

Three Papers on the Divided Line and the Levels of the Cosmos

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Papers V09P

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TOPIC: Plato

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I. Idea of Man as Four Cosmic Animals

Relationship between sensible stars and intelligible realm; application of divided line

Historical context of Plato's astronomical thinking; role of mythological/imaginal consciousness

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Four fixed signs as Idea of Man; Christian tradition parallel (four evangelists)

Plato's criticism of materialistic approach to astronomy/astrology

II. Levels of Cosmos and Divided Line

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2) Second level (belief): real world/sensible archetype; sublunary realm; four elements

3) Third level (reason): realm of mathematical; planetary spheres

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archetypes; individual imagination
Sublunary realm (second): belief; four elements; Earth objects as sensed in their
actuality without additional imaginal overlay
Sections 1 and 2 subsumed under sensible Sun
Planetary spheres (third): reason; intermediates; combination of Ideas through
aspects; mathematical relationships
Inerratic sphere (highest): pure Ideas; timeless, spaceless principles; accessed
through intuition
Sections 3 and 4 subsumed under Intelligible Sun
Sensible stars we see belong to lower half of divided line

BOOKS QUOTED FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Plato, Thomas Taylor (tr. and comm.), *The Republic* (Vol. 1), *The Timaeus* (Vol. 2), in *The Works of Plato, viz. His Fifty-Five Dialogues, and Twelve Epistles*
- Edward Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*

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NOTES:

- **RETYPE AD PAPERS (V09P).**
- Note from JF: As the files appear, and in my recollection, they a) seem to have been “composed” as papers for Anthony by me from class/seminar notes; b) are from approximately the same time period, later 1981-1983. To a greater or lesser extent they consist of Anthony’s words from class/seminar notes, plus some interpolations, mixed in varying degrees. There were many Divided Line classes at WG throughout the years, especially 1977 to 1980 (Republic, Thomas Taylor Intro & footnotes - separate project), and later 1981-1984, especially 1983.
- Scan File PLA Divided Line Papers P 10p.PDF -- dated approximately 1981-early 1983. This document consists of two different (but roughly the same time frame) papers, both in the Scan File, one with header “Plato”; the other with the header “DIVIDED LINE #2”. The first paper deals with the fourfold Idea of Man as the four cosmic animals and references the Plato Republic Astronomia quote (included); the second treats the Divided Line as four cosmic levels, inerratic, planetary, sublunary, and phantasy; the third paper,

Scan File PLA Divided Line and Inerratic P 6p.PDF, is conceptualizing the inerratic itself from the four different levels.

- Paper #3: Written ~1982-1983 for Anthony, based on AD concepts and words, as found in student's/JF's class notes. The first part of the PDF scan is the paper itself; the second part is the earlier draft, with edits in JF's handwriting. Appended is the typed note that prefaces the second part/paper draft. This note as well as the writing style indicates that this paper was written by JF. But per AS/JF discussion, and since it is based on Anthony's ideas and also class notes of Anthony's words, it should be "by Anthony".

THREE PAPERS ON THE DIVIDED LINE AND THE LEVELS OF THE COSMOS

1) Idea of Man as Four Cosmic Animals

[Scan File PLA Divided Line Papers P 10p.PDF Begins (pp. 1-7)]

Plato

Obviously here the reference is to understand the relationship of the sensible stars, or the stars as they appear to vision, and their relationship to one another, which is an unfolding of the meaning which is in the Intelligible, and through this reach out towards that higher realm.

We can see here an application to the divided line. The lowest part of the Divided Line is where the appearance of the stars takes place, that is, in the realm of fantasy, and that this suggests there is a sensible archetype or reality which the fantasy is picturing or portraying. The equality between Section 2 of the Divided Line and Section 3 of the Divided Line seems to suggest an equality exists between the Reason Principles separated or distinct from the sensible archetype, although the sensible archetype is a manifestation of those reason principles. Obviously the 3rd Section of the Divided Line, the Reason Principles which constitute the archetypal world, *will not be seen with a telescope*. And that in all probability these Reason Principles are combined and arranged in a variety of ways, which the mathematical aspects within the astrological chart are depicting and representing. Reason Principles can only be known relative to one another, isolation of one reason principle from another can only be seen through the intuitive faculty, which is the last segment of the Divided Line. We expect to go into much detail in regards to the epistemology which is based on the actualities of the sensible and intelligible world that he's applying to it.

