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CREDITS

SUMMARY

EDITORIAL

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The current volume of the *Plato Journal* constitutes an important turning point in the history of the journal and as such is characterized by both the old and the new. What is 'old' is that here, as in the last volume, we have a collection of very strong papers displaying a wide diversity of approaches and topics. The goal of the journal continues to be what it always has been: to disseminate important new research on Plato and the Platonic tradition, just as the goal of the International Plato Society is to promote and provide an international venue for such research. But the journal has now a new look and, far from being something purely cosmetic, this new look represents a major change in the journal's profile and standing. For the first time the journal has a publisher and this not only improves the look of the journal, but also gives it the same standing as print journals in the field when it comes to citation, indexing and access. Furthermore, the journal will now be both an electronic and print journal in that the publisher will make printed copies available on demand. In short, the journal now and for the first time has the form that its content merits. This will make it more attractive and more useful both as a venue for publishing one's own work and as a source for consulting current research in the field. For this we owe a debt of gratitude to the current president of the International Plato Society, Gabriele Cornelli, who from the very start of his mandate made it a priority to improve the standing and visibility of the journal and who found the right publisher for this end.

There have been internal changes as well. After some years as sole editor, including for the present volume, I have now been joined by two co-editors: Irmgard Maennlein-Robert of the University of Tübingen and Angela Ulacco of the University of Freiburg. We can only expect and hope that the workload for the journal will increase in coming years and this expansion of the editorial board will enable the journal to cope with this increasing workload. In particular, this expansion, along with a new Scientific Committee drawn from members of the Advisory Board of the International Plato Society, will help speed up the review process that has been rather slow in this transitional year.

Finally, I wish to thank, first, those who submitted their work to the journal this last year, not only those whose work is included in the present volume, but also those whose submissions had to be rejected as a result of the rigorous and blind evaluation process that the journal needs and wishes to maintain. The journal, like any other journal, can succeed only as long as there are scholars wiling to submit their work to it for evaluation and indeed many more than those whose work will ultimately be published within it. But the success of the journal also depends, of course, on the evaluators who must sacrifice a significant amount of their precious time for work that is anonymous and uncompensated. They too must receive our thanks; this volume is their work as much as that of anyone else.

PAPERS

The Missing Speech of the Absent Fourth: Reader Response and Plato's *Timaeus-Critias*

For Stanley Fish

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ABSTRACT

Recent Plato scholarship has grown increasingly comfortable with the notion that Plato's art of writing brings his readers into the dialogue, challenging them to respond to deliberate errors or lacunae in the text. Drawing inspiration from Stanley Fish's seminal reading of Satan's speeches in *Paradise Lost*, this paper considers the narrative of Timaeus as deliberately unreliable, and argues that the actively critical reader is "the missing fourth" with which the dialogue famously begins. By continuing *Timaeus* with *Critias*—a dialogue that ends with a missing speech—Plato points to the kind of reader he expects: one who can answer Critias' question (*Critias* 107a4-6): ὡς μὲν γὰρ οὐκ εὖ τὰ παρὰ σοῦ λεχθέντα εἴρηται, τίς ἂν ἐπιχειρήσειεν ἔμφρων λέγειν;

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Despite Diskin Clay's claim that "the great gaps in the universe of the Platonic dialogues… are beyond the reach of even speculation,"[1] Mary Louise Gill has recently published a fascinating book on Plato's missing *Philosopher*. In its Introduction she writes:

> Plato did not write the *Philosopher* because he would have spoiled the exercise had he written it. In finding the philosopher through the exercise, the student becomes a philosopher by mastering his methods, and thus the target of the exercise is internally related to its pedagogical purpose.[2]

At the heart of Gill's attempt to fill in this "gap" is the three-fold claim that Plato *deliberately* created the puzzle of the missing *Philosopher* for a *pedagogical* purpose, and, moreover, that he created that puzzle *for us*:

> Plato uses the devious strategy I have attributed to him [sc. he 'hides the pieces of the puzzle and its solution in plain sight'] because, by making his audience work very hard to dig out his meaning, he fosters in them (and us, his modern readers) a skill in reading and a competence in using dialectical techniques and developing new ones.[3]

Not only by leaving *Philosopher* unwritten, but also in any number of other ways, Gill's Plato both "provokes"[4] and "tests"[5] his readers, i.e., us. Although Gill's attempt to locate Plato's missing *Philosopher* in the astute reader's response to its absence is particularly germane to the subject of this paper, it is worth emphasizing that Gill's is but the most recent addition to a growing body of literature reflecting a new trend in Plato's reception: an increasing concern with the central role of *the*

reader's response in interpreting the dialogues. Two recent books on Plato's *Republic* are good examples;[6] Francesco Ademollo's magisterial commentary on *Cratylus* can also be cited as evidence.[7] In fact, Ademollo astutely points out that this trend can be traced at least as far back as the nineteenth century.[8] Finally, as David Sedley has documented, the commentary tradition on *Theaetetus* proves that this trend actually originated in antiquity.[9]

Although it is well beyond the scope of this paper to offer anything like a reception-study of this important aspect of Platonic hermeneutics,[10] I do need to introduce at the start a few distinctions relevant to my immediate purpose. To begin with, there is Gill's attempt to use the reader's response to a particular kind of Platonic provocation: e.g., why didn't he write *Philosopher*, *Hermocrates*, and leave *Critias* unfinished? Leaving the problem of the *Philosopher* in Gill's capable hands, I will here be applying a reader-response approach to *Timaeus*, and, more specifically, to the discourse of Timaeus. In doing so, I want to distinguish my approach both from that of Gill, and, on the other hand, from that of Ademollo, Grote, and the ancient commentators discussed by Sedley: it is not to Socrates, but specifically to Timaeus, another of "Plato's Philosophers,"[11] that I will be applying a reader-response approach. And I am doing so deliberately in the context of the paradigmatic representative of what is called "reader-response theory"[12] in literary criticism: the great Milton scholar, Stanley Fish.[13] Although I will be directly addressing the question of "the missing speech" of Zeus with which *Critias* conspicuously does not conclude—and making some remarks at the start about the missing *Hermocrates*—my principal claim is *not* that (1) we need to imagine for ourselves a missing *dialogue*, or (2) that we are being asked to respond to a *Socratic* provocation, but (3) that Plato intends us to read the discourse of Timaeus in much the same way that Fish claims we need to read the speeches of Satan.

To begin to substantiate this paradoxical claim, it is noteworthy that Fish explicitly connects his reading of *Paradise Lost* to Plato:

> *Paradise Lost* is a dialectical experience which has the advantage traditionally claimed for dialectic of involving the respondent in his own edification. On one level at least the poem has the form of a Platonic dialogue, with the epic voice taking the role of Socrates, and the reader in the position of a Phaedrus or a Cratylus, continually forced to acknowledge his errors, and in this way moving toward a confirmation in the Truth.[14]

But the Platonic parallel I see is not between Milton's "epic voice" and Socrates, but rather between Timaeus and Fish's Satan:

> One begins by simultaneously admitting the effectiveness of Satan's rhetoric and discounting it because it is Satan's, but at some point a reader trained to analyze as he reads will allow admiration for a technical skill to push aside the imperative of Christian watchfulness.[15]

Rather than imagining an extra-textual dialogue between the reader and a benignly provocative Socrates, my argument begins with the realization that Plato uses a variety of characters other than Socrates—including Timaeus, the Athenian, and Eleatic Strangers[16]—whose effective rhetoric, and admirable "technical skill," are sufficient to "push aside" a prior allegiance to Socrates, or rather to expose the weakness of that allegiance.[17] According to Fish, Milton's goal is not to make converts for

Satan. Instead, the poet deliberately exposes the reader to what Fish calls "the good temptation": a carefully created test "in a controlled situation."

> In the middle books (IV-IX) these same choices are structured into a series of scenes which provide a continuing test of the reader's steadfastness and honesty. The technique is again the technique of the 'good temptation' whereby the reader is left to choose, in a controlled situation, which of two roads he will take.[18]

Adding support to the contrast between Socrates and Timaeus *qua* cosmologist is the fact that, in Fish's memorable phrase, Satan is "an empiricist";[19] by contrast it is to a rather more idealistic Platonic ontology, to "what is real and truly beautiful,"[20] that Plato (like Milton), expects his chosen reader to be loyal.[21] In other words, it is central to my argument that Timaeus does not speak for Plato *and* that a correct interpretation of Timaeus depends on grasping that fact in all its force. Compare this with Fish's audacious claim:

> There is, however, only one true interpretation of *Paradise Lost*, and it is the reward of those readers who have entered into the spirit of Milton's 'good temptation' and so 'become wiser by experience': others 'sport in the shade' with half-truths and self-serving equivocations and end by accusing God or by writing volumes to expose the illogic of His ways.[22]

By analogy, the "one true interpretation" of *Timaeus* depends on recognizing the dialogue as Plato's "good temptation," and on recognizing Plato himself as what Fish elsewhere calls "the good physician": Timaeus' highly rhetorical speech functions as a test and achieves Plato's end only because of the reader's response to the dialectical text that contains it.[23] But it could not test the reader unless the reader already had been exposed to what Plato regards as true: it is therefore also central to my argument not only that *Critias* follows *Timaeus* but that *Timaeus* follows *Republic*: the extra-textual auditor of Timaeus' discourse is being led to what Fish calls "confirmation in the Truth." To use Milton's own lines, Plato's readers encounter Timaeus

> Complete to have discover'd and repulst
> Whatever wiles of Foe or seeming Friend
> For still they knew, and ought t' have remember'd[24]

In short: if Plato's readers are loyal to the lessons of the *Republic*, they will be able to respond, after *Critias*, to the blandishments of Timaeus with "the missing speech of the absent fourth."

But before using "(3)," i.e., Fish's type of reader-response theory to account for the missing speech of the *Critias* in relation to *Timaeus*, some remarks about what might be called "the text-imminent" significance of that speech are in order. Paradoxically, perhaps, it is this path that leads to increased concern for the missing *Hermocrates* as per "(1)."[25] To put the same point a different way: before interpreting the missing speech in relation to the flawed ontology[26] presented by Timaeus in *Timaeus*—the equivalent, on my account, of Satan's temptation of Adam, and thus the reader, in *Paradise Lost*—it needs first to be interpreted in relation to *Critias*, and, more specifically, to the flawed politics of the Atlantids there. Three points about the political interpretation of the missing speech of Zeus need to be emphasized from the start: (i) the parallel between Athens and Atlantis creates the following analogy:[27] Atlan-

tis : "Ancient Athens" :: Alcibiades' Athens of 415 B.C. : the Syracuse of Hermocrates, (ii) as indicated by "(i)," the patriotic Sicilian federation against Athens justifies the silent presence of Hermocrates of Syracuse,[28] who organized it, and points to the probable content of the missing *Hermocrates*,[29] and (iii) the political interpretation of the "speech of Zeus," along with "(i)" and "(ii)," depends entirely on Thucydides. In addition to supplying the background that allows the reader to connect "modern" Athens with the Atlantids,[30] Thucydides has given us three speeches that suggest the general contours of the missing speech of Zeus at the end of *Critias*: the two speeches of Nicias[31] that failed to persuade the Athenians to reject the proposal of Alcibiades to invade Sicily, and the speech of Diodotus ("the gift of Zeus")[32] that persuaded the Athenians not to put the men of Mytilene to death.[33] Despite the name "Diodotus," it is clearly the failed speeches of Nicias that offer the clearest parallel, especially because it is only in the context of a failed speech by Zeus that the presence of Hermocrates is justified, and the probable content of the missing *Hermocrates* can be divined. It is thus a text-imminent approach to the missing speech that points forward to the missing *Hermocrates*. To put it another way: by not writing *Hermocrates*, Plato justifies an approach to the missing speech that is not what I am calling "text-imminent."

Of course the importance of Thucydides in the political interpretation of the missing speech proves that this interpretation of Plato's *Critias* is — despite the fact that it ignores the cosmology of Timaeus in its companion dialogue—scarcely text-imminent. As indicated in many dialogues but proved by his *Menexenus*, Plato expects his readers to know Thucydides.[34] And no careful readers of Thucydides — especially no readers who, despite her crimes and errors, still maintain their loyalty to Athens — desires to hear more from Hermocrates: Thucydides gives him the opportunity to say and do a great deal to the detriment of Athens and many thousands of Athenians.[35] Nor are any loyal Athenians particularly keen on hearing much more from Critias, the enemy of democracy who parleyed the errors and crimes of democratic Athens into the even worse crimes and errors of the Thirty.[36] Least of all do critics of Critias desire to hear him insert a speech into the mouth of Zeus: there is piety to be considered, and mere atheism is pious in comparison with an atheist's appropriation of God for political ends. Leaving aside the question of whether Plato's Critias is the atheist of the Thirty, there is unquestionably a pious reason for eliding or censoring the speech of Zeus: the structure of the political interpretation demands that the speech of Critias' Zeus *fails* to achieve its goal.[37] To put it bluntly: the purpose of the divine speech is to restore the Atlantids to a sense of proportion; had it succeeded, there would have been no war. To be more specific, Plato refuses to allow Critias to create for Zeus a speech that Critias' theme—the ancient war between Atlantis and "Athens"—requires to have failed, and Plato does so for the same reason that he does not write a *Hermocrates*: the Syracusan's only known discourses likewise depend on the failure of Critias' "Zeus" to restrain the Athenian "Atlantids" from the Sicilian Expedition.

It is not my purpose simply to reject the political interpretation of Plato's *Critias*. In fact, that interpretation is perfectly consistent with the reader-response approach I will be taking to interpret the *Timaeus-Critias* dyad. Although I am going to argue that the *primary* reason that *Critias* ends with a missing speech is because the dialogue *begins* with the inadequacies of the cosmology presented in *Timaeus*, there is no doubt that Plato has a secondary reason an-

chored in the political interpretation: he expects any philosopher-statesman to imitate Diodotus and succeed where Nicias had failed. To put it boldly: every democratic statesman who enters politics in order to arrest the slide of her city into tyranny must be able to give the missing speech of Zeus. In that sense, the political interpretation of the missing speech of the absent fourth is *practical*: it points forward to what the truly Platonic philosopher must be able to do.[38] But for the same reason that the Allegory of the Cave depends on the prior ontological division between Being and Becoming in order to illuminate just political *action* as the temporary abandonment of philosophy and the return to the shadows, so also Plato's conception of just political practice depends entirely on ontology. It deserves mention that Plato creates *multiple* openings in *Timaeus-Critias* for the reader to supply what he has deliberately withheld. By far the most popular of these openings has led to the search for Atlantis conceived as a literal place, and, as a denizen of Atlantis-reborn, I am perfectly comfortable with even this kind of reading. But in addition to the political interpretation I have sketched in the last three paragraphs, I will argue in the balance of this paper that *prior* to the political speech Plato is demanding from some future Atlantid statesman—the missing "speech of Zeus" that will restrain her benighted citizens from invading some second "Sicily"—he *first* requires that same Atlantid, *qua* philosopher, to bring his *Republic* to life by fighting Timaeus, i.e., by supplying "the missing speech of the absent fourth."

Consider, to begin with, the text that forms the basis of the political interpretation, i.e., the last words of Plato's *Critias*:

> But as Zeus, god of the gods, reigning as king according to law, could clearly see this state of affairs, he observed this noble race lying in this abject state and resolved to punish them [δίκην αὐτοῖς ἐπιθεῖναι] and to make them more careful and harmonious [ἐμμελέστεροι] as a result of their chastisement.[39]

With careful attention to the Greek expressions found at the end of *Critias*, the reader is now asked to reconsider the beginning of that dialogue, which begins with a speech of Timaeus that proves he is speaking immediately after *Timaeus*.

> My prayer is that he [sc. "that god who had existed long before in reality, but who has now been created in my words"] grant the preservation of all that has been spoken properly; but that he will impose the proper penalty [δίκην τήν πρέπουσαν ἐπιθεῖναι] if we have, despite our best intentions, spoken any discordant note. For the musician who strikes the wrong note the proper penalty is to bring him back into harmony [ἐμμελῆ].[40]

The verbal echoes are precise, revealing, and deliberate: just as Zeus undertakes to punish— δίκην ἐπιθεῖναι —the Atlantids and render them more harmonious (ἐμμελέστεροι), so too does Plato's "Timaeus," using the exact same expressions, point the way forward, immediately after concluding his speech, for *us* to distinguish the discourse of Timaeus from Plato's. In short: by leaving room for a missing speech at the end of *Timaeus-Critias*, Plato not only invites the reader to supply the missing speech of Zeus in the context of *Critias* alone (i.e., the political interpretation), but first and foremost to bring the discourse of Timaeus back into tune by distinguishing "all that has been spoken properly" from that which has not.[41]

And there are further clues in Critias' first speech in *Critias* that the primary subject of the missing speech is the discourse of Timaeus as presented in *Timaeus*. In the course of his rude and self-serving explanation of why his task is more difficult than that of Timaeus,[42] Critias uses the analogy of a painting: a critic will naturally be more critical of the portrait of a person than the accurate depiction of the background, a background that Critias likens to the cosmology of Timaeus. In this analogy, Critias uses the same word (ἀπατηλῷ at 107d1) to describe the technique used by those who paint "all of heaven and the bodies that exist and move within it"[43] that the Goddess in Parmenides uses to describe "Doxa" at B8.51: "the cosmos of my words" is ἀπατηλός.[44] Critias further complains that "we do not examine these paintings too closely or find fault with [ἐλέγχομεν] them" at 107c7-d1; this word recalls the need for a Guardian who is προθυμούμενος ἐλέγχειν ("eager to refute") at *Republic* 534c1. And most importantly, having dropped the painting analogy, Critias likewise uses the same crucial word to attack directly discourses like those of Timaeus—"about the heavens and things divine" (107d6-7)—that Timaeus famously used to *defend* his coming "myth": εἰκότα at *Timaeus* 29d2.[45]

> We embrace what is said about the heavens and things divine with enthusiasm, even when what is said is quite implausible [σμικρῶς εἰκότα]; but we are nice critics of what is said of mortals and human beings.[46]

By placing this harsh appraisal of the cosmology presented in *Timaeus* in his *Critias*, the dialogue that immediately follows it, Plato draws attention to the famous words that Timaeus uses to introduce his discourse, words that have recently received increased attention thanks to Myles Burnyeat.

In his influential 2005 article "'Εικὼς Μῦθος,'" Burnyeat draws an important distinction between internal and external coherence in the case of Plato's *Timaeus*,[47] and the lack of textual basis for this distinction will strengthen my claims about the applicability of reader-response theory to the dialogue. While internal coherence is required from Timaeus—and this claim is crucial for Burnyeat's argument about the meaning of εἰκώς μῦθος—*external* coherence is not; in other words, while an account cannot be εἰκώς if it contradicts itself,[48] a *series* of accounts can be inconsistent *with each other* without losing the more positive sense for the word εἰκώς that Burnyeat's article is intended to secure for it.[49] The question of external incoherence arises because immediately prior to Timaeus' introduction of the term εἰκὼς μῦθος at 29d2, he makes the remarkable admission that discourses like his—discourses about copies as opposed to exemplars—may well be inconsistent *with themselves* (ἑαυτοῖς at 29c6); this admission momentarily complicates Burnyeat's case. Relying on the authority of John Burnet's editorial decisions[50] and a creative rendering of the Greek,[51] that case turns on the question of whether Timaeus' discourse is best understood as a single μῦθος or λόγος (on the one hand) or—and this is Burnyeat's claim—it is best understood as a series of λόγοι that are each *internally* coherent but are not collectively so.[52] Burnyeat obscures the fact that there is incontrovertibly a Timaean λόγος of λόγοι, wherein these λόγοι, each in itself "a complex of statements standing to each other in some logical relation,"[53] is in turn merely one of those "statements" that collectively constitute some larger λόγος, in this case, that singular εἰκὼς μῦθος, i.e., the words with which he famously describes his discourse.

Not surprisingly, Burnyeat begins the relevant passage by emphasizing instances of the plural λόγοι: "My second comment is on the plural λόγοι at 29c6 (which I would set beside the plural εἰκότων μῦθων at 59c6)."[54] The problems here are three. First of all, the later passage from *Timaeus* 59c6 refers to "pursuing *the idea* of εἰκότων μῦθων" (translation and emphasis mine);[55] it is therefore the idea that there is a *form* or genre of εἰκότες μῦθοι that leads Timaeus to employ the plural beginning at 29b4 because he is distinguishing between two types of *discourses*, some of which can be characterized in one way, and *others* in another. The second problem is that Burnyeat chooses not to cite a parallel instance of the plural—here the reference is to τὴν τῶν εἰκότων λόγων δύναμιν at 48d2—immediately before referring to his own discourse in the singular, indeed as εἰκότα at 48d3. And of course the greatest weakness in Burnyeat's case is the remarkable equation: "ἑαυτοῖς here = ἀλλήλοις": "with themselves" does not mean the same thing as "with one another."[56] As if acknowledging the problematic nature of this interpretation, Burnyeat concludes the passage on a more modest note: "I trust that everyone will agree that this interpretation is preferable to one that understands Timaeus to mean that a given account may be internally inconsistent, at variance with it itself."[57]

Despite the fact that she refers to "Burnyeat's seminal paper"[58] in her recent book *Nature and Divinity in Plato's* Timaeus (2012),[59] Sarah Broadie has discovered an internal incoherence in Timaeus' discourse of that undermines Burnyeat's analysis. Her discovery originates in the following hymn to sight at 47a1-b2:

> As my account has it [κατὰ τὸν ἐμὸν λόγον], our sight has indeed proved to be a source of supreme benefit to us, in that none [οὐδεὶς] of our present statements about the universe could ever have been made if we had never seen any stars, sun, or heaven. As it is, however, our ability to see the periods of day-and-night, of month and of years, of equinoxes and solstices, has led to the invention of number, and given us the idea of time and opened the path to enquiry into the nature of the universe. These pursuits have given us philosophy, a gift from the gods to the mortal race whose value neither has been nor ever will be surpassed.[60]

Broadie comments as follows:

> Whatever the intention of the passage, Plato must have regarded his point here as well worth making: for it comes with a cost of which he can hardly have been unaware. If the chief benefit of vision depends on contemplating *all* the visible regularities of the heavens, Timaeus' physics of vision cannot be adequate. The theory that postulates an optic fire that coalesces with daylight can explain only daytime vision (45b4-d7). By itself it cannot explain how we see the moon and stars by night.[61]

Here then is Broadie's internal incoherence claim, a claim that rests on the fact that *some* of "the visible regularities of the heavens" are only visible *at night* and therefore that Timaeus' sun-based account of vision is inconsistent with a hymn to it that depends primarily on astronomy. There can be no question here of external incoherence, Broadie points out, due to the close proximity of the two inconsistent claims: "Almost as soon as Timaeus has uttered his account of how vision works, it turns out

to sit badly with the ultimate purpose of the faculty [n. 22]."[62] And it is in n. 22 that Broadie mentions Burnyeat:

> Burnyeat, 2005, suggests that internal but not external coherence is a necessary condition for a Timean *logos* (i.e. section of the cosmology on a specific subject-matter) to be *eikôs*. The vision example casts doubt on this if (as I am supposing) it is internally incoherent—unless Plato missed the difficulty.[63]

The careful reader will observe that the possibility that Plato "missed the difficulty" contradicts the first sentence of Broadie's incoherence claim,[64] quoted above. Because this sentence opens the door to the central theme of this paper, I will quote it again, this time for purposes of analysis:

> Whatever the [1] intention of the passage, [2] Plato must have regarded his point here as [3] well worth making: for it [4] comes with a cost of which [5] he can hardly have been unaware.

The sentence's first part, [1], calls attention, in an admirably open-minded manner, to the possibly elusive *proper* interpretation of Plato's text; far more important than the internal inconsistency that Broadie discovers here is the remarkable hymn to vision and the visible, a hymn that could only strike the student of *Republic*—and in particular, the careful student of its central images, the Sun, the Divided Line, and the Cave—as peculiar. I want to suggest, then, that Broadie's open-minded manner of expression in [1] opens the door to the possibility that the proper interpretation of "Timaeus' remarks about the chief benefit of vision" in Plato's text is that they are precisely the remarks of the *character* "Timaeus" and not necessarily those of Plato. It is for this reason that I draw attention to Broadie's reference to *Plato* at [2]; despite any latitude that [1] may offer for separating Timaeus from Plato, her own approach is to assume that Timaeus' remarks are actually Plato's as well and, indeed, that these are remarks that Plato in particular believed were [3] "well worth making." Broadie's proof for this statement is not simply based on the implicit assumption that since Plato made these remarks—albeit through Timaeus—he *ipso facto* considered them "well worth making"; instead, her proof of [3] is that making these remarks [4] "comes with a cost."[65] What Broadie means, of course, is that Timaeus' remarks about vision are internally incoherent and thus that the proof that Plato regarded them as worth making is that they are made at the cost of internal incoherence. Indeed it is to explain this incoherence that Broadie is writing the paragraph: she elucidates it in the remainder of it. But in the context of n. 22, her claim at [5] that Plato was aware of the incoherence is made at the cost *of her own coherence* because Broadie raises the possibility that "Plato missed the difficulty" (n. 22) whereas she claims at [5] that "he can hardly have been unaware" of the same fact, i.e., that Plato's position "is internally incoherent." The important point, however, is that Broadie's problem disappears when we discriminate between Timaeus—whose discourse *is* "internally incoherent"—and Plato, who, as Broadie rightly senses, "can hardly have been unaware" of the fact. On this reading, it is Timaeus who is unaware of the difficulty, not Plato.[66] To put it another way: (1) if Broadie is correct in her initial sense that it is not the case that "Plato missed the difficulty" (as I believe she is), and (2) if Timaeus' account of vision is "internally incoherent" (as I believe it is), then (3) Burnyeat's argument becomes doubtful.[67]

By distinguishing Plato from Timaeus and attributing the incoherence to the latter but not the former, Broadie is not contradicting herself precisely because Burnyeat is wrong. Unfortunately, proving Burnyeat wrong is only a small first step; there is a more important kind of incoherence to be considered where Plato's *Timaeus* is concerned: the discourse of Timaeus is inconsistent with what we find in other Platonic λόγοι, and in particular with *Republic*, which precedes it.[68]

When Plato began *Timaeus* with the enigmatic words "One, two, three, but where is the fourth," he must have anticipated that his readers would ask themselves: "Who is this missing fourth?"[69] But if Plato answers this question in the dialogue that follows, he hid the answer carefully because it isn't obvious.[70] What is a reader to do after failing to get an answer to this question? By this I mean: what do *you*, as a thoughtful reader, do? One obvious thing is to read a paper that gives every appearance of offering an answer to this question. Once having heard that answer—and I will be offering an answer—you will consider it, testing whether or not it is plausible or likely. But long before that, I want to emphasize that it is a question that Plato has deliberately posed to everyone who tries to understand this dialogue: it is a puzzle deliberately constructed for a pedagogical purpose. It is therefore the elusive Plato who poses this question, not his Socrates, not Timaeus, and not I. By this opening, Plato might be thought to make himself *more* elusive but this is really a misconception: Plato here reveals himself as a writer who has deliberately provoked us to raise this question and then to search for his hidden answer; that's why he placed it at the very threshold of his *Timaeus*. And to approach this puzzle in a second way that leads to the same place, when any one of us raises the question: "Who is the missing fourth in Plato's *Timaeus*?" it is really a question about *Plato's* identity, not simply the identity of some fourth missing person: "*What was Plato about* when he began *Timaeus* in this way? What did he mean?" Plato wants us to solve the mystery: he wants *you* to look for him.

I take it for granted that every thoughtful student of Plato agrees that the first words of a Platonic dialogue are significant but the *Republic* proves it.[71] But before considering the meaning of κατέβην,[72] it is necessary to point out that Plato has posed another mystery to his readers: how are we to understand the relationship between *Republic* and *Timaeus*?[73] While the summary of the previous day's conversation in *Timaeus* makes it obvious that this conversation *resembled* the conversation Socrates describes in *Republic*, it is equally obvious that plenty is missing.[74] In some sense, then, there are two similar problems at the beginning of *Timaeus*: we are asked to consider what is missing twice.[75] Certainly the *Timaeus* summary is missing the Allegory of the Cave, the Divided Line, and the Sun.[76] But given the accumulation of detail that surrounds the summary of what in *Republic* V is called "the Second Wave of Paradox"[77]—especially since the equal training the female Guardians for war ("the first Wave of Paradox") is present but treated more briefly[78]— it is pretty obvious that the first and most obvious thing the previous day's conversation is missing is "the third Wave of Paradox,"[79] i.e., the assertion that philosophy and political power need to be combined in one person.[80] This combination is quickly made conspicuous in a second way by attributing what is absent from the previous day's truncated "*Republic*" to Timaeus, Critias, and Hermocrates who—it should be made explicit—are precisely the "one, two, three" who precede the mention of the missing fourth.[81] Now the opening word of Plato's *Republic* is

"I went down" and the reason that word is of crucial importance to understanding Plato's *Republic* only becomes obvious when Socrates offers Glaucon the speech that the City's founders will address to the temporarily rebellious Guardians who presumably concur with Glaucon's protest that it would be unjust to compel them to return to the Cave. The most important passage in this speech is where Socrates compares the Guardians to citizens of other cities, who are justified in not returning to the Cave because their exit from it has been their own private affair.

> But you [ὑμᾶς] we [ἡμεῖς] have engendered for yourselves [ὑμῖν τε αὐτοῖς] and the rest of the city [τῇ τε ἄλλῃ πόλει] to be, as it were, king-bees and leaders in the hive. You have received a better and more complete education than the others, and you are more capable of sharing both ways of life. Down you must go [καταβατέον] then, each in his turn, to the habitation of the others and accustom yourselves to the observation of the obscure things there.[82]

I would like to suggest that just as the "you" to whom "we" are speaking in *Republic* is not really or, at the very least, not solely the hypothetical Guardians of a strictly imaginary City but rather, to put it baldly, *you*—citizens of what Socrates calls "the other city"—so also it is *Plato* who stands behind this "we"; it is he who has given you the best possible education and now he asks you as a philosopher to return to the Cave of political life.[83] It is this reading that determines my solution to "the Problem of the Missing Fourth" in Plato's *Timaeus*.

The parallel sentence in *Timaeus* occurs toward the end of Socrates' longest speech where he expresses an interest in seeing the City he constructed yesterday at war;[84] he wants to see its Guardians in action.[85] After having stated that he cannot accomplish this himself, he then explains why neither poets nor sophists are capable of doing so.[86] The inadequacy of this triad leaves only his audience,[87] who combine philosophy and political experience.[88] He then enumerates—and it is the first time he has explicitly done so—a second triad, and he discusses in turn the political and philosophical accomplishments of Timaeus, Critias, and Hermocrates.[89] The critical sentence follows:

> That's why even yesterday, bearing all this in mind, I [διὸ καὶ χθὲς ἐγὼ διανοούμενος] gratified you heartily [προθύμως ἐχαριζόμην] when you obliged me to go through matters of regime [ὑμῶν δεομένων τὰ περὶ τῆς πολιτείας διελθεῖν], since I knew that none would more adequately than you render the account next in order (that is, if you were willing) [εἰδὼς ὅτι τὸν ἑξῆς λόγον οὐδένες ἂν ὑμῶν ἐθελόντων ἱκανώτερον ἀποδοῖεν]; for by establishing all things proper to the city [καταστήσαντες τὴν πόλιν . . . ἅπαντ' αὐτῇ τὰ προσήκοντα], you would render her [ἀποδοῖτ' ἄν] engaged in a fitting war [εἰς γὰρ πόλεμον πρέποντα]—you alone of those now living [μόνοι τῶν νῦν]—and so, having spoken what was ordered [εἰπὼν δὴ τἀπιταχθέντα], I ordered you in return to take up [ἀντεπέταξα ὑμῖν] what I'm describing now [ἃ καὶ νῦν λέγω].[90]

I will discuss the critical sentence in Plato's Greek. It begins with the words διὸ καὶ χθὲς ἐγὼ διανοούμενος and these words raise the ambiguity of Plato's written "I": is ἐγὼ Socrates or Plato? As was the case in *Republic* VII, Plato and the reader will emerge simultaneously; he (as author) recovers from the "most majestic silence" of *Phaedrus* 275d6 at the same moment that *we* overcome the characteristic passivity of

the reader, the ἀσθένειά τις of 17a4.[91] "You"—the Missing Fourth—are introduced in the next set of words: ὑμῶν δεομένων τὰ περὶ τῆς πολιτείας διελθεῖν. This "you" is the insistent audience of *Republic*, and the same ambiguity arises that first emerged in the context of ἐγὼ: is it Socrates or Plato who is now addressing the Three or the reader?[92] Whoever this "I" is, he was eager to gratify his insistent audience because he *knew*—and for some, this will suggest Plato as opposed to Socrates[93]—that nobody could give him a more suitable return than "you," assuming, of course that "you" are "willing" to give him "the discourse that comes next."[94] Here's what Plato writes: προθύμως ἐχαριζόμην, εἰδὼς ὅτι τὸν ἑξῆς λόγον οὐδένες ἂν ὑμῶν ἐθελόντων ἱκανώτερον ἀποδοῖεν.[95] Given that *Critias* breaks off his narrative before the war between Atlantis and the City of Socrates—allegedly preborn as ancient Athens—can even begin, it is clearly not the Three who supply τὸν ἑξῆς λόγον; if Socrates is "I" and the Three are "you," then Socrates is disappointed in *Timaeus-Critias*.[96]

But if I am right, and this "I" is Plato himself, then it is entirely up to "you" to gratify him by offering "the discourse that comes next in order," described in three lines of verse:[97]

> —εἰς γὰρ πόλεμον πρέποντα
> καταστήσαντες τὴν πόλιν
> ἅπαντ' αὐτῇ τὰ προσήκοντα ἀποδοῖτ'
> ἂν μόνοι τῶν νῦν
> εἰπὼν δὴ τἀπιταχθέντα, ἀντεπέταξα
> ὑμῖν

Only if "you" are willing to supply the missing λόγος and lead the Socratic City, now internalized in your own soul with you as its Guardians,[98] by fighting an interpretive war against "the plausible myth" of Timaeus, does Plato's "now" become *now*; only when *you* yourself become "the missing fourth" will you realize that it is the elusive Plato who is saying: ἃ καὶ νῦν λέγω, "the things which even now I am saying." In short: the true reading of Plato's *Timaeus*—like the true reading of his *Republic*—depends on the reader's response. But in *Timaeus*, he provides his chosen reader—the reader who has responded appropriately to *Republic*, and who now becomes its city's philosophical Guardian—with an enemy far wilier than his Thrasymachus, "whatever wiles of Foe or seeming Friend." To put the same point another way: he now asks that reader to fight for the lessons learned in the critical sections of the πολιτεία deliberately deleted—since the reader alone can supply them—in Socrates' earlier summary of the previous day's discussion.

The notion that the City's Guardians will be required to fight the kind of interpretive[99] battles I am suggesting here is introduced in *Republic* VII.[100] Having already described the five mathematical sciences so prominent in *Timaeus*,[101] and now turning toward the training in dialectic[102]—the give and take of discussion conspicuous by its absence in the astronomer's discourse[103]—Socrates says:

> And is not this true of the good likewise—that the man who is unable to define in his discourse [τῷ λόγῳ] and distinguish and abstract from all other things the idea of the good [τὴν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέαν] and who cannot, as if in battle [καὶ ὥσπερ ἐν μάχῃ], through all refutations emerging, not eager to refute by recourse to opinion but to essence [μὴ κατὰ δόξαν ἀλλὰ κατ' οὐσίαν προθυμούμενος ἐλέγχειν], proceeding throughout in all of these with the discourse untoppled [ἀπτῶτι τῷ λόγῳ]—the man who lacks this power, you will say, does not really know the good itself or any particular good but if he joins himself in any way to some image [εἰδώλου]

> he does so by reputation [δόξῃ] but not knowledge [ἐπιστήμῃ].[104]

The "war" Plato has in mind by having Socrates make this demand of his "Guardians"—and by this, I mean *you*—will be waged, in the first place, against the previously mentioned "one, two, three" in accordance with the following calculus: if we really loved Athens,[105] we would hate Hermocrates who was most responsible for the deaths of the best and brightest in the quarries of Syracuse; if we really loved democracy or even a halfway decent moderation, we would hate the slippery Critias;[106] and if we really embraced the disjunction between Being and Becoming that emerges from the Third Wave of Paradox, and reaches its highest development in the Cave, we would discover in Timaeus the first of several "images" Plato will create in order to determine whether "you" will refute them μὴ κατὰ δόξαν ἀλλὰ κατ' οὐσίαν.[107] Were you to do so, you would find his discourse objectionable from just after the beginning to the end, from the absence of the Idea of the Good and the mixture of Becoming and Being in the World Soul,[108] through to the rebirth of Becoming as χώρα,[109] in turn made possible by the reduction of otherworldly Being to the status of exemplars for worldly things to copy,[110] thereby opening the door to Aristotle's critique that the Ideas of Plato needlessly reduplicate the world.[111]

It should go without saying that Plato's missing fourth is still for the most part "missing in action" as of today; those who are familiar with the literature on Plato's *Timaeus* are aware that the implicit premise of most of it is that Timaeus speaks for Plato,[112] and its dominant trope is to explain away and thereby make coherent all of the most obvious inconsistencies in his discourse;[113] the goal is to defend the consistency of Plato,[114] not to expose the myriad mistakes he has deliberately sown into his character's discourse.[115] It should surprise no Platonist that these solutions often depend on Aristotle.[116] But I have hope.[117] As previously mentioned, Socrates does briefly describe the First Wave of Paradox while summarizing the previous day's discussion.[118] Although this summary is a watered down version of what Socrates claims in *Republic*, any notion of the equality of the sexes is entirely absent from the discourse of Timaeus; he first asserts the superiority of men,[119] and then, at the very end of his discourse, he explains the "origin" of women:

> According to the plausible account, it was from men who had come into being—however so many as were cowards and had led their life unjustly—that women emerged, changed in the second genesis.[120]

Why should we accept this nonsense as Plato's?[121] It is amazing that more scholarly effort has been expended to prove that Socrates' arguments for the equality of the sexes in *Republic* V are not really designed to prove it[122]—and, for that matter, to prove that his arguments for the immortality of the soul in *Phaedo* don't work[123]—than to subject the discourses of Timaeus,[124] the Eleatic,[125] and the Athenian Strangers to the kind of critical dialectic *they* so richly deserve. I will therefore leave Plato's "missing fourth" with a provocation that I hope will arouse *your* fighting spirit:[126] by what standard of plausibility can Timaeus' account of the origin of women be called "likely"?

Let me return at the end to Milton, the poet who caused Fish to rediscover the central place of the reader's response in dialectical pedagogy. As Christians, readers of *Paradise Lost* know (or knew) from the start that Satan is evil. But such is Milton's artistry—and

so Platonic is his pedagogy—that even this "knowledge" proves insufficient: the poet replicates the fall of Adam by deliberately seducing the reader with Satanic rhetoric and technical skill. Without any tradition linking his Timaeus to evil, Plato certainly makes it far more difficult than Milton does for the reader to recognize that his "Satan" does not speak for him. But he scarcely makes it impossible: after all, it is not Socrates who describes the genesis of the cosmos nor, indeed, is such a project Socratic. To say nothing of the place that Parmenides gave to his cosmology, Plato's readers need only find Socrates' distinctly non-empirical account of astronomy at *Republic* 528e3-c4 compelling in order to avoid the tempting reversion to the central concern of the pre-Socratic physicists. Even when expressed in terms of Being, Becoming, and a generous demiurge, there are perfectly Platonic reasons for questioning the value of a science that depends entirely—as Cicero emphasized—on the dubious testimony of the senses (*Timaeus* 46e7-47b2). In addition to epistemological and ontological considerations, there are political ones as well: after all, Plato links Timaeus with Hermocrates and Critias, and the political implications of Timaeus' cosmology deserve more attention than I can give them here.[127] These connections can be ignored—as they were by the early Platonists who found "Plato's cosmology" compelling and frequently constitutive of the master's views[128]—but it is scarcely impossible to see that they can be read from an Athenian perspective as profoundly destabilizing. Even Broadie and Thomas Johansen, moderns who take it for granted that Timaeus speaks for Plato, readily admit that Critias does not do so.[129] But ironically, it is Critias to whom the playful Plato[130] entrusts his own critique of Timaeus in *Critias*. Despite Timaeus' claim that his discourse is εἰκώς in Burnyeat's sense—and I readily admit that Burnyeat is correct about the *character* Timaeus' sense of that word—Plato offers the reader an alternative: that discourse is plausible only to a tiny degree (σμικρῶς εἰκώς) at 107d7. And it is likewise through Critias that Plato poses his provocative challenge to the "missing fourth" in the form of an apparently rhetorical question:

> Now, who in his senses would undertake to maintain that your [sc. Timaeus'] speech was not an excellent speech?[131]

It is only Plato's chosen reader who will respond appropriately to this question, and it will be in the course of articulating this response that the absent fourth mentioned at the beginning of *Timaeus* will finally make the missing speech—unheard for centuries—introduced at the end of *Critias*.

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END NOTES

1 Clay 1987, 151: "The unwritten {*Philosopher*} and {*Hermocrates*} are great gaps in the universe of the Platonic dialogues, as is the missing conclusion of the *Critias* and the myth of Atlantis. These occupy vast interstellar spaces that are beyond the reach of even speculation." Cf. "the cosmos of the Platonic dialogues" (192-93) in Strauss 1989.

2 Gill 2012, 5-6.

3 Gill 2012, 5. With the parenthesis referring to "us," cf. 104 and 19 n. 3: "our grasp of Plato's views remains partial until we also take into account his conversation with his audience by means of the dialogue."

4 Gill 2012, 50, 126 n. 62, and 228. Cf. Miller 1995, 165: "There is, however, a second level of provocation and initiation as well: precisely by Socrates' exchange with his interlocutors, Plato challenges us, the listeners outside the dialogue."

5 Gill, 2012, 5: "Plato tests their competence by posing problems he does not explicitly solve." For an emphasis on Plato's "tests," see Altman 2012a.

6 In addition to Altman 2012a, see Weiss 2012, 2-3: "Inconsistencies in a Platonic dialogue are therefore not to be papered over or domesticated, but acknowledged and confronted. Plato counts on his readers to disentangle Socrates' exchange with his interlocutors from his own address to us."

7 Ademollo 2011, 245-46: "Moreover, Socrates at [*Cratylus*] 396e has promised a purification for the *following* day, while the refutation of Cratylus will take place almost immediately; indeed, the etymologies themselves already anticipate, to some extent, the later rebuttal of the naturalist thesis (see §5.2.2). Therefore it seems better—and is in any case much more natural—to take Socrates' references to inspiration as concerning the etymological performance *as such*. At the end of the dialogue the purification is, at best, still incomplete; we have, so to speak, to act as Socrates' purifiers, finding out what is wrong with the etymologies and assessing their real worth."

8 Ademollo 2011, 102-3: "All this fits in very well with a general way of reading Plato, to which I am sympathetic, according to which Plato exploits the dialogue form to invite his readers to engage actively in the dialogue [cf. 103: 'Plato expects us, the readers, to criticize Socrates' claims'], as if they were present to it, by assessing the theses and arguments presented and thinking out for themselves the philosophical problems at stake [note 15]." After citing in the attached note Frede 1992 and Burnyeat 2000, Ademollo quotes to powerful effect Grote 1888, vol. 3, 333: "The Platonic dialogues require, in order to produce their effect, a supplementary responsive force, and a strong effective reaction, from the individual reason of the reader."

9 Sedley 1996, 103: "Their [sc. the ancient commentators] inspired diagnosis is that while the dramatic content of the *Theaetetus* takes the form of *failed* midwifery, performed by Socrates on Theaetetus, the dialogue's address to us, the readers, is also one of intellectual midwifery, this time on Plato's part."

10 Nevertheless, the wonderful conclusion (62) of Reeve 1985 deserves to be quoted: "We all know, of course, that Plato was a great literary artist and a great teacher as well as a great thinker. And we know that art is artful and that teachers often leave dangling puzzles to test their pupils' acumen. But we often read Plato as if his art and pedagogical purposes were extraneous to his thought. The result is that we often get the thought wrong."

11 Zuckert 2009 has pioneered a post-developmentalist reading of Plato that creates a dialectical coherence among the dialogues by distinguishing the views of Socrates from those of, e.g., Timaeus. For my review of Zuckert, see Altman 2010b.

12 See Habib 2005, 708-736.

13 Fish 1997; on Fish's place in reader-response theory, see Habib 2005, 733-36.

14 Fish 1997, 49.

15 Fish 1997, 12.

16 Note that Gill 2012 does not distinguish Plato from either Timaeus or the Eleatic Stranger at 244 (emphasis mine): "Plato's philosopher [sc. the Eleatic Stranger] aims for the good in two spheres: to understand the nature of things and to help others find it (*Stm*. 285d5-8, 286d4-287a6). He hunts, he weaves, *he often distorts*, but always with the good in view: to stimulate the audience to discover things." Cf. 35 n. 44: "As for *idea*, Plato [sc. Timaeus] uses the word in reference to an immanent character, as opposed to a (separate or immanent) form at *Ti*. 28a4-b1, 46c7-d1, 49c2-4, 50c7-e1, and 71a7-b1."

17 Fish 1997, 38: "The reader who falls before the lures of Satanic rhetoric displays again the weakness of Adam".

18 Fish 1997, 216.

19 Fish 1997, 251; note the scientific context of 259-51 and 123-28, especially on 128: "Humility is what he [sc. Milton] seeks to instill in his readers by exploding the promise of a terrestrial paradise which they may have accepted in the name of a secular faith."

20 Fish 1997, 270-71: "Here is the ultimate 'responsive choice', where the spiritual ideal, to which the reader's faculties should be answerable, is absent, and must be supplied by his own sense of what is real and truly beautiful."

21 Fish 1997, 184: "True virtue is a state of mind—loyalty to the best one knows [sc. the Idea of the Good]—and true heroism is a psychic (willful) action—the decision, continually made in a variety of physical situations, to maintain that loyalty." See also Fish 1981.

22 Fish 1997, 272.

23 See Fish 1972: as Table 2 on 19-20 suggests, Plato's dialogue embodies "dialectic" while the speech of Timaeus has the characteristics of "rhetoric and writing." For a parallel case of scientific rhetoric, one that equally leaves us "in the oxymoronic state of constant wavering" (554), see Fish 1989.

24 *Paradise Lost*, 10.12; on this passage see Fish 1997, 14.

Cf. 271: "in *Paradise Lost* we are asked to condemn the hero's [sc. Adam's] response, and, moreover, to condemn it because, at the moment of crisis, he is too much like ourselves."

25 Gill (unpublished) will extend her application of this approach.

26 See Kalkavage 2003, especially 140: "Just as the *Republic* takes us from Becoming 'up' to Being, so the *Timaeus* brings us back 'down'—back to the cave of the body, custom, opinion, and change." In this context, the word "psychology" could just as easily have been substituted for "ontology" as indicated by Johansen 2004, 157: "the human body appears less like a prison for the rational soul [sc. as in *Phaedo*] and more, as one might put it, like a rather comfortable hotel with quite a few research facilities built in."

27 Vidal-Naquet 1964, the view that Critias' myth of the ancient war between Athens and Atlantis "re-enacts the Sicilian expedition and it also re-enacts the Persian invasion putting Athens on the wrong side" is now being accepted by Anglophone scholars; for the quotation, see Broadie 2012, 140. This is partly due (cf. Broadie's note at 140 n. 45) to the publication of Vidal-Naquet 2007, a translation of Vidal-Naquet 2005.

28 Of great value on all such topics is Welliver 1977.

29 Note that while Hermocrates is competent to describe the modern re-enactment of the Atlantis myth—his role in defeating the disastrous Sicilian Expedition is well known from Thucydides—such a description is scarcely germane to Socrates' request: Syracuse was by no manner of means similar to the City described in *Republic*.

30 And the Persians: Thucydides is well aware of the other analogy between the Athens of Alcibiades and the Persian Empire at the time of Marathon; see the Melians at Thucydides 5.102.

31 Thucydides 6.9-14 and 6.20-23.

32 See Bruell 1974, 16. For a "post-Straussian" (463) reading of this passage, see Altman 2011, 464-66.

33 Thucydides 3.42-48.

34 See Altman 2010.

35 Thucydides 4.59-64, 6.33-34, and 6.76-80. But from an Athenian perspective, the crowning blow is struck at 7.73; in his teens at the time of the Sicilian Expedition, Plato doubtless knew many young men who would die as a result of Hermocrates' stratagem.

