in conformity with that idea: a society governed by temperate rulers who have the requisite expertise in order to judge correctly *what* they themselves and others know or do not know and delegate tasks accordingly.

Socrates repeatedly draws attention to the imaginary nature of that society. He calls it a 'dream' and, grammatically, alludes to its fictional standing by repeatedly using the remote future construction (optative + ἄν). Neither Critias nor we, the readers, are ever allowed to forget that the 'dream' illustrates something *atopon*, a strange idea, and moreover that a certain strangeness characterises the 'dream' itself. Borrowing a metaphor from the *Odyssey* (19.564–7),<sup>64</sup> Socrates invites Critias to consider whether his 'dream' has come through the gate of horn, in which case it is veridical, or through the gate of ivory, in which case it is not.<sup>65</sup> Like the 'dream' of the *Theaetetus* (201d–202c), this 'dream' too constitutes a natural image for inspiration – 'an idea coming to mind, not as something one asserts as definitely true on one's behalf and as a conclusion of a process of reasoning, but more as something which gets said in one's mind, as if by an alien voice, so that one may wonder at first whether to accept it as true'.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> The metaphor is used by Penelope when she describes her dream to Odysseus disguised as a beggar (*Od.* 564–7). According to Tuozzo 2011, 266–7, as Penelope's dream represents something bad but prophesies something good, so Socrates' dream appears to effect something bad, i.e. undermine the possibility of a knowledgeably run city, but leads to something good, namely a better understanding of the nature of temperance. While I agree that the 'dream' contributes to our understanding of temperance, I doubt that it prophesies anything good. More on this below.

<sup>65</sup> According to Burnyeat 1970, *Rep.* 443b with 432d–433a and *Leg.* 969b illustrate 'a dream coming true', whereas *Lys.* 218c, *Pol.* 290b, and *Thrt.* 208b refer to cases in which the dream was 'only a dream'.

<sup>66</sup> Burnyeat 1970.

In both the *Charmides* and the *Theaetetus* the image of the ‘dream’ aptly conveys the condition of epistemological insecurity that the interlocutors find themselves in. And in both these dialogues the views exhibited by the ‘dream’ are deemed worthy of consideration, regardless of whether they will eventually prove to be true or false. While the ‘dream’ is being entertained the discussants are in the eerie realm of belief, as opposed to the firm ground of knowledge.<sup>67</sup> It remains open whether, in their wake, they will discover that their dream was true or, alternatively, that it was only a dream and truth still escapes them (*Plt.* 277d). There is another aspect of the ‘dream’ as well, which has to do with the subtext of the *Charmides*. ‘Telling someone his own dream’ was a proverbial expression for telling a person something he is already familiar with in his own experience.<sup>68</sup> In depicting a society ruled by a higher-order knowledge on the basis of which the temperate ruler delegates and oversees the execution of tasks, Socrates may be telling Critias something that Critias has already envisaged. He may be ‘telling Critias his own dream’. The historical record suggests that the contents of the dream find a parallel in the ideology of political elitism that Critias pursued as leader of the Thirty.<sup>69</sup> If this is correct, Socrates’ ‘dream’ is not only a dream. It could be read as a nightmare foretelling the future.

Turning to the contents of the ‘dream’, the first thing to note is that the imaginary society it depicts is not located in time or place. Unlike the ideal city of the *Republic*, which is unquestionably Greek, there is no indication that the city of the ‘dream’ is Greek or anything else. Nor is there any other element identifying a particular group of citizens or the city as a whole. Rather, Socrates singles out only the features relevant to the point that his thought-experiment is intended to make: the temperate rulers’ scientific knowledge of what each person knows or doesn’t; their capacity to distinguish experts from non-experts on the basis of that knowledge, and to delegate tasks only to the former and never to the latter; the experts’ successful execution of these tasks; and, most importantly, the implications of the rule of temperance for the happiness of all concerned. In the society of the ‘dream’, everything is done ‘according to the sciences’ (*kata tas epistêmas*: 173a9–b1)<sup>70</sup> and no error or deception is possible (173b1–4).