Plato came from a long line of Greek thinkers, including Pythagoras, etc., and we can infer his ideas on astronomy had a long precedence, and were not coming from nowhere. And, historically the Platonic teachings have continued through neo-Platonism and the middle ages, down through Western thought, in a subterranean fashion. There is no need to be surprised here, the study of ancient culture will reveal the need to acquaint ourselves with the mythological or imaginal consciousness of the ancients. (We can include here the quote by Conze. [see below]) It is also necessary to remember the frequent use that Plato makes of myth.

[Conze quote added: "What I am trying to say is that in order to disclose to us people of the twentieth century the living meaning of the Tantra, a scholar must not only know Sanskrit and Tibetan, but also be familiar with modern psychology and one or other of the occult arts. ... Likewise, though many readers will not believe it, it is obvious that no one can do justice to the occult side of the Tantra without knowing at least one of the magical arts, such as astrology, and without actual experience of the working of magical forces in and all around us. If such a marriage of linguistic scholarship with first-hand psychological and occult knowledge should ever take place, then and only then will the Tantra become a vital ingredient of Western Buddhism." (Edward Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*. 1968. University of South Carolina Press, pp. 26-27)]

An example of the use of myth would be the one in [Republic] Book IX, and this myth is very obviously portraying the Idea of Man as it is found in astrological parlance.

Quote: "...real bodies in the heavens...paradigm for learning those real things..."

[quote added: "We establish then, said I, astronomy as the fourth discipline. . . . if any one contemplates the various bodies in the firmament, and, by earnestly looking up, apprehends every thing, you think that he has intelligence of these things; and does not merely see them with his eyes; and perhaps you judge right, and I foolishly. For I, on the other hand, am not able to conceive, that any other discipline can make the soul look upwards, but that which respects being, and that which is invisible; and if a man undertakes to learn any thing of sensible objects, whether he gape upwards or below downwards, never shall I say that he learns; for I aver he had no science of these things; nor shall I say that his soul looks upwards, but downwards, even though he should learn lying on his back, either at land or at sea. . . . But what was the proper way, said you, of learning astronomy . . . ? In this manner, said I, that these variegated bodies in the heavens, as they are varied in a visible subject, be deemed the most beautiful and most accurate of the kind, but far inferior to real beings. . . . Which things truly are to be comprehended by reason and the dianoetic power, but not by sight . . . that variety in the heavens [is] to be made use of as a paradigm for learning those real things. . . . (Plato, Republic, Book VII, Thomas Taylor trans., The Works of Plato, v.1, pp. 373-374)]

From this quote it is readily apparent that for Plato the sensible stars, their orbits, velocities, etc., are all sensible manifestation, and are a *paradigm* for the stars as understood by the faculties of reason. Because "as above, so below", because the sensible stars are a paradigm or model of the stars as reason principles or meanings in the Soul, through the study of astronomy, starting at its lowest level of the observation of the visible stars, we can eventually comprehend the stars' true meaning. This is especially true where he says we learn more by looking at the night sky than by looking at the sky lit by sunshine. (Plato, Republic, Book VII, Thomas Taylor trans., The Works of Plato, v.1, p. 358; also General Introduction, p. lxiv) Obviously here the reference is to understand the relationship of the sensible stars as they appear to vision, and their relationship to one another, which is an unfolding of the meaning which is in the Intelligible, and through this reach out towards that higher realm.

In other words, the whole problem of epistemology for Plato has for its background the sensible world, and that he brings in the functioning of the Sun, and hints at, and points to, the functioning of the cosmos for an answer.

Throughout the Dialogues of Plato there are scattered many references for the need to study astronomy--its relevance for man and the workings of the world, and the meaning of cosmic manifestation. Here in Book IX of the Republic Plato speaks of the Idea of Man as images in the heavens, when he says to picture the Idea of Man as a combination of a lion, a hydra-headed beast, and a man. To any astrologer or astronomer who knows the signs of the heavens, this obviously refers to the zodiacal signs of Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius. This picture in the heavens has Leo representing man's anger or irascible nature, Scorpio his desire nature, and Man in Aquarius. We can say the 4 fixed signs represent precisely that Idea of Man. This example is also continued down into Christian tradition, with the 4 evangelists represented by a Lion (Leo), Bull (Taurus), Eagle (another symbol for Scorpio) and Man (Aquarius).

The first quote in the Republic, Book VII, is the most explicit in pointing out the need to study astronomy, but there are others.-- The Dialogue of the Timaeus is almost completely an astrological and cosmological schemata [sic: schema].

His criticism does not only apply to the astronomers but also to the astrologers, in their mechanically calculating nativities, their preoccupation with the sensible events & materialistic things, and their “cookbook” derivation of the chart’s meaning. For in Plato’s day the dividing line between astrology and astronomy was not as strong as today. The mechanistic view of astrology borders on superstition, for the meaning with respect to the Soul is never considered. Similarly, the modern-day’s astronomer’s or astrophysicist’s [sic] preoccupation with the materialistic appearance, of the stars’ light, or even the root of the matter in the physical universe’s origin, is not getting into the meaning, which is what the inner man or Soul really wants to know about.

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2) Levels of Cosmos and Divided Line

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DIVIDED LINE #2

Starting in the sensible world, the everyday world of here and now, we would like to show how the gnostic functions or Plato’s 4 divisions of the Divided Line relate to the spheres of the heavens. In the geocentric view of traditional astrology, the heavens have been divided into the inerratic sphere (sphere of the fixed stars), the spheres of the 7 Chaldean planets, and the sublunary sphere--the sphere of the elements, below the Moon. And below this we can add the realm of the reproductive imagination, that has to do with our own inner fantasy life, and not the real world. This probably would correspond to Plato’s lowest division of the Divided Line, the realm of conjecture, or the perception of shadows. Here there is only an image of whatever is taking place. As written previously, this level of the reproductive imagination uses as its bases the memory traces of prior functioning, and from there derives its images. These images can feed upon themselves, producing more memory traces and further images, ad infinitum. These images constitute a world of pure presentation [sic. Note from jf: I think “representation” may be the word intended here, like in “reproductive imagination”.] without any concrete basis.

But there seems to be a basis for all this--the real world-- the archetype of the sensible, upon which the lowest level is based. This is what the reproductive imagination is reproducing. To seek this, one has to divest oneself of the functioning of the memory traces of the reproductive imagination. Then one will be in the realm of the sensible archetype, of the things [sic: the things] as they are. This would be the sublunary realm here on earth, and would include the elements, in the case of the ancient astrologers the traditional elements F E A W [Fire Earth Air Water]. This is the level of the gnostic function of belief, because here one believes the object really is, and by believing gives the object its existence. This gnostic function knows that the object is, but however, not the *what* of the object.

But, then it is apparent there is a pattern to these objects or sensible archetypes, ie, that they can be reasoned about, and mathematically described. So we must go up another level. Here we are in the realm of the “mathematics” or the intermediates between the sensible world and the Ideas themselves. As discussed previously, the combination of the ideas is produced through the angular relation or aspects of

the planets, so this realm pertains to the planetary spheres. Because reason is the combination and re-combination of ideas, the gnostic function of reason would describe this level.

And what is reasoned about?-- it is the Ideas themselves, the highest level of the Divided Line. These Ideas which make the thing what it is and nothing else are immutable, never changing in time and space, and therefore correspond to the fixed stars of the far-away inerratic sphere. Reason cannot grasp these Ideas, but only manipulate them. However, what is required to grasp the light of the Nous or the Ideas is the gnostic faculty of intuition, which is beyond all imagery. The reason principles of the force fields emanating from the fixed stars would therefore correlate to this highest level.

Plato divides his line of all that exists into 2 sections--the lower part being under the dominion of the sensible Sun, and the higher under the intelligible Sun. According to our scheme, the sensible Sun would be responsible for the presentation, say of vision. Objects seen by vision would be what is seen in daylight, by the light of the sensible Sun. But Plato counsels us that we can learn more about the working of the universe, and of the principles beyond it, by observing the night sky, with its planets and stars. (Plato, Republic, Book VII, Thomas Taylor trans., The Works of Plato, v.1, p. 358; also General Introduction, p. lxiv) The 3rd and 4th levels, those under the intelligible Sun, clearly correspond to the planets and stars which are observable only in the night sky. From them, from observing the patterned gyrations of the planets against the background of the fixed stars, and applying this astrological information to ourselves, we can learn something of the true nature of ourselves and of the universe.

Plato makes the 2nd and 3rd sections equal in length. That's because the archetypes of the sensible object have a one-to-one correspondence with the reasoning that constitutes them. Or what appears in the world as outer has its inner equivalent in reason, as today the modern physicists are rediscovering with their reduction of the sensible world to mathematical descriptions.