36 The view that the Critias of *Timaeus-Critias* is the Critias of *Charmides* and the Thirty Tyrants seems to be gaining ground; see Broadie 2012, 133-36 and n. 105 below.

37 Given the context of missing speech of Critias, and the fact that it is intended to chastise "Atlantis" and render its citizens "more melodious," it is the kind of speech that would have prevented Athens from attempting to conquer Sicily. See Clay 1997 for a sensible account.

38 Cf. Fish 1981, 530-31: "What I have been trying to show is that for Milton the impulse to ask that question [sc. 'what happened next?'] (which his verse often encourages but rarely answers) is symptomatic of a desire [sc. on the part of the reader] to displace responsibility for moral decision from ourselves onto the world of circumstance."

39 *Critias* 121b7-c2 (Diskin Clay translation).

40 *Critias* 106a4-b3 (Clay).

41 An anonymous reader, after pointing out that *Timaeus* itself contains a speech of the Demiurge to the lesser gods at 41a7-d3, then draws attention to its connection with *Critias*: "he tells them to get out there and do the work that he cannot do, by generating living beings (not so different from what Socrates had told the quartet on the day before, 19b). Who knows whether the enigmatic θεοὶ θεῶν at 41a7 might relate to θεὸς δὲ ὁ θεῶν Ζεὺς ἐν νόμοις (cf. 41e2) βασιλεύων [*Critias* 121b7-8]? But in any case the only point in summoning the gods together at all is if Zeus is going to say: 'You go and do this in that world of mortals.' And they have to be mortal, and yet have to have a future ἵνα γένοιντο ἐμμελέστεροι σωφρονισθέντες [*Critias* 121c1-2]." This connection reminds me of the Thirty: just as atheists can invoke "the gods," so also can the vicious speak the language of virtue. Cf. Lysias, *Against Eratosthenes* 5 (translation W. R. M. Lamb): "When the Thirty, by the evil arts of slander-mongers, were established in the government, and declared that the city must be purged of unjust men and the rest of the citizens inclined to virtue and justice, despite these professions they had the effrontery to discard them in practice, as I shall endeavor to remind you by speaking first of my own concerns, and then of yours."

42 *Critias* 107a3.

43 *Critias* 107c3-4.

44 Indispensible is Mourelatos 2008; I am citing his text (282).

45 And, likewise, that the Goddess in Parmenides had first used to describe the coming "Doxa" (εἰκότα at B8.60).

46 *Critias* 107d6-8 (Clay).

47 Burnyeat 2005, reprinted in the revised version of Partenie 2009, 167-186.

48 Burnyeat 2005, 155: "I trust that everyone will agree that this interpretation is preferable to one that understands Timaeus to mean that a given account may be internally inconsistent, at variance with it itself. That would give it zero probability, at once."

49 Burnyeat 2005, 158: "the standard aimed at is to be εἰκώς in the sense of reasonable or appropriate: as like what reason says *ought* to be as the materials allow."

50 Burnyeat 2005, 155: "The λόγοι we meet in the sequel are a series of well-marked units as displayed by the paragraphing in Burnet's Oxford Classical Text."

51 Burnyeat 2005, 155: "One such account is at variance with another (ἑαυτοῖς here = ἀλλήλοις)."

52 Burnyeat 2005, 155: "If these units are the type (ii) accounts which aim to be εἰκότες, they are the λόγοι about which we are warned not to expect them to agree with each other in absolutely every respect."

53 Burnyeat 2005, 155: "Each unit is a λόγος in the sense of a complex of statements standing to each other in some logical relation and dealing with a particular explanandum."

54 Burnyeat 2005, 155.

55 Donald J. Zehl translates the relevant passage: "As for going further and giving an account of other stuffs of this sort along the lines of the likely stories we have been following, that is no complicated matter." For the train of thought developed here, I have benefitted from Mourelatos 2010, especially 241-43.
56 *Phaedrus* 237c5.
57 Burnyeat 2005, 155.
58 Broadie 2012, 33 n. 14.
59 Broadie 2012, 180-81. For the explicit connection to Burnyeat, see 180 n. 22.
60 Cicero's translation of *Timaeus* breaks off here, and Sedley 2013, 200 effectively repels the notion that the translation—as opposed to the dialogue that would have contained it (brilliantly reconstructed on 204)—is incomplete. Although Lévy 2003 does not distinguish between Cicero and the character Nigidius—in whose mouth Cicero places the excerpt from Timaeus' discourse—it remains a valuable introduction to the problems involved. For Cicero's own position of the limited role of vision for apprehending realities, see *Orator* 8 (*neque oculis*) and 10 (*sub oculos ipsa non cadunt*).
61 Broadie 2012, 180. One of the remarkable aspects of this argument is its Parmenidean echoes: the two principles that inform "the Way of Opinion" are fire and night (Parmenides at Diels-Kranz, B8.56-59). And the interplay of night and light is crucial to the claim advanced by Mourelatos that it is not only light but also darkness that allowed Parmenides to deduce that the moon derived its light from the sun and that the morning and evening stars were one and the same; see Mourelatos 2011. Of course this does not touch Broadie's point about the stars and also, perhaps, the planets; cf. Johansen 2004, 152 n. 26. But it does establish a link between the λόγος of Timaeus and another cosmology intended by its ultimate creator to be both deceptive and incoherent; the best way to make "Timaeus' physics of vision" coherent with his claims about the knowledge that only nighttime vision bestows is found in the "Way of Opinion" in Parmenides. See Altman 2012b.
62 Broadie 2012, 180.
63 Broadie 2012, 180 n. 22
64 Note that I agree with Broadie on the main point: there is an incoherence.
65 Cf. Broadie 2012, 222 and 226.
66 Thereby rendering the following sentence more accurate (Broadie modified; emphasis mine): "Whatever the intention of the passage, Timaeus must have regarded his point here as well worth making: for it comes with a cost of which *Plato can hardly have been unaware*."
67 Although I will postpone an explanation of this argument until it arises later in Broadie's paragraph, it is important to grasp that: (¬3) if Burnyeat's argument is sound, and (2) Broadie is correct that Timaeus' "vision example" is "internally incoherent," then (¬1) "Plato missed the difficulty," thereby contradicting what Broadie said at [5] that Plato "could hardly have been aware" of just this "difficulty."
68 Inconsistencies of this kind have for far too long been explained by a variety of merely likely stories about "Plato's development," i.e., by developmentalism.
69 Beginning with the first *scholium* to the *Timaeus*; see Greene 1938, 277; all references to the text of *Timaeus* are based on Burnet 1902.
70 For a detailed attempt to identify a particular person, see Lampert and Planeaux 1998.
71 See Burnyeat 2012, especially 310-313.
72 Cf. Brann 2004, 116-21, 213-16, 244 and Altman 2012a, 37-45.
73 The latest to do so is Broadie 2012, 117-29.
74 For a good account, see Miller 2003, 20-21.
75 Of course avoiding the mystery is fashionable as well; see, for example, Johansen 2004, 7; he lets others consider the problem in notes 1 and 2. Johansen postpones discussion of "the missing fourth" until 197, in the last paragraph of his last chapter.
76 As indicated the title of Miller 2003: "*Timaeus* and the 'Longer Way.'"
77 *Timaeus* 18c6-19a5.
78 Cf. *Republic* 451d4-457b5 with *Timaeus* 18c1-4.
79 Introduced at *Republic* 473c6-e2, the "third wave" follows from Glaucon's interruption beginning at 471c4. Cf. Benardete 1971, 22: "His [sc. Socrates'] summary, at any rate, omits the rule of the philosopher-kings and the still-undiscovered sciences needed to educate them."
80 *Republic* 473d2-3.
81 See *Timaeus* 20a1-b1; the crucial sentence that follows (20b1-7) will be discussed below.
82 *Republic* 520b5-c3 (Shorey translation modified).
83 This is the thesis of Altman 2012a.
84 *Timaeus* 19b3-20c3; the fullest treatment of Socrates' speech is Reydams-Schils 2001; particularly valuable is her suggestion at 41 that Socrates' request is connected with his critique of writing in *Phaedrus*.
85 After speaking only of a city (*Timaeus* 19c1-8), Socrates adds its men at 19d2; the role of women in the City's wars is mentioned at 18c3.
86 *Timaeus* 19d3-e8.
87 *Timaeus* 19e8-20a1. For the careful articulation of this triad and identification of the fourth as οἱ ἀκροαταί ("the audience"), see Greene 1938, 278-79.
88 For the claim that Timaeus, Critias, and Hermocrates are not really instances of this combination, see Rowe 2004.
89 *Timaeus* 20a1-b1.
90 *Timaeus* 20b1-b7 as translated in Kalkavage 2001, 50.
91 At *Phaedrus* 275d4-e5, after making the comparison to painting also found at *Timaeus* 19b4-c2, Socrates famously claims that written texts "remain most solemnly silent" (translation Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff) and even "when it is faulted and attacked unfairly, it always needs its father's support; alone it can neither defend itself nor come to its own support." But when deliberately fashioned by its father to attack itself—as, for example, in this very text—a text comes alive by provoking *its readers* to come to the aid of the truth it suppresses (cf. Fish's "good temptation…in a controlled situation"); the passivity of the reader is the weakness

that prevents Plato's texts—and all text's that depend on reader-response—from coming to life. And even if only a few readers will overcome this passivity, they will prove that Socrates' claim that the text "doesn't know to whom it should speak and to whom it should not" is false; a deliberately provocative *text ipso* facto distinguishes between active and passive readers. Incidentally, anyone who has read any Platonic dialogue twice knows that no Platonic text says the exact same thing again and again (*Phaedrus* 275d9); Plato's writings have proved an enduring delight because we learn something new from them every time we read them and this is even more true when we teach them.

92 Hereafter, "the Three" will refer to Timaeus, Critias, and Hermocrates.

93 Cf. *Apology* 21b4-d7 and 29b6-7.

94 The phrase τὸν ἐξῆς λόγον reappears at *Critias* 106b7. Note that the first instance of "you" in the sentence is found in a genitive absolute (ὑμῶν δεομένων); the second instance (ὑμῶν ἐθελόντων), also in the genitive, appears to be another genitive absolute, but is really a genitive of comparison following ἱκανώτερον.

95 Note the echo of Cephalus' definition of justice; for its incorporation into Socrates' conception, see Irwin 1995, 314.

96 See Broadie 2012, 124-28, culminating with "Socrates will never be accorded the spectacle he longs for and which is beyond his competence to produce for himself." Cf. Morgan 2010, 268-72.

97 For galliambics, see the commentary on Catullus 63 in Quinn 1970, 282-297, especially 288 on line 12 for an example in Greek.

98 *Republic* 590e2-591a3.

99 Note the use of διερμενεύσις at *Timaeus* 19c7 in the context of Socrates' desiderated war, a war that will be fought with both actions *and words*, λόγοι that are explicitly said to call for translation or "thorough interpretation."

100 Note that Timaeus regards such battles as unhealthy at *Timaeus* 87e6-88a7 (Zeyl): "When within it [sc. the body] there is a soul more powerful than the body [when is this not the case where philosophers are concerned?] and this soul gets excited, it churns the whole being and fills it from inside with diseases, and when it concentrates on one or another course of study or enquiry [e.g., philosophy], it wears the body out. And again, when the soul engages in public or private teaching sessions [i.e., as politician or teacher] or verbal battles [μάχας ἐν λόγοις], the disputes and contentions that then occur cause the soul to fire the body up and rock it back and forth, so inducing discharges [ῥεύματα ποιεῖ] which trick most doctors into making misguided diagnoses [τἀναίτια αἰτιᾶσθαι]." Presumably the ῥεύματα in question are tears, sweat, and expectoration.

101 Note the conspicuous absence of the elementary "one" in Timaeus' account (cf. *Republic* 524d9-526b4; the elements of his cosmology are triangles and he further never mentions either lines or points.

102 Given the proclivity of the young to employ dialectic in a destructive manner (*Republic* 539b1-7) and given also the superiority of voluntary falsehood to the involuntary kind (535e1-5), Plato's pedagogical strategy is—like Milton's—to offer the budding dialecticians deliberately contrived falsehoods that will turn the aforementioned youthful proclivity to a good end. Not that the pedagogy in question is in fact the basis for the "true-false" type of question used everywhere today.

103 Cf. Johansen 2004, 177-78, particularly 178: "Surely Plato wants us to keep the *Republic* in mind and think about its relationship to the ideas contained in the *Timaeus*." Johansen's use of "ideas" here is revealing.

104 *Republic* 534b8-d1. On this important text, see Krämer 1966; cf. Altman 2012a, 346-48.

105 For a pious Athenian, "the Goddess" in the first sentence of *Republic* (cf. *Timaeus* 21a2) is Athena; see LSJ 791 and Greene 1938, 188; it is the Thracian Thrasymachus who is responsible for the view that ἡ θεός is the Thracian Bendis (*Republic* 354a10-11). Questioning the authority of Thrasymachus on this point weakens the attempt to disjoin *Republic* and *Timaeus* on chronological grounds: although detecting it depends on their deliberate juxtaposition, the real disjunction between the dialogues is philosophical.

106 Incidentally, the argument against identifying the Critias of *Timaeus-Critias* with the Tyrant on the basis of anachronism (see, for example, Lampert and Planeux 1998) can be short-circuited by an editorial decision: place the first set of quotation marks at 21b1 (instead of 21c4), marking the beginning of the narrative spoken to the modern Critias (he of the Thirty and of the *Timaeus-Critias*) by his grandfather Critias. Of course the quotation marks of 21c4 would be retained; they would mark a speech within a speech, i.e., the speech of a yet more ancient Critias (Greek has no word to distinguish grand-father from either great- or great-great-grandfather; hence παππός at 20e3 does not settle the matter) heard *in his youth* by the tyrant's grandfather and then relayed, within the speech that begins at 21b1, to the present speaker. Such narrative layering—a speech within a speech within a speech—is hardly without parallel in Plato; cf. *Symposium* where the speech of Diotima, as reported by Socrates, is being narrated by Apollodorus, who heard it from Aristodemus. *Apology of Socrates* 29d7-e3 must also be reckoned a speech within a speech within a speech.

107 I am referring primarily to the Eleatic and Athenian Strangers. Note that Socrates qualifies his praise for the philosophical attainments of Timaeus with the words κατ' ἐμὴν δόξαν ("according to my opinion") and uses the word οὐσία to refer to his *wealth* at *Timaeus* 20a1-5: Τίμαιός τε γὰρ ὅδε, εὐνομωτάτης ὢν πόλεως τῆς ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ Λοκρίδος, οὐσίᾳ καὶ γένει οὐδενὸς ὕστερος ὢν τῶν ἐκεῖ, τὰς μεγίστας μὲν ἀρχάς τε καὶ τιμὰς τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει μετακεχείρισται, φιλοσοφίας δ' αὖ κατ' ἐμὴν δόξαν ἐπ' ἄκρον [recalls *Seventh Letter* 344d3-7] ἁπάσης ἐλήλυθεν

108 As indicated by Plutarch, the World Soul was the primary subject of controversy although Sorabji 2003 is illuminating on the difficulties that Timaeus' physi-

calized account of the soul caused Platonists. Modern commentators are content to give the palm for solving the problem (sometimes without mentioning him) to Cornford 1937; see Johansen 2004, 138-39 (interesting on Plutarch; note the reference to Grube at 138 n. 1) and Broadie 2012, 92.

109 Modern debate has shifted to "the receptacle" and Sayre 2003 is a useful introduction. Johansen 2004, chapter 6, and Broadie 2012, chapter 6, are more representative of Anglophone discussion although perhaps the most compelling attempt at restoring coherence to this deliberately incoherent construction is Zeyl 2010. But the real challenge comes from the continent; with anti-Platonic intent, Jacques Derrida has argued that the χώρα undermines Plato's distinction between Being and Becoming, as indeed it does; see Derrida 2005, 87-127. Giannopoulou 2010 is an attempt to refute Derrida and thereby restore coherence where it does not belong.

110 See Miller 2003, 18-22.

111 Aristotle *Metaphysics* A.9.

112 Mohr 2010, 3: "Even the metaphysics of the *Timaeus* is spun out in the manner of a story. But virtually all critics now think that Timaeus' story about the universe, unlike Critias' about Atlantis, is one in which Plato advances his own views—to the extent, that is, that Plato's own views can be found in the dialogues. A lot of critics deny this latter position. . . . For the sake of full disclosure, though, let it be known that all the contributors here who write on the content of Timaeus' speech work on the unstated presumption that the speech represents Plato's views."

113 In addition to previously cited examples, see Harte 2010, especially "this is a puzzle I will set aside" at 134, Code 2010, especially "it can easily be made consistent" at 209, both in Mohr and Sattler 2010, and most recently Kahn 2013, 172, 192-93, and 199.

114 Cf. the golden sentence on Taylor 1928, 614: "When we find T. [sc. Timaeus] falling into inconsistency we may suspect that his creator is intentionally making him 'give himself away.'"

115 Cf. Dillon 1997.

116 For example, the answer to the question posed by Johansen 2010 is "no."

117 Zuckert 2009, 420-81, by implicitly reviving the explicit premise of Taylor 1928 that Timaeus does not speak for Plato, is particularly welcome.

118 *Timaeus* 18c1-4; cf. Miller 2003, 46 and 59 n. 66.

119 *Timaeus* 42a1-3; cf. Zuckert 2009, 448-49.

120 *Timaeus* 90e6-91a1 (translation mine).

121 Consider *Timaeus* 90e6-a1 in Zeyl's translation: "According to our likely account, all male-born humans who lived lives of cowardice or injustice were reborn [μετεφύοντο] in the second generation as women." By translating μετεφύεσθαι as "reborn" he changes the merely absurd into a self-contradiction. Cf. Bryan 2012, 157 n. 124 and Broadie 2012, 259 n. 32. But Broadie does note the contrast between Timaeus and Socrates at 86 n. 11.

122 See Annas 1999 (original 1976) and Spelman 1988, 19-36.

123 A good example is Bostock 1999.

124 See the remarks on Taylor 1928 in Cornford 1937, v-ix.

125 But see Bostock 1984.

126 Despite its brevity, Socrates' summary of the First Wave of Paradox includes the fact that they will be soldiers (*Timaeus* 18c3).

127 I am very grateful to an anonymous reader for drawing attention to this important point.

128 For the central place of *Timaeus* in the Academy's reception of the dialogues, see Merlan 1967.

129 In addition to "the Critias framed in this way is truly an anti-Socrates" at 169, a clearer critical distinction between author and character is found at Broadie 2012, 166: "This Critias of Plato's imagination is the personified paradigm of one sort of unreason." Cf. Johansen 2004, 42-47. Perhaps most revealing is Mohr 2010, 3: "Even the metaphysics of the *Timaeus* is spun out in the manner of a story. But virtually all critics now think that Timaeus' story about the universe, unlike Critias' about Atlantis, is one in which Plato advances his own views—to the extent, that is, that Plato's own views can be found in the dialogues."

130 See Greene 1920, de Vries 1949, and Ardley 1967, particularly on 240: "The serious and the playful are sisters. Through their association in contrariety, through the *aporiai* engendered thereby, the intelligence is set in motion. The proper handling of this ascending counterpoint is the key to education. The maintenance of the fugue is no easy matter; we so readily run after one contrary to the exclusion of the other." Plass 1967 usefully discusses "'playful' detachment from the lower, sensuous world" on 360.

131 *Critias* 107a4-6 (translation Diskin Clay).

SOCRATES VS. CALLICLES: EXAMINATION & RIDICULE IN PLATO'S *GORGIAS*

David Levy

ABSTRACT

The Callicles colloquy of Plato's *Gorgias* features both examination and ridicule. Insofar as Socrates' examination of Callicles proceeds via the elenchus, the presence of ridicule requires explanation. This essay seeks to provide that explanation by placing the effort to ridicule within the effort to examine; that is, the judgment/pronouncement that something/someone is worthy of ridicule is a proper part of the elenchic examination. Standard accounts of the Socratic elenchus do not include this component. Hence, the argument of this essay suggests a need to revise the standard account of the elenchus, at least as it relates to the use of that method within the *Gorgias*. Insofar as a revised account of the elenchus has implications for our understanding of Socratic moral psychology, the argument of this essay also suggests a need to reconsider the moral psychological framework within which Socrates operates in the *Gorgias*.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Plato's *Gorgias* has been the focus of many studies that seek to highlight some feature or other of Socrates' approach to philosophy. In particular, commentators have used the text to ground their discussions of Socratic method (i.e., elenchus),[1] of Socrates' use of shame,[2] and of Socratic moral psychology.[3]

What is missing from these otherwise excellent discussions is a phenomenon within the dialogue that cannot be overlooked: Socrates ridicules his two younger interlocutors (Polus and Callicles), and ridicule is, in some ways, an organizing theme of the entire Callicles colloquy. I should like to argue that understanding Socrates' use of ridicule allows us to understand how Socratic method, use of shame, and moral psychology cohere. The aims of this essay, however, are rather less ambitious: to illustrate how, within the Callicles colloquy, Socrates' ridicule of his interlocutor is connected to his elenchic examination of him, and is the mechanism by which Socrates seeks to shame him into moral improvement.[4]

Before I begin my detailed discussion of ridicule within the Callicles colloquy, I wish to clarify that the focus of this study is on the dialogue's explicit characterization of individuals/acts as ridiculous. That is, I will examine the dialogue's uses of *katagelastos*, rather than other ways in which an individual might invite ridicule of another, such as when one laughs derisively at another (as occurs within the Polus colloquy, at 473e; see Callicles' characterization of this moment in the dialogue at 482d). A more comprehensive account of ridicule within the dialogue would take into consideration these other

mechanisms, but it nonetheless is plausible to lay the groundwork for such an account by examining those moments when Plato is explicit.

II. CALLICLES' USES OF *KATAGELASTOS* IN RELATION TO HIS AXIOLOGY

All told, there are eight uses of *katagelastos* within Plato's *Gorgias*.[5] Each occurs within the Callicles colloquy. Callicles is responsible for the first four occurrences. These all occur during his initial great speech, during which he assesses the value of pursuing the practice of philosophy into one's adult years. More specifically, they appear in one 23-line section of this speech (484e1-485c1). Immediately prior to these lines, Callicles asserts that, although philosophy is a 'delightful' (*charien*) thing, devoting too much time to it would bring about the 'ruin' (*diaphthora*) of humanity (484c5-8). In this way, the continued practice of philosophy is utterly incompatible with the satisfaction of any condition necessary for consideration as a *kalon k'agathon*. Instead, the philosopher appears ridiculous in that he ends up wholly ignorant concerning both private and public matters of interest to human beings. In fact, Callicles identifies such individuals as so vicious that they deserve to be beaten, for in their continuing concern for philosophy they resemble other ridiculous men whose speech and mannerisms are appropriate for children.

The import of these occurrences of *katagelastos* is that those who devote too much of their lives to philosophy suffer from some moral failing. According to Callicles' axiology, mastering those skills necessary for success in politics is the *sine qua non* of leading the excellent life. Thus when Callicles claims that continued devotion to the philosophical way of life leads to humanity's 'ruin,' he does not simply mean that from a practical point of view things would start to go poorly. His worry is not, for example, that shoes would not be repaired or that food would no longer be produced, even if he is disposed to agree that these consequences would follow. Instead, Plato is exploiting an ambiguity in *diaphthora*. This term can mean simply ruin or destruction, but it also invites images of decay or corruption, including morally. So Callicles' position here seems to be that the philosophers' 'ridiculous' appearance is symptomatic of a more general moral failure, one that also leads them to refrain from participation in politics and instead relegates them to shadowy corners, where they do nothing but whisper in the ears of impressionable youths (485d3-e2).

III. SOCRATES' USES OF *KATAGELASTOS*

Socrates utters the final four occurrences of *katagelastos* in *Gorgias*. My position is that the first three occurrences (509a, 509b, 512d) gradually draw out the connection between appearing ridiculous as a symptom of moral failure and the goals of Socratic philosophy. The final occurrence (514e) then announces a complete reversal of Callicles' position on the relative value of philosophy and politics: it is not Socrates (*qua* philosopher) who is ridiculous and thus who suffers from some moral failure; rather, it is Callicles (*qua* would-be politician) who is and thus who does. Moreover, this announcement seems designed especially to induce a feeling of shame in Callicles. Putting these together, Socrates' position seems to be that Callicles is ridiculous, and thus should

feel shame, precisely because he fails to pass the elenchic test.

III.1 BEING RIDICULOUS, MORAL FAILURE, AND FAILING THE ELENCHIC TEST

Socrates first invokes the notion of being ridiculous as he reviews the positions for which he argued against Polus and asserts that those arguments are held fast by bonds of iron and adamant. Here is his full statement:

> But as for me, the *logos* I give is always this: that I do not know how these things are in this way, but no one I've ever come across (as is the case now) can argue anything else without being ridiculous (*katagelastos einai*). (509a4-7)[6]

Socrates here does not assert explicitly that those who maintain positions that differ from his believe falsely. We might expect him to do this, given that the language that precedes this statement virtually commits Socrates to the position that the arguments he has offered in support of his theses are conclusive. Instead, he turns our attention to a characteristic of those interlocutors who have attempted to maintain different positions: they are ridiculous. Note that in doing so he does not characterize how such interlocutors *appear* to be; he claims that this is how they *are*.

Moreover, the surrounding context for this statement decisively connects it to the function of elenchic examination. This statement initiates a series of remarks that succeed in drawing Callicles back into the discussion. Callicles first signals his desire to leave the discussion at 505c.[7] The process of drawing him back begins with a review of the earlier discussions (506c5), but is immediately preceded by an invitation to *refute* (506c1: ἐξελέγχῃς) Socrates if Callicles does not think he is speaking well (ἐαν τί σοι δοκῶ μὴ καλῶς λέγειν). After reviewing and expanding the positions that were secured during the earlier stages of the discussion, Socrates effects a transition to the specification of the consequences of accepting his views (i.e., the views that he takes as established during the earlier parts of the discussion). That transition is achieved by presenting a choice: either the argument must be refuted (508a8: ἐξελεγκτέος), or they must consider what the consequences of accepting it are. Socrates' statement at 509a4-7 characterizes those who have sought to refute this argument (i.e., those who have tried to maintain a different position in order to avoid accepting the consequences Socrates identifies as required by accepting his position): they are shown to be ridiculous precisely insofar as expressing their position involves a failure to speak well (509a4: καλῶς λέγειν).

Socrates follows up his first use of *katagelastos* by turning his attention to the moral implications of taking seriously his position. In doing so he draws a very strong connection between acceptance of his theses and the ability to care properly for one's soul. So, he wonders, if his positions really are correct—that is, if it really is the case that injustice is the greatest evil for the one who commits it, and if it really is the case that it is worse to be an unpunished perpetrator of an injustice than it is to be punished for an injustice—then what aid must one provide for oneself to avoid truly being ridiculous (509b1-5)?[8]

Although Socrates will not characterize anything as 'ridiculous' for another three and a half Stephanus pages, using instead

this dialogue's more familiar pair of apparent contraries—admirable (*kalon*) and shameful (*aischron*)—at the start of the response to his wonder, he will cap off this portion of the discussion by once again leveling this charge. This time that charge is more explicitly directed at Callicles than it was in either of the first two occurrences. Of additional note is that this third use comes at the end of what appears to be a rather straightforward elenchic argument.

This argument begins—at least from Callicles' perspective—on a rather promising note. Socrates announces that the *technê* one must acquire if one is to avoid suffering injustice is to become a ruler; short of that, the surest protection against suffering injustice is to become like the ruling party (510a). This means that one must train his desires from youth on to be identical to the ruler's; in this way, one maximizes his chances of becoming a friend of the ruler (510d, with 510b). Such friendship serves as a deterrent against the commission of injustice in that the one considering performing the injustice has some reason to fear the retribution of the ruler. Moreover, these conditions give one license to commit unjust acts (510e). In this way, one gains protection against suffering unjust acts in the same way one acquires the ability to commit unjust acts.

This, however, means that in gaining protection against suffering unjust acts, one brings to bear upon oneself the greatest evil for oneself: a depraved (*mochthêria*) and mutilated (*lelôbêmenê*) soul (511a). Callicles balks at this implication, noting that the one who has gained protection against suffering injustice through his imitation of the ruler has the power to put to death the one who refuses to imitate. Socrates concedes this point, but he refuses to see this as a point in favor of Callicles' position. After all, in order to see this as reason to engage in the sort of imitation championed by Callicles, one would have to believe that the good for a human being is to make sure his life is as long as possible.

It is Callicles' commitment to this principle—that the good for a human being consists in living a long life—that Socrates proceeds to subject to elenchic testing. Callicles refuses to grant that a scientific knowledge of swimming is a grand (*semnê*) thing, yet such expertise does allow people to prolong their lives (511c). Perhaps recalling Callicles' earlier aversion to mundane, trivial concerns (see 490c-491b), Socrates shifts to an examination of an apparently more important expertise: that of the helmsman. The helmsman's knowledge of how to conduct passengers and their goods to safe harbor does not lead him to become boastful; rather, he remains unassuming (*prosestalmenos*) and orderly (*kosmios*). This is because, so Socrates supposes, he realizes that the life he has prolonged by steering safely through the storm might not be a life that is worth living—it might suffer from either an incurable disease of the body or, worse, an incurable disease of the soul (512a).[9]

Of course, Socrates knows that Callicles won't find anything truly admirable in what the helmsman does; even this practice is too mean for Callicles' tastes. However, Socrates works hard in this passage to get Callicles to see that what the helmsman does is in important ways analogous to what the orator does. Each has the power to prolong life; each is indifferent to questions concerning whether the life it is in a position to prolong is worth prolonging. That is, neither the helmsman nor the orator—to count as an expert in his field—has any need to consider whether he is applying his skills to a worthy cause. Put somewhat differently,

neither need consider if he has identified an appropriate aim; the methods are, in this way, applied aim-independently.

Still, Callicles has already shown his affinity for those who have the skill to avoid suffering the consequences of committing an injustice. This is one of oratory's great powers.[10] But if this is reason to value the skills of the orator, then Callicles ought to concede that what the helmsman or the engineer does is admirable after all. So Socrates concludes:

> And yet, given your grounds for applauding your own activities, what just reason do you have for despising the engineer and the others whom I was mentioning just now? I know that you'd say that you're a better man, one from better stock. But if "better" does not mean what I take it to mean, and if instead to preserve yourself and what belongs to you, no matter what sort of person you happen to be, is what excellence is, then your reproach against engineer, doctor, and all the other crafts which have been devised to preserve us will prove to be ridiculous. (512c-d, trans. Zeyl)[11]

This passage is important for our understanding of how Socrates conceives of his own activity. Note that Socrates does not issue as his concluding judgment that what Callicles believes is false; nor does he conclude that Callicles is not in agreement with himself, language we might take to mean merely that Callicles holds inconsistent beliefs.

Moreover, it is not his position that the thesis maintained by Callicles is itself ridiculous. Rather, Socrates' judgment is that it would be ridiculous for Callicles to continue to issue apparently inconsistent judgments of the value of practices that, although different, are relevantly similar in their objectives. Importantly, these judgments seem to arise on the one hand from a general principle of the nature of value and on the other hand an assessment of the value of various practices vis-à-vis that general principle. In this way, the argument that follows Socrates' first two uses of 'ridiculous' and that contains his third use of it really does seem to connect the *moral* objective of elenchus with something like an *epistemic* test: if maintaining a (moral) position would involve one in appearing/being ridiculous, then there is some good (epistemic) reason for doubting that position. The revelation of the ridiculous status of the interlocutor who maintains inconsistent beliefs, and so who acts and speaks in inconsistent ways, is thus itself part of the elenctic examination.

For all this, however, we might still be tempted to understand the elenchus more or less as Vlastos does.[12] After all, in the context of this argument Socrates' use of *katagelastos* seems to indicate nothing other than an inconsistency in Callicles' beliefs. That is, the concluding diagnosis of Callicles—that were he to maintain his apparently inconsistent beliefs he would be ridiculous—seems to add nothing to the apparently more factual claim that he holds apparently inconsistent beliefs. Most directly, one might understand this elenchic argument without mentioning the role played by the use of *katagelastos* and not miss anything important in the argument. Insofar as Callicles holds inconsistent beliefs, he ought to experience *aporia*, but nothing any more psychologically disturbing than that.

Still, it should be noted again that it is not the inconsistency in belief itself that is

characterized as ridiculous. What is ridiculous is the activity of reproaching various individuals for engaging in pursuits that Callicles finds to be inferior. That is, actions Callicles would continue to perform, now that the elenchus has identified an inconsistency in his beliefs, are found to be ridiculous.

Moreover, the dialogue includes one further use of *katagelastos*, and an analysis of the term's function within the dialogue ought to cover all the instances. I turn now to the final instance.

III.2 CALLICLES AS RIDICULOUS

After Socrates announces at 512d that it would be ridiculous for Callicles to continue to issue judgments that appear to be inconsistent with his beliefs, he exhorts Callicles to reconsider one of these beliefs: that the good for a human being just is preservation. In particular, he exhorts Callicles to reconsider his attachment to preserving himself and his property by seeking power in the city's political affairs, especially if the way he intends to pursue this is by merely conforming himself to what the people expect (513a-b). After all, the people will not be satisfied with a mere imitator, but will seek out one who is genuinely like them; this is the surest way of providing themselves with the pleasure that comes from hearing speeches that flatter.

Of course, underlying Socrates' exhortation of Callicles is his understanding of Callicles' great disdain for the masses. Socrates knows well that Callicles will not respond favorably to the (ironic) suggestion that he win the friendship of the Athenian people by 'naturally' (*autophuôs*) being like them (513b3-6).[13] But the point of this exhortation is not to get Callicles to be more like the Athenian people in his pursuit of political power in Athens. Rather, it is to get him to give up that pursuit because it is founded upon a mistaken conception of what makes a man's life valuable.

Callicles' response to Socrates' exhortation is particularly interesting. He says, "I don't know how it seems to me that you speak well, but what happens to many has happened to me: I'm not entirely persuaded by you."[14] That is, Callicles appreciates the logical force of Socrates' comments, and perhaps even recognizes that the premises Socrates employs are true (or reasonable to believe), but logic alone is not sufficient to effect a change in his attitude. As Dodds puts it in his commentary on the *Gorgias*, "We may take this remark… as expressing Plato's recognition that basic moral attitudes are commonly determined by psychological, not logical reasons."[15]

Though Dodds's way of putting the point is not entirely perspicuous, the next phase of Socrates' discussion with Callicles features yet another elenchic argument that is designed to do more than diagnose inconsistency in Callicles' beliefs (or beliefs and subsequent actions): it is designed to shame him. Toward this end, Socrates utters the final use of *katagelastos* in *Gorgias*.

Socrates begins this instance of elenchus by reminding Callicles of the earlier distinction between pleasure and what is best, concerning both body and soul, and between practices that pursue one or another of these. He further elicits Callicles' (reluctant) agreement that the proper political aim is to make the citizens as good as possible (514a). He then reasons that before one endeavors to conduct business in important civic affairs, the proper thing to do is to 'look carefully' (*skepsasthai*) at and

'examine closely' (*exetasai*) oneself in order to see if one has learned the appropriate *technê*. If the result of this self-examination is that there is insufficient evidence to conclude that one has learned the appropriate *technê*, then it would be 'utterly foolish' (*anoêton*) to continue the pursuit of the public business (514c-d). Again, Callicles agrees to all of this.

Socrates next considers the specific hypothetical case in which he and Callicles would consider pursuing appointment to the position of public physician. The appropriate source of evidence of their qualifications in this case would be testimony concerning whether they have ever improved the health of anyone by applying their putative medical expertise. If no such evidence were to be found, then, Socrates concludes, it would be 'ridiculous' (*katagelaston*) and 'utterly foolish' (*anoêton*) for them to continue their pursuit. After all, these affairs are too important to the well-being of others to consider them merely an opportunity for developing one's skills (514d-e).

After getting Callicles to agree to his characterization of such pursuits in the absence of evidence that one is skilled enough to warrant the people's trust as ridiculous and foolish, Socrates notes that Callicles himself is at the start of his own pursuit of influence over affairs of great importance to the city and its citizens. Thus, the appropriate question to ask Callicles is whether he has ever improved any of the citizens. More specifically, since the proper political aim is the moral improvement of the citizens—i.e., the ordering and controlling of the citizens' desires—we must ask Callicles to provide testimony that he has contributed to the production of any one 'admirable and good' (*kalos…k'agathos*) citizen (515a).

Although Socrates does not state it directly, the implication of this argument is clear. Once again, it has been revealed that Callicles issues (or is disposed to issue) inconsistent judgments and to act on them. On the one hand, he would judge that it is ridiculous and foolish for someone to pursue important business in the city without being positioned to provide evidence that one is qualified to do so. On the other hand, his own pursuit of important business in the city would seem to indicate that he judges himself positioned to provide this kind of evidence. However, when Socrates provides him with the opportunity to do just this, he falls silent.[16] Ultimately, he is left to offer a rather hollow attack on Socrates' intentions: "You love to win, Socrates."[17]

The overwhelming sense one gets from this argument is that Socrates is trying to effect some change in Callicles not merely by getting him to see that he holds yet another inconsistent set of beliefs, but by doing so in a way designed to shame him.[18] This is a feature of Socrates' method for which Vlastos and his ilk could not account: it is not at all clear that the proper response to learning that one's beliefs are logically inconsistent with each other is to experience shame. Yet having Callicles experience shame seems to be precisely what Socrates is after. Were Socrates interested only in demonstrating the presence of a logical inconsistency, he could have refrained from using such derisive language; were he not interested in bringing to bear on his interlocutor public pressure to effect some change, he could have pulled him aside and "whispered" in his ear that he finds some of his beliefs implausible. Given, then, that he opts for a different approach, it seems reasonable to ascribe to him intentions that go well beyond what Vlastos's analysis of his method would lead us to expect.[19] Socrates is no mere diagnostician of logical inconsistency. In his pursuit of the

production of moral excellence, he recognizes that shame can be a powerful tool.[20]

IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCRATIC MORAL PSYCHOLOGY IN THE *GORGIAS*

But this has implications for how we understand the moral psychological framework within which the examination of Callicles is conducted. It is difficult to see how a purely intellectualist moral psychology—such as the one ascribed to Socrates by Terry Penner, for example—could make sense of Socrates' combining of examination and ridicule. Were Socrates the sort of intellectualist described by Penner, he would be content to seek to change Callicles' attitudes and actions by changing his beliefs. Calling attention to the inconsistencies in Callicles' beliefs would thus be the strategy he would adopt. As I have argued, however, Socrates does something different from calling attention to the inconsistencies in Callicles' beliefs: he uses his diagnosis of inconsistency to force Callicles to see himself as ridiculous and utterly foolish.

Brickhouse and Smith have called attention to some sort of connection between Socrates' use of the elenchus and his efforts to shame (some of) his interlocutors. In that context, they have also noted the difficulties involved in reconciling Socrates' efforts to shame with some forms of intellectualism. They write, "Socrates makes no secret of the fact that he often seeks to create [an unpleasant emotional experience] in others, and to use shame in such a way as to lead them to change their ways. But the process…seems to work in the opposite direction from the one required by the standard interpretation [offered by Penner, for example]: instead of shame adjusting to reason, one's reasoning seems to be influenced by shame."[21]

The analysis of Socrates' examination and ridicule of Callicles presented in this paper, I believe, is consonant with Brickhouse and Smith's rejection of Penner's reading of Socratic moral psychology. At least with Callicles, Socrates tries to initiate a process of moral improvement by leading Callicles to recognize that he is ridiculous, and to feel the shame of being such. It remains to be seen if Socrates' efforts to effect moral improvement in his interlocutors (at least in Callicles) are successful. If they are not, it further remains to be seen if this is because of some failing in Socrates' method, or if it is due to some additional problem in his interlocutors (or at least in Callicles). I suspect that the matter is actually rather more complicated than either of these options, but my arguments on that point are best saved for another occasion.[22]

END NOTES

1 The work of Gregory Vlastos remains the benchmark against which all subsequent accounts of Socratic elenchus are measured. See in particular "The Socratic Elenchus" with "Afterthoughts on the Socratic Elenchus," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 1 (1983): 27-58, 71-74. Vlastos himself recognizes that his account of the Socratic elenchus represents especially the way in which it is employed in the *Gorgias*. So in "Afterthoughts" he writes, "I now see that a more appropriate title for section III of 'The Socratic Elenchus' would have been 'The Socratic Elenchus *in the Gorgias*.'" (page 74, n. 8; emphasis in the original). Others who provide accounts of the Socratic elenchus while remaining essentially within Vlastos's framework include Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, *Plato's Socrates* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) and Hugh H. Benson, "The Dissolution of the Problem of the Elenchus," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 13 (1995): 45-112.

2 The importance of shame within the *Gorgias* has been recognized by at least the following: W. H. Race, "Shame in

Plato's *Gorgias*," *The Classical Journal* 74 (1979), 197-202; Charles H. Kahn, "Drama and Dialectic in Plato's *Gorgias*," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 1 (1983), 75-121 and *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Richard McKim, "Shame and Truth in Plato's *Gorgias*," in *Platonic Writings/Platonic Readings*, ed. Charles L. Griswold (New York: Routledge, 1988), 34-48; Daniel Sanderman, "Why Socrates Mocks His Interlocutors," *Skepsis* 15 (2004), 431-41; and D. B. Futter, "Shame as a Tool of Persuasion in Plato's *Gorgias*," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 47 (2009), 451-61.

3 Here, of course, the work of Terry Penner and of Brickhouse and Smith has come to frame the discussion of Socratic moral psychology. See Penner, "Socrates," in *Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, ed. C. J. Rowe and M. Schofield (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 164-189 and now especially Brickhouse and Smith, *Socratic Moral Psychology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Others have offered more nuanced readings of moral psychological issues as they play out specifically in the *Gorgias*. These include Jessica Moss, "The Doctor and the Pastry Chef: Pleasure and Persuasion in Plato's *Gorgias*," *Ancient Philosophy* 27 (2007), 229-49 and Raphael Woolf, "Callicles and Socrates: Psychic (Dis)Harmony in the *Gorgias*," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 18 (2000), 1-40.

4 Sanderman ("Why Socrates Mocks His Interlocutors") discusses Socrates' "mocking" of his interlocutors, but assimilates it to some form of Socratic irony. As my discussion will make manifest, there is nothing ironic about the manner in which Socrates ridicules Callicles.

5 This is the greatest number of occurrences within any of Plato's dialogues (and Plato's writings collectively include more instances of the term than in any other author's writings). *Republic* includes seven instances, and is a much longer text than *Gorgias*. Although there are some dialogues in which this term appears with greater frequency than it does in Gorgias (i.e., although it occurs fewer times, the text is shorter—for example, six occurrences in *Lysis,* which is only 20 Stephanus pages long), the eight occurrences within *Gorgias* are contained within two well-defined portions of text (four within 484e1-485c1, and four within 509a7-514e3). This "density" of occurrence warrants our attention. Further justification for a focused study of these occurrences is provided by the fact that these two portions of text seem rather deliberately set in opposition to each other.

6 Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own. I discuss this passage in "Techné &The Problem of Socratic Philosophy in the *Gorgias*", *Apeiron* 38 (2005): 185-227; see esp. 209-214.

7 Is this desire to break off the discussion itself symptomatic of Callicles' being ridiculous? An anonymous reviewer for this journal has suggested that it is important to consider what precisely distinguishes interlocutors who are ridiculous from those who merely maintain ridiculous positions (i.e., theses). I agree that drawing this distinction is important, but I'd like to consider that there is at least a third category: those who regard their position within the discussion with Socrates (i.e., as interlocutor) as ridiculous. At 505c and following, I think we see that Callicles has come to consider that his position within the discussion is problematic in some way, and I find it plausible that he would regard it as ridiculous. The same reviewer addresses Thrasymachus as a candidate ridiculous interlocutor, observing that he "evidently change[s] [his] position without letting others know ostensibly for the sake of winning the fight." Callicles admits to something similar at 505c5-6: he gave the answers he did only for the sake of respecting Gorgias. Perhaps there is something ridiculous about not having fixed positions. If that is the case, then participation in an elenchic examination by someone of that sort would involve finding oneself in a ridiculous position, insofar as one's beliefs lack the logical structure presupposed by the elenchus. Raphael Woolf's discussion of the examination of Callicles ("Callicles and Socrates: Psychic (Dis)Harmony in the *Gorgias*") discusses related issues.

8 Note what is *not* said at this point: his question is not about finding resources that will enable one to avoid acting in inconsistent ways, or avoid asserting inconsistent positions.

9 The presence of "incurables" within the *Gorgias* is a challenge, especially for those who wish to defend an intellectualist reading of Socratic moral psychology. Briefly, if one ascribes to Socrates a form of intellectualism with respect to motivation, then for a soul to be incurable would be for it to be incapable of holding true beliefs about what is (really) desirable. Brickhouse & Smith (*Socratic Moral Psychology,* Chapter 4) offer an account of the ways in which unrestrained appetites can compromise the functioning of an agent's cognitive capacities. There is not room in this essay to explore the notion of incurability within the *Gorgias*. However, an anonymous reviewer for this journal has suggested that ridicule of an incurable individual could function—not to improve the condition of that individual—to instruct others who witness the ridiculing. As I will observe later, Socrates' effort to induce feelings of shame within Callicles includes the fact that this discussion is taking place before an audience. Perhaps, then, we should understand the ridiculing of Callicles primarily in terms of the intended effects this will have on members of the audience (including, of course, the readers of the text). I think that considerations of the effects on the audience are indeed relevant, but I resist allowing that relevance to be identified to the exclusion of the intended effects on Callicles himself. The only case in which the effects on Callicles would properly be reduced to zero is the case in which Callicles is thought (by Socrates) to be incurable. I am not persuaded that Callicles is incurable, nor am I persuaded that anyone else within the dialogue believes that he is. Briefly, I am moved by the ways in which both Socrates and Gorgias work to keep Callicles participating in the discussion to accept that they at least believe that he can benefit from the discussion. Moreover, I contrast this concern shown for Callicles with the disregard

shown for Polus; see esp. 463a-e. In this way, I find it more plausible to consider that Polus is the incurable one, if anyone is. Finally, I'll note that although Polus might be shown to be ridiculous, Socrates never characterizes him in this way (including by never using the term *katagelastos* to refer to him). Perhaps, then, the reason Socrates allows for and encourages the characterization of Callicles as ridiculous is precisely that he is not incurable. I investigate the challenges presented by the notion of incurability in "On (In)Curability in Plato's *Gorgias*", presented at the U.S. Regional Meeting of the International Plato Society, Ann Arbor, MI, October 6, 2012.

10 Recall that Callicles becomes Socrates' interlocutor only after Socrates has concluded against Polus that the only proper use of oratory is to convict oneself when one acts unjustly or to make sure that one's unjust enemies never suffer retribution for their unjust actions. See 480a-481b.

11 καίτοι ἐξ ὧν τὰ σαυτοῦ ἐπαινεῖς, τίνι δικαίῳ λόγῳ τοῦ μηχανοποιοῦ καταφρονεῖς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὧν νυνδὴ ἔλεγον; οἶδ' ὅτι φαίης ἄν βελτίων εἶναι καὶ ἐκ βελτιόνων. τὸ δὲ βέλτιον εἰ μὴ ἔστιν ὅ ἐγὼ λέγω, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἀρετή, τὸ σῴζειν αὑτόν καὶ τὰ ἑαθτοῦ ὄντα ὁποῖός τις ἔτθχεν, καταγέλαστός σοι ὁ ψόγος γίγνεται καὶ μηχανοποιοῦ καὶ ἰατροῦ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τεχνῶν ὅσαι τοῦ σῴζειν ἕνεκα πεποίηνται.

12 Vlastos's account of the elenchus continues to provide the framework within which most subsequent accounts are developed. See, again, the sources listed in n. 1. I know of no account of the elenchus that explicitly connects Socrates' use of it with his efforts to induce feelings of shame in his interlocutors. Brickhouse and Smith (*Socratic Moral Psychology*) recognize some connection—even calling a section of Chapter 5 of that text "Elenchos as shaming" (136)—but their discussion of the connection they find stops short of a recognition of the fact that, at least sometimes (as with Callicles), Socrates' examination of his interlocutor *is* a shaming experience.