The aforementioned sciences are of all sorts, some more prestigious and others less, some more theoretical but others involving greater practical

<sup>67</sup> See Burnyeat 1970, who also gives relevant references: *Men.* 85c, *Rep.* 476c, 520c, 533b.

<sup>68</sup> Burnyeat 1970, 106. <sup>69</sup> See Dusančić 2000.

<sup>70</sup> The accusative plural ἐπιστήμας clearly refers to the first-order sciences or arts. Implicitly, it points to the contrast between the first-order sciences and temperance or the ‘science of science’, which governs itself and generally every science.

experience, some productive, others acquisitive, others performative, and so on. The first group mentioned by Socrates includes sciences of considerable prestige and prudential importance: navigation, the military art, and medicine, which secure, respectively, safety and health. The next group consists of crafts whose products contribute to our physical sustenance and comfort, and whose artisans (*dēmiourgoi*: 273c2) are valued by every organised society: pottery-making and metallurgy, weaving, and cobbling. The ‘dream’ does not preclude that, in the society it represents, there is an axiological hierarchy among these arts and that they enjoy different degrees of social recognition.<sup>71</sup> Nonetheless, it is clear that all of them are lower-level occupations in relation to temperance, which presides over them. In just this respect the society of the ‘dream’ could be compared with the rigidly hierarchical structure of the Callipolis and, specifically, the Guardians’ rule over the Producers.

In the fictional society of the ‘dream’, divination (*mantikē*) is a special case. Socrates seems hesitant to call it a science (173c3–4) or to acknowledge that the seers’ practices are beneficial for us.<sup>72</sup> He introduces divination into the ‘dream’ in a manner that is tentative and entirely dependent on Critias’ assent: ‘and moreover, if you would like, let us concede that divination is the science of what it is to be in the future’ (173c3–4).<sup>73</sup> Within the ‘dream’, divination is treated just as all the other first-order sciences are treated. It is supervised by temperance<sup>74</sup> and acts together with temperance in order to successfully distinguish true prophets from charlatans. As for the benefits that divination was expected to bring, the argument does not challenge the common assumption that true diviners can secure material prosperity or avert material disasters for the individual or for the city by correctly foretelling the future, and by ensuring that appropriate steps will be taken to gain the good will of the gods.

Despite suggestions to the contrary,<sup>75</sup> there is no indication in the text that Socrates takes the benefits of institutionalised divination to be psychic rather than material. Plato’s readers are bound to remember, for instance, that Calchas’ prophecy to Agamemnon was not sought for the purposes of psychic benefit, nor, heaven knows, did it offer any. The dubious benefit of its outcome was material: the Greeks were able to sail for Troy and eventually win the war. Also, the Pythian oracle was typically consulted

<sup>71</sup> Remember that Critias appears to despise cobblers and their like (163b7), whereas he seems to have more respect, for example, for doctors (164a9–c4).

<sup>72</sup> In this context ‘μαντική’ refers to institutionalised divination, not to occurrences such as Socrates’ divinatory dreams or his δαιμόνιον.

<sup>73</sup> ἐπιστήμη τοῦ μέλλοντος ἔσεσθαι: 173c4.

<sup>74</sup> καὶ τὴν σωφροσύνην αὐτῆς ἐπιστατοῦσαν: 273c4–5. <sup>75</sup> See Tuozzo 2011, 268–78.

about practical decisions and its famously ambiguous sayings were supposed to give guidance aimed at material safety and prosperity, not at the good of people's souls. Nor were the prophecies of the diviners always successful. Far from it. Recall Nicias' catastrophic decision to follow the omens and delay the departure of the Athenian navy from Syracuse, which led to the demolition of the naval power of the city and the end of the Athenian hegemony. This background makes understandable Socrates' reluctance to brand divination as a science. And in light of Critias' character, it is plausible to surmise that he too may entertain doubts about its scientific credentials.

