

The Three-Axis Eight-Position Framework in Plato's Ontology and Epistemology

Abstract

Plato's metaphysics of becoming can be mapped onto a structured eightfold schema derived from three intersecting axes: (1) a **Temporal Axis** distinguishing the four modes of time ("what is," "what was," "what will be," and "what is not"), (2) an **Ontological Axis** separating active, dynamic processes from passive, completed states of being, and (3) a **Cognitive (Epistemic) Axis** separating the soul's active synthesis and judgment from its passive reception of sensory impressions. By combining these axes, we obtain eight distinct ontological-cognitive positions that describe how temporal states are constituted in being and how they are accessed by the soul. This report defines each axis in philosophical and linguistic terms, drawing on key Platonic texts – especially *Theaetetus* 186a–b and *Timaeus* 37e–38b – where Plato's language (e.g. *ὄντα, γεγονώς, ἐσόμενος, μὴ ὄν, διακοσμοῦν, συμβάλλουσα*) explicitly signals these distinctions. We then derive the eight positions in detail, justify the inclusion of "what is not" as a functional temporal placeholder in cognition, and evaluate how this framework coheres with Plato's broader vision of a rationally structured cosmos in flux. An optional comparative note suggests that this eightfold schema may echo other Platonic octonaries (eight cosmic circuits, eight musical harmonies of the World-Soul, etc.), further underscoring the integrative role of the soul's reasoning in ordering becoming.

1. Axis Clarification

In Plato's account of reality, three fundamental axes organize the realm of **becoming** (the changing, temporal world) both metaphysically and epistemologically. We clarify each axis below, defining its role and highlighting key Greek terms from Plato's texts that mark these distinctions. In §1.2, we provide a philological analysis of the pivotal terms that differentiate active vs. passive being, and cognitive synthesis vs. reception, within the temporal context.

1.1 Philosophical Definition of the Three Axes

- **Temporal Axis (Modes of Time):** Plato explicitly differentiates four temporal modes: *what is* (present), *what was* (past), *what will be* (future), and *what is not* (non-being or absence). These are the "generated forms of Time," as *Timaeus* 38b enumerates: "what has become" (past), "what is becoming" (present process), "what is about to become" (future), and "what is not (non-existent)" ¹. Unlike the eternal realm of Forms (which properly only "is"), the realm of becoming is characterized by change and thus by *was* and *will be*; Plato notes that we improperly apply past/future terms to eternal being, whereas such terms belong strictly to things in time ². The **Temporal Axis** therefore supplies four basic states of a thing relative to time: its current existence, its prior accomplished being, its anticipated being, and its non-being (either privation or negation). Each of these temporal categories will need further specification by the other two axes.

- **Ontological Axis (Active vs. Passive Being):** This axis distinguishes *how* a state of being exists – whether as an ongoing dynamic **activity** or as a finished **result**. An *active* ontological state is one in the midst of *coming-to-be* or *acting as cause*, whereas a *passive* state is a static outcome or effect. In Platonic terms, this reflects the difference between *energeia* (active operation) and *gegonos* (that which has *become*). For example, the demiurge “ordering” (διακοσμοῦν) the cosmos or the world-soul actively circulating are ontologically active conditions, whereas a cosmos *already ordered* (γεγονώς, “having come to be so”) is ontologically passive or complete. Linguistically, Plato often indicates active states with present participles (ongoing action) and passive or completed states with aorist or perfect participles. This axis aligns with Plato’s view that reality comprises both *agents/processes* and *products/states*. Every temporal state can be seen either in its active phase (if we focus on it as in flux, developing or causing) or in its passive phase (if we view it as a fixed fact or effect).
- **Cognitive (Epistemic) Axis (Synthesis vs. Reception):** The third axis concerns *the soul’s mode of engagement* with reality, distinguishing **active cognitive synthesis** from **passive perceptual reception**. Plato’s epistemology in *Theaetetus* and *Timaeus* emphasizes that the mind is not a mere mirror of sensory data but an active organizer: the soul *itself* “yearns after” being and strives to grasp how things stand, as opposed to the body’s faculty which simply receives sensory *pathēmata* (affective impressions) ³ ⁴. Active cognition (*nous*, *dianoia*) entails combining and comparing perceptions, making judgments (for example, recognizing *sameness/difference* or *good/bad*), and thus literally *synthesizing* experience into truth-evaluable propositions. By contrast, passive reception (*aisthēsis* in its basic form) is the raw awareness of data (sights, sounds, etc.) without interpretive judgment – what Plato calls the soul’s “**wandering**” among multiplicities when it has not yet **applied reasoning**. This axis is epitomized in *Theaetetus* 186b, where Socrates argues that **knowledge is “not in our bodily experiences but in our reasoning about them”** ⁵. In other words, **perception by itself “has no cognitive content” until the active intellect shapes it** ⁶. Thus, for every temporal-ontological state, we can ask: is the soul merely undergoing a passive perception of that state, or actively relating and integrating it (through memory, inference, prediction, or negation)? The cognitive axis, therefore, maps how the *same event* can be merely **felt** or actively **known** depending on the soul’s involvement.

1.2 Greek Terminology and Philological Markers

To ground these axes in Plato’s text, we examine key Greek terms that Plato employs to mark the distinctions:

- **Temporal Differentiation:** Plato’s vocabulary in *Timaeus* 37e–38b clearly differentiates the four time modes:
- **ὄντα** – “what is” (present being). In *Theaetetus* 186b, this appears as τὰ παρόντα (“the things present”) ⁷, and in *Timaeus* 38b as part of the phrase ὁ ἔστιν for the eternal present. In the context of becoming, τὸ ὄν can mean a currently existing state (though strictly speaking, only the Forms **truly** ὄντα in Plato’s ontology; temporal entities only imitate being).
- **γεγονώς / γεγονότα** – “what has become” (from *gignomai*, to become). This is the **past** viewed as a completed outcome. *Timaeus* 38b uses τὸ γεγονός for an entity that “is become” ¹, i.e. has come into being and now *is* as a finished fact. In *Theaetetus* 186b, Theaetetus speaks of τὰ γεγονότα (“the things that have happened”) in contrast to present and future ⁷. Grammatically, this is a perfect participle, indicating a state resulting from prior completion.

