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The Purpose of Storytelling: Logical Mythologizing in Plato's *Timaeus*

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Abstract

Contemporary discussions concerning whether Plato's *Timaeus* is a literal or metaphorical account are fundamentally misguided. The academic response to this question appears to stem from a historic debate among his students, and not the text itself. In this paper, I argue that a second sailing of textual analysis is required to understand how *Timaeus* fits in with the rest of Platonic philosophy. I argue that *Timaeus* is not a cosmological commentary in principle, but a political commentary concerning the important role mythmaking plays in creating and preserving society. This interpretation transforms *Timaeus* from a playful pseudo-scientific text to the exemplar of Platonic philosophy in motion. The deepest unnoticed teaching of *Timaeus* is that mythmaking is what puts the image of the city into motion and repays the philosopher for his analytic work. I conclude by enjoining the academic community to finally set aside this debate concerning Plato's intentions and begin examining *Timaeus* as the likely story it was always meant to be.

Keywords: ancient philosophy, comparative mythology, creation stories, Greek philosophy, Plato, *Timaeus*

Introduction

Plato's *Timaeus* is a unique and controversial text. It is unique because it belongs to the limited selection of dialogues that do not prominently feature Socrates, it is the first part of an unfinished trilogy, and it is the only well-known Platonic text that was accessible in the medieval period.¹ It is controversial because it concerns the question of how our universe came into being, it was a sacred text to Neoplatonists, and it is the earliest account of the story of Atlantis.² It should be no surprise that *Timaeus* is particularly interesting to a certain kind of scholar. The cryptic nature of the text has left Platonic scholars in disagreement over crucial interpretations of the dialogue, including whether Timaeus' cosmogony should be taken literally or literarily. Despite a plethora of interest and attention, no consensus around how one should read *Timaeus* has emerged.

Academic inquiry into the text typically centers itself around Plato's 'scientific' claims, his depiction of the Demiurge, and how the dialogue fits in with the rest of Platonic philosophy. However, scholars cannot agree whatsoever on the character of Timaeus' account. While some scholars characterize *Timaeus* as "a prose poem of science, a hymn of the universe, Plato's *De Rerum Natura*," others characterize it as the capstone work of *The Republic* and its related dialogues.³ The former position strictly presents the text as a poetic wrapping of scientific discoveries, while the latter suggests a greater philosophical importance to the allegorical exercise *Timaeus* portrays. Donald J. Zeyl suggests that the arguments against a literal interpretation have been "motivated primarily" by logical contradictions stemming from the demythologized metaphysical framework *Timaeus* presents.⁴ However, I hope to demonstrate that the metaphorical argument shouldn't be motivated by these difficulties whatsoever. Instead, I contend that the metaphorical argument is undeniable as a textual interpretation of the context in which Timaeus' account is delivered.

Additionally, I contend that the debate itself is misguided. It seems that the dialogue's entire purpose is to attempt to reconcile this contradiction between reason and myth by presenting a reasoned-myth. It appears that this debate over the literal truth of Timaeus' account is exactly the kind of discussion the dialogue is meant to discourage. By taking a second sailing and examining the text itself, it should become clear that the deeper meaning of Plato's *Timaeus* is not to be found in its scientific cosmology, rather the text can only be understood by interpreting and understanding the purpose, function, and execution of Timaeus' likely story (τόν εἰκότα μῦθον). Plato's *Timaeus* is more than a poetic wrapping of natural discoveries. It is the image of what it would mean to put Socrates' philosophy into motion; it is a spiritual representation of how one uses the liberal arts to order one's soul.

¹ John Marenbon, "Medieval Philosophy," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Spring 2023, Section 1.3.2.

² Paul Shorey, "The Interpretation of the *Timaeus*," *The American Journal of Philology* 9, no. 4 (1888): 400-401, 407, JSTOR.

³ Paul Shorey, "Recent Interpretations of the *Timaeus*," *Classical Philology* 23, no. 4 (1928): 343, JSTOR; G. E. L. Owen, "The Place of the *Timaeus* in Plato's Dialogues," *The Classical Quarterly* 3, no. 1-2 (1953): 81.

⁴ Donald J. Zeyl, "The Creation Story: Literal or Metaphorical?," introduction to *Timaeus*, by Plato, xxi.