For all its scientific organisation, which extends to the whole of mankind (173c7), the society of the 'dream' conveys no sense of unity or community. Significantly, Socrates does not say that the city governed by temperate rulers will itself be temperate, and he does not tell us anything about the other inhabitants' attitude towards these latter. While in the ideal city of the *Republic* temperance binds together the three classes through their agreement as to who should rule, in the imaginary city of the 'dream' there is no intimation that the subjects accept (or that they don't) the temperate ruler's authority and respect his judgement concerning the distribution of tasks. Nor is there any indication that the subjects share the governors' criteria and objectives. Instead, the 'dream' represents the subjects of the imaginary city as mere instruments of scientific achievement, vessels of specialised knowledge, makers but not users of the products of their arts.<sup>76</sup> Worse, their actions seem to have no direction. They do things correctly, but what for? For what purpose? While the Guardians in the Callipolis pursue the good of the city and guide everyone to do the same in his/her own way, it is impossible to gather what the temperate rulers of the 'dream' might aim to attain. Such a way of life appears disconnected from the intuitive goal of humans: happiness (173d4).

The thought-experiment of the 'dream' brings matters to a head. From our perspective, it now becomes evident that Critias is faced with two mutually exclusive alternatives: either temperance is *not* strictly reflexive knowledge, or it *is* strictly reflexive knowledge but cannot secure our happiness. In either

<sup>76</sup> This problem is not unrelated to the problem on account of which Critias dropped the definition of temperance as 'doing one's own' in the sense of 'doing or making good things': while the experts might 'do their own' and be temperate on that account, nonetheless they might be unaware of the goodness of their deeds and therefore of their own temperance (164a1–d3). Likewise, while the people populating the 'dream' are supposed to act in accordance with temperance and hence act correctly, there is no indication that they are aware of the correctness of their actions, let alone the goodness of these.

case, we surmise that he will be compelled to abandon his definition of temperance as a 'science of science', i.e. a science directed only towards science itself and the other sciences. And in either case, the factor responsible for his failure is, it seems, the strictly reflexive character of the *epistêmê* that he takes to be equivalent to temperance. Critias does not yet realise the dialectical impasse he is in, but expresses his profound perplexity about the intimation of the 'dream' that it may be possible to live knowledgeably without living happily. If acting on the basis of scientific knowledge does not secure happiness, he wonders, what does (173d6–7)? In the final stage of the search, Socrates will suggest an answer to that question<sup>77</sup> and will rely on his initial intuition regarding the *technê* analogy in order to do so.

## 5

Instruct me, then, about one more small detail, I said. You mean acting scientifically or knowledgeably in respect of what? Of cutting the leather for shoe-making? – By Zeus, certainly not. – Of the working of brass? – Not at all. – Of wool, or of wood, or of any other such thing? – Of course not. – Therefore, I said, we are no longer abiding by the claim that he who lives scientifically is happy. For although these experts live scientifically, you do not acknowledge that they are happy, but rather you seem to me to demarcate the happy person as someone who lives scientifically in respect of certain things. (173d8–e9)

In response to Critias' comment that it would be difficult to find a *telos*, goal or end, of acting well other than acting scientifically (173d6–7), Socrates brings back the *technê* analogy in full force. He appears prepared to consider Critias' intuition that acting scientifically amounts to acting well and being happy, provided that Critias can determine the domain of such actions. Acting scientifically in respect of what and for what purpose? As in his debate with Critias regarding the object of temperance (165c4–166c6), so in the present instance Socrates ties the function and benefit of the science equivalent to temperance to the proprietary object of the latter. And as in the former passage, so in the latter he treats temperance as analogous to the other arts or sciences, insofar as he appears to assume that the correlative object of temperance should be distinct from temperance itself. In both cases, Socrates defends these assumptions on the basis of analogies between temperance or 'the science of science' and first-order arts. And on both occasions, he appears to strongly favour the view that