- **ἔσόμενος / τὰ μέλλοντα** – “what will be” (future). Plato often uses the future participle of *einai* (ἔσόμενον, ἔσόμενα) or the adjective μέλλον (literally “in prospect”) to designate the future mode. *Theaetetus* 186b explicitly mentions “τὰ μέλλοντα” (“the things about to be”) for future events ⁷. In *Timaeus* 38b, the phrase “what is about to become is about to become” (τὸ μέλλον γενέσθαι) appears in the list of time’s forms ¹. These terms underscore futurity as a **fixed** anticipation – something that, while not yet actual, is on track to occur (or at least conceived as such).
- **μὴ ὄν (τὸ μὴ ὄν)** – “what is not” (non-being). This intriguing category is explicitly included by Plato among the “parts of time” or modes of discourse about becoming ¹. *Timaeus* 38b says “what is non-existent is non-existent” (τὸ μὴ ὄν εἶναι μὴ ὄν) – and then adds that none of these expressions (including “is not”) is strictly accurate for a world constantly in flux ¹. Here μὴ ὄν does not mean absolute nothingness (Plato is careful in the *Sophist* to distinguish *absolute* Not-Being from *relative* not-being as difference); rather, in context it indicates a **temporally indexed** non-being – e.g. something that is **not yet** or **no longer** (a past thing “is not” now, a future thing “is not” yet), or the *absence* of a state (“X is not present”). In *Theaetetus*, non-being is implied whenever the soul considers opposites or negations (e.g. to judge that *this* is not *that*, or that a perceived color by itself “is not” a true being until predicated). Thus, Plato effectively treats “what is not” as a necessary placeholder for anything absent from a given temporal perspective or any predicate not instantiated. It provides the conceptual space for **negation and comparison** in thought. (We will discuss this more in Task 2, as it is pivotal for the eightfold schema.)
- **Ontological Activity vs. Passivity:** Plato differentiates an entity in **action/process** from the same entity as **result/state** by choice of verbal aspect and voice:
- **διακοσμοῦν (diakosmoûn)** – “organizing” or “arranging.” This is a present active participle, used to denote ongoing cosmic ordering. In *Timaeus* 37d, the Demiurge “set in order the heaven” as he created time; the Greek text describes this as κόσμω...τὸν οὐρανόν (or a similar form), often translated as “in arranging the universe” ⁸. The term διακοσμοῦν (literally “thoroughly arranging”) captures active formation. We use it to exemplify the **active ontological mode**: something *currently shaping or moving* (e.g. the cosmos being actively regulated by rational principle, or more generally any cause in fieri). Another example is κινούμενον ἀεί (always moving) for the present state of the cosmos, as opposed to γεγονός (having become). The *active voice* and present tense highlight that the thing is *doing* or *undergoing* something **now**.
- **γεγονώς (gegonós)** – “having become,” and by extension “**being in a finished state.**” This perfect participle (from *ginomai*, to become) signals that the process is completed and the result obtained. For instance, *Theaetetus* contrasts γεγονώς (what has come to be, hence now a fixed fact) with διακοσμοῦν or ποιῶν (what is in the making). *Timaeus* uses the neuter form γεγονός to refer to the created world as a whole: it is something that *became* (since it had a beginning in time) ¹. Ontologically, this term marks the **passive mode** – the state of *already being* such-and-such, with no further active change inherent at that moment. Other related terms are τέλειον (complete) or simply the use of the verb εἶναι in a static sense. Grammatically, the perfect tense in Greek often carries this nuance of a present state resulting from a past action, which is exactly the concept of ontological passivity here.
- **Other active/passive pairs** can be found for the other temporal realms: e.g., for the future, Plato might distinguish μέλλον (what is destined, passively awaited) from an active term like προορώμενος (proorómenos, “looking forward” or “pre-seeing”). In the *Theaetetus* 186a–b passage, the soul is described as προορώμενος (“foreseeing” or actively **pre-visioning** the future) in some

interpretations ⁷, vs. the mere μέλλον ἐσόμενον (what will be, irrespective of our involvement). Likewise, for “what is not,” we can speak of the soul **actively negating or delineating** non-being vs. non-being as a given void. Plato uses the verb ἀποφαίνω in the context of negation; we might speak of an ἀποφαίνουσα (apophaínousa) action – the soul “showing forth” or declaring something as not being (as when one makes a negative judgment, “X is not Y”). By contrast, μὴ ὄν as such is just absence, with no cognitive effort.

- **Cognitive Synthesis vs. Passive Reception:** The *Theaetetus* provides vivid vocabulary for how the soul actively works upon the data of sense versus passively receives them:

- **συμβάλλουσα (symbállousa)** – literally “throwing together,” hence **combining or comparing**. Socrates uses this term to describe the soul’s action of collating sensory inputs to grasp their relations. At *Theaetetus* 186b, he says the soul “*itself, by itself, coming back together and comparing (ἐπανιοῦσα καὶ συμβάλλουσα) things with one another, attempts to judge*” ⁹. Here **συμβάλλουσα** marks the **active mental synthesis**: the soul takes disparate perceptions (e.g. hardness from touch, whiteness from vision) and combines them with each other and with abstract categories (being, difference, number) to form a judgment (like “this white thing is hard” or “A is different from B”). This process is also termed συλλογισμός (syllogismós, reasoning or calculation) in the text: the soul engages in a reasoning *about those things* (ἐν δὲ τῷ περὶ ἐκείνων συλλογισμῷ – “in the reasoning concerning those [sensibles]”) ¹⁰. *Symbállousa* is powerful evidence of Plato portraying the mind’s active role – it *contributes* to experience by synthesizing it, rather than passively reflecting it.
- **κρίνειν πειράται (krinein peirâtai)** – “tries to judge/distinguish.” This phrase from the same passage shows that the soul’s combining activity is goal-directed: it attempts to *krinein* (discriminate, judge) the data for us ⁹. The effort (πειράται, “endeavors, tries”) implies an **active striving**, not an automatic imprint from the senses. This aligns with Plato’s view that **judgment (δόξα)** is a **discursive act** of the soul (a “silent dialogue” the soul has with itself, as 189e in *Theaetetus* elaborates).
- **ἐπανιοῦσα (epanioûsa)** – “returning back” or “coming up again.” In 186b Socrates says the soul “comes back up (into itself) and combines” ⁹. This term suggests **reflection** or recollection – the soul withdraws from immediate sensation (which is outward-directed) and *re-engages internally* with the data to think about them. It underscores that cognition for Plato often involves the mind turning itself back upon the deliverances of sense and *adding something* (concepts, memory) to them.
- **πάρεστι φύσει αἰσθάνεσθαι... vs. διὰ παιδείας**: Later in the same passage, Plato contrasts what is **naturally present** (πάρεστι...φύσει) to humans and animals from birth – namely the capacity to *perceive* affections through the body – with what comes *through time and education* (ἐν χρόνῳ... καὶ παιδείᾳ) ¹¹. The Greek text notes that **immediate sensory perception is an inborn, passive capacity** available equally to beasts and people ¹², whereas the *soul’s* ability to **reunite and compare perceptions** (τὸ ἐπανιόν καὶ συμβάλλον πρὸς ἄλληλα) is developed gradually and requires **teaching (παίδεια)** ¹³ ¹¹. This is a clear linguistic marker separating the **passive reception** of data (which is *phusei*, by nature) from the **active intellectual synthesis** (which is an achievement of training and effort).
- **μὴ ὄντα as “unsynthesized” data**: The term μὴ ὄν (not-being) arises in epistemic contexts to denote that which has not yet been integrated into a truth-bearing judgment. For example, a raw sense-datum like “whiteness” divorced from any subject is, in a way, *not (yet) a being* for the mind – it is just a fleeting occurrence until the soul predicates it of a subject in a proposition (saying “X is white”). In *Sophist* 263b, a false statement is said to “say that things that are not, are” ¹⁴ ¹⁵, implying that to *be* for us is often to be synthesized into a meaningful statement. Thus, **the unsynthesized sensory**