13 I have said nothing to this point about Socrates' use of irony, whether restricted to the *Gorgias* or in general. I'm not sure that I have anything compelling to offer, but an anonymous reviewer for this journal has called attention to the need to distinguish ridicule more clearly from other notions, including irony. At least in relation to the ironic suggestion Socrates makes at 513b, irony would seem to function to remind Callicles to consider carefully what his priorities (or axiological commitments) really are. That is, Socrates' use of irony at this point is designed to get Callicles to say what he really believes. This is quite different from what I am suggesting about the role of ridicule as expressing the concluding judgment of an elenchic examination.

14 Οὐκ οἶδ' ὅντινά μοι τρόπον δοκεῖς εὖ λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες, πέπονθα δὲ τὸ τῶν πολλῶν πάθος· οὐ πάνυ σοι πείθομαι.

15 E. R. Dodds, trans. *Plato Gorgias* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), note on 513c5, page 352.

16 See the implied pauses between Socrates' questions at 515a7-b4.

17 Φιλόνικος εἶ, ὦ Σώκρατες (515b5).

18 Both Charles Kahn and Richard McKim also locate a role for shame in Socrates' efforts to effect moral change in his interlocutors, at least within the *Gorgias*. Kahn does so in his chapter on the *Gorgias* in *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue*, 125-47; see esp. 133-42. McKim does so in "Shame and Truth in Plato's *Gorgias*." I cannot here distinguish fully my position on the role of shame from their positions. I will merely observe that the emphasis in my interpretation is on the way in which Socrates seeks to shame his interlocutor (an interpersonal function), whereas the emphasis in their interpretations seems to be on Socrates' efforts to characterize positions (theses) as shameful (an impersonal—perhaps purely logical—point).

19 Of course, we might well conclude that Callicles himself "asked for" this kind of treatment. After all, his opening maneuver seems designed to shame Socrates in front of a crowd, all but encouraging them to slap Socrates across the face. Moreover, he is the one who impugns Socrates' character by invoking the image of whispering in dark corners. While I am moved by these considerations, I hesitate to conclude that this is all Plato is after.

20 But then why isn't there a ninth instance of *katagelastos* in the dialogue? Why doesn't Socrates end this stage of the discussion by simply asserting that Callicles has been shown to be ridiculous? Perhaps this has something to do with the fact that Callicles also does not explicitly characterize Socrates as ridiculous, even though what he does say encourages that characterization. It strikes me that this, too, connects with the issues surrounding the status of interlocutors as curable or otherwise (see n. 9 above), as well as the ways in which my reading of ridicule as shame-inducing differs from the roles assigned to shame by Kahn and McKim (see n. 18 above). Additional work in this area could fruitfully be done to understand these issues in relation to the ways in which Socrates and Callicles might prove to be friends (see, for example, 487a-e, with 499c). Some discussion of related issues can be found in Rachana Kamtekar, "The Profession of Friendship," *Ancient Philosophy* 25 (2005), 319-339, and in Roslyn Weiss, "Oh, Brother! The Fraternity of Rhetoric and Philosophy in Plato's *Gorgias*," *Interpretation* 30 (2003), 195-206.

21 Brickhouse & Smith, *Socratic Moral Psychology*, 59.

22 For an intriguing discussion of why Plato shows Socrates failing to improve the character of his interlocutors, see Julie Piering, "Irony and Shame in Socratic Ethics," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 50 (2010), 473-488.

En tout et pour tout (*Théétète* 204a-210b)[1].

Nathalie Nercam

RÉSUMÉ (FRANÇAIS)

Cet article a pour fin de montrer que la dernière partie du ***Théétète*** (204-210) peut être interprétée dans une perspective nouvelle, selon une analyse discontinue et thématique, en référence à la digression centrale du dialogue. La réfutation de la théorie dite de rêve n'est plus alors aporétique. Elle apporte des conclusions certes limitées mais néanmoins consistantes. En effet, à travers elle, Socrate raisonne positivement sur le «tout». Les deux mots *τὸ πᾶν* and *τὸ ὅλον* renvoient au principe d'exhaustivité qui leur est commun (204-206), et sont finalement différentiés dans les dernières pages du texte (206c-210b). Ces arguments positifs servent à disqualifier une conception fallacieuse de la totalité. Tous ces points permettent finalement d'éclairer la fameuse digression dans laquelle Socrate oppose l'activité positive du scientifique et l'activité négative du rhéteur. Au fond «le tout» est entre eux l'objet secret de leur désir et donc l'enjeu caché de leur débat.

ABSTRACT (ENGLISH)

The purpose of this paper is to show that the last part of the ***Theaetetus*** (204-210) can be interpreted in a new way, by a discontinuous and thematic analysis and by referring to the central digression of the dialogue. The refutation of the so-called "Dream Theory" is then no longer a dead end. On the contrary it provides results certainly limited but nevertheless consistent. Indeed, through this examination, Socrates analyzes "the whole." The words *πᾶν* and *ὅλον*, designate the general rule of exhaustiveness. It is their common principle. But the two terms have also been differentiated by Socrates in the last section of the dialogue (206c-210b). These positive arguments are used to disqualify a false conception of the totality. All these points ultimately shed light on the central digression in which Socrates brings into conflict the positive activity of the Scientist and the negative activity of the Rhetorician. Basically the "whole" is the secret object of their desire and therefore the hidden stake of their debate.

MOTS-CLEFS, KEYWORDS

Totalité, Whole; Notions communes, Common concepts; Théorie des éléments, Dream Theory; Digression du *Théétète, Theaetetus*' digression; Méthode exégétique, interpretative method.

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Dans la troisième et dernière partie du *Théétète*, Socrate se propose d'examiner une théorie souvent appelée «théorie de rêve». Les nombreux commentaires de cette critique divergent quant à leurs résultats mais ils convergent tous en leur principe d'analyse. En effet, la majorité des études sont linéaires (à partir du problème initial, «qu'est-ce que la science ?» jusqu'à sa résolution finale). La «théorie de rêve» est en général commentée dans cette perspective, l'exégète cherchant à montrer en quoi et dans quelle mesure elle permet ou non de définir la science[2]. Mais d'autres méthodes analytiques, moins linéaires, pourraient être proposées en raison de la structure particulière du dialogue. En effet la progression continue de l'argumentation (examen successif de trois définitions dont la complexité s'accroit) est rompue en son milieu par une digression dans laquelle Socrate compare deux paradigmes, celui du philosophe/physicien et celui de l'orateur/politicien (172c2-177c6)[3]. Platon semble ainsi avoir associé continuité (une longue analyse) et discontinuité (une comparaison impromptue). Si l'on prend ce principe structurel pour modèle, il faudrait compléter les commentaires linéaires par d'autres enquêtes plus discontinues. En changeant ainsi de point de vue, la réfutation de la «théorie de rêve» prendrait nécessairement une autre valeur.

Dans cette nouvelle approche, la digression qui coupe le fil du dialogue devient le point de départ du commentaire. L'activité du scientifique y est décrite en son principe. Entre 173e4 et 174a1, Socrate déclare en effet que la pensée du philosophe/physicien s'envole des profondeurs de la terre jusqu'en haut du ciel, et sans jamais s'arrêter à ce qui est immédiat, découvre πᾶσαν πάντῃ φύσιν ἐρευνωμένη τῶν ὄντων ἑκάστου ὅλου, c'est-à-dire littéralement: «partout toute nature de chaque tout des êtres » (173e4-174a1). Cette étrange formule est très diversement traduite[4]. Elle associe les deux mots grecs πᾶν et ὅλον, en donnant ainsi un rôle majeur à la notion de «totalité». Découvrir la nature des «touts» serait ainsi la grande affaire du philosophe/physicien, une de ses compétences parmi les plus notables.

La perspective ouverte par cette affirmation est généralement négligée dans les commentaires linéaires. En effet Socrate abandonne rapidement les deux paradigmes ainsi que la description de leurs activités respectives. Les protagonistes retournent à la réfutation de la thèse de Protagoras momentanément abandonnée, sans plus parler du travail scientifique. Dans la continuité apparente de l'argumentation, le sujet serait donc clos. Mais la conclusion est toute autre si une analyse thématique et discontinue de la fin du dialogue est conduite. Car la notion de «totalité», évoquée rapidement dans la digression, est un des thèmes majeurs des dernières pages du *Théétète*, en particulier lorsque la « théorie de rêve » est examinée par Socrate. Les deux mots πᾶν et ὅλον y sont alors directement mis en question.

Le but de cet article est de montrer qu'en modifiant comme on vient de l'indiquer l'orientation et les modalités de l'analyse, la réfutation de la « théorie de rêve» apparaît sous un nouveau jour: elle permet, non point de définir la science, mais de clarifier le concept de « totalité », clef de l'activité scientifique brièvement résumée dans le milieu du dialogue. Pour vérifier cette hypothèse, l'étude est divisée en quatre temps. Les trois premiers correspondent aux trois étapes de la réfutation finale dans lesquelles les occurrences des mots ὅλον, «entier», et πᾶν, «tout», sont décisives[5]. Dans la dernière partie de l'article, l'activité scientifique présentée dans la digression sera finalement précisée grâce aux conclusions tirées des trois précédentes sections.

PARTIE 1: LE PRINCIPE D'EXHAUSTIVITÉ (204-206)[6].

Après avoir sommairement décrit la «théorie de rêve» (201c-203e) Socrate passe immédiatement à sa critique (204a-206b). Au cours de celle-ci, la notion de totalité est au cœur du débat: les deux protagonistes discutent en effet ouvertement du sens respectif des mots *πᾶν* et ὅλον[7]. Théétète défend que τὸ ὅλον, est une unité, différente de *τὸ πᾶν*, multiplicité désignant tous les composants (204b7-8, 204e4-8)[8]. Contre le jeune mathématicien, Socrate veut montrer que *τὸ ὅλον* est équivalent à toutes ses parties.

Pour ce faire, le philosophe recourt à deux exemples, l'entier naturel 6 et trois normes physiques. Il conclut qu'un nombre est équivalent à tous les éléments numériques requis dans telle ou telle opération et qu'un objet physique consiste en toutes ses parties matérielles de telle ou telle dimension (204be). Le mot « tout » n'en réfère pas à l'unité mais est équivalent à tous ses composants. Cette règle s'appliquerait à *πᾶν* comme à ὅλον. Théétète qui refuse d'abord de l'admettre conclut finalement en accord avec Socrate (205a7).

Le philosophe ne définit pas de manière aussi explicite l'unité dont il ne parle qu'occasionnellement (203c4-5, 203e3-5, 204a1-2 et 205c-e). Mais ces indications dispersées permettent de la caractériser. Socrate emploie toujours le verbe γίγνεσθαι (générer, venir à l'être) pour décrire cette unité qui est par conséquent littéralement «générée». Elle provient d'un assemblage (συντίθημι 203c4-5) ou d'un ajustement (συναρμόζω, 204a1)[9] réalisé élément par élément. Le processus de genèse mêle intimement des composants de base, un par un, afin qu'étroitement combinés, ils disparaissent finalement en devenant cette nouvelle « unité générée».

Dans les deux cas – totalité et unité – de multiples éléments sont reliés les uns aux autres. C'est la dynamique de composition qui fait toute la différence. En effet la génération se développe nécessairement dans le temps et l'espace alors que dans le cas de la totalité, l'antériorité est inexistante. Le tout ne génère pas ses parties pas plus que celles-ci ne génèrent le tout. Celui-ci est instantanément équivalent à toutes ses composantes. Ainsi au fil du raisonnement, «le tout » comme « l'entier » signifie toujours une pluralité. Tous les composants numériques sont immédiatement liés dans le nombre total au moyen des opérations, comme tous les composants matériels sont reliés instantanément dans les étalons physiques de mesure. Ces dynamiques correspondent en leur principe à la force interne de cohésion qui maintient ensemble, à chaque instant, tous les constituants d'une totalité. Il apparaît donc qu'entre 204 et 206, Socrate discrimine en fait deux processus, l'un génératif et l'autre cohésif.

Comme les deux protagonistes, les exégètes contemporains comparent l'unité et la totalité et admettent que «le tout», πᾶν, comme «l'entier», *ὅλον*, sont constitués par tous leurs composants. Mais beaucoup d'entre eux rejettent la conclusion de Socrate qui assimilerait les deux termes[10]. Car selon eux le mot «entier», ὅλον, évoque la notion de structure et, pour cette raison, désigne une sorte d'unité[11]. Or si tel était le cas, cette unité que serait «l'entier» proviendrait soit des composants, soit d'un ordre supérieur à ceux-ci.

- Dans le premier cas, il ne s'agit en fait que d'un processus de type génératif (les éléments produisant l'unité). Cette hypothèse tombe en conséquence sous la critique socratique. «L'entier» n'est pas une unité générée par ses composants mais désigne une totalité c'est-à-dire des multiples maintenus ensemble par une force de cohésion instantanée.

- Le second cas est exemplifié par Emanuele Maffi qui a récemment défendu que Socrate ferait la différence entre πᾶν et ὅλον, en prenant en compte la notion de «structure» et tiendrait «l'entier» pour une unité eidétique[12]. Il «constitue, écrit Emanuele Maffi, l'unité logique d'une multiplicité d'éléments qui acquièrent une nouvelle nature en devenant un tout unifié et harmonieux»[13]. Ainsi le processus de genèse serait à l'œuvre du côté des éléments, dont la nature serait à cette occasion transformée en devenant une. Mais l'unité ainsi générée et qui serait en fait «l'entier», est dite «logique» comme déliée de la dynamique générative dont elle est pourtant le résultat. Le processus de genèse présupposé est immédiatement gommé, l'unité émergente devenant alors une *eidos*. «L'entier», ὅλον, doit être compris, poursuit Emanuele Maffi, «comme une *εἶδος*, idée unique et indivisible, dont la nature particulière dispose et organise toutes les relations entre ses éléments constitutifs»[14]. En fait cette «unité», produite à partir des éléments à l'issue d'un certain processus génératif, est déniée en tant que telle et doublée alors d'autorité par une Idée organisant les multiples.

Dans les deux types d'exégèse qui viennent d'être examinés, la notion de «structure» permet en fait d'entretenir le trouble[15]. Car les processus dynamiques qu'elle implique nécessairement[16], demeurent en général non examinés dans les commentaires. Genèse et cohésion s'évanouissent donc. A travers l'idée de structure vidée en grande partie de sa substance, c'est surtout la participation du «tout» ou de «l'entier» à l'unité qui est en fait visée. Mais cette participation suppose en fait une différence radicale: «tout» comme «entier» ne sont pas des unités mais participent de l'unité et tendent en conséquence à unifier les composants, en formant justement «une multiplicité», «une totalité».

De ce point de vue, la «structure» entendue comme participation à l'unité à travers le système de cohésion instantanée, est loin d'être négligée par Socrate. Ainsi les différentes expressions de 6 proposées par le philosophe (204a-d) peuvent être représentées par les diagrammes suivants[17].

° ° ° ° ° ° °	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
° ° ° ° ° °	2 x 3
° ° ° ° ° °	3 x 2
° ° ° ° ° °	4 + 2
° ° ° ° ° °	3 + 2 + 1

Ce sont cinq «arrangements» possibles, tous différents mais tous équivalents à 6. Si cinq exemples sont ainsi proposés, c'est parce que quelque soit la structure d'un «tout»/«entier», le principe d'exhaustivité demeure valide et prioritaire. Car avant que ne se pose la question de l'arrangement des parties élémentaires, «le tout» comme «l'entier» impliquent par définition l'intégralité des composants (la liste doit être complète comme doivent l'être les sommes et les produits ...).

Nous pouvons donc conclure cette première partie. Entre 204 et 206, Socrate énonce une règle générale. Les deux mots «tout» *πᾶν* et «entier» ὅλον renvoient au même principe d'exhaustivité qui implique l'équivalence instantanée entre le tout et tous ses composants. La multiplicité demeure grâce à une dynamique interne de cohésion par laquelle toutes les parties sont liées à chaque instant (la double flèche de l'équivalence). Ce processus diffère de la genèse qui se déroule dans le temps et l'espace et qui produit à partir de multiples éléments originels une nouvelle «unité générée» (la flèche temporelle). Le principe d'exhaustivité n'est pas contesté par la suite; Théétète et Socrate le tiendraient donc pour acquis sans autre discussion.

PARTIE 2: *ΠΑΝ* ET *ΌΛΟΝ* DISTINGUÉS (206-208).

Entre 206 et 208, le «tout» n'est plus l'enjeu majeur du débat. Pour cette raison, les commentateurs qui proposent une lecture linéaire, n'examinent pas les nouvelles occurrences des mots *ὅλον* et πᾶν et ne remettent pas en cause les résultats qu'ils ont tirées de la section précédente du dialogue. Bruno Centrone est parmi les rares qui aient affirmé que dans le *Théétète*, Platon suggère une distinction entre les deux termes[18]. Mais son analyse est externe en référence au *Phédon*. Comme lui, Emanuele Maffi considère que la différence est faite, mais pour elle comme on vient de le voir, *ὅλον* désignerait une unité eidétique cependant que *πᾶν* renverrait à la multiplicité[19]. La conclusion de notre enquête est similaire en apparence aux travaux des deux exégètes italiens mais elle en diffère radicalement sur le fond. Il est en effet possible de montrer que *ὅλον* et *πᾶν* sont distingués par Socrate entre 206 et 208 en s'appuyant sur le texte lui-même et sur la façon dont les protagonistes emploient les deux termes. En caractérisant ainsi les usages de *ὅλον* et de πᾶν, le philosophe affine ses conclusions précédentes sur le «tout». C'est ce que cette deuxième partie de l'analyse vise à démontrer.

Les deux occurrences de *πᾶν* appartiennent à la même phrase (206d6 et 206e1)[20]. Dans les deux cas, le mot est appliqué de la même façon, sans article, comme un quantificateur universel qui signifie: «quel qu'il soit». Chaque élément est équivalent à tous, leur différence ne vaut que numériquement (en tant qu'elle manifeste seulement leur multiplicité).

Le mot τὸ ὅλον apparaît deux fois et nécessite un examen plus approfondi car il joue un rôle important dans l'argumentation socratique 206e4-208c6. Le philosophe déclare que définir une chose pourrait être «en rendre compte (*logos*) au moyen des éléments» (206e7). Il emploie alors le mot τὸ ὅλον dans une phrase positive qui clôt son exposé avant qu'il ne le critique (207c1-4). Il emprunte à Hésiode l'exemple du charriot et affirme que «celui qui peut passer à travers ses cent pièces» connaît la réalité du charriot «en atteignant l'entier (τὸ ὅλον) à travers les éléments»[21]. La préposition δια (+ génitif) qui signifie «par» est systématiquement appliquée aux «éléments», dans toutes les occurrences de ce mot. La signification de cette préposition est illustrée par deux verbes. Le *logos* «parcourt» (διελθεῖν, 207b8) une «route» (ὁδός) étant ainsi ouverte[22]. Les éléments sont les étapes successives de ce trajet. Socrate vise tout à la fois la chose visible et le discours tenu à son sujet. Il y a une sorte de parallélisme: les mots liés dans la phrase et les concepts associés dans l'explication correspondent aux composants joints dans l'objet visible. Le second verbe est *περαίνεῖν* qui signifie «atteindre la limite» donc «achever» et qui est utilisé deux fois (207b5, c4). Le logos atteint la limite qui est τὸ ὅλον «l'entier». Par quatre fois, «élément» est au singulier. On doit parcourir chaque élément, un par un. Ainsi, le *logos* est littéralement la route qui passe à travers chaque composant et qui s'achève dans «l'entier»[23]. Ce dernier est explicitement une limite. Cette dynamique n'additionne pas les éléments et correspond plutôt à un processus proche de l'intégration[24].

Mais l'explication socratique est plus ambiguë. Car on peut assourdir le sens propre du premier verbe διελθεῖν. En ce cas, le *logos* n'est pas une route continue mais une simple énumération. Si l'on fait semblablement avec le second verbe περαίνεῖν en atténuant son sens premier, l'idée de limite s'estompe. L'entier n'est plus alors l'accomplissement d'un voyage à travers chaque élément mais une sorte d'agrégat dont le *logos* liste tous les éléments, un par un. Ainsi, le mot τὸ ὅλον tel qu'il paraît dans ces

lignes, oscille entre deux extrêmes, selon qu'il est compris au propre ou au figuré:

- Littéralement, l'entier est la dernière limite atteinte à la fin d'un trajet à travers chaque élément. Le processus est une sorte d'intégration (la cohésion de l'objet est maximale, la continuité forte et le *logos* est une explication avec de solides liens logiques).

- Au sens figuré, l'entier n'est qu'un agrégat, seulement défini par l'énumération de tous ses éléments un par un (la cohésion de la chose est à son plus bas niveau, très discontinue et le logos est semblable à une liste)[25].

La seconde occurrence de τὸ ὅλον (208c6) est la dernière du dialogue. Le mot est alors employé par Théétète qui résume les explications précédentes. Le *logos* serait « à travers l'élément, la route vers l'entier» (διὰ στοιχείου ὁδὸς ἐπὶ τὸ ὅλον, 208c6). Toutes les notions proposées par Socrate ont été intégrées par le mathématicien[26]. Pour le philosophe comme pour Théétète, «l'entier», énumération ou intégration de tous ses éléments, est la limite d'un processus dynamique de cohésion liant toutes ses composantes de manière plus ou moins continue.

Ainsi, entre 206 et 208, les mots ὅλον et πᾶν se distinguent clairement par leurs usages respectifs. Le principe d'exhaustivité est nécessaire dans les deux cas mais πᾶν est employé comme un quantificateur universel, tandis que τὸ ὅλον désigne plutôt la dynamique générale de cohésion. Cependant il nous faut reconnaître que Socrate pose *de facto* cette différence sans l'expliquer. Pour comprendre la raison de ce relatif silence, remarquons d'abord que dans un dialogue, est implicite tout ce que les protagonistes n'ont pas besoin de démontrer entre eux et qu'ils mettent spontanément en pratique au cours de leur discussion. La différence entre ὅλον et πᾶν serait donc tacitement admise par les deux parties. Ce point peut-il être vérifié ? Théétète a déclaré au début de l'argumentation qu'il y avait selon lui une différence entre les deux termes. Ce faisant, le jeune homme suivait en fait les usages de la langue commune. En effet, comme la plupart des commentateurs l'ont remarqué, πᾶν renvoie à l'universel affirmant la multiplicité (et correspond à *omnis*) tandis que ὅλον (équivalent à *totus*) désigne plutôt la structure c'est-à-dire le fait que la totalité soit non divisée mais en son entier[27]. En soulignant cette différence consacrée par la langue vernaculaire, Théétète a oublié ce qui reste commun entre les deux termes: le principe d'exhaustivité. Socrate le lui a donc rappelé entre 204 et 206. Après cette mise au point, le philosophe a poursuivi son argumentation en utilisant les deux mots selon les usages en cours. Si l'explication est superflue, c'est parce que dans le langage courant, la différence entre les termes est tacitement admise.

A l'issue de la seconde partie de l'analyse on peut donc conclure: ὅλον et πᾶν qui avaient d'abord été considérés en leur point commun (le même principe d'exhaustivité) ont été finalement différentiés à travers leurs usages respectifs. *Πᾶν* renvoie à l'universel (tous, toutes choses) et *τὸ ὅλον* désigne la dynamique d'intégration qui tend à l'unification (le système de cohésion interne qui relie les éléments entre eux). Ni Socrate ni Théétète ne contestent ces points qui demeurent valides pour les deux protagonistes.

PARTIE 3: LE «NON TOUT», LA DIFFÉRENCE (208-210).

Mais le philosophe montre immédiatement la limite des explications qui précèdent. En élucidant la dynamique interne d'un tout, ce dernier est connu en soi, à travers ses composants. Mais ceux-ci ne sont distingués que

par le rôle qu'ils jouent dans un processus particulier de cohésion[28]. C'est insuffisant pour les caractériser complètement et donc pour connaître parfaitement le tout en question. Socrate poursuit cette critique en constatant que tant que l'on veut définir les choses «par leur caractéristique commune, on ne définit que la communauté (ἡ κοινότης) de ces choses» (208d8-9). L'occurrence du mot ἡ κοινότης est unique dans le corpus platonicien. Dans le contexte du *Théétète*, ἡ κοινότης peut être traduit par le nom moderne: «classe»[29]. Quand on sait que quelque chose a la propriété d'appartenir à une classe, on sait seulement que cette chose est semblable à n'importe quel autre membre de cette classe. Voilà qui n'est pas assez pour déterminer l'objet étudié dans sa singularité[30]. Ainsi, la seule considération soit d'une classe, soit d'une dynamique de cohésion ne permet pas de définir complètement «un tout»[31].

La fin du dialogue offre une solution à ce problème. Socrate examine une dernière définition de la science (208c7-210a7). Elle pourrait être: opinion vraie et *logos* donnant «un signe par lequel une chose diffère de toutes (τῶν ἁπάντων)» (208c8). Le mot ἅπᾶν est ici employé[32]. La nouvelle recherche socratique est à l'opposé de la précédente. Le philosophe essayait jusque là de saisir l'objet étudié en cherchant à «atteindre son intégralité à travers ses éléments». Il veut désormais définir l'objet d'un point de vue extérieur, dans sa singularité, littéralement en ce qu'il diffère de «toutes les choses», c'est-à-dire de «tout». La notion de totalité qui semble hors de cause, est encore bien que de façon négative, l'enjeu du débat. C'est ce qui va être précisé maintenant.

Afin de singulariser un objet, Socrate cherche donc à déterminer sa «différence». Le mot grec d'abord employé, ἡ διαφορά, est assez fréquent dans les dialogues, mais le nom ἡ διαφορότης qui le remplace peu après, est rare. Sur ses neuf occurrences dans tout le corpus, cinq appartiennent à cette dernière partie du *Théétète*[33]. *Διαφορά* comme *διαφορότης* indiquent la différence d'une chose comparée à d'autres. Sur ce point, le dernier exemple de Socrate permet d'apprécier comment le philosophe procède. Il considère le rapport entre deux objets: d'un côté « le corps de Théétète », et d'un autre côté un représentant de la classe «corps humain». Socrate prend ensuite des représentants de plus en plus précis, de plus en plus proche du «corps de Théétète». La «différence» qui apparaît au cours de cette série de comparaison tend alors vers zéro. Ainsi, le *logos* proposé par Socrate correspond à un processus particulier illustré par l'exemple: il s'agit de viser la limite d'une série de rapports entre des quantités qui tendent à devenir infinitésimales. En termes contemporains, c'est une sorte de différentielle[34]. De façon plus générale, on peut dire qu'afin de distinguer le corps de Théétète dans sa particularité, Socrate considère les différents ensembles auquel il appartient (tous les corps , tous les corps avec nez camus, tous les corps avec nez camus et avec ...). Le corps de Théétète est à l'intersection de tous ces ensembles. En caractérisant ainsi l'objet étudié à travers ses différentes appartenances, celui-ci est individualisé et libéré de toute classification.

Or il nous faut maintenant admettre que le contraire du tout considéré comme la limite de «la route à travers l'élément» (c'est à dire comme une sorte d'intégration) est en effet la limite du rapport entre deux quantités infinitésimales (c'est à dire une sorte de différenciation). Il nous faut aussi admettre que le contraire du tout considéré comme une classe (ἡ κοινότης) est en effet une singularité qui dépasse en sa particularité toute classification et qui peut être caractérisée en comparant tous les ensembles auxquels elle appartient (ἡ διαφορότης).

Ainsi le raisonnement de Socrate est conséquent: après avoir défini de manière positive la totalité (206-208) le philosophe a voulu examiner son contraire (208-210) et la différenciation finalement exposée est en effet l'inverse des processus d'intégration et de classification précédemment évoqués. Socrate lui-même a mis en pratique ces procédés, par exemple au début du dialogue, lorsqu'il a montré les points communs et les différences existant entre son art maïeutique et celui des sages-femmes (149b-150d)[35]. Mais à la fin du *Théétète*, après avoir fourni les explications analysées précédemment, le philosophe semble limiter considérablement la portée du processus de différenciation. Car il observe que la «différence» est déjà faite par l'opinion droite, sans qu'il soit besoin d'aucune autre explication, d'aucun *logos*. La dernière argumentation socratique serait-elle alors complètement inutile ?

Pour lever cette dernière difficulté, il faut noter que Socrate a défini peu avant l'opinion comme un arrêt du mouvement de la pensée finalement fixée en une assertion dûment soupesée (190a4). En conséquence, pour montrer la validité ou au contraire démasquer l'incohérence d'une opinion, il est nécessaire de révéler et de discuter les délibérations de l'âme avant son arrêt définitif. Ainsi, la «différence» appréciée par l'opinion n'est rien d'autre que l'arrêt d'un mouvement propre de la pensée. En l'occurrence, ce mouvement est connu car il correspond aux dernières explications socratiques. Le jugement n'affirme à juste titre une «différence» qu'à la fin d'un processus de différenciation au cours duquel l'objet étudié a été singularisé à travers une série de comparaison entre toutes ses appartenances, processus qui doit être organisé et contrôlé, comme Socrate l'a montré sur l'exemple du corps de Théétète. Il s'agit là d'un résultat positif qui n'est pas contesté par les protagonistes.

PARTIE 4: «LE TOUT» SELON LE SCIENTIFIQUE ET SELON LE RHÉTEUR.

Ainsi les deux dernières parties de l'argumentation finale du *Théétète* sont en fait les deux versants d'un même développement logique. Il permet de raisonner au sujet des totalités en supposant qu'un «tout» implique d'une part l'intégration de tous ses composants et d'autre part la différenciation de chacun d'eux, le principe d'exhaustivité s'imposant dans les deux cas[36].

Tous ces points permettraient finalement d'éclairer la digression du dialogue dans laquelle Socrate oppose le physicien/philosophe et l'orateur/politicien. Rappelons que selon lui, la pensée du scientifique vole, πᾶσαν πάντῃ φύσιν ἐρευνωμένη τῶν ὄντων ἑκάστου ὅλου (173e4-174a1). Il est désormais possible de proposer une traduction justifiée de cette dernière formule. L'objectif scientifique est ainsi défini: «découvrir partout, la nature, quelle qu'elle soit, de chaque tout constitué par les êtres». Le verbe ἐρευνωμένη coupe en deux parties la proposition:

- τῶν ὄντων ἑκάστου ὅλου, «chaque entier des êtres». Le mot ὅλον, peut être précisé car on sait désormais que «l'entier» est connu à travers le double processus d'intégration et de différentiation. Il correspond à l'accomplissement d'une dynamique particulière de cohésion, plus ou moins continue, qui tient ensemble tous les composants. Dans le cas présent, ceux-ci sont «les êtres», τῶν ὄντων. Ils ne peuvent être individualisés que par différenciation à travers leurs appartenances à divers ensembles.

- πᾶσαν πάντῃ φύσιν, «partout, toute nature». L'adverbe, πάντῃ, « partout », indique le caractère systématique de l'enquête, des profondeurs de la terre aux confins du ciel et renforce l'universalité de l'activité scientifique.

L'adjectif πᾶσαν, sans article, est le quantificateur universel (comme en 206d6 et 206e1). Le scientifique doit découvrir les différents types de «nature» quels qu'ils soient. Le mot φύσιν nécessite une analyse détaillée qui dépasse la mesure de cet article. Mais il est commenté peu après par Socrate (174b1-6). Celui-ci distingue «la nature humaine» relativement aux autres en ce qu'elle «fait» (ποιεῖν) et en ce qu'elle «pâtit» (πάσχειν). Cette affirmation est conforme à la déclaration du *Phèdre*, 270d4 -5: explorer la nature d'une chose consiste à examiner sa dynamique, son agir (quel type d'action et dans quel but) et son pâtir (quel type de réaction et sous quel effet). Découvrir la nature quelle qu'elle soit d'une chose (en l'occurrence d'un tout) consisterait donc à caractériser celle ci (en l'occurrence le tout en question) en son action/passion avec les autres choses (en l'occurrence les autres touts).

La découverte scientifique a donc deux volets, ce que confirment les exemples donnés ensuite par Socrate – la nature de l'homme (174b), la justice (175c) la royauté (175c). Dans tous ces cas, l'objet de l'étude est considéré en lui-même puis est différencié par rapport aux autres. Dans la phrase étudiée en 173e4-174a1, on peut distinguer les deux niveaux de l'examen scientifique: d'une part, il faut caractériser chaque tout en lui-même (en tant qu'«entier» ὅλου) c'est-à-dire chaque processus de cohésion reliant des êtres dûment distingués. D'autre part, il faut déterminer la nature spécifique de chacun de ces touts, c'est-à-dire leur action et leur réaction les uns par rapport aux autres.

Deux remarques s'imposent: d'abord, «l'unité générée» n'est pas mentionnée. Selon Socrate la pensée du scientifique s'applique aux forces instantanées de cohésion entre les êtres. Les processus génératifs semblent donc être exclus de cette enquête. Deuxièmement, la recherche ne porte ni sur le cosmos (mot qui ne figure pas dans le *Théétète*) ni sur «le» Tout mais sur la nature de chaque tout sans rassembler cette pluralité dans «un ensemble des ensembles»[37].

Mais Socrate n'a évoqué le travail scientifique qu'afin de montrer comment il s'oppose à l'activité mesquine et chicanière de l'orateur/politicien. Dans le *Théétète*, l'art rhétorique est défini comme la capacité de changer les opinions à volonté (201a9 -10). Cette définition renvoie littéralement au *Phèdre* (261ce). Dans ce dialogue, la critique de l'orateur est largement développée (261-270) et montre l'incompétence dialectique de celui-ci (264-269). Il ne sait pas que le discours est constitué comme «un tout», un corps organisé (264c5, ὅλου) et ne prête en général aucune attention à l'ordonnancement des totalités (269c2-3, ὅλου). Cette méconnaissance explicitement mise en évidence dans le *Phèdre*, prend tout son sens dans la digression du *Théétète*. Car le rhéteur/politicien en ignorant la façon dont les touts sont constitués ne peut pas découvrir leurs différentes natures et s'oppose donc en conséquence au philosophe/physicien. La notion de «totalité» est donc au cœur du débat[38] et la dernière partie du dialogue peut être à nouveau invoquée. Elle nous a permis à l'instant de clarifier l'activité scientifique mais elle comporte également une dimension critique qui met en évidence une fausse conception de la totalité. Dans ce cas, le tout peut être:

- assimilé à une unité générée»,

- réduit au seul processus d'intégration, enténébrant alors la singularité de chaque élément écrasé en quelque sorte dans la multiplicité,

- enfin radicalement nié au profit de son contraire, la « différence », mystérieusement appréciée par l'opinion.

Avec cette rhétorique, une entité fantomatique émerge au-dessus de la multiplicité, la dynamique de cohésion reste presque totale-

ment inconnue, aliénante et aliénée et l'unité de base ou individuelle est simplement préjugée. La «théorie de rêve» devient «théorie de cauchemar[39].»

CONCLUSION.

Cette étude a donc proposé une nouvelle interprétation de la troisième et dernière partie du *Théétète*. La digression qui est au centre du dialogue a constitué le point de départ et le point d'arrivée de notre enquête. Loin de chercher à considérer *a priori* le *Théétète* comme «un tout», notre commentaire fut thématique, fondé sur l'examen de parties discontinues de la fin du dialogue, où paraissent les occurrences des mots ὅλον et πᾶν. On a pu alors montrer que la réfutation de la «théorie de rêve» propose en fait un raisonnement valide sur la totalité par lequel une conception fallacieuse est disqualifiée.

- Premièrement (203a-206c) Socrate établit un principe d'exhaustivité. «L'entier» et «le tout», τὸ ὅλον et τὸ πᾶν, sont équivalents à tous leurs composants. La genèse qui produit une nouvelle «unité» est distinguée de la cohésion qui solidarise instantanément de multiples parties. Au contraire, dans une conception erronée de la totalité, l'entier est une mystérieuse unité émergeant de la multiplicité.

- Deuxièmement (206c-208c) *ὅλον* et *πᾶν* sont distingués. Le mot πᾶν est employé à titre de quantificateur universel cependant que τὸ ὅλον en réfère à la dynamique cohésive réunissant les composants. Mais ces considérations nécessaires ne sont pas suffisantes. Au contraire, dans une conception erronée de la totalité, le tout peut être simplement réduit à une classe ou à une dynamique interne sans complète différentiation des constituants.

- Troisièmement (208c-210a) Socrate examine finalement un objet dans sa singularité, en tant qu'il est différent de tous, comme un «non tout». Antithétique à la classification et à l'intégration, le processus de différenciation implique la comparaison organisée entre les touts auxquels appartient la chose étudiée. Au contraire, dans une conception erronée de la totalité, la «différence» est jugée, sans avoir été explicitement examinée et vérifiée.

Fort de ces compléments d'information, l'activité du philosophe/physicien décrite brièvement dans la digression, a été finalement précisée. Le scientifique cherche à découvrir la nature de chaque tout, sans égard au processus de génération ni à une totalité absolue, en déterminant les liaisons externes entre les différents touts (agir et pâtir) en fonction des liaisons internes en chacun d'eux (intégration et différenciation). Parallèlement, il est possible de définir faussement les «totalités». Dans le pire des cas, le rhéteur peut faire croire qu'entre une unité générale artificielle (le «tout-un») et une unité individuelle préjugée (l'«élément-un»), la dynamique est contradictoire, écrasant les singularités comme les multiplicités. Ainsi, le double paradigme de la digression, explique le double caractère, à la fois positif et négatif de la fin du dialogue. Mais cette complexité trouve aussi une de ses raisons dialectiques essentielles en la personne du jeune Théétète qui reçoit l'enseignement du géomètre Théodore (le tout selon le physicien) dans le contexte politique athénien dominé par l'art rhétorique (le tout selon l'orateur). La maïeutique de Socrate vise alors à trier le bon grain de l'ivraie c'est-à-dire «à séparer le rêve scientifique de totalité» du cauchemar totalitaire du politicien. Est-il possible de penser que, sans ce nécessaire examen diacritique, la science pourrait être dialectiquement définie?

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END NOTES

1 Monique Dixsaut a bien voulu lire et commenter cet article, ce qui m'a permis de mieux saisir les limites de mon travail et en cela même de mieux l'accomplir. Qu'elle en soit ici remerciée. Je reste évidemment entièrement responsable du propos tenu.

2 Le débat est largement ouvert concernant la nature des éléments, unités atomiques présupposées par la théorie : pour certains, ils sont physiques ou matériels, pour d'autres logiques ou mathématiques, pour les derniers simplement ambigus. La réfutation conduite par Socrate est également discutée. 1) Pour certains, elle est totale soit parce que la théorie ne peut atteindre l'essence (CORNFORD, 1935), soit parce qu'elle est matérialiste et condamnée en conséquence par Socrate (SEDLEY, 2004), soit parce qu'avec elle, la connaissance dépend de la sensation ce qui la discrédite (Chappell, 2004), soit parce qu'elle montre l'impasse du raisonnement mathématique qui ne peut pas prouver ses propres prémisses (MORROW, 1970). Pour David Bostock, la réfutation de Socrate n'est pas rigoureuse sur le plan logique (BOSTOCK, 1988). 2) D'autres commentateurs ont relativisé la conclusion du philosophe (l'aporie est nécessairement la base de toute connaissance pour FINE, 2003; la théorie permet d'atteindre une connaissance incomplète mais reste efficace pour les scientifiques et les artistes selon POLANSKY, 1992). 3) D'autres encore font valoir que le but de la réfutation est d'invalider la prémisse fautive du raisonnement ce qui n'anéantit pas la théorie en son entier. Mais déterminer cette prémisse est l'enjeu d'un nouveau débat : soit c'est la disjonction entre les deux propositions «le tout est un» ou «le tout est toutes les parties» qui est erronée (DESJARDINS, 1990; HARTE, 2002) soit c'est la dissymétrie entre inconnaissables (unités élémentaires) et connaissables (pluralité composée) qui est trompeuse (SEDLEY, 2004; FROIDEFOND, 2006). Selon la position adoptée, les commentateurs défendent que: 1) la théorie est finalement condamnée par Platon (CORNFORD 1935; CHAPPELL, 2004) 2) au contraire, elle permettrait, adaptée ou pas, de définir tout ou partie de la science (POLANSKY, 1992; DESJARDINS, 1990; FINE, 2003).

3 Certains commentateurs ont essayé de relier la digression au reste du texte (BARKER, 1976; BENARDETE, 1984-1986; HEMMENWAY 1990). Mais dans tous les cas, la discontinuité, loin d'être affirmée de manière positive, est en fait considérée soit comme un détail négligeable soit comme une difficulté. Cette position interprétative est souvent implicite.

4 Benardete traduit : "*in exploring everywhere every nature of each whole of the things which are*" (BENARDETE, 1984-1986, p : I-40). Cornford : «*everywhere seeking the true nature of everything as a whole*» (CORNFORD, 1935, p :85), Timothy Chappell : «*investigates the whole nature* (*physis) of each single thing that exists in every respect*» (CHAPPELL, 2004, p : 123), David Sedley : «*investigating in every respect the entire nature of the whole of each of the things there are*» (SEDLEY, 2004, p :69), Ronald Polansky : «*investigating in every way all the nature of the things which are, each as a whole*» (POLANSKY, 1992, p :138), Miles Burnyeat/ Levett : «*tracking down by every path the entire nature of each whole among the things that are*» (BURNYEAT/ LEVETT, 1990, p : 38). En français, Diès traduit «scrutant la nature en son détail et en son ensemble» (DIES, 1926, p : 205) et Michel Narcy : «explorant enfin sous tous ses aspects la nature entière de chacun des êtres en général» (NARCY, 1994, p : 206).

5 En anglais, tous les critiques traduisent systématiquement et semble-t-il, spontanément *τὸ ὅλον* par « *the whole*». *Τὸ πᾶν* est parfois traduit par « *the sum*» *(*CORNFORD 1935; BURNYEAT-LEVETT, 1990; BOSTOCK 1988, DESJARDINS, 1990; POLANSKY, 1992; SEDLEY, 2004), parfois plus littéralement par «*all*» *(*BENARDETE, 1984 - 1986; CHAPPELL, 2004 FOWLER, 1921). Je traduirai *τὸ πᾶν* par «le tout» et *τὸ ὅλον* par « l'entier». Mais en français la différence est moins marquée qu'en anglais. Seul le mot «tout» est couramment employé. On ralliera souvent cet usage, en spécifiant les significations particulières s'il en est.

6 Pour plus de détails concernant cette étape du raisonnement socratique, voir : NERCAM, 2011.

7 Les occurrences de *πᾶν*: 204a3, 7, 9, 11, 7 b, 9, 9 c2, 7, 9, d 2, 10, 10, 11, 5 e, 5, 6, 6, 8, 9, 13, 205a1 , 2, 5, 7, 9, 9, les occurrences de *ὅλον*: 204a7, 8, 11, b7, e8, 12, 205a4, 5, 7, 8.

8 La théorie de rêve suppose qu'il existe des «éléments» (unités irréductibles) qui sont aussi considérés comme des «parties» au cours du raisonnement. J'ai donc choisi de traduire le plus souvent possible ces deux mots par «composants» ou «constituants» afin d'éviter un débat terminologique et conceptuel qui dépasse le propos du seul *Théétète* (et qui mettrait en question les différences existant entre «éléments» d'un ensemble, «membres» d'une classe, «parties» d'une totalité …).

9 Ces deux verbes ne sont jamais appliqués ni au «tout», ni à l'«entier».

10 Pour David Sedley, « *some formal component – arrangement, structure, function, or the like* » manque (SEDLEY, 2004, p: 166). Pour Verity Harte, la prémisse défectueuse du raisonnement socratique est « *the identification of the whole with its parts* » et le concept de «structure» permettrait de résoudre cette difficulté (HARTE 2002 p: 35).

11 Voir: BOSTOCK, 1988; BURNYEAT-LEVETT, 1990; DESJARDINS, 1990; HARTE, 2002; SEDLEY 2004.

12 MAFFI, 2007.

13 «*L'intero è l'unità logica di una molteplicità di elementi che acquistano una nuova ed unitaria natura nel divenire una totalità armonica*» (MAFFI, 2007, 2-6-5).

14 «*Come εἶδος, idea unica ed indivisibile, la cui natura così peculiare dispone ed organizza tutti rapporti tra i suoi fattori costitutivi*» (MAFFI, 2007, 3-13, 19-22)

15 Soit l'exemple du gâteau en tant qu'«entier» : Pour les

uns, il est la structure combinant ses éléments originels, beurre, farine, sel,… Pour Emanuele Maffi, c'est une Idée organisant la combinatoire entre ses mêmes éléments originels…

16 Pour la notion de «structure» voir TRANÖY, 1959.

17 J'emprunte ce schéma à Ariel Meirav qui, au moyen de lignes de points, montre différentes structures du nombre 12 (MEIRAV, 2003, p :17-20).

18 CENTRONE 2002, 139-155.

19 MAFFI 2007, 2-10, 6-8.

20 Socrate déclare: toute personne (*πᾶς*, 206d6) qui n'est ni sourde ni muette est en mesure de prononcer une opinion. Donc, tous ceux qui sont dans ce cas et qui ont une opinion vraie, sont en mesure de l'exprimer vocalement. Par conséquent, toute personne (*πάντες*, 206e1) qui prononcerait une opinion vraie aurait la science (206d6-e2) si celle-ci était définie par «l'opinion vraie plus le flux sonore de la parole».

21 L'idée est la même en 207b4-6. Le mot *τό στοιχεῖον* est au pluriel en 206e7, 207b5, c3, et au singulier en 207c7, 208a9, b3 et c6.

22 *Ὁδός* est répété en 207c8, 208a10, b5 et c6.

23 Le mot grec moderne *ολος* se réfère presque littéralement à la même définition. Irini Tsamadou--Jacoberger écrit en effet que *ολος* «constitue la trace d'une opération de parcours que l'on pourrait caractériser comme un trajet de point à point » (TSAMADOU--JACOBERGER, 2006, p: 229).

24 Cette conclusion est semblable à ce que suggère Christian Froidefond. Il a affirmé mais sans donner aucun détail, que l'idée mathématique de l'intégration est implicite dans ce dialogue. Selon lui, la théorie du «flux» par lequel une ligne est générée (une ligne étant considérée comme l'écoulement d'un point) aurait pu être la base des découvertes de Théétète (FROIDEFOND, 2006, 28). Parallèlement, Rosemary Desjardins insiste elle aussi sur la notion de «flux» dans la tradition pythagoricienne, en lien avec le dialogue *Théétète* (DESJARDINS, 1990, note 3, 228-229).

25 L'exemple choisi par Socrate révèle le double sens. Le wagon considéré en son entier est à mi-chemin entre un ensemble d'éléments séparés qui peuvent être énumérés et un objet complet et organique, les 100 pièces ayant été étroitement assemblées afin de produire la meilleure cohésion possible.

26 La préposition *ἐπι*, «en direction», signifie aussi «au-dessus». C'est le caractère singulier et paradoxal de la limite. À cet égard, l'entier est d'une certaine façon à l'intérieur de tous les éléments et en dehors d'eux. L'accomplissement du tout semble dépasser toutes ses composantes, comme si une unité émergeait au dessus d'eux. L'illusion est d'autant plus grande que la cohésion et la continuité sont plus fortes.

27 Selon Viggo Brøndal, *totus* viendrait de «nation» ou «peuple», ce qui implique l'indivisibilité et la préservation d'un «bloc» sur le modèle de la solidarité sociale. *Omnis* viendraient par contre de *homines*, les hommes c'est-à-dire les éléments du groupe ce qui sous-entend à l'évidence la multiplicité (BRØNDAL, 1937). En anglais, «*whole*» signifie plutôt «entier, complet, non divisé» alors que «*all*» indique «tous» comme «chaque» composant(s) d'une totalité.

28 Socrate déclare que celui qui connaît le nom «Théétète» et sait en donner un par un les composants (c'est à dire les syllabes) dans leur propre dynamique (c'est à dire dans leur bon ordre) peut ignorer en même temps que le nom «Théodore» commence avec la même syllabe «Thé» (207d6-208a5). Sa connaissance du nom entier «Théétète» est incomplète, les composants de ce nom n'étant pas complètement connus.

29 La traduction de *ἡ κοινότης* est incertaine. Mais le fait essentiel reste l'unicité de l'occurrence dans le corpus. Le terme est donc très spécialement choisi pour ce contexte. Pour cette raison, le mot contemporain «classe» n'est peut-être pas le plus mauvais des choix.

30 C'est ce que Socrate montre dans son dernier exemple. Le «corps de Théétète» considéré comme appartenant à une classe générale («le corps humain» 209b4-8) n'est rien d'autre qu'un représentant de cette classe, équivalent à tous les autres représentants. Il reste tel, même si cette classe est précisée (par exemple «le corps humain avec un nez camus et des yeux globuleux» 209b0-c3). En effet, «le corps de Théétète» n'est pas seulement un représentant d'une classe spécifique mais aussi un corps singulier caractérisé par des différences par rapport à tous les représentants de la classe en question (nez camus spécifique, yeux globuleux particuliers, ...).

31 Un «tout» dans le sens moderne du mot «ensemble» ne classe pas les éléments. Il est nécessaire de tenir compte de tous les nez camus pour obtenir l'ensemble des nez camus. Mais deux nez camus suffisent pour déterminer la classe «nez camus» car chaque membre de cette classe est équivalent à un autre, quelle que soit sa particularité.

32 À la toute fin du dialogue, le mot πᾶν est également utilisé deux fois. En 210b5, *πάντα* renvoie à toutes les choses qui ont été dites auparavant et en particulier aux douleurs de l'enfantement que Théétète a enduré au cours de la discussion. *Ταῦτα πάντα* «tout ça», répété ensuite en 210b8, en réfère aux mêmes thèmes. Dans ces deux cas, *πᾶν* n'appartient à aucune démonstration et sa signification n'est ni spéciale ni technique.

33 *Διαφορά* est utilisé en 186d8 et deux fois à la fin du dialogue, 208d6 et e4. *Διαφορότης* apparaît en 209a5, d1, e7, 210a4, a8. Dans le corpus, il y a sept occurrences socratiques de ce mot: deux dans le *Philèbe* et cinq dans le *Théétète*. Dans les dialogues, le sens du mot *ἡ διαφορά* est plus psychologique que celui de *ἡ διαφορότης*.

34 Le caractère mathématique du raisonnement socratique est ici souligné et amplifié par la transcription en termes modernes. Cette exagération ne trahit pas le sens du texte. Le contexte est mathématique : Théétète est un géomètre pour qui Socrate adapte son discours. Si le vocabulaire a changé, il n'en est pas forcément de même pour les types de raisonnement, tout au moins en leur principe.

35 Le meilleur exemple se trouve au tout début du dialogue lorsque Théodore et Socrate font le portrait de Théétète (143d-144d). Le maître de géométrie le décrit

physiquement (points communs entre Théétète et Socrate, 143e7-144a1) et psychologiquement (144a1-b7). Le jeune homme se différencie de tous les élèves de Théodore. D'une «nature incroyable», il appartient à la fois à tous ceux qui ont une vive intelligence doublée d'un caractère colérique (144a6-8) et à tous ceux qui sont oublieux mais de tempérament taciturne (144a8-b3). En participant à ces dynamiques opposées, Théétète semble avoir équilibré les défaillances des premiers par celles des seconds : il est intelligent mais sans colère, paisible mais sans indolence oublieuse (144b3 -7). Il est ainsi différencié comme point d'intersection entre deux ensembles. Avant et après ce portrait, Socrate caractérise Théétète d'une manière plus sociologique. Le philosophe déclare que le jeune homme appartient à deux groupes : les élèves du géomètre (143d7-e3), et sa famille, l'*oikos* d'Euphronios du *démos* de Sounion (144c5 -8). N'étant pas encore citoyen, il est supervisé par le maître d'école et par le chef de la famille. Théétète est donc à nouveau différencié comme point d'intersection de deux ensembles. Cette caractérisation sociologique est externe par rapport à celle de Théodore. Mais tous deux appliquent le même principe : différencier la personne de Théétète en montrant ses différentes appartenances.

36 Cet enseignement délivré par Socrate à travers l'élenchos du jeune mathématicien constituerait comme une propédeutique nécessaire avant l'intervention de l'étranger d'Elée. Il va quant à lui, considérer de façon non plus logique mais dialectique les totalités, en procédant à leur division en parties adéquates. Les deux approches (l'une critique et logico-déductive et l'autre constructive et dialectique) bien que différentes sont complémentaires.

37 La totalité-une n'existe qu'en tant que «genre», rassemblant toutes les espèces de tout. Socrate dit dans le *Philèbe*: «le tout, comme« genre », est un, mais les parties de celui-ci relativement les unes aux autres, sont ou opposées ou distinguées les unes des autres par une myriade de différences» (12e5-13a1). C'est encore une *idea* et non un tout englobant qui relie une pluralité de touts, selon l'étranger Elée (*Sophiste* 253d8, voir sur ce point le commentaire de Monique Dixsaut, DIXSAUT 2001: 192-195). Un même type de raisonnement se trouve dans le *Théétète* lorsque Socrate déclare que : «toutes choses» (*πάντα ταῦτα*, et dans le cas présent, toutes les sensations, 184d3-4) convergent vers une «idée simple» (*μίαν τινὰ ἰδέαν*, et dans le cas présent, l'âme). L'unité entre touts est eidétique.

38 Elle fut aussi l'un des enjeux de la polémique séparant les « Mobilistes « et les « Immobilistes «. Les premiers disent que «toutes les choses changent » (*τὰ πάντα κινεῖσθαι*, 181c2), les seconds déclarent que «tout est un» (*ἕν ἑστος τὸ πᾶν*, 183 e4) et que «le tout est immobile » (*τοῦ ὅλου στατιῶται*, 181a7). Dans les deux cas qui sont extrêmes, «multiplicité en mouvement » et « unité immobile», la dynamique ne peut pas être comprise rationnellement (soit parce qu'elle est considérée comme absolue, soit parce qu'elle est complètement niée). Entre les « Mobilistes» et les «Immobilistes », le «tout» est coupé, divisé en deux camps, d'un côté «tout» au singulier, de l'autre côté «tous» au pluriel. La dynamique de cohésion est donc effacée et reste inconnue. La pensée dialectique est alors bloquée. Le rhéteur peut en conséquence jouer avec les contradictions formelles. Comme il sait comment transformer chez son interlocuteur une opinion en son contraire, il peut inverser *τὸ πᾶν* en *τὰ πάντα*. Mais ce lien nouvellement établi entre les deux termes n'est ni logique ni dialectique, mais purement rhétorique.

39 Le rhéteur est littéralement capable de «tout» «dénaturer». Face à ce danger extrême, Socrate fait fi des différences qui séparent le philosophe dialecticien du physicien géomètre et rassemble les deux personnages en un seul paradigme, le philosophe/physicien. Celui-ci représente tous ceux qui ont simplement le désir de savoir que celui-ci soit proprement dialectique (recherche des fondements et des causes) ou seulement logique et déductif (formalisation des axiomes posés par hypothèse sans être dialectiquement fondés). Si la science n'est pas définie dans le *Théétète* c'est peut-être parce que l'urgence face à la malignité du rhéteur commande premièrement de présenter un front d'union entre physiciens et philosophes et deuxièmement de raisonner logiquement la notion de totalité justement mise à mal par le rhéteur.

Competition, Imagery, and Pleasure in Plato's *Republic*, 1–9[1]

Matthew Robinson

ABSTRACT

This paper interprets the ***Republic***'s "parallel" imagery of a contest between the lives of the most just and most unjust men as indicating that book 9's two pleasure arguments are the culmination of the dialogue's refutation of Thrasymachus' sophistry. This strategic function of the pleasure arguments explains why Socrates designates the account of the just man's pleasure the most severe defeat of the unjust man. The article concludes with a brief defense of using the contest imagery as an interpretive aid to the dialogue.

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> "The question you are asking," I said, "needs an answer given through an image
> . . . At all events, listen to the image so you may see still more how greedy I am for images."
>
> (Socrates in *Republic* 487 E–488 A)

INTRODUCTION

1. In book 9 of the *Republic*, after he has completed the description of the tyrant's extreme unhappiness, Plato gives an account of pleasure that some scholars including Richard Kraut have taken to be of little importance to the argument of the dialogue as a whole.[2] On the other hand, in his recent monograph, Daniel Russell shows that Plato's treatment of pleasure is an important extension of the *Republic's* argument that the just life is by nature the best life. I support Russell's claim that the pleasure arguments are required to complete the *Republic*'s argument about the soul's nature. I also defend the further claim that when Socrates labels the defeat of the unjust man in terms of pleasure, "the greatest and most sovereign"[3] of the unjust man's defeats, a careful analysis of the imagery that accompanies this argument shows that Book 9's pleasure arguments form a final, decisive stage in the *Republic*'s larger refutation of Thrasymachus' sophistry as restored by Glaucon in Book 2.

2. I begin by analyzing in detail one of the dialogue's central, parallel images, a contest between the lives of the most just and most unjust men, whose significance within the dialogue as a whole has been largely overlooked. This contest is initially depicted

by the image of Glaucon's two statues, which summarizes the logic in Glaucon's challenge by distilling the contrast between the 'most just man' and most unjust man from the standpoint of Thrasymachus' sophistry (360 E 2).[4] In this analysis, I focus on parallel imagery as distinct from other kinds of imagery Plato used in composing the *Republic*. The central images of the sun, line, cave and the myth of Er, for instance, function as a replacement for argumentation, as Socrates says when introducing the first of these images (506 D 8 – E 5).[5] As parallel imagery, the contest imagery does not replace logical argument, but rather develops and complements it.[6]

A. THRASYMACHUS' DEFEAT IN BOOK 1

3. To prepare for this analysis, it is important to see that Glaucon's restoration of Thrasymachus' argument is given against the backdrop of Thrasymachus' submission to Socrates in book 1. There, Socrates defeated the sophist on sophistic terms, taming the metaphorical 'beast,' silencing his trickery, and thus clearing the pathway for intellectual exchange.[7] Recognizing Plato's suggestion that the real sophist must be silenced is important because it highlights Plato's implied claim that Thrasymachus, who has been characterized as deeply attached to victory and appearance,[8] cannot participate in philosophical dialogue while also prioritizing these goods. In Plato's view, philosophical progress requires receptivity to what lies beyond all exterior goods. Furthermore, in seeing the dramatic interplay of power and domination between Thrasymachus, the eventual loser, and Socrates, the eventual victor, we witness an early contest between their conflicting positions and Plato's early suggestion that Thrasymachus' position must eventually be answered on its own ground of power, *dynamis*. I will argue that the strategic function of Book 9's pleasure arguments becomes clearer when Socrates' response to Glaucon's challenge is seen as a gradual appropriation of the terms of Sophistry's argument. In this context, the theme of power re-emerges in Book 9 where the pleasure arguments are decisive because they are the final stage of this appropriation of terms. For now, I return to the beginning of book 2 where Glaucon, rather than Thrasymachus, sets forth the logic of sophistry from his own genuine desire for intellectual enlightenment. Again, Glaucon is better suited to restoring Thrasymachus' argument as his attraction to something higher (367 E 6–368 B 2) allows him the critical detachment from Thrasymachus' position required to articulate its logic transparently.[9]

B. TWO STATUES IN COMPETITION

4. In the third stage of this restoration, Glaucon depicts the furthest extreme of injustice in the description of the most unjust man whose injustice is made complete in his *seeming* to be perfectly just while in fact *being* the opposite (361 A 2–B 1). Conversely, Glaucon's most just man is inwardly just, while appearing to be perfectly unjust (361 B 8–C 3). This ensures that, in Kantian terms, the just man's motive for justice is derived from duty and not inclination, and that he is therefore just in the extreme.[10] Today, Glaucon's most just man might be a living saint, falsely convicted of something like terrorism or pedophilia. In order to test whether justice really is intrinsically good, the *dikaios* receives for his detested appearance the penalties of political and social disenfranchisement and, ultimately, bodily torture (361 B 7– 362 A 3).

It is important to my analysis that here, Glaucon places special emphasis on the persuasiveness of the most just man's pain: "They'll say that the just man who has such a disposition will be whipped; he'll be racked; he'll be bound; he'll have both his eyes burned out; and, at the end, when he has undergone every sort of evil, he'll be crucified and know [*γνώσεται*] that one shouldn't wish to be, but to seem to be, just" (361 E 3–362 A). The extreme of justice, Glaucon argues, causes extreme pain. It is worth noting that in this image perfect justice is portrayed as an indirect, extrinsic cause, since the pain is inflicted by the torturer rather than being self-inflicted. This passivity is emphasized by Plato's use of the middle voice with passive meaning in the description of the physical punishments. Furthermore, Glaucon portrays the just man's physical pain as sufficient to persuade the just man, against his own original conviction, that justice has no intrinsic value. The pain of his torture is so persuasive that the just man comes to 'know' that the sophist was right after all. Thus, the argument concludes, justice has only utilitarian value and it is better to seem to be just but to be unjust (362 A 2). In this conclusion we see that for "those who praise injustice ahead of justice" (361 E 2), as Glaucon describes Thrasymachus and his followers, extreme pain is sufficient to prevent the life of 'perfect' justice from being judged a good life. As the description of the two figures continues, the *adikos* receives all the external rewards obtained in the *polis* by the appearance of perfect justice – good reputation, social and political dominance, wealth, favor with the gods, and so on (362 A 4–C 8). The success of the most unjust man demonstrates, then, that justice is good, but only as an appearance that brings these superior goods. Justice therefore belongs to the third category of goods outlined at the beginning of book 2, the utilitarian goods (357 C 5–D 2).

5. I would like to stress that in both figures outlined here, the sophist's claim is captured in the perfect contradiction between outward appearance and interior state, which displays justice as a construction and an abstraction, and human happiness as appetite-satisfaction, a "good" without any necessary or determinate content.[11] As expected, this illustration facilitates the judgment that the life of the unjust man is superior (358 C 4–6 and 360 E 1–2), and to emphasize this purpose Socrates adds a finishing touch. After Glaucon has prepared all the material for his image, Socrates says, "my dear Glaucon, how vigorously you polish up each of the two men – just like a statue – for their judgment" (361 D 4–6; *ὦ φίλε Γλαύκων, ὡς ἐρρωμένως ἑκάτερον ὥσπερ ἀνδριάντα εἰς τὴν κρίσιν ἐκκαθαίρεις τοῖν ἀνδροῖν*). In this depiction, Socrates transforms Glaucon's character into a sculptor, who exerts his energy (*ἐρρωμένως* = vigorously) to manufacture statues with a contest-winning appearance (*ἐκκαθαίρεις* = polish up, or scour clean).[12] Socrates' active participation in establishing the image shows his agreement that Thrasymachus' version of justice is indeed purely a human construct. To see the full import of the image, we need to bear in mind that the just and unjust men exist within the city created by Glaucon's social contract, where justice *originates from* and also *in opposition to* a fundamentally anti-social, appetitive version of human nature.[13] The restrictive convention of law, *nomos* (359 C 5), is artificially imposed to restrict each individual's appetite-satisfying *phusis* into a society. At the same time, this justice is only superficial because it lacks intrinsic value. This is first indicated by Gyges, who casts it aside the moment it is no longer useful to him (360 A–B). The argument is that this kind of justice unifies society, but because the unity it provides is artificial, it is also only superficial. I suggest that the image of the

two polished stone statues, themselves products of human skill, presents in distilled form the logically basic claims of Thrasymachus' position, which are: 1) that the soul's nature is primarily and fundamentally appetitive, 2) that the only real justice is not natural, but manufactured, and thus has value only through its appearance as a means to satisfy the soul's appetites, and 3) that the best life is the one that satisfies the soul's appetites. However, I also suggest that while the image of statues captures this sophistic logic succinctly and elegantly, it also makes a subtle attack: the portrayal of both the most just man and the most unjust man as statues (361 D 5; *ὥσπερ ἀνδριάντα*), the lifeless products of human skill, is Socrates' early critique of sophistic *phusis* as unreal. As Socrates says before Glaucon reconstructs Thrasymachus' position, justice is neither good exclusively for its effects, nor is it good exclusively in itself. These two claims both miss the mark because they both emerge from a misconception of human nature. The image suggests that Thrasymachus' version of human nature is as disconnected from human nature as a statue is from a living human. In one of the rare scholarly references to this image, Seth Benardete remarks that "the statue Glaucon had made of the unjust man had no soul."[14] We should notice that in Socrates' preliminary attack on sophistic *phusis* there is, furthermore, an early suggestion that Socrates rejects Thrasymachus' concepts of justice as well as his judgment of what constitutes the best life (happiness), both of which logically derive from the same concept of *phusis*. Whether we are thinking in Thrasymachus' sophistic terms or Platonic terms, *phusis, dikaiosunē*, and *eudaimonia* are linked intrinsically to one another and to the Good as it is conceived within that position. That is, however any one of these terms is conceived is part and parcel of the way the other terms are conceived.

6. In what follows, I will maintain that the argumentative purpose of the statue image is two-fold. First, the image captures the sophistic logic at the outset of the *Republic*'s argument, clarifying this position in itself. The image also provides a shorthand reference point so that the distilled form of Thrasymachus' view can be recalled at later points in the dialogue where its interpretations of the basic terms, 'nature,' 'justice,' 'happiness,' 'pleasure,' 'pain,' and 'power' are analyzed, rejected and replaced, as Socrates systematically appropriates each term. There is evidence that the text supports my claims about the image's purpose, first in Socrates' recalling the image when the argument of the *Republic* re-evaluates the link between justice and happiness in books 7, 8, and 9.[15] Furthermore, as I will demonstrate, not only does Socrates return to Glaucon's image at these later points, but in book 9 he presents new contest images in parallel with the developments in the argument about the soul's nature and the character of justice. I will propose then, that the image of a contest between the *dikaios* and the *adikos* is recurring and parallels the *Republic*'s larger argument about human nature. The capacity of image to contain the whole discursive argument all at once is one way in which Plato's dialogue-form already takes into account Gadamer's insight that the whole can only be known through the part and the part through the whole. In the *Republic,* the relation of the 'parallel' image to the argument it summarizes is precisely the relation of the whole all at once to the parts that are available through the discursive argument only one step at a time.[16]

7. I now turn my focus to the re-appearance of the statue image in books 7 and 8, with the aim of illustrating how Socrates' response to Glaucon's challenge is present in the structurally similar images that appear in book 9.

My intention is to illustrate how the text uses its contest imagery to verify the content and strategy of Socrates' response to sophistry.

C. BOOKS 7 AND 8—THE CONTEST IMAGERY AS REFERENCE POINT

8. Between books 2 and 9, Socrates develops his argument as a response to Glaucon's image of the competing statues, whose demand Adeimantus makes more explicit: "don't only show us by the argument that justice is stronger than injustice, but show what each in itself does to the man who has it – whether it is noticed by gods and human beings or not – that makes the one good and the other bad" (367 E 1–5). As I have indicated, the foundation of Socrates' response comes in his own account of 'nature,' which is discovered both in the soul and in the city.[17] This alternative account of nature is first evident in the "city of utmost necessity" (369 D 11), which emerges from the pre-determined dependence of each citizen on the others.[18] When taken alone, each individual cannot meet his own natural requirements for food, shelter, and clothing (369 D 1–4) and so he requires the help of others to meet these bodily needs. Furthermore, 'nature' divides the members of this city into the various different occupations to which each simply discovers himself to be especially well-suited.[19] In Socrates' new city, the good of the group is inseparable from the good of each of its members because the nature of each individual would remain incomplete if he should live alone. Since the nature of each citizen is complete only in partnership with the others, it follows that there is no need for an artificially–and externally–imposed social contract to unify the citizens and to create justice. Nature already unifies them through natural necessity, and by doing so defines the good of each one as the good of the whole, rather than as the good of the discrete individual. I would suggest, then, that in this early city and its very different version of 'nature,' Socrates begins to appropriate this term, which is the most logically fundamental in his account and also in the account Glaucon reproduced.

* * *

9. At the end of book 7, having completed his description of the aristocracy (the best of all five states) and of its corresponding citizen (the reconceived *dikaios*) to the satisfaction even of Adeimantus and Glaucon, Socrates recalls the statue-making image, again as a way of measuring the argument's progress. It is significant that at this point it is not Adeimantus, but rather Glaucon, who frames Socrates' description of the aristocratic man in the terms of the original image from book 2: "Just like a sculptor, Socrates . . . you have produced ruling men who are wholly fair" (540 C 3–4; *Παγκάλους, ἔφη, τοὺς ἄρχοντας, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὥσπερ ἀνδριαντοποιὸς ἀπείργασαι*). Book 7's *ἀνδριαντοποιὸς,* a statue maker or sculptor, is a cognate of the *ἀνδριάντα* (361 D 5) that characterized book 2's image as a contest between statues, and its use provides one way to link the two images. The conjunction of the similar etymology and image, the fact that Glaucon is again interlocutor, taken together with the dialogue's return to the criterion of happiness, provides sufficient textual ground to interpret the *ἀνδριαντοποιὸς* in book 7 as a direct reference to book 2's image and concept. One important difference, however, is that Glaucon now characterizes Socrates as the sculptor instead of the reverse. Glaucon's framing Socrates' position on 'nature' and 'justice' in a way that specifically parallels

the way Socrates originally framed Glaucon's reconstruction in book 2 indicates, among other things, that Socrates' argument is now sufficiently developed to allow his direct response to Glaucon's challenge.

10. Book 8, which resumes the description of the aristocracy's corruption into four worse states, begins by stating its goal of determining whether the *dikaios* or the *adikos* is happiest:

> Must we next go through the worse men . . . and then, in turn, an oligarchic and a democratic man, and the tyrannic man, so that seeing the most unjust man, we can set him in opposition to the most just man? If so, we can have a complete consideration of how pure justice is related to pure injustice with respect to the happiness and wretchedness of the men possessing them. In this way we may be persuaded either by Thrasymachus and pursue injustice, or by the argument that is now coming to light and pursue justice (545 A 2–B 1).

It is notable that this reappraisal of the best life will hinge on the same link between justice and happiness that Glaucon established in book 2, except of course that 'justice' means the tri-–partite soul's harmonious order, something very different than it meant in Glaucon's description. It is also significant that Socrates accepts Glaucon's suggestion (540 C 3–4 as quoted above) to take up book 2's original image by offering his refutation of sophistry in terms of a judgment between the two extremes of the *dikaios* and the *adikos*, now interpreted as the philosopher king and the tyrant.

D. BOOK 9—A SEQUENCE OF CONTEST IMAGES

11. As I analyze how this reappraisal takes shape in book 9, I will argue that the logical progression through the three distinct stages of book 9's argument is paralleled by two more closely related contest images.[20] My analysis focuses on tracing the progress in the argument as captured by the particular contest image that accompanies each stage. By comparing the progress in the argument to the progress in the sequence of images, I argue that the development in the imagery supports the claim that Socrates' concept of *phusis* gives ultimate victory to the most just man in book 9 ultimately by the criterion of pleasure. However, I also emphasize the radical difference between this stance and a life devoted primarily to satisfying the appetites. As I will argue, I see the three images related in the following ways. First, the 'distinct' images all represent a contest in terms of who leads the happier life between the opposite poles of most unjust and most just men — and this contest has one unequivocal victor. Secondly, although the images share this common structure, their difference is marked by a progressive increase in the degree of life and independence possessed by the figures in each image. Third, since each subsequent image represents greater life and independence than its antecedent image, it makes that antecedent image obsolete in this role. Although I defend these three points in what follows, the third point is further supported by its use of the plural genitive, *τῶν πτωμάτων* (583 B 1–7), which integrates the earlier defeats of the unjust man into the final image of the wrestling contest. This inclusion of the previous defeats in the new image suggests that it replaces them in representing the most complete, accurate version of human nature.

12. Book 9's description of the tyrant's soul derives from the 'true' model of the soul's nature in that the perfect injustice of the tyrant is the perfect contradiction of the natural rule that reason should lead the whole

soul.[21] With specific reference to book 2's sophistic assertion that law, *nomos,* stands in opposition to the soul's 'nature' (359 C 5–6), Socrates now depicts the appetitive unjust man of book 2 as "[the tyrant, who] is drawn to complete hostility to the law" (572 D 9–E 1).[22] The tyrant's appetite for luxury (573 A 4; *αἱ ἄλλαι ἐπιθυμίαι*) unrestrained, quickly takes over his whole soul. But when it has isolated itself in the role of leader, *prostatēs*, his appetite has no capacity to limit itself. After it has become his soul's leader, his appetite inevitably destroys every limit it encounters, every vestige in the democratic soul of guidance by spirit and reason. At the end of this account of the tyrant's genesis, Socrates summarizes the result of a total divorce from nature and its necessity as the insanity of disdaining all objective order: " . . . the man who is *mad and deranged* undertakes and expects to be able to rule not only over human beings but gods, too" (573 C 3–5; emphasis added). The tyrant's extreme deviation from the justice of his soul erodes all limits, stemming either from the *oikos* (574 B 12–C 3) or from the *polis* (574 D 3–5).[23] His limitless 'freedom' to fulfill his limitless appetites (572 E 1–2) leads the tyrant into an absolute slavery;[24] as his appetite becomes his ruler (573 B 1) it also becomes his infinite and all-demanding master, consuming or destroying everything.[25] On my reading, this is a reinterpretation of Thrasymachus' view, reconstituted by Glaucon in book 2, that the best life or the happy life is the unlimited satisfaction of the appetites for anything from political power to possessing the woman of your dreams to placating the gods before you die (362 B – C). Socrates' critique of the pursuit of such appetite-satisfaction is that it inevitably turns into a life of slavery and pain, as explained in greater depth in the remaining two stages of book 9's argument.

13. As Socrates' analysis of the tyrannical soul continues, the *adikos* is presented as unhappy in the extreme, a conclusion now understood in relation to the model of the soul's tripartite 'nature.' Socrates asks Glaucon, who has suddenly taken over the argument from Adeimantus,[26] ". . .the man who turns out to be worst . . . will he also turn out to be most wretched?" (576 B 11– C 1). In satisfying his unfettered appetites, the tyrant has violated his soul's natural structure in the extreme and is utterly miserable. The unavoidable conclusion is that the old criterion of external reward does not produce real happiness. Instead, there will be a new standard for judging happiness: the harmony of the soul's three parts. Having redefined 'nature' and 'justice,' 'happiness' can now be judged "in the light of the truth" (576 C 3).

14. At this point, Socrates begins to illustrate a new contest image that corresponds with the developments in his account of the soul's *phusis*. It is certainly noteworthy, if not a direct cue to recall book 2's image, that Glaucon returns to the floor suddenly, and at the same moment this new image emerges with its several thematic similarities to the old image of Glaucon as sculptor. To judge the individual tyrant's life accurately, it is less important to see the exteriority of his public guise than it is to see him in the more authentic private life of his family and friends. Exposing the tyrant's personal life, Socrates says, is like stripping off the costume of an actor from the tragic stage to see the unmasked man underneath:

Would I also be right in suggesting that that man should be deemed fit to judge . . . who is not like a child looking from outside and overwhelmed by the tyrannic pomp set up as a façade for those outside, but who rather sees through it adequately? And what if I were to suppose that all of us must hear that man who . . . saw how [the tyrant] is with each of his own,

among whom he could most be seen stripped of the tragic gear [*ἐν οἷς μάλιστα γυμνὸς ἂν ὀφθείη τῆς τραγικῆς σκευῆς*] . . . and . . we were to bid him to report how the tyrant stands in relation to the others in happiness and wretchedness? (577 A 1 –B 4).

In contrast to the statue image, this new image has two layers, which are used to emphasize the priority of the soul's interior condition against a deceptive exterior. Having seen that the soul has naturally distinct parts, and that all parts must be governed by reason as the soul's leader, Glaucon now understands why the sophist is wrong to prioritize the mere appearance of justice as sufficient for happiness:[27] "the real tyrant is . . . in truth [*τῇ ἀληθείᾳ*] a real slave and. . . most in need of things . . . if one knows how to look at a soul as a whole [*ἐάν τις ὅλην ψυχὴν ἐπίστηται θεάσασθαι*]" (579 D 9–E 4).[28] Seeing all three parts of the soul's nature at once is required to judge the best life accurately. Continuing, Socrates then asks Glaucon, who is now recast as the arbiter of what is now even more clearly a dramatic competition, to judge the outcome of the argument so far.[29] The new contest image is elaborated with the presentation of five figures, standing in front of Glaucon like *chori* (580 B 6) on a stage in the final round of the new competition:[30]

Come, then . . . just as the man who has the final decision in the whole contest declares his choice, you, too, choose now for me who in your opinion is first in happiness, and who second, and the others in order, five in all – kingly, timocratic, oligarchic, democratic, tyrannic (580 A 9–B 4).

As the living, moving actors line up to receive their evaluations, Glaucon, as dramatic judge, pronounces them to be happy "in the very order in which they came on stage" (580 B 5–7)[31]—that is, according to how closely they resemble the 'aristocracy'. The real constitution of living humans can be represented by the moving, breathing actors in the new contest image because the logic embodied by this new image is grounded in the reality (579 D 9–10) of the soul's tri-partite *phusis*. As if to correspond with this new logic, the actors are not the dead, stone likenesses of humans produced exclusively by human *techne*. As naturally human, they belong to the world of 'true' natural necessity, indicated by their having life and motion.[32] This represents a *phusis* with a positive determination that causes 'real' happiness. By replacing the contest image of two statues with this image of a contest between actors, Plato illustrates that the logic Socrates has been articulating—teleological because grounded ultimately in the Good—surpasses the arbitrary and indeterminate sophistic logic that has no ultimate ground or *telos*.[33] As we move into the pleasure arguments, which constitute the second and third stages of book 9, we should notice that Thrasymachus' position destroys itself precisely because it lacks this kind of ultimate ground or *telos*.

15. As soon as Glaucon has made his pronouncement, the three middle figures (timocratic, oligarchic, and democratic) drop out,[34] leaving only the two poles of *dikaiotaton* and *adikōtaton* (580 A 9–C 8). With only these two extremes of philosopher king and tyrant remaining, the new image bears a closer resemblance to book 2's contest between opposite statues. Completing the reference to a dramatic contest, Plato recasts Socrates as the herald, *kēruka* (580 B 8), whose job it was to announce throughout historical Athens the outcome of tragic festivals, and who now asks Glaucon, "shall I add this to the proclamation. . . [the aristocratic man is happiest and the tyrant most miserable] whether or not in being [happy and miserable] they escape the notice

of all human beings and gods?" (580 C 6–7).[35] Glaucon's affirmative answer (580 C 8) shows his new recognition that since justice is the fulfillment of the soul's tri-partite nature, the most important benefits justice confers are not exterior.[36] It would seem that Glaucon's challenge, whose question was "which of the two is happier?" (361 D 3) has at last been answered, and in response to Thrasymachus' original claim, Glaucon seems satisfied that justice is the only way to true happiness.

E. PLEASURE, THE 'NATURE' CONCEPT, AND REFUTING SOPHISTRY

16. Despite Glaucon's seeming contentment, however, Socrates has not yet finished his refutation of Thrasymachus' reconstructed position.[37] In two arguments about pleasure, Socrates completes his thesis that justice produces the best life by demonstrating that as he originally said, justice is good both for itself and for its effects (358 A 1–3). Furthermore, in tandem with this account of pleasure, Plato develops the contest imagery yet further, this time replacing the image of a tragic competition with the image of an Olympic wrestling match.

As I mentioned at the outset, some scholars like Richard Kraut view book 9's two pleasure arguments as a relatively unimportant addendum to Plato's main argument. For Kraut, Plato's main argument has already been made by this point in the dialogue, and the pleasure arguments contribute little that is important:

> ... the fundamental case for justice has been made before the discussion of pleasure has begun ... What then should we make of [Socrates'] statement that the "greatest and supreme fall" for injustice occurs in the battle over pleasure? A simple and plausible explanation of this phrase is provided by the fact that at the end of his last argument Plato claims that the philosopher's pleasure is 729 times greater than the tyrant's (587 E). Whether Plato is serious about this precise figure or not – and I am inclined to think he is not – it provides an explanation of why he says that this last argument gives injustice its greatest defeat. In no other argument had he tried to portray the gap between justice and injustice as so great in magnitude. Once we realize that Plato's remark admits of this interpretation, we can rest content with our earlier conclusion that pleasure has a modest role to play in the overall scheme of the *Republic*.[38]

Nikolas Pappas also sees book 9's pleasure arguments as somewhat loosely connected to the principal import of the *Republic*'s larger argument: "Glaucon had asked Socrates to show the superiority of justice over injustice with respect to its natural effects on the soul. . . . If Socrates chooses to identify pleasure as one, he has not strayed from his mandate."[39] On the other hand, Daniel Russell sees book 9's pleasure arguments as completing the account of the just soul's harmony, which Russell argues was left incomplete in book 4. Russell sees an important, even an indispensable reason for book 9's account of pleasure in this link to book 4:

> In fact, both of the pleasure arguments are meant to articulate the goodness of the virtuous person, understood as the health of the soul—and it was the health of the soul that Socrates had not explained to his own satisfaction earlier in book IV. For now Socrates has shown

> just what this goodness or health consists in: it consists in each part of the soul finding completion and fulfillment in the things appropriate to it, and in the whole soul endorsing and engaging in the sort of life that really is best for it. When reason leads the way, every part of the soul becomes fulfilled in its nature.[40]

In short, Russell takes book 9's two pleasure arguments to supplement the proposition, established in book 4, "if the hierarchy of parts is out of order, then some part is not in its good condition" with the proposition, "if the hierarchy of parts is in order, then each part is in its good condition."[41] The resulting bi-conditional is, "the hierarchy of parts is right in the virtuous soul *if and only if* each part is in its good condition."[42] Russell goes on to argue that an essential aspect of the just soul's pleasure is its self-reflexive recognition that it is achieving a harmonious natural state. This is a useful way of articulating the contribution of Book 9's pleasure arguments to the *Republic*'s argument about the soul's nature and is, I think, correct. However, while I agree with Russell that book 9's account of pleasure completes Socrates' notion of the just soul, I think we miss the force of this argument's strategic value in the scheme of the *Republic* if we see it primarily as completing the arguments begun in book 4. Socrates' proposal that book 9's pleasure arguments are "the greatest and most sovereign" (583 B 6) of the unjust man's defeats makes more complete sense when we attend to the contest imagery, which links book 9's argument about pleasure to Glaucon's reconstruction in book 2. In what follows, I suggest that this indicates the pleasure arguments should be read indeed as the completion of the argument about the soul's nature, but more than this, as the high point of Socrates' complete and total philosophical victory over that initial position.

17. The first of the pleasure arguments, which is at the same time the second of book 9's three contests between the most just and most unjust men, concludes that the pleasure experienced by the just man is superior to the pleasures experienced by either the honor lover or the appetitive man. The philosopher is the only one of these three to have experienced all three kinds of pleasure. He experiences them with a more mature practical wisdom, and he judges his pleasure with a special expertise in argument, giving him superior access to all three criteria by which the relations between the pleasures are judged: experience, practical wisdom, and argument (582 A 4–582 E 9). However, while the philosopher's conclusion that the rational pleasures are superior turns out to be correct, and therefore constitutes the second victory for the most just man,[43] the argument is somewhat incomplete on its own.[44] Above all, this first of the pleasure arguments does not explain *how* the philosopher arrives at his judgment that the pleasures of the highest part of the soul (583 A 1–2) are most truly (582 E 9) pleasurable. Even though the just man concludes that his own pleasure is superior according to the necessity of *logos,* the specific criteria of his judgment "according to *logos*" (582 E 7) remain hidden.[45] They will become visible in the second and final pleasure argument, which establishes an ontological ground for the philosopher's judgment that the pleasure of *logos* is the greatest pleasure.

18. After the first argument has been presented, but before the second pleasure argument is articulated, a third image of

the contest between just and unjust men is developed. Now, Plato replaces the image of a drama competition with the image of an Olympic wrestling match in which the *dikaios* has become an Olympic wrestler who throws down the *adikos* for the third time, earning a final and decisive victory:

> Well then, that makes two in a row, and twice the just man has been victorious over the unjust one. Now the third, in Olympic fashion, to the savior and the Olympian Zeus. Observe that the other men's pleasure, except for that of the prudent man, is neither entirely true nor pure but is a sort of shadow painting, as I seem to have heard from some one of the wise. *And yet this would be the greatest and most sovereign of the falls* [*καίτοι τοῦτ' ἂν εἴη μέγιστόν τε καὶ κυριώτατον τῶν πτωμάτων*].[46]

Since the just man has now won two victories over the unjust man, the first by Glaucon the drama judge, the second by the just man's private decision, I take the "*μέγιστόν τε καὶ κυριώτατον*" (583 B 6) to indicate that in the following segment of argument, the *dikaios* wins his third and ultimate victory.

19. An analysis of the structure of the wrestling image and the structures of the previous two contest images can be seen to support the claim that the pleasure arguments extend Socrates' account of human nature, and thus support Russell. In the first place, the pattern of the same two extremes (justice and injustice) competing over the same prize (victory in terms of who leads the happy life) is common, and thus provides one aspect of continuity between the images. Secondly, Glaucon the sensualist has the floor when all three images are created. Further, all three images are found in the context of arguments about the relative happiness of justice and injustice as this happiness is derived from a logically foundational concept of human nature. Without this parallel between conceptual contexts, the above parallels might not be enough to link the images. However, the structural likenesses of the images taken with the conceptual similarity between their contexts provides sufficient evidence to verify an important and, I suggest, an intended relation between Book 2's image of the statues Book 9's images of the tragic actors, and Book 9's image of the two wrestlers. When it is compared to the earlier two contest images, the image of two wrestlers indicates first, that the arguments about pleasure are an expansion of the underlying concept of *phusis,* and thus support Russell's thesis. As if to confirm this emphasis on human nature, the tragic gear from the dramatic competition has been stripped off to expose the naked wrestlers, leaving no means for the *adikos* to hide his true nature behind a mask or a costume. I take the presence of exposed athletes in this image to indicate that what is tested in this contest is a justice that is more accurate because it is grounded in an even more real or true account of human nature than was given alongside the dramatic contest. Furthermore, the independence of the competitors, who now rely exclusively on their own skill and strength, portrays a more complete unification of justice with the soul's 'nature.' In the statue contest, the winning appearance was exclusively a product of the sculptor's energy and skill; there was no necessary relation to the naturally determined human being. In the drama competition, the statues were replaced by living tragic actors, who could walk and speak on their own, although from behind masks. These representations of justice and injustice as actors were moving and breathing, but before the introduction of the pleasure arguments, the reality of their living natures was covered over by the artifice of their costumes, masks, and presumably their actions dictated by a

script. Now that the just and unjust men have become Olympic wrestlers, the *dikaios*'s justice and his superiority come purely from his own independent nature since he does not rely upon an external judge, the technical skill of other people like a costume maker or a playwright, or from manufactured products like a mask or a costume. Victory in this third match comes spontaneously from the naked, most just man all by himself. That is, victory comes from his psychological nature as it 'truly' is.[47] Conversely, when the *adikos* loses, this defeat will also be determined by *phusis* in its 'truest' form. It is also significant that none of the characters from the *Republic*'s own *dramatis personae* is recast to partake directly in this image, as Glaucon into the sculptor (361 D 4–6) or the judge (580 A – B), Socrates into the herald (580 B 8), and so on. Plato has distanced his authorial voice from a direct creation of this image, having his characters only describe this contest as if they, too, were spectators. Such passivity in the dialogue's characters indicates that the truth captured by the wrestling image, which they only observe, is independent from Plato's creativity as author of the dialogue.

20. I would like to focus now strictly on the link between the wrestling image and the image of the statue contest, a link which prompts us to recall the specific role of pain in the argument summarized by the contest image in book 2. As I noted above in analyzing Glaucon's image, the most just man is portrayed there as experiencing extreme pain, inflicted because he appears entirely unjust. Since this pain was persuasive enough to cause the just man to abandon his position that justice is good in itself, it played a decisive role in the sophistic argument against perfect justice. By the time Plato presents the image of the wrestling contest, the tyrant has already been depicted as most miserable, a reversal of book 2's portrayal of the unjust man as most happy. I suggest that book 9's pleasure arguments demonstrate that the most just man actually experiences the most and greatest pleasures rather than the worst pain, thereby completing this reversal.[48] The social appearance and the torturer, both exterior causes of the just man's pain in Glaucon's reconstruction, are replaced in Book 9's account, with 'real' fulfillment as the true and intrinsic cause of true justice's pleasures. This shift in imagery parallels the argument's shift to the claim that Socrates made at the outset of Book 2 that Justice is good both in itself and for its effects. In this respect it is, just like thinking, seeing and being healthy (357 C 1–3 and 358 A 1–3), rather than being metely utilitarian. Russell puts the point as follows:

> Pleasure, on Plato's view, is a crucial element of the good life, not because wisdom is inadequate for happiness without it, but because pleasure is a part of our nature that wisdom transforms and causes to flourish. Transformed, rationally incorporated pleasure is not the 'payoff' of the life of wisdom, but one of the forms that wisdom takes in one's life.[49]

This is Russell's notion that the just life is a naturally complete state of the just soul that experiences pleasure in reflexively seeing its own attainment of justice. However, given that Plato is not advocating hedonism in any commonly recognized form,[50] the dialogue's reader can still reasonably ask why the unjust man's defeat in terms of pleasure is the *greatest and most sovereign (μέγιστόν τε καὶ κυριώτατον)* of the unjust man's defeats and not a straightforward resolution of the loose ends in the *Republic*'s argument. In what follows, I

argue that the imagery indicates that the defeat in terms of pleasure is the most serious defeat because it is a cumulative summary of Socrates' gradual appropriation of the terms of Glaucon's reconstruction.

21. 'Nature,' is the first and also the most important of the terms Socrates appropriates because his appropriations of 'justice,' 'happiness,' 'pleasure,' 'pain,' and 'power', the remaining constitutive terms of Book 2's position, follow from this one. As I have argued, the tyrant's misery, above, illustrates Socrates' appropriations of 'justice,' and 'happiness,' the second and third terms. After Glaucon, as judge of the drama contest has been convinced that appetite-satisfaction by itself does not lead to happiness, but to a self-imposed and total misery, Socrates then focuses on appropriating the remaining terms, 'pleasure' and 'pain.' In the second of the pleasure arguments, Socrates describes false pleasure as a transition from a state of 'emptiness' to a neutral state of repose (584 D–586 B). Since it is only one phase of the appetite's endlessly repeating cycle, the transition from emptiness to repose is necessarily linked to recurring pain, which is experienced throughout every emptying phase (586 A–C). One of the most frequently experienced examples of this is the experience of hunger only hours after having eaten. When it is conceived in terms of the soul's true nature (the decisive condition), pain is caused by the inevitable return from repose to emptiness (585 A 1–2) rather than by the appearance of injustice.[51] The soul's tripartite nature is the intrinsic, and thus the necessary cause of this pleasure–pain cycle. Conversely, when Socrates re-interprets 'pleasure' as the just man's most real pleasure (583 C –587 A)[52] because it is the most real filling of the most real part of the soul (585 A–E), he distinguishes 'true pleasure,' which is not tied to pain, as the superior pleasure, available only to the just man. Again, the soul's nature is the interior and direct cause of this pleasure.

22. The appropriation of terms emerges from the claim that the pleasures and pain of justice and injustice are not extrinsic but intrinsic. If this is given and the appetites necessarily cause pain on the emptying phase, and only injustice allows the appetites to grow infinitely large, it follows that the degree of pain experienced is directly proportional to the degree of the soul's injustice. The soul's injustice is the cause of pain when the soul's nature is seen as tri-partite. Notice that this reinterpretation of 'pain' does not directly pit the severity of the pain of book 2's tortured just man against the severity of the pain of book 9's tyrant, ruled entirely by his appetites. After all, the most just man is not in reality the one in book 2 who appears most unjust. That unhappy statue figure is no longer a contestant because his torture, a violent (i.e. anti-natural) removal of health or comfort, is outside the scope of natural, intrinsic causes. Furthermore, within Socrates' schema, pain belongs to the appetitive part of the soul, the part that is most changing, or least real. Thus, even if the pain of torture should be construed as caused by the artificial emptying of the appetite for sensible goods, it would thus belong in the class of transitory, appetitive goods. Thus, it would necessarily lack the same kind of existence as any truly real thing like the highest and rational part of the soul.

23. In terms of his argumentative strategy it is important to see that, beginning with 'nature,' Socrates appropriates sophistry's terms not by dismissing its interpretations entirely, but by integrating these interpretations into a conceptual schema larger and more complete

than the one Sophistry recognizes. Thus, Socrates does not reject the sophistic claim that there are appetites in the soul that most people wish to fulfill, but rather the proposal that these appetites are what most basically define human 'nature.' The appetites do belong within the soul, Socrates has argued, but at the lowest rung of the soul's natural rank-order. Similarly, in the present treatment of 'pleasure,' Socrates does not reject the sophistic claim that the transition from emptiness to repose, which is actually the relief of pain, is experienced as one kind of pleasure—even the kind that the majority pursues. This sort of pleasure, though, is an inferior "shadow painting" of true pleasure (586 B 8). However, so long as appetitive pleasure is governed by reason, Socrates includes this "shadow" pleasure in his account of the just soul's pleasures. In doing so, he employs the same strategy of appropriation he used in taking over the term 'nature.' That is, he reinterprets the sophist's interpretation of 'pleasure' by integrating that interpretation into his own broader, more conceptually complete account:

> Of the desires concerned with the love of gain and the love of victory, some—followers of knowledge and argument—pursue *in company with them* the pleasures to which the prudential part leads and take only these; such desires will take the truest pleasures, so far as they can take true ones—because they follow truth—and those that are most their own—if indeed what is best for each thing is also most properly its own ***. . . Therefore, when all the soul follows the philosophic and is not factious, the result is that each part may, so far as other things are concerned, mind its own business and be just and, in particular, enjoy its own pleasures, the best pleasures, and, to the greatest possible extent, the truest pleasures.*** . . . And, therefore, when one of the other parts gets control, the result is that it can't discover its own pleasure and compels the others to pursue an alien and untrue pleasure.[53]

In this description of the just soul's experiencing the pleasures that naturally belong to all three of the soul's levels, Socrates is taking over and reinterpreting the term 'pleasure' as the next stage of his apropriation of the term 'nature.'

24. I have suggested that the wrestling image links Book 9's pleasure arguments to Glaucon's account of sophistry in book 2 in a way that shows the contest in terms of pleasure is also the final and decisive contest in terms of nature. That is, the related imagery indicates the account of pleasure *should* be read as the final, cumulative stage of Socrates' response to Glaucon's reconstruction of sophistry. I would like to argue, furthermore, that when the pleasure arguments are read this way, the unjust man's defeat through the pleasure arguments appears the "greatest and most sovereign" (583 B 6) of the unjust man's three defeats in book 9 for three reasons: 1) they address directly Glaucon's image of the just man's extreme pain, 2) they summarize Plato's whole concept of individual human nature, and 3) critically, they summarize it *as* an appropriation that reverses every last term of sophistry's argument. This leaves the sophist no remaining way to argue that injustice pays. The final and decisive fall of the unjust man is at once the final and decisive fall of Book 2's reconstructed sophistry. This is to say that the pleasure arguments are not added on in book 9 in order simply to answer Glaucon's lingering portrayal of the just man's pain, or to provide an account of justice particularly suited to Glaucon, the sybarite.[54] The pleasure arguments do indeed contradict book 2's lingering portrayal of pleasure and pain, and

they also address the sensualism of Glaucon's character. However, the pleasure arguments are the most decisive of the unjust man's defeats because they do these things in a way that completes and also summarizes Socrates' appropriation of all the terms Glaucon used in his reconstruction of Sophistry. The *adikos*, along with the sophist, who supports his position intellectually, are both defeated in this final defeat, which is therefore the "greatest and most sovereign" (583 B 6).

25. At this point, I would like to return to my early claim that Glaucon's challenge and Socrates' response to it both occur against the backdrop of the theme of power, *dynamis*, in order to show that Socrates' pleasure arguments also operate on the grounds of power, a critical element of the contest that has taken place throughout the dialogue between Socrates and Thrasymachus position. With this in mind, it is worth noting that the wrestling contest, unlike the earlier contests, is a direct, unmediated struggle for physical domination. I suggest that this indicates the defeat of the sophist through the exhaustive appropriation of his original terms is a defeat by the power of Socrates' argument.