Context of the Question

Zeyl states that the controversy between a literal and metaphorical reading is almost as old as the dialogue itself.⁵ This appears to be true but only muddles the question at hand. Zeyl traces the controversy back to Aristotle's criticism of time's beginning in *Physics* and Xenocrates' defense of *Timaeus* as a pedagogical story, which is alluded to in *On the Heavens*.⁶ But why does it matter that Aristotle is criticizing the text when Timaeus himself clearly invites a future dialectic around improving the likely story? Timaeus says we should only be content with his account so long as it is no less likely than any other, clearly opening the possibility for more likely accounts in the future.⁷ Additionally, Aristotle recognizes that Plato does not necessarily believe everything expressed in *Timaeus*.⁸ Therefore, why must one assume that Aristotle's criticism is irreconcilable with a progression of the likely myth?

By not separating Aristotle's work as a truth-seeker and Timaeus' work as a storyteller, one misses the entire point of the dialogue. This misconception seems to have developed from interpreting *Timaeus* as a treatise in search of truth, which Timaeus himself explicitly denies.⁹ Zeyl seems to believe that Aristotle could not both criticize the text to improve it and simultaneously understand that the broader intention of the text is spiritual allegory, not factual accuracy. These two ideas are not contradictory. It seems that the question at hand has been obscured by subsequent interpretation and debate; so, in Socrates' likeness, it appears that to understand *Timaeus'* role, a second sailing is required.

A Second Sailing

Timaeus' creation account is the first of a series of speeches that Socrates will hear as repayment for the previous day's conversation. The dialogue begins with Socrates summarizing that conversation and revealing that it concerned his ideal city. He says that the city should have a strict class structure, a class of guardians who are reared in a specific way, and a common belief that all citizens are members of the same race.¹⁰ These features resemble the same city that is laid out in *The Republic*.¹¹ Given that *The Republic* criticizes poets and calls for thoughtful creation and censorship of stories, it seems more than plausible that the creation story in *Timaeus* is somehow a continuation of that endeavor.¹²

Socrates then explains how he feels about the city and reveals the purpose of the present gathering, stating "[I feel] as if, having beheld some beautiful animal somewhere, whether in the works of a painter or truly living but at rest, one might arrive at a desire to behold them being set in motion and for them to be contending in some struggle as is expected

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. author, 29c.

⁸ Joe Sachs, *Aristotle's Physics: A Guided Study* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 2011), pg. 97, 209b.

⁹ Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. author, 29c.

¹⁰ Ibid., 17d-e.

¹¹ Allan Bloom, trans., *The Republic of Plato* (Basic Books, 2016), 374a, 374e, 414d.

¹² Ibid., 386b.

for their bodies.”¹³ This context reveals that Timaeus’ task is only incidentally to create a scientific cosmogonic account, but principally, it is to satisfy Socrates’s desire to see his city “set in motion.” Socrates elaborates on what this would mean, stating “yesterday, with this in mind, when you all needed me to go through the things concerning politics, I was speaking eagerly. I knew that nobody could deliver a more befitting successive speech, if you all were willing – for you alone of all men now existing could establish the city in a befitting war and render all the things that are present in it. Having spoken then on my assignment, I assigned to you in turn what I say now.”¹⁴ The opening conversation to the dialogue indisputably frames *Timaeus* as what naturally follows when the city in speech is made apparent to the most honorable men. They are compelled to put that city into motion. Socrates, like any creator, desires to see more than a mental image of his creation, but he wants to see it come into being.

However, the dialogue does not depict the hosts planning or establishing such a city. Instead, the group repays Socrates with stories, with the first not being about the city itself, but the origin of the cosmos. Why would Socrates be pleased by this response to his request? It is because Socrates’ city comes into being through storytelling. In *The Republic*, Socrates states that the city is supposed to be founded on a noble lie that compels philosophers and laymen alike to mind their proper business, a noticeably missing facet of Socrates’s earlier summary.¹⁵ The noble lie in *The Republic* is also a story concerning mankind’s origination with the purpose of promoting fraternal love and philosophic natures. It is more than likely, but almost certain that Timaeus’ creation story functions as a more extrapolated version of the noble lie, a capstone to *The Republic* and a fitting repayment for Socrates’ analytical labor.

In response to Socrates’s request, Critias tells an old story about Solon which he supposedly heard from his grandfather. According to the story, an Egyptian priest told Solon that the Greeks used to be the best and most well-governed city in the world. Critias remarks on how similar Socrates’s city is to this ancient city, and he suggests that in their retelling of the story in full, they will “establish the citizens and the city which you were going through yesterday for us as in myth, now *translating* them into reality, like that city really existed here. We will say that the citizens that you imagined are our true ancestors which the priest was speaking of.”¹⁶ The word which I’ve rendered here as “translating” is the word “μετενεγκόντες,” which is a participial form of the compound word μεταφέρω, literally meaning “to carry across.” Today, a metaphor carries a truth into our understanding not through a replica, but through a likeness of the truth it represents. Critias is suggesting that by connecting the story of Socrates’ city to a true story, Socrates’ image of the perfect city can metaphorically be carried over into reality.

When Critias makes this suggestion, Socrates replies by asking “what story could we interchange that is better than this, Critias? ... And that it is formed not as a myth [μύθος] but as an account [λόγος] is immensely important ... And now in return for my speeches yesterday, I will be quiet to hear in turn what you all have brought forward.”¹⁷ Because Critias’ story is not based on a myth, but an allegedly true story from Solon, the founder of Athenian democracy, it

¹³ Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. author, 19b.

¹⁴ Ibid., 20b.

¹⁵ Bloom, *The Republic*, 414d.

¹⁶ Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. author, 26c-d.

¹⁷ Ibid., 27a.

not only gives Critias' story intrigue and credibility, but as Critias says, it carries the city across upon true things, or as I've rendered it, it translates the city into reality [μετενεγκόντες ἐπὶ τᾷ ἀληθείᾳ]. It appears undeniable from the context of Timaeus' account that this dialogue contains the cryptic secrets describing how to bring Socrates' ideal city into reality. *Timaeus* is not about an inquiry into nature but is a demonstration of the role storytelling plays in the creation of a state.¹⁸

Now that the context of Timaeus' account is understood, its content can finally be examined with a proper view of its intentions. He begins with a distinction between "*what always is* and has no becoming, and *what is always becoming*, but never *is*."¹⁹ He then establishes that our universe is one of becoming since it is one of temporal sense perception.²⁰ And since our universe is beautiful, it must also be likened by a good creator to the eternal model.²¹ But Timaeus adds the caveat that "those accounts concerning modeled images, being a likeness, like an analogy, are themselves images."²² For this reason, he says that Socrates should not be surprised if "we are unable to perfect the many, many things which are said concerning the gods and the creation of the universe so that all the speeches are consistent in all ways."²³ Because our world is always changing, the account of it is always changing, so according to Timaeus, we must accept the likely image outright, and Socrates agrees. Timaeus says in this same introduction, "just as being is to becoming, truth is to faith."²⁴ Therefore, Timaeus' account, as one of temporal becoming, must be taken on faith rather than proven to be true. This is what is meant when it is said we must accept the likely story. This passage cannot be properly understood if one views *Timaeus* as merely a poetic hymn to science. To understand the text, it must be accepted and read for its metaphorical meaning, as a likeness, and not a replica of the truth.

The Purpose of The Timaeus

Plato's *Timaeus* is not just a myth but is commentary on the purpose of mythology, our methods of producing it, and how one is meant to approach mythology as a reader. The context of the conversation clearly alludes to the idea that storytelling is a fundamental part and the first step of bringing Socrates' city into motion. *Timaeus* is not just a story; the dialogue instructs the reader through allegory how to read this story and why it was written. But beyond *this* myth and *this* city, given that he begins this city the same way twice, with a noble lie or likely story, Plato seems to be alluding to a more universal claim, that the base and beginning of a society is its mythology: the way it takes other-worldly truths and puts them into motion

¹⁸ The historical reality that Critias was a leader of The Thirty all but confirms this interpretation. William Morison, "Critias (460—403 B.C.E.)," in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. James Fieser and Bradley Dowden, accessed May 27, 2025, <https://iep.utm.edu/critias/>.

¹⁹ Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. author, 27d.

²⁰ Ibid., 28b.

²¹ Ibid., 29a.

²² Ibid., 29c.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

through storytelling. Socrates starts the motion of his city this way because having a shared canon and mythology appears to be the foundation of a city, a people, a culture, and its beliefs.

Plato's *Timaeus* is a commentary on the purpose of myth in general, itself represented as an image in dialogue form. It supplies the reader with Plato's instructions on how to create, implement, and receive myth. There appear to be countless comments in the text that are about how to create and interpret Timaeus' story and likely myths in general; that it should be likely so that one can reason about it, that it should be based on truth, that it should be accepted by all so long as it is the likeliest story, that it should be created by the most honorable among us, etc. Taking the dialogue as a whole, it should be absolutely clear that the primary purpose of Plato's *Timaeus* is not to explicate Platonic theories of physics and metaphysics, but to explicate the purpose of allegory, how one must implement it, the perspective one should have about it, and how it is fundamental to the creation of cities and transference of ideas from the world of forms to the world of becoming. None of this can be seen unless one reads *Timaeus* literarily instead of literally, which should be the natural scholarly instinct for Platonic dialogues generally.

When approaching any allegorical text, if one limits it to its literal demythologized meaning, they miss its grander purpose; this is especially true with *Timaeus*, since it is an allegory demonstrating the purpose and execution of allegory itself. As a parallel, consider another creation myth: Genesis. While there are certain factual claims that can be drawn from the creation account that appear to be confirmed by modern science (such as the idea that our universe had a beginning and before that, there was nothing) this demythologized perspective robs the text of its deeper and more metaphorical meanings – such as the day of rest or original sin. This example characterizes my critique of the academic discourse around *Timaeus*. In debating the literal demythologized truths, we seem to have lost the more pressing responsibility of interpreting the allegorical imagery to find truths deeper than facts.

The literalist interpretation appears to be primarily motivated by the factual underpinnings that underly several elements of Timaeus' account. However, when examining those underpinnings, it becomes clear that those factual claims are being used as a springboard to present a more complete mythologized truth. Consider Timaeus' allegory that the World-Soul is constructed via a division of a mixture of *the same*, *the different*, and *the being*.²⁵ Then, the Demiurge has the compound revolve in two motions, an inner motion of *the different* and an outer motion of *the same*.²⁶ The discussion of this passage is often limited to its poetic encapsulation of ancient Greek astronomy, but few ever expand on the metaphor's implications. Timaeus has likened the World-Soul to the visible order of the cosmos. The World-Soul is not static, but in an attempt to resemble stasis as much as possible, it moves in cycles. Those cycles are not simple, but are compounded of an outer *same* cycle, and an inner *different* cycle. The spiritual implications of this metaphor appear to outline an image of our universe that differs locally but also progresses universally in a steadier harmony. The political implications of this metaphor appear to outline a similar image, recommending a relationship to society in which our outer persona finds its place in the outer motion of the same, but our

²⁵ Ibid., 35a.

²⁶ Ibid., 36c.

internal identities vary. While one could limit this discussion to the demythologized account, there appears to be a more enriching purpose to the character of Timaeus' story.

Timaeus furthers the analogy between external phenomena and the World-Soul by dividing it into whole number ratios that correspond to the Pythagorean musical scale.²⁷ If *Timaeus* is read strictly as a hymn to science, this description is merely a poetic wrapping of the discovered phenomenon of diatonic order. But, when considering the spiritual implications of such a claim, Timaeus has analogized the life force of the world to the whole number ratios that constitute that scale. This framing likens the World-Soul both to music's beautifully intelligible mathematical relationships, but also to music's fatal flaw: the inability to combine the various keys into a singular scale without intonation issues. This allegory likens the musical problem of tuning to the spiritual problem of 'tuning' one's soul. Our souls, like the universe, began not at rest, but "moving out of tune."²⁸ Timaeus' spiritual suggestion is that it is the duty of the intellect to bring the soul into an ordered harmony, and that if one devotes himself to the love of learning, he will become immortal.²⁹

Some skeptics will still question the value of a mythologized account when compared with the kind of truth an analytic demythologized account provides. However, I maintain that one position need not disparage or detract from the other whatsoever. In Critias' account of the conversation between the Egyptian priests and Solon, a priest replies to Solon's history of his people by claiming "you Greeks are always children, and there is no Greek old man."³⁰ When asked to elaborate, he says "You are all youthful of soul, for you do not have a single ancient belief amongst yourselves from archaic tradition nor any lessons which have been made venerable by time."³¹ Critias later remarks on the value of children's stories, stating "As the saying goes, the lessons of childhood carry marvelous remembrance. For myself, I do not know if I could remember everything which I heard yesterday, but this story which I heard such a long time ago, I would be astonished if any part of it escaped me."³² The value of a mythological account is its pedagogic value. Myths introduce children to the values, functions, customs, and beliefs of a society. If those stories are properly constructed, when the child becomes an analytical adult, they will be able to expand on and improve the story for coming generations. The stories do not only provide value to children, but by their continuous development, they preserve the kind of knowledge the priest accuses the Greeks of lacking, lessons which have been made venerable by time. As C. S. Lewis says in "On Three Ways of Writing for Children," "I am almost inclined to set it up as canon that a children's story which is enjoyed only by children is a bad children's story."³³

The purpose of Timaeus' account appears to be, in part, to restore this kind of lost knowledge. How he preserves astronomical and musical discovery through his spiritual teaching has already been discussed, but he also includes the other two categories of the quadrivium,

²⁷ Ibid., 36a-b.

²⁸ Ibid., 30a.

²⁹ Ibid., 90b

³⁰ Ibid., 22b

³¹ Ibid., 22c.

³² Ibid., 26b-c.

³³ C. S. Lewis, "On Three Ways of Writing for Children," accessed May 27, 2025, <https://myweb.scu.edu.tw/~jmklassen/scu99b/chlitgrad/3ways.pdf>.

arithmetic and geometry.³⁴ However, these are not the only liberal arts to be found in the text. Lessons in logic and rhetoric are also subliminally scattered throughout the dialogue. To limit *Timaeus* only to a preservation of the demythologized discoveries limits the text to something it never intended for itself to be. The fact that Socrates calls Timaeus' account a λόγος and not a μύθος does not support the literalist interpretation either. Socrates says it is a λόγος because it is based on a true story, but Timaeus makes it clear that his account is one based on faith, not truth.³⁵ The preservation of these pedagogical necessities is the intended purpose of the story, but these necessities are not exclusively in the realm of natural science.

If *Timaeus* is to be taken as something more than a poetic adornment of Plato's ideas of physics and metaphysics, one must be convinced that it contains more than just physical and metaphysical claims. Only by reading *Timaeus* as something grander than the natural sciences can one see the dialogue's commentary on the importance, purpose, and value of allegorical storytelling, which is the backbone of good literature and mythology. *Timaeus* teaches that good mythology is the true birth of a new city. The *Timaeus*, therefore, is more about politics than it is physics. Beyond politics, an additional purpose of Timaeus' account is to restore lost knowledge and preserve lessons made venerable by time. Timaeus' account accomplishes this end by using musical, astronomical, and mathematical discoveries to create a metaphor concerning the creation of the soul. To only assess the literal truth of this creation account, to not perceive this metaphor as religious, spiritual, or at bare minimum, cultural, is to forfeit the knowledge that becomes lost to time as cultures change. *Timaeus* does not contain factual truths about reality, but metaphorical truths about the human condition and our relation to creation and its creator. To ignore this teaching in favor of debating Plato's claims about the beginning of time or the constitution of matter is to let *Timaeus* fail in accomplishing its primary end.

Plato uses *Timaeus* to show the importance of storytelling to the city in speech and esoterically implies that mythmaking is the primary means by which ideas are brought into becoming (or motion). Once one can see that *Timaeus* contains claims that go beyond the physical and the metaphysical, but instead concern the purpose and execution of good storytelling, city building, and culture creating, they must also see that even the parts of *Timaeus* that appear to be about physics and metaphysics are more deeply about the humanities (e.g. musical ratios and tuning one's soul, the positing of a world soul, etc.). Without this perspective, scholars have spent more time disputing whether *Timaeus* is factually true or even intended seriously than they have spent discerning the literary or spiritual meaning of these metaphors presented as claims of fact, nor have they made much discussion of how Plato's biggest allegory may enlighten his use of allegory in other dialogues.

Just like in *The Republic*, Socrates' perfect society must have stories where the gods are good. Therefore, it is necessary for the myth on which Socrates' city will be set in motion to contain religious and spiritual truths, i.e. truths that relate to theology and the soul. The most exclusively religious claim is Timaeus' characterization of the Demiurge. Timaeus claims that the Demiurge created the universe because "he was good, and nobody who is good can ever become jealous of anything; and being without envy, he wished most that everything would

³⁴ Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. author, 31b-32b, 32b-33d.

³⁵ Ibid., 26e, 29c.

resemble himself. You should accept this, then, as the governing cause of becoming and the cosmic order, because it is accepted by men of sound mind.”³⁶ To try to debate the literal truth of this claim seems frivolous and counterproductive. It seems like this is exactly the kind of claim that must necessarily be taken on faith. However, to Timaeus, this is obvious, since he also claims that because the universe is beautiful, this assertion is “clear to all” and to suggest otherwise would be “blasphemous.”³⁷

Timaeus also enjoins the reader to “accept the likely myth and not seek anything beyond it.”³⁸ This seems to suggest that we should be looking for acceptable belief and not absolute truth. To be content with a likely account, because that’s all you’ll ever get, appears to be a deep spiritual truth. However, more implicitly, Timaeus also tells us that the creator wants us to become as much like him as possible, and when he creates, he creates with his attention on the eternal model. On the surface, these two commands seem contradictory. However, if one considers that spiritual texts often attempt to balance an implicit and explicit meaning, this account could have an explicit injunction to just be content with what’s likely wrapped around an implicit suggestion to mirror the creator and create with your mind focused on the eternal model. This would help serve one of the important functions of the noble lie, which is sorting the classes into philosophers and craftsmen. Regardless of whether one reads this command as a noble spiritual truth or a noble political lie, the debate cannot even be had without *Timaeus*’ narrative context. When the statement is demythologized, at most it means that scientific endeavors should prioritize understanding what is always changing rather than what always is. While this is certainly part of the meaning, academic discussions around *Timaeus* must shift their attention away from the debate concerning logical consequences towards an inquiry into comparative mythology if we hope to discover more about what this text intends to teach.

Conclusion

It appears that the academic discussion concerning Plato’s *Timaeus* has been plagued by a perceived feud between two of his students. Upon re-examining Timaeus’ account, I hope it has become evident that the text is clearly intended to be a reasoned and likely mythological account for pedagogical purposes. When considering the text in this light, it should be clear that asking whether Atlantis really existed or if Timaeus is perfectly accurate in his scientific claims is a distraction from the text’s real meaning. Instead, questions about the literary meaning of Timaeus’ imagery are required to understand how *Timaeus* fits into the rest of Platonic philosophy. When *Timaeus* is viewed by scholars as a commentary on Platonic natural philosophy, it is often seen as peculiar, outlandish, or at least misfit, when compared to other dialogues. However, upon a preliminary examination of the text as a spiritual allegory, or perhaps more secularly as a literary allegory, it appears undeniable that *Timaeus* is the philosophical capstone to *The Republic*. It is the explication of a noble lie, but as is said in *The Republic*, it is a useful and unhated lie because it is replacing historic gaps in knowledge with what is most likely, and we should be content with it if we cannot produce a more likely

³⁶ Ibid., 29e.

³⁷ Ibid., 29a.

³⁸ Ibid., 29d.

account.³⁹ These two texts together teach that the beginning of setting political ideas into motion is storytelling.

Timaeus is in no way a mere poetic hymn to science, but it is a pedagogical preservation of all kinds of wisdom, including spiritual and political wisdom. As a spiritual allegory, the text teaches that the liberal arts are tools our intellect must use to bring our souls into tune with the rest of the universe. It also teaches that all that exists was created by a singular, perfect, benevolent Craftsman. As a political allegory, the text teaches that the liberal arts help us order society, that there is an inner individual motion of the same and an outer collective motion of the other, and that cities begin with noble lies that establish cultures and unite the people under one tribe (or even better, one World-Soul).

While *Timaeus* certainly does contain commentary on the natural world, to focus our scholarly attention on it is to miss the forest for the trees. It should be sufficiently demonstrated that *Timaeus* was not written as a treatise on nature, but was written to “put the city into motion” by restoring and preserving the lost art of cultural mythmaking. It reminds the reader of the importance of storytelling and its power for social change. It also teaches that the bridge between the world of forms and the world of becoming is mythmaking, a teaching echoed in *Phaedrus* and *Ion*. The dialogue has far more to offer in the realm of humanities than it does in the natural sciences. These more literary aspects of the text are also far more relevant to the modern age with its crisis of purpose, spiritual reawakening, and the rising interest in alternative religions and mysticism. Additionally, reading the dialogue in this manner, as it should be evident it was intended to be read, makes the text easier to integrate with other dialogues in shaping a consistent view of Platonic philosophy. This reading, when contemplated long enough, seems to answer all sorts of questions from other Platonic dialogues. The questions vary from “Why does Socrates often tell myths and allegories to convey ideas?” to “Did Socrates and Plato approve of *The Thirty*?”. For the reasons above, scholars should turn their attention away from the literal truth and the physical theories *Timaeus* contains and turn it towards the full pedagogical value *Timaeus* has to offer. Plato’s *Timaeus*, more than any other dialogue, creates a framework for discerning the rest of Plato’s esoteric ideas and puts Socrates’ philosophy into motion.

³⁹ Bloom, *The Republic*, 382d.

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