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# THE PERFORMATIVE TIMELINESS OF PLATO'S PHAEDRUS, PART I

By Pierre Beaudry, 1/14/2016

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## INTRODUCTION

I don't know if you are ready for this one, but the time has come to start my reports from a tight pinch, which is to acknowledge that the present world situation is very much like the dual and contradictory nature of the Greek divinity Pan, reflecting a very unsuccessful attempt at creating a unity of two opposites, beast and man, Satan and God.



Ironically, Pan is the ugly and sensually depraved divinity that Socrates prayed to at the end of the *Phaedrus* of Plato to be granted the power to solve the paradox of the unity of the opposites as in the unity between body and soul.

So, let us join Socrates in prayer:  
*“Dear Pan, and all other gods who live in this place, grant me internal beauty and make sure that these external features that I have are in amical unity with my internal being.” (Phaedrus, 279b.)*

**Figure 1** The Greek divinity Pan.

Throughout the *Phaedrus* dialogue, Plato makes extensive use of an ancient Greek application of time called *kairios*, which also embodies these two opposite tendencies in its meaning and its application, and which are also performed in opposite ways and with opposite resulting effects. However, Plato only uses the term *kairios* about a dozen times throughout his works [mostly in his books on law] and only once, near the end of his *Phaedrus* dialogue, as if to spring a trap for the reader to fall into. In a way, Socrates acts as Lyn says, for the purpose of the effect.

This concept of *kairios* meaning *opportune* is best represented as the balance and proportion that is required in classical musical well-tempering composition, which enables you to unify overlapping dissonant and contradictory emotions clashing against each other in a manner such that they end up creating an orchestral unity of the highest beauty. That's what the intention of the *Phaedrus* is all about and that's the effect it should have on the reader.

However, such “opportunity” timing is not an easy method to master, because it carries within itself an unusual and surprising mean of unifying the opposites. If you wish to find this, you have to look for it in the performative manner with which change takes place in the world, as Lyn demonstrated, through just the right proportion of a pinch of *isochronic-negative-curvature*.

## 1. *KAIRIOS*, ISOCHRONICITY, AND NEGATIVE CURVATURE

*“The most important thing to do in strategic matters is to be at the right place and act at the right time no matter what anyone says, as Washington did when crossing the Delaware.”*

Dehors Debonneheure

The ancient Greeks had two completely different but complementary notions of time: one was *chronos* (χρόνος), a sequential notion of clock-time, and the other

was *kairios* (*καίριος*), an opportune or favorable moment of time. The former means a measurable lapse of time expressed as a spatial quantity or periodical length, while the latter means the timeliness of a moment of opportunity, the right time to do something, otherwise known as the “right timing.” In the first case, time always comes back and repeats itself unceasingly; in the second case, time never repeats itself, because it comes when everything changes or, if the opportunity is missed and everything collapses, the opportunity has been missed.

From a strategic standpoint of the present world situation, what matters the most for every human being today is to become able to develop an epistemological form of *kairioscopy*, that is to say, to develop an insightful kind of looking glass which can project from your mind an insight into the *right time* and the *proper measure* for changing the world. It is important to understand this point, at this moment in history, because that discovery may mean life or death for most of mankind. And, the most important characteristic to examine is that this *kairios* type of time is directly associated with Lyn's idea of isochronic-negative-curvature and creative-time-reversal.

In classical Greek literature at the time of Homer, *kairios* had an etymological connection with opposite terms that meant “to destroy” and “to care for.” It is only from the time of Aeschylus that *kairios* began to be connected with time and the term came to signify “opportune.” With Plato, however, *kairios* became something more. It became an epistemologically unifying concept, an element of fusion between a proportional measure of performative action and truth. And, that is when *kairios* began to be like a caustic of negative curvature; that is to say, an action that brings together the unity of the opposites with the idea of accomplishing what is to be done with *proper measure* and at the *right time*.

With Plato, *kairios* expresses performatively a primary ethical principle of proportionality as Leibniz later understood it; that is, for instance, as the harmony of proportion between reason and power. Is it any wonder that what Leibniz considered the divine spark of creativity was to be like a caustic? After Plato, and most emphatically since Isocrates, the teacher and controller of Aristotle, the idea

of *kairios* degenerated into becoming a rhetorical device exclusively intended for political manipulation of people.