<sup>77</sup> Whether or to what extent Socrates endorses this answer remains controversial. As I shall indicate, in my view, he does not settle that issue.

every *epistêmê*, including temperance, is mainly orientated outwards: it not (or not only) of itself, but of something distinct from itself. However, while in the earlier debate (165c4–166c6) he eventually allowed Critias to have his own way, now he shows himself committed to his original position, i.e. that if temperance is an *epistêmê*, it must have an aliorelative object. As for Critias, one wonders whether he has changed his mind in respect of this topic, for he now does not raise any objection to Socrates. Has he come to tacitly accept that, in order to maintain that acting scientifically secures well-being, one needs to specify what acting in that manner is scientific *about* and what it is good *for*?

To direct Critias to specify the proprietary object of temperance, Socrates asks successive questions that aim to narrow down the relevant options. First, Critias eliminates crafts that consist in the working of various materials: cobbling, metallurgy, and weaving. Since he holds the belief that cobbling and other such crafts cannot be considered *good* doings or makings (163b7–8), he also believes that these arts must differ from the science aiming at happiness (173d9–e5). Thus he clarifies his stance: happy are not the persons who act scientifically without qualification, but those who act scientifically in respect of certain things (173e9). Think of the craftsmen in the *Apology*, who were found to have expert understanding of their particular fields, but no expertise in things that really matter, i.e. things distinctly pertaining to happiness and the proper care of one's soul. Next, Socrates asks Critias to entertain an apparently more promising candidate.

Perhaps you mean the man I [sc. Socrates] was just referring to, namely the one who knows everything that is to be, the seer. Do you mean him or someone else? – Well, he replied, both him and someone else. Whom? I asked. Is it the sort of person who might know, in addition to what is to be, both everything that has been and everything that now is and might be ignorant of nothing? Let us assume that there is such a person. I won't say, I imagine, that there is anyone alive that knows more than he does. – Certainly not. (173e10–174a9)

The seer might appear a better bet. Some might think that, since he can foretell the future, he can plan better and more effectively than anyone else for the well-being of individuals and of the city. However, Critias' cautious answer ('Well, both him and someone else': 174a3) indicates that, like Socrates (173c2–7), he has reservations about the wisdom of diviners and their contribution to human happiness. While he does not overtly challenge the epistemic authority of seers, he makes clear that he is thinking primarily of someone else. His attitude is consistent with other features of

his character. As a conservative aristocrat, he does not wish to undermine the traditional belief in diviners and divination. As a representative of the ‘new learning’, however,<sup>78</sup> he is likely to be sceptical about the role of seers and, as an intellectualist advocating the rule of those endowed with a higher form of understanding, he is probably inclined to place the seers under the governance of such men. In his speech about the meaning of the Delphic inscription, he has artfully presented himself as one of the privileged few that could read the mind of Apollo and explain his sayings to the populace. And he has indicated that the authoritative men in question have self-knowledge, not expertise in prophecy.

Hence, Critias is likely to be sincere when he states that the person he primarily has in mind is not the diviner, but someone else. According to Socrates, this is an omniscient person whose knowledge extends over all temporal modes and therefore is superior to the seer’s knowledge. Then Socrates raises the following question: if there were someone knowledgeable of everything and ignorant of nothing, he would be bound to be happy; but *which bit* of his total knowledge would have caused his happiness?

There is still one more thing I desire to know in addition: which one of the sciences makes him happy? Or do all of them do so in the same way? – Not at all in the same way, he said. – But what sort of science makes him supremely happy? The science by which he knows one of the things that are or have been or will be in the future? Is it perhaps the science by which he knows how to play draughts? – What are you talking about! he said. Draughts indeed! – What about the science by which he knows how to calculate? – Not in the least. – Well, is it the one by which he knows what is healthy? – More so, he said. – But that one which I mean makes him happy most of all, said I, is the science by which he knows what kind of thing? – That, he replied, by which he knows good and evil. (174a10–b10)

To help Critias articulate his thought, Socrates pursues a new line of questioning. He is not asking what the omniscient man is knowledgeable *of* or *about*, but which one of the sciences that he possesses is chiefly responsible for his happiness. Implicitly allowing that certain sciences may bear contingently on one’s well-being, he presents Critias with two alternatives: either all the sciences contribute to one’s happiness in the same manner (*homoiōs*: 174a11), or a single science contributes supremely to it (*malista*: 174b1).<sup>79</sup>

<sup>78</sup> See Socrates’ suggestion that Critias is one of the σοφοί, ‘wise men’ (161b9–c1).

<sup>79</sup> In the passage that follows, happiness is taken to be uniquely and exclusively related to a single science. Hence the term μάλιστα is not intended to indicate that different sciences contribute to happiness in different degrees, but rather to suggest that a single science is essentially responsible for happiness whereas the other sciences may bear on happiness in some contingent way.

A third possibility is conspicuous by its absence: that all of the sciences contribute to happiness in different ways and possibly to different degrees as well. While the interlocutors of the *Charmides* do not engage with this option, Plato's readers may do so in connection with the hierarchical structure of the ideal state in the *Republic* or the scientific orchestration of the sciences effected by the wise ruler in the *Statesman*. In any case, assuming that the 'dream' illustrates Critias' idea of the rule of temperance, one could hardly expect him to choose the former alternative, i.e. that all the sciences contribute to happiness in the same manner. For, in the 'dream', temperance is the only science responsible for the expert delegation of tasks and hence for acting well and being happy, whereas the first-order arts contribute to the well-being of that society in a conditional and contingent way. Moreover, there is a logical constraint that appears to preclude the possibility that all the arts aim at happiness in the same manner. If the interlocutors endorse a constitutive conception of relatives and relations,<sup>80</sup> they are committed to the view that happiness must be the object of a single science.

Indeed, Critias emphatically rejects the suggestion that all the sciences contribute to the attainment of happiness in the same way (174a12) and proceeds with the assistance of Socrates to identify the science principally and essentially aiming at human flourishing. Some candidates are immediately eliminated, starting with the least plausible, then proceeding to a better option, then finally to a seemingly Socratic answer. First, the interlocutors eliminate draughts-playing (174b2–4) – a provocative suggestion made by Socrates and dismissed vehemently by Critias – and also the science of calculation (174b5–6). Then they consider medicine, which comes closer to what they are looking for (174b7–8) and which brings about the good, but only that of the body. All along, Socrates appears quite confident that Critias does have the answer to the question of which science is responsible for making us happy. And he obtains it in due course.

For Critias finally answers that the science chiefly responsible for happiness is 'the science by which one knows good and evil' (174b10). Critias' statement does not surprise Socrates and should not surprise us. For he is portrayed as someone familiar with Socrates' ideas and way of thinking and, therefore, he acts in a way true to his character when he asserts that temperance is knowledge of good and evil – a view closely associated with Plato's Socrates and the so-called minor Socratics as well. In the present context, however, it is not clear whether Critias truly endorses the latter

<sup>80</sup> See Chapter 10, 197–9 and notes 4 to 9.

view,<sup>81</sup> and whether he has truly abandoned his claim that the science securing well-being is a ‘science of science’ that governs every art and every expert in the state. This ambiguity pertains to the assessment of Critias’ character, motives, and affinity to Socrates, and it will be clarified soon. For the moment, it is important to emphasise, as does Socrates (174b11–c3), that the relation between the science of good and evil and happiness is one to one. Happiness is the only object of the science of good and evil, and the latter is the only science that can make us happy. Socrates illustrates the constitutive relation between the science of good and evil and its object using yet another thought-experiment.<sup>82</sup>

You wretch! I said. All this time you have been dragging me around in a circle, while you were concealing the fact that what made a person do well and be happy was not living scientifically, not even if this were science of all the other sciences together, but only if it were science of this one science alone, namely the science concerning good and evil. Because, Critias, if you choose to remove this science from the set of other sciences, will medicine any the less produce health, or cobbling shoes, or weaving clothes? Or will the art of navigation any the less prevent passengers from dying at sea, or the military art from dying in war? – No less at all, he said. – However, my dear Critias, if this science [sc. the science of good and evil] is lacking, the good and beneficial execution of each of these tasks will be gone out of our reach. – This is true. – And this science, it seems, is not temperance but a science whose function is to benefit us. For it is not a science of the sciences and the lack of the sciences, but of good and evil, so that, if this is beneficial, temperance would be something else for us. (174b11–d7)<sup>83</sup>

We should pause to consider Socrates’ uneasy feelings, especially if we are experiencing them as well: a sense of running around in circles as if on a merry-go-round, a sensation of dizziness deriving from the illusion that everything is moving and nothing is stable. Personally, I have struggled with such feelings for a long time, while working through the second half of the dialogue and trying to make sense of it. And I have wondered what precisely may be the cause of them. I have come to the conclusion that the root of the problem is the strict reflexivity of Critias’ notion of

<sup>81</sup> Tuckey 1951, 78, contends that the knowledge producing happiness is not the knowledge of good and evil but the second-order knowledge of the knowledge of good and evil. See, however, Tuozzo 2011, 278 and n. 42, which contains a reference to the decisive objections against Tuckey by Dieterle 1966.

<sup>82</sup> The sketch can be considered a separate thought-experiment or, alternatively, a follow-up to the ‘dream’.

<sup>83</sup> I follow Burnet in excising ἡ ὠφέλιμη present in B and T. On the textual difficulties of this passage see Murphy 2007, 228–30, and Tuozzo 2011, 279 n. 44.

temperance – the totally abstract, entirely uninformative conception of a ‘science of science’ but of no scientific object. Socrates and Critias have gone through many twists and turns in order to keep the argument going, but no move that they have made has yet managed to dispel the ambiguities surrounding that notion, prove the coherence of a ‘science of science’, and show how the latter might be relevant to our well-being. Rather, both the interlocutors and we ourselves experience a lingering sense of disorientation. We have become entangled in the labyrinthine problems of the ‘science of science’, losing sight of the main objective of the search: the element on account of which a person can live well and be happy. Socrates accuses Critias of having deliberately concealed his view that the happiness-producing science is the science of good and evil. This may be a playful remark, or it may suggest that Critias’ love of victory has been greater than his concern for the truth.

Be this as it may, Socrates’ latter thought-experiment (174c3–d1) has affinities with the ‘dream’ and proposes the following moves: first, remove the science of good and evil from the other sciences that are expertly practised in an imaginary society reminiscent of the society of the ‘dream’. Then, consider whether these remaining sciences are any less successful in achieving their respective goals: you will find that they are not. Next, ask yourself whether, in the absence of the science of good and evil, the other experts’ successful engagement in their respective domains is likely to yield any true benefit. You will find that it does not seem so. If the science of good and evil is removed, happiness is removed as well.

As with the previous thought-experiments, so the present one points to an argument implicit in the story. Assuming that the sciences differ on account of their respective objects, since the object of the science equivalent to temperance is solely science (and its privation) but the object of the science of good and evil is happiness, temperance must differ from the science of good and evil. ‘It would be something other for us’ (174d6–7) but, whatever this might be, it would not be the science aimed at securing happiness. The upshot is that the ‘science of science’ is formally distinct from the only science aiming to procure happiness, i.e. the only science truly beneficial for us. The inference to draw is that, if ethical knowledge were taken away from us, even the most significant technological and scientific achievements would be useless.

Even though the above thought-experiment is sketchy, it contributes significantly to the Argument from Benefit by drawing attention to certain crucial features. First, it highlights an assumption to be built into the ‘dream’ in retrospect, namely that the society of the ‘dream’ contained all

the sciences *including* the science of good and evil. On the other hand, in Socrates' latter scenario, the science of good and evil is hypothetically removed. As a result, Socrates' latter construct achieves what the 'dream' did not fully achieve, namely it prompts us to draw a sharper contrast between the first-order arts and sciences, which are orientated towards their respective prudential goods, and the science of good and evil, which is directed uniquely and exclusively towards happiness. Second, the scenario presently under discussion indicates that the knowledge of good and evil can benefit us in different or complementary ways, i.e. by its very presence in us, or by ensuring that we use the first-order arts and sciences in a truly profitable manner, or both. Third, the suggested conclusion, i.e. that Critianic temperance does not bring genuine benefit because it does not have happiness as its own peculiar object, affects the 'science of science' whether we take it to be discriminatory knowledge (knowledge-that) or substantive knowledge (knowledge-what) or both. If the removal of the science of good and evil renders substantive technological knowledge useless, the same evidently holds for discriminatory knowledge too. A question can be raised, however. Since Critias now admits that the only science that truly benefits us is the science of good and evil, why does he not change direction? Why does he not abandon his earlier definition of temperance as 'science of itself and every other science' and propose instead that, in truth, temperance is the science of good and evil?<sup>84</sup> The reason is, as we shall see immediately below, that Critias has a last arrow in his quiver.

But why, he said, should it [sc. the science of science] not be beneficial? For if temperance is above all a science of the sciences and presides too over the other sciences, then, in virtue of ruling over this one, i.e. the science of the good, surely it would benefit us. (174d8–e2)

This is Critias' final attempt to defend the idea that temperance or 'the science of itself and the other sciences' brings great benefit. He relies, I submit, on the assumption that temperance is higher-order *because* it is strictly reflexive: it governs the other sciences *because* it is only of science and no other object.<sup>85</sup> Accordingly, Critias argues that, since 'the science of

<sup>84</sup> Many commentators wonder why Socrates does not make that move himself. In my view, both epistemic and formal reasons prevent him from doing so. Epistemically, he does not claim to *know* that temperance is the science of good and evil. Formally, the dialectical rules do not allow the questioner to put forward a definition other than hypothetically (e.g. *Euthyph.* 11e–12d, *Gorg.* 453a).

<sup>85</sup> This could explain why Critias is unwilling to give up the idea that temperance is strictly reflexive. Although the elenchus has done much to undermine that idea, Critias appears still to cling to the intuition that, if temperance is to enjoy a privileged second-order status, it must be reflexive and not tied to any particular field.

science' rules all the first-order sciences, and assuming that the science of good and evil is one of them,<sup>86</sup> the 'science of science' must also rule the science of good and evil. Furthermore, Critias seems to assume that, when one science governs another, it also appropriates the function of this latter; on this assumption, since temperance or the 'science of science' rules the science of good and evil, it also appropriates the work that the science of good and evil is supposed to do, namely make us happy. The 'science of science' is greatly beneficial on account of that fact.

This is a brilliant move. And it might have been successful, if Critias' conception of temperance were such as to allow that temperance or 'the science of science' rules over the other sciences *as well as* their proprietary objects. This is not the case, however. For the relation of Critianic temperance to the objects of the first-order sciences is intransitive or intransparent: while the 'science of science' is set over the first-order sciences, it has no access to the objects that these sciences are of. Temperance is a science only of science and no other thing. Socrates draws the implications of that thesis as follows:

And, I replied, would this science, and not medicine, also make people healthy? Moreover, would it be the one to bring about the works of the other arts, and the other arts not have each its own work? Or have we not been protesting for some time that it is only a science of science and the lack of science, but of nothing else? Is that not so? – Indeed, it appears to be. – So, it will not be a producer of health? – No, it will not. – For health is the object of another art, is it not? – Yes, of another. – Therefore, my friend, it [sc. the science of science] will not be a producer of benefit either. For, again, we just now attributed this function to another art, did we not? – Very much so. (174e3–175a5)

Socrates refutes Critias outright. He argues that since, according to Critias, every first-order art or science is only of its own peculiar object and has only its own peculiar function, and since temperance is a science only of science, it cannot do any specific work or make any specific thing. Consequently, the temperate person cannot fulfil any specific function and, *a fortiori*, cannot do anything beneficial. In sum, no crossing of boundaries is possible between the 'science of science' and the other arts and sciences with regard to their respective objects or domains. And insofar as their respective functions and goals are determined by their proprietary objects, no crossing of boundaries seems possible with regard to the work

<sup>86</sup> Critias is entitled to make that assumption, because the aforementioned science does have a specific aliorelative object, namely good and evil.

that they, respectively, do or the benefits that they yield. It follows that the ‘science of science’ cannot appropriate the work peculiar to the science of good and evil. Even supposing that the former governs the latter, it cannot make its own the work that the science of good and evil does or the happiness that it brings. The conclusion that the interlocutors reach is immensely disappointing. ‘In what way, then, will temperance be beneficial since it is not the producer of any benefit? – In no way at all, Socrates, it seems’ (175a6–8).

In the end, Socrates seems vindicated regarding the society of the ‘dream’. The temperate rulers can make the state run scientifically; but it appears that they cannot make it run beneficially and make the citizens happy. Recall, however, that the scientific governance of the state depends on the rulers’ ability to successfully discern experts from non-experts in particular fields and delegate tasks to the former but not the latter. In turn, the correct delegation of tasks depends on the shaky premise that temperate rulers have knowledge-what as well as knowledge-that – substantive as well as discriminatory knowledge. If that premise were revoked, the temperate rulers’ capacity for identifying experts in particular fields and distinguishing them from non-experts would be debatable. In particular, one might question how these rulers can tell *that* there is scientific knowledge, if they don’t know anything about its content. Pushing the matter further, one might wonder whether the temperate rulers of the ‘dream’ are experts in anything or mere frauds.

Why did things go so wrong for Critias? As I have repeatedly indicated, I think that the main reason is that he rejected a central feature of the *technè* analogy, namely the view that every art or science is constitutively related to a proprietary object, which determines the domain of that science as well as its function and benefit. By forcing Socrates to concede, if only for the sake of the argument, that temperance is a strictly reflexive *epistêmè*, Critias narrowed down the domain of the latter to such a degree as arguably to deprive it of substantive content. He placed an insurmountable wedge between temperance and every other science, and he segregated the temperate person’s discriminatory activities from the activities of the first-order experts, which aim to improve and enrich many aspects of our lives. Comparably to the Greek doctors who were accused of treating the part but neglecting the whole (156d6–e6), Critias’ temperate men could be blamed for focusing exclusively on science as such and disregarding the contribution of virtue and scientific knowledge to the well-being of mankind.

Thus emerged the incongruous picture of a society whose unity under the guidance of the ‘science of science’ seems artificial and forced, and

whose promise of happiness appears empty. There is something quite frightening about the thought-experiments that Socrates sketched out in close succession and, especially, about the thought-experiment of the 'dream'. It depicts a society run by managers rather than statesmen, on the basis of a science revolving solely around itself, obsessed with specialisation and productivity but oblivious to individual or communal welfare. To this all-too-familiar threat the Argument from Benefit suggests the hope of a remedy: a science of value, whose goal would be the well-being of all concerned and whose function would consist in coordinating our various activities and integrating them into an organic whole. The main features of that science are foreshadowed by Socrates in the prologue of the *Charmides* (156d1–157c6). Like Zalmoxian medicine, it charms the soul by means of philosophical discourses, with a view to the whole and not just the part, so that virtue prevails and every good follows.