26. On the one hand, it might be objected that force and argument belong to incommensurable kinds of contest. In fact, at the outset of the *Republic* Socrates presents force and persuasion as alternatives (327 C). Furthermore, as Polemarchus points out there (327 C 12), the requirement for persuading the listener is that he or she is actively listening, which implies that for someone to be defeated through an argument, they must follow its stages and reject what they see is false, but assent to what they see is true. However, this rational rejection or assent by definition cannot be compelled, which distinguishes persuasion from force. The requirement that there be a willing participation on the part of the person persuaded through argument could, furthermore, be used to support Annas' point that there is no exterior necessity compelling Thrasymachus to assent to Socrates' argument even in book 9:

> [T]he happiness which the tyrant can never have flows from a well-ordered soul; but Thrasymachus would not associate happiness with a well-ordered soul. He would think of it as being in a position to do what one likes and satisfy any desire one happens to have. If he is stubborn enough, he can say at the end of Book 9 that his claim was that the tyrant was happy in this common—or—garden sense, and that the results of psychic harmony are not relevant to that.[55]

With these observations in mind, I suggest that the way power operates in Socrates' refutation is as mediated through rational necessity. It is important therefore to stress that Socrates' power derives from what is most true, *ἀληθέστατα εἶναι* (582 E 9). I take this to require that defeating an interlocutor through the power of an argument is tantamount to defeating his argument on its own terms, a method that Socrates demonstrated in book 1 in his "taming" Thrasymachus. Here in book 9, I suggest, to defeat the sophist in the terms of his original argument is at once to defeat him on the grounds of power, at least as far as it is possible to defeat an interlocutor by power through argumentation. Given this critical qualification, which redefines 'power' teleologically, I suggest that the wrestling image reflects another important dimension of Socrates' response to Thrasymachus sophistry, and is one reason why Socrates does not stop responding to Glaucon's

challenge even once Glaucon says that he has been satisfied. As a final, summary defeat, the unjust man's defeat in terms of pleasure is at once a defeat of sophistry's reconstruction in terms of the power of argument.

F. INTERPRETIVE METHOD

27. I have emphasized the contest imagery as a sequence of parallel images, used to highlight the significance of Socrates' total defeat of the sophistic stance that Glaucon summarizes in book 2. Before I conclude, I will turn briefly to consider what hermeneutical problems and benefits there might be in interpreting the imagery as I have done. To begin with, there is the question why Plato would complement the development of the *Republic's* central argument about *phusis* with such a carefully crafted set of related images? To examine this question, I will draw upon two problems confronting the author of a philosophical text, problems that Charles Kahn takes from Plato's *Phaedrus,* 1) the failure of clarification, and 2) the failure of adaptability:[56]

> [a written work] is like a painting that seems to be alive, but remains silent if one asks it a question. A set speech or written work is [like a painting,] equally unable to respond to questions; it simply repeats the same message each time it is interrogated (275 D). Let us call this the failure of clarification. The second defect of a book is that it cannot adapt itself to the level of the audience . . . [c]all this the failure of adaptability.[57]

In my reading, Plato's technical use of the contest images responds to both problems.[58] In explaining this, I assume first, that there is some determinate concept present in the text, and second that Plato wanted his readership to engage with this concept.[59] From the *Phaedrus*, it is clear that Plato was aware of some of the most difficult problems encountered when communicating an idea through text. I suggest that by using the contest imagery in the way outlined above, Plato also at least attempted to avoid these problems.[60] Working under these assumptions, I understand the relation itself between the transforming imagery of the contest, and the developing argumentation of the text as a replacement for the living author, who would, in a spoken dialogue, steer the interlocutor toward an understanding of his meaning.[61]

28. The reader's progressive discovery of the relations between the contest image and the argument it parallels in the text prevents Kahn's problem 1) the failure of clarification, at least in part. Insofar as the reader pays close attention to the parallel imagery and then asks how the imagery is related to the argument's development, the text does indeed answer the reader's philosophical questions—questions like, 'what really does and does not constitute human *φύσις* ?' 'how is pleasure linked to the human soul's justice?' and 'why are book 9's pleasure arguments part of Plato's argument about justice at all?'[62] While the parallel imagery may indeed help to clarify the concepts articulated in the text and the relations between these concepts, it is important to specify that they can do so only because Plato presents them carefully within the context of his arguments. In other words, there is a legitimate question as to whether the images themselves are inherently ambiguous. For instance, how can we be sure that Plato intends the nakedness of the wrestlers in the third contest image to represent the most robust and complete articulation of human 'nature'? It is true that in general any image, taken in isolation from other images and from the argument of the text is ambiguous and open

to widely varying interpretations because the imagery alone does not tell us how to interpret the imagery. However, I am not proposing to interpret the imagery in isolation, but in the context of the dialogue, which concentrates primarily on an accurate understanding of 'nature'. Once Socrates' version of this concept has been developed enough to show how and why the unjust man is actually unhappy, the same concept then provides the context in which, for instance, the nakedness of the wrestlers can legitimately be interpreted *as* indicating that the argument about pleasure is the most complete articulation of human 'nature'. Furthermore, the 'parallel' images I have highlighted are found at strategically important locations in the text, adjacent to the arguments which they summarize and clarify. For instance, the wrestling image, which describes a final, culminating moment, has been placed exactly between the two pleasure arguments. This placement provides the justification for interpreting the arguments on pleasure, and not some other argument(s) as the most complete articulation of human 'nature'. Finally, what I intend by 'context' also includes references between the images through the close similarities in structure and theme that I have outlined above. In summary, the different aspects of the parallel images can be interpreted in determinate ways only because of their context, which consists of the dialogue's central concepts, each image's relation to the text that immediately surrounds it, and each image's relation to any other structurally related images. The imagery indeed clarifies and addresses Kahn's problem 1) the failure of clarification, but the imagery does so only when taken in context.

29. The role of the imagery as an intra--textual standard for distinguishing between 'right' and 'wrong', or at least more and less complete readings also provides a way of responding to Kahn's problem 2) the failure of adaptability.[63] The text of Plato's *Republic* does indeed adapt to different readers. It shows itself more completely to those who attend to the possibility of important relations between its imagery and its argumentation than it does to those who do not attend to this possibility.[64] I am not claiming that without attending to the imagery, nothing at all can be understood of the text, but that less can be understood from reading the text without attending to the possibility of the imagery's role. Since we know, courtesy of the *Phaedrus*, that Plato was aware of the kinds of fundamental interpretive challenges facing the reader of any text, and since the set of intra-textual relations which emerge from reading the images in relation to the argumentation are economical, sophisticated and subtle, I suggest it is reasonable to think that Plato included the imagery in the text as an interpretive aid to its concepts and argumentation.

30. I would like to acknowledge one particular limit of this hermeneutical relationship between image and its context. For some readers, it would seem circular, and therefore fatally flawed to say I can gain access to any given hermeneutic through the use of that very same hermeneutic. If the text does not explicitly tell me how to read it, the objection would go, how can I know that the guidelines I am using actually come from the text, and not from myself? To this charge, first I reaffirm that the proof or evidence justifying this approach to the text must come from within the text. I also emphasize that the context I use for interpreting the imagery is provided by the most important concepts in the same text where the imagery is found, not by some arbitrary context of my own choosing. However, since the method

of using imagery as an interpretive guideline is not itself made explicit, the approach can only be seen or defended by analyzing the relation itself between the specific images and arguments found gradually through a discursive analysis of the text.[65] This is to say that the hermeneutic I am using and claiming is present in the text is indeed circular. However, this circle does not have to be vicious, or logically flawed. As readers of the dialogue, we can gain access to the hermeneutic, but only by discovering and illuminating sufficiently persuasive relations between the particular images and particular arguments.

CONCLUSION

31. There are two principal advantages I have emphasized that come from reading the *Republic* with attention to its "parallel" contest imagery. First, the imagery confirms the point that through book 9's pleasure arguments Socrates continues his articulation of the soul's 'nature' as the tri-partite hierarchy that determines 'justice' and 'happiness.' From this perspective, 'pleasure' is seen as a necessary experience accompanying the just life This shows how Plato's position is distinguished from the hedonistic view that appetitive pleasure is to be sought in and for itself. In this I have shown my agreement with Russell. Secondly the contest imagery also links the pleasure arguments directly to Glaucon's representation of sophistry in book 2. In doing so, it indicates that the reasons for Socrates to characterize the pleasure arguments as the "greatest and most sovereign" (583 B 6) defeat for the unjust man become clearest through analyzing the pleasure arguments as part of Socrates' strategy of responding to Glaucon's reconstrution. The investigation of the arguments as part of this response reveals, in turn, 1) that book 2's original depiction of the most just man as suffering the greatest pain has only partially been overturned in book 9's depiction of the tyrant, and furthermore, 2) that the pleasure arguments not only contradict this early depiction of the just man's pain, but also summarize and complete a larger program of appropriating every term Glaucon originally used to depict sophistry's position. The contest imagery indicates that throughout the *Republic,* Socrates has been setting up a response to Glaucon's challenge that culminates in the pleasure arguments of Book 9. His strategy has been to leave no remaining way to argue that injustice pays, and thus to defeat Glaucon's reconstruction with finality.

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END NOTES

1 I would like to thank Nicholas Thorne, Brian Gregor, Jason Taylor, Arthur Madigan, Marina McCoy, and Ronald Tacelli for their suggestions in editing this paper. Any remaining faults are, of course, my own.

2 See Richard Kraut, "The Defense of Justice in Plato's Republic," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, ed. Richard Kraut (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 311–37, and Nickolas Pappas, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Plato and the Republic*, 2nd ed. Routledge Philosophy Guidebooks (New York: Routledge, 2003), 173.

3 Plato and Allan Bloom, *The Republic of Plato,* trans. Allan Bloom, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 583 B 6. All subsequent references to the English translation will be to the Bloom translation unless otherwise specified. All Ancient Greek quotations are taken from *Res publica,* ed. Ionnes Burnet, Platonis Opera, vol. 4 (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1989).

4 Following Plato's lead, I will refer to these extremes as *dikaios* and *adikos*.

5 For arguments that take Socrates at his word when he describes poetic image as a 'second best' method, see Harvey Yunis, "The Protreptic Rhetoric of the Republic," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, ed. G. R. F. Ferrari (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 21, and Jonathan Lear, "Allegory and Myth in Plato's Republic," in *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic*, ed. Gerasimos Xenophon Santas (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006), 25–43.

6 Other images that belong in this category, but that do not have so extensive a philosophical role in the *Republic* as the contest imagery are: 1) The famous myth of metals (414 D 1–415 C 10), which captures the sense of the city's naturally determined divisions into strata of natural talent. 2) The analogy of Socrates' unified city to the unity of a human body, which feels pain as a whole when any part (here the finger) is harmed (462 C 10–E 6). This image captures Socrates' notion that in *Kallipolis,* individual self-interest is inseparable from corporate, political interest. 3) Socrates' 'ship of state' analogy (487 E 7–489 D 5), which explains Adeimantus' observation that philosophers appear to be the most politically useless of all people only because what is most important in guiding the state is usually ignored in determining who should be its leader. 4) The analogy of the sophist as a wild beast tamer (493 A 6–C 8), which captures the sophistic notion that since unbridled animality is identical with human nature, education is equivalent merely to understanding how to manipulate the pre-existing and violently dangerous appetites.

7 In book 1, Thrasymachus enters the dialogue as a ferocious wild beast: "But when we paused . . . he could no longer keep quiet; hunched up like a wild beast, he flung himself at us as if to tear us to pieces [*ἀλλὰ συστρέψας ἑαυτὸν ὥσπερ θηρίον ἦκεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ὡς διαρπασόμενος*]. Then both Polemarchus and I got all in a flutter from fright . . ." (336 B 5–7). Compare Thrasymachus' temperment at the end of book 1, where this beast has been tamed: "I owe it to you, Thrasymachus," I said, "since you have grown gentle and have left off being hard on me [*ἐπειδή μοι πρᾷος ἐγένου καὶ χαλεπαίνων ἐπαύσω*]" (354 A 12–13). Never, after having been subdued, does Thrasymachus impede the progress of the interlocutor's dialogue again. Commenting on the purpose of Socrates' rhetoric in this section of the *Republic*, Marina McCoy writes, "Socrates seems as interested in making Thrasymachus feel flustered and ashamed as in disproving his claims about the nature of justice" (Marina McCoy, *Plato on the Rhetoric of Philosophers and Sophists* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 4). Luc Brisson pushes this a step further, when commenting on Socrates' general method: "Socrates does not practice refutation for the pleasure of refuting and therefore shaming the respondent, but to render his interlocutor better by means of this feeling of shame" (Brisson, "Plato, Socrates and the Literary Form of the Dialogue" [paper in plenary session, U. of South Carolina Comparative Literature Conference, Plato and Platonisms: The Constitution of a Tradition, Columbia, SC, March, 2008]).

8 Thrasymachus makes it clear that his participation in book 1's conversation is driven by the external rewards of money (337 D 6–7) and of praise for answering Socrates well (338 C 2–3). This attachment to exterior rewards is further revealed in Thrasymachus' poignant embarrassment when Socrates shows him to be in error (350 C 10–D 8). Thrasymachus' uncontrollable distress, caused by his awareness that he appears the loser of the argument, indicates dramatically that Thrasymachus desires reputation above knowledge. Even if the philosophical legitimacy of Thrasymachus' position is acknowledged, as in McCoy, *Plato on the Rhetoric of Philosophers and Sophists,* 112–117, there is still the problem how to reconcile the legitimate force of Thrasymachus' argument with his intellectually disruptive, non-philosophical desire to win above all else. I argue below that Plato resolves this tension using Glaucon's character.

9 Socrates here validates Glaucon's earlier profession, at 358 C 6–7, of only acting as Sophistry's mouthpiece, and not being its true proponent when he characterizes both Adeimantus and Glaucon as divinely affected (*πάνυ γὰρ θεῖον πεπόνθατε*) (368 A 5–6). This divine quality is a reference to the two brothers' philosophical desire for the Good, which qualifies them to be Socrates' principle interlocutors throughout the dialogue.

10 This is the sophist's refutation of a Kantian or, in contemporary terms, a deontological ethics. As I will argue below, Plato explicitly rejects the opposition between pleasure and virtue implied in deontological ethics.

11 In his presentation of the sophistic view, Glaucon

portrays only the two kinds of good articulated at the beginning of book 2 that lie at the furthest extremes; what is good exclusively for itself (357 B 4–9), and what is good exclusively for its results (357 C5–D3), showing that for Thrasymachus, justice belongs only in the latter category. Glaucon's synopsis avoids the third middle category (357 C 1–4), which is a union of interior state and exterior effect. Socrates' claim, at the beginning of book 2, that justice belongs "in the finest kind [of good], which the man who is going to be blessed should like *both for itself* and *for what comes out of it*" (358 A 1–3; emphasis added) shows his rejection of any logic that would divide these two 'kinds' of good. On this point, see Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 60, and Christopher Shields, "Plato's Challenge: The Case against Justice in Republic II," in *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic*, ed. Gerasimos Xenophon Santas (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006), 67–70. Reeve, who reads this section differently, prioritizes the *dikaios*'s bad reputation rather than its origin in the inherently flawed sophistic logic as the principal problem to which Socrates responds in the *Republic* (C.D.C. Reeve, "Glaucon's Challenge and Thrasymacheanism," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* XXXIV [Summer 2008]: 71 n. 4, and 74–8). James Butler articulates an important caution to any scholar interpreting these categories of 'good': "The nature of the question put to Socrates, especially the distinction between 'welcomed for its own sake' and 'welcomed for its consequences' is not immediately clear. And for good reason: one is unsure to what the expressions 'welcomed for its own sake' and 'welcomed for its consequences' refer. One thing is certain, however: We must take care to interpret this distinction as Plato intends it, and not simply to read it in accordance with our modern views" (James Butler, "Justice and the Fundamental Question of Plato's Republic," *Apeiron* XXXV [2002]: 3). I argue below that Socrates' account of pleasure in book 9 develops his explanation that justice is in the middle category of goods.

12 I take it to be significant that the image includes a transformation of the dialogue's characters, and is not merely spoken to us by Socrates. Transforming the characters themselves has the rhetorical effect of bringing Plato's authorial voice closer to the reader, emphasizing his authorship. I will consider the significance of authorial distance from the reader below, in analyzing the contest imagery's evolution in book 9.

13 For an extended discussion of this sophistic version of human nature see Reeve, "Glaucon's Challenge and Thrasymacheanism," 79–83.

14 Seth Benardete, *Socrates' Second Sailing: On Plato's Republic*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 213.

15 The statue imagery is also recalled at 420 C–D, where Socrates ridicules Thrasymachus' stance through an image of painted statues. This additional statue image with its tactic of comic ridicule is an important element of Socrates' critique of the political (rather than the psychological) implications of equating happiness simply to appetite satisfaction. However, to limit the length of this paper, I omit a treatment of this statue-painting image.

16 See Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 258 ff., and 367.

17 As Reeve says, "Socrates' response will need to persuade us that our (and the gods') nature has been misrepresented, and with it our (and their) natural good" (Reeve, "Glaucon's Challenge and Thrasymacheanism," 83). For a discussion of the limitations of Plato's concept of nature, see Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic,* 328–334.

18 Socrates says, "[L]et's make a city in speech from the beginning. Our need [*χρεία*], as it seems, will make it" (369 C 9–10).

19 Socrates says, "I myself also had the thought when you spoke that, in the first place, each of us is naturally not quite like anyone else, but rather differs in his nature [*διαφέρων τὴν φύσιν*]; different men are apt for the accomplishment of different jobs. Isn't that your opinion?" (370 A 7–B 2). For further commentary on the concept of nature here, see Adam's note on *φύεται*: Plato and James Adam, *The Republic of Plato*, ed. James Adam, 2 vols. 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 1:95.

20 On the question of the continuity of the three stages of book 9's argument, see Adam, *The Republic of Plato,* 2:347–8. For persuasive arguments defending the continuity of book 9's three stages, see Daniel Russell, *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), ch. 4.

21 For a critique of Socrates' presentation of the tyrant as unrealistic and irrelevant to answering Glaucon's challenge, see Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic,* 304–5. For a clear, systematic account of how Plato develops his theory of the soul's tri-partite hierarchy in book 9 relative to book 4, see Russell, *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life,* esp. 120–121 and 136–7.

22 Cf. Glaucon's proposal in Book 2 to allow each position to reach its logical end: "Give each, the just man and the unjust, license to do whatever he wants, while we follow and watch where his desire will lead each [*ποῖ ἡ ἐπιθυμία ἑκάτερον ἄξει*]" (359 C 1–3). In book 9, Socrates is taking Glaucon at his word.

23 I read the repeated use of, "*οὐκ ἀναγκαῖος*" in the passage at 574 B 12–C 5 as linking the notion of necessity together with the notion of nature insofar as the tyrant's parents, his most immediate natural relations, are described as necessary, while those companions he chooses are instead unnecessary. Doing violence to his original *oikos* is only one sense in which the *adikos* does violence to his own nature: "*Ἀλλ', ὦ Ἀδείμαντε, πρὸς Διός, ἕνεκα νεωστὶ φίλης καὶ* ***οὐκ ἀναγκαίας*** *ἑταίρας γεγονυίας τὴν πάλαι φίλην καὶ* ***ἀναγκαίαν*** *μητέρα, ἢ ἕνεκα ὡραίου νεωστὶ φίλου γεγονότος* ***οὐκ ἀναγκαίου*** *τὸν ἄωρόν τε καὶ* ***ἀναγκαῖον*** *πρεσβύτην πατέρα καὶ τῶν φίλων ἀρχαιότατον δοκεῖ ἄν σοι ὁ τοιοῦτος πληγαῖς τε δοῦναι καὶ*

καταδουλώσασθαι ἂν αὐτοὺς ὑπ' ἐκείνοις, εἰ εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν οἰκίαν ἀγάγοιτο;" (574 B 12–C 5; emphases added).

24 Cognates of *ὁ δοῦλος* are used to characterize the tyrant at 576 A 5, 577 D 2, and most directly at 579 D 10.

25 See 574 E 4: "He will stick at no terrible murder, or food, or deed." It is noteworthy that this discussion echoes thematically the first part of Cephalus' speech in book 1, which warned the interlocutors of immoderate desire's despotism (329 C 1–4). On the link between book 1 with the rest of the *Republic*, see Christopher Rowe, "The Literary and Philosophical Style of the Republic," in *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic*, ed. Gerasimos Xenophon Santas (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006),17–21, Angus Johnston, "The Origin of Constitutions in the Republic," in *Philosophy and Freedom: The Legacy of James Doull*, ed. David Peddle and Neil G. Robertson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 73–82, and Rachel Barney, "Socrates' Refutation of Thrasymachus," in *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic*, ed. Gerasimos Xenophon Santas (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006), 56–59.

26 See 576 B 10: " '. . . Necessarily,' Glaucon said, as he took over the argument."

27 Socrates emphasizes this connection to ultimate Being in the following description of the 'real' tyrant, quoted in my text below. The most relevant part of the Greek reads, "[*ἔ*]*στιν ἄρα τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, κἂν εἰ μή τῳ δοκεῖ, ὁ τῷ ὄντι τύραννος τῷ ὄντι δοῦλος τὰς μεγίστας θωπείας καὶ δουλείας . . .*" (579 D 9– 10). On this point, Reeve writes, "The good judge of how happy justice makes us, we might reasonably think, had better proceed in the same way—looking to our true state and not simply to how happy we look or feel" (Reeve, "Glaucon's Challenge and Thrasymacheanism," 76).

28 For a helpful account of the way the soul functions as a whole while reason is in control, see G. R. F. Ferrari, "The Three-Part Soul," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, ed. G. R. F. Ferrari (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007),198–200.

29 See n. 31 below.

30 See n. 31 below.

31 According to Adam, the ancient method of judging dramatic contests had a sequence of two steps. The first was preliminary; the second, final and decisive. Adam holds that Glaucon's judgment is within the second and decisive stage: "On the day of the [dramatic] contest, one name was drawn from each urn, and the ten judges thereby constituted, after witnessing the performance, each wrote down in his *γραμματεῖον* the order in which he arranged the several competitors. Of these ten judges five were next selected by lot, and the final verdict was given in accordance with the votes already registered by these five. . . .the upshot of the whole matter will be that Socrates appeals to Glaucon, as the Archon might to one of the five judges in what we may be forgiven for calling the 'grand finale,' calling on him to pronounce *τίς πρῶτος*" (Plato and Adam, *The Republic of Plato,* 2:340–1). My analysis is also indebted to Adam's second Index to Chapter 9 (Adam, *The Republic of Plato,* 2:373–376), which explores the line, "*ὁ διὰ πάντων κριτὴς*" (580 A 9–B 1), rejecting most attempts at attributing to the phrase a technical use. Adam finds no relevant precedent in Greek from which Plato draws his idiosyncratic use here. Despite the lack of scholarly consensus and the lack of a precedent in Greek for the technical use of "*ὁ διὰ πάντων κριτὴς*," Adam sees no reason for this passage to be considered corrupt, and maintains that "the general meaning of this passage is clear."

32 I distinguish the interior necessity of what i call here "natural necessity" from the necessity of external force that compels the unjust man in Glaucon's re-construction to have the appearance of justice. As one of my reviewers indicates, Socrates separetes exterior necessity from the good in book 6's parallel image of the sophist as the lion-tamer of the beast-like citizenry: "Knowing nothing in truth about which of these convictions and desires [of the citizenry conceived as beast] is noble, or base, or good, or evil, or just, or unjust, [the sophist] applies all these names following the great animal's opinions — calling what delights it good and what vexes it bad. He has no other argument about them but calls the necessary just and noble, neither having seen nor being able to show someone else how much the nature of necessary and the good really differ [*ἄλλον δὲ μηδένα ἔχοι λόγον περὶ αὐτῶν, ἀλλὰ τἀναγκαῖα δίκαια καλοῖ καὶ καλά, τὴν δὲ τοῦ ἀναγκαίου καὶ ἀγαθοῦ φύσιν, ὅσον διαφέρει τῷ ὄντι, μήτε ἑωρακὼς εἴη μήτε ἄλλῳ δυνατὸς δεῖξαι*] (493 C 3–6). In this passage *ἀνάγκη* is the exterior necessity of the ignorant citizenry's overwhelming force that compels justice to be merely the appearence of justice, and thus distinct from the good. Such superficial necessity is qualitatively different from the interior necessity of *logos* that derives from the good and leads back to the good, a necessity that causes all things to be what they are and also causes true knowledge of them (508 D–509 B). This interior necessity is the kind I refer to as "natural necessity", in the sense that it causes human nature to be what it is (tri-partite), and to be known as what it is, i.e. known truly. For my analysis of the necessity of *logos* relative to the second of the two pleasure arguments in book 9, see n. 45 below.

33 Analyzing the argument about pleasure, which I treat below, Angus Johnston also emphasizes this argument's underlying teleology as a teleology toward the Good, writing, "just pleasures are those which involve no opposite. They are ends themselves, and thus what justice is for becomes a limited question . . ." (Johnston, "The Origin of Constitutions in the Republic," 80).

34 The oligarchic man and democratic man do however, briefly re-emerge for the calculation of the quantitative difference in pleasure between king and tyrant at 587 C 6–7, 12.

35 For my assertion on *κήρυκα* I rely on Adam, who, in agreement with Müller, holds that "in dramatic and musical contests the victor's name was publicly proclaimed by a herald" (Adam, *The Republic of Plato*, 2:341).

36 Johnston puts this moment of the argument most succinctly: "In relation to happiness, and to the being of the soul and the state, what is, is one in justice—its

very nature is that all parts must be each in its own way" (Johnston, "The Origin of Constitutions in the Republic," 81).

37 Cf. 357 B 1. Evidently, Socrates' goal lies beyond only 'to persuade' Glaucon and Adeimantus.

38 Kraut, "The Defense of Justice in Plato's Republic," 314. McCoy anticipates the alternative analysis I give of the centrality of pleasure to the *Republic*'s larger argument about justice and happiness: "The main source of contention between the philosopher and sophist . . . becomes a dispute about the nature of desire itself" (McCoy, *Plato on the Rhetoric of Philosophers and Sophists,* 128).

39 Pappas, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Plato and the Republic*, 173.

40 Russell, *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life,* 135.

41 Russell, *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life,* 121.

42 Russell, *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life,* 136. For Russell, Plato presents pleasure as a consequence not only of fulfilling the soul's true nature, but furthermore of the soul's self-reflexive judgment that the kind of life it leads, taken as a whole, is the best life: "Plato seems to be arguing that the life of virtue is most worth living on the grounds that from the authoritative perspective one sees that that life is most worth living. The pleasure of this life is not what makes it worth living. The pleasure is not what gives this life its point. Rather, the pleasure of this life is part and parcel of *seeing* its point. The virtuous person's life is not most worth living because it is most pleasant. It is most pleasant because it is most worth living" (Russell, *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life*, 126). I am most interested here in examining the role of the pleasure arguments within the larger argument of the *Republic*, and thus do not analyze in depth Russell's pronounced focus on self-reflexivity as "part and parcel" of the soul's pleasures. For Russell's argument, see *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life*, 106–138.

43 As quoted below, Socrates says, "Well then, that makes two in a row, and twice the just man has been victorious over the unjust one" (583 B 1–2).

44 Although it is beyond the scope of my particular focus on Plato's use of image, I read the incompleteness of the first pleasure argument as intentional and necessary, and as complemented by the second argument on pleasure that follows. For an alternative view of this first argument's limitation, see Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic,* 311.

45 If the philosopher's judgment should lack rational necessity, Socrates acknowledges he would be stuck in the following *aporia*: "since . . . the pleasures of each form, and the life itself, dispute with one another, not about living more nobly or shamefully or worse or better but about living more pleasantly and painlessly, how would we know which of them speaks most truly?" (581 E 6–582 A 2). It is important to see that the *ἀνάγκη,* which characterizes *λόγος,* responds to this problem: "What the lover of wisdom and the lover of argument praise would necessarily be most true [*Ἀνάγκη, ἔφη, ἃ ὁ φιλόσοφός τε καὶ ὁ φιλόλογος ἐπαινεῖ, ἀληθέστατα εἶναι* . . . Therefore, of the three pleasures, the most pleasant would belong to that part of the soul with which we learn; and the man among us in whom this part rules has the most pleasant life" (582 E 8–583 A 3). For an alternative response to the criticism that the conclusion of the first pleasure argument depends on a merely subjective judgment, see Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, 307–10. For a critique of Socrates' claim that experience itself can act as a standard for measuring pleasure, see C.C.W. Taylor, "Plato and Aristotle on the Criterion of Real Pleasures," In *Pleasure, Mind, and Soul: Selected Papers in Ancient Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 95–8. For a defense of the Socratic position against this critique, which stresses the pleasure of each kind of life as a whole activity, see Russell, *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life,* 122–7.

46 583 B 1–7; emphasis added. The entire Greek passage reads: "*Ταῦτα μὲν τοίνυν οὕτω δύ' ἐφεξῆς ἂν εἴη καὶ δὶς νενικηκὼς ὁ δίκαιος τὸν ἄδικον· τὸ δὲ τρίτον ὀλυμπικῶς τῷ σωτῆρί τε καὶ τῷ Ολυμπίῳ Δι,ἄθρει ὅτι οὐδὲ παναληθής ἐστιν ἡ τῶν ἄλλων ἡδονὴ πλὴν τῆς τοῦ φρονίμου οὐδὲ καθαρά, ἀλλ' ἐσκιαγραφημένη τις, ὡς ἐγὼ δοκῶ μοι τῶν σοφῶν τινος ἀκηκοέναι. καίτοι τοῦτ' ἂν εἴη μέγιστόν τε καὶ κυριώτατον τῶν πτωμάτων* ."After summarizing Stallbaum's view that this is a reference to a tradition of libations by the competitors at the Olympic games, and Schneider's view that this is a reference to the pentathlon, Adam concludes that these two stances are untenable. He writes, "the words *τῶν πτωμάτων*below make it clear that the reference is only to wrestling. The point manifestly is, that as in wrestling the third throw decided the contest between two athletes (Schol. on Aesch. *Eum.* 592 et al.), so here the *δίκαιος* wins after he has thrice defeated the *ἄδικος*(cf. also *Euthyd.* 277 C)" (Adam, *The Republic of Plato,* 2:348). Bloom sides with Adam, concluding that this is a reference to Olympic wrestling competitions, although he is also sympathetic with a position similar to Stallbaum's, insisting that the dedication to Zeus is nevertheless a reference to the libations to the Olympian gods traditionally given at banquets (Bloom, *The Republic of Plato,* 470 n. 7).

47 The self-movement of the wrestler, furthermore, anticipates the notion that justice is a power, *δύναμις*, as Socrates says at 588 B 8: "Now then . . . let's discuss with him, since we have agreed about the respective powers [*δύναμιν*]of doing injustice and doing just things" (588 B 6–8). For an analysis of the dialogue's focus on *δύναμις* after the third competition has been won, see Butler, "Justice and the Fundamental Question of Plato's Republic," 15.

48 See n. 53 below.

49 Russell, *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life,* 108.

50 Plato's stress on the importance of the pleasure arguments makes it tempting to see his argument either as purely hedonistic in the sense of seeing pleasure in and by itself as the ultimate good, or else to somehow mitigate Socrates' statement that the unjust man's defeats through the pleasure arguments is most severe, as Kraut does in, "The Defense of Justice in Plato's Republic," cited above.

My reading views both these interpretations as erroneous, and attempts to explain how the pleasure arguments are the most severe of the unjust man's defeats, while siding with Russell in rejecting the claim that, for Plato, pleasure is in and by itself the ultimate cause of happiness. For Russell's rejection of the hedonist interpretation, see Russell, *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life*, 127. Plato is very much aware of the hedonistic position that takes pleasure in and by itself to be the ultimate Good (i.e. the necessary and sufficient cause of happiness). See, for instance, 505 B 5–6.

51 In the second of the pleasure arguments, Socrates argues that while olfactory pleasure is an instance of a 'pure pleasure' discovered in sensation (584 B 6–8), we learn that the pleasure of smell is unusual. Most sense-pleasures are in reality just relief from pain, and not pure, or true pleasures: "of the so-called pleasures stretched through the body to the soul, just about most, and the greatest ones, belong to this form; they are kinds of relief from pains" (584 C 4–7). Socrates provides the example of nutrition to represent these more typical bodily 'pleasures' (585 A 8–B 1), which emerge from the appetite. The pleasures of eating and drinking are, in his view, only experiences of relief from the pains of hunger and thirst. This becomes clearer in considering that only some number of hours after relieving our hunger and thirst the 'counterfeit' pleasures of first their relief and then their absence are replaced once again by more hunger and more thirst. After some number of hours we must eat yet again to alleviate these constantly recurring kinds of pain. In other words, when the pleasures of becoming full and of being full are gone, we return straightway to the pains intrinsic to nutrition, not to a lasting neutral state. Nutrition fails the litmus test for 'pure' pleasure since the absence of nutrition's pleasure is the presence of its particular pain. This logic applies equally to every instance of satisfying the appetite. C.C.W. Taylor makes the point that the intellect never gains a perfectly stable hold on its object, which is evident in our sometimes forgetting what we have learned (Taylor, "Plato on Rationality and Happiness," 231). However, Taylor's point does not repudiate Plato since there is nothing intrinsically necessary about the kind of emptying that is forgetting. On the other hand, it is necessary that we lose the things we have acquired through the appetite since they are all impermanent (see 586 A–B, esp. 586 B 7–8). For another response to Taylor's objection, see Russell, *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life*, 128 n. 45, and 129 ff.

52 Just as 'Glaucon's' sophistry does not describe pain as the *primary* evil to be avoided, but rather the lack of social influence that causes the pain, so his account does not describe pleasure as sophistry's ultimate good. At 362 B–C, Glaucon describes the reward of sophistry as limitless freedom or power. Glaucon does define a category of goods desired for their own sake at 357 B, and includes in this category "all the pleasures which are harmless and leave no after effects other than the enjoyment in having them." However, he uses this category of good, not as a way of contextualizing the goal of sophistry, but rather to illustrate how the most just (and naïve) man understands justice (357 D 3).

53 586 D 4–587 A 5; emphases added. On the relation of this description to the Good, also see Adam's note on 586 E: ". . . *τὸ βέλτιστον ἑκάστῳ, τοῦτο καὶ οἰκειότατον* —a saying which reaches to the very foundations of Plato's philosophy: for if that which is best for each thing, is also most its own—most truly akin to it, part of its very being,—it follows that each thing truly is just in proportion as it is good. In other words the cause of all existence is the Good" (Adam, *The Republic of Plato,* 2:358).

54 It should be acknowledged that in treating the topic of pleasure at this point in the dialogue Socrates is responding to Glaucon's sybaritic tendencies. For Plato's characterization of Glaucon as sybaritic, see for instance Socrates' reference to Glaucon's lover at 366 A 3 and Glaucon's demand for relishes at 372 C 2–3 that leads to the unhealthy city of excess. However, just as the pleasure arguments are not themselves 'purely' hedonistic, so the aim of Socrates' account of pleasure is not primarily to respond to the aspect of Glaucon's character that is drawn to pleasure, but to respond to sophistry's account of justice as Glaucon presents it (367 E–368 C). Therefore, while Socrates' treatment of pleasure does indeed respond to Glaucon's sensualism, this alone does not explain why Plato characterizes the pleasure arguments as the most severe defeat of the unjust man. Rather, Socrates responds to the sophistic argument that would promote and uphold Glaucon's sensualism.

55 Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, 315.

56 On the literary, thematic and philosophical relations between the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus,* see Charles Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), esp. 372–375. While Kahn is careful to link these two dialogues in various ways, I do not depend here on any intrinsic relation between the *Phaedrus* and the *Republic*, but only on the general claim that, when writing the *Republic*, Plato was aware of the problems of a text's capacity to convey philosophical concepts, as written down at some other time in the *Phaedrus.*

57 Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue*, 377. Cf. Jacob Klein's analysis of this passage and of the question of how to read the Platonic dialogues in general (Jacob Klein, *A Commentary on Plato's Meno* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965],10–13). The more recent and widespread project of analyzing the interpretation itself of Plato can be seen as a response to a methodological problem of hermeneutical naiveté in Plato scholarship clarified in Roochnik, "Terence Irwin's Reading of Plato," in *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings*, ed. Charles L. Griswold (New York: Routledge, 1988), 183–93, and Terence Irwin, "Reply to David L. Roochnik," in *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings*, ed. Charles L. Griswold (New York: Routledge, 1988), 194–99.

58 I limit my analysis to one aspect of Plato's authorial attempt to answer this difficulty. For a broader analysis of the problems Plato finds with text, and the way in which Proclus and Boethius adapt their texts to some of these

concerns, see Solère, "Why Did Plato Write?," in *Orality, Literacy, and Colonialism in Antiquity*, ed. Jonathan A. Draper (Boston: Brill, 2004), 83–91, and Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue*. For a concise articulation of the general impediments to accessing any text on its own terms see Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* esp. 235 ff.

59 On the question of whether Plato's authorial voice is present through the dialogue form, see, for instance Ruby Blondell, *The Play of Character in Plato's Dialogues,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 14–21 and 43–6. For a defense of the view that the character Socrates mostly articulates Plato's ideas (the 'Socrates as mouthpiece' view), see Christopher Rowe, *Plato and the Art of Philosophical Writing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

60 As Blondell affirms, "it is true that dialogue form may plausibly be seen as an attempt by Plato to circumvent some of the difficulties of writing per se as aired in *Phaedurus*" (Blondell, *The Play of Character in Plato's Dialogues*, 44). Also see my n. 61 below.

61 On the inadequacies of the author's merely steering a reader away from misunderstanding his ideas, see Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue,* 377–8.

62 Heidegger, analyzing an interpretive problem that is broader than, but still deeply relevant to textual analysis, advocates an hermeneutical method whose goal is described as follows: "to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself" (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson [New York: Harper, 1962], 58). I take Plato's authorial use of image to anticipate and respond to the challenge every reader faces to follow and understand the author's argument when he has only the author's text in front of him, the author himself being absent; the parallel imagery, which corresponds with 'right' textual readings help prevent against misinterpretation, and permit the text's argument to "show itself," at least imperfectly.

63 Discussing this point, Jean-Luc Solère suggests that Plato's "esoteric" teaching can be explained without recourse to a secret, oral doctrine, but by accessing the deeper, latent meaning of the text through an attentive reading: "The deep meaning remains hidden to those who do not know how to read with understanding, but all that is necessary is nevertheless said in the text" (Solere, "Why Did Plato Write?," 87). For a direct rejection of the "esoteric" reading of Plato, see Brisson, "Plato, Socrates and the Literary Form of the Dialogue," Section 2.1.

64 The text of the *Republic* presumably adapts to different readers in more ways than I state here, but the consideration of these further ways lies beyond the scope of my present treatment.

65 Marina McCoy puts the point as follows: "The proof as to whether the drama of the dialogue really helps us make better sense of Plato's philosophy is best found in the practice of explaining dramatic and poetic devices in relation to the spoken words of the dialogue rather than in an abstract defense" (McCoy, *Plato on the Rhetoric of Philosophers and Sophists,*16).

Ignorance or Irony in Plato's Socrates?: A Look Beyond Avowals and Disavowals of Knowledge[1]

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ABSTRACT

My central thesis is that Socrates of Plato's "early" dialogues believes he has the very wisdom he famously disavows. Eschewing the usual tack of analyzing his various avowals and disavowals of knowledge, I focus on other claims which entail a belief that he has wisdom par excellence—not just self-awareness of ignorance and not just so-called elenctic wisdom. First, I correct the common misimpression that Socrates is willing only to ask but not to answer questions. Indeed, he describes his own answers as a crucial part of his exhortative message, which, I show, involves not just an exhortation to participate in "elenctic" discussion; his exhortation to virtue is not aimed just at getting his interlocutors to understand that virtue—whatever it is!—must be pursued first and foremost. The elenchus, I argue, is only a prerequisite for understanding the much more substantive lessons of his exhortative practice, which produces "the greatest good"—indeed "happiness" itself. This interpretation, I explain, goes hand in hand with Socrates' belief that he is a "good man", invulnerable to injury, who rationally and independently always makes unerring decisions aimed at justice. In light of such beliefs, as well as his fearless claims about others' injustices, I offer a plausible explanation of why Socrates denies having bona fide wisdom and being a "teacher" of it.

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> *PROTARCHUS: Why, then, did you yourself not give an answer to yourself, Socrates? SOCRATES: No [reason] why not. Do, however, have a part of the logos with [me].* (*Philebus* 54b)[2]

> *SOCRATES: If you don't wish to answer, then I'll answer for you….* (*Apology* 27b8-9)

Three decades ago, when Gregory Vlastos wrote his paper titled "Socrates' Disavowal of Knowledge", he could claim (1994, 39)[3] that "the standard view" of such disavowals was that Socrates does not mean by them what he says.[4] Today, due in no small measure to Vlastos's work, it might well be said that the standard view has been reversed.[5] I shall argue in this paper, however, that there are important passages in Plato's early dialogues that are familiar enough but have unfortunately been discounted or misinterpreted by Vlastos and many of those who have followed his lead. Careful reexamination of these passages strongly suggests that we ought to consider a return to the formerly "standard view". Besides discounting or misinterpreting crucial evidence, one factor that led to the abandonment of that view was its being virtually identified with what was in fact only one possible version of the view: viz., that of Norman Gulley (1968, 64ff.). After marshalling all the evidence which suggests that Plato's Socrates[6] cannot in his familiar disavowals mean what he says, I shall suggest some plausible reasons for the frequent disavowals that avoid the problems found in Gulley's particular interpretation of them.

The "paradox"[7] in Socrates' alleged ignorance is familiar enough, so I shall not bother to start with reviewing the interpretive problem in detail. Let me instead begin by highlighting one feature of the typical way in which the "paradox" has been presented in scholarship over the past couple decades: the scholarship is not of course monolithic, but there is a discernable tendency to fetishize knowledge-claims: in recent decades, the "paradox" of Socrates' ignorance has often been presented as an at least prima facie incongruity between Socrates' *claims* of ignorance versus his *claims* of knowledge.[8] I, however, want to argue that, in order to get a full appreciation of what and how much Socrates thinks he knows, we need to pay more attention, than is now usually given, to other kinds of evidence. Vlastos's observations in a 1957 address are, in this connection, worth reviewing: "… [N]o man ever breathed greater assurance that his feet were planted firmly on the path of right. He never voices a doubt of the moral rightness of any of his acts or decisions, never betrays a sense of sin. He goes to his death confident that 'no evil thing can happen to a good man' (*Apology* 41D)—that 'good man' is himself." (1971, 7).[9] Such observations are crucial in my own attempt to revive the formerly "standard view".

SECTION 1). READINESS TO ANSWER QUESTIONS.

This brings me to the first familiar passage that I want to reconsider. Let me introduce it by noting how remarkable it is that Vlastos—in "Socrates' Disavowal of Knowledge", published three decades after the address from which I just quoted—can so confidently cite (1994, 40) Aristotle in support of his view that Socrates' disavowals are sincere: so Vlastos explains that "…for Aristotle the reason why Socrates 'asked questions, but did not answer them' is that

'he confessed he had no knowledge' (*Soph. El.* 183b7-8)..." (1994, 16 n. 47).[10] "Socrates", Vlastos tell us, "does not answer questions, does not expound his 'wisdom.' Pieces of it spill out in elenctic arguments, leaving the interlocutor wondering how much is being held back" (1991, 35).[11]

Rather than simply taking Aristotle's word for it that Socrates "asked questions but did not answer them", one might well stop to consider—or reconsider—whether it was actually the case. A close look will show that it was not true of at least *Plato's* Socrates (even though Plato does make it clear[12] that it was indeed an impression some had of the man). But it is not *Socrates*' (or *Plato's*) failure to be clear about the matter. It is of course true that in Plato's dialogues Socrates happens oftener to be the questioner than the respondent.[13] But there are more than just a couple instances where Socrates expresses his willingness to answer as well as ask.[14] Unfortunately, one of the most relevant instances is a very familiar passage indeed, but the passage is all too often either overlooked or obscured (unintentionally), mainly (I suspect) because of how it is usually translated and interpreted. The passage is *Apology* 33b1-3.

Below is, first, the Oxford Classical Text of the passage, followed by a couple widely-read English translations; lastly, I submit my own suggestion.

> "<33b1-2> ...ὁμοίως καὶ πλουσίῳ καὶ πέντι παρέχω ἐμαυτὸν ἐρωτᾶν, <33b2-3> καὶ ἐάν τις βούληται ἀποκρινόμενος ἀκούειν ὧν ἄν λέγω." (Duke et al. 1995)

> "<33b1-2> I am equally ready to question the rich and the poor <33b2-3> if anyone is willing to answer my questions and listen to what I say." (Grube/Cooper 2002)

> "<33b1-2> …I am ready to answer questions for rich and poor alike, <33b2-3> and I am equally ready if anyone prefers to listen to what I have to say and answer my questions." (Tredennick/Tarrant 2003)

> "<33b1-2> … I hold forth myself for both a wealthy person and a poor one similarly to question, <33b2-3> and if anyone wishes to hear the things I have to say by answering." (Senn)

The accuracy of mine and Tredennick/Tarrant's translation of the *first* clause (33b1-2) is well-confirmed by a number of venerable commentators,[15] and so it is a little surprising to see it still so often mistranslated in the manner of Grube/Cooper.[16] The second clause (33b2-3), however, is trickier. According to John Burnet, there is a hyperbaton here: he says the "answering (*apokrinomenos*)" belongs with Socrates' "I say (*legō*)", not with the "any (*tis*)" interlocutor (1924, 138-139). So Burnet would hold that our popular translators have got 33b2-3 wrong—that Tredennick/Tarrant and Grube/Cooper's "answer my questions" should rather be "hear what I say in reply" (sc., to *their* questions, the ones mentioned in 33b1-2). But Emile de Strycker and Simon Slings maintain that the transposition Burnet attributes to the clause "would be contorted and misleading", so they suggest that the "answering" there is the interlocutor's rather than Socrates' (1994, 350). Since contorted hyperbatons do occasionally occur in the language, for my own part I do not believe the Greek by itself is clear enough to adjudicate the issue, which is why I have above translated 33b2-3 so that it is as ambiguous as, I believe, the Greek itself is.[17]

SECTION 2.) "WAKENING" OFFERED TO ALL, WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED OR GUARANTEES.

The context, on the other hand, clinches it in favor of Burnet's reading.[18] It is true that "discussion" is mentioned at 33b1, which usually implies mutual asking and answering; but the *main* point of the whole passage appears clearly to be Socrates' willingness to be heard by anyone whether "younger or older" who "desires to hear when I'm speaking…" (33a7). Our passage seems really to be just an echo of the passage surrounding 30a, where Socrates states his commitment to "exhort" (29d), "admonish" (30a), and "persuade" (30a) everyone, both "younger and older", concerning attention to virtue. There he did of course reiterate his eagerness also to "question", "examine", and "interrogate" (29e) them; but, crucially, that eagerness is mentioned there only as a *reaction* to someone who claims already to attend to virtue *after* being exhorted by Socrates to do so. Indeed, 29d ff. is the passage where we first hear (at least explicitly)[19] of Socrates' habitual exhortations to virtue. So 33b is a reiteration of this commitment to deliver ("say/speak") the same exhortative message to any and all.

Now, interestingly, in the earlier passage, at 30a, he had of course claimed that all this—including, and perhaps *most*[20] importantly, his exhorting/persuading—is something than which there is "no greater good for you". At 30b4-6 he does seem to entertain the possibility that his practice may be harmful, "if by saying those things I corrupt the young".[21] But he then goes on to assure his judges that they will "be helped by hearing" him (30c), once he persuades them, for their own sake, not to "somehow err regarding the god's gift" by voting against him (30d-e), whereupon he reiterates his commitment to "waken", "persuade", and "admonish" everyone of them (30e-31a).

I say that these facets of the earlier, 29d ff. passage are "interesting", because they too are echoed later in our passage at 33a-b, where, immediately after the controversial 33b1-3, we have:

> "And whether any of those [interlocutors] becomes good (*chrēstos*) or not, I would not justly be held as the cause; I never promised any learning to any of them, nor did I teach [any of them]. But/And if anyone asserts that from me he ever learned anything or heard in private anything that[22] all the others didn't too, be well aware that he is not saying true things." (*Apol.* 33b)

Again, as I have been arguing, the focus of 33a-b (as of 29d ff. and also 36c-d) is on what others "hear" from Socrates. And this is all the more remarkable, given that the upshot of 33a-b is that Socrates is allegedly *not* a "teacher". I think the lesson we are meant to take from this must be this: Socrates denies being a "teacher", not because he has nothing to say or even teach, but because (i) he is willing to say the same things to everyone, (ii) including the old,[23] and (iii) has, if any, a preference for speaking with fellow-citizens;[24] and (iv) he does not receive a wage for what he says; and (v) he does not *promise*[25] that anyone who listens to him will actually learn.[26] In refusing to accept the label of "teacher", he is not disavowing knowledge; rather, he is distinguishing himself from those who *made a profession* out of what amounted to higher education in the Greek world at the time, the so-called Sophists. If his point was that he had nothing to teach anybody, then he surely would have made this clear; however, to the contrary, both 29d ff. and 33a-b quite

obscure the point about teaching that most commentators nowadays believe he is so anxious to make, since what those passages in fact do is to *highlight* how eager he is to bring them all a greatly (perhaps uniquely) beneficial bit of teaching.

SECTION 3). EXHORTATIVE CONTENT.

Now, of course, commentators like Vlastos would agree with me that Socrates is willing to consider himself a "teacher" *in a sense*; but, according to Vlastos, he has no knowledge that "can be handed over": all he can offer as a "teacher" is partnership in a cooperative search that can yield, at most, "elenctically justified" knowledge (1991, 32, 36-37, 242). According to Vlastos, the elenctically defensible knowledge that Socrates admits to having cannot be transmitted by "direct expression" (1994, 65); rather, it can only be acquired (eventually) by participating in (enough) "elenctic" discussions. So, on this interpretation, Socrates' "greatly beneficial" message/lesson can consist only in an invitation to participate in elenctic discussion.

There are two deeply problematic aspects to Vlastos's interpretation. First, it is based on a patent misinterpretation of what Socrates means by "human wisdom" at *Apology* 20d ff. A second problem—one that I think is common even among those who do not cleave to Vlastos's peculiar interpretation of "human wisdom"—comes from a misinterpretation of the import of Socrates' exhortative message.

So, first, how does Vlastos misinterpret "human wisdom"? Vlastos clearly believes his great insight in "Socrates' Disavowal of Knowledge" was to interpret Socrates' avowal of "human wisdom" (*Apol.* 20d-e) as an avowal of elenctic wisdom (1994, 62),[27] which, Vlastos tells us, is in fact genuine virtue according Socrates (1994, 61). But Socrates' "human wisdom" cannot be interpreted as genuine wisdom/virtue.[28] For one thing, Socrates makes it pretty plain that by "human wisdom" he means simply the awareness of the limits of one's knowledge—not any kind of substantive knowledge. He claims he has "human wisdom", but denies flatly (20b4-c3) that he has *genuine* human virtue.[29] Contrary to Vlastos's interpretation (1991, 239 and 1994, 62), Socrates in the *Apology* is not prepared to claim that *any* knowledge has "issued from" his examinations other than awareness of his own lack of knowledge about important matters.[30] It is worth noting that, as soon as the topic of Socrates' peculiar human "wisdom" is raised (and thereafter throughout the *Apology*), Socrates repeatedly makes it clear how reticent he is even to *call* it "wisdom".[31] Also, Socrates describes human "wisdom" as worthless (23a7)[32] not only "*in comparison with* true [divine] wisdom" (as Vlastos would have it; 1991, 110, 239 n. 17 and 1994, 62, my emphasis); rather, Socrates thinks that the human wisdom that he has is worth *nothing unless it leads to true wisdom* which humans allegedly lack.[33] Vlastos's Socrates, on the other hand, is so far from thinking that his elentically based human wisdom is worthless that he "is morally justified in living by" the results of the elenchus (1991, 271): the elenchus provides evidence that is "strong enough to offer us the moral certainty needed for prudent action" (269); so much so that Socrates "is serenely confident" that he has achieved both virtue and happiness (1994, 43). According to Vlastos, Socrates' "human wisdom" is not worthless at all. Indeed, "the condition of moral excellence and therewith the condition of happiness" is "knowledge of good and evil" (1991, 110); but moral excellence—virtue—according to Vlastos's Socrates is *elenctic* knowledge of good and evil (1994, 61), which he believes he has plenty enough of.

Many scholars who accept the sincerity of Socrates's disavowals part ranks with Vlastos: they do not interpret Socrates as avowing genuine human virtue.[34] But these scholars still face a version of the second problem with Vlastos's interpretation, to which I now turn; for they, for the most part, agree with Vlastos in concluding that Socrates has no substantive knowledge to pass along. But is it actually true that Socrates held he had no substantive knowledge—knowledge which *could*, so to speak, be "handed over": i.e., a kind of independently worthwhile knowledge that could be presented and explained by "direct expression" outside of a purely "elenctic" discussion? I believe the evidence tells against the idea that Socrates' only message is an invitation to elenctic discussion.

Let me start by simply reiterating an important point that that I have just attempted to show: I think one lesson from the passages at 29d ff. and 33a-b (as well as 36c-d) is that what Socrates thinks is of the *most* importance—what he in fact bills as the ultimate aim of his peculiar "practice", including the elenchus—is his *positive* message, i.e. what he has to *tell* everyone. That is to say, on Vlastos's kind of interpretation, the elenctic cart is put before the exhortative horse. In fact, Socrates' exhortation is not an exhortation to participate in the elenchus; rather, the elenchus is (at most) a necessary step to get his listeners to understand and be persuaded by the much more substantive content of his exhortation and admonishment.[35]

SECTION 4). MAKING PEOPLE "BE HAPPY".

I want to turn to another very remarkable passage that, despite its familiarity and its significance, has received surprisingly little attention in the relevant literature, when it is cited or even acknowledged at all.[36] When it is mentioned, what it seems to imply is usually completely overlooked. In this case, mistranslation is not the cause. And I can of course only guess, but I suspect that it has been overlooked because most scholars simply *presume* that Socrates cannot literally mean what he says.

> "What then is becoming for a poor man, working good (*euergetēs*), who needs to lead a life of leisure for the purpose of exhorting you? There is not, men of Athens, anything which is so becoming for the man of that sort as to be fed in the Prytaneion. At least it's much more becoming than if anyone of you has been victorious at the Olympics on a horse or on a two-horsed chariot or with a team [of horses]; for he makes you seem to be happy, whereas I make you be happy; and he is in need of no nourishment, whereas I am in need of it." (*Apol.* 36d-e).[37]

The reason why his claim here is so remarkable should be clear: If taken literally, he is implying that he makes them wise—i.e., *genuinely* wise, *genuinely* virtuous.[38] This is because Socrates of the early dialogues accepts what I like to call the "success-requires-wisdom" doctrine, according to which having genuine wisdom/virtue is necessary for having happiness.[39]

Moreover, the claim to make Athenians "happy" is tied explicitly to his practice of exhortation and persuasion. This seems to suggest that Socrates not only "tried" to persuade each Athenian to attend first and foremost to the condition of their souls (36c), but actually succeeded in some measure.[40] More crucially, it seems to suggest that *what* they were successfully persuaded to do was not just to engage

first and foremost in a *search* for maximal virtue/wisdom; rather, he successfully persuaded them to engage *knowledgeably* in activities that actually *gave* them genuine virtue/wisdom. Indeed, this may be what made him say there was "no greater good" for them that his practice of persuasion (30a6-7)—that he has accomplished through that practice "the greatest good work/product (*euergesia*)" (36c3-5).[41]

Interpreted literally, Socrates cannot at 36d-e mean only that he has gotten Athenians to participate in philosophical discussion and examination. Elsewhere he does call such activity "the greatest good for a human" (38a); but as I argued in my 2012, by "greatest" he cannot at least there have meant *most ultimate*, since he values philosophizing as a necessary means for getting genuine virtue/wisdom. Taken literally, Socrates cannot at 36d-e even mean that he has made Athenians aware of the limits of their knowledge, instilling that "human wisdom" that he himself avows; as I have already argued, mere awareness of the limits of one's knowledge is valuable, at most, only as a prerequisite to genuine human virtue.[42]

To his credit, David Reeve is one of very few scholars who explicitly acknowledge that Socrates does not just say he provides Athenians with a "good" of unprecedented greatness,[43] but actually says he makes them "happy". Reeve is also one of very few who have attempted to account for that claim head on. Unfortunately, he waffles. First, Reeve interprets Socrates as claiming only to subject the Athenians to "frequent elenctic examinations", which result, at most, in non-expert "human wisdom". (This seems nowadays to be the usual way of interpreting Socrates' claims to be greatly benefiting the Athenians.)[44] Reeve concludes, "That is why Socrates confers 'the greatest benefit' on the Athenians and makes them really happy (*or as close to being really happy as possible*)" (1989, 179, my emphasis; cf. his 2000, 29-30).[45] The reason that Reeve fudges things here may be because he realizes that according to Socrates the "human wisdom" he claims to offer the Athenians is not sufficient for happiness; according to Reeve, Socrates thinks that "expert" knowledge—something he allegedly does not teach—is necessary for happiness (1989, 136, 179). So one way to interpret Reeve's conclusion is that "happy" at 36d10 is not to be taken literally.

However, Reeve's treatment of the relevant passages suggests a different way of understanding his interpretation of 36d10: Reeve seems to think that because Socrates "repeatedly portrays the elenchus itself as the greatest good" and because he thought "expert" knowledge was not possible for humans, this means that Socrates "cannot have valued the elenchus because it helps to gain that possession for us" (1989, 178 n. 84). Perhaps, then, Reeve is suggesting that, for Socrates, elenctic examination is an *end in itself*, meaning that it alone is sufficient for *genuine* happiness, even if it never leads to "expert" knowledge.[46] Such an interpretation would certainly be consistent with Reeve's contention that, according to Socrates, his "human wisdom" *is* genuine human virtue (1989, 150, 179; 2000, 30).[47]

But, as I have already argued, Socrates explicitly says otherwise. Moreover, this interpretation of 36d10 would directly contradict Socrates' success-requires-wisdom doctrine. It seems, therefore, that we must either interpret "happy" non-literally, or else interpret Socrates to mean that he confers genuine virtue.

SECTION 5). THE BENEFICIARIES.

Before I move on to consider other passages in order to resolve this interpretive problem, I

want first to address one potential problem for a literal interpretation of 36d10. Many scholars have noted that a commonplace of the early dialogues is that (at least as far as we know) Socrates' interlocutors remain unmoved by their encounter with him.[48] Indeed, Socrates himself reports that the usual result of his encounters is enmity (*Apol.* 21d, e, 23a), anger (23c), aggravation (23e, 31a), and grudge (28a, 37d)[49], not even the admission of ignorance (23d7-9). Also, if we interpret *Apol.* 36d10 literally, then how are we to explain Socrates' claim never to have found any Athenian who was genuinely wise (23a-b) and his claim that in Athens one can still find "an ungrudging many of humans who suppose they know something but know few things or nothing" (23c)? He even concludes that the majority of his jurors have not even learnt from him that the unexamined life is not livable (38a1-7); he actually says of those jurors who voted against him that they "aren't living correctly" (39d). How can Socrates be claiming at 36d10 that he makes the Athenians *literally* happy, if so many of them are so far from genuine wisdom that they do not even have mere "human wisdom"?

The answer is that we may interpret "happy" literally if we do not interpret "you" literally. And I think it is clearly only natural *not* to interpret "you" at 36d10 literally: he is no more suggesting that he makes *every* Athenian be happy than he is suggesting that an Olympian victor makes *every* Athenian seem happy. Those whom he is claiming to have made happy are only a subset of his audience—maybe a relatively small subset, but, in his mind, a crucial one. There is every reason to think that the alleged beneficial effects of associating with Socrates did not come about after only one or two encounters with him; rather, continual, sustained interaction was necessary.[50] I imagine that this is one reason why Socrates does not expect (19a1-5, 24a1-4, 37a7-b2) that his allotted time with his jurors is sufficient for "teaching" and "persuading" (21b, 35c) them that he is innocent or even that the unexamined life is not worth living. I suggest that the Athenians he thinks he has improved are some of the wealthy young men who follow him, "listen to my speaking", and imitate him (23c, 37d, 39c-d). His list (33d-34a) of those young Athenians who, if his accusers were right, would have been corrupted by Socrates (but in fact, according to him, were not) could well be a partial list of those whom Socrates thinks he has made happy. After mentioning seven of such followers (including Plato), he adds that he could name "many others" (cf. 39d1). This, I suggest, is the enumeration of improved students that Socrates elsewhere (*Lach.* 185e-186b, *Gorg.* 515a; cf. *Prot.* 319e-320b, *Meno* 93b ff.) requires from those who claim to be good teachers. It is worth noting that at *Euthyphro* 2c-d, Socrates makes the point that it is best for the politician to start with improving the youth; so it may well be that he imagines that he has even made Athens herself happy by improving her youth: "For certainly, as sons become good (*chrēstos*) or the opposite, so too the entire house of the father will be managed—in whichever sort of way the children come to be" (*Lach.* 185a).

SECTION 6). THE GOOD/ARTFUL WORKS OF AN UNERRING COUNSELOR.

In any case, the list at *Apol.* 33d-34a is telling, and it corroborates my literal interpretation of 36d10 in another way: because there he is not simply trying to show that he has not harmed them or made them worse; rather, he is trying to show that, in his role as private "counselor" (31c), he has never "counseled anything

bad" (33d). The implication is that the counsel he gives makes them *good*, not bad. My point is *not* that *make good* and *make bad* are for Socrates logical contradictories. The point is that we already know from many other indications in the *Apology* that the content of Socrates' "counsel" is quite substantial: he advises people not only to attend to virtue (31b), but about how it should be obtained—viz., eschewing financial, bodily, social and political power (29d, 30a-b),[51] and by first recognizing that one does not yet have (maximal) wisdom (23b) and then by participating "each day" in philosophical discussion and examination (38a).

And there is still more: When Socrates explains why he did not become a *public* counselor by practicing conventional politics, it immediately becomes clear that he believes that, had he done so, he not only would have advised the Athenian Assembly on the necessity of knowing the good and the bad, but also would have advised them on *the just itself* (31e3-32a1, 32a1-2, 32e3-4).[52] Indeed, he describes his peculiar practice of "private counseling" as involving "really battling[53] for what's just" (though "privately", not in a public capacity). And this cannot be interpreted very weakly to mean, for instance, only that he understands on an abstract level that justice—whatever it is!—must be done, while not understanding (completely or in lots of case) what justice demands.[54] As Socrates maintains in the *Gorgias*, it is not by sheer determination that the just is brought about; it is by "some power (*dunamis*) and art (*technē*)" (sc., substantive knowledge of good and bad) (509d-e).[55] Surely the Socrates of the *Apology*, and of the early dialogues in general, would have agreed. In the *Laches* he says,

> "There is a need…to consider the counselor—whether he is an artisan/expert (*technikos*) in ministering to that thing [sc., the soul] for the sake of which we are considering the things we are considering." (185d)[56]

"There is a need," according to Socrates, because not just anyone is qualified to counsel, but only the one who is expert about the subject in question. It is greatly significant that the reason that he actually gives in the *Apology* for not having become a public counselor is *not* that he was not an expert about the just,[57] but that—due to his inevitable attempts to *bring about* justice—opposing political forces would have "destroyed" (sc., killed or exiled) him, thus ruining his chances of improving *anyone* (31d-e, 32a, 32e, 36b-c). Socrates' mention of daimonic opposition to his political aspirations (31c-d) implies that he, at least at one point in time, was confident enough about his qualifications for the job that he actually decided to pursue it; it is important to recall that Socrates "hears" the *daimonion* only when it turns him away from what he is "going/about to do" (31d). And, according to his own account, the *daimonion* opposed him not because he was unqualified, but because he would ultimately not have been allowed to put his qualifications to use: he would have been killed or exiled first.

So when Socrates claims to make the Athenians "happy", when he maintains that he is an unerring private "counselor" about justice and virtue, when he names the specific individuals who were counseled well and not corrupted, what he is really doing is proving that he thinks he satisfies the required condition of being a "craftsman (*dēmiourgos*)" or "artisan (*technikos*) concerning ministering to [the] soul": viz., "being able to show some work (*ergon*) of that art (technē) which was well -worked/crafted (*eu eirgasmenon*)" (*Lach.* 185e). As he says in the *Apology*, his exhortations have produced "the greatest good work (*euergesia*)"

(36c)—precisely what one would expect, by his own lights, from a competent artisan.[58]

SECTION 7). BEING A "GOOD MAN".

Indeed, we have still further indication in the *Apology* of Socrates' expertly produced "good works". We find it in statements that are not explicitly knowledge-claims, and, perhaps for that reason alone, are typically either downplayed or discounted altogether. Among these are statements wherein Socrates expresses the belief that he is a "good man". There are several indications of this in the *Apology* (28a7-b2, 32e3, 36d1-3, 41c-d).[59] The one that has gotten most attention occurs at the end of the *Apology*:

> "But you too, gentlemen judges, ought to have good anticipation about your death and to think on this one thing—a true thing: that there is for a good man nothing bad—neither when he's living nor even when he's come to an end; nor are his affairs/troubles unattended to by the gods. And the things that have now come to be for me have not come to be spontaneously; rather, this is clear to me: that it was better for me to have died now and to have been released from troubles. And because of that, the sign did not turn me away from anything…." (*Apol.* 41c-d)

Hugh Benson has argued (2000, 243-244) against the idea that Socrates ever expresses the belief that he is good. He may well be right that some of the texts usually used to support the interpretation show only that Socrates considers himself *more* good than others. But I happen to think that Benson's position involves a misinterpretation of *Apol.* 41c-d, as I believe it clearly implies that Socrates considers himself a good man for whom there is nothing bad. I shall, however, not quibble over 41c-d, because there is even clearer evidence, and it is unfortunately almost always overlooked (or perhaps just misunderstood), including by Benson:

> "…Much enmity has been generated for me, and from many…. And this is what will condemn me, if indeed it does condemn: not Meletus or Anytus either, but the aspersion and grudge of the many, which actually has condemned many other good men too (πολλοὺς καὶ ἄλλους καὶ ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας),[60] and I suppose will also keep condemning. And there's no fear of its stopping at me." (*Apol.* 28a-b)[61]

Now, we know that Socrates believed that no one could be genuinely good without being genuinely wise.[62] Naturally, however, the word "good (*agathos*)" was used in ancient Greek, by Socrates too, in all sorts of ways, in all kinds of contexts, to describe all manner of things and qualities. So why should we think, when he applies the term to himself, that he is referring to *genuine human virtue*?[63] First of all, I would highlight the significance of the fact that when Socrates implies he is good, he is attaching the word "good" to the word "man". When Socrates uses the phrase "good man", he seems specifically to mean *genuinely virtuous man*, especially one who serves justice and the genuine good of the public (28b6-c1, 32e2-4). Indeed, describing oneself as "good" seems to have had in Athens those very connotations in the context of a litigation,[64] which we may see, for instance, in Socrates' derisive reference to the fact that Meletus in his own speech to the jurors had described himself as "good " (24b)—right before Socrates attempts to show

that Meletus "does injustice" by prosecuting Socrates (24c) and does not "attend to" (sc., understand) the crucial issues of the indictment, viz. who makes the young better or worse (24d).

SECTION 8). THE INVULNERABILITY OF A "GOOD MAN".

In any case, there are two far more compelling reasons for interpreting "good" to refer to genuine wisdom/virtue when Socrates implies that he is "good": first, Socrates' implication that he is good is explicitly connected to his claim of invulnerability to harm; and second, his claim to be good is tied to his claim never to have done injustice and the claim that, whenever he decides to act, he takes into account only justice and whether he "does works (*erga*) of a good man or a bad one".

As I have said, I think it is clear that at *Apol.* 41c-d, he considers himself among the good men for whom there is "nothing bad". One thing that partly corroborates this interpretation of 41c-d is that it is not the first time in the *Apology* that Socrates implies that he is invulnerable to harm. Earlier, at 30c-d, he had said:

> "….Be well aware that if you were to have me—a person of the sort such as I say I am—killed, you would not injure me more than you yourselves. Now then, neither Meletus nor Anytus would injure me in any way; for he would not even be capable of it; for I don't suppose that it is sanctioned that a better man be injured by a worse one. Indeed he may perhaps have me killed or drive me out or disenfranchise me. But whereas that one and certainly some other, may perhaps/probably suppose that those things are greatly bad; I do not suppose so, but rather that doing these things that he's now doing—putting his hand to having a man unjustly killed—is much more bad." (*Apol.* 30c-d)

Now here, one might be inclined to say, he is implying not necessarily that he *is good*, but only that he is *better than* Meletus and Anytus. My point, however, in citing 30c-d is that Socrates clearly he thinks he has a goodness (or *at least* some degree of it *relative* to what others have or do not have) that affords him a remarkable kind of protection against *any* injury (including injury from death, exile, disenfranchisement, as well—one assumes—as from imprisonment, torture, maiming) that an inferior may try to bring about for him. I have argued elsewhere (Senn 2005) that the only thing that can really account for Socrates' belief in this kind of invulnerability is to interpret it as the possession of something of positive intrinsic value that cannot be taken away by inferiors (and likewise cannot be counteracted by an inferior's efforts to bring about something of negative intrinsic value for him). Indeed, I have argued, this implies that *all that ultimately matters* to Socrates—as far as good and bad, benefit and harm is concerned—is something that he thinks he has *already* got (at least some of). And, if we add to this Socrates' belief that the ultimate basis for decision making is concern for the condition of the soul,[65] then what we have at *Apol.* 30c-d is a reference to *genuine* virtue, and Socrates is implying there that he already has it (to some degree).[66] And I think the same may be said of 41c-d, perhaps with even greater assurance.[67]

Once again, it is important to recognize that a possession like Socrates' "human wisdom" just cannot measure up to the invulnerability described in 41c-d or even in 30c-d: If Socrates

were "better" than Meletus and Anytus *only* due to his awareness of the limits of his own knowledge, while lacking any other substantive knowledge, then surely Meletus and Anytus could harm him a great deal: by preventing him from ever acquiring any genuine wisdom, thereby making his life not worth living (or not worth having lived). Meletus and Anytus could perhaps also prevent someone who was already genuinely wise from acquiring *more* wisdom, but the wisdom *already* acquired would evidently, according to Socrates, make life worth living (or at least worth *having lived*).[68] In this sense, anything short of genuine wisdom can offer little protection indeed; being better than someone in only that sense is indeed good, but not intrinsically good.[69]

SECTION 9). TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ONLY JUSTICE.

These indications are, I think, remarkable enough by themselves. But consider the passage immediately following *Apol.* 28a-b, where he implied that he is a "good man":

> "You're not speaking admirably, human, if you suppose that there's a need that any man who is even some small benefit take into account (*hupologizesthai*) risk of living or dying, but not consider only this whenever he acts: whether he does just things or unjust things, and whether he does works (*erga*) of a good man or a bad one." (*Apol.* 28b-c)

This is the first explicit statement in the *Apology* of Socrates' determination never to take into account, in decision making, anything other than whether his action will be just or unjust.[70] And its connection with 28a-b suggests that what Socrates meant by "good men" at 28a-b was genuinely *just/virtuous* men. It also suggests that Socrates thinks that, as a good man himself, he has the capacity to see to it that his decisions *actually end up being* just and, consequently, of some "benefit". If he did not think so, one might wonder what is the point of belaboring his commitment to the principle expressed at 28b-c. Can he think that he deserves congratulations or credit for mere good intentions? What "even small" benefit can he think there is in trying to take into account only what is just, if one cannot (consistently) figure out which action(s) would be just?

SECTION 10). DELIBERATING INDEPENDENTLY.

It is important to observe, in this connection, that Socrates is indeed so confident in his ability to deliberate effectively and to come consistently to just decisions, entirely on his own, that he even says so, and quite explicitly:

> "…I—not now for the first time, but actually always—am the sort of person such as to be persuaded by none of my things other than the statement (*logos*) that to me, when I reason (*logizomai*), appears best." (*Crito* 46b)

Socrates is asserting here that he will only be persuaded when he has reasoned the matter through for himself; what determines his decisions is always and only the conclusion of his own argument—a principle that I have elsewhere called "Autonomous Rationalism".[71] Not only does Socrates express this general confidence in his ability to come to the correct decision on his own, but the *Crito* actually provides us with a specific instance of this reaso-

ning process at work.[72] In determining whether it is best for him to await his "unjust" execution (*Crito* 50c, *Apol.* 30d, 33b3-5, 37b, 41b3) or to allow his friends to help him escape, Socrates confidently makes use of some quite specific precepts about the just. And these precepts are evidently accepted as sufficiently informative to be helpfully applied to his current predicament: Socrates uses them to determine that it is best to submit to being "unjustly" executed. And he does so with complete confidence—without fear, reservation, or perplexity—that he has arrived at the best decision.[73]

I have already mentioned that the sole ultimate end of deliberate action according to Socrates is goodness of one's soul. The most fundamental precept, then, that he uses in decision-making elsewhere and specifically in the *Crito* is that one must at all (other) costs strive to ensure that one's soul is as virtuous as possible. He confidently advises others to act according to this principle, and he never treats it as open for debate. Could he consider this the extent of his knowledge about the good? If this were all he really were supposed to know, it would be dangerous to act—as Socrates in fact does in the *Crito*—as though the principle in question were helpful in making a correct decision about whether or not to remain in prison. But more importantly, Socrates in the *Crito* actually seems to have (or to think he has) some very specific knowledge about *which* acts harm the soul. And this consists not simply in the knowledge that unjust acts harm the soul, but in the knowledge that doing harm to others harms the agent's soul. If he did not think he knew this, he certainly would not treat the prohibition against harming others (or bringing about bad things for others) as inviolable (*Crito* 49c-d). If he thought either of these precepts—the one about maximizing goodness of soul or the one against injuring others—were seriously open for discussion, then he would not at the end of the *Crito* (54d4-6) tell his friend not to bother trying to convince him otherwise: Socrates says that he is so convinced of these basic points that he is "not capable" of listening to alternatives![74]

SECTION 11). FEARLESS/ SHAMELESS ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS OWN ACTS.

According to a fairly typical interpretation of the wisdom that Socrates disavows, it is what is called "definitional knowledge" of virtue and of the good, in the sense defined, e.g. by Gary Matthews, as knowledge of an "explanatory set of necessary and sufficient conditions" (2008, 117).[75] For the purposes of this paper, I accept that interpretation. And passages such as *Euthyphro* 6e make it clear that it is not *just* intellectual curiosity that is supposed to motivate a desire for answers to Socratic questions; rather, he thinks having definitional answers is practically helpful (as a "paradigm") in identifying real-world instances of virtuous acts. I have already mentioned the success-requires-wisdom doctrine, which Socrates appears to accept. It may be that Socrates believes that one possibly could, without genuine wisdom, identify some or even lots of instances of just and unjust actions. But he seems, at the very least, to think that one could not, without genuine wisdom, know about *every* case. Some scholars have speculated that it is for knowledge about the particularly "difficult", "borderline", or "controversial" cases that Socrates considers wisdom useful, or even absolutely necessary.[76]

It may be in light of such views that Socrates seems to think one's *attitude* toward one's own actions, particularly in thorny cases, is

revealing about whether or not one presumes to have genuine wisdom. For instance, in *Laches*, he says of Nicias and Laches,

> "They indeed seem to me to have the power to educate a human; for they would not ever have fearlessly made declarations about purposes/pursuits good (*chrēstos*) and bad (*ponēros*) for a young person if they for their part didn't trust that they were sufficiently knowledgeable." (*Laches* 186c-d; cf. *Meno* 70b6-c1)

Socrates is saying that, on the basis of these veteran generals' fearless declarations about the good, we may conclude that Nicias and Laches must consider themselves experts about the good too. He makes similar conclusions about Euthyphro, but in this case, due not merely to Euthyphro's statements, but to his actions:

> "…If you didn't know plainly the pious and the impious, it's not possible that you ever would have put your hand to prosecuting for murder an elderly man—[your] father—on behalf of a hired man. Rather, concerning the gods, you would have feared taking the risk lest you not do it correctly, and concerning humans, you would have been ashamed [to do so]." (*Euthyphro* 15d-e; cf. 4a12-b2, 4e4-8)

And, likewise, with Meletus' prosecution of Socrates:

> "…For a young one, it is no paltry thing to have come to understand so great a matter. For, as he asserts, he knows in what manner the young are corrupted and who corrupts them. And it's probable he is someone wise. And, having discerned my lack of learning, he is going before the city, just as before a mother, to accuse me of corrupting his peers." (*Euthyphro* 2c; cf. *Apol.* 24d3-5)[77]

I suggest that it is no coincidence that, in spite of his *general* disavowals of wisdom, Socrates never expresses any real doubt or perplexity or shame about any *specific* course of action of his own.[78] That is, given the principle expressed in the above passages, Socrates (and Plato) *meant* for others to see that the disavowals are not to be taken seriously.

What about those "specific" cases? In the few cases where we are given a glimpse into Socrates' real-world decision-making we find him manifesting a remarkably tranquil confidence—and that too, in circumstances that appear to be of the most intimidating, trying, and morally complex and controversial sort, where if anywhere we should expect that the perplexity, or at least doubts, of a self-confessed non-expert would surface.[79] He believes without reservation that he is not (contrary to popular belief) "guilty (*adikei*)" of corrupting the young (*Apol.* 33d-34a), and that he acted justly in helping Athens fight her imperial wars (28e), and in voting against the overwhelmingly popular motion to try collectively the generals of Athens' forces at Arginusae (32c), and in refusing to carry out the Thirty's order to arrest Leon (32d), and in not letting himself or his family and friends submit to the typical supplications of the jurors (35b-d), and in making his unusual proposal concerning the sentence he deserves (36b ff., 36e-37a), and in not giving in to Crito's plea to escape prison (*Crito* 49e-50a) in spite of recognizing (*Crito* 50c; *Apol.* 30d, 33b3-5, 37b, 41b3) the injustice of his judges' ruling.[80] His familiar professions of ignorance and perplexity are nowhere to be seen in these important cases. Even by his own lights, Socrates cannot so confidently suppose that he succeeded in acting justly in them without

also supposing that he has expert knowledge of the good and the just.[81] As if to put the matter past any doubt, sometimes Plato even quite explicitly draws attention to Socrates' tranquil resolve, as when he makes Crito not only take note of Socrates' "pleasantly slumbering" in the prison cell just days before his unjust execution, but also remark more generally on the "happy manner" that Socrates has had throughout his "entire" life (*Crito* 43b).[82]

SECTION 12). NEVER HAVING DONE INJUSTICE.

Lastly, and perhaps most tellingly, recall Socrates' remarkable claims in the *Apology* that he has *never*[83] performed an unjust act (*Apol.* 33a, 37b; cf. *Gorg.* 521d and *Apol.* 27e3-5).[84] His unblemished record of just deeds is clearly yet another case of Socrates' living up to the requirement (discussed earlier in connection with making others good/better) that an artisan/expert must be able "to show some work (*ergon*) of that art (*technē*) which was well-worked/crafted (*eu eirgasmenon*)" (*Lach.* 185e). There are here two problems for anyone who maintains that Socrates is serious in his disavowals of wisdom. One is: how does Socrates think it was possible (and actual!) for him to *succeed* in consistently avoiding injustice throughout his long life, given his success-requires-wisdom doctrine?[85] The other is: how does Socrates think he is to *come to a competent conclusion* that every single act that he ever performed was just, given his view on "fearless declarations" and his view that at least the thorny instances cannot be correctly identified without definitional knowledge?[86]

It is important to reiterate the fact that my interpretation of Socrates is based not simply on the fact that he makes confident moral claims. The basis for my interpretation has primarily to do with Socrates' categorical confidence not simply in some general moral propositions, but in the ability he thinks he has to avoid error consistently and to give others consistently correct and substantive counsel—all based only on his own rational deliberations using precepts about which he shows little sign of doubt or of willingness to reconsider seriously.

I should note here that, on my interpretation, it is perfectly admissible that there is still much that Socrates does not think he understands. Indeed, I think there is plenty of reason to think there is much that he wants to come to know; it is actually this desire that fuels the search he describes in the *Apology* as wanting to continue even after death if possible.[87] But his deficiencies in understanding do not seem (at least to him) to stand in the way of his making correct decisions, acting knowledgeably, and living an adequately good life (even if he has not achieved a *maximally* good life). Whatever perplexity continues to cause him trouble appears to be "merely" philosophical—it does not cause *practical* trouble in his day-to-day decision-making.[88]

SECTION 13). "SIMPLY" IRONIC DISAVOWALS.

What, then, do I make of the disavowals, given how much they may seem at least prima facie to clash with the interpretation I have offered? On Gulley's interpretation, Socrates is saying what he believes is false "as an expedient to encourage his interlocutor to seek out the truth, to make him think he is joining with Socrates in a voyage of discovery" (1968, 64ff.). But several scholars have pointed out how especially hard it would be to disregard the disavowals we find in the *Apology*. Vlas-

tos, for instance, thinks the disavowals at *Apol.* 21b and 21d are unique, because there we find Socrates making the disavowals to himself "in the inmost privacy of self-scrutiny…" (1994, 48): "Could Socrates have said *to himself*, 'I am aware of not being wise in anything,' if he thought it untrue?" (42, original emphasis). A few sentences later, Vlastos suggests the obvious answer himself: Yes, if Socrates is presenting in these passages a narrative that he knows is fiction.[89] But Vlastos balks at the possibility, saying that in that case "…Socrates is lying to the judges, to whom he had promised, just a moment earlier (20D): 'Now I shall tell you the whole truth' " (42).[90] Vlastos evidently thinks that that is an undesirable conclusion; for he prefers (e.g., at 48; cf. his 1991, 238) the assumption according to which Socrates' narrative is fact. But surely it is possible that Socrates' promise to tell the whole truth could itself not be seriously intended.

It is remarkable what little else there is to say in favor of taking Socrates' disavowals seriously. There is no particular reason to think the disavowals in the *Apology* are especially believable. As I have also indicated, we cannot fall back on Aristotle's observation that Socrates asks but does not answer questions; it is patently not true of Plato's Socrates and there is no compelling reason to think Aristotle would have had some special insight that we lack. Often, the sheer frequency of the disavowals seems to be accepted as a good reason to take them seriously.[91] If, however, there were some motivation for the disavowals other than sincerity, their frequency by itself would not necessarily constitute a good reason to take them seriously. I shall momentarily suggest such an alternative.

But it is worth recognizing that, given how little there is to support the idea that Socrates is serious in his disavowals, and how much we must downplay or distort fundamental elements of Socrates' conception of virtue and happiness in order to reconcile his personal confidence with the allegedly sincere disavowals, we have, it seems, little to lose and much to gain by abandoning the commitment to Socratic ignorance.

So how precisely do I account for the frequent disavowals? I agree with Gulley that in the disavowals Socrates is saying what he believes is false. But I disagree that the purpose of them is always pedagogical, and I think that, where it is pedagogical, he has no interest in deceiving his listener(s) into believing that he is ignorant. I agree with Vlastos that Socrates is not being intentionally deceptive in his disavowals (he does not *expect* that the disavowals will be accepted as what he believes). But, partly for reasons I have already touched upon, Vlastos's interpretation (1991, 32) of the disavowals as examples of "complex irony" goes too far. Indeed, Socrates has the very wisdom (and ability to teach) that he claims not to have. If we reject Gulley's interpretation of the disavowals and instead explain them as instances of what Vlastos calls "simple" irony of the potentially "puzzling variety" (1991, 21-23),[92] then I think we may adequately account for why Socrates disavows wisdom even when not engaging in a conversation per se (like in his speech in the *Apology*), and why he might do so even after completing a conversation,[93] and even why he might disavow wisdom after claiming that he is going to tell his listeners "the whole truth". After all, such a promise may itself be an example of "simple", potentially "puzzling" irony.

Consider first the *Apology*. It would be perfectly appropriate and understandable that Socrates would be ironic about disavowing wisdom and teaching, and even about promising to tell his judges "the whole truth", if his intent were to mock his accusers and to mock what he must have thought was a patently baseless

and indeed farcical proceeding. Let us recall that he had little (if any) expectation of victory given the deep-seated prejudice against him and his judges' inability to comprehend his "practice" (18d2-7, 19a1-5, 24a1-4, 37e3-38a7, 35e1-36a5, 37a7-b2). Also recall his refusal to stoop to the typical defensive maneuvers expected by Athenian jurors, of which he repeatedly reminds them (34c ff., 37a3-5, 37c4-5, 38d-e); abstaining from those maneuvers is one thing, but calling such attention to those "pitiful dramatics" (35b) seems gratuitous, unless it were aimed at ridicule. Given these facts, it would seem perfectly apt for Socrates to mock the solemnity involved in all the trappings of courtroom drama.[94] Moreover, as I am about to show, there is actual textual evidence that he is doing just this.

Before I turn to it, let me make it clear that one of the virtues of the general interpretation that I am entertaining here is that if we accept it, we need not interpret Socrates' "irony" as intentionally deceptive (as Gulley, for instance, seems to have); in fact, if his aim is to mock or even simply to be playful, he would fail if his listeners were deceived by his disavowals. It is worth noting, in this connection, that Plato portrays so few people as actually having accepted his disavowals of wisdom; not only Socrates' adversaries, but most of his friends and associates (*Lach.* 180b-c, 200c-d; *Charm.* 176b, *Ion* 532d; *Meno* 71b-c, *Symp.* 175c-d, 217a, 218d, 219d, 222a; *Rep.* 367d-368c, 506b-d; *Phaedo* 118a15-17), as well as the public at large (*Apol.* 23a, *Euthyphro* 3c-d), conclude that Socrates either is wise or at least thinks he is.[95] The fact that he evidently *failed* so utterly in deceiving people on this score is some reason to believe that he did not *intend* to deceive.

So what is the textual evidence that Socrates' disavowals of wisdom, and his promise to tell the whole truth in the *Apology*, are not to be taken seriously, and are part of Socrates' attempt to mock his accusers and the proceedings? Only a few Stephanus pages before his familiar disavowal of knowledge about virtue (20c, e), we find his disavowal of knowledge—"cleverness (*deinotes*)"—about "the way of speaking (*lexis*)" typical of the Athenian courtroom: he says he will be "speaking at random, with any chance terms" (not in "expressions and terms that've been systematized"), i.e. "in the ways I've been in the habit of speaking"—and not merely as a matter of principle, but because, being "simply/artlessly (*atechnōs*) a foreigner to the way of speaking here", he simply lacks the *skill* to speak otherwise (17c-18a). Readers unaccustomed to the Athenian courtroom will overlook an important fact that Burnet rightly emphasizes, quoting James Riddell: Socrates' exordium (17a-18a)—including the denial of being "clever/formidable (*deinos*) at speaking", the begging leave to speak in one's accustomed way, the refusal to speak in a style "unbecoming" an old man, the claim of unfamiliarity with the courtroom—"may be completely paralleled, piece by piece, from the Orators", sc. from such illustrious, professional speech-writers as Lysias, Isocrates, Demosthenes, Aeschines, and Antiphon; this suggests that Socrates' real skill belies his claims of inability (Burnet 1924, 66-67; Riddell 1877, xxi).[96] Socrates has claimed that he will be "speaking at random with any chance terms" (17c), that he will be speaking in his ordinary and natural way, not as skilled litigants usually do in court (17c, 17d-18a). The claim is so far from being true that it was itself a commonplace among skilled defendants.[97] The accumulation of such commonplaces in this brief passage by itself suggests that Socrates can hardly be "speaking at random" as he claims—which moreover must have been obvious to most or all of his (or Plato's) Athenian audience. Burnet's observation is

apt: "It is just like Socrates to say he knows nothing about forensic diction at the very moment when he is showing his mastery of it" (1924, 73). Accordingly, Burnet concludes, "the exordium is, amongst other things, a parody…" (67).[98] Since Socrates can be so clearly disingenuous in disavowing rhetorical skill, while in the very same breath promising to tell them "the whole truth" (*Apol.* 17b), it would be pure naiveté to accept unquestioningly his later disavowals of skill. And it would be quite in keeping with the satirical disavowals of rhetorical skill, if his disavowals of wisdom and virtue were aimed, in part, at sarcasm too.[99]

Thomas Brickhouse and Nicholas Smith have identified a downside to the kind of interpretation that I am making of Socrates' disavowals:

> "If we suppose that Socrates is willing to be dishonest or intentionally unclear about whether or not he has knowledge and wisdom, then we will have *at least some reason* to be suspicious about any other claim he might make as well. Once we convict someone of being a liar or a riddler on one issue, we will have no *clear* reason to accept the person's apparent meaning in any case." (2000, 66, my emphases; cf. their 1994, 32 and also Benson 2000, 179)

The words I have emphasized above indicate that Brickhouse and Smith are aware that they are walking a thin line here; for they themselves have supposed (2000, 62ff.; cf. Benson 2000, 176-178) that Socrates is sometimes dishonest, viz., when he claims that others are wise:

> "In this claim, however, we judged Socrates to be saying something other than what he believes, because we also found texts in which he broke from this pose and admitted that he thought no one was wise or had the kind of knowledge we found him elsewhere granting to his interlocutors." (Brickhouse and Smith 2000, 64)

But of course we have similar reason for thinking that his disavowals of wisdom and virtue are not to be taken seriously; for, as I have shown in previous sections of this paper, there are passages in which Socrates clearly "broke from this pose" (to use Brickhouse and Smith's phrase), revealing his opinion that he does have the relevant knowledge. Perhaps one reason why Brickhouse and Smith (and others) have overlooked or downplayed these passages is that they seem to be narrowly preoccupied with *knowledge-claims* (Brickhouse and Smith 1994, 35-36 and 2000, 101-120; cf. Benson 2000, 223ff.), as many recent commentators unfortunately have been.

I believe my interpretation of Socrates' disavowals in the *Apology* can also account substantially for Socrates' disavowals in other dialogues. In many of these cases I do think there is a pedagogical purpose in the disavowals; but in these cases the pedagogy hinges upon a kind of mocking irony that Socrates' interlocutor(s) and listener(s) are meant to discern. What I have interpreted as Socrates' "simple", possibly "puzzling" irony in disavowing knowledge puts him in an excellent position to mock the shameless arrogance of interlocutors who profess knowledge, especially after lengthy elenctic exchanges with Socrates who, in sharp contrast, professes ignorance. Most or all of these disavowals are just a part of Socrates' usual mocking flattery toward those who profess wisdom. In these cases, his profession of ignorance is ironic in two, separate ways. The first is largely aimed at humor and is, in relation to Socrates' broader aim, the less significant

aspect of his irony: it would be ironic, in the ordinary sense of the term, if one who indeed was ignorant could defeat in the argument those who confidently profess knowledge. The humor works whether or not the interlocutor or listener really believes that Socrates is ignorant, particularly since Socrates' refutations do not hinge on his own beliefs but on those of the interlocutor. But apart from comic effect, by professing ignorance, Socrates can effectively shift attention away from himself and onto the shamelessness of his arrogant interlocutors, for the purpose of shaming and ridiculing them, ultimately in order to highlight (for their sake and ultimately for Socrates' own[100]) their need for continued philosophizing and the same need of listeners, to whatever extent they share the defects of Socrates' actual interlocutor. For an interlocutor or listener who felt shamed by Socrates' mockery and was thereby convinced of the need to philosophize, the bite of shame, the immediacy of the need and possibility of its satisfaction would be intensified by the realization that Socrates has (or believes he has) what they have not yet got. It is worth emphasizing again the fact that such mockery would be ineffective insofar as it was taken seriously and not recognized as mockery.[101]

Brickhouse and Smith allow that Socrates does use what they call "mocking irony" against interlocutors who profess knowledge. But they assert that "the mockery does not work by his own disclaimer…; the irony is in the mocking compliments and flattery Socrates lavishes on others. So he is not guilty of mock-modesty; his modesty is genuine" (2000, 63).[102] It should be clear, however, that their inference (at "So…") is unwarranted. If they are right, it would at most mean only that Socrates *need* not be guilty of mock-modesty; it would not mean that he *is* not guilty of it.[103] But, significantly, despite their assertion that Socrates' mockery "does not work by his own disclaimer" and that "the irony is in the mocking compliments and flattery Socrates lavishes on others", Brickhouse and Smith go on to explain that "[a]t least part of the irony in Socrates' mock-praise of others is in the *contrast* between the customary Socratic disclaimers of knowledge and wisdom, on the one hand, and the acknowledgements of others' knowledge and wisdom, on the other" (63; original emphasis). So they acknowledge that the disclaimers themselves (sincere or not) are indeed a part of Socrates' mockery.

Let me be clear that I am *not* interested in using Socrates' mockery in these instances as *evidence* for concluding that Socrates is not sincere in his disavowals; I believe I have already offered sufficient evidence for such a conclusion in the previous sections of this paper. Rather, my main point in the present section has been to try to explain one of the main reasons for Socrates' frequent disavowals, and how they and their frequency are *consistent* with an ironic interpretation of them. I have already laid out a substantial case against taking the disavowals at face value; and that case was independent of the conjectures that I have just offered in an effort to explain the purpose of Socrates' disavowals. Indeed, insofar as it is clear that the disavowals cannot be taken seriously, *all* of us (not only I) who are interested in understanding Plato's Socrates are compelled to try to discover how those disavowals can be explained *without* the assumption that he means by them what he says.

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END NOTES

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2 Unless attributed otherwise, translations are mine. Plato references are to the latest editions of the Oxford Classical Text.

3 My references herein will be to the 1994 revised version of Vlastos 1985.

4 So too, Grote, writing in 1865, reported that this kind of "ironical" interpretation "appears in the main to be preferred by modern critics" (1885, 419-420), though not by Grote himself (367ff., 420-422). Vlastos cites Irwin as one who, like Vlastos, was also taking the disavowals seriously (Vlastos 1994, 39; Irwin 1977, 39-40). Vlastos could also have added two other prominent scholars who also dissented from the "standard view": A. Taylor (1951, 48) and Guthrie (1971, 127).

5 Recent scholars who take the disavowals seriously include: Kraut 1984, 246 ff.; Austin 1987, 27ff.; Lesher 1987, 282ff.; Reeve 1989, 164; Woodruff 1990, 90ff.; Penner 1992a, 139-147 and 1992b, 22 ff.; Brickhouse and Smith 1994, 32 and 2000, 68; McPherran 1996, 176ff.; Graham 1997, 36; Nozick 1997, 148; Stokes 1997, 26ff.; Nehamas 1998, 65-67, 72, 75; C. Taylor 1998, 48; Matthews 1999, 27; Benson 2000, 168; Wolfsdorf 2004, 117; Lear 2006, 459-460; Santas 2006, 11; Weiss 2006, 250; Rowe 2007, 78 n. 40; Gonzalez 2009, 117-118; Bett 2011, 218. A few scholars have resisted the trend, among them: Beversluis 2000, 226ff. and Leibowitz 2010, 17ff. Kahn 1996 accepts the disavowals in the *Apology* (96), though he thinks that Plato in "later" dialogues (in particular the *Charmides*) is calling their sincerity into question (201).

6 My focus is Socrates as Plato depicts him in his "early" dialogues, not necessarily the "historical" Socrates. For the purposes of this paper, I accept the usual division between "early" and "middle" dialogues, where "early" includes at least *Apology*, *Charmides*, *Crito*, *Euthydemus*, *Euthyphro*, *Hippias Minor*, *Ion*, *Laches*, *Lysis*, *Protagoras*. *Gorgias* and *Meno* are often considered "transitional" between early and middle, so my interpretation of Plato's "early" Socrates does not hinge on those two works, however consistent (I and many others think) they are with the "earlier" dialogues. I shall also occasionally cite even later dialogues, where I think such references are telling, though nothing crucial depends on such references.

7 Vlastos 1971b, 7 and 1991, 32 and 1994, 48; Kraut 1984, 268; Austin 1987, passim; Brickhouse and Smith 1994, 30; Graham 1997, 25; Nehamas 1998, 12; Morrison 2006, 108; Bett 2011, 231.

8 See, e.g., Vlastos 1991, 236-242 and 1994, 43ff.; Lesher 1987, 280ff.; Nehamas, 1987, 47; Reeve 1989, 54ff.; Woodruff 1990, 88ff.; Brickhouse and Smith 1994, 35-36; 2000, 101-120; Gomez-Lobo 1994, 14ff.; Irwin 1995, 28-29; Benson 2000, 223ff.; Wolfsdorf 2004, passim.

9 I shall say much more about *Apol.* 41d in due course.

10 Cf. Vlastos 1991, 94-95. Irwin cites the same passage from Aristotle as reason for us too to take Socrates' disavowals seriously (1977, 40).

11 Guthrie says that "…Socrates *preferred* to ask questions of others, though *occasionally* in a Platonic dialogue he offers his interlocutor the choice of roles" (1971, 126-127, my emphases), citing only *Gorg.* 462b and *Prot.* 338c-d.