As we wrote previously, all the levels of the Divided Line can be present simultaneously and the line is continuous. For example, the stars of the fixed (inerratic) sphere are the reason principles or Ideas. However, they can be viewed at the level of reason, for instance when an astronomer makes mathematical calculations about their distance from the earth, the wavelength of their light, etc., or an astrologer determines the aspects in a nativity. And they can be viewed as reas [sic: real?] objects, as archetypes of the sensible. And, at the lowest level, they can be fantasized about or dreamed about, a reflection of the higher levels.

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3) The Divided Line and the Inerratic, Planetary, & Sublunary Spheres, & the Reproductive Imagination

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Since from our previous discussion, the sensible is in the Intelligible and the Intelligible is in the sensible, we would like to explicate how Plato's 4 sections of the Divided Line--images, archetypes of sense objects, intermediates, and ideas--or how the 4 gnostic functions--conjecture, belief, reason & intuition--may be found in the sensible, as relating to astrology on earth & in the heavens.

We would like to do this by going through the levels of the Divided Line, from the lowest to the highest.

In our own lives, our fantasies or images, that is our reproductive imagination, obviously corresponds to Plato's lowest level of the Divided Line, that of images or the perception of shadows. This level is almost "subterranean", since it is a more-or-less distorted version of the sensible archetypes, and only pertains to each individual's imagination. This is the realm of the gnostic function of *conjecture*, in that nothing is ever known with certainty, but can only be guessed at using the distorted imaginary data as a basis.

Plato's next level, that of the archetype of the sensible object or that of the gnostic function of belief, would correspond to (the archetypes) of the objects as they are actually found on this earth. These are the objects of our everyday existence, as they really are, not as we imagine them to be as in the lowest level of the Divided Line. This level would be our sublunary realm--under the Moon, the realm of the 4 elements Fire, Earth, Air, Water. Here objects are found in their sensible actuality on the earth, and not as pertaining to the heavens. Here is the gnostic function of belief, in that a person at this level believes, really & truly, the objects to be as they appear. This belief is not mistaken insofar as it is of these things sensed in their actuality or their sensible archetype, through the means of the sense function (organ?) without additional imaginal overlay.

Plato subsumes both these levels--the first half of the divided line--under the sensible Sun--and it is quite obvious that they pertain to our world of the sense, or the world of here and now, in time & space.

But above this earth, there are the heavens. If we behold the scintillating lights of the night sky, we can distinguish 2 groups of lights, the planets of our solar system which have their movement against the background of the fixed stars, and the lofty stars themselves which are relatively fixed in their relation to one another & which in their totality comprise the inerratic spheres. These planetary and inerratic spheres, as they are called by the astrologers, are analogous to the next 2 sections of the Divided Line, in the following way.

The third section of the Divided Line is that of the intermediates or of reason. The intermediates, according to Plato, are those which combine the Ideas. Insofar as, according to the astrologers, the aspects of the planets, i.e., their combinations and the angles they make to each other, generate the events here on earth through their combining the power of the Ideas, the planetary spheres would correspond to this section. This combination is a reasoning, as reason is the intellectual connection of one idea to another, to form an ordered sequence of thought, like in a mathematical theorem or a piece of music.

Far above the planets are the fixed stars in their respective constellations. In their aloofness from the everyday world, they seem to be pure Ideas, and (different traditions have them as Ideas--? for instance each Soul comes from a different star, etc.). The level of the stars or Ideas would be the highest level of the Divided Line, the intuition of the reason principles or Ideas from the Nous. These reason principles are known in a timeless spaceless mode, in their nakedness without any sort of imagination or pictures, through pure Intuition, and this is why the gnostic function of Intuition rules this level of the Divided Line. In brief, the reason principles of the Nous are represented in the inerratic sphere through Intuition, and they flow down through the planetary spheres where they are combined in various ways through reason, to be instantiated in the sensible through belief, and reflected in a distorted manner in the reproductive imagination through conjecture.

Sections 3 & 4 of the Divided Line Plato places under the Intelligible Sun, and using our schemata we can see why this is so. The planets and stars in the night sky do not touch the earth, and do not directly contact it; their power only comes to our earth in an intelligible way. (Though the sensible stars we see, however, belong to sections 1 & 2 of the Divided Line.)

[Scan File PLA Divided Line and Inerratic P 6p.PDF (pp. 1-3) Ends; note below from top of p. 4.]

[At beginning of draft, note by JF: NOTE: This was written with blinders on, so to speak, to avoid confusion. Therefore, it does not include anything about the levels of the imagination as previously discussed, the Sun in Aquarius, the 12th H., the rings, the 4 and the 7, etc., etc.]