content can be regarded as $\mu\eta\ \delta\upsilon\nu$ in the context of knowledge – not in the absolute sense, but in that it “fails to be” an object of *knowledge* until the active intellect works on it. The *Theaetetus* hints at this when it insists perception alone doesn’t yield truth – only when the mind adds $\delta\tau\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\acute{\iota}\nu$ (“that it is”) and $\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\acute{\iota}\sigma\iota\varsigma$ (essence/being) to the perceived quality do we get a determinate object (e.g. recognizing “*the being of* hot and cold, and their opposition” requires the soul’s intervention ¹⁶). In that vein, **the purely passive perception of “hot” without reference to “not-cold” or without affirming “it is hot” remains a $\mu\eta\ \delta\upsilon\nu$ – a something undefined, unbound in being.**

In summary, Plato’s Greek reinforces our three-axis model: he uses distinct grammatical forms and vocabulary to signal whether a thing is considered under the aspect of **time** (present, past, future, or absent), as an **active process or a completed state**, and as an **object of active understanding or mere passive experience**. We will now deploy these distinctions to derive the full eight-position framework.

2. Derivation of the Eight Positions

By combining the **Temporal**, **Ontological**, and **Epistemic** axes defined above, we arrive at a comprehensive eightfold matrix of positions. Each of the four temporal modes divides into two aspects (active vs. passive), and each of those in turn implies a mode of cognitive engagement (the soul actively synthesizing or passively observing). For clarity, we will fuse the ontological and epistemic axes – since in Plato’s view the active ontological side of a state naturally invites active intellection, while the passive ontological side is typically given to passive perception. The result is an eightfold classification of *ontological-cognitive modes*, each corresponding to a temporal category. Table 1 below presents the schema, with Greek terms from *Theaetetus* and *Timaeus* illustrating each position:

Table 1. Plato’s Eight Ontological-Cognitive Positions (Three-Axis Schema)

Temporal State	Active Mode (Ontologically dynamic & cognitively synthesizing)	Passive Mode (Ontologically static & cognitively receptive)
What Is (Present)	διακοσμοῦν – “ <i>organizing</i> ” (actively ordering the present reality; the cosmos or mind in the act of structuring current experience) ⁸ . The soul actively imposes form on the flux, e.g. <i>the Demiurge ordering the world</i> , or the mind arranging present perceptions into a coherent judgement.	ὄντα – “ <i>being</i> ” (the state of simply being at present, a completed presence) ⁷ . This is the given fact of the moment , the <i>present as a fixed content</i> (e.g. the cosmos viewed as a stable order). The soul can passively witness “what is” without further analysis – a mere <i>presence</i> or datum.
What Was (Past)	ἀναλογιζομένη – “ <i>recollecting / reasoning back</i> ” (actively synthesizing the past; the soul reflecting on what has happened) ⁷ . For instance, memory and after-the-fact understanding – <i>the soul reviews past events in itself, relating them to present and future</i> ⁷ . This involves judgment of the past (what it meant, why it happened).	γεγονός – “ <i>having become</i> ” (the past as a finished product , factum) ¹ . A past event regarded as complete and unchanging; e.g. <i>a historical fact or a memory image as given</i> . The soul here is a passive recorder of “what has become.” No new becoming occurs; one simply <i>has</i> the past fact (or one passively reminisces without analysis).

Temporal State	Active Mode (Ontologically dynamic & cognitively synthesizing)	Passive Mode (Ontologically static & cognitively receptive)
What Will Be (Future)	προορώμενος – “fore-seeing” (actively projecting or planning the future). The soul actively anticipates what will be, using imagination and inference – akin to “looking forward” to coming-to-be. In <i>Theaetetus</i> 186a, the soul is said to consider present things “in relation to the future” (πρὸς τὰ μέλλοντα) ¹⁷ , indicating an active orientation to what is not yet . This position includes intentionality towards the future (making plans, setting goals).	ἐσόμενον – “going to be” (the future as a given destiny or fixed unfolding) ¹ . This is the passive aspect of futurity: <i>what will happen to</i> something, rather than <i>what we will do</i> . It implies the future considered as already determined on its own course (e.g. an eclipse that will occur, or one’s fate). The soul can regard “what will be” with passive expectation , as a spectator awaiting an outcome without intervening.
What Is Not (Absence)	ἀποφαίνουσα – “declaring (as) not” (actively negating or distinguishing an absence). This is the stance of the soul that defines a thing by what it is not , or actively recognizes a lack or otherness . For example, judging “X is <i>not</i> Y” or “the absent is <i>not</i> present” – the soul is performing an act of differentiation, marking non-being by thought. In judgment, this corresponds to using the “not” copula (saying <i>non-existent</i> or <i>not-F</i>). It is a necessary active power to carve out what is absent (e.g. noting a hole, a missing piece, or an unrealized possibility).	μὴ ὄν – “not being” (the state of non-existence or absence as such) ¹ . This is <i>nothingness relative to a context</i> – e.g. “there is no X” or X’s non-presence. In this passive sense, “what is not” is simply the <i>given void</i> , the fact of a thing’s non-being without anyone doing anything. For instance, a future event right now is not (it has no being yet), or a quality unperceived is “not there for us.” The soul can remain at the level of non-aware non-being – failing to register something that is absent (like an animal that does not conceive what it lacks).

Explanation: Each row in Table 1 corresponds to one of the four temporal categories from Axis 1. Within that, the left column gives the **Active** aspect (combining Axis 2’s ontological dynamism with Axis 3’s cognitive synthesis), while the right column gives the **Passive** aspect (ontologically static, cognitively receptive). We have included Greek terms that Plato uses or that aptly describe each aspect, along with translations and brief examples.

Let us illustrate each with a Platonic example and a bit more analysis:

1. **Present – Active (διακοσμοῦν, “organizing/ordering”):** Plato’s *Timaeus* portrays the creation of time itself as the demiurge’s active ordering of the cosmos: “as he was ordering the heaven, he made an image of eternity... which we have named time” ⁸. Here the **temporal present** (the ongoing life of the cosmos) is seen in its *active formation*. Correspondingly, the *Theaetetus* portrays the soul in the present continuously *organizing incoming sensory streams* – for example, actively distinguishing a present sound as the same or different from a present sight. In this mode, reality is **processual** (something is *happening now*) and the soul is fully engaged in *making sense* of it. We might think of a craftsman at work (ontologically active) and an intellect at work (cognitively active) – the **maximum involvement** in the present.

Present – Passive (ὄντα, “being”): This is the present as a *settled fact*. Plato acknowledges this aspect when he notes that we use “is” for things, thinking of them as stable, though in truth sensible things are ever changing ¹⁸. For instance, one can consider *this tree is (exists here now)* without attending to its growth or one’s perception – it just *is*. The soul merely *perceives* or registers the presence: e.g. seeing a tree’s green color without reflecting, or feeling the warmth of the sun without analyzing. Knowledge does not necessarily emerge here; it’s the **raw being** of the moment, corresponding to the passive reception of an **αἰσθημα** (sense-impression). Plato implies this is what animals have: a direct awareness of the present ὄν but no interrogation of it ¹⁹. (This resonates with *Theaetetus* 186c, where those without the active component “hear or see, but do not understand” – they stick at *being* as presented, not investigated.)

1. **Past – Active (ἀναλογιζομένη, “recollecting/reasoning”):** The term ἀναλογίζομαι means to calculate or reckon by comparing (“analogizing”) – in *Theaetetus* 186a Theaetetus says the soul in itself “*putting together the past and present to the future*” (τὰ γεγονότα καὶ τὰ παρόντα πρὸς τὰ μέλλοντα) ⁷. This indicates an active **recollection**: the soul actively brings past events to mind and integrates them with the present and future aims. This position covers **memory, retrospection, and lessons learned**. For example, after experiencing something, the soul later actively analyzes it – *learning from experience*. Ontologically, the past itself may be fixed, but *our grasp* of it is dynamic: e.g. a historian or dialectician reasoning about what **was** in order to discern a pattern or truth. Plato’s doctrine of **anamnesis** (recollection of Forms) is another angle: the soul actively *searches* its past (including prenatal vision of Forms) to recognize truths in the present. Thus, Past-Active entails *judging the past* (Was that event just? What caused it? How does it connect to now?), which is an ongoing, rational enterprise.

Past – Passive (γεγονός, “having become”): Here the past is simply taken as **given**. Plato uses γεγονός for something that *has happened* or *been produced*, with a sense of finality ¹. The soul operating passively in regard to the past would be mere **remembering** without analysis – e.g. a brute memory of a sensation or a trauma with no attempt to contextualize it. It could also be the state of *being influenced by past* without conscious awareness (the past weighing one down as habit or memory-trace). In the *Theaetetus* discussion, this might correspond to someone who has perceptions and even memories, but hasn’t undertaken any training to sort them out, so the past experiences sit in the soul as unexamined *facts*. Ontologically, this is the **“archive” mode**: the cosmos has a determinate history (passively there), and the individual’s soul has a set of impressions from the past stored. Plato’s image of the wax tablet in *Theaetetus* 191c–d (memory as impressions left in wax) resonates: the wax has passive imprints (past facts), and only if the mind actively consults and organizes them does it become knowledge.

1. **Future – Active (προορώμενος, “foreseeing/projection”):** In *Theaetetus* 186a, after Theaetetus lists commons like same/different, Socrates asks if the soul also considers “τὰ παρόντα πρὸς τὰ μέλλοντα” (present things relative to future things) ¹⁷. Theaetetus agrees, implying the soul *actively* gauges the future. We label this προοράομαι (to gaze forward). This covers deliberate **planning, expectation, and hypothesis**. For example, a doctor anticipates how a disease will progress and actively takes measures; or the demiurge, seeing that a creature will be mortal, plans to give it a reproductive means to continue the race. Plato often attributes **providence (πρόνοια)** to divine intellect – an active foresight that orders the future. Thus Future-Active means treating the future not as a fixed fate but as *open to influence or preparation*. The soul in this mode uses current knowledge (and memory of past patterns) to **project possibilities**, set intentions, or even *invoke* future outcomes (as when a prophecy or plan attempts to shape what will be). It is inherently an active use of reason and imagination directed at the not-yet.

Future – Passive (ἐσόμενον, “going to be”): This is the view of the future as **fated or expected** irrespective of our will. In *Timaeus* 38a–b, Plato classifies “will be” (ἔσται) as something we say about what occurs in time ²⁰. Future–Passive is exemplified by natural cycles: e.g. the rising of the sun tomorrow, or one’s aging – processes that will happen and are largely *out of our control*. The soul here is an onlooker awaiting what *will become*, or experiencing **hope and fear** (passively) about it. In practical terms, this mode appears when one resigns to destiny (“what will be, will be”) or simply predicts outcomes without trying to change them. It reflects Plato’s recognition that much of the realm of becoming follows necessary patterns (the rotations of the planets, the bodily life cycle) that the individual soul can only accept or witness. Cognitively, this is a **passive expectation** – akin to perception but of an anticipated event. (Notably, even in this passive stance the soul is doing some anticipating; but the key difference is it’s not *shaping* the future, only awaiting it based on general perception of trend or fate.)

1. Non-Being (Absence) – Active (ἀποφαίνουσα, “negating/distinguishing not-being”): Among the most significant intellectual moves for Plato is the ability to say “*X is not Y*.” The *Sophist* dedicates effort to explaining how we do in fact think and speak of **what is not** in a relative sense (i.e. *otherness*), without embracing complete nihilism. In our schema, “what is not” as an active position means the soul is actively *marking a negation or an absence*. For example, recognizing **evil** as the absence of good involves intellectually grasping a *not-being* (evil is *not* good). Saying “This shade is **not** red” isolates what is absent in the object. This requires the Forms of Otherness or Difference (τὸ ἕτερον) and Being (τὸ ὄν) to be employed by the mind ²¹ – an exercise of sophisticated dialectic. In *Theaetetus* 186b, Socrates includes *the being of opposites* (τὴν οὐσίαν τῆς ἐναντιότητος) and their opposition itself as things the soul considers by itself ¹⁶. For the soul to grasp an opposite, it must implicitly grasp that *A is not B*. Thus, the **Active Non-Being** position is the mind *drawing distinctions*, defining by contrast, and even using **negative judgement** constructively (as in *apophasis*, saying what something is not to approach what it is). This is crucial for knowledge: knowing what something is **not** (e.g. not eternal, not perfect) can be as important as knowing what it is. It is a creative act – the soul “*declares the absent as absent*” or the false as false.

Non-Being – Passive (μὴ ὄν, “no-being”): This is simply **absence** or **nothingness experienced without remark**. In perception, this happens all the time: our senses fail to register something that isn’t there (we don’t see infrared light; we don’t notice a missing piece unless we look for it). The world presents plenty of *non-beings* to us (gaps, lacks, things that could have been but aren’t), but if the soul does not actively attend, they remain *null*. For instance, an animal may not perceive the *non-existence* of a hidden predator until it’s too late; a person might sit in ignorance of an absent friend (the friend’s not being there has an effect – loneliness – but if one doesn’t reflect, it’s just a feeling without concept). Non-Being in this passive sense is *undifferentiated nothing*: simply the **background of reality** against which beings appear. Plato might equate this to the **Receptacle** in the *Timaeus* (49a ff.) in a metaphysical way – a “space” that in itself is *no thing*, only giving room for things to be. Cognitively, this corresponds to **ignorance or oversight**: when one does not know and doesn’t even realize what one doesn’t know (the unknown unknowns, so to speak). It is the polar opposite of knowledge – pure *μὴ ὄν* for the soul.

The Role of “What is Not” as a Temporal Placeholder

One might question why “what is not” is included as a *temporal* category alongside past, present, and future. In Plato’s schema of time (especially in the *Timaeus* passage), “was” and “will be” are explicitly called “generated forms of time,” and “is” belongs ambiguously to both time and eternity (present “is” vs eternal

"is") ²⁰. "Is not" seems odd – how can non-existence be a part of time? The answer lies in understanding "what is not" as a necessary logical slot that temporal discourse requires and the soul's cognition utilizes:

- **Unrealized future and no-longer existing past:** From the perspective of any given moment, the past no longer exists (in the present it *is not*), and the future is not yet existing. Plato's model of time in the *Timaeus* acknowledges that "was" and "shall be" are spoken in reference to time because temporal beings **come-to-be and pass-away**. At the very moment something passes out of being, it becomes "what is not." Thus "not-being" accompanies temporal change at every turn – it is the **endpoint** of ceasing-to-be and the **starting point** of coming-to-be. In this sense, "what is not" functions as a *placeholder for the state before birth or after destruction*, the gap on either side of an event's existence. The *Theaetetus* implicitly uses this when discussing how we never actually perceive "cold" as a positive entity, but only as the *receding of heat* – one state slipping into not-being and making way for another (this is informed by the Heraclitean flux doctrine that perception is always of transitions). So to fully describe a thing's temporal career, one must sometimes say "*it is not (at this time)*" – an operation the soul performs to understand change (e.g. recognizing that *after* Socrates dies, Socrates is not (among us) anymore).
- **Negation in thought as timing:** The act of **judging something absent or false** often implicitly involves time. For example, "X is not here (now)," "Y is not anymore," or "Z is not yet." Even a plain negation "X is not F" can be seen as "X never was nor will be F" or "X ought to be F but is not." Thus *not-being* frequently carries a temporal qualifier (explicit or implicit). In *Sophist* 263a–b, a false statement asserts "*what is not, is*" ¹⁴, meaning it brings a non-realized combination into the now in speech. The *presence of an absence* is paradoxical, but Plato resolves it by framing non-being as *otherness* – e.g. false statement speaks of "different things than what are" ¹⁴, effectively dragging an alternative that has no real being into consideration. In cognitive terms, whenever the mind envisions something *contrary-to-fact*, it is using the "what is not" category. For instance, imagining an alternate outcome ("If it were not the case that...") situates a scenario in the realm of non-being. This power is essential for planning, counterfactual thinking, and defining truth by contrast to falsity.
- **Ordering function:** Including "what is not" completes the logical space the soul navigates. The *Philebus* (at 27b–e) speaks of a "fourfold" division: the unlimited, the limit, the mixed, and the cause. In a similar spirit, here we have four: being and becoming (present), became (past), becoming-to-be (future), and non-being. Non-being acts as a **limit case** – it defines the others by negation. We understand "what is" better when we contrast it with "what is not" (as Parmenides famously did, though his conclusion was to bar non-being altogether – Plato's later work re-admits it carefully). In more practical terms, $\mu\eta\ \delta\upsilon$ is the **zero** in the number-line of being: you need zero to have positive and negative, and in Platonic metaphysics you need *the concept of non-existence* to measure change and difference. Thus "what is not" in the eightfold matrix is not a rogue element but a pivotal one that allows the soul to say: *this is absent, therefore that can come to be* (making room), or *this was, now it is not* (marking an end), etc. It's intimately tied to time because time is both generative and destructive – *non-being* is the shadow of time's changes.

In sum, treating "what is not" as a temporal-cognitive position is justified by Plato's texts and philosophy: it appears in *Timaeus*' list of temporal expressions ¹, and *Theaetetus* 186b's discussion of opposites and the soul's effort to apprehend being and non-being in each case ¹⁶. The active vs. passive distinction further refines it: *actively*, non-being is something the intellect can delineate (thus it gains a sort of being "in logos"

even if not in reality), whereas *passively*, non-being simply marks where perception and reality fail to register anything.

Summary of the Eightfold Schema

Having justified each cell of Table 1, we can summarize the eight positions more succinctly:

- **Present-Active:** Ongoing reality structured by mind (*dynamic being*, grasped by *nous*). Example: the cosmos in motion under the world-soul's guidance; a judge actively discerning the truth of a case right now.
- **Present-Passive:** The static "is" encountered by the senses (*static presence, immediate datum*). Example: a color patch seen, an object simply being there; time as the mere *now*.
- **Past-Active:** The act of looking back and synthesizing what happened (*interpretation of history, memory with insight*). Example: a philosopher recalling an argument to find its meaning; the soul comparing past perceptions to recognize a pattern.
- **Past-Passive:** The past considered as a finished fact (*memory without analysis, residue of experience*). Example: a stored piece of information or a habit formed by past events; the brute fact "Socrates existed."
- **Future-Active:** Projecting and planning towards what will be (*creative anticipation*). Example: a statesman devising a law for the future; the Demiurge planning the cosmic rotations to produce time ²².
- **Future-Passive:** That which will occur regardless, awaiting observation (*fated expectation*). Example: the next eclipse; one's natural death (as simply to be undergone); saying "Tomorrow is going to rain" in a passive voice.
- **Non-Being-Active:** Differentiating and negating to define reality (*intellectual negation, seeing what isn't to understand what is*). Example: understanding darkness as the absence of light; refuting a false belief by showing an inconsistency (i.e. pointing out a "not being" in the account).
- **Non-Being-Passive:** Unnoticed or raw absence (*ignorance/void*). Example: an unnoticed missing piece in a puzzle; an unknown error; the sheer non-existence of unicorns (as long as we don't actively imagine them, they are just not there).

These eight positions form a conceptual lattice that describes how the **realm of becoming** (which is never just monolithic "flux" in Plato, but a structured interplay of being and not-being in time) is experienced and shaped by the **soul's cognitive powers**. In the next section, we will examine how well this model coheres with Plato's overall ontology of a rationally ordered cosmos, and we will consider the "recursive" nature of the soul's judgments that operate within this framework.

3. Framework Validation

We must ask: does this "Three-Axis Eight-Position" framework truly reflect Plato's philosophical vision, or is it an over-systematization? To validate, we consider two angles:

(A) Coherence with Plato's Ontology of Structured Becoming: One of Plato's central tenets in later dialogues is that the world of becoming (change, time, multiplicity) is not a chaotic whirl but is **ordered and intelligible insofar as it is guided by *voûç* (Mind or Reason)**. The *Timaeus* especially emphasizes that the Demiurge crafts the cosmos as a **rational order** – the cosmos is a living being with a soul, patterned after the eternal Forms, and time itself is the "moving image of eternity" designed with numerical regularity ²³

²² . In other words, the domain of becoming operates within a framework set by forms of order (Same, Different, Being – the components of the World-Soul) and measures (e.g. the harmonic intervals, the planetary periods). Our eightfold schema situates each instance of becoming at the intersection of a **causal state** (active or passive) and a **temporal state** (present, past, future, or absent), with a corresponding mode of soul's awareness. This is quite consonant with Plato's idea that **any phenomenon** in the sensible world can be understood through a combination of factors – the changeless forms imparting structure (active cause), the receptacle providing a background (passive substratum, akin to “what is not” in itself), and the moving process of generation (time).

To see the coherence, consider how our schema would describe a concrete example in Platonic terms: *Take the phenomenon of a lunar eclipse*. Ontologically, what is it? The moon (a body in becoming) loses its light (non-being of light) temporarily. The cause is the alignment of the earth (active blocking). Temporally, for us, it is a future event (will be), then a present happening (is), then a past fact (was). Cognitively, an astronomer can actively predict it (future-active), then observe it passively (present-passive), then analyze records of it (past-active), and note the darkness as absence of sun (non-being-active). All these perspectives together give a full understanding of the eclipse as a rational, predictable occurrence – *i.e.*, part of the structured becoming of the cosmos. If we lacked any one axis – say we ignored the role of non-being (we didn't consider the darkness as “absence of sun's light”) – we'd fail to understand the eclipse's nature. If we ignored active vs. passive – say we didn't distinguish the causal action (earth blocking) from the resultant state (moon darkened) – we'd likewise be confused. And if we ignored temporal mode – say thought only in timeless terms – we'd be unable to predict or retrodict occurrences. Thus the framework dovetails with how Plato approaches cosmology: by analyzing phenomena into component factors (including *causal activity, material receptivity, time/periodicity, formal structure*, etc.).

Specifically, Plato's “**three ontological dimensions**” (as referenced in the related research note, Active vs Passive, Coming-to-be vs Ceasing-to-be, Visible vs Invisible) can be seen reflected here: - *Active vs Passive* = ontological axis (our second axis). - *Coming-to-be vs Ceasing-to-be* = roughly the temporal axis (what will be vs what was, with “what is not” capturing the ceasing or not-yet). - *Visible vs Invisible* = one way to state the cognitive axis (the “invisible” being the intelligible structures the soul actively cognizes, versus the merely visible givens it passively sees ²⁴). In *Timaeus* 37a–c, the demiurge made the world's body visible and tangible (so perceivable) but its soul invisible and intelligible ²⁵ . Our framework recognizes that each position has a “body” aspect (the state of the thing) and a “soul” aspect (the apprehension of it).

Furthermore, the eight positions highlight **Nous's role at every turn**: wherever there is an active aspect, Nous (mind) is operative either cosmically or in the individual soul. For example, Present-Active (διακοσμοῦν) in the cosmos = the rational ordering principle currently shaping the world; in the individual = the mind currently judging perceptions (the “king” within us, as Plato might call reason). Conversely, in every passive aspect, there is the imprint of Nous's past activity: e.g., the facticity of the past (γεγονός) is the footprint of what Nous achieved; the given present (ὄν) exists as *ordered* partly because a rational order underlies it (the forms). Even *μή ὄν* in the passive sense (nothingness) is given structure by the fact that we conceive it as the *other* of being (the *Sophist* says Non-Being is actually *Otherness*, which has a sort of form). So the schema doesn't introduce alien elements; it articulates how the **rational structure and the chaotic flux interface**. Indeed, it displays an almost **grid-like order imposed on flux**, which is very much Platonic: like a chessboard on which the game of becoming is played by the rules of form.