12 *Rep.* 336c, 337a, 337e, 338b1-2; *Theaet.* 150c (cf. *Meno* 79e-80a) The fact that these occur in what are commonly accepted as "later" dialogues *may* suggest that it reflects *readers*' reaction to Plato's own portrayal of Socrates in "earlier" dialogues. The fact that we find it repeated in Xenophon (*Memorabilia* 1.2.36, 4.4.9) and Aristotle settles little, since they both may well be simply reproducing what they found in Plato. Lacey aptly notes that Socrates' supposed refusal to make his own declarations is "an impression one hardly gets from the rest of Xenophon!" (1971, 39).

13 It is of course usual to observe that Socrates' role of "questioner" seems to become "increasingly" nominal in "later" dialogues. Indeed, according to Vlastos, as "early" as the *Euthydemus* and *Lysis*, Socrates has discarded the "adversary procedure" of the "elenctic" dialogues in favor of "virtual monologue": i.e., "the didactic style of the middle dialogues, where the interlocutor is a yes-man, who may ask questions and occasionally raise objections, but never puts up substantial resistance" (Vlastos 1994, 30ff. and 1991, 115ff.). Given Vlastos's assumptions, he must conclude that such dialogues are not as genuinely "Socratic" as "earlier" ones. I argue that, given other assumptions, such a conclusion is far from obvious.

14 Besides the *Apology* passages that I am about to consider, we have: *Ion* 532d, *Prot.* 338c7-d5, 347b3-9, 348a6-7, *Gorg.* 462b, 467c, 470b-c, 504c, 506a ff., *Rep,* 1.337c, 1.348a-b. To these we may add *Euthyphro* 3c-d, where Socrates and Euthyphro discuss why Socrates is being singled out for prosecution (and not, e.g., someone like Euthyphro): "For," he explains, "the Athenians actually, as it seems to me, don't pay vehement attention to anyone who they suppose is clever/formidable (*deinos*)—unless of course [they suppose] he's skilled at teaching his own wisdom. But they are angered by one who they suppose makes others too be of that sort—whether from envy as you say, or because of something else." Socrates explains how he is different from the diviner in this respect: "For perhaps/probably you seem to be scarce at holding yourself forth and [seem] not to be willing to teach your own wisdom. Whereas I fear that I, because of my love of human beings, seem to [the Athenians] to say profusely whatsoever I have to every man, not only without payment, but even being, with pleasure, put out [of pocket] if anyone is willing to hear me." It is true that Socrates is here describing how he "seems" to the Athenians—what they "suppose" he does. But remark-

ably it is an appearance that not only is *contrary* to the impression described elsewhere (see note 12 above), but also agrees substantially with *his own* account of his practice, including in the *Apology* (especially concerning his willingness to talk to anyone, and his willingness to become poor as a result of his peculiar "practice").

15 Thompson 1901, 61-62 (who compares the passage to *Meno* 70c1); J. Adam 1916, 94; Burnet 1924, 38; Smyth 1984, 446; de Strycker and Slings 1994, 349; Stokes 1997, 159. Stokes' comments are illustrative of the usual reaction to a correct reading of 33b1-2: "That Soc[rates] says he not only asks but *answers* is surprising…." After noting how very unusual is Socrates' answering in the early dialogues, Stokes concludes, "Either our passage… is careless, or it was written with the *Gorgias* in mind, or Pl[ato] was unclear when he wrote this sentence just how he was going to portray Soc[rates] in the definition dialogues" (159-160). (Stokes translates 33b2-3 in the usual manner.)

16 Unfortunately, Fowler makes the same error in the Loeb edition of the text, now freely available to everyone at http://www.perseus.tufts.edu. The error finds its way into some of the best scholarship on Socrates (notably Brickhouse and Smith 1994, 7-8). To his credit, Reeve avoids the error in translating 33b1-2 (1989, 161); but he fails to observe the passage's import when he later glosses the text, interpreting Socrates' "doing his own things" (33a6-7) as though it involved only "asking his questions of young and old, rich and poor" (Reeve 1989, 163).

17 I have nowhere seen 33b2-3 translated in the ambiguously neutral way that I here suggest: all of the many published translations I have consulted accept either de Strycker and Slings' reading or else (far less frequently) Burnet's.

18 I have encountered only one published translation that gets *both* 33b1-2 *and* 33b2-3 right according to Burnet's account: the one published, only online, by Woods and Pack 2007/2012.

19 It is really (pace Stokes 1992, 75) another way of putting the point expressed earlier at 22d and 23a: that wisdom in "the greatest things" is not the knowledge of the money-makers, or of the doctors or trainers, or of the rhetoricians, etc.

20 Note "*gar*" at 30a8, and cf. 36c3-d1, 36d4-6.

21 *Apol.* 33d-34a, which I shall soon discuss, shows that he does not seriously entertain this possibility.

22 As the relative clause here can be taken to refer to both "learned" and "heard", it cannot be said that Socrates is in this passage denying that someone may have *learned* something from him. All he appears to be denying is that whatever was learned, it was not something that was promised and it was not "private" learning. Needless to say, the text does not imply that he believes anyone has in fact learned from him. But it is worth noting that he is not denying it either.

23 The willingness to speak to the old would distinguish Socrates from the professional teachers of his day; as de Strycker and Slings note, "only young people ha[d] teachers" (1994, 349). Philosophy was considered fine for young people to be educated in, but adults who continued such study were regarded as wasting their time and shirking real responsibility (*Rep.* 487c-d, 497e-498a; *Euthyd.* 304e-305a; *Gorg.* 484c-486d; *Menex.* 234a-b).

24 Cf. *Theaetetus* 143d. Socrates here separates himself from the Sophists who, being mostly foreigners (19e), not to mention businessmen, had no such loyalties (cf. Burnet 1924, 124).

25 Nehamas reminds us of Socrates' criticizing Gorgias for claiming that his students will be virtuous (*Gorg.* 460a) but disavowing responsibility if they turn out vicious (457b-c). "I think," Nehamas concludes, "that if there ever was a sense, any sense, in which Socrates did think of himself as a teacher of *aretē*, he would never have disavowed this central responsibility" (1992, 73; 1998, 66). But Nehamas's diagnosis of what Socrates needs to disavow in order to escape the problem he imputed to Gorgias is mistaken. It is not teaching or the ability to teach that Socrates needs to disavow, but the *guarantee* of teaching. And this is precisely what Socrates takes such pains to disavow at *Apol.* 33b.

26 To some extent my treatment here of the Socrates' reticence in applying the term "teacher" to himself parallels Scott's 2000, 15-26; but, as far as I can tell, Scott does not grapple directly with the question of whether Socrates (honestly or not) disavows *knowledge* or *virtue*. Cf. also de Strycker and Slings 1994, 167, 170. Reeve entertains an interpretation close to what I have here suggested, but rejects it (1989, 162-163).

27 Reiterating its prominence in his account, he chastises his critics for overlooking "this crucial feature of my position" (1991, 238 n. 12).

28 Reeve also thinks Socrates identifies what he calls "human wisdom" as genuine human virtue (1989, 150, 179; 2000, 30). As does Graham 1997, 36. Woodruff seems to do so as well: "…non-expert knowledge will include the quite extraordinary human knowledge that Socrates connects with virtue—an understanding of one's own epistemic limitations" (1990, 90; cf. Woodruff 2006, 45, where he claims that Socrates is a kind of teacher of virtue). Kraut argues not only that Socrates' "knowledge of how little he knows" makes him think he is virtuous, but that it is in virtue of that knowledge that he "cannot be harmed" (1984, 273-274)—a point to which I shall shortly return. Kraut (1984, 231), Reeve (1989, 35), Woodruff (1990, 90ff.), and Graham (1997, 29) all agree that what Socrates disavows is "expert" knowledge.

29 The reason that Socrates starts describing his peculiar "sort of wisdom" as "human" (20d8) is decidedly *not* because it constitutes the "human's and citizen's virtue" (20b4) that Euenus and the rest advertise as having. Indeed, Socrates' peculiar "sort of wisdom" is called "human" because he thinks it is *not* the wisdom the Sophists claim to possess, which he now says is "wisdom too great for a human" (20e1)—a characterization that not only serves, in Socrates' typical fashion, to heap accolades on those who profess genuine virtue (cf. *Euthyd.* 273e), but also foreshadows his claim that no human is genuinely wise/virtuous (*Apol.* 23a).

30 Benson makes a similar objection against Vlastos (2000, 170-171 n. 13). See also Irwin 1995, 28-29 and Wolfsdorf 2004, 128-130, 132.

31 It is introduced not as "wisdom" but as "a sort of (*tina*)" wisdom (20d7). He says only that "I seem (*kinduneuō*)" to be wise (20d9). And again at 20e6-7 his reticence is still more explicit, calling it "my wisdom—*if* indeed it is some wisdom—even of *any* sort (*hoia*)". In relation to wisdom, he and everyone else "is in truth worth nothing" (23b3-4). He reiterates the same reticence every time he refers to his "wisdom" (see 29b4, 38c4). Cf. Fine 2008, 78-80.

32 "…Human wisdom is worth something little—actually, nothing." A. Adam 1914 ad loc.: "καί corrects ὀλίγου and introduces a stronger word." Cf. Smyth 1984, 650.

33 Awareness of the limits of one's knowledge may indeed "profit" one (*Apol.* 22e), but only in that way explained in the *Meno*: i.e. it is profitable as a prerequisite to seeking greater, substantive knowledge (84b-c; cf. *Charm.* 174d). See Senn 2005, 5 and 2012, 6.

34 There are a number of scholars who agree with Vlastos that Socrates thinks he has some elenctically-supported knowledge (Brickhouse and Smith 1989, 133, 137, 160; 1994, 18-23, 27, 39-41, 81-82, 127-128; Reeve 1989, 48, 52; Woodruff 1990, 90ff.; Nehamas 1992, 69; C. Taylor 1998, 50-51), but who disagree that this knowledge constitutes the kind of wisdom that genuine virtue requires, describing it rather as a kind of knowledge that falls short of "expertise" (Reeve 1989, 35, 51-53; Woodruff 1990, 90ff.; Nehamas 1992, 69 and 1998, 75; Brickhouse and Smith 1994, 31, 36-44, 60; C. Taylor 1998, 46-49).

35 Weiss 2006 sees this quite well (though she goes too far in concluding that this is what ultimately *motivates* his peculiar practice; see my 2012 for further discussion). Irwin too sees that Socrates' exhortation and his elenctic cross-examination are related to each other as end and means (1995, 19). Irwin, however, seems to miss the significance of this; for the "moral reform" that he says Socrates "advocates" in his exhortations is "an 'examined life' that includes daily argument about virtue" (ibid.). So it is not clear, on Irwin's interpretation, that cross-examination is a "means" to anything ultimately except further cross-examination. My interpretation, according to which examination is described as subordinate to the exhortative message, is corroborated by the *Charmides*, where Socrates refuses to let Charmides "chant" the "incantations" (or "admirable speeches/words")—which heal the soul by conferring sound-mindedness (*sōphrosunē*)—until he *first* (158e, 176b) submits to an examination concerning whether or not he may already possess sound-mindedness and so not need healing.

36 One is quite hard put to find reference to the passage in the indices locorum of the major works on Plato and Socrates in the last few decades.

37 Stokes' commentary on the passage is worth noting: "Since he cannot be saying that the Olympic victor merely tries to make them seem happy, by symmetry he does not mean that he, Socrates, *tries* to make them actually happy, nor would such a claim cut any ice in court" (1997, 22, original emphasis). Indeed, even the doctor, the trainer, and the moneymaker all can claim to *try* to make the Athenians happy (*Gorgias* 452a-c).

Charles Brittain has suggested to me that 36d10 ought to be translated as "I am [in the process of] making you happy" rather than "I make you happy". First of all, this does not, I think, make sense, given our text. According to the usual way of understanding the passage, it may indeed seem plausible to assume Socrates meant not that he *made* anyone happy, but only that he is *in the process of making* them so. But Socrates' claim about what he does for the Athenians is so closely connected to his claim about what the Olympic victor does that Socrates' "I make you be happy" is in the Greek actually elliptical: *poieō* does not even occur; rather, it is only understood from the Olympic victor's *poiei* earlier in the sentence. So if we were to accept Brittain's suggestion, we would have to interpret in the same way Socrates' claim about the Olympic victor: we would have to interpret Socrates as saying not that the Olympic victor *has made* anyone seem happy, but only that he *is making* them seem so. It is hard to understand what that would mean. The matter is, in any case, settled on independent grounds: we know that the Olympic victor's *poiei* cannot here mean "is making" because Socrates introduces the analogy by saying, "… if anyone of you *has been* victorious (*nenikēken*)…" So at 36d10 Socrates is explicitly referring to what Olympic victors *have done*—not to what they *are doing*. Since Socrates is clearly making a parallel claim about himself, it follows that the parallel claim is referring likewise to what Socrates *has done*—not to what he *is doing*.

In any case, it would not really be an obstacle against my interpretation even if our text were to permit Brittain's suggestion. For one thing, we cannot interpret Socrates to mean that he is making any positive, substantive contribution toward their becoming happy (i.e. short of actually making them happy), *unless* we accept (as I hold) that he considered himself to be an expert about the good—about what contributes positively and substantively to happiness. It would, for instance, be quite a stretch to suggest that he "is making" the Athenians happy by providing them with only some necessary condition for happiness which, all by itself (i.e. without genuine virtue), is worthless (e.g., "human" wisdom or the desire for genuine wisdom/virtue). Likewise, it would be quite a stretch to suggest that I "am making" my niece "be" a dentist only by persuading her to go to dentistry school or by paying her tuition. If Socrates were to hold that just anyone who provides for a person a necessary condition for happiness really "is making" that person be happy, then he would have to allow that not only he, but even the doctors, the trainers, and the farmers "are making" the Athenians happy. As a matter of fact, he clearly thinks that if those craftsman lack knowledge of virtue, they cannot be said to be the ones who "are making" anyone really virtuous or really happy. This, I take it, is why Socrates concludes in the *Euthydemus* that wisdom, "alone of the things that are, makes the human happy…" (282c-d).

38 It is worth recalling that Socrates is in the passage using "a literary trope" (de Strycker and Slings 1994, 189): it is a clear riff on Xenophanes' characterizing his own "wisdom (*sophia*)" as much more valuable to the city than Olympic prowess (DK 21B2).

39 There is no space to defend the attribution adequately here, so I simply assume it. It appears most explicitly in the *Euthydemus* (282a1-b6, c8-d1, e2-4, 288d6-7, 289c7-8). But I think it is a motif of most or all of the early dialogues, including the *Apology*. I give full attention to the point in Senn 2012 (2-9), where, among other things, I argue against scholars (like Brickhouse and Smith 1994, 129-130) who maintain that happiness, according to Socrates, is possible in absence of genuine wisdom.

40 Note that at 30a-b and 31b "persuading" is not qualified by "trying". The point of that qualification at 36c4 seems to be that Socrates does not want to go so far as to claim that he succeeded in persuading "*every* (*hekaston*)" Athenian, as I shall explain more fully in Section 5.

41 In Senn 2012 (6 n. 20) I went too far in saying the "greatest good" at 30a and 36c "cannot" mean the *most ultimate* good. I had wrongly assumed that "greatest" in those passages must be interpreted just as it must at 38a. Certainly by "greatest" he *may* not at 30a and 36c mean *most ultimate*; but, as I am now arguing, 36d-e (among other things) allows such an interpretation. It is worth noting that if Socrates' brand of persuasion does *not* provide substantive knowledge, then it is only on the level of Gorgias' merely belief-inspiring rhetoric (*Gorg.* 454e), hardly something that ensures "happiness". As I shall show in Section 6, Socrates in the *Apology* describes himself as engaging, at least "privately", in a form of persuasion aimed knowledgeably at justice, just as the "admirable" and "artful" kind of rhetoric described in the *Gorgias* (503a-b, 504d-e, 527c).

42 See my note 33 above.

43 We might have thought this was all that Socrates meant at 30a6-7 and 36c3-5—*if* it were not for 36c-d, among other things.

44 Kraut's explanation of Socrates' claim to benefit the Athenians is similar: Socrates' great benefit to his interlocutor consists simply in getting him to be "bothered by difficulties in his moral views" (1984, 225). Nehamas (1992, 76) evidently accepts the kind of interpretation of Socrates' great benefit that Kraut and Reeve offer, as do McPherran (1996, 220-221), Stokes (1997, 22-30, 173; 1992, 50, 63, 66), and Doyle (2012, 52). In order to make 36d10 consistent with Socrates' alleged lack of genuine wisdom and virtue, Stokes significantly waters down the import of "happy" there (as well as of "virtue" at 30b). Morrison seems to accept the usual interpretation, but admits how unsatisfying it is (2000, 261); however, he lays the blame for this at Plato's door: "what Plato makes Socrates say in the *Apology* is remarkably under-specified" (263). Morrison does not see that solving the problem actually involves *rejecting* the now usual interpretation. (Of the seven scholars mentioned here, only Reeve, Stokes, and Doyle explicitly acknowledge Socrates' use of the word "happy".)

45 Brickhouse and Smith 1994 (roughly in accordance with Vlastos 1991, 32, 241-242) seem to go a bit further, claiming that his interlocutors can be happy as Socrates is provided they partake in enough elenctic examination so as to acquire as many elenctically secure convictions as he has (28-29 with 129-130). But Brickhouse and Smith gloss over 36d10 in the same way Reeve does: They say, since Socrates (as every human) lacks genuine wisdom he has only a happiness "such as is possible for humans" (129; cf. 132-134). So too Doyle: "The unparalleled benefit Socrates claims he has provided to the city in doing the god's bidding is *eudaimonia*—happiness (or well-being) itself; *or, at least, its most basic precondition*" (2012, 53, my emphasis).

46 Kraut seems to adopt this kind of interpretation: "Because of the god [sc., via the oracle], he now sees moral discussion as an intrinsically worthwhile activity, even when it does not lead to definitive solutions; and he realizes that the peculiar form of wisdom he has acquired through moral discussion [sc., his 'human wisdom'] is the only existing form that is intrinsically worthwhile" (1984, 271 n. 43). Likewise, Bett suggests that it is hard to avoid attributing to Socrates a "deeply paradoxical" view: viz. that a life of "fruitless inquiry itself constitutes the best possible human life" (2011, 230-232). I comment specifically on Bett's point in my note 58 below.

47 Also one of the few scholars who grapple with 36d10, Gonzalez accepts this kind of interpretation: "…Human goodness consists of caring for one's goodness, where this 'care' involves continual examination and discussion of the good. … This 'care'…is inherently and positively good, so much so indeed that it can by itself make us happy" (2009, 141). Gonzalez is fully aware of the paradox this view entails (118), especially given his willingness to take seriously Socrates' disavowals of "secure and final" knowledge (117). Indeed, he poses the relevant question aptly and starkly: "What is the great benefit of getting them to *care* about virtue if they can never *possess* it?" (138). This makes it all the more remarkable that Gonzalez unflinchingly accepts his "paradoxical" answer: "…Socrates characterizes the goodness of the individual as *caring about and examining*, rather than possessing, the good…" (145, original emphasis). One might well be excused for misunderstanding such an interpretation as attributing to Socrates a straightforward contradiction, rather than mere "paradox".

48 Kraut 1984, 300; Nehamas 1985, 13 and 1987, 48 and 1992, 70-71 and 1998, 65-66; Stokes 1992, 79 n. 15; Brickhouse and Smith 1994, 4 and 2000, 69ff.; Beverslius 2000, 9; Scott 2000, 1-2. Vlastos too points this out (1994, 15), but elsewhere emphasizes the precise opposite in attempting to account for *Apol.* 30a and *Gorg.* 521d (1991, 32, 241-242).

49 Cf. *Gorg.* 457d-e; contrast *Sophist* 230b-c.

50 Cf. *Gorg.* 513c8-d1, *Meno* 85c10-d1, Theaet. 150d2-e8.

51 Stokes recognizes that Socrates' criticism of his fellow citizens' "materialistic values", and his advocating "anti-materialistic values", suggest that Socrates has more knowledge than simply an awareness of his own

ignorance (1992, 75); but Stokes (75-76) attributes his confidence not to genuine knowledge of the good but only to Socrates' noticing that his "values" are consistent—that his have not been refuted on the grounds of self-contradiction. But this alone can hardly have inspired the degree of confidence that Socrates actually evinces: for even if he has demonstrated that everyone he has met who has "materialistic values" has not maintained consistency, that would not show "how difficult it is to sustain…a consistent set of materialistic values", as Stokes (1992, 76) seems to think. Rather than so strongly favoring his own "anti-materialistic values", a safer conclusion for Socrates, on Stokes' interpretation, might be that most humans tend to be pretty bad at maintaining a consistent set of *any* values—though it could perhaps in principle be done. I suspect that those same humans would be just as bad at maintaining consistency if they were instead to adopt Socrates' "anti-materialistic values". Why would Socrates have suspected any differently?

52 This manifests itself in other parts of the *Apology* as well: When the court sentences him to death, he accuses them (or those who voted against him) of injustice (41b)—of not "living correctly" (39d)—since they followed his accusers in their unjust arraignment of him (30d, 33b3-5, 39b5-6), implying that they injure (only) themselves (30c, sc. their own souls), which according to *Crito* 47d ff. is the natural result of unjust action. As Burnyeat 1997 aptly puts it, "…the *Apology* is one long counter-indictment charging the Athenians with rampant injustice" (5).

53 Cf. *Gorg.* 503a8-9, 513d2-5, 521a2-4.

54 Beyond the principles that I cite in what immediately follows, I shall farther below provide more support for this interpretation, when I consider Socrates' determination always to take into account only what is just and his confidence that he has never done injustice.

55 Cf. *Hipp. min.* 375d.

56 Cf. *Rep.* 4.428b: "…[I]t is certainly not by *lack of learning* but by knowledge that one counsels well."

57 So Socrates' explanation for not entering conventional politics is not, as Kraut 1984 seems to maintain, that he was so satisfied with the Athenian legal system that he thinks he would not have been able to counsel the Athenians better than anyone else. Kraut suggests that Socrates could not have thought of himself as a "moral expert"—i.e., "someone who can satisfactorily defend an answer to the sorts of questions that are typically asked in the early dialogues" (209)—because, if he had, he would not have been so satisfied (as Kraut argues that he was) with the legal system of Athens (247): he would have preferred a state ruled by moral experts like himself instead of by the many (247). But Kraut admits (208, 233) that Socrates preferred a state ruled by moral experts *anyway*, regardless of whether he considered himself one. Kraut was maybe thinking that if Socrates had considered himself a moral expert, he would have made greater attempts to place himself in the position of ruler instead of simply conducting philosophical discussions in private. But, as I am presently explaining, the reason Socrates actually states for not trying to become a ruler is not that he "thought that neither he nor his followers could have done a significantly better job than the many" (Kraut 232), but that the *daimonion* ("admirably") prevented him because he would have been destroyed in his public attempts to bring about justice. I do not deny that there were certain things about the Athenian polity that Socrates enjoyed; but I disagree with Kraut's suggestion that, given Socrates' view that the moral experts should rule, the only way to explain why Socrates did not work politically to put into place such a regime is "to take Socrates at his word when he says that neither he nor anyone else has satisfactory answer to his 'What is X?' questions" (247). Plato in fact makes Socrates give a quite different explanation, as I am about to show. (It happens to agree with the disposition of the philosopher toward conventional politics described in the *Republic*: lack not of competence, but of interest (496c-d, 521b, 592a).)

58 Bett sees quite well the "tension" between Socrates' confidence in his recommended lifestyle and his disavowals of wisdom (2011, 231). Bett calls the tension not "eliminable" (232). But of course the tension is perfectly "eliminable" *if* we part ways with Bett (218) and refuse to take Socrates' disavowals seriously. A further benefit in parting ways with Bett is that we are not driven to attribute to Socrates a view that Bett correctly describes as "deeply paradoxical": viz. that a life of "fruitless inquiry itself constitutes the best possible human life" (230-232). Not only is such a view "paradoxical" and contrary to common sense, but, more importantly for our understanding of Socrates, the view is utterly inconsistent with Socrates' own view that wisdom is necessary for happiness. So we have ample reason for concluding that Socrates does not accept the paradox that Bett considers not "eliminable".

59 Socrates claims explicitly to be good (521b)—even "admirable-and-good (*kalon kagathon*)" (511b)—in the *Gorgias*. This is remarkable, as "*kalon kagathon*" is in the *Apology* the term used when the issue of "human's and citizen's virtue" is first raised (20b), and we know that it had quite a special meaning for both Socrates and his fellow Greeks (though Socrates' use was crucially different; see Dodds 1959, 242-243, 273). My conclusions will not hinge on the *Gorgias*, as some regard it as a "transitional" rather than "early" dialogue. It is worth noting, however, that Benson's dismissal of 521b is not compelling (2000, 244-245 n. 82), since it turns crucially on his misinterpretation of similar references in the *Apology*. I take up Benson immediately below. (Benson does not address *Gorg.* 511b, though he presumably dismisses it as he does 521b.)

60 Rowe translates the phrase as "many others before me, good men too", explaining that "Socrates carefully avoids the implication that *he's* 'good'…" (2010, 179 n. 42, original emphasis). Rowe does not, however, explain why he differs here so markedly from most translators, and from scholars like J. Adam (1916, 78) and Burnet (1924, 117-118), who both render the phrase: "many other good men too". I believe Rowe has simply misread the Greek. The

first *kai* (="too") is adverbial, the second (untranslated) conjoins "many" and "good" (cf. Smyth 1984, 651-652; A. Adam 1914, 76).

61 Benson does not address the passage in his discussion at 243-244, and it is not specifically cited in Benson's index locorum. Stokes does not address the passage in his discussion of the matter either (1997, 26ff.), though he does translate the passage accurately.

62 Some scholars have questioned the identification (Brickhouse and Smith 1994, 124 and 2000, 150; Benson 2000, 243). But the doctrine is pretty explicit at *Lach.* 194d1-3, *Hipp. min.* 366d3-368b1, *Lys.* 210d1-4, *Euthyd.* 282e2-4; cf. also *Gorg.* 459e5-6, 506d5-8 and *Rep.* 1.349e. Kahn does not think the Socrates of the *Apology* accepted the doctrine. He says, "Care for the excellence of the soul includes the pursuit of practical intelligence or understanding…. Thus the Socratic conception of *aretē* certainly includes a cognitive or intellectual element. But nothing in the *Apology* suggests that virtue is simply a kind of knowledge, or identical with [genuine] wisdom [or knowledge of what is most important]" (1996, 90) As a matter of fact, *many* things in the *Apology* do indeed "suggest" it, to say the least. Pace Kahn, there can really be no real doubt that Socrates considers *sophia*, *phronēsis*, virtue, and having a good soul/self as one and the same. His examining and questioning of those who seem "*sophos*" (23b4-7, 33c3, 41b7) is clearly none other than his examining and questioning of those who seem to have "virtue" (29e5-30a1, 38a3-5), just as the exhortation to be as "good" as possible is none other than an exhortation to be as *phronimos* as possible (29e1, 36c7). Having a "good" soul/self is clearly identified as "virtue" (30b2-3; also 29e2 with 30a1). This is why Socrates routinely just assumes that if there is someone who is making people "good/better" in "human's and citizen's virtue" (20b4), the person must be "educating" or "teaching" (19e ff., 24e) them and must himself have an "art" (20c), a "wisdom" (20d9-e1) that makes that work possible. (It is instructive, in this connection, to compare *Euthyphro* 2c2-7 with *Apol.* 25c1-2.) These plain facts are obscured when translators and commentators interpret "*phronēsis*" as meaning "practical intelligence" or "good sense" (e.g., Kahn 1996, 90 and Forster 2007, 4), as though Socrates distinguished *sophia* and *phronēsis* in the manner of Aristotle. See Burnet (1916, 258 and 1924, 12) for a corrective on this point.

63 Some commentators allow that Socrates does claim for himself a kind of virtue (Kraut 1984, 268; Nehamas 1987, 49; Reeve 1989, 57 with 150 and 179; Kahn 1996, 90). But it is usually held to be a "virtue" that falls short of the "expertise" that virtue par excellence requires (Kraut 1984, 231, 272-274; Nehamas 1987, 49 and 1992, 69 and 1998, 75; Reeve 1989, 35, 51-53; Kahn 1996, 103). Vlastos, as we have already seen, thinks Socrates regards himself as having bona fide virtue. And, as I have already indicated, Reeve waffles.

64 As de Strycker and Slings note, "in Athens, it was customary for both parties in a lawsuit to extol their own ethical and civic merits (corresponding to the ἀνθρωπίνη τε καὶ πολικὴ ἀρετή of 20b4-5) and to revile or to ridicule the character and deeds of their opponents…" (1994, 296; see their references to the Orators).

65 We find this belief expressed most explicitly at *Crito* 47d3-5, 47e7-48a7 (see my 2005, 18). We are not to let the terms "just" and "unjust" distract us from this point; for, as Socrates uses the terms, particularly given the context, they are plainly either synonymous or co-referential with the terms "good" and "bad", "admirable" and "shameful". See *Crito* 48b7, 49a5-6, 49b4-5, and again my 2005, 18.

66 I think that at *Apol.* 36d1-37a2 too he is tying his "goodness" to his ability to have (or to bring about) what is ultimately good—i.e. happiness. That is, his "goodness" (or "worthiness") is due to his ability to bring about happiness.

67 Brickhouse and Smith say that "all that follows from what he says [at 41c-d] is that the virtuous person will never be miserable. But, of course, from the fact that the virtuous person cannot be miserable, it does not follow that they are always happy" (2000, 133). They are right, if one reads the passage very narrowly and disregards what Socrates says elsewhere about virtue and the conditions for a good life, which I highlighted in the interpretation just given. To address Brickhouse and Smith's specific concerns, we may look at it this way: 41c-d implies that a virtuous person has a kind of charmed existence (both in life and in death or dying)—charmed inasmuch as nothing bad can happen (or be done) to her/him and nothing she/he does can be bad: the virtuous person can never err or suffer any distress, dissatisfaction, or misfortune (at any rate no "mistake" or "misfortune" will bring about anything bad for her/him). So, at the very least, the virtuous person has no need to worry about living a bad life. But we can say more: We know (from *Euthyd.* 280e ff.) that avoiding error by using our resources correctly goes a long way toward achieving happiness (even if it is not by itself sufficient for happiness). And if, *on top of* correct use of resources and avoiding error, we are blessed with resources which, if used correctly, are sufficient for happiness, then we are assured of happiness. Now, by any reasonable measure, lack of such resources is surely a "bad" thing. So it seems that, on Socrates conception of a good life, one for whom there was *nothing* bad—no mistreatment, no incorrect action, no ill fortune, no lack of resources—would live a good life. As Socrates seems likewise to suggest at *Gorg.* 492e, those who need nothing are correctly said to be happy.

68 As I argued in Senn 2005, I do not think *Crito* 47d-e can ultimately be interpreted to imply that Socrates believed any bodily injury, sickness, or disability, in and of itself, makes life not worth living—i.e., unless it prevents someone *without any wisdom* from acquiring any. Without repeating the arguments of that paper, let me suggest that a bodily injury (say, to the brain) that prevented a person from normal cognitive functioning might well, according to Socrates, have a noteworthy effect even on a person who was already wise. But I suspect Socrates would characterize such an effect, not as an "injury" to the person, but as essentially that person's death. Insofar as Socrates identifies soul/thought and self, he would say

a bodily injury that obliterates normal cognitive functioning would thereby obliterate *the person*. It may be worth noting at *Rep.* 496b-c Theages' bodily "sickness" is described as having *prevented* him from being an "exile" from philosophy, the sickness evidently being too severe to keep him out of conventional politics, but not severe enough from keeping him from philosophizing with Socrates. (Theages of course was mentioned in Socrates' list of "uncorrupted" young followers at *Apol.* 34a.)

69 See my note 33 above.

70 It is reiterated at 28d and 32d. We find it at *Crito* 48c-d too.

71 The translation and the interpretation of *Crito* 46b are not without controversy. I discuss both at great length in my 2012, and shall here simply assume mine are correct. Since I have argued (2012) that we find the same rationalism in the *Apology* as in the *Crito*, I reject Kahn's conclusion (1996, 97) that the "deeply religious" Socrates of the *Apology* cannot be the same as the Socrates who embraces the rationalism of *Crito* 46b.

72 Kahn correctly points out that Socrates does not in the *Crito* "claim" to possess expert knowledge of good and bad, but it is not so clear that, as Kahn says, "the *Crito* does not represent Socrates as an expert (epistēmon)" (1996, 103). Surely it is remarkable and suggestive that at 47b ff. we have Socrates claiming that we must be persuaded by no opinion but the expert's, and accordingly must act "in that way alone which the one person—the supervisor/knower (*epistatēs*) and expert (*epaion*)—opines [as best]", while only one Stephanus page earlier we have Socrates' bold commitment to be persuaded by only the conclusion of his own reasoning. Indeed, one might well interpret 47b ff. as an explanation of 46b.

73 His confidence in the *Crito* cannot be explained, as some do (Vlastos 1994, 35; Graham 1997, 29; Woodruff 2000, 138; Brickhouse and Smith 1994, 24-25 and 2000, 88-89; Irwin 1995, 19, 122), by suggesting that he is there referring merely to the results of elenctic reasoning. First, there is no indication whatever that the statements Socrates accepts in the *Crito* were established through elenctic reasoning (either in *Crito* or in the past discussions to which Socrates there alludes) (Kahn 1996, 247; C. Taylor 1998, 50-51). Second, and more importantly, if we do not accept Vlastos's idea (which I already put to rest above) that the "human wisdom" afforded by the elenchus constitutes genuine virtue, then truth discovered elenctically, non-expertly cannot (in light of the success-requires-virtue doctrine to which Socrates cleaves) explain his exclusive confidence in his own ability to reason and deliberate independently and effectively.

74 Vlastos 1971b, 10ff. thinks *every* issue for Socrates (except, possibly, the view that all things are done for the sake of happiness; cf. Vlastos 1991, 112 and 1994, 30) is an open issue, subject to re-examination (cf. Irwin 1977, 38, 71; Kraut 1984, 4 n. 1; Reeve 1989, 51-52, 179; Nehamas 1992, 64-65; Gomez-Lobo 1994, 29-32). *Crito* 54d4-6 calls into question the seriousness of Socrates' supposed willingness (*Crito* 46c, 48d-e, 49e) to listen to counterargument on these matters. Recall also that Socrates made it clear even earlier (49a) that there is "no common counsel" for those who disagree over the fundamental principle (*archē*) that it is never correct to do injustice even in retaliation. This casts further doubt on the suggestion that Socrates' beliefs rest purely on elenctic reasoning.

75 Cf. my 2012, 13-14.

76 Irwin 1977, 43; Nehamas 1987, 35; Beversluis 1987, 111; Brickhouse and Smith 1994, 54, 131 and 2000, 112, 117.

77 It should be clear enough that Socrates is seriously inferring not that Euthyphro and Meletus *are* wise, but only that they "trust" that they are, as he put it at *Lach.* 86c-d.

78 The distinction here between general and specific, I believe, adequately counters Benson's suggestion that Socrates' refusal to avow wisdom is a manifestation of shame (2000, 126). In any case, without begging the question at hand, we cannot here assume that disavowals are to be taken seriously.

79 Oddly enough, Benson actually uses the "very trying and intense circumstances" of Socrates' trial as a possible excuse for what Benson suggests may strictly speaking be a mistaken use of knowledge-terms in some of Socrates' knowledge-claims in the *Apology* (2000, 236; cf. Guthrie 1975, 99), as though the intensity of the circumstances might have made Socrates unintentionally misrepresent his knowledge.

80 Given the level of abstraction characteristic of the discussions in most of Plato's dialogues, it is no surprise and not significant that we do not find *many* examples of this sort. But it is telling that, in those that do involve Socrates' defense of particular actions (the *Apology* and the *Crito*), we do find Socrates' attitude to be fearless and shameless.

81 Since Socrates is committed to what I have called Autonomous Rationalism, his confidence in his decisions cannot be based on any kind of divine revelation or inspiration, as some have maintained (Brickhouse and Smith 1989, 106-107, 130, 133, 135 and 1994, 35-36, 132; McPherran 1996, 182; Kahn 1996, 96; Benson 2000, 126, 246-246 (esp. n. 88); Tarrant 2003, xxiv).

82 See also *Phaedo* 58e, 117c, and *Symp.* 221b. Vlastos notes his tranquility well, saying he is "serenely confident he has achieved both" genuine virtue and thereby happiness (1994, 43).

83 Kraut points out that at *Apol.* 37a Socrates claims never to have *voluntarily* done injustice. Kraut suggests that by saying this Socrates allows that he sometimes acts unjustly out of ignorance, since the qualification "voluntarily" would otherwise be pointless (1984, 213 n. 46; cf. Benson 2000, 242-243 and his n. 71). Presumably 37b is to be read with reference back to 37a (cf. Benson and Reeve 1989, 58 n. 66). But the other passages cannot be so easily accommodated on Kraut's interpretation: Unfortunately, *Apol.* 33a and *Gorg.* 521d are not even considered in this connection by Kraut, Reeve, or Benson. Stokes glosses 33a thus: "Soc[rates] means that he has always supported justice above all" (159); but by "supported", he must mean only "*tried* to support", since he concludes that, according to Socrates, "a human being can be sure

only of having done no intentional, deliberate, injustice" (26). Stokes recognizes *Gorg.* 521d, but concludes, "In this Plato's *Apology* is more guarded than the *Gorgias*..." (26). In any case, by using the word "voluntarily" at 37a Socrates does have a point *even if* he thinks he has *never* done injustice (cf. Penner 1992a, 162 n. 51). Consider the context of the claim at 37a: The question there is over what kind of sentence Socrates deserves. He is stressing the point about voluntariness here, because he is reminding his judges that if he has not done injustice voluntarily then he must not deserve a very harsh punishment (37b) *whether or not* he has done any injustice involuntarily. He had already pointed out (26a) that according to law involuntary wrongdoers are to be subjected to private teaching and admonishment rather than punishment.

84 Recall also his "private" battle "for what's just" (*Apol.* 32a), discussed earlier.

85 Vlastos puts it well: "His avowals of epistemic inadequacy, frequent in the dialogues, are never paralleled by admission of moral failure; the asymmetry is striking" (1994, 43 n. 13). Brickhouse and Smith see the problem here well enough; but their solution leaves much to be desired. They think that *part* of the reason "Socrates has consistently managed to steer away from evil" is that "his elenctically produced convictions provide him with a number of fixed points for a theory of how humans ought to act" (1994, 60). Since this elenctic knowledge by no means constitutes complete "moral knowledge", Brickhouse and Smith say that Socrates does not have—or even profess—"perfect assurance" that he has completely succeeded in avoiding misconduct (132). Rather, he has great confidence that he has never, "even unwittingly, done what he ought not", because "the great frequency of his daimonic alarms gives him reason to think that he has avoided a host of other evils" (132); that is, apparently, Socrates is confident that his *daimonion* has come to the rescue when his own elenctically justified convictions fail him either in being incomplete or in being simply erroneous. More recently, however, they concede that "… Socrates is careful not to say that [the *daimonion*] always warns him away whenever he is about to do something evil. Thus, Socrates cannot infer from the silence of the *daimonion* that whatever it is that he is thinking about doing is actually permissible" (2000, 152). They conclude that "…Socrates has been *lucky* when he reaches the end of his life and realizes that he has managed to have harmed no one" (my emphasis). Needless to say, this still conflicts with the success-requires-wisdom doctrine. And there remains the other problem: how can Socrates "realize" that he has ("luckily") done no injustice without definitional knowledge? In their 2006, they suggest that Socrates succeeded in avoiding injustice by "scrupulously manag[ing] to avoid allowing his appetites 'to fill themselves up,' " thus keeping "them from interfering with his deliberations about what is best." This still does not avoid the conflict with the success-requires-wisdom doctrine, or the problem of how Socrates can "realize" that he has avoided injustice.

Nor will Benson's characterizing (2000, 245-246) Socrates' "policy" as one of "inaction" allow us to avoid the conclusion that Socrates thinks he has expert knowledge. If he lacks it, then the various choices Socrates made—avoiding a conventionally political life, refusing to put to a vote the decree concerning the generals at Arginusae, refusing to obey the order to arrest Leon, suffering injustice rather than doing it (all of which Benson characterizes as instances of mere inaction)—could, for all he knew, have been just as disastrous as the more "active" alternative in each case. Deciding not to act in situations that require knowledge that one lacks does not indemnify one against lots of error and injustice, even if one has complete self-knowledge of the extent of one's abilities. If definitional knowledge is necessary for acting correctly and justly, then it would seem that it is no less necessary for deciding correctly when to *abstain* from action. (Benson believes (246-247 n. 88) that all the exceptions to Socrates' "policy of inaction" involve Socrates' daimonic voice or other divine sanction, and not knowledge.)

86 Nehamas sees this problem very well (1992, 69, 71 and 1998, 67-69; see too Morrison 2006, 108, 113). Nehamas admits not having a solution, but concludes (1992, 71-72 and 1998, 67, 86) that Socrates *himself* was puzzled by the fact that he consistently acted correctly throughout his life in spite of lacking the (supposedly necessary) knowledge. (I take it that this is the upshot of Nehamas's point that "ironists can be ironical toward themselves as well.") One might well wonder why one who took such great pains to persuade everyone that wisdom is necessary for doing well would make such a great deal of the fact that he was an exception to his own rule. Ironic and puzzling indeed—enough to strain markedly the credibility of Nehamas' interpretation.

87 Despite accepting the "sincerity" of Socrates' disavowals, Penner does allow that "[w]e may suspect, though Socrates never tells us so, that Socrates thinks himself rather farther along than anyone else in this attempt to grasp the whole [sc., to achieve comprehensive, substantive knowledge of good and bad]. But unless he thinks there is nothing left for him to figure out and fit together, he may still fairly claim to know only that he knows nothing" (1992, 145). And, quoting Frege, Penner maintains that "we never attain" the kind of maximal knowledge Socrates is striving for (147). Penner also offers some provocative suggestions as to what philosophical problems Socrates had not resolved (1992a, 146; 1992b, 24 n. 38). I feel that Penner is in a sense correct; but since he maintains (1992a, 146) that Socrates "says very little that is useful" about "the nature of happiness" (one of the things that, according to Penner, Socrates "still ha[s] to figure out"), I cannot accept his conclusions in detail.

88 So I am willing to agree with Matthews that Socrates may not even believe that he can posit a definition of virtue or goodness that will not generate philosophical problems (1999, 52; cf. Penner 1992a, 139ff.; 1992b, 23ff.). But such problems will, on my interpretation, be "only" philosophical problems, not practical ones that bar him from a (at least minimally) good life.

89 Brickhouse and Smith (1989, 41) and Benson (2000, 179) acknowledge this possibility too, but they share Vlastos's worries about accepting it.
90 Brickhouse and Smith (1989, 40ff.) and Bett (2011, 218) likewise think the disavowals in the *Apology* take on special significance.
91 Irwin 1977, 39-40; Kraut 1984, 247 n. 7; Nehamas 1987, 54-55 n. 37; Brickhouse and Smith 1989, 100 n. 85; Benson 2000, 178; Forster 2006, 14-15; Wolfsdorf 2004, 124.
92 As Vlastos explains, this kind corresponds to "the primary use" of the English word "irony" (43). He makes it clear that the possibility (or fact) of a listener's missing such irony does not mean it is not irony (22-23, 41, 42, 138). So he likewise makes it clear that this kind of irony is perfectly consistent with pretending (27), feigning (29), even dissimulation (28 n. 24) or insincerity (26 n. 18) or concealment (28 n. 24, 37), so long as the agent is not intentionally attempting to deceive. (Vlastos also seems to discern a difference—too subtle however for me to see—between "dissimulation" and "dissembling", since, he holds, puzzling irony can fairly be described as "dissimulation" (28 n. 24), but *not* as "dissembling" (25 n. 13, 28 n. 24).)
93 Many scholars have suggested that, on Gulley's sort of interpretation, since Socrates in the *Apology* is not even engaging his audience in an examination or refutation, he has no clear motive for the disavowals there (Reeve 1989, 178; Brickhouse and Smith 1989, 101 n. 90; 1994, 32; 2000, 65; C. Taylor 1998, 48; Benson 2000, 178-179; Bett 2011, 218). A related idea is that there is no motive for *continuing* to dissemble at the *end* of a successful refutation (Vlastos 1994, 41-42; Woodruff 1990, 88; Benson 2000, 178).
94 Brickhouse and Smith dismiss ironic interpretations of Socrates' statements in the *Apology* because, they believe, he takes his defense seriously (1989, 40ff., 89-90). So, similarly, Reeve's contention that Socrates "makes the majority of his defense hinge on" the truth of his disavowals (1989, 177) presumes that Socrates takes his "defense" entirely seriously. As I have said (and as I pointed out in Senn 2012, 23, 27 n. 74), there are powerful reasons for thinking he does not. In any case, given what, I argue, is the complete transparency of Socrates' sarcasm in the *Apology*, there is little "risk" of "causing some jurors to believe what is false", which Brickhouse and Smith take such pains to show Socrates' desire to avoid.
95 Nehamas acknowledges this, but says it "is no reason for refusing to take his own disavowal…at face value" (1998, 66). True enough; it is by itself no reason. But Nehamas seems to miss a crucial point. Alongside Plato's making Socrates consistently disavow wisdom, Plato consistently depicts almost everyone as not taking them at face value. The latter, I believe, is at least part of Plato's "literary" attempt to get us too to see that the disavowals are not to be taken seriously.
96 See further Burnet's notes on *Apol.* 19d4, 28a4. Guthrie makes some of the same observations, without wholeheartedly accepting Burnet's view that the exordium is a deliberate parody (1975, 74ff.). De Strycker and Slings agree with Riddell and Burnet, and they cite additional parallels with the Orators (1994, 32ff.). They also agree that Socrates' claim to be unable to use forensic diction is "irony": "This claim, surely, we cannot take at face value" (38-39).
97 Riddell and Burnet cite Isocrates, *Antidosis* 15.179 and Demosthenes, *Against Aristogeiton 1*, 25.14. Burnet explains, "...The exordium is, amongst other things, a parody, and the very disclaimer of all knowledge of forensic diction...is itself a parody" (67).
98 Brickhouse and Smith object to Burnet's reading the passage as parody; they argue that Socrates is being completely sincere (1989, 49-59). But their objection is based in part on misunderstanding: Burnet never claims that Socrates' words in this passage are "only" a parody or "only" an attempt to ridicule; nor does he deny that some of Socrates' remarks in the passage are true; nor does he maintain that Socrates is claiming to lack "any experience whatever" with usual courtroom diction. Burnet's point is that Socrates presents a masterful (and completely conventional) disavowal (not of "experience" but) of *mastery* of courtroom diction (just as a "foreigner" is no master of local dialect); Burnet's point is that it must be ("amongst other things") a parody because the disavowal is so transparently conventional among professionals. (Reeve's objections (1989, 5ff.) to an "ironic" interpretation of Socrates' exordium can be dismissed on similar grounds.) Perhaps more significantly, in interpreting the passage, Brickhouse and Smith crucially beg the question (52, 56-57) against Burnet and in favor of their view (40ff.) that Socrates has a "moral commitment" to tell his audience the truth (see my note 94 above). And perhaps most significantly, Brickhouse and Smith's interpretation of the passage does not take sufficiently into account Socrates' claim that he is going to be "speaking at random, with any chance terms" (17c2-3), not in "expressions and terms that've been systematized" like those of his prosecutors (17b9-c2). This claim *precedes* significant parts of what Riddell and Burnet have pointed out as typical of courtroom rhetoric: begging leave to speak in one's accustomed way (17d5-18a1), claiming unfamiliarity with the courtroom (17d1-3), exhorting the judges to "instruct each other" about the facts (19d2ff.), warning the judges about setting bad precedents (35c5-6). So it is hard to accept Brickhouse and Smith's contention that Socrates' promise (17b7-8) to tell the judges the truth refers only to what they "*will hear*" (55, their emphasis). De Strycker and Slings' answer (1994, 32-33 n. 16) to Brickhouse and Smith's criticism of Burnet's interpretation is worth considering too.
99 It is worth noting that the elaborate story of the oracle's role in Socrates' peculiar "practice" is also aimed largely at mockery, as I argue at length in Senn 2012.
100 To the extent that Socrates—though knowledgeable enough for "practical" purposes—himself desires to have more knowledge and so to keep philosophizing (see the previous section of this paper), he has a personal stake in inducing others, particularly those with lots of philo-

sophical potential, to join with him in the pursuit of maximal wisdom. Recall that, on my account, the "elenchus" is not where Socrates thinks substantive philosophical discovery is made; the "elenchus" is not "constructive", as many would have it. (Some even go so far as to suggest that the "elenchus" is Socrates' *only* method of attaining the truth: Vlastos 1994, 55-56; Brickhouse and Smith 1994, 12, 68; Irwin 1995, 18. Contrast Irwin 1977, 37; C. Taylor 1998, 49-51; Benson 2000, 31; McPherran 1996, 191.) On my account, its purpose is rather purely "protreptic", an inducement to *begin* philosophizing.