As ancient Greece degenerated, *kairios* became the art of opportunism, as Aristotle canonized the term to express the rhetorical right moment when a proof is being delivered in an argument in order to convince an audience. In other words, the sophistical or Aristotelian use of the term *kairios* is what politicians and lawyers use for the purpose of acquiring someone's consent. Isocrates called this *phronesis*, the discourse of the practical man or "practical wisdom." This is not the meaning that we intend to use, here, because the opportune moment to capture an audience is merely a sophistical tool to manipulate others. This is not the effect you want to generate.

The point, here, is to use the opportune time in the manner that Plato and Socrates used the term in the *Phaedrus* for the purpose of changing others. In other words, appropriate does not mean feeling good but doing the good. The Platonic or Socratic use of the term is for the purpose of causing an axiomatic change in someone's mind and increase his power to think. That's the effect you want to produce. And, that is why, generally, doing the good does not feel good.

In both cases, timeliness is appropriateness, but for two completely opposite reasons and also with the intention of using two completely opposite means producing two entirely different ends. The Aristotelian form requires cunning while the Platonic form requires creativity.

The Platonic meaning of *kairios* is also associated with the idea of isochronicity and negative curvature, as well as with the notion that Lyn identified as *simultaneity of physical eternity*. [See the 1989 report: [LYNDON LAROCHE SEMINAR ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF NEGATIVE CURVATURE FOR PHYSICS AND BIOLOGY](#)]

In that 1989 FEF seminar on negative curvature, Lyn developed the very seminal idea that discoveries of principles must take place through the understanding of *Classical musical composition and isochronic-negative-curvature*. As he said:



“During the Spring of 1981, I was forced to recognize, that no general understanding of my own discoveries in economic science were likely, unless the student was first grounded in study of the application of constructive geometry to the principles of well-tempered composition. The errors of interpretation of my work, up to that point, reflected either the student's acceptance of the axiomatic fallacies embedded in popular teaching of advanced mathematics, or, similarly, deeply held axiomatic prejudices of the form of belief in naive sense-certainty. One had to consider, not only the emphasis which Plato, St. Augustine, and Kepler had placed upon musical harmonics, but also that without following this pedagogical example, little understanding of the physics of a Gauss-Riemann domain were likely.”

Then, Lyn added this real axiom buster with respect to Riemannian axiomatic discontinuities of isochronic-negative-curvature:

"First, we have to account for the action generating the discontinuity in the first place. Riemann developed an initial approach to this in his paper on acoustical shock waves. There he showed how a continuous process, characterized by negative curvature, leads to formation of a singularity called a shock front. We shall return to this later.

"The second aspect is that, in the real Universe, we do not merely have generation of discontinuities, but the underlying physical action function is manifestly one which subsumes an INCREASING DENSITY OF DISCONTINUITIES GENERATED PER UNIT OF ACTION. In other words, in every interval of action, transformations of the sort indicated by the elementary Riemann surface construction are occurring, with increasing density."

What does that mean? This means that when the world goes through an axiomatic transformation, as in today's out of control strategic situation, it must go through a high density of contradictory singularities. It also means that, when the *kairios* right moment is here, the whole of humanity will become transformed

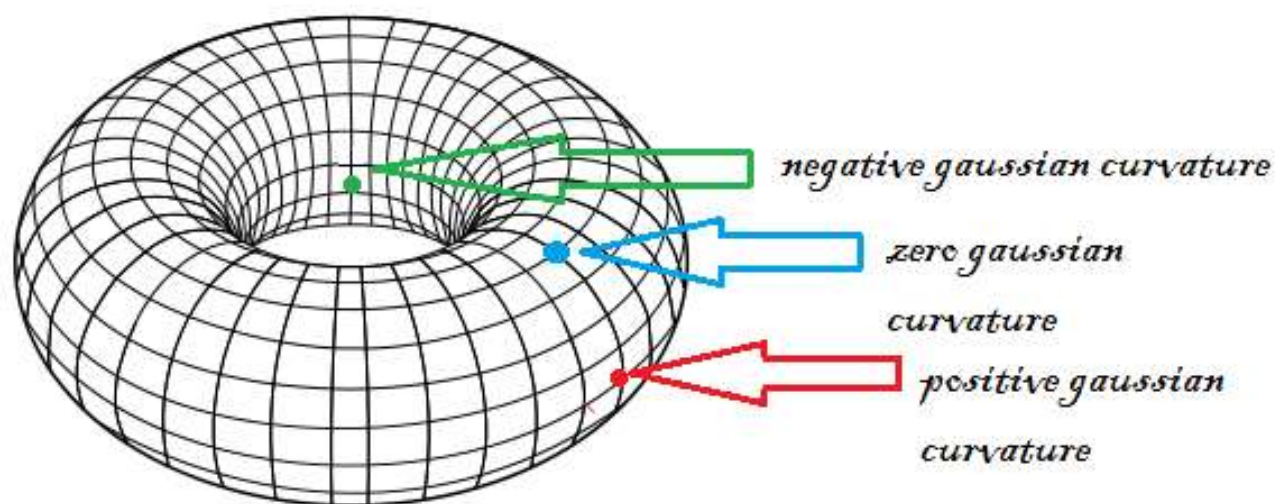
through a mental surface of isochronic-negative-curvature along which every human being of the planet will be as if going down a cycloidal curve at entirely different speeds, but with everyone arriving at the bottom of the curve at the same time. That is the meaning and significance of “isochronic-negative-curvature” (arriving at the same place at the same time) See **Figure 2**.



**Figure 2** The cycloid curve or Brachistochrone curve is the curve of “shortest time” of descent under the condition of gravitation.

It is the idea of the timing of isochronicity which is important to understand, here, because isochronic time is not in accordance with *chronos*, but in accordance with *kairios*. It is a unique and absolute time for mankind. It is a time of change which is also unique and absolute in the universe as a whole: an axiom busting time in the microcosm and macrocosm. And, the unique characteristic of this curvature lies in the fact that no matter where or when one starts rolling the ball down the curve, all of the balls will arrive at the bottom of the curve together in spite of their different momentum. And, that is the point to focus on: How can

several objects move at different speeds is space and arrive together at the same ending point as if they had been driven by the same purpose? That's what I hope Plato's *Philebus* is going to teach us. What kind of absolute time is that? Can such an isochronic function also find an analogous meaning in the Bible where it is said: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand?" (Mark 1: 15)



**Figure 3** The Torus is the best suited geometrical figure to identify simultaneously the three different aspects of negative curvature, zero curvature, and positive curvature.

Here is the fundamental point that Lyn made on this subject in his discussion with the biophysicist, Fritz Popp, and with the input of the crucial historical period of the Italian Renaissance. It is essential that Lyn's view be replicated in full here:

"Popp: A question. There are a lot of very interesting relations between, for instance geometrical spatial properties. I would like to remind you here also of Rene Thom's catastrophe theory. He describes some morphological changes in development and I think, there are some parallelisms to your discussion. You mentioned also necessary principles of

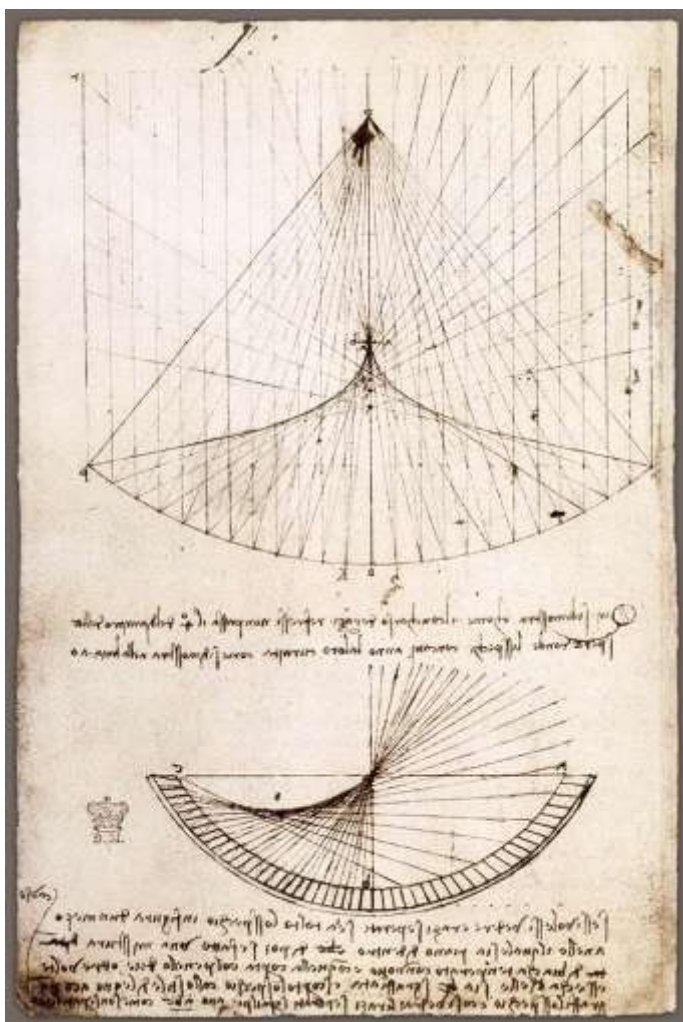
action. But to criticize this I would say you have lot of possible developments – each situation has some possibility to reduce its development to some principle of stability. You have to have a stable state or you have changes in stability in order to describe a development. And here is a more metaphysical question: is there any evolutionary motivation or evolutionary aim for such a development?

“Lyn: Essentially, that's the problem.

“Popp: Can one explain this?

“Lyn: This is already done. This is where the problem is in physics, in the history of modern physics, which started essentially in the time with Brunelleschi. The central question in physics was defined by Plato, in the so-called Plato's cave construction, which is constructed with respect to the obvious self-boundedness of visual space-time in terms of the Platonic solids function. In fact space is not infinite; there is a self-bounded characteristic limitation of the form. When George Gemisthos Plethon brought the Archimedes and Plato manuscripts from Greece to Cosimo de Medici, there was a great ferment around this question. From the standpoint of Plato, the question posed to Brunelleschi and people of that sort, is: what we see is a stereographic conformal projection of reality, not reality. To discover the ontologically real space, we must discover anomalies in the field of vision such as the caustic, a very interesting anomaly. Space is not coherent as it defines itself, the visual domain, because of this caustic.





“You cannot follow the rules of physics and not have that caustic. So, therefore you must do as Brunelleschi and Leonardo did. You must then correct your idea of curvature of space-time to correspond to physical reality. The anomalies tell you what the discrepancies are between your axiomatic assumptions in visual space and the reality. Then, you must turn that backwards and use the measurement of the anomaly to study what the better approximation of physical space-time is, the better geometry. This is what Brunelleschi did.

**Figure 4** Leonardo Da Vinci. Visible light caustics forming surfaces of negative curvature inside of a curved mirror. Codex Arundel, 87 v.

“This continued with a rather exhaustive development, through Leonardo da Vinci. Kepler starts from this. Gauss in particular proves that Kepler was correct in his method. The details of mathematics are more complicated, but in respect to the principles he was correct. Not only for macrophysics, but also for microphysics and also for life. So, the problem is this, that Kepler demonstrated effectively, that the fundamental law of the universe is not entropy. It is negentropy. In the same sense that Leibniz

meant, it is characteristically negentropic. And also microphysics is negentropic, essentially, and life is simply an expression first of all of the negentropic universe.

“So, once you eliminate the idea of entropy as a law of the universe, you have no problem. Now, then the question is, where does this idea of entropy come from? Partly from stupid people. Aristotle believed in the big bang. But where does it come from in physics? The famous case is Newton. Newton wrote this confession in his Principia, in which he said: in my universe which I present to you, there is a great fallacy. The fallacy is, the universe appears to run down, like a mechanical watch. He said: that is not due to physics, that is due to the mathematics I use. But I have no other choice of mathematics I like. So, therefore this happens.”

“But that's all it is. The introduction of the wrong mathematics, superimposing it upon the physical evidence, creates this idea, which was originally ridiculed except by people like Lagrange, Laplace and the other Cartesians at the beginning of the 19th century. Then around 1850, these swine Kelvin, Clausius, Helmholtz introduce arbitrarily this crazy notion of the second law of thermodynamics. Where is the evidence? The evidence is the mathematics and if I use a Euclidean or axiomatic arithmetic formal mathematics to analyze any physical phenomenon, that language of mathematics will not allow me to represent that phenomena in any way except in an entropic way, a linear way. It cannot be done. Any deductive mathematics is linear. You cannot represent a true nonlinear process in deductive mathematics. You can, in an evolutionary constructive geometry. No problem, it is not a paradox.

“Take this crazy Satan-worshipper, Illya Prigogine -- that is what he is, he is an actual Satan-worshipper. But his crazy non-linear systems are not non-linear. They are pasted together linear systems. He sticks one here, he pastes one here, he sticks one there, he makes a branch, a network of linear systems. He cannot, within a deductive system, do a non-linear process.

“What is a non-linear process? As opposed to the Boltzmann concept, a non-linear process is either negentropic or entropic. In a truly negentropic state we are going to a higher order of phase-space. In an entropic state we are dropping to lower order of phase-space. For example, the catastrophe case. Look at the biosphere. The biosphere is in a certain state. In this state what would be represented as a negentropic energy-density function, exists. What happens when the biosphere drops catastrophically to the lower state?

“Well, my thesis has been for a long time, as a provocative research-thesis, that if I compress a biosphere without totally killing it, then the biosphere will produce material which eats itself up -- by lower forms of life who will eat up higher forms of life in order to bring the biosphere into equilibrium with the limits of the boundary-conditions of its energy throughput. Given an INCREASE of energy throughput, the biosphere will tend to destroy its lower forms of organization of life or to emphasize the higher ones. But what we are doing with the ecology now is, we are eliminating the human beings, and bacteria and viruses will take over. But there will be new forms. What we will actually generate, is like the Kepler piece on the snow-flake. If I have a negentropic sequence, and if I go to an inorganic sequence, it's a different harmonic ordering. On the downside of the process we get a different sequence of events than on the upside.”  
(LYNDON LAROCHE SEMINAR ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF  
NEGATIVE CURVATURE FOR PHYSICS AND BIOLOGY)

## **2. A CASE OF MISSED OPPORTUNITY**

Take the most recent example. When one looks at the cowardness of the U. S. Congress during the Christmas recess of 2015, one can only realize that their biggest blunder was to have missed the opportunity to impeach Obama by using the 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment. It is clear that the reason for the missed opportunity was the fear of retaliation.



The nature of the difference between the Aristotelian and Platonic notions of *kairios* becomes clear in this context, especially when one considers the nature of the moral emotion that is trampled upon in such a missed opportunity. How many Americans are going to die because of this omission? How many millions of Jewish people were sent to the gas chambers during World War II under a similar silent condition of a knowledgeable population?

It may be useless to regurgitate some mental speech in one's mind that one has a tendency to make in the aftermath of such an unseized moment, but it is useful to remind one's conscience of what is right and what is wrong in a life and death situation.



The point is that truth is truth, and it is never too late to tell the U. S. Congress that it has missed what might have been the greatest *kairios* moment of truth of this century. Therefore, the following pinch-effect: “It is not just Obama; it’s the Queen, stupid! So, how are you going to go over the upper-limit of the acceptable and correct that mistake?”

**Figure 5** The tight pinch-effect or the upper-limit of the acceptable.

### 3. PLATO'S PHAEDRUS AND THE ART OF UNIFYING THE OPPOSITES

According to the Pythagoreans, the purpose of *kairios* is to master the unification of the opposites. In that sense, *kairios* is the equivalent of the *Chi* of



Confucius, that is, the ontological characteristic governing the balance of the unity of contraries. What Plato shares with both the Pythagoreans and the Confucians is that the idea of *kairios* is the moment of truth in which the discovery of a new principle and its meaning act together to change an audience in an axiomatic moment of opportunity.

The most important Platonic dialogue to study on this matter is the *Phaedrus* because that dialogue makes a unique and thorough compositional use of the performative language in which Socrates develops the right speech at the right time and for the right audience. In other words, the performative *kairios* power of truth is the principle to be discovered.

This dialogue is probably the greatest and most difficult of all of Plato's dialogues because of the deeply hidden ironic nature of the subject matter and because of Socrates' unique treatment of the subject of "love" as a rhetorical subject to be treated as they say, "tongue in cheek." It is also the most restricted form of dialogue set in the countryside outside of the city walls of Athens, and involving only two characters, Socrates and his young student, Phaedrus. Although the dialogue has been historically identified by most historians as a discussion on language comparing Plato's idea of a "good rhetoric" versus a Sophist use of "bad rhetoric," the real subject matter is on the good timing of an axiomatic transformation of the human mind by means of irony.

The dialogue opens with Phaedrus bumping into Socrates outside of the city walls just after having heard Lysias make a speech on love. The curious anomaly is that the Lysias speech was based on the idea that favor should be given to the non-lover rather than to the lover. Recognizing the fallacy that Lysias must have been dishing out by "giving the company a feast of eloquence," Socrates engages Phaedrus to pull the Lysias script out of his pocket and to read it to him.

After some small talk on the local divinities between the two, Phaedrus starts reading a clearly inappropriate speech at an inappropriate moment to an inappropriate listener, Socrates, who, politely agrees without interruption, and who, after Phaedrus finished reading, turns to make a similar inappropriate speech, as a perfect Sophist would, on the subject of how a lover must keep his loved one

“totally ignorant and totally dependent on his lover, by way of securing the maximum of pleasure for himself, and the maximum of damage to the other.” And, Socrates concluded: “As wolf to lamb, so lover to his lad.” (*Phaedrus*, 241 d.)

At that point in the reading of the dialogue, the reader must stop and realize that he has been taken in by a fallacy of composition. Both tales are lies. The reader realizes that Socrates had also been telling a story of a lie and, thus, he becomes perplexed. Where is the truth in the lie? What is the truth? Why has Socrates become a Sophist?

Thus, the reader is made to discover that Socrates is deliberately using sophistry in order to awaken the sense of truth in the reader's mind. Socrates delivers the truth through a false story, by developing a completely false notion of love which he executed in a proper state of *kairios*, at the right time, and at the correct moment when the reader was able to measure that the truth of real and true love cannot be what Socrates is saying. Thus, the truth emerges through the discomfort of discovering that one is being manipulated by the lie that both Socrates and Phaedrus have uttered. Then, Socrates confessed: “That was a terrible theory, Phaedrus, a terrible theory that you introduced and compelled me to expound.” (*Phaedrus*, 242 d.)

It is only after the reader was able to sort out the truth of this performative action of *kairios* that Socrates was able to deliver a true speech on the true nature of love.

#### **4. THE SOUL, *KAIRIOS*, AND NEGATIVE CURVATURE**

The point that Socrates is making is that not only must his speech on love be delivered at a proper moment, and in a precisely measured manner, but it must also be true in accordance with the highest truth. He, therefore, can also know what is truly probable as opposed to what seems to be, because he knows that his manner of speaking is not manipulative. In order to accomplish that task, the speaker must

know everything there is to know about the nature of the soul, and most emphatically why it is immortal and universal. And, the secret is that, for this to be true, the very nature of the speech he makes must be a performance of the truth as a self-mover, because the soul is the only self-mover who can tell the truth. As he put it:

“All soul is immortal, for that which is ever in motion is immortal. But that which while imparting motion is itself moved by something else can cease to be in motion, and therefore can cease to live; it is only that which moves itself that never intermits its motion, inasmuch as it cannot abandon its own nature; moreover, this self-mover is the source and first principle of motion for all other things that are moved.

“And now that we have seen that that which is moved by itself is immortal, we shall feel no scruple in affirming that precisely that is the essence and definition of soul, to wit self-motion. Any being that has an external source of motion is soulless, but a being deriving its motion from a source within itself is animate or *besouled*, which implies that the nature of soul is what has been said.” (*Phaedrus*, 245d-e.)

After a lengthy description of how this winged process of self-motion works as the highest form of liberating beauty, Socrates puts Phaedrus into a tight pinch-effect by telling him that he has to denounce Lysias for having made a speech like a politician “extolling evil as being really good.” (*Phaedrus*, 260 c.) But, Phaedrus is hesitating because he is not sure he has the courage to do it. He is thinking something like: “Would you believe me if I were to tell you I can fly? Obviously not. Then, why do members of Congress believe that Banks are too big to fail?”

In other words, it is only by combining the truth with the art of awareness of the right moment of time and place, that is, with a true sense of *kairios* that you can change mankind, because knowledge of what is true will not suffice to get you to change people unless you also act to change them with the truth as opposed to trying to win them over by persuasion or by bullying them. This is how the Socratic art of axiom busting works.

The problem that Socrates is confronted with, however, is that rhetoric combines the art of profiling the souls of people with what appeals to them and most politicians use it for the purpose of persuading them with what is plausible; knowing that the same people will fear going against public opinion, if what appears to be true is not acceptable to most. The point of the matter is that Socratic organizing is not attempting to persuade people, but acting to change them; that is, by actually refusing to go along to get along. That's the effect.

You ask: "Where does Negative Curvature fit into this?" That's where the pinch is located. ***Kairios is to the creative human mind what isochronicity is to negative curvature.*** Consider the epistemological difference between universal knowledge and locally controlled knowledge from that vantage point and you will discover the crucial difference between Plato and Aristotle. That's where the pinch-effect of truth versus fallacy hurts the most. That's also the nature of the battlefield.

On the other hand, the relativistic epistemology of Aristotle lies in that the contradictory beliefs people have cannot be solved without eliminating the people in conflict; that is, without manipulating wars between them. That condition is established by the local control and limitation of knowledge to a narrow identity. And, the local limitation of knowledge is established by the idea that everything that is known is based on local sense perception. The irony is that it was during Plato's time that the original idea of *kairios*, under the thumb of Isocrates and Aristotle, became used for precisely the opposite of what it was meant to accomplish.

In the rhetorical schools of Isocrates and Aristotle, *kairios* became the instrument of acquiring consensus. It became a *modus vivendi*. *Kairios* became the universal rule for political correctness and wise moderation. In fact, practicing the *kairios* meant to adapt and accommodate to accepted convention, to be appropriate and correct at the right time and the right place, to act in accordance with public expectation and to publically display a form of acceptable behavior and decorum. In one word, *kairios* meant to be polite and socially acceptable.



On the other hand, for Plato and Socrates, *kairios* was understood to mean uniquely a timely creative moment of singularity, which challenges the politically correct view of the majority and cannot be accepted within the accepted rules of agreed upon experience. *Kairios* belongs to and comes from the future. As in the case of negative curvature, there is, in Plato's *Phaedrus*, a definite opposite tension between the two notions of *kairios*, which is reflective of the non-linear nature of axiomatic changes in the curvature of the universe and which is reflected in the double opposite directionality of a surface of negative curvature. Thus, for Plato, *kairios* is the axiomatic mean of change between two extreme opposites.

In his discussion of the unlimited (*ἄπειρόν*) and of going beyond the limit (*περαία*) (*Philebus*, 15-19) Plato also attributes to the One of the Many the primary characteristic of *kairios* because the **right time** and the **proper measure** can also be achieved by means of determining the One in both language and in musical composition through a series of unlimited amount of noise and dissonance. The purpose, in that sense, is not entertainment but change and transformation into what never existed before. And, it is in the epistemological nesting of four different appropriately measured steps, as in the Bach-Lydian musical dissonances, that Socrates is able to identify *kairios* as the means of creating such a change as a transfinite determination of changing the boundary conditions of the mind in order to make a discovery of principle from the top down. As he said: "The first, then, I call the unlimited, the second the limit, and the third, the being that has come to be by the mixture of these two; as to the fourth, I hope I shall not be at fault in calling it the cause of the mixture and of the coming-to-be." (*Philebus*, 27b-c.)

In fact, the first principle in the ethics of Plato is also this **proper measure** of *kairios*. This is what historian Phillip Sipiora identified about a crucial 1924 report written by Doro Levi ("*The Concept of Kairios and the Philosophy of Plato*." *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei Classe di scienze moralia* RV 33 (1924): 93 – 118.) [Unfortunately, this last document is inaccessible on the internet and in American libraries. Maybe some of our Italian members could find it for us.] At any rate, here is the crucial point that Sipiora had to say about it:

“It is the memory of beauty, however, that inspires conceptions of the divine, thereby transporting the individual to a superior existence. The beautiful, therefore, provides a means of transcendence to the good. The identification of the beautiful with the good is a major issue in the *Phaedrus*, but what is significant is Levi’s conclusion that *kairios* provides the connecting link between these concepts.” (Phillip Sipiora, [\*Rhetoric and Kairios: Essays in History, Theory, and Praxis\*](#), p.6)

And, then, Sipiora added this insight about the epistemological significance of Plato’s higher hypothesis in the application of *kairios*:

“Levi’s groundbreaking 1924 essay, “*The Concept of Kairios and the Philosophy of Plato*,” examines *kairios* as an ethical and aesthetic concept in Plato, one that plays a significant role in shaping Plato’s notion of a “philosophical rhetoric.” Platonic aesthetics, according to Levi, is based upon principles of harmony, symmetry, and measure, while his ethics is based upon aesthetics, justice, and truth. Justice requires that citizens establish, within themselves, a harmony mirroring (and supporting) just relations within the state; thus, individuals must connect together the many conflicting elements of which they are made into a state of health or inner harmony. Central to Plato’s philosophy (and arguably one of Greek philosophy’s greatest insights), this conception of unity-in-plurality provides the connecting link between ethics and aesthetics; and it is a link provided by *kairios*. *Kairios* is thus the fusion of ethical and aesthetical elements.” (Phillip Sipiora, [\*Rhetoric and Kairios: Essays in History, Theory, and Praxis\*](#), p.5)

If Sipiora is right, Levi’s hypothesis means that the concept of *kairios* in Plato represents the isochronic link bringing together ethics, aesthetics and statecraft in the simultaneity of eternity. As I noted in the case of the *Philebus*, such a transfinite application of *kairios* is also the way that the unity of musical harmony through dissonances is achieved in the *Phaedrus* dialogue. Through one story after another, Plato goes into different clusters of dissonances (density of singularities) depending on the emotional profile of each of the two speakers:

alternately, the two characters go from poetical enthusiasm to pedantic caricature, here brutal and cynical, and there serene or vengeful, depending on what idea needs to be changed.

Then, Socrates goes into a very delicious irony by comparing the method of rhetoric with the method of medicine. It is actually a spoof on what Socrates calls, tongue in cheek, “scientific rhetoric.” (*Phaedrus*, 271a) As if the idea of a universal human soul did not exist, Socrates goes on suggesting there must exist different types of discourses appropriate to different types of souls and the true “rhetorical scientist” should proceed to adopt nothing short of a brainwashing method of identifying and controlling his victims at first glance and decide which discourse is good for him.

“Socrates: Thirdly, he [the student of rhetoric] will classify the types of discourses and the types of soul, and the various ways in which souls are affected, explaining the reasons in each case, suggesting the type of speech appropriate to each type of soul, and showing what kind of speech can be relied on to create belief in one soul and disbelief in another, and why.” (*Phaedrus*, 271b)

Then, Socrates goes to the heart of the matter and reveals the well kept secret that authors of such manipulations use against their targeted victims, without revealing the method of their cunning knowledge. Socrates spills the beans and summarizes the “science” of rhetorical manipulation as follows:

“Socrates: Since it is in fact the function of speech to lead souls by means of persuasion, a man who is going to be a rhetorician must know how many kinds of souls there are. Let us, then, state that there are so many of this or that sort, so that individuals also will be of this or that type. Again, the distinctions that apply here apply as well to the classification of speeches there are of this or that type. Therefore, those who are under the influence of speeches of a particular kind are readily persuaded to take action of a definite sort because of the qualitative correlation that you get between speech and soul; while men of a different sort are hard to persuade because this qualitative correlation does not exist in their case. The student of

rhetoric must, therefore, acquire a proper knowledge of these classes and then be able to follow them accurately with his own perceptual awareness, when he sees them taking place in the practical affairs of life and must be able to evaluate how they function in practical terms; otherwise, he can never profit from the theoretical knowledge he acquired in those lectures he had. But it is only when he has the capacity to declare to himself, upon catching sight of so an so, and say: ‘That is the man now standing before me and that is the characteristic of what was discussed theoretically at school,’ to which he must apply *this* kind of speech in *this* sort of manner in order to obtain persuasion for *this* kind of action or belief. It is when he can do all this and when he has, in addition, grasped the concept of proper measure [*kairous*] – when to speak and to hold one’s tongue, when to use a brief speech, a pitiful or an exacerbated speech; in a word, when to use any and all of the classes of speeches he has studied – it is only under such opportune or inopportune [*eukairian te kai akairian*] occasions that his art will be completely finished.” (*Phaedrus*, 271d – 272b)

Thus, Socrates identified the science of brainwashing in the manner that soap operas do it today, with the two essential components of manipulation in speech making; ***good timing*** and ***proper measure***. However, ultimately, what brings these two components together is not “opportunity,” but “practicality.” Again, Socrates admits he has been abusing the good nature of his interlocutor and finally comes to the bottom line on the question of how the “***proper measure***” has been turned into the fallacy of what Lyn identified as “practicality.” As Socrates put it about the conduct of lawyers:

“In the courts of law, nobody cares a rap for the truth about these matters, but only about what is plausible. And that is the same as what is probable, and is what must occupy the attention of the would-be master of the art of speech. Even actual facts ought sometimes not to be stated, if they don’t tally with probability; they should be replaced by what is probable, whether in prosecution or in defense; whatever you say, you simply must pursue this probability they talk of, and can say good-by to the truth forever.



Stick to that all through your speech, and you are equipped with the art complete.” (*Phaedrus*, 272d – 273a)

Therefore, as any moral person can see, the objective of rhetoric is not the same as that of philosophy, even if the means of achieving their respective end appear to be the same. What must be understood clearly is that the objective of rhetoric is the same as the goal of British Intelligence. And, the game is not to get some secret knowledge from people, but to control and own them through plausibility and make them accept a way of life worse than death. As the saying goes: “They have their hands so far up people’s asses that they are able to make their lips move the way they wish, because they own them.”

Finally, Plato ends his grandiose musical composition of the *Phaedrus* with a story about the fact that the divine gift of writing which was meant to provide a solace for memory, will, in fact, guarantee nothing but forgetfulness in the souls of men. Although Plato chose to end this dialogue less for the purpose of attacking writing than for defending the truthfulness of Socratic living speech, his concern, which is the same as ours today, was also less about language than about the freedom of developing the human mind to higher principles by means of change in *kairios* time, and for the purpose of determining the direction the world has to take. Therefore, the time has come for you to decide which way you are going to go.

How do you deal with a world that exists and doesn’t exist at the same time? That’s the question. And, the time to act on that question is now, because tomorrow will be too late. So, what kind of man or beast are you to think that you can be immortal and mortal at the same time, tell the truth and lie at the same time? What sort of world curvature is it that is dependent on a time which goes into two opposite directions at once? What sort of world is it that sees you change into something else while you remain the same? Don’t you think that the time has now come to answer these questions?

## END OF PART I