(B) Recursive Structures of Judgment: Another hallmark of Plato's thought is the **interdependence and layering of judgments**. The *Theaetetus* commons (being, other, same, etc.) show that to judge *any* simple

perception (say “this chalk is white”), the soul simultaneously brings in multiple concepts: thingness (being), quality, difference (white vs other colors), perhaps also quantity or unity (“one chalk”). The process is **recursive** in that higher-level judgments (“Is it the same as the one I saw before?” “Is it good or bad?”) feed on earlier judgments and experiences. Our eight positions accommodate such recursion:

- Notice that some positions involve **the soul referring one time to another**: Past-Active explicitly has the soul comparing past and present to gauge the future ⁷. That is a recursive loop through time – the soul judges a present situation by recalling a past case (active memory) and anticipating outcomes (active projection). Similarly, Present-Active and Non-Being-Active often loop: e.g., to actively organize the present, the mind might need to negate what it is not or differentiate from alternatives (present synthesis includes negative comparisons). In *Theaetetus* 186a, Theaetetus mentions that the soul examines good and bad “especially in relation to each other” and likewise same and different ²⁶. This implies a *binary judgment*: you can’t judge “good” without also considering “not good (bad)” – an implicit invocation of non-being (the bad is the absence or opposite of the good in some contexts). Thus a single act of judgment spans multiple positions: calling something “good” actively (present-active with concept of good) presupposes you *negated* its bad aspects (non-being-active) and perhaps references an eternal standard (eternal Good, which Plato would call beyond time – but we incorporate it via the active axis involvement of rational Form).
- The **same/different** pair is telling. In *Theaetetus* 186b, Socrates says the soul *itself* considers “the same and the different” by reasoning, not by sense ¹⁶. This is the Non-Being-Active in action (grasping otherness) paired with Present-Active (grasping identity of a thing). The *recursion* is: to say X is the same as Y (a judgment now), one must recall Y (past) and mentally check difference (non-being of any difference) – a multi-axis feat. Our framework accounts for this interplay: the act “X is same as Y” touches Present-Active for identifying X now, Past-Active (or memory) for bringing Y from before, and Non-Being-Active for acknowledging “no difference” (or if finding difference, then acknowledging “not-same”). We see how the soul cycles through positions rapidly in making one compound judgment. This cycling is what we mean by **recursive cognitive operation**: the output of one comparison becomes input for another, etc.
- Likewise, **good/bad judgments** engage recursion. Plato in *Republic* and elsewhere suggests that recognizing the Good is the highest cognition, requiring abstraction. The soul when judging “this is good” might compare the situation to past pleasant outcomes (Past-Active), foresee future benefits (Future-Active), and importantly, see the absence of bad in it (Non-Being-Active in judging “no badness here”). If instead it judges “this is bad,” it senses some privation of order or harmony (the Form of Good not present – so “good is not here” = an active negation). This chain underscores that even to apprehend a single value-laden fact, the soul moves through multiple positions on our grid.

Thus, the eightfold model does not treat these positions as isolated pigeonholes – they are **vertices in a network** through which the soul’s reasoning passes, often visiting several in one cognitive act. This dynamic usage is entirely in line with Plato’s view that the soul’s reasoning is like a weaver, interlacing threads of different kinds (sense data, memories, abstract categories) to create the fabric of knowledge. The model’s validity is that it clearly lays out the “threads” – the basic positions – that must intersect. Plato’s text gives direct evidence of such intersections: e.g., *Theaetetus* 186b: “the soul itself, coming back (from sense) and comparing (present) with (past) tries to judge (future implication) for us, and it yearns for being of same and different (abstract universals)...” ¹⁶ ⁹. Nearly every phrase there maps onto one or more positions of our schema.

One additional perspective: The framework aligns with Plato's division of the soul's powers in *Philebus* and *Republic*. He often distinguishes **perception** (passive, tied to the present), **memory** (passive retention of past), **imagination (phantasia)** which can be future-oriented or at least represent absent things, and **calculation/reason** (active synthesizer, dealing with being and non-being). Our eight positions effectively distribute these soul faculties across the field of time. This coherency suggests the framework is not an artificial imposition but an explication of Plato's implicit system of how *nous* operates in *chronos*.

In conclusion, the three-axis eight-position framework appears to be a philosophically sound extrapolation of Platonic doctrine. It captures the **metaphysical structure** (every temporal event has active and passive aspects, reflecting form and matter, cause and effect) and the **epistemological structure** (the soul must actively reason as well as passively receive to know anything) of Plato's thought. It thereby provides a unified schema for understanding Plato's model of a cosmos in flux yet guided by intelligence. This coherence is its primary validation.

4. Optional Comparative Note: Echoes of the Eightfold Structure in Platonic Symbolism

It is intriguing to observe that the number **eight** and patterns of eight-fold division occur in several Platonic contexts. While these may or may not be intentionally connected to the ontological-cognitive schema we've outlined, the parallels are worth briefly noting:

- **Eight Cosmic Circuits (Timaeus 38c–39d):** Plato describes the **seven “wanderers” (planets)** created to trace out time – the Sun, Moon, and five other planets – plus the **eighth sphere of the fixed stars** encompassing them ²⁷ ²⁸. He says explicitly that there are “seven orbits” for the planets set within the motion of the **eighth** (the stellar circle governed by the motion of the Same) ²⁷ ²⁸. These eight celestial cycles together generate the complex pattern of time (day, night, month, year, and the great Year when all align) ²⁹. Symbolically, we might see a correlation: just as our eight positions cover all modes of temporal being for cognition, the eight heavenly circuits cover all the regular periods of time for the cosmos. The world-soul's rational rotation (the circle of the Same) unites with the seven variable rotations (circle of the Different) to produce Time ²² ³⁰ – an analog to how the unity of reason and multiplicity of sensory events produce knowledge. This could be coincidental, but it underscores Plato's penchant for **comprehensive schemas**: the eight orbits account for all astronomical phenomena visible, much as an eightfold cognitive schema aims to account for all ways we relate to being in time.
- **Eight Musical Harmonies of the World-Soul (Timaeus 36b–37c):** When constructing the World-Soul, Plato describes a mysterious process of taking certain proportional lengths (1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 27...) and creating **intervals of 4:3 (fourth), 3:2 (fifth), and 9:8 (whole tone)**, then filling the intervals to complete a musical scale ³¹ ³². By the end of this, he has a series of intervals that span what appears to be **three octaves (doublings)** with some left-over fraction (the Pythagorean comma) ³³ ³⁴. Commentators often note that Plato essentially gives the Soul a **harmonic structure corresponding to an eight-note scale (an octave)** repeated through multiple ranges. Indeed, the text implies the division of the soul's mixture produced segments analogous to the notes: “He stretched the mixtures out and cut them in two, then in intervals: one interval of 4:3, one of 3:2, etc., until he had eight intervals within each double” (paraphrasing Timaeus 36b–c) ³¹. If the World-Soul has an eight-step musical ladder built in, it suggests the soul inherently resonates with an eight-part

structure. One might poetically compare those eight notes to our eight cognitive positions – each a “note” the soul can sound in the symphony of thought. Furthermore, the World-Soul’s components of Sameness, Difference, and Being were mixed and then quantified, which is analogous to our axes (Sameness/Difference relate to cognitive axis activity of identifying vs negating differences; Being relates to understanding what is, vs. the Difference component allowing grasp of what is not). The fact that the outcome of that process is an octave structure hints that **the soul’s rational functioning is ‘octaval’** – it covers a full scale of relations. This parallel is speculative, but alluring: the soul that can understand the octave of music (often linked to harmony of the cosmos) might itself operate through an octave of metaphysical positions.

- **Myth of Er – The Spindle of Necessity (Republic X, 616b–620d):** In the eschatological myth, Plato describes a great spindle rotated by Lady Necessity, with **eight whorls** nested inside each other, each emitting a tone – together forming a harmony ³⁵ ³⁶. Each whorl corresponds to a cosmic sphere (presumably the fixed stars and the seven planets), and on them sit the three Fates: *Lachesis*, *Clotho*, *Atropos*, who sing of the **past, present, and future** respectively ³⁷. We see the number eight (whorls), and significantly, a direct link of the Fates to times – **Past, Present, Future** – being sung. The three Fates’ temporal domains resonate with our temporal axis, and their singing suggests *intelligible content* (i.e., the meaning of past, present, future events). Could it be that the eight whorls (which produce the music of the spheres) and the triple-temporal singing indicate that to encompass the whole of reality one must consider all time and all cosmic levels? The soul in Er’s tale chooses its next life by consulting Lachesis (past) then seeing Clotho and Atropos fix the chosen fate into the present and future. This is a mythic dramatization of how *cognition* might work: the soul’s decision (judgment) involves memory (past experiences), present insight, and future consequence – again a full sweep of temporal axis, guided by a sort of meta-cosmic eightfold harmony. The eight whorls are also explicitly called **one harmony** (suggesting unity of multiplicity – akin to how our eight modes form one coherent understanding when used together).

While one must be cautious in drawing firm conclusions from these correspondences, they at least illustrate a **recurring pattern of 8** in contexts linking cosmic order and soul knowledge. Plato does not spell out “because there are eight cognitive modes, there are eight planets,” nothing so literal. However, the recurrence of the number alongside comprehensive structures (cosmic and musical) hints that **wholeness** in Plato’s design often comes in eight parts. It may be Pythagorean influence (the Ogdoad was considered a meaningful number in some traditions), or simply that an octave (as completion of a scale) symbolized *completion* generally.

For our purposes, it is a poetic reinforcement: the eight-position framework is not an arbitrary contrivance; it fits into a broader Platonic intuition that truth and reality have an **octave-like completeness** – spanning from the highest (Sphere of the Same or Form of Being) to the lowest (empty not-being or base matter) in a series of gradations that the rational soul must traverse. Just as the World-Soul’s octaves bind the universe or the spindle’s eight rings turn under Necessity’s song, the soul’s reasoning in eight modes binds the flux of becoming into an intelligible order under the governance of λόγος (reasoned account).

In conclusion, the “Three-Axis Eight-Position” framework not only emerges from careful textual analysis of *Theaetetus* and *Timaeus*, but it also **resonates with Platonic cosmology and myth**. It provides a structured way to understand how the **soul’s judgment (συλλογισμός)** participates in the **ordering of temporal being** – fulfilling the goal set out in this research to integrate Plato’s treatment of *temporal flux*, *ontological causality*, and *epistemic activity* into a unified schema of becoming. By recognizing the distinct yet

interrelated roles of what is, was, will be, and is-not – each in both active and passive guise – we gain a more precise appreciation of Plato’s insight that *knowledge* is a bridging of **being and becoming**: a product of the soul’s active engagement with a world that is at once changing and structured. This eightfold map is one way to chart that bridge in both its directions, illuminating how our rational soul threads the tapestry of time with the eternal patterns of intelligibility.

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- Plato, **Timaeus**, 37d–38c: (Donald Zeyl trans. & Greek text) – Creation of time as the moving image of eternity; definition of past (“was”), present (“is”) and future (“will be”) as forms of time, and inclusion of “what is not” among these temporal expressions ² ¹ . Shows the differentiation of active eternal “is” versus generated tenses, and lists *γεγονός*, *γινόμενον*, *εσόμενον*, *μή ὄν*.
- Plato, **Sophist**, 263b: Explanation of false statement as saying non-being *as being* (*τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα λέγει*) ¹⁴ , illustrating the necessity of *μή ὄν* in thought (relative non-being) and foreshadowing the role of negation in cognition.
- **Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy**, “**Plato on Knowledge in the Theaetetus**” – discusses the 186a–187a passage and how perception vs. reasoning are distinguished, noting that “knowledge is not in the experiences but in the reasoning about them” ⁵ . Also compares Plato’s list of “common notions” at 186a to other dialogues’ treatment of Forms ²¹ , supporting the idea that the *Theaetetus* passage indicates the soul’s need to grasp being, sameness, difference, etc., for any knowledge.
- **Lott, Plato on Belief (doxa), Theaetetus 184–187** – provides a detailed analysis of the terminology in 186a–d: noting terms like *ἐπανιοῦσα*, *συμβάλλουσα*, *συλλογισμός* at 186b–d ³⁸ and arguing that Plato sees belief formation as requiring these rational acts, not just passive perception. This underpins our cognitive axis distinction (active synthesis vs. passive reception).
- **Calcidius, In Timaeum (4th c. commentary)** – while not directly cited in the main text, the diagrams of Calcidius illustrate how later Platonists visualized the World-Soul’s construction in musical intervals, confirming the eight-note scale interpretation ³⁴ . This was used to inform the comparative note on eight harmonies.
- **Republic X, 616–620 (Myth of Er)** – provides the imagery of the spindle with eight whorls and the Sirens/Fates singing of time ³⁷ , which we used in drawing parallels to the temporal axis and the holistic role of reason (symbolized by harmony) in ordering destiny.

¹ ² ¹⁸ ²⁰ ²⁵ ²⁷ ²⁸ ²⁹ ³⁰ ³¹ ³² ToposText

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