101 I cannot confidently conclude that what Vlastos calls "simple", "puzzling" irony is what Socrates engages in *every* time he disavows knowledge in Plato's dialogues. Over and above his conscious efforts at mockery, I think there is some reason to think that Socrates may have been just *disposed to reticence* about *explicitly* avowing wisdom, and that his "*eirōneia*" may indeed have been to a certain degree "habitual (*eiōthuia*)"—as both friend (*Symp.* 218d7) and foe (*Rep.* 1.337a4) had described it. His reluctance to respond to Glaucon and Adeimantus, as though he were knowledgeable, may be a good example. (The *Republic*, especially what follows book 1, is often considered a marked departure from the aporetic, doubtful Socrates typical of the "earlier" dialogues (so, e.g., Matthews 1999, 74, and Vlastos 1991, 248-249). But Socrates does later express doubt and lack of knowledge several times, throughout the dialogue (368b-c, 394d, 427d-e, 450c-451a, 497e, 506c-d, 517b, 533a).)

The Greek word *eirōneia* can mean dissimulation/evasiveness which is, depending on the context, malicious/deceitful or playful or neither (Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1108a21-23, 1127a22-23, 1127b22-31; *Eudemian Ethics* 1233b39-1234a1; *Rhetoric* 1379b31-32). But it may be a mistake to use the English word "irony" to describe *all* of Socrates' disavowals or his overall demeanor. The reason is that the English word suggests something rather more *calculated* than what Socrates seems to be doing in some of his disavowals. I think Burnet's insight is worth considering; Socrates, he says, "did not like to commit himself further than he could see clearly, and he was apt to depreciate both his own powers and other people's. That was not a mere pose; it was due to an instinctive shrinking from everything exaggerated and insincere. … To a very large extent, we gather, 'the accustomed irony' of Sokrates was nothing more or less than what we call a sense of humour which enabled him to see things in their proper perspective." (1914, 132)

So, on Burnet's account, Socrates' "irony" is really, "to a very large extent", just reflexive modesty, or even diffidence, rather than calculated feigning or dissembling. This *could* perhaps be why Plato sometimes makes Socrates add his usual disclaimer apparently only as an afterthought (*Gorg.* 509a, *Rep.* 1.354b-c, *Meno* 98b), which some have claimed are actually *un*-Socratic (on *Gorg.* 509a see Dodds 1959, 341; on *Rep.* 1.354b-c see Matthews 1999, 74). Partly on the basis of Aristophanes' portrayals of the ordinary Athenian and on Demosthenes' *First Philippic* 7 and 37, Burnet thought the trait was not peculiar to Socrates but actually "in the Athenian character" (1911, lv-lvi)—which, if true, would constitute further reason to think Socrates' disavowals were in no danger of being misunderstood by Socrates' or Plato's immediate audience. It goes some way toward corroborating Burnet's opinion of "the Athenian character" if we recall two examples from Plato's early dialogues. One is in the *Charmides*: Socrates asks the already illustrious adolescent if he has sound-mindedness (*sōphrosunē*), and the youth blushes and says that although it would be "out of place" to deny it, it will "perhaps/probably appear onerous" if he praises himself by avowing it (158c-d). And in the *Protagoras*, even the very ambitious and wealthy youth Hippocrates helplessly blushes (312a) at having to admit the possibility that he is willing essentially to pay someone (a foreigner no less!) to make him a professional wise man (*sophistēs*). His shame came in part, no doubt, from the fact that the Athenian people were largely hostile towards those who made a living from professing to teach wisdom (*Euthyphro* 3c-d, *Prot.* 316c-d, *Rep.* 492a), partly due to their being almost viscerally wary of overly "clever/formidable (*deinos*)" speakers (*Euthyphro* 3c; *Lach.* 197d; *Apol.* 23d5-7; also Thucydides 3.37.4-5, 8.68.1; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.2.31; Aristophanes, *Clouds* 94ff., 882ff.). (In addition to the examples of Charmides and Hippocrates, one might find further support for Burnet's idea of the "ironic", noncommittal "Athenian character" at *Meno* 71a, where Socrates claims that any Athenian would, if asked, claim not to know whether virtue is teachable or even what its nature is. However, the passage *may* not count, if Socrates is in fact just dissembling somehow "on behalf of" his fellow-citizens.)

An anonymous referee for this journal objected to the suggestion that any of Socrates' disavowals can be explained by positing "habits" for Socrates: the referee argued that such a suggestion involves the confusion of literary characters, "who have no habits at all", with actual persons; the representation of literary characters must, the argument goes, be "*motivated*" in every respect (presumably by their creator). Without here taking a position on just how "literary" any of Plato's dialogues really is, I believe the objection overlooks the natural possibility that a writer of literature may be motivated, for a variety of reasons, to depict his or her *human* characters as having certain habits—if only because actual persons really have them. Plato's characters have certainly *seemed* real to many readers, regardless of whether they actually represent historical persons. That, I venture to think, is largely due to Plato's remarkable skill at *making* his characters seem real, through a number of devices; rendering them with habits may well be one.

102 To avoid confusion, let me clarify here that the kind of irony that I have above attributed to Socrates differs from what Brickhouse and Smith refer to as "mocking irony" (2000, 60ff.), "in which the mockery is achieved through deception" (99 n. 9). According to my interpretation, Socrates has little or no interest in merely making an "inside" joke, i.e. little interest in deceit. Rather, he is genuinely interested in making the arrogant interlocutor

himself feel shamed, whether or not he always succeeds. Again, the kind of irony that I have attributed to Socrates is of the kind that Vlastos characterizes as "simple", potentially "puzzling", but not deceitful.

103 Indeed, Brickhouse and Smith seem to be aware of this; for, shortly after the assertion that I just quoted, they seem to weaken their inference considerably, saying only that Socrates' mock-praise of others "does not *require*… that Socrates actually supposes that he possesses the knowledge and wisdom he claims to lack…" (63, emphasis added).

BOOK REVIEWS

Plato and the Post--Socratic Dialogue: The Return to the Philosophy of Nature. By Charles H. Kahn.

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Only once, in the crucial chapter on *Philebus*, does Charles Kahn cite his 1960 study of Anaximander (166n17),[1] but the power and significance of that single citation is immense: it is thanks to his mastery of the Presocratics that Kahn can make his case for seeing six of Plato's late dialogues not only as "post-Socratic" but also as a return to the Presocratics with whom Kahn himself began his extraordinary scholarly journey more than half-a-century ago. The citation comes shortly after this revealing passage:

> In historical terms, then, the mixture of Limit and Unlimited points to a blend between Parmenides and Anaximander, and more generally to a union between Being and Becoming. Ultimately it will be this sort of mixed ontology that Plato has in mind, adding an intermediate blend to the simple dualism of the classical theory of Forms. In the immediate context, however, Limit points to a typically Pythagorean concern with number and ratio. For it is precisely by means of such mathematical concepts that Plato will forge this union between Being and Becoming (165).

For Kahn, two different roles for mathematics—one leading up to the Forms, the other down to the world of nature (xiv-xv, 158-59, 166, 194, and 202)—become a dividing line (significantly, Kahn calls the Divided Line "the Knowledge Line" on 74) between Plato's Socratic and post-Socratic dialogues. Although Plato's post-Socratic "revision of the sharp dualism between intelligible and sensible realms" (xv) reaches its natural τέλος in *Timaeus*, and more specifically in the χώρα (xv, 18, 58-9, and 187-95), *Philebus* is the central dialogue for Kahn's claims about Plato's "re-

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turn to the philosophy of nature," especially the often-repeated phrase γεγενημένη οὐσία at 27b8-9 (xv, 5, 17-18, 56n3, 59, 175, 186, 194, and 203). Although Kahn claims at one point (157) that "nothing essential depends" on the chronological priority of *Philebus* to *Timaeus*, it is difficult to see how he could have sustained his basic argument without placing *Timaeus* last, after chapters on *Parmenides*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Philebus*.

Because Kahn will argue that the imitation of the Forms in the intermediate χώρα will be Plato's solution to the problems of participation introduced in *Parmenides* (187-95 and 200-6), the first chapter—ably uniting the concerns of the six aporias of Part One with the eight deductions of Part Two—suggests that the Second Deduction ("a rich flotsam of philosophical insights" offering a "torrent stream of arguments good, bad, and ingenious" on 39) creates "the conceptual outline for a theory of nature" (41; cf. 42, 45, 46, 55-5, 58, and 115). In the second chapter, Kahn shows that *Theaetetus*, by excluding the Forms (see "the hypothesis of the *Theaetetus*" on 84; cf. 51 and 59), is Plato's investigation of "empiricist epistemology" (47), offering "a brilliant account of the phenomenology of perception" (53), and that it naturally follows *Parmenides* because even though the earlier dialogue "may be seen as a preparation for physics . . . we would need some empirical data" (46). Particularly because it reconfigures Being to include both the things that move and those that rest, the "five greatest kinds" in *Sophist* (the subject of chapter three) "is a list of fundamental concepts required for any rational account of the natural world, that is to say, of a world admitting change" (115). A fourth (bridge) chapter entitled "the new dialectic: from the *Phaedrus* to the *Philebus*," includes discussion of *Statesman* as well, and it should be noted that it is unclear whether it is the *Phaedrus*, *Statesman*, or *Laws* that is the sixth of the six dialogues Kahn takes as his subject matter in the opening sentence (xi). But about the fourth and fifth there is no doubt: the titles of "the *Philebus* and the movement to cosmology"—this is the chapter that every serious student of ancient philosophy will most need to study—and "the *Timaeus* and the completion of the project: the recovery of the natural world," speak for themselves. All of the chapters contribute to a powerful and unified vision, and abound with many felicities and flashes of insight,[2] although the chapter on *Philebus* is particularly important, and the chapter on *Theaetetus* somewhat diffuse. The book ends with an Epilogue on "Plato as a political philosopher."

Although Kahn certainly builds here on his studies of the Presocratics and his pioneering work on the verb "to be" (66-7 and 95-8), his latest book's relationship to his 1996 classic *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue* is naturally of paramount concern. From the start, he refers to it as "a sequel" (xi), and in explaining the book's "Epilogue" at the end of his Preface he writes: "Instead of promising a third volume to deal with these topics, I offer here an Epilogue to take some account of Plato's concern with moral and political philosophy in his latest period." It seems not unlikely that this sentence marks the abandonment of a three-volume project, and betrays the inevitable melancholy that must accompany it. The fact is that this new book suffers by comparison with the earlier work: despite the complexity of the issues with which it must deal, it is not only shorter in length, but its bibliography is less than half the size. But most saddening was that despite the case Kahn builds for reading *Phaedrus*, *Parmenides*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Philebus* as preparation for "the return to the philosophy of nature" in *Timaeus*, he mentions only in the Preface his brilliant discovery, central to the first volume, of "prolepsis" and "proleptic intentions," and

does so only to register the point that "today I would formulate my view more cautiously, to avoid the impression that Plato never changed his mind, or that he knew where he was going from the start" (xiii). The paradox at the heart of these two volumes is that both share—each within its own domain, and both in the teeth of an entrenched and disjunctive scholarly orthodoxy—a brave commitment to continuity. In both cases, Kahn takes a series of dialogues, first "the Socratic," now "the post-Socratic," and attempts to show that Plato had a much clearer conception of where he was going than we thought, and that the end of each movement was already somehow implicit from the start. *This is what Kahn does*. What Kahn cannot do is work his integrative magic on the two disparate parts of his own project: not even Hegel could create a third volume synthesizing these two, and the fact that there will be no third from Kahn follows directly from his attempt to accomplish this synthesis in the second. There can be no question but that Kahn's Plato has changed his mind: the problem is that he still hopes to show that Plato didn't change it all that much. After all, Kahn's brilliant configuration of the interplay of Limit and Unlimited in *Philebus* in terms of both Anaximander and Parmenides aims to blend the Socratic Plato of "the normative trio"—Kahn's apt phrase for the Good, Beauty, and Justice (xiv, 158, 174, and 181)—with the Presocratic Plato of natural science. But this synthesis requires not only a new and opposite direction for mathematics, but the abandonment of dualism in the service of "immanent form" (5, 14, 17, 186, 194, and 199-200), a vigorous attack on what Aristotle called the χωρισμός (18 and 46), an otherwise strong shift in the direction of an Aristotelian Plato (169, 186, and 193-4), the disharmonious embrace of a One that must also be Many (22-3, 104n5, and 202), and the mixing, blending, and even the union of Being and Becoming (xv, 31, 55, 74, 105, 165, 169, 186, 202, and 203).

Considered not in the context of his own previous achievements, but simply as a landmark in the Anglophone reception of Plato, the most striking feature of Kahn's new book is that he takes Plato's "Unwritten Doctrines" seriously (28-31, 42, 104n5, 204, and 206); indeed there is a sense in which his argument depends on them, especially since the section in which the lost lecture on the Good finally appears (206) is followed only by a "supplementary note" and the Epilogue. On the one hand, this follows from the rather more Aristotelian Plato that emerges from Kahn's pages, and although he does not cite recent work by Sarah Broadie and Mary Louise Gill, there are many point of intersection with their approaches. Among the proponents of the Unwritten Doctrines, Kahn cites only Kenneth Sayre (28n45), but for those sympathetic to "the other Plato," Kahn's work is an even more significant indication of the prospect of further Analytic-Tübingen/Milan syncretism precisely because he is not in direct dialogue with the school. In the same vein is Kahn's indirect dialogue with Jacques Derrida, whose work on the dualism-destroying implications of the χώρα, while never mentioned here, is tacitly supported if not confirmed. But Kahn's reluctance to extend the bibliographic hand to these various approaches is probably prudent, since he must be aware that some would prove dangerous allies: after all, Kahn's project aims to blend traditional Platonism—the Forms remain intact if not separate—with natural philosophy. One supportive scholar whom Kahn does not cite is Mitchell Miller.

Although Kahn does cite both Harold Cherniss and G. E. L. Owen, he never refers to their debate about the chronological relation between *Timaeus* and *Sophist*, and this omission is significant. To state the obvious first:

Kahn is following Cherniss on the crucial question: the *Timaeus* is late, so Plato returns to what looks very much like the separation of Being and Becoming even after "the critical period" (cf. 86). On the one hand, Kahn's choice need not surprise anyone: as early as 1968, in a review of Gilbert Ryle's *Plato's Progress*, he recorded his rejection of "an infanticidal Plato" while writing: "it will not do, I think, to say that the Forms or Kinds which survive after Parmenides' criticism are mere concepts, deprived of their former support in an ontology of intelligible Being."[3] But in his interpretation of both *Parmenides* and *Sophist*, the problem of the dangerous ally rears its head (68): Kahn relies heavily, and in the case of *Sophist*, almost completely, on the work of Michael Frede (*passim* in first three chapters, but see especially 24n38), whose approach to the verb "to be" in the late Plato might be said to out-Owen Owen's own. For this reader, the Kahn-Frede alliance blurs rather than resolves the sharpness of the issues that originally divided Cherniss and Owen, and the result is not the carefully argued compromise effectively championed by Lesley Brown—whose unpublished translation of *Sophist* Kahn was able to use (xv)—but a not always satisfactory *mélange*. When confronted by inconsistencies in *Timaeus* (177-9, 200, 199-200, and 213),[4] Kahn must write: "to give Timaeus a consistent view we must draw a distinction that Plato does not provide" (193; cf. 172, 192, and 199). And even though Kahn's readers are offered some superb cosmological speculations (202), we are left wondering why Plato would entrust to Parmenides—whose attitude toward cosmology was ambivalent at best (cf. 50-1, 177, and 187)—the task of preparing "a schematic outline for an essentially mathematical account of the natural world" (42). But such is the simultaneously post-Socratic and pre-Socratic τέλος that emerges triumphant in Kahn's insightful but not altogether worthy sequel to his magisterial *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue*.

END NOTES

1 All parenthetical page references are to the book under review.

2 A few of these should be mentioned: Kahn's use of "the default case" (10, 26, 116, and 120), the link between "the late learners" of *Sophist* with the first deduction in *Parmenides* (21-7), his advice to Neoplatonists (30), his remarks on the connection between *Parmenides* and *Philebus* (2, 8, and 45), his use of the term "anti-Platonic" (49 and 72), his telling phrase "author-reader complicity" (52), his many insightful remarks about Democritus beginning on 61, the juxtaposition of *Phaedrus* 249b and Kant (62; cf. 195), a brilliant and original discussion of elements (83), a crystal clear—and critical—reprise of the contrast between the "durative-stative" and "mutative-kinetic" in the Greek verbs "to be" and "to become" (97), the implications of 113n13—which introduces the troublesome relationship between "the linguistic and ontological levels" (cf. 115, 156, 164, 170, and 188), the interesting observation about the Stranger's argumentation on 116n16, the illuminating discussion of the alphabet (133 and 154-5), a perceptive discussion—practically unique in taking the context into account—of Collection and Division in *Phaedrus* (135-6), the use of "complex unity" and "structured plurality" on 139, the structural anomaly of the (Socratic) sixth definition of the *Sophist* (140), suggestive comments about the Eleatic Stranger (146-7), the splendid use of the *langue/ parole* distinction (155-56), the whole of chapter 5, the discussion of creation in Time in *Timaeus* (178), the marvelous use of "inconcinnity" (179), the luminous account of the Receptacle, especially on 190-1, the revealing comment about the Receptacle's gender (192), the rehabilitation of Aristotle's account of Plato's "mathematicals" along with the illuminating remarks on the history of philosophy on the same wonderful page (205), the summary of the Presocratics on sensation (208-213), and finally the two notes about James Lennox, who apparently can document Aristotle's unacknowledged debt to *Philebus* (186n16 and 194n23), and who should be encouraged to do so in print without delay.

3 *Journal of Philosophy* 65, no. 12 (June 1968), 364-375, on 374.

4 Given the dualism-denying phenomenology of perception he celebrates in *Theaetetus* (90-93 and 114), the most important of these inconsistencies for Kahn is the account of what appears in the Receptacle before "the power of sense-perception" has emerged (192-3 and 206-13).

Reading Plato is like Solving a Jigsaw Puzzle: Mary-Louise Gill's *Philosophos* A Discussion by Georgia Mouroutsou on *Plato's Missing Dialogue*

Georgia Mouroutsou

> But cautious people must be *especially on their guard in the matter of resemblances*, for they are very slippery things.
> Plato, *Sophist*, 231a.

> And so we must *take courage and attack our father's theory here and now, or else*, if any scruples prevent us from doing this, *we must give the whole thing up*.
> Plato, *Sophist*, 241a.

> Wir dürfen kaum sagen, daß wir weiter seien als Plato. Nur im Material der wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnisse, die er benutzt, sind wir weiter. Im Philosophieren selbst sind wir *noch kaum wieder bei ihm angelangt*.
> Karl Jaspers, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, p. 9.[1]

I. PLATO'S MISSING *PHILOSOPHOS* AND GILL'S FINDINGS

Who is Plato's philosopher? Is she the true rhetorician or the true politician, or perhaps even the true poet? Plato's philosopher is excellent in persuasion; she conducts real politics and even composes philosophical poetry. But what about the danger of sophistry? Plato's philosopher-types may give the impression that they are sophists, and could have even been able to become sophists, had they intended to mislead. But they are unwilling to exercise their ability to deceive, and instead do nothing but educate.[2] To make matters worse, don't Plato's philosophers seem to fall into a kind of madness whenever they try to disturb common views and traditional customs, and when turning things upside down in their interlocutors and readers?[3] Plato's philosophers admittedly

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appear as if they succumb to such madness on many ocassions: when meticulously working on and transforming their theories without pause, when bravely criticizing their predecessors and challenging their contemporaries, and when practicing the art of never resting too long on their laurels.

Even Plato, notorious for blurring things and concepts, or, better to say especially Plato, who has to draw clear boundaries between philosophy and rhetoric, politics, and poetry — notwithstanding all innate similarities and hastily imposed identifications — does not think that philosophy, rhetoric, and politics can be identified, or that the distinctions between them can be blurred. At the beginning of his *Sophist*, Plato asks who the sophist, the statesman, and the philosopher are. While not as obsessed as Gill with definitions, Plato still searches for clear-cut lines of demarcation. Philosophy pervades the whole Platonic corpus; it is not reserved solely for the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*.[4] Yet it is in these two texts that Plato builds our anticipation for a separate dialogue devoted specifically to his concept of philosophy. Though Plato refers to this dialogue, he didn't write it down — instead leaving us to our own devices: We have to search for it within his work, and thereby explain his seemingly meaningful silence on the *Philosophos*.

Plato scholars have come up with many possible scenarios to explain why the *Philosophos* is missing (for a critical summary of the views about the interlocutors in this dialogue, see Gill's fn. 54, p. 201). The two main solutions that have been offered are as follows. The *Philosophos* is missing, either because (1) Plato *couldn't* write the dialogue down or, (2) because he felt that he *shouldn't* write it down. There are two further explanations to the first suggestion: (1a) either Plato couldn't fulfill the task of writing the dialogue down because he died or lost interest after the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*; or, (1b) the philosopher's objects, which are the form of the good and forms in general, have no propositional character (e.g. Wolfgang Wieland) — the knowledge of them being a knowledge *how* rather than a knowledge *that*. To put it more succinctly, in this view Plato was incapable of composing the *Philosophos*, although he still wanted to highlight its importance. The second suggestion was given by the famous "Tübingen School" (Hans-Joachim Krämer, Konrad Gaiser, and Thomas Alexander Szlezák, among others). This view argues that Plato reserved the most important and most precious topics, such as the problems related to the first principles of reality, for his oral teaching in the Academy. Tübingen scholars don't deny that Plato expressed his main ideas in the dialogues, which they appreciate and read closely, making important comparisons between the texts in order to detect and reconstruct parts of the *Philosophos*, seemingly successfully. But according to them, this unwritten dialogue marks the most significant gap in the Platonic corpus, which cannot simply be filled in with the help of the other dialogues, nor with insightful esoteric readings.

On this point, Gill disagrees with the Tübingen School, and sides with Kenneth Sayre. Gill argues that the individual dialogues are not "stand-alone unified wholes" (p. 15, *pace* Schleiermacher) but part of a tightly-woven inter-relational system, which has no missing pieces or doctrinal gaps; instead we have to do the work and solve the jigsaw puzzle ourselves. Gill's solution of the riddle follows a third view, according to which the *Philosophos* can be detected somewhere in the existing Platonic corpus: either in one dialogue (the *Parmenides*, the *Sophist* or the *Philebus*, for instance) or in all dialogues. In the entire corpus, Plato continually and colorfully portrays the philosopher

and talks about her 'type', her nature, and her tasks. Some scholars take a "performative view" according to which the philosopher performs different aspects of her nature in different contexts; others want to pay more attention to the doctrinal underpinning of the concept of philosophy, in order to draw the philosopher's portrait through selections from Plato's dialogues. Gill's endeavour is characterized by the idea of philosophical training that pervades the Platonic corpus, and this unifies her account of the philosopher. Training is a constitutive element of Platonic dialectics after all, along with critique — of both his predecessors and contemporaries — and theory. Gill's book, the fruit of both long labours in ancient philosophy and extensive discussions with scholars and students, is essentially a handbook about training in Platonic dialectics. Gill is clearly an expert, and she exercises her readers in combining elements from various contexts in the Platonic corpus. As I read her, she vacillates — rather than mediates — between the Tübingen School and Kenneth Sayre. Although she claims to follow Sayre, she operates rather differently to Sayre when it comes to Aristotle, and though she claims to diverge from the Tübingen School in finding central Platonic ideas in the dialogues, this is of course common ground between her and the Tübingen scholars.[5]

II. THE BOOK'S CONTENT, GILL'S METHOD, AND HER MAIN BACKGROUND FIGURES AND UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

In what follows, I am far from being able to do justice to Gill's far-reaching and comprehensive project. I will narrate the book's chapters and Gill's analysis in broad strokes. I will give a somewhat educational account, by which I mean that I will focus on the arguments and aspects of the book that might support and improve upon Gill's own project, and in this stay faithful to the book's spirit — rather than work against it. My critical role will in no way eclipse Gill's project, though I shall be critical at points, even sometimes going beyond Gill's hermeneutical presuppositions and paradigm. There are therefore three levels in my discussion: narration, where for the most part I remain neutral; support of Gill's points, with further argument; and critical comments that reach beyond Gill's perspective. I will not always proceed sequentially.

I begin with three general remarks about the book's content, addressing Gill's underlying presuppositions and key philosophical figures, and looking at her method.

First, Gill's ultimate goal is to lead us through the dialogues in order to solve "the puzzle of being" and reconstruct the *Philosophos*. As a quick look at the table of content reveals, Gill makes even larger claims. Her book reveals the Platonic dialectic in its threefold character: as theory, as critique, and, above all, as exercise. To do this, Gill interprets the dialogues *Parmenides*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Statesman*, paying more attention to some passages than others, while carefully avoiding the *Timaeus*, to some problems of which she has devoted herself in earlier articles.[6] Gill fulfills her principal goal, not through close readings and discussions of the still hotly-debated passages, but rather by taking a joyful stroll through the four dialogues, sometimes making unjustifiably rash jumps though the minefields of the Platonic landscape and thick Plato scholarship, all the while providing helpful instruction to help us navigate the landscape.

Second, in her introduction, Gill makes her direction clear. Plato's later philosophy displays a distinctly Aristotelian bent (p. 10). As such

it is no surprise that Gill appeals to Aristotle to clarify topics in Plato (fn. 27, Introduction). Throughout the book, Gill pursues this line: when making a case for the immanent forms in Plato, or speaking of Plato's overcoming his ontological dualism of being and becoming in the *Statesman* (fn. 1, p. 202), or when sketching how Plato paves the way for a more fully worked-out theory of change and rest, which was later developed by Aristotle (p. 231).[7] Bearing in mind Gill's aim, nothing can really startle the reader, not even her idiosyncratic claim that it is because of his treatment of change and rest that Plato doesn't paint the philosopher's portrait in the *Sophist*. Gill is also indebted to Gilbert Ryle. But to go further, she is almost under Ryle's spell: She never criticizes a single view of Ryle's,[8] despite confronting such a large amount of his work; from his *Plato's Progress* up to his esoteric or unpublished doctrines of the "Logical Atomism in Plato's *Theaetetus*", which were finally made available to the broader public by Burnyeat in 1990.

Third, through reading Plato's texts cover to cover — from front to back and back to front again — as all of us should do, though not everyone successfully does, Gill outlines problematic passages as well as those in which interlocutors broach the issue at hand (p. 13). She carefully follows Plato's allusions and intimations; his vital clues and stage directions. She even furnishes Plato's interlocutors with better arguments, and strikes Plato on the hand when he fails. Keeping to the spirit of the Platonic dialogues, Gill refines and revisits a number of parts to fit them into her jigsaw-puzzle, which she solves while composing, in an equally Platonic spirit, excursus and addenda — in order to provide the reader with a finely-woven Platonic fabric. To Gill, reading Platonic dialogues feels like solving a jigsaw puzzle (p.13).

As challenging an educator as Plato was, Gill claims that he "deliberately withheld" the *Philosophos* (p. 1) "because he would have spoiled the exercise, had he written it" (p. 5). The full portrait of his philosopher can be completed by diligent disciples, and is indeed completed by Gill, who provides and conducts the "final exercise". To put it differently: Gill's book should be regarded *as the Philosophos* — if not as the only possible reconstruction, then certainly as a good model for other experts and trainees. I cannot think of a loftier ambition in Plato studies than Gill's in this text. Let us then see how Gill fulfills her aim.

III. THE BOOK'S CHAPTERS: EXERCISE ON THE WAY TOWARD THE *PHILOSOPHOS*

According to Gill, for Plato philosophical ability can only be accomplished by continuous training. The disciple must learn "to recognize patterns across variations and gradually gains a settled disposition to solve a range of problems including ones not encountered before" (p. 11). Based on her interpretation of the hypotheses in the *Parmenides*, Gill settles on her own "dialectical pattern", which, she shows, repeats itself with variations throughout the text. The following pattern has been largely — and surprisingly — overlooked in Plato scholarship; nevertheless Gill makes it the "backbone of the book" (p. 3): An antinomy emerges whose arms are unacceptable (steps one and two). A middle path between the two arms is attempted (step three) and then dismantled (step four).

As Gill sees it, all the dialogues she interprets respond to *Parmenides* (p. 73), to whose prelude and second part she devotes the first two chapters of the book. Examining the first part of the *Parmenides*, Gill interprets every stage in

Parmenides' critique of his interlocutor. In the *Phaedo*, the older Socrates left it open whether forms are transcendent or immanent in their sensible particulars. Socrates, in his youth, tries in vain to pass Parmenides' test while introducing a theory of transcendent forms. Gill diagnoses that the remedy for his failure lies in training, and characterizes the second part of the *Parmenides* as "sheer gymnastics" (p. 45) with regard to the structural form of oneness. The forms, and thus the world and the capacity for Platonic dialectic, will be saved.[9]

Gill operates for the most part with the first four deductions of the *Parmenides*, which display a striking progression (p. 55). In the first and second, an antinomy emerges: the one is neither F nor not-F, and the one is both F and not-F. The appendix (*Prm*. 155e4-157b5) attempts, but fails, to find a constructive way forward. The positive hypothesis is then saved by the third deduction, while the fourth corresponds to the fourth step of Gill's "dialectical pattern" (see above). In the first antinomy, being emerges as a nature "outside the nature of beings, including oneness" (p. 63), whereas, we should correct this impression: being is inside the nature of things and thus the one can be one in virtue of itself, and can also have other features by partaking of natures other than its own. The problem of being is left unresolved in the second part of the *Parmenides*. Gill's treatment is insightful and imaginative, though I'm sure it won't be to every Plato scholar's taste; her discussion of Meindwald's interpretation is to the point.

The third chapter accomplishes the three steps of Gill's exercise about being, which runs as follows. The Heraclitean view that being is changing (step one, the *Theatetus*' first part as an exercise in seeing and noticing things of significance buried in the text, p. 78) and the Parmenidean view that being is unchanging (step two, the *Sophist*) should be rejected. A middle path is provided by the Eleatic Guest, who wishes to "have it both ways" (being is both change and rest), and then withdrawn, since change and rest are mutually exclusive opposites. For Gill, the contest between the types — and not historical figures — of Heraclitus and Parmenides concerns the same question about the nature of being, and cannot be reconciled through the distinction of being into the sensible and intelligible realms (p. 77). It is a mistake to see rest and change as mutually exclusive, as if they were categorical opposites, and not structural kinds, which prevents the Guest and his interlocutor Theaetetus from "defining the form of being" (p. 77). In Chapter four, Gill pursues an "open possibility" in the *Theatetus*. On the model of language-learning, she argues that knowledge is an expertise that combines perception, true judgment, and an account added to true judgment. Knowledge by acquaintance (don't worry, Gill doesn't detect intuition or mental perception in the *Theaetetus*!), knowledge *how*, and propositional knowledge are intimately connected (p. 9). This is one of the most insightful moments of the book (pp. 131-7). Here, Gill is well aware of her going beyond Plato's text — an awareness often missing in the scholarship.

There are no dialogues that have left more generations of interpreters baffled with regard to their aim(s), than the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*. Gill's Chapter five focuses on the *Sophist*, in which Plato aims at and achieves many things at once. Gill helps us avoid a headache by taking the whole discussion as serving a single goal: the analysis of the false statement (p. 149). To found the possibility of falsehood is one of the greatest philosophical achievements, which Plato makes in order to capture the sophist. At the same time, Plato wishes to dispute with his predecessors and

contemporaries both being and not-being, to explicate some of the grammar of his dialectics of forms, and thereby to educate Theaetetus and all his readers.

Gill's key thesis is that the dialogue with the Giants (*Soph*. 245e-250d) is the centerpiece of the dialogue, to which we should return after reading through the arduous dialectics concerning the greatest kinds, up to 259e (fn. 7, p. 205). The relations between the greatest kinds are not those of genus to species, and Gill concludes that "circularity seems unavoidable in the case of structural kinds, since these kinds go through everything and therefore through one another" (p. 235). We should not understand being as something external to the other kinds but as a structural feature inside their natures (p. 211). Not only I am sympathetic to the above views, I share them.[10] To show how we come from a view of beings and forms as "external" to one another toward an internalized *dunamis*, there is no other way than to interpret the whole passage and argumentation up to *Soph*. 259 step by step and without interruption. As for Plato's "serious mistake" of regarding motion and rest as categorical opposites and not all-pervasive kinds like being, or sameness and difference, here is a suggestion in the spirit of the *Sophist*: Plato wants too many things at once when working on his chosen five greatest kinds. He is not sketching a project on transcendentalia exclusively, but he intends to speak about the relations of all forms. Thus he lets motion and rest enter the game in the way that they do.

Gill is indebted to Lesley Brown and Michael Frede, which she acknowledges — who isn't, when it comes to the *Sophist*? Here she takes "the first steps toward an alternative interpretation of being" with the aim to "preserve the virtues of their different proposals without the shortcomings" (p. 176). In these initial steps, I would have liked more argument for Gill's thesis — *pace* Brown — that forms can be affected in relation to one another (which she just mentions on p. 239). Some pinches of salt for Frede, and more of an attempt to follow and sharpen some of Brown's critical points, would certainly have corroborated Gill's interpretations more strongly. For instance, her own critique of Meinwald's interpretation would have been more well-founded had Gill seen a fundamental shortcoming in Frede's seminal interpretation. For, 255c13-14 is certainly a key passage in the context of the *Sophist* (Gill, fn. 61, p. 164), but it is not *the* key that opens all doors in the *Sophist*, as Frede wished to show, and even less with regard to other dialogues.

In Chapter six, Gill devotes herself to the *Statesman* and manifests charming diligence and fine labour. No one wants to be (called) a sophist, but a lot of different types wish to participate in statesmanship and even more people wish to share, if not usurp, the title of philosopher. Gill draws attention to the difference between the division in the *Phaedrus* and the *Statesman* (fn. 17, p. 183), and offers paradigmatic analysis of models, refining some previous work (p. 141, here correcting Melissa Lane's view that models are merely examples falling under some general kind; also compare Gill's fn. 29, p. 189). She disappointingly — but not unexpectedly — undervalues the *Statesman*'s cosmological myth, based on the Guest's negative characterization of the myth's oversized model. "The myth does not confront *the real issue*, the difference between the statesman and his rivals, who also profess to look after humans in the city" (p. 194). Gill is right to complain about the shortcomings of the myth. It is not my task here to show how the myth fulfills another "real issue" and important goal in the quest of statesmanship — an undertaking which would definitely go beyond

what Gill intended to do and even against her own interpretive line. Nevertheless I would like to highlight "the real issue", as Gills terms it, because it reveals her general tendency to detect a singular goal and a single target (see also section V). In comparison, I favor the direction Gill takes regarding the method of division. It would have strengthened her undertaking, I feel, to analyze more systematically the relation between method and object in the *Statesman*. One of the crucial problems of this dialogue, and one of the most important topics for Gill's agenda, is how different methods apply to particular objects and how intimately connected these methods are with their objects.

In chapter Seven, Gill finally releases the suspense and completes the puzzle of the *Philosophos*. The chapter made me quite giddy, although Gill had patiently trained me to move smoothly from dialogue to dialogue and from puzzle to puzzle, while respecting differences and drawing significant similarities. She begins with the "aporia about being" (*Soph*. 250a8-c5). After the Guest's declaration about the children's plea, we face a kind of setback, according to Gill's diagnosis: Being is neither motion nor rest. She then moves to a description of dialectic (*Soph*. 253d5-e2), but interrupts the analysis to "make an expedition into the *Philebus*'s notion of dialectic" and "holistic conception of knowledge" (*Phil*. up to 18d), before working her way back to the *Sophist* and its cryptic lines about dialectic. Finally, she moves back to the *dunamis* proposal with the aid of which the Guest improved the materialists' thesis. Gill's philosopher emerges in the vicinity of the children's plea. Gill does not make the mistake of detecting in one passage or other any exhaustive analysis of dialectics (p. 225), and nor does she identify dialectics with the method of division. But she endangers her analysis by moving too quickly from one problematic text to another, and from obscure constellation to obscure constellation.

IV. SOME CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM IN THE SPIRIT OF GILL'S TEXT: ON PLATO'S DIALOGUE'S FORM, HIS "MUNDANE" LATER STAGE, AND HIS MULTI-LAYERED RIDDLES

Plato prompts us to search out our own philosophical tendencies and directions, and find ourselves as philosophers. The wish to return to "the historical Plato himself" amounts to one of the greatest hermeneutical illusions, as Hans-Georg Gadamer has argued, notwithstanding all the beneficial and fruitful historical reconstructions we have seen so far. According to Gill, the dialogue form is not "merely an external trapping", and Plato could not have "presented the *Sophist* as a dogmatic speech", *pace* Stenzel and many others (fn. 3, p. 139). Gill maintains instead that "the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*, like the *Theaetetus* (and the *Parmenides*), are philosophical exercises designed to stimulate Plato's audience (including us modern readers) to do a lot of work"; "The interlocutor is vital to the exercise." I agree with this claim, as well as with most of Gill's subtle hermeneutics concerning the dialogue's dramatic character and characters, found in both the main text and footnotes. Yet I wish Gill had confronted the crucial point, among both parties to the debate: Essential and not coincidental to Plato's purposes as it may be to write dialogues, the form of monologue should not be necessarily condemned as "dogmatic", as the case of Plato's *Timaeus* manifests.

Gill seems to be in absolute agreement with Lloyd Gerson on at least one point, surprising as this is because of their numerous

disagreements: Plato was a Platonist, on the basis of the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* (see pp. 31f. and 168; Gill speaks occasionally of Plato's "later Platonism"). For my part, I have not yet been able and remain unwilling to force myself to regard Plato as a Platonist, despite going back and forth between Plato and various Platonists. Furthermore, one way to put Plato's development, as Gill does, is that Plato became more down-to-earth as he got older, and as such turned from the forms to mundane knowledge and truths about concrete particulars in his later dialogues. Similar statements may mislead us and popularize Plato's philosophy. So I would rather describe Plato's development differently: Plato worked on the relation between the General and the Particular from the very beginning of his career. Delving into the nature of the Forms necessarily led him "back" anew to the Particulars' nature. For anything concerning the relation between the General and the Particular — let me call this Plato's fundamental philosophical interest — is dressed up in new content and integrated again, anew and afresh, into new literary environments.

Further, Gill often speaks of the "layers of the puzzle" and the "inner core of the puzzle[s]" (pp. 146 and 148), and tries to show us that she knows *how* to deal with them. I am confident that showing that Gill also knows *that* there are different levels of riddles and aporias, and also knows how they are connected with one another, will add more philosophical shades of color to her portrait, and ultimately support her project. We can untangle puzzles, solve fundamental aporias, perhaps about not-being (p. 138), and never cease to be fascinated by even deeper *aporia* and *atopia* in Plato's philosophers.

V. SOME CRITICAL POINTS GOING BEYOND GILL'S PROJECT

Having availed myself of excellent German and Anglo-American discussions and contexts, and also because I regard the dialogue between continental and analytic philosophy to be necessary for the sake of ancient philosophy, I wish to make some further remarks. Gill cites German authors like Paul Friedländer, Julius Stenzel, and Jan Szaif. Martin Heidegger is not discussed, although he is as elucidating as G.E.L. Owen on the "parity assumption" passage (Soph. 250e5-251a3). This is perhaps a minor negligence, since Heidegger's lecture on the *Sophist* should be studied for the sake of his own philosophy and is no "pure" Plato scholarship, we may argue. What I regard as a deficit in such a thorough undertaking is Gill's leaving unmentioned Hans Joachim Krämer's and Nicolai Hartmann's contributions, at least when it comes to the digression on the two measurements in the *Statesman*. Karl Bärtlein and Peter Kolb would, additionally, assist Gill's aims — to mention just two German figures.

Astonishing as it may be, theology is missing from Gill's book, which I find to be the most crucial gap in her *Philosophos*. I was dumbfounded not to find the term in the appendix, though we must acknowlegde that this is a book devoted to Plato's concept and nature of philosophy, and his type of philosopher(s). I looked for hints throughout the book, but to no avail. Gill often appeals to Aristotle as having provided a "more fully worked-out" theory with regard to many topics, which is correct when we focus on Plato's paving the way for Aristotle. Nonetheless, she is not willing to regard Plato as preparing the Aristotelian bent on this point, which we might regard as metaphysics as the question of being *qua* being (general ontology)

and of the divine being(s) (theology). Gill detects the former in Plato (p. 241, the term pops up at the very end without much discussion), but remains silent on the latter. If one Aristotelian character of metaphysics is of relevance to Plato, then why the former and not the latter? Once more, the crucial passage for building the argument and pleading for the case for general ontology is the mediation between the Giants and the Friends of Forms in the *Sophist*.[11]

There is a very interesting tension in Gill's book, which helps us to understand her undertaking. On one hand, she understands Platonic philosophy not to be "a storehouse full of all -purpose tools ready for use regardless of topic" (p. 226). In this way, Gill is right to admit a rich and irreducible variety in the Platonic corpus. On the other hand, and with great intuitive insight, she manifests a rare feature of Anglo -American Plato research: Though she doesn't show any affinity with Neoplatonic strategies and agendas, Gill often thinks she exposes the "one and single goal" (e.g. p. 149 *et passim*) and detects a single pattern, which is repeated in different contexts of the Platonic corpus. It is here that Plato gets in her way. He wants so many things at once, and he compels us to be precise about both the differences and similarities of the contexts we wish to relate, and not only to detect and reconstruct models, "to make headway"[12] on various issues, and find the key that will solve all problems, but also to make a stop at each and very step and turn, while applying our philosophical method. After all, Plato has set up a model for replacing smooth headway with reflective digressions and digressive reflections in his *Statesman*. Whichever our choice, the ground remains slippery, but it is highly rewarding to prove Plato a philosopher and describe the type of philosophy he represents between the Presocratics and Aristotle, and also to show how he speaks to modern philosophers after centuries of developments, which go far beyond Plato — be they Ryleans, New-Kantians or Hegelians. Gill has her own method and style, and sets out her interpretation in the midst of a not particularly "pattern-governed"[13] Anglo-American Plato landscape.

VI. CONCLUSION: GILL'S BOOK AS A MODEL FOR CRITICAL INTERLOCUTORS

In Plato scholarship we rarely encounter anything new. Through diligently following her leads, reconstructing her "strategy patterns" (p. 16f.), and detecting their repetitions, Gill offers us a fresh undertaking, and she shows that she knows how to lead us through the crucial questions. She even dares to end with a question. Her book deserves serious consideration and sets up a new model in Plato scholarship. As with every good paradigm, it motivates each of us not to passively imitate it, but to create our own well-thought and well-grounded model in dialogue with it. As such, I urge scholars and students of ancient philosophy to read this book. It is in the spirit of the text that they should exercise their philosophical muscles by improving on Gill's account where possible. Students should not be overwhelmed by Gill's combining so many bits and pieces of the dialogues in one picture. My advice, addressed mostly to students — since we scholars hopefully have more reliable compasses at our disposal — is that they should often pause, and, inspired by Schleiermacher or some of his followers, take a dialogue, read and re-read it, both forwards and backwards, many times — until their own insights come up. And when these insights do emerge, they have but to give a thorough account of all their details, with and beyond Plato. The greater and more valuable the context we choose, the more precise our ac-

count must become. And what is greater than the nature of the philosopher in Plato? Gill's book is therefore an exceptional model not only for grand visions, beautiful perspectives, and bold and provocative proposals, but also for their adequate demonstration.

Plato scholarship will never cease in its progress. Not interested in persuading believers but aiming to educate critical interlocutors, Gill continues a fruitful dialogue which will help this scholarship to flourish.

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END NOTES

1 The italics in the above citations are my own. To the first quotation: Gill is cautious regarding resemblances. To the second: I wish that she were more critical of the Anglo-American research. To the third: Sie ist noch kaum wieder bei Platon angelangt so wie wir alle.
2 According to Gill, Plato may block us (p. 205f.), fuel illusions (p. 227), make serious mistakes (p. 158) and even fail (p. 156). For example, when he doesn't depict the kinds of motion and rest as pervasive, and when he virtually ignores sameness in the dialectics of the greatest kinds. He frequently misleads his interlocutors and does not guide them to the right destination (p. 242). As I see it, every digression and every step toward a different direction is part of Plato's educational project. Things that seems a little "a trial and error" at first glance (see Gill, fn. 27, p. 188) prove to have been necessary as we progress.
3 The connection between madness and bringing things "upside down" (ἄνω καὶ κάτω) explains why philosophers may sometimes give the impression they are mad. Gill misses this connection in her fn. 3, p. 203, but she is right, of course, to draw a parallel with the *Phaedrus*' divine madness.
4 Some less benevolent readers might misread Gill in this way (p. 203). I grasp the opportunity to draw the readers' attention to what we might call a Platonic trait in Gill's writing. The reader must know that Gill reveals her thought and argument step by step. Thus we should not halt and criticize her for not formulating her thought as precisely as she should have done at the beginning, but instead read the chapter or book to the end. The following are two examples of this. 1. "The form of being" as the philosopher's object, for instance, can be misleading, if identified with the greatest kind of being, which is not what Gill does, of course. 2. Gill introduces the ideals of the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* as "other-worldly" (pp. 86f.), before differentiating them (p. 89). This way of progressing requires well-trained readers, and exposes Gill's familiarity with the Platonic corpus. Needless to say, we should deal with Plato's writing in exactly the same way. Gill does so, most of the time at least.
5 See fn. 38, in Gill's Introduction. That Gill does not situate her interpretation between the Tübingen School and Sayre has to do with her aversion to the former, I feel. When she is more objective and benevolent, she makes more accurate judgments. In her *Sophist* interpretation, for example, she accordingly depicts her line as mediating between Michael Frede's and Lesley Brown's (see fn. 64, p. 165).
6 The *Timaeus* is a thorn in Gill's side with regard to immanent forms and her strong thesis that forms are not apart from sensible objects in our dialogues. In this later dialogue, Gill manages to avoid the regressive arguments of the *Parmenides* with the help of the Receptacle (see fn. 53, p. 38).
7 It would surprise me if Plato would accept Aristotle's definition of motion as Gill thinks he would (p. 235).
8 Gill does not distance herself from Ryle's scorn of the *Statesman*'s divisions (fn. 16, p. 182). Ryle raises false expectations of Plato in the *Statesman*. In this respect, he is as incorrect as Stenzel, who represents the opposite extreme thesis and apotheosizes the method of division.
9 Gill does not wish to understand *Parm*. 135b5-c3 in the stronger way. For my part, I think Plato is radical here, as radical as in *Phdr*. 266b. In any case, *Phl*. 57e6f. does not provide sufficient evidence for Gill's reading *of ἡ τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι δύναμις* in *Prm*. 135c1f.
10 I have argued for these theses in my *Sophist* chapter, in: *Die Metapher der Mischung in den platonischen Dialogen the* Sophist *and the* Philebus.
11 I am confident that by a thorough analysis of the Dialogue with the Giants at an initial stage of her book Gill would have had the opportunity to depict Plato's ambiguities, systematically delve into scholarship (by distinguishing the parties: Gerson and Politis on the one hand and Keyt and Brown on the other), and find argument for the parallel to Aristotle's general ontology of being *qua* being and against the connection to his theology. I have found and argued for both aspects in Plato's endeavor, but I cannot develop my views further here.
12 For an expression that characterizes Gill's manner, see Gill, p. 149.
13 This term stems from Sellars. Gill is happy to apply it to Plato's model of learning language (p. 136, fn. 82). Here I have detached it from its original context and used it to characterize Gill's undertaking in general.

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Plat., *Tim.* 35 a 4-6.
Arist., *Metaph.* A 1, 980 a 25-28.
Simpl., *In Cat.*, 1.1-3.17 Kalbfleisch (CAG VIII).

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