
Δικαιοσύνη and 'Οσιότης at Protagoras 330-1

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I Introduction and Review

In an argument in *Protagoras* for the similarity of δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης Socrates introduces the following set of propositions:

- (1) δικαιοσύνη is δίκαιον.¹
- (2) ὀσιότης is ὄσιον.²
- (3) δικαιοσύνη is ὄσιον.³
- (4) ὀσιότης is δίκαιον.⁴

The meanings of (1)-(4) remain controversial. The objective of this paper is to give an update on the state of the discussion and to offer my own interpretation.

The words 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'δίκαιον' are typically translated as 'justice' and 'just'. Thus, (1) is rendered as 'Justice is just'. The words 'ὀσιότης' and 'ὄσιον' are typically translated as 'piety' or 'holiness' and 'pious' or 'holy'. But 'piety' and 'holiness' are not synonyms. Humans and their actions can be pious or holy, but inanimate objects can be holy,

1 330c4-d1

2 330d2-e1

3 331a7-b3

4 331a7-b3

but not pious. Thus, it is unclear whether to translate (2)-(4) as 'Holiness is holy', 'Justice is holy', and 'Holiness is just', or 'Piety is pious', 'Justice is pious', and 'Piety is just'. For much of the paper I will retain the original Greek and render the key words in English only where necessary. Translations are semantic clarifications, so I want to avoid begging the question.

In view of the surface grammar, it has often been suggested that (1) and (2) are self-predications. Vlastos, following Russell,⁵ introduced the phrase 'self-predication' into Platonic studies in the 1950s.⁶ He interprets the condition as the attribution of a property (or character, as he calls it) to a 'corresponding' εἶδος and he schematizes instances as $\Phi \varepsilon F$. According to this schema, ' " Φ " is the name of a Form, " F " [designates the] character corresponding to that Form (as, e.g., "just" to "Justice"), and " ε " is the Peano symbol for class-membership.⁷ Thus, the schema means that the εἶδος Φ is a member of the set whose members have the property F . In short, the εἶδος Φ has the property F .

There are difficulties with this conception of self-predication, one of which Vlastos discusses and which I will explain now. In the schema $\Phi \varepsilon F$ the property F is said to correspond to the εἶδος Φ . The logical symbols make it appear that Φ is ontologically distinct from F . But this is misleading, since the relation of so-called correspondence can be nothing other than identity. In Platonic metaphysics what it means to have a certain property F is to participate in the εἶδος Φ , and, as Vlastos notes, participation is always conceived as aliorelative. This implies that the εἶδος participates in itself, and that is metaphysical nonsense.⁸

Another difficulty, which Vlastos does not acknowledge, is that there is no evidence in *Protagoras* that Socrates regards the ἀρεταί as abstract Forms. There is not even evidence that he regards them as immanent universals. The words 'εἶδος' and 'ιδέα' do not occur in *Protagoras*. Consequently, (1)-(4) are not self-predications, for self-predication, as

defined, is a condition that can only occur within a metaphysical discursive context.⁹

Insofar as the condition of self-predication depends upon the subject of the given proposition being conceived as an εἶδος, Vlastos' definition of self-predication is unnecessarily narrow. I propose to broaden it to include the referents of general expressions, whether or not these are conceived as εἶδη.¹⁰ With the definition thus broadened, the question may again be posed whether (1) and (2) are self-predications.

Some scholars have suggested that they should not be interpreted as such.¹¹ In view of the apparent unintelligibility of (1) and (2) as self-predications, Vlastos himself developed an alternative solution.¹² He suggests that (1)-(4) are Pauline predications.¹³ As Pauline predications, the deep grammar of (1) and (2) govern their interpretation as $\forall x (\Delta x \supset \Delta x)$ and

9 Daniel T. Devereux, 'Pauline Predications in Plato' [PPP], *Apeiron* 11 (1977) 1-4, also makes this point: 'We may note first of all that Socrates does not use the term εἶδος (or ιδέα) ... anywhere in *Protagoras*. I suggest that the term "Justice" ... refers to a power or disposition of an individual's soul rather than to a form' (2).

10 As I will discuss in section II, this conception of self-predication is also in some respect misleading.

11 R.E. Allen, 'Participation and Predication in Plato's Middle Dialogues', *Philosophical Review* 69 (1960) 147-64, argues that these should be interpreted as identity statements. Alexander Nehamas, 'Self-Predication and Plato's Theory of Forms', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16 (1979) 93-103, argues that (1) and (2) should be interpreted to mean F is what it is to be F . But Gregory Vlastos, 'On a Proposed Redefinition of "Self-Predication" in Plato', *Phronesis* 26 (1981) 76-9, shows that when 'correctly analyzed [the predicate "what it is to be F "] turns out to be a simple identity disguised by periphrastic grammar.' So, Nehamas' interpretations of (1) and (2) may, in spite of the author, also be understood as identity statements.

12 Vlastos remarks that if interpreted as self-predications the propositions from *Protagoras* would be nonsense, because they assert that 'an abstract Form [has] a property which only concrete individuals — persons — and by legitimate extension, their actions, dispositions, institutions, laws, etc., could possibly have' (*PS*, 405). Though, again, there is no evidence in *Protagoras* that Socrates regards the ἀρεταί as abstract Forms. (I comment on this citation from Vlastos in n. 73.)

13 'The term "Pauline predication" originated with Sandra Peterson. It is an allusion to St. Paul's statement that "Charity is long-suffering and kind", which Vlastos takes to be a paradigm case of Pauline predication' (Jerome Wakefield, 'Vlastos on the Unity of Virtue: Why Pauline Predication Will Not Save the Biconditionality Thesis' [VUV], *Ancient Philosophy* 11 (1991) 47-65, at n. 1).

5 Bertrand Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics* (Cambridge: 1903), §§96, 97, 102

6 Gregory Vlastos, 'The Third Man Argument in the *Parmenides*', *Philosophical Review* 63 (1954) 319-49. The phrase is first introduced at 324.

7 Gregory Vlastos, 'The Unity of the Virtues in the *Protagoras*', in *Platonic Studies* [PS], 2nd edn. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1981) 221-65, at 258

8 Gregory Vlastos, 'Self-Predication and Self-Participation in Plato's Later Period', in *PS*, 335-341

$\forall x (Ox \supset Ox)$ respectively. Accordingly, the subjects of (1) and (2) do not function as referring expressions but as universal quantifier phrases; and so, (1) and (2) are logically true analytic propositions.¹⁴

Several scholars have criticized Vlastos' proposal.¹⁵ Devereux, Teloh, Nehamas, Malcolm, and Wakefield all take the subjects of (1)-(4) as referring expressions. I believe this is correct, given the character of the discussion preceding the introduction of (1)-(4). I will return to this point in section II. Granting this, it remains a question why Socrates and Protagoras do not find (1)-(4) odd. After all, Vlastos suggests a Pauline interpretation of (1)-(4), because he finds the idea of δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης having the properties δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης nonsensical.

One response to (1)-(4) has been to deny that they are in fact odd. Taylor writes: 'If justice is seen as a force in a man causing him to act justly, it is by no means *obviously nonsensical* to describe it as holy, or for that matter just.'¹⁶ The problem with Taylor's remark is that he owes us an account of how sensibly to interpret them.

Wakefield comments that 'the attribution of moral properties to psychological states, of which traits of character are instances, is not only legitimate and sensible, but commonplace. For example, people can possess courageous resolves, cowardly fears, wise beliefs, just intentions, temperate desires, and holy attitudes of reverence.'¹⁷ Admittedly, certain psychological states can sensibly be said to have ethical properties, including piety or holiness and justice. But (1)-(4) seem odd because Socrates attributes the particular ethical properties, δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης, to the particular entities, δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης. It does not

14 This expression is from Willard van Orman Quine, 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism', in *From a Logical Point of View*, 2nd edn. (New York: Harper Torchbooks 1961) 20-46, at 22.

15 Henry Teloh, 'Self-Predication or Anaxagorean Causation in Plato' [SPA], *Apeiron* 9 (1975) 15-23; Devereux, PPP; John Malcolm, 'Vlastos on Pauline Predication', *Phronesis* 30 (1985) 79-91; Wakefield, VUV; cf. also Jerome Wakefield, 'Why Justice and Holiness are Similar: Protagoras 330-331' [WJH], *Phronesis* 32 (1987) 267-76; John Malcolm, *Plato on the Self-Predication of Forms* [PSP] (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1991), at 11-46.

16 C.C.W. Taylor, *Plato: Protagoras* [PProt], rev. edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1991), at 119-20. The phrase 'obviously nonsensical' is a reference to Vlastos (see n. 12).

17 Wakefield, VUV, 54

follow from the demonstration that the attribution of some ethical properties to some psychological states is intelligible that the attribution of other ethical properties to other psychological states is intelligible. Wakefield, like Taylor, owes us an account of what it means to attribute the properties δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης to the psychological states δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης.

Malcolm, who, like Taylor, Teloh, and Wakefield, takes the predicates in (1)-(4) to be 'ordinary descriptive predicates' speaks of (1) and (2) as self-exemplifications:

... some general immanent characteristics can plausibly be taken to be instances of themselves. The common characteristic, Unity, is one. It does not unduly strain credulity to suppose that the universal nature of Beauty is itself a beautiful thing.¹⁸

Accordingly, Malcolm suggests that Socrates understands (1) and (3) as claiming that δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης are δίκαιον, where 'δίκαιον' means '[forming] a part of the ordered nature of things ... being what it is and keeping to the limits of its own nature and function.'¹⁹ Likewise, in (2) and (4) ὁσιότης and δικαιοσύνη are understood to be ὅσιον, where 'ὅσιον' means 'hallowed, sanctioned, or allowed by the law of God or nature' and 'intrinsically lovable by the gods'.²⁰

I find Malcolm's proposal unsatisfactory for three reasons. Each of these may not in and of itself be sufficiently compelling to reject his proposal, but collectively they render it unpersuasive. First, consider the meanings Malcolm ascribes to the predicates 'δίκαιον' and 'ὅσιον'. It is conceivable that Socrates or Protagoras could have recognized 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'ὁσιότης' as having the meanings Malcolm suggests. At least, such meanings are in some sense consonant with Greek thought. But I doubt Socrates and Protagoras would have understood (1)-(4) in this way in the present context. When Socrates introduces (1)-(4) there has been no prior discussion of the identity of δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης suggestive of the meanings Malcolm ascribes to the related predicates. Thus, the suggested interpretation of (1)-(4) would have to rest on the

18 PSP, 37

19 *ibid.*, 38

20 *ibid.*, 37

assumption that this interpretation is the most obvious and natural one to Socrates and Protagoras. I find this implausible, again, particularly in view of the context in which (1)-(4) are introduced. I return to this point in section II.

A second problem is that on Malcolm's reading Socrates' argument for the similarity of δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης is significantly weakened, so much so that it seems unlikely he could have intended the argument as such at all. On the same grounds as the interpretation Malcolm gives, Socrates could argue for the similarity of unity and δικαιοσύνη. Both are one and form a part of the ordered nature of the world, being what they are and keeping to the limits of their own nature and function.²¹

The third problem has to do with Protagoras' view of (2)-(4). In response to the question, 'Is ὀσιότης ὄσιον?', the interlocutors exchange the following dialogue:

"For my part I should be annoyed (ἀγανακτήσαιμι) at this question," I said, "and should answer: Hush, my good sir! It is hard to see how anything could be ὄσιον if ὀσιότης itself is not ὄσιον. And you — would you not make the same reply?" "Certainly I would," [Protagoras] said.²²

Both Socrates and Protagoras take (2) to be extremely obvious. On the other hand, while Socrates finds (3) and (4) also to be obvious, Protagoras does not agree.²³ If Protagoras understands the predicates 'δικαίον' and

'ὄσιον' as Malcolm suggests, then it is unclear why he is reluctant to admit (3) and (4) as Socrates does. Perhaps Malcolm would respond that Socrates understands (3) and (4) as suggested, but that Protagoras understands them differently. But if this is so, then Protagoras could not have understood (1) and (2) as Socrates does either. Yet he finds (1) intelligible, and he agrees that (2) is annoyingly obvious. So, there is need to explain how Protagoras could understand (1) and (2) differently, but also readily. In short, I am not persuaded by Malcolm's interpretation of (1) and (2) as self-exemplifications and (3) and (4) as derivatively explicable.

Another feature of Malcolm's interpretation is the claim, in contrast to that of Teloh, Wakefield, and Devereux, that Socrates conceives of δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης in (1)-(4) as universals, but not as psychic states. I have suggested that this view is mistaken because Socrates does not use the words 'εἶδος' or 'ιδέα' for the ἀρεταί or at all in *Protagoras*. But Malcolm also claims that although in *Protagoras* and *Laches* the cardinal aretaic terms are used in investigating states of the ψυχή, in *Republic I* and *Charmides* they are also considered to be properties of action.²⁴ Assuming that *Charmides*, *Republic I*, *Laches*, and *Protagoras* are concep-

goes on to ask this question: Is not ὀσιότης something of such a nature as to be δίκαιον, and δικαιοσύνη such as to be ὄσιον, or can it be ἀνόσιον? Can ὀσιότης be not δίκαιον and therefore ἄδικοι and δικαιοσύνη ἀνόσιον? What is to be your reply? I should say myself, on my own behalf, that both δικαιοσύνη is ὄσιον and ὀσιότης is δίκαιον; and with your permission I would make this same reply for you also, since δικαιοσύνη is either the same thing as ὀσιότης or extremely like it; and above all δικαιοσύνη is of the same kind as ὀσιότης and ὀσιότης as δικαιοσύνη. Are you minded to forbid this answer, or are you in agreement with it? I do not take quite so simple a view of it, Socrates, as to grant that δικαιοσύνη is ὄσιον and ὀσιότης is δίκαιον. I think we have to make a distinction here' (331a6-c3).

24 'It is true that in dialogues such as the *Laches* and *Protagoras* the virtue-terms are introduced in the context of gaining insight into 'states of soul'. Hence, arriving at a common characteristic and determining a type of psychic state will not be distinguishable. But this is not always the case, as Penner admits. He grants that in the *Charmides* and *Republic I* the discussion begins by considering virtues as properties of actions, but stresses that Socrates soon focuses on qualities of agents. It is, indeed, a natural progression to start from the more accessible overt behavior and proceed to the more fundamental factor, the psychic state producing this. This is no reason to believe, however, that the virtue-term is no longer intended to cover virtuous actions' (*PSP*, 34; see also 34-6). The reference to Penner is Terry Penner, 'The Unity of Virtue', *Philosophical Review* 82 (1973) 35-68, at 48, n. 17.

21 Malcolm might respond here that Socrates' argument is precisely so weak. The evidence for this is Protagoras' response that agreement to (1)-(4) does not license the conclusion that δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης are alike, for, as he says, each thing in the world is like each other thing in some way. Thus, there is a point in which white resembles black, and hard soft, and so with all the other things which are regarded as most opposite one another — and the things which we spoke of before as having different δυνάμεις and not being of the same kind as one another, the parts of the face. These in some sense resemble one another and are of like sort. In this way, therefore, you could prove, if you chose, that even these things are all like one another. But it is not fair to describe things as like which have some point alike, however small, or as unlike that have some point unlike' (331d2-e4). But Socrates finds this response remarkable: 'This surprised me and I said to him, "What? Do you regard τὸ δίκαιον and τὸ ὄσιον as so related to one another that they only have some small point of likeness?"' (331e4-6)

22 330d5-e2

23 'Well now, Protagoras, after that admission, what answer shall we give him if he

tually unified on this point, Malcolm thinks the ἀρεταί cannot simply be viewed as psychic states. I grant that Socrates' conception of the ἀρεταί in *Charmides*, *Republic I*, *Laches*, and *Protagoras* is unified. But I do not believe he regards them as properties or characteristics of action as well as of psychic states.

I return to this point in section II. But I raise the topic here, because Teloh's discussion of (1)-(4) focuses on the relation of states of the ψυχή and action. He suggests that at the time Plato composed *Protagoras* (and throughout the composition of the early dialogues) he '[took] for granted the causal principle that a cause must have the quality [that] it produces in something else.'²⁵ Thus, since, e.g., δίκαιον action is caused by δικαιοσύνη, a state of the ψυχή, δικαιοσύνη must have the quality that it causes such acts to have; and so, δικαιοσύνη is δίκαιον.²⁶

I do not deny that in some dialogues Socrates is committed to something like the causal principle.²⁷ But, I do not believe he is committed to it in *Protagoras*. Moreover, I do not deny that in some early dialogues Socrates grants that if *x* causes *y* to have certain properties, then *x* itself must have those properties. But I do not believe Socrates assumes this as a general principle about all properties, their transitivity and derivation.²⁸ In *Charmides* Socrates assumes that if σωφροσύνη makes a man

ἀγαθόν it must itself be ἀγαθόν.²⁹ I would assume he would say the same of the property κάλλος and that he would say of the other ἀρεταί that they are ἀγαθά and καλά since they make men ἄριστοι. But I suggest that the reasonableness of such claims has to do with the idiosyncratic semantics of the predicates 'ἀγαθόν' and 'καλόν', which differs from the semantics of predicates such as 'δίκαιον' and 'ἴσιον'.³⁰ For instance, there is nothing odd about the claim that if justice makes men good it must be a good thing itself. But there is something odd about the idea that if justice makes men just, then it must be just itself. We do not find claims of this kind anywhere in *Charmides*, *Laches*, *Protagoras*, or *Republic I* — and I believe this is because such claims would seem odd to Socrates and his interlocutors, as they do to us.³¹

A related problem for Teloh's account is that it fails to explain why Protagoras, as well as Socrates, readily accepts (1) and then grants (2) as annoyingly obvious. Are we to suppose that Protagoras assumes the causal principle also? I am dubious. I suspect that if Socrates were introducing (1) and (2) as claims based on a causal principle, he would first have gained Protagoras' assent to the following set of propositions:

- (c) δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης produce δίκαια and ἴσια acts respectively.

29 160e6-12

30 It may also be noted that Teloh's evidence from *Lysis* (217c) where Socrates suggests that whiteness is white does not lend support to the idea that the causal principle applies to the ἀρεταί (*SPA*, 17-8). The reason Socrates regards whiteness as white may have to do with the semantic or perhaps epistemological-ontological idiosyncrasies of colors and color-terms. Sentences such as 'Whiteness is white' or 'Redness is red' do not seem so odd as 'Justice is just' or 'Courage is courageous'. Perhaps this is because self-predications of color-terms are most naturally interpreted as logically true analytic propositions. If so, such sentences would be akin to sentences such as 'Justice is just', 'Piety is pious', and 'Holiness is holy' where the general terms are understood to mean just action and pious action or just conditions and holy conditions. (I note in passing that this itself is of course a possible interpretation of (1)-(4). But, as I discuss in section II, I do not think this is how Socrates and Protagoras understand the referents of the subjects.)

31 I believe something like the causal principle plays a role in Socrates' thinking about the relation of properties and particulars in dialogues where the concept of an εἶδος and the distinction between εἶδη and non-eidetic individuals is formulated, discussed, or assumed. But in *Laches*, *Protagoras*, *Charmides*, and *Republic I* this is not the case.

25 *SPA*, 15. Teloh finds a precedent of this idea in Wilfred Sellars, 'Vlastos and the "Third Man"', *Philosophical Review* 64 (1955) 405-37, at 435, and Evan L. Burge, 'The Ideas as Aitai in the *Phaedo*', *Phronesis* 16 (1971) 1-26, at 4-5.

26 'Since Justice has the power to make men just, it is itself just; since Holiness has the power to make men holy, it is itself holy' (*SPA*, 19). Devereux argues for the same solution, though he does not cite Teloh's paper and may have arrived at his conclusion independently. '... Socrates' argument presupposes the general principle that if an individual has the property *F* in virtue of a certain quality of the soul, *X*, then *X* itself must have the property *F*. Accordingly, if justice as an inner disposition of an individual's soul disposes one to be just and pious in his behavior towards other men and the gods, then justice itself must be just and pious' (*PPP*, 3 and n. 10).

27 For instance, I believe he is in both *Euthyphro* and *Hippias Major*.

28 By 'transitivity of properties' I mean that *x*, which has *F*, is responsible for other entities having *F* in virtue of its relation to them, whether this be causal or constitutive. By 'derivation of properties' I mean that *y*'s having *F* is derived from *x*'s having *F* and *x*'s (causal or constitutive) relation to *y*.

(d) That which produces an act of a certain kind must itself be of that kind. Therefore, δικαιοσύνη is δίκαιον and ὀσιότης is ὀσιον.

So, Teloh believes Socrates assumes (c) and (d). But, even if this were true, there would still be need to explain Protagoras' assent to (1) and (2). The notion that Protagoras himself assumes (c) and (d) seems implausible.

II i Overview of the Solution

Making sense of (1)-(4) requires that we accomplish three tasks: determine the meanings of the subjects; determine the meanings of the predicates; and determine what is implied when the latter are predicated of the former.

Teloh, Wakefield, Devereux,³² Nehamas,³³ Allen,³⁴ and Malcolm regard the subjects of (1)-(4) as referring expressions. But the first three regard them as referring to psychic states, whereas the last three regard them as referring to universals or εἶδη (that are not identical to psychic states). Vlastos does not regard the subjects of (1)-(4) as referring expressions, but as quantifier phrases.

Only Malcolm discusses precisely what the predicates mean. The other six scholars either explicitly or implicitly take the predicates according to their ordinary meanings. In certain cases and in certain respects, this is harmless. For instance, in Vlastos' case, if 'δικαιοσύνη is δίκαιον' means $\forall x (\Delta x \supset \Delta x)$, then it is enough to know the syntactic function of the subject and unimportant what it and the predicate mean. Similarly, in the case of Teloh and Devereux, since both claim Socrates is committed to the causal principle, it doesn't much matter what the subjects and predicates mean.

Teloh, Wakefield, and Malcolm view (1) and (2) as self-predications. Vlastos views them as Pauline predications. Allen views (1) and (2) as identity statements; and although Nehamas does not regard his own

conception of (1) and (2) as such, he too commits himself to a view of (1) and (2) as identity statements.³⁵

Teloh regards (1)-(4) as strange and explicable via the causal principle, which he acknowledges to be a peculiar metaphysical conception. Devereux acknowledges that (1)-(4) are puzzling claims as well.³⁶ Wakefield does not think the attribution of δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης to δίκαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης is odd. Malcolm regards (1)-(4) as intelligible for a Greek, though perhaps odd for us. Vlastos reckons that as far as the surface grammar is concerned (1)-(4) are nonsensical, but perfectly sensible according to their deep grammar.

Wakefield might agree that Socrates would assent to other self- or inter-predications of the ἀρεταί. Vlastos, Allen, Nehamas, and Teloh certainly are committed to the view that Socrates would assent to propositions of the same grammatical form as (1)-(4) if the subjects and predicates were substituted for the other cardinal aretaic expressions. But, Malcolm does not believe Socrates is committed to the self-predication and inter-predication of all the ἀρεταί.³⁷

My own suggestion is that 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'ὀσιότης' are understood as referring expressions and that they are understood to refer to psychic states, specifically to virtues. I take the predicates according to their ordinary meanings. But it is especially important for my interpretation that I explain what these meanings are. I admit that (1) and (2) are syntactically, but not semantically self-predications. I regard (1)-(4) as perfectly intelligible for Socrates and Protagoras; but I suggest that, due to the distinctness of the meanings of 'δίκαιον' and 'ὀσιον', propositions syntactically similar to (1)-(4), but using the other aretaic terms would

32 See n. 9.

33 See n. 11.

34 See n. 11.

35 See n. 11.

36 'The supposition that Socrates is using "justice" in [(1) and (3)] to refer to a disposition or state of an individual's soul does not of course make these statements any less puzzling. After all, how could a state of the soul be just or pious?' (PPP, 3)

37 He specifically regards it as a strong point of his interpretation that it explains (1) and (2) as the only self-predications of ἀρεταί in the early dialogues. And he suggests that a successful interpretation of (1)-(4) must meet the 'Differentiation Condition' which '(1) authorizes the four predications arising from self-predication and inter-predicability in the case of Justice and Holiness, but (2) does not allow for a corresponding four for either Temperance and Wisdom or Courage and Wisdom' (PSP, 41).

probably not be intelligible to Socrates and Protagoras.³⁸ In the following section, I will provide evidence for these claims.

II ii The Solution

Both Socrates and Protagoras take the subjects in (1)-(4) to be referring expressions. Shortly before he introduces (1)-(4), Socrates asks Protagoras whether 'σωφροσύνη', 'δικαιοσύνη' and the other cardinal aretaic terms are names (ὀνόματα) applied to one entity or many entities (ὄντα/πράγματα/οὐσίαι).³⁹

... you often said in your speech that δικαιοσύνη, σωφροσύνη, ὀσιότης, and all these things were all some one thing, ἀρετή. Now explain to me precisely whether ἀρετή is some single thing and δικαιοσύνη, σωφροσύνη and ὀσιότης are parts of it, or whether these things of which we were just speaking are all names of the same thing.⁴⁰

Similarly, later in *Protagoras* he says:

... σοφία, σωφροσύνη, ἀνδρεία, δικαιοσύνη, and ὀσιότης, are these five names for some single thing or does some distinct being underlie each of these names ...?⁴¹

Though it is in question in *Protagoras* whether the names of the ἀρεταί refer to one entity or many, it is not in question whether they refer to something.⁴² On the assumption that the ἀρεταί are distinct entities,

38 It is not necessary that a correct interpretation meet Malcolm's Differentiation Condition. Rather, his stipulation that a satisfactory interpretation must meet this condition is question begging. On the other hand, all other things being equal, I would regard an interpretation that satisfied this condition as stronger than one that did not.

39 329c6-d1, 349b1-5. Various expressions are used to describe the relation between words and objects: the objective genitive, the dative of possession, the preposition 'ἐπί', the verbs 'ὑποκείσθαι' and 'ἐπικείσθαι'.

40 329c2-d1

41 349b1-6

42 Similarly, in *Charmides*, although Socrates does not know what the name

Socrates wonders what sort of entities they are.⁴³ He then asks what sort of thing δικαιοσύνη is, specifically, whether δικαιοσύνη is δίκαιον and ὀσιον. In other words, in asking what sort of entity (ποιόν τι) the ἀρεταί are Socrates wants to know what can be predicated of the aretaic terms. But before he asks what can be attributed to the ἀρεταί he asks whether δικαιοσύνη is some entity or not an entity and subsequently says that he himself believes it is: 'Is δικαιοσύνη something (πρᾶγμα τί) or is it not something?'⁴⁴

Note that Socrates uses the word 'πρᾶγμα' to identify δικαιοσύνη, which is among the words he used to distinguish the name 'δικαιοσύνη' from the entity to which the name refers. The significance of Socrates' question in the context of the discussion seems to be this. Before asking what can be predicated of 'δικαιοσύνη' he wants to gain Protagoras' assent to the claim that 'δικαιοσύνη' names some entity. Presumably he believes that if the word 'δικαιοσύνη' lacks a referent then it would be idle to inquire into its attributes.⁴⁵ When Protagoras agrees that δικαιοσύνη is some entity, Socrates asks: 'Tell me then you two, this thing (πρᾶγμα), which you have just called δικαιοσύνη, is it itself δίκαιον or is it ἄδικον?'⁴⁶ Here again Socrates speaks of δικαιοσύνη as a πρᾶγμα and clearly distinguishes it as an entity from the word that names it.⁴⁷

Assuming Socrates and Protagoras believe the subjects of (1)-(4) are referring expressions, I now turn to consider what type of entity they take the referents to be. Socrates and Protagoras speak of δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης as ἀρεταί. Ἀρετή is of course a property that may be attributed

'σωφροσύνη' refers to, he assumes that it refers to something: '... we have failed to determine to what the lawgiver gave the name "σωφροσύνη"' (175b3-4).

43 'σκεπώμεθα ποιόν τι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἕκαστον' (330b6-7).

44 'ἡ δικαιοσύνη πρᾶγμα τί ἐστὶν ἢ οὐδὲν πρᾶγμα;' (330c1).

45 Paul Woodruff, 'Socrates and Ontology: The Evidence of the *Hippias Major*' [SO], *Phronesis* 23 (1978) 101-17, argues that Socrates' propositions of the form *F* is τι do not commit him to the existence of *F*. I am not persuaded by his paper, but it would be inconvenient here to explain my reasons. I discuss the problems of his argument in an appendix to this paper.

46 'εἶπεν δὴ μοι. τοῦτο τὸ πρᾶγμα ὃ ὀνομάσατε ἄρετι ἢ δικαιοσύνη, αὐτὸ τοῦτο δίκαιόν ἐστιν ἢ ἄδικον;' (330c3-5).

47 Socrates and Protagoras assent to the same claims regarding ὀσιότης at 330d1-5.

to a wide variety of ontological kinds. But in this context the term is used with regard to humanity. Protagoras specifically characterizes δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης (as well as σωφροσύνη) as the ἀρεταί of a man.⁴⁸

That Socrates regards human ἀρετή as a psychic entity is clear from the ensuing discussion, where he identifies ἀνδρεία, σωφροσύνη, ὀσιότης, and δικαιοσύνη with σοφία — σοφία of course being an epistemic state and so a psychic entity.⁴⁹ In Protagoras' case, he suggests at the beginning of his discussion with Socrates that his instruction will make Hippocrates a better person.⁵⁰ Specifically, he claims to teach a μάθημα consisting of good counsel regarding one's own affairs as well as how to manage one's household best and how most effectively to speak and act in public affairs.⁵¹ Socrates and Protagoras identify this as πολιτική τέχνη;⁵² a τέχνη is an epistemic condition and so a psychic entity. Later, Protagoras suggests in his account of the origin of society that the lack of πολιτική τέχνη caused humans to harm one another and threatened their complete self-destruction.⁵³ To remedy this condition, Zeus introduced δίκη and αἰδώς.⁵⁴ The implication is that these are central components of πολιτική τέχνη. Shortly after this he speaks of 'partaking of δικαιοσύνη and the rest of πολιτική τέχνη'.⁵⁵ As τέχναι or components of πολιτική τέχνη, δίκη or δικαιοσύνη and αἰδώς must also be understood as psychic entities.

More specifically, I suggest that Socrates and Protagoras consider the ἀρεταί to be psychic dispositions to act virtuously.⁵⁶ Evidence for this

comes from the description of the ἀρεταί as δυνάμεις. When (1)-(4) are introduced, it is agreed that the ἀρεταί, like the parts of a face, have δυνάμεις. The word 'δύναμις' is first introduced by Protagoras earlier in his account of the origin of society.⁵⁷ Specifically, δυνάμεις are there treated as entities Zeus charges Prometheus and Epimetheus to distribute to the animals. Among the entities said to be a δύναμις are strength,⁵⁸ speed,⁵⁹ and 'other means of self-preservation (σωτηρίαν)'.⁶⁰ In these cases, the word 'δύναμις' seems to mean power or capability, which is of course its most common meaning. I assume it continues to be used with this meaning when it is later attributed to the parts of the face and the ἀρεταί.

It is not explicitly stated in *Protagoras*, but it is implied, and I suggest it is understood by both Protagoras and Socrates that specific δυνάμεις are related to specific types of action.⁶¹ The δυνάμεις of the animals are distributed to protect them from harm; e.g., speed enables some to flee and strength enables others to fight. In the case of facial parts, eyes enable one to see, ears to hear.⁶² In the case of ἀρεταί, I suggest δικαιοσύνη enables people to behave in a δίκαιον manner and ὀσιότης enables them to behave in a ὀσιον manner.

These suggestions are supported by the following considerations. In his account of the origin of society Protagoras claims that by means of τέχνη (= ἔντεχνος σοφία)⁶³ human beings were able to acquire speech and

48 '... ἀλλὰ δικαιοσύνη καὶ σωφροσύνη καὶ τὸ ὄσιον εἶναι, καὶ συλλήβδην ἐν αὐτῷ προσαγορεύω εἶναι ἀνδρὸς ἀρετήν' (325a1-2).

49 The most concise expression of this identification in the early dialogues occurs in *Laches* where Nicias attributes to Socrates the idea that a man is ἀγαθός insofar as he is σοφός. Socrates confirms that he does claim this (194d1-3).

50 318a6-9

51 318e5-19a2

52 319a3-7

53 322b7-c1

54 322c1-2

55 323a6-7

56 In using 'disposition' here I am following Vlastos, *PS*, 434, who follows Willard van Orman Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge: MIT Press 1960), 223: Dispositions are

not merely tendencies to act in a certain way but '... are conceived as built-in, enduring structural traits.'

57 320d5

58 320d8

59 320e1

60 The phrase is from David Savan, 'Self-Predication in *Protagoras* 330-331' [*SPP*], *Phronesis* 9 (1964) 130-5, at 132. The Greek 'δύναμιν εἰς σωτηρίαν' occurs at 320e3.

61 Cf. Hugh H. Benson, 'Socratic Dynamic Theory: A Sketch', *Apeiron* 30 (1997) 79-93, at 80-1.

62 The function of the facial parts is not at all described in *Protagoras*, but these claims may reasonably be inferred from the context of the discussion. The inferences are also supported by evidence from a passage in *Republic V* discussed later in the paper.

63 The phrase 'ἔντεχνον σοφίαν' occurs at 321d1.

to create clothing, shelter, and agriculture.⁶⁴ On the other hand, through lack of πολιτικὴ τέχνη they harmed one another (ἡδίκουν ἀλλήλους).⁶⁵ Consequently, Zeus sent δίκη and αἰδώς in order to foster civil order and friendship.⁶⁶ The implication, I suggest, is that the introduction of civic virtues altered human behavior.⁶⁷

More explicit evidence for the relation of δυνάμεις and activity comes from a later passage. Immediately after the discussion of (1)-(4), Socrates elicits Protagoras' assent to a number of propositions that exemplify the following general principle: '... if something is done in such-and-such a way (ὡσαύτως), it is done by the same thing (τοῦ αὐτοῦ) ...'.⁶⁸ For instance, it is agreed that men behave foolishly because of foolishness and temperately because of σωφροσύνη.⁶⁹ Similarly, that which is done strongly is so done because of strength; and that which is done swiftly is so done because of speed.⁷⁰ These last two examples of course recall the two δυνάμεις Protagoras mentions as distributed by Epimetheus to animals.

In sum, I suggest that in the context in which (1)-(4) are introduced Socrates and Protagoras understand δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης as psychic dispositions (or δυνάμεις of the ψυχή) that produce action of a particular kind.

Having clarified the meaning of the subjects of (1)-(4), I turn to the predicates 'δίκαιον' and 'ὄσιον'. Although the subjects and predicates are grammatically cognate, this does not imply that the predicates designate the psychic dispositions to which the subjects are here used to refer. (1)-(4) clearly do not mean that the psychic dispositions δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης have ψυχαί that possess those very psychic dispositions. Pro-

tagoras' and Socrates' use of 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'ὀσιότης' to refer to psychic dispositions is a particularly narrow use of these general expressions, which, as I have said, is due to the particular focus of the discussion on civic virtue.

The expressions 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'ὀσιότης' are generally used more broadly. Especially when paired together, as in the *Protagoras* passage, the predicates 'δίκαιον' and 'ὄσιον' are commonly used to mean fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens and fitting or lawful with respect to gods respectively. So, for example, in *Gorgias*, Socrates says: '... one who does what is fitting (τὰ προσήκοντα) with regard to men does δίκαι', and one who does what is fitting with regards to gods does ὄσια.'⁷¹ Similarly, in Antiphon's *Prosecution for Poisoning*, Philoneus' son says:

Who has a better claim to pity, the murdered man or the murderess?
To my mind the murdered man; because in pitying him you would be acting δικαιότερον and ὀσιότερον before gods and before men.⁷²

Accordingly, (1) means that the psychic disposition δικαιοσύνη is fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens. (2) means that the psychic disposition ὀσιότης is fitting or lawful with respect to gods. (3) means that the psychic disposition δικαιοσύνη is fitting or lawful with respect to gods. And, (4) means that the psychic disposition ὀσιότης is fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens.

To further clarify these meanings, consider that in Greek literature a wide variety of ontological kinds, including people, their actions, social conditions and processes, institutions, inanimate objects, and laws, are said to be δίκαιον or ὄσιον. Moreover — and this is a crucial point — these entities and the properties attributed to them may be variously related, depending on the identity of the ontological kind to which the property is attributed.⁷³ For instance, a man may be δίκαιον because *his*

64 322a5-8

65 322b7

66 322c1-3

67 Shortly before this it is suggested that as a result of the divine gifts of τέχνη human beings worshipped the gods by building altars and idols (322a3-5). This suggests how the virtue of ὀσιότης might be understood to influence behavior.

68 332c1-2

69 332b4-6, also 332a8-b3

70 332b6-c1

71 *Gorg* 507b1-3

72 I.25. (The order of the relevant syntactical components here is chastic.) Similarly, in *Euthyphro* after Socrates has suggested that τὸ ὄσιον is a part of τὸ δίκαιον, Euthyphro explains their relation as follows: '... the part of τὸ δίκαιον that has to do with attention to the gods is εὐσεβές and ὄσιον, and the remaining part has to do with attention to human beings' (12e5-8).

73 It is not the case, as Vlastos claims, that the attribution of the properties to the various

behavior is fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens, or because *his character is responsible for behavior that is fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens*. A treaty may be δίκαιον because it *was ratified by a procedure that is fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens*. A statement may be δίκαιον because it *represents a principle of behavior that is fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens, or because it is made with the intention of encouraging behavior that is fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens*. A law may be δίκαιον because it *promotes behavior that is fitting or lawful*.

It is an open question then how the psychic dispositions δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης are here understood as fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens and gods. In considering an answer to this question, the following points should be kept in mind. The answer must conform to the meanings of the subjects and predicates given. The answer must explain the relation as transparent or obvious to Socrates and Protagoras; for Socrates does not explain the predications and Protagoras does not ask for clarification of their meanings. The answer must also make sense in terms of the broader argument in which (1)-(4) are embedded; and it should make sense in terms of Socrates' assent to (1)-(4) and Protagoras denial of (3) and (4).

ontological kinds is just an extension of their attribution to people, of which they are in some sense primary attributes. '[O]nly concrete individuals — persons — and by legitimate extension, their actions, dispositions, institutions, laws, etc. [can] possibly have [the properties that the predicates "δίκαιον" and "ὀσιον" designate].' (Cf. n. 12) In this statement Vlastos implies that the properties 'δίκαιον' and 'ὀσιον' designate are in some sense *primarily* attributes of people and attributable to other entities, such as actions and social kinds, insofar as people are causally responsible for the production of the latter. At least, this is how I interpret his use of 'legitimate extension'. But Vlastos' point is by no means obviously true, and he gives no argument in support of it. Why should we assume the properties are *primarily* of people? I do not think we should. Another problem with Vlastos' claim is his assumption that these properties are only attributable to concrete individuals. Again, this is not obviously true. Consider the claim that (e) aiding one's friends is just. This implies that (f) each instance of aiding one's friends is just. But, the fact that (e) implies (f) does not imply that (e) means (f), in other words, that (e) should be interpreted as a Pauline predication. According to (e), each act, only insofar as it aids one's friends, is just. So, it is just this aspect of action that is just. Wakefield engages in a more elaborate discussion of this criticism of Vlastos in reference to the claim, tallness is attractive (VUV, 61-2).

I suggest that the psychic dispositions δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης are understood to be δίκαιον and ὀσιον, because the former *are conducive to social conditions that are fitting or lawful with respect to human beings and citizens and gods*. In particular, the psychic dispositions are *conductive to δίκαιον and ὀσιον acts*,⁷⁴ and these either constitute or promote social conditions that are fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens.

In view of the preceding interpretations of the meanings of the subjects and predicates, we are now in a better position to consider the status of (1) and (2) as self-predications. Outside of Vlastos' precise, though unnecessarily narrow application, the phrase 'self-predication' is sometimes used rather loosely in the discussion of (1) and (2). Recall that Teloh and Wakefield regard the subjects of (1)-(4) as psychic states, i.e., virtues. However, neither claims that when 'δίκαιον' and 'ὀσιον' are predicated of 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'ὀσιότης' Socrates is suggesting that the virtues have the psychic states δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης; in other words, that the virtues have ψυχαί and that these contain virtues. Strictly speaking, if the referents of the subjects in (1)-(4) are psychic states, then if (1) and (2) are self-predications the predicates must also imply this, namely, that being-ὀσιον or -δίκαιον implies having a certain psychic state. But of

74 Savan, *SPP*, argues for a similar position. Though, his defense differs from mine, mainly in that he offers no semantic support for his interpretation, and that the significance of Protagoras' understanding of (1)-(4) does not figure in his explanation. Commenting on Savan, Taylor writes: 'Savan is indeed correct in saying that Socrates is in fact represented as holding that, on the analogy with the power of the eye or the ear, the power of justice, conceived as a permanent state of the person, is to promote just action, and that of holiness to promote holy action ... But it is quite impossible that the Greek of 330c7 [i.e., "Ἔστιν ἄρα τοιοῦτον ἡ δικαιοσύνη οἷον δίκαιον εἶναι ..."] should mean "The power of justice is (to promote) just action". For that sentence follows directly from c1-2 "Justice is something" and c3-6 "That thing is just", and is given as the answer to the question "Is justice just or unjust?" ... Again, Savan's interpretation does not give a good sense to 330d8-9 "How could anything else be holy, if holiness itself is not to be holy?" The first occurrence of "be holy" in that sentence is clearly an ordinary predication; it is very hard to see the second as something altogether different' (*PProt*, 117). I agree that the predicates 'οἷον δίκαιον (or ὀσιον) εἶναι' and 'δίκαιον (or ὀσιον)' are intended to convey the same idea. Moreover, I agree that the predicates 'δίκαιον' and 'ὀσιον' are used in their ordinary senses. The question is what their ordinary senses are. I suggest that Taylor fails to consider what the predicates mean and how their designations may be variously related to the referents of the subjects.

course Wakefield and Teloh are claiming that the psychic states, δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης, have the characteristics or properties, δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης. So, strictly speaking, the predicates do not have the same meanings as the subjects.⁷⁵ Accordingly, (1) and (2) would be self-predications just to the extent that the predicates are grammatically cognate with the subjects; that is to say, they are self-predications syntactically.⁷⁶ Similarly, according to my interpretation, (1) and (2) are only self-predications insofar as the subjects and predicates are grammatically cognate; the subjects and the predicates are not understood here with the same meaning; that is to say, they are not self-predications semantically.⁷⁷

So far I have provided evidence that my interpretation of (1)-(4) is syntactically and semantically licensed. I have also provided some evidence that it is contextually warranted. I will now present further supporting evidence by considering the broader argument in which (1)-(4) are embedded. The broader argument of course concerns the relation of the ἀρεταί. Protagoras claims that σωφροσύνη, ἀνδρεία, ὀσιότης, and δικαιοσύνη are proper parts of ἀρετή.⁷⁸ He likens their relation to the parts of a face, as opposed to parts of a nugget of gold.⁷⁹ The analogy is supposed to convey that the parts of ἀρετή are structurally or qualitatively distinct. Socrates elicits Protagoras' assent to the claim that the distinct ἀρεταί are also distinct with respect to their δυνάμεις.⁸⁰ Again, the suggestion is made by analogy with the parts of the face, each of which has a distinct power or capability; as I have suggested, e.g., the eyes to see, the ears to hear. According to Protagoras' claim that the

ἀρεταί are not identical, it is assumed that the ἀρεταί are not alike either in themselves or in their powers.⁸¹

I want to consider why, in analyzing the distinction of the ἀρεταί from one another, Socrates introduces the concept of δυνάμις at all. In other words, why it is not sufficient for Socrates to consider whether the ἀρεταί are qualitatively or structurally distinct?⁸² I suggest that Socrates' focus on the δυνάμις of ἀρετή is due to the fact that the ἀρεταί, *qua* psychic dispositions, are publicly imperceptible. Therefore, in analyzing their (assumed) distinction, he considers their manifestation in publicly perceptible action. This idea is supported by comments Socrates makes about the nature of δυνάμεις in *Republic V*. Note that in the following passage Socrates' aim is to distinguish two psychic dispositions, knowledge and opinion.

Shall we agree that δυνάμεις are a type of entity by which (αἷς) we, as well as everything else, are able to do what we are able to do? I mean that sight and hearing are δυνάμεις, if you understand the type of entity I want to describe ... Listen then to what I think of them. I do not see the color of a δυνάμις, nor its shape, nor any such thing, as I do in the case of many other sorts of things when I fix my eye upon them and look to distinguish one from the other. But in the case of a δυνάμις I look at one thing only, at that to which it is related (ἐφ' ᾧ τε ἔστι) and

75 Of course psychic states may be understood as universals, properties, or characteristics. But even so, in this case the meanings of the subjects and predicates still cannot be the same.

76 Wakefield and Teloh do not discuss the meanings of the predicates, and this is a limitation of their accounts. But, I do not regard it as a shortcoming of their explanations that, granting either of their views, Socrates must be using the subject and predicate expressions with different meanings.

77 In contrast, according to Malcolm's interpretation of (1) and (2) as self-exemplifications, (1) and (2) are self-predications in respect of the meanings of the subject and predicates as well as their grammatical relation.

78 329d3-4

79 329d4-e2

80 330a4-b3

81 'ἀρ' οὖν οὕτω καὶ τὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς μέρη οὐκ ἔστιν τὸ ἕτερον οἶον τὸ ἕτερον, οὔτε αὐτὸ οὔτε ἡ δυνάμις αὐτοῦ; ἢ δῆλα δὴ ὅτι οὕτως ἔχει, εἴπερ τῶ παραδείγματι γε ἔοικε; — 'Ἄλλ' οὕτως, ἔφη, ἔχει, ὡς Σώκρατες' (330a7-b3).

82 Wakefield puts the inverse question: 'If virtues are identified by reference to their powers, why is Socrates also interested in demonstrating that Justice and Holiness share properties other than powers [i.e., structural or qualitative properties]? A thing's powers depend on its properties, and if Socrates is to go far toward his goal of suggesting the identity of Justice and Holiness he must show not only that they share powers, but that their essential properties, those which give rise to the powers, are also shared. Otherwise, like the insect eye and the human eye, or the horse's hoof and the human's foot, the virtues might share powers but [structurally or qualitatively] be entirely different' (*WJH*, 270). The problem with Wakefield's question is that if it is the case that two entities may share the same power, but differ in their 'essential' properties, why should Socrates introduce the concept of the δυνάμις of ἀρετή at all? (Note also that according to his position Wakefield must assume that the ἀρεταί cannot be identified by reference to their δυνάμεις. Presumably, this is why he speaks of certain non-functional properties of the ἀρεταί as 'essential'.)

at what it produces (ὃ ἀπεργάζεται). In this way I come to call each of them a δύναμις. And that which is related (τεταγμένην) to the same thing and produces (ἀπεργαζομένην) the same thing I call the same δύναμις; and that which is related to a different thing and produces a different thing I call a different δύναμις.⁸³

In *Protagoras* Protagoras believes that since there are various kinds of virtuous acts there must be various virtues that produce them. In contrast, Socrates believes just one psychic disposition is responsible for all virtuous action. Protagoras finds such an idea implausible, for, as he says: '... many are ἀνδρείοι, but ἄδικοι, and many again are δίκαιοι but not σοφοί.'⁸⁴ It is immediately following this statement of Protagoras' that Socrates questions whether each of the ἀρεταί has a distinct δύναμις. Again, I suggest that Socrates' point is to analyze the nature of the ἀρεταί by considering their operation in human behavior. If δικαιοσύνη is agreed to be conducive to ὅσια acts and ὀσιότης to δίκαια acts, then one may be inclined to believe that there is actually only one virtue, rather than two.

According to my interpretation, both Socrates and Protagoras will find (1) and (2) obvious, and, as they agree with respect to (2), so obvious as to be annoying. Of course the virtues δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης are conducive to δίκαια and ὅσια acts respectively.⁸⁵ But, given their differing beliefs about the unity and disunity of the ἀρεταί, we would not expect Protagoras to assent to (3) and (4),⁸⁶ while we would expect Socrates to — and this of course is what occurs.

83 477c1-d5

84 329e5-6. Presumably in making this claim Protagoras has made an inference from the observation that there are many men who act courageously, but not justly, and there are many who act justly, but not wisely.

85 Note that both will assent to (1) and (2) as obvious, even though Socrates believes the aretaic terms are co-referring and Protagoras believes they are not.

86 Protagoras' hesitation to admit (3) and (4) accords with common conceptions of δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης, as I briefly discussed above. At least, the antithesis between τὰ δίκαια, things fitting with respect to citizens, and τὰ ὅσια, things fitting with respect to gods, was common in popular discourse. Note also that Protagoras does not flatly deny (3) and (4). He says, 'It does not seem to me to be so simple (οὕτως ἀπλοῦν)' (331b8-c1). Thus, Protagoras might also not accept the polar opposite view that the extensions of 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'ὀσιότης' in action do not overlap, but some

I conclude my interpretation with one further semantic consideration. It is questionable whether Protagoras and Socrates would find intelligible propositions of the same syntactical structure as (1)-(4) but employing other aretaic terms. As we have seen, most scholars believe Socrates would assert self- and inter-predications using all the aretaic terms; and so, the fact that he does not must be explained as coincidental. In contrast, Malcolm claims as a strongpoint of his interpretation its explanation of why only 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'ὀσιότης' are self- and inter-predicated.⁸⁷

Vlastos also thinks all the aretaic terms are self- and inter-predicable. He cites the following examples from *Protagoras*:⁸⁸

(5) ἀρετή is καλόν.⁸⁹

(6a) σοφία is ἀνδρεία.⁹⁰

(7a) δικαιοσύνη is ἐπιστήμη.⁹¹

(8a) σωφροσύνη is ἐπιστήμη.⁹²

(9a) ἀνδρεία is ἐπιστήμη.⁹³

Of course (6a)-(9a) do not have the same syntactical structure as (1)-(4). But Vlastos cites them because he believes they are to be interpreted as biconditionals in a Pauline fashion. For instance, (6a) would be interpreted as $\forall x (\Sigma x \equiv Ax)$. I have explained why Vlastos is mistaken: the general terms in (6a)-(9a) are all understood as referring expressions. As such, (6a)-(9a) are identity statements. This leaves just (5). Proposi-

middle position. Again, though, his reaction is relatively commonsensical. It is Socrates' assent to (3) and (4) and, more generally, his commitment to the unity of ἀρετή that is atypical.

87 See nn. 37, 38.

88 *PS*, 236

89 349e4

90 350c4-5

91 361b1-2

92 *ibid.*

93 *ibid.*

tions of this form are common in the definitional dialogues;⁹⁴ and there is nothing odd about the claim that human virtue is a good (ἀγαθόν) or fine (καλόν) thing.⁹⁵

Rather, we want to know whether Protagoras and Socrates would have found it intelligible to predicate 'ἀνδρείον', 'σώφρον', and 'σοφόν' of the cardinal aretaic terms, as for instance:

(6) σωφροσύνη is ἀνδρείον.

(7) ἀνδρεία is σώφρον.

(8) δικαιοσύνη is σοφόν.

I believe the answer to this question is no; and the reason has to do with the distinction between the meanings of 'δίκαιον' and 'ἴσιον', on the one hand, and 'ἀνδρείον', 'σώφρον', and 'σοφόν', on the other. The first two differ from the last three in that the last three are, as I will call them, personal aretaic predicates, whereas the first two are impersonal aretaic predicates in the following respect. To be σοφόν, σώφρον, or ἀνδρείον implies acting in a certain fashion, having a certain psychic state, or being the product of an entity that has a certain psychic state. Thus, the attribution of these properties to non-human entities, e.g., acts or utterance, implies that they are products of agents or speakers who possess the corresponding virtues. Consequently, an act cannot be ἀνδρείον, σοφόν, or σώφρον unless a distinct psychic state accompanies it. This is explicitly brought out in *Charmides*. The fourth definition of σωφροσύνη is τὰ τὰγαθὰ πράττειν (doing what is good). Socrates asks Critias whether a doctor who accidentally healed a patient, thereby doing something good, would be σώφρων, although he didn't know what he was doing. Critias denies that he would be.⁹⁶ Similarly, it seems an act could not be ἀνδρείον if the agent were completely unaware of the danger in the environment. And likewise, an act could not be σοφόν, if the agent successfully performed the act, but by luck and without the relevant understanding.

In contrast, being δίκαιον or ἴσιον does not imply acting in a certain way, having a certain psychic state, or being the product of an entity that

has a certain psychic state. Thus, an act or utterance or social condition may be δίκαιον or ἄδικον or ἴσιον or ἀνόσιον regardless of an agent's intention or disposition. Being δίκαιον or ἴσιον simply implies conforming with an established conception of propriety with regard to human beings or citizens and gods; and there are many ways in which entities may be understood to satisfy this condition. Thus, psychic dispositions can intelligibly be said to be δίκαιον or ἴσιον because they are conducive to the appropriate social conditions.

In contrast, it does not seem intelligible to predicate the personal aretaic predicates of the virtue terms, because attribution of the corresponding properties implies a distinct relation to psychic states. On the one hand, the virtues themselves do not possess ψυχαί or bodies; therefore, they cannot possess virtues or perform acts. On the other hand, they are not in any straightforward way products of agents that possess virtues. Thus, they cannot be said to be courageous, wise, or restrained.⁹⁷

Granting this point, we can now see why at first glance (1)-(4) might appear odd. If 'δίκαιον' and 'ἴσιον' are interpreted as personal aretaic predicates, their predication of 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'ὀσιότης' becomes unintelligible. The translation of 'ἴσιον' as 'pious' is particularly misleading in this regard, for 'pious', like 'courageous', 'wise', and 'restrained', is a personal predicate. In contrast, 'holy' is not. So, for instance, a site may be said to be holy, without implying its production by an agent with the corresponding virtue.^{98,99}

97 There are cases, as for instance in *Laches*, where we encounter phrases such as 'φρόνιμος καρτερία' (192d10) and 'ἄφρων τόλμα τε καὶ καρτερήσις' (193d1). But here the implication is that the agent acts with both prudence or foolishness and daring or steadfastness. A person can of course possess wisdom and courage and exercise them simultaneously. But, it does not seem that courage itself can possess wisdom or vice versa.

98 The phrase 'ἴσιον χωρίον' occurs in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (743).

99 Interestingly, the impersonal and personal aretaic predicates are also used in distinct syntactical constructions. For example, 'δίκαιον' and 'ἴσιον' may be used in the impersonal constructions 'δίκαιον ἔστι' and 'ἴσιον ἔστι' with the infinitive. But equivalent constructions with 'ἀνδρείον', 'σοφόν', and 'σώφρον' do not occur. Also, the phrases 'τὸ δίκαιον' and 'τὸ ἴσιον' are common enough. Both occur in *Protagoras* and in the definitional dialogues. But 'τὸ ἀνδρείον', 'τὸ σώφρον', and 'τὸ σοφόν' do not occur. I am not sure what to make of this. But it seems significant.

94 E.g., *Lach* 192c5-6; *Charm* 159c1.

95 See n. 73 and Wakefield, *VUV*, 61-4.

96 164a-c

Appendix: The Ontological Significance of the Proposition F is $\tau\iota$ ¹⁰⁰

In *Hippias Major* Socrates elicits assent to the following questions:

So then this thing δικαιοσύνη is something ($\tau\iota$)? ... And these things [wisdom and goodness] are things? For presumably they would not be so [i.e., wise men would not be wise and good things good because of them] if they [wisdom and goodness] did not exist? ... And this thing beauty is something?¹⁰¹

Woodruff claims that Socrates is not committing himself here to the existence of δικαιοσύνη, τὸ ἀγαθόν, or σοφία.¹⁰² He argues that in sentences such as “Ὀντι γέ τιτι τούτῳ;” and “Ὀυκοῦν ἔστι τι τοῦτο ἢ δικαιοσύνη;” the copula serves a ‘nuncupative’ use, that is, a use most like the natural language use of ‘is’ for logical identity. Sentences schemata such as $x = y$ are ‘not falsified by the non-existence of x and y in the world’.

Woodruff subsequently focuses the ‘ontological burden’ on the indefinite pronoun ‘ $\tau\iota$ ’. He argues that describing an entity as ‘ $\tau\iota$ ’ is ‘ontologically neutral’: ‘for something to be a $\tau\iota$ is not for it to have necessarily a clearly defined ontological status.’¹⁰³ I suggest that it does commit Socrates to the existence of F , though to nothing more specific than that F is an entity of some kind.

Woodruff cites evidence from Plato’s middle and late writings to support the conclusion that for Plato what is not-nothing is not necessarily what is. In *Republic* Socrates distinguishes between what-is-not, what-is, and what-neither-is-nor-is-not. Consequently, what-is-not may be either what-is or what-neither-is-nor-is-not.¹⁰⁴ There are two difficulties with Woodruff’s use of this passage from *Republic* to support his argument. *Hippias Major* is not even by Woodruff thought to be a work

of the middle period, hence the tri-fold ontological distinction made in *Republic* may be inapplicable to *Hippias Major* or any early dialogue. There is simply no evidence of such a tri-fold ontological distinction in *Hippias Major* or any of the other early dialogues and there is no reason to presume such a distinction. The entities about which Socrates is talking in *Republic* are objects of opinion, which are distinguished from objects of knowledge. But in the early dialogues the ἀρεταί are never assumed to be merely objects of opinion.^{105,106}

Woodruff is also wrong to suggest that in the definitional dialogues Socrates does not have ontological concerns about the *definienda*. In *Charmides* a relatively lengthy argument is devoted to the suggestion that the knowledge of knowledge and all other knowledges and lack of knowledge does not exist.¹⁰⁷ In view of this argument Socrates does not suggest that therefore σωφροσύνη may not exist. On the contrary, the possibility that the knowledge of knowledge and lack of knowledge does not exist is used as evidence that it may not be the correct definition of σωφροσύνη.

As we have seen, strong support that Socrates understands questions such as ‘Is F something ($\tau\iota$)?’ as ontologically significant comes from *Protagoras*. I suggest that Socrates’ questions in *Hippias Major* about whether δικαιοσύνη, σοφία, τὸ ἀγαθόν, and τὸ καλόν are something ($\tau\iota$) function similarly to the way I have interpreted these questions in *Protagoras*. Socrates asks such questions in order to make explicit the assumption that such entities exist. Again, presumably he thinks that if they did not exist, talk of their attributes and their relation to other entities would be idle.

So, for instance, Socrates says:

100 This appendix makes good on a promise in n. 45.

101 ‘Ὀυκοῦν ἔστι τι τοῦτο ἢ δικαιοσύνη; ... Ὀυσι γέ τιτι τούτοις [σοφία τε καὶ τῷ ἀγαθῷ]. οὐ γὰρ δὴ που [οἱ σοφοὶ σοφοὶ σοφία τε καὶ τάγαθὰ ἀγαθὰ τῷ ἀγαθῷ] μὴ οὐσί γε ... Ὀντι γέ τιτι τούτῳ [τῷ καλῷ];’ (287c4-d2).

102 Woodruff, SO

103 Ibid., 106

104 478b-c

105 Woodruff also cites a passage from *Sophist* (237d1-2) concerning how words such as ‘nothing’ and ‘not any’ can be meaningful, yet have no referents. But it is unreasonable to assume that the content of *Sophist* is relevant to *Hippias Major* in this regard. Such ideas appear nowhere in the definitional dialogues and seem entirely alien to their content.

106 Note also that if the copula has no existential significance, then it may also be questioned whether the ontological status of $\tau\iota$ matters.

107 167bff.

Then these things, goodness and wisdom, are something. For presumably wise men would not be wise by wisdom and good things good because of goodness if wisdom and goodness were not something?¹⁰⁸

Here Socrates confirms the existence of entities such as goodness and wisdom, because if these entities did not exist then it would be incorrect to claim that the reason ἀγαθὰ or σοφοί individuals are ἀγαθὰ or σοφοί is because of the εἶδη τὸ ἀγαθόν and σοφία.

In interpreting Hippias' first definition in preparation for his criticism of it Socrates develops this point as follows:

Come now, Hippias, let me consider for myself what you are saying. My friend will question me in some such way as this. "Go ahead, Socrates, answer me this. *All these things that you assert are beautiful, these things would be beautiful if αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν is something (τι)?*" And I will say that if a beautiful young woman is beautiful, it is for this reason that these things would be beautiful.¹⁰⁹

Socrates' alleged friend's question is somewhat oddly put, both in the Greek and in my literal translation. Without jeopardizing the relevant content, I propose the following re-phrasing of it for the sake of clarity:

Things that are (asserted to be) beautiful would be beautiful, if αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν were something.

In other words, the possibility that many entities are beautiful depends on beauty itself being some thing. This assumption is based on the further unexpressed assumption that if multiple entities are καλὰ it is in virtue of some other single entity αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν that they are so. This

108 Ὅσι γέ τισι τούτοις· οὐ γὰρ δὴ που [οἱ σοφοὶ σοφοὶ σοφία τε καὶ τὰγαθὰ ἀγαθὰ τῷ ἀγαθῷ] μὴ οὐσί γε· (287c7).

109 '... φέρε δὴ, ὦ Ἱππία, πρὸς ἑμαυτὸν ἀναλάβω ὃ λέγεις. ὁ μὲν ἐρήσεται με οὕτως πᾶς· ἴθι μοι, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀποκρίναι· ταῦτα πάντα ἃ φῆς καλὰ εἶναι, εἰ τί ἐστιν αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, ταῦτ' ἂν εἴη καλὰ; ἐγὼ δὲ δὴ ἐρῶ ὅτι εἰ παρθένος καλὴ καλόν, ἔστι δι' ὃ ταῦτ' ἂν εἴη καλὰ' (288a6-11). H.N. Fowler translates 'ἔστι' in '... ἔστι δι' ὃ' as 'there is something [by reason of which] ...' (*Plato IV* [Cambridge 1926] at 361); but surely the antecedent of 'ὃ' is a suppressed 'τούτο' which refers to the preceding noun-clause 'ὅτι εἰ παρθένος καλὴ καλόν' (not a suppressed 'τί' recalling the 'τί' from the preceding sentence).

further unexpressed assumption entails a rejection of an alternative such as that various καλὰ entities are καλὰ in virtue of a variety of distinct entities, e.g., αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν₁, αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν₂, etc. Again, the substantial contribution to the investigation of both the expressed and unexpressed assumptions depends upon the existence of the referent of the general term.

In sum, what Woodruff should have argued is that the claims in *Hippias Major* and *Protagoras* that τὸ καλόν (τὸ ἀγαθόν, σοφία, or the like) is something (τι), a πρᾶγμα and an ὄν, are limited or rather minimal ontological claims. They assert that the referent of the general term is some kind of entity, though they assert nothing about the kind of entity that it is.

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The Body Problem in Aristotle

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Given his divergent and competing taxonomical commitments, Aristotle faces a significant difficulty concerning his conception of what it is to be a *body*. The difficulty admits of a precise, though perhaps slightly artificial, formulation in terms of Aristotle's apparent acceptance of the three following inconsistent theses.

1. Body ($\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$) is a genus in the category of substance.
2. Body is a genus in the category of quantity.
3. No genus can be in both the category of substance and the category of quantity.

This formulation of the problem, what I will henceforth call 'the body problem', does, as I have mentioned, have the virtue of precision. Formulated in this way, the body problem presents a very clear criterion for the adequacy of its solution. Supposing that Aristotle did not put forth an inconsistent theory, one need only deny in a principled fashion that Aristotle accepted all the above theses. But, as I hope emerges in the remainder of the paper, (1)-(3) are manifestations of deep and central theses in Aristotle's philosophical system concerning the placement of bodies in the categorial scheme. Hence, even though I will spend a significant amount of time trying to resolve the inconsistency in (1)-(3), the real focus of this paper is a problem that does not suggest easy criteria for the adequacy of its solution but that nonetheless focuses attention on a central issue, one whose resolution has deep implications for Aristotle's metaphysics. Simply stated, the problem in its general form is this: where in the categorial scheme does body lie? The focus on the inconsis-

it is held not casually, but in the face of philosophical objections, marks it as a philosophical view.

I conclude, then, that Vlastos was incorrect in his claim that the Socrates of the early dialogues was exclusively a moral philosopher. I have argued, following Allen, that the Socrates of these dialogues is a metaphysician, an ontologist, as well as a moral philosopher. The ontology of the elenctic dialogues differs from that of the middle dialogues only in a single respect: separation. This is a huge difference, and it is, strictly, an incompatibility. Thus, the ontology of the elenctic dialogues is in this one respect incompatible with the ontology of the middle dialogues. In other respects, however, it is compatible with that ontology, and should be seen as the precursor or first stage of that theory. In this regard, as, I believe, in others, Socrates_E was much more closely connected to Socrates_M than Vlastos's portrait allows.

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INTERPRETING PLATO'S EARLY DIALOGUES

DAVID WOLFSDORF

1. The mouthpiece principle

INTERPRETATION of philosophical texts usually proceeds on the assumption that philosophers have written in order to disseminate their beliefs. Interpreting their texts, therefore, aims to clarify their beliefs on the topics the texts engage, where the texts constitute the evidence for those beliefs. Difficulty tends to lie in determining the author's meaning or the cogency of the author's arguments rather than whether the author believes what is written.

In the case of Plato's writings—throughout, this paper's principal concern is the early writings—no straightforward identification of the texts' contents with the author's beliefs is possible. Plato wrote dialogues or narratives with abundant dialogue whose sentences express the views of dramatic characters. Some of these sentences obviously do not represent the author's beliefs, but it is not always clear which do.¹

An ancient solution to this problem identifies Plato's beliefs with the utterances of the main character Socrates. The earliest surviving expression of this, the mouthpiece principle, occurs in Diogenes

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¹ Secondary literature on this subject and interpretation of Plato's dialogues in general is vast. A good, although biased, point of departure is G. Press, 'The State of the Question in the Study of Plato's Dialogues', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 34 (1996), 507–32, which contains much essential bibliography. Some important contributions are assembled in N. Smith (ed.), *Plato: Critical Assessments [Plato]*, vol. i (London, 1998). Another useful volume is J. Klagge and N. Smith (eds.), *Methods of Interpreting Plato and his Dialogues [Methods]* (*Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, suppl. vol.; Oxford, 1992). A good monograph is E. Tigerstedt, *Interpreting Plato* (Stockholm, 1977). F. Novotny, *The Posthumous Life of Plato* (Prague, 1977), is an encyclopaedic account of Platonism from the early Academy to the twentieth century.

Laertius. Vlastos offers a modern endorsement: 'in any given dialogue Plato allows the persona Socrates only what he (Plato), at that time, considers true'.²

But many scholars, more cautious than Vlastos, resist the mouth-piece principle. One strategy is to restrict interpretation to Socrates' utterances. For instance, Brickhouse and Smith:

We do not, in this book, intend to answer the question of whose philosophy we are actually interpreting [Plato's or the historical Socrates'] . . . We claim only that a distinct philosophy can be found consistently portrayed as Socrates' in Plato's early dialogues, and that the philosophy so portrayed is itself consistent.³

Thus, one might say, Socrates' philosophy is rich and constitutes the dialogues' main philosophical substance—to have clarified that is interpretation enough.

This approach falters on several grounds. Most plainly, the richer and more cogent the philosophy disclosed by the character Socrates, the more reasonable it seems that Plato maintained that philosophy himself—regardless of whether it originated with him or the historical Socrates. So in this case, avoiding the bugaboo of authorial intention appears a weak manoeuvre.

There is also a problem determining the character Socrates' beliefs. His utterances are not entirely consistent among the early dialogues or occasionally even within dialogues. Of course, this is an interpretation. But assuming for the time being that it is correct, one is compelled to question which of Socrates' beliefs are Socrates'. Consequently, it becomes necessary to consider why Plato composed Socrates' utterances as inconsistent.

Of all the views expressed in the early dialogues Plato clearly is most sympathetic to the character Socrates', even though he is not sympathetic to all of Socrates' views. However, an approach to the dialogues that begins with the relation between Plato's beliefs and Socrates' utterances begins improperly. It overlooks the texts' basic dialogic nature. If Plato's aim were simply to convey his views through Socrates, then why did he not write monologues? And if he

² G. Vlastos, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher [Ironist]* (Ithaca, NY, 1991), 117. Cf. also Vlastos's 'grand assumption' that 'Plato makes Socrates say in any given dialogue whatever he—Plato—thinks at the time of writing would be the most reasonable thing for Socrates to be saying just then in expounding and defending his [i.e. Plato's] own philosophy' (*Socratic Studies* (Cambridge, 1994), 125).

³ T. Brickhouse and N. Smith, *Plato's Socrates* (Oxford, 1994), p. viii.

could have written monologues with Socrates as speaker, then why did he not write monologues in his own voice? An understanding of the relation between Plato and Socrates should emerge from prior consideration of the texts as dramatic dialogues. One should begin by asking not whose views are most likely to be identified with Plato's, but what Plato is trying to advance through the engagement of his characters and how he attempts to achieve this. Once one has a better grasp of Plato's dramaturgy and dramaturgical objectives, it then makes sense to assess the functions Socrates serves in relation to these and so the relation between Plato and Socrates.

2. Fundamentals of Plato's dramaturgy

A dramatic theme pervades the early dialogues, the opposition and conflict of philosophy and non-philosophy, its antithesis. The former category encompasses the love and pursuit of human excellence principally through logical argumentation. The latter encompasses much popular and traditional ethics as well as almost every Greek discursive tradition, including some that we might call 'philosophical', in so far as their values and methods contradict philosophy: for example, sophistry, political, forensic, and epideictic rhetoric, Athenian drama, and, in fact, most of the Greek poetic tradition.⁴

Plato's conception of philosophy is distinct from philosophy as this discipline is currently conceived and has otherwise been conceived. It is one, albeit seminal, form that philosophy has assumed. The distinction between Plato's conception of philosophy and modern conceptions of philosophy is significant because the early dialogues' critique of convention and tradition is limited to ethics of a distinct kind and to pertinent issues in the epistemology of ethics. In contrast, ordinary knowledge claims and the grounds of ordinary knowledge are taken for granted. Consequently, the opposition of philosophy and non-philosophy, as Plato conceived these,

⁴ D. Wolfsdorf, 'Aporia in Plato's *Charmides*, *Laches*, and *Lysis*' ['Aporia'] (diss. University of Chicago, 1997), where the opposition is characterized as between 'philosophy' and 'counter-philosophy'. The word ἀφιλοσοφία does not occur in Plato's early dialogues, but see *Def.* 415 E. The adjective ἀφιλόσοφος occurs at *Phdr.* 256 C 1 and *Tim.* 73 A 6. A. Nightingale, *Genres in Dialogue* (Cambridge, 1995), 55, also conceives of Plato's dialogues as involving a rivalry of this kind; I have adopted her terms.

must be understood to revolve around a limited domain of philosophical topics, again, values of character and their justification.

Plato's early dialogues present philosophy as the sole legitimate mode of personal and civic life.⁵ They demonstrate the practice of philosophy and attempt to persuade the reader of its superiority to non-philosophy. They convey this basic idea by various means, in various tones, often more comical than fanatical—although the final movement of *Gorgias* involves one powerful and earnest instance. Socrates' and Callicles' dispute concludes: 'Let us follow this, then, and invite everyone else to this—not that to which you trust yourself and invite me, Callicles, for it is worthless' (*Gorg.* 527 E 5–7).

In promoting philosophy, the early dialogues are proaedeutic. Simultaneously, they recommend philosophy by demonstrating its practice. They portray Socrates and his interlocutors engaged in enquiries into philosophical topics that are, to a large extent, controlled by logical argumentation. These demonstrations achieve several overlapping objectives. This style of speech was relatively new, certainly not well established. Therefore, the depiction of characters employing it serves to introduce the thing itself and to distinguish it from other forms of speech.⁶ The demonstrations also orient the reader towards a philosophical life by undermining conventional and traditional ethical views and epistemological views pertaining to ethical topics, and advancing and defending alternatives. And again, the discussions demonstrate the superiority of the form of philosophical discourse to discourse ungoverned by logical argumentation.

The early dialogues' dramatization of the opposition of philosophy and non-philosophy operates in three complicit dimensions: logical, through the style of speech in which the characters engage, logical argumentation; characterological, through the portrayal of character in speech and action; and historical, through reference and allusion to historical persons and events. These three dimensions also converge on the prevailing dramatic mode of the texts, realism,⁷ for the three basic aspects of the dialogues' realism are

⁵ That is, at least for those few intellectually capable. On this point and Plato's target audience see sect. 4.

⁶ For instance, in *Protagoras* and *Gorgias* Socrates admonishes Protagoras and Polus to refrain from making speeches and to adhere to succinct questions and answers (*Prot.* 335 B 5–C 7; *Gorg.* 461 D 2–462 A 5).

⁷ Compare M. Frede's characterization in 'Plato's Arguments and the Dialogue Form', in Kluge and Smith, *Methods*, 201–19 at 201.

their historicity, characterology, and diction. The dramatic characters represent historical individuals, and the dramatic settings represent historical places.⁸ The dramatic characters are also represented in a realistic manner as saying and doing things that real people would. In particular, they are portrayed as conversing in relatively colloquial language.⁹

Realism can be a deceptive form of dramatic presentation. Often, it is treated as a default mode. Accordingly, scholars view the dramatic style as merely instrumental to engaging the reader in the text's substance, which begins only with the philosophical enquiry proper. Passages without philosophical argumentation are treated like vehicles that convey the reader through a hermeneutically barren landscape to sites of philosophical interest. This view oversimplifies such passages and neglects whole dimensions of the dialogues, for Plato employs character and history as well as philosophical argumentation to demonstrate the value of philosophy over non-philosophy.

The characters' conduct as well as utterances reflect their psychological conditions, specifically, their ethical characters and values. Accordingly, willingness and eagerness to engage in logically governed argumentation indicate a philosophical disposition. For instance, in *Charmides* (153 A 1–D 5), upon Socrates' return from Potidaea, those present at Taureas' palaestra are eager to hear news of the battle, whereas Socrates quickly turns the conversation to the subject of philosophy and the education of youth. Similarly, in *Protagoras* (309 A 1–C 12) the anonymous companion assumes that Socrates has just come from an erotic adventure with Alcibiades, whereas Socrates explains that at Callias' he found the wisdom of Protagoras far more compelling than Alcibiades' beauty.

In contrast, some of Socrates' interlocutors are unwilling to engage in discussion. For instance, Critias initially resists joining the investigation of self-control;¹⁰ twice Protagoras stubbornly falls into silence (*Prot.* 360 D 6–8); and Callicles ultimately will not continue

⁸ The dialogues' realism and historicity have so captivated some scholars that they misuse dramatic elements as evidence of historical facts. See D. Wolfsdorf, 'The Dramatic Date of Plato's *Protagoras*', *Rheinisches Museum*, 140 (1997), 223–30; and, on anachronism in *Charmides*, Wolfsdorf, 'Aporia', 65–9.

⁹ This has been thought due to the Sicilian genre of mime. However, the evidence for this is extremely weak. See D. Wolfsdorf, 'The Historical Reader of Plato's *Protagoras*' ['Historical'], *Classical Quarterly*, NS 48 (1998), 126–35 at 126 n. 2.

¹⁰ Cf. *Charm.* 161 B 8–C 2; 162 C 1–D 6.

the investigation (*Gorg.* 519 E 1–2). Such cases expose the interlocutors' fear of humiliation and desire to safeguard their reputations. These attitudes, moreover, suggest a distinct prioritization of personal values, precisely, one according to which truth is subordinate to common opinion.

Related is the character who is willing to engage, but for the wrong reasons; his contributions aim to outdo or defeat his interlocutor rather than foster a co-operative pursuit of truth.¹¹ Euthydemus and Dionysodorus' eristic sophisms are a good example. Likewise, in *Laches* once Nicias supplants Laches as Socrates' principal interlocutor, Laches becomes contentious, eager to see his military colleague refuted as he was. Similarly, Thrasymachus' violent and abusive manner shows an appalling lack of interest in his company's well-being. In short, the characters' non-philosophical as well as philosophical claims manifest their values. Generally, their motives for speech or silence as well as the content of their speech play an important role in Plato's dramaturgy.

In addition, Plato employs history to achieve his objectives. The early dialogues are set in a quasi-historical past. Precisely, historical elements populate the dialogues, but the particular configuration of the historical elements is not historically accurate. Among other things, the ubiquity of anachronism confirms this. In short, the dialogues are not intended to represent conversations that actually occurred.

Plato draws the historical elements mainly from the last thirty years of the fifth century BC. This period encompasses the first thirty years of his life, a span of Athenian history marked by the Peloponnesian war and its immediate aftermath and concluding with Socrates' execution. Much of the history to which Plato alludes surely is lost, and so the texts' historical dimension is elusive. But surviving historical sources facilitate appreciation of certain examples and so suggest a more general significance of Plato's engagement of history.¹²

Plato treats this historical period critically and ironically. *Protagoras* provides one concrete demonstration. Protagoras claims that he can teach excellence in both private and public spheres, specifically, how to manage one's household and be an effective

¹¹ Such instances reflect the common Greek values of *φιλονικία* and *φιλοτιμία*, on which see Wolfsdorf, 'Aporia', *passim*.

¹² D. Nails, *The People of Plato [People]* (Indianapolis, 2002).

citizen in speech and action (*Prot.* 318 E 5–319 A 2). The ensuing enquiry concerning the relation of the components of excellence exposes Protagoras' ignorance of excellence and undermines his claim. However, before this enquiry begins, Plato intimates, through his choice of setting and characters, that Protagoras cannot teach excellence.¹³ In the dialogue, Protagoras is staying at Callias' house. Callias came from one of the wealthiest and most esteemed Athenian families. In the course of his life, he depleted his family's fortunes and disgraced their reputation. Callias was one of Protagoras' principal Athenian adherents. Therefore, the dialogue's setting at Callias' house undermines Protagoras' claim to teach excellence in a private capacity.

Furthermore, many of the Athenians at Callias' were notorious for political and social misdeeds. The collection of characters in *Protagoras*, the largest in a Platonic dialogue, contrasts with the collection in *Phaedo*, the second largest. None of the nineteen characters at Callias' is present in Socrates' prison cell. The Phaedonic group consists of Socrates' disciples and adherents of philosophy who have come to share last moments with a dear friend and teacher. In contrast, the Protagorean group are portrayed as adherents of sophists. Plato thereby loosely correlates their scandalous histories with the sophists' corrupt activity. Accordingly, their presence undermines Protagoras' claim to teach excellence in a public capacity. Early in the text Protagoras argues that the Athenians cultivate excellence; he concludes:

the Athenians think that excellence is teachable in both private and public affairs . . . in matters where the death penalty or exile awaits their children if not instructed and cultivated in excellence—and not merely death, but the confiscation of property and practically the entire subversion of their households—do they not have them taught or take the utmost care of them? (*Prot.* 324 C 4–325 C 4)

The histories of the individuals represented in *Protagoras*, many of whom suffered death, exile, or confiscation of their property, undermine Protagoras' claim.

This example illustrates a basic ironic criticism of Athens that pervades the early writings: the Athenians lacked excellence, failed to recognize their ignorance of excellence, and failed to cultivate it. The criticism of the sophists who appear in many of these texts

¹³ The argument summarized here is drawn from Wolfsdorf, 'Historical'.

correlates the corruption in Athens with sophistry. The relation is not portrayed as one of cause and effect. Rather, the Athenian upper class's reception of sophistry is characterized as symptomatic of their non-philosophical character.

Generally speaking, by setting his dialogues in this quasi-historical past, Plato engages the histories of the individuals whom the characters represent and their reputations among posterity with the portrayal of the characters in the texts' settings. The early dialogues portray Athens and a segment of Athenian society of a past generation with the hindsight of Athens' fate during this period. Plato's engagement of history dramatizes the opposition of philosophy and non-philosophy because philosophy is a practical social and political enterprise. Therefore, not only the conduct of dramatic characters, but also the biographical activities of the individuals whom these characters represent serve as evidence that is evaluated in relation to the topics and problems that the texts explore.¹⁴

Generally speaking, Plato's realistic portrayal of character and engagement of history is remarkably compelling. But the treatment of character and history is not fundamentally psychological or historical; it is ethical, more precisely philosophical. Accordingly, the realism Plato employs to dramatize the opposition of philosophy and non-philosophy and to demonstrate the value of the former over the latter is cunning. The dialogues incorporate representative elements of philosophy and non-philosophy, including representative persons, but this incorporation involves manipulation. The realism of the dialogues conveys the impression that the portrayal of persons and their utterance is accurate. But the dramatic characters are constructions and entirely subject to their author's interests. This does not preclude aspects of the dialogues from being historically accurate. Still, the opposition of philosophy and non-philosophy operates through a conquest of appropriation. Within the dialogues' dramatic worlds, the values embedded in the social and political life of Athens, its inhabitants and discursive forms, are re-evaluated and recalibrated according to the authority of philosophy.

¹⁴ M. Gifford, 'Dramatic Dialectic in *Republic* Book 1', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 20 (2001), 35-106, develops a noteworthy recent dramatic-historical interpretation of *Republic* 1.

3. Aporia and authority¹⁵

The early dialogues' sweeping criticism of Athenian culture is a critique of established authority. This critique targets the conventional and traditional values of institutions and practices such as the Athenian democracy, the Thirty's violent regime, sophistry, and Attic drama. It also concerns the manner in which the values of these institutions and practices are imposed and adopted. The early dialogues emphasize that, whether one is persuading or being persuaded, conviction should result not from grounds such as force, threat, cajolery, habit, or rhetoric, but from understanding and rational argumentation.

Accordingly, when Socrates disagrees with Thrasymachus' conception of justice and Thrasymachus responds in exasperation, 'If you are not convinced by what I was saying, what more can I do for you? Should I take the argument and ram it into your soul?', Socrates suggests that Thrasymachus permit a reasoned discussion of his position (*Rep.* 1, 345 B 4-C 9). When Hippocrates rushes to his bed at the crack of dawn expecting Socrates to escort him to Callias' to become Protagoras' student, Socrates suggests that they discuss Hippocrates' intentions and understanding of the situation. When Critias suggests a particular conception of self-control and expects Socrates' agreement, Socrates responds:

Critias . . . you treat me as though I professed to know the things concerning which I pose questions and needed only the will to agree with you. But the fact of the matter is that I join you in enquiry each time an assertion is made because I myself am ignorant. Therefore, I want to consider first, before telling you whether I agree. (*Charm.* 165 B 5-C 2)

When Crito, anxious and dismayed, arrives at Socrates' prison cell explaining that Socrates must allow him to bribe the guard to let Socrates escape, lest Crito himself be considered negligent of his friend's welfare, Socrates suggests that they ignore common opinion and examine the arguments for a particular course of action. As Socrates says, 'I am not only now but always a man who follows nothing but the reasoning that on consideration seems best to me' (*Crito* 46 B 3-5).

¹⁵ A brief account of the history of the interpretation of aporia in the early dialogues can be found in Wolfsdorf, 'Aporia', 1-41.

In short, reason should govern one's convictions and conduct—hence, the dialogues' persistent identification of excellence and knowledge and emphasis upon the value of knowledge for living well. Accordingly, the texts strive to demonstrate the process of giving reasons and justifying beliefs and courses of action. Notably, the discussions do not always succeed in finding compelling reasons or in reaching satisfactory conclusions; some dialogues end in aporia. Yet the dramaturgical function of aporia corresponds to this very emphasis on the rational justification of belief.

Plato's early dialogues (arguably) encompass fourteen texts: *Apology*, *Charmides*, *Crito*, *Euthydemus*, *Euthyphro*, *Gorgias*, *Hippias Major*, *Hippias Minor*, *Ion*, *Laches*, *Lysis*, *Meno*, *Protagoras*, and *Republic* 1.¹⁶ The philosophical discussions in the seven non-definitional dialogues concern the following topics: whether the prosecution of Socrates is just (*Apology*); whether it is right for Socrates to escape from prison (*Crito*); whether Euthydemus' and Dionysodorus' eristic dialectic is valuable (*Euthydemus*); the relative value of a life of pleasure or goodness, specifically, the identity of rhetoric, whether orators and tyrants have power and live well, and whether it is better to suffer injustice than to do it (*Gorgias*); whether voluntary wrongdoing is better than involuntary wrongdoing (*Hippias Minor*); whether Ion has knowledge (*Ion*); whether excellence is teachable (*Protagoras*).

Every definitional dialogue ends in aporia. *Hippias Minor* and *Protagoras* end in some degree of aporia. For instance, in *Hippias Minor* the argument compels Socrates' conclusion that the good man voluntarily does wrong, but he finds this contrary to his intuitions and difficult to accept (*H.Min.* 376 B 8–C 1). The other five non-definitional dialogues (*Apology*, *Crito*, *Euthydemus*, *Gorgias*, and *Ion*) do not end in aporia. For example, in *Gorgias* Socrates

¹⁶ Issues of chronology and, to a lesser extent, authenticity persist. For example, it is debated whether *Republic* 1 was written significantly earlier than the rest of *Republic*. I assume that it was. It is sometimes claimed that *Meno* 80 ff. does not reflect the philosophical content of the early period. This is irrelevant for my discussion. *Hippias Major* is occasionally regarded as inauthentic. I assume it is genuine. Some important recent contributions to these matters—with which I am not always in agreement—include C. Kahn, 'Did Plato Write Socratic Dialogues?', *Classical Quarterly*, NS 31 (1981), 305–20; H. Thesleff, *Studies in Platonic Chronology* (Helsinki, 1982); id., 'Platonic Chronology', *Phronesis*, 34 (1989), 1–26; C. Young, 'Plato and Computer Dating', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 12 (1994), 227–50. All are reprinted in Smith, *Plato*. See also D. Nails, *Agora, Academy, and the Conduct of Philosophy* (Dordrecht, 1995).

strongly affirms that it is better to suffer injustice than to do it, although he disavows knowing this (*Gorg.* 508 E 7–509 B 1).

In some cases a dialogue concludes with a proposition that Plato clearly intended to advance;¹⁷ for instance, those in *Apology*, *Crito*, *Gorgias*, and *Ion*.¹⁸ However, the non-definitional dialogues' non-aporetic conclusions do not necessarily convey positions that Plato intended to advance. *Hippias Minor* is the obvious example. The historical Socrates seems to have believed that nobody voluntarily does wrong and so that the good man does not voluntarily do wrong. At several points in the early dialogues Socrates makes this claim.¹⁹ It is implausible to suppose that when he composed *Hippias Minor* Plato intended to advance the view that the good man voluntarily does wrong. Thus, it is a question why Plato composed the enquiry to conclude with a proposition that he did not intend to advance.

The aporetic conclusions in the definitional dialogues are similarly puzzling. Throughout the early writings Socrates suggests that excellence is a kind of knowledge. However, Plato did not conclude the definitional dialogues by having Socrates affirm, with whatever degree of confidence, that, whatever precisely it is, the definiendum is a kind of knowledge.²⁰ How are the conclusions in *Hippias Minor* and the definitional dialogues to be explained?

In composing the early dialogues Plato had some interest in developing and advancing arguments for (putatively) true ethical and, to a lesser extent, epistemological propositions; for instance, the conclusions of non-definitional dialogues such as *Gorgias* and *Crito*. But Plato was also concerned to convey the view that belief in a given ethical proposition should be rationally justified. Accordingly, through the dialectical enquiries that Socrates promotes,

¹⁷ One might worry here that I am committing the intentional fallacy. I cannot see that the particular claims that follow are unreasonable, even though they attribute intentional states to Plato. In sect. 5 I offer a more restricted conception of *that which Plato intended to advance in a particular dialogue* as well as further justification for my attribution of particular intentional states to Plato.

¹⁸ In other words, Socrates' prosecution and conviction were unjust, Socrates was right not to have tried to escape from prison, Ion lacks knowledge, and it is better to suffer injustice than to do it.

¹⁹ Admittedly, significant controversy surrounds the interpretation of this claim. For the most important recent contribution, with bibliography, see H. Segvic, 'No One Errs Willingly: The Meaning of Socratic Intellectualism', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 19 (2000), 1–45.

²⁰ Of course, *Lysis* and *Hippias Major* must be understood as exempt from this comment because friendship is a relation and not a psychological state and beauty is treated as a property of inanimate entities as well as human beings.

Plato demonstrates processes of and attempts at rational justification.

In concluding *Hippias Minor* with a proposition that he probably did not intend to advance and in concluding the definitional dialogues without affirming, however tentatively, that the definiendum is a kind of knowledge, Plato drew particular attention to the character and quality of the arguments upon which the conclusions rest. As such, the aporiai in these texts compel the reader to examine the grounds of his beliefs rather than to adopt, even on Plato's own authority, but with insufficient grounds or inadequate examination or understanding, any particular ethical proposition.

These texts' emphasis on the examination of the grounds of ethical belief is consonant with their propaedeutic character. Tenable conclusions require understanding, which requires rational enquiry. Granted, Plato could have concluded the definitional dialogues with Socrates, however tentatively, affirming that the definiendum is a kind of knowledge, on the grounds that this is the most reasonable view developed in the discussion. Moreover, this would not have entirely undermined his interest in demonstrating the value of rationally justifying ethical belief. Plato's concern with the rational justification of ethical belief clearly pervades all the early writings. Even in *Gorgias*, whose conclusion strongly affirms that it is worse to do injustice than to suffer it, Plato is able to convey the importance of justifying this proposition on rational grounds. Still, the decision to conclude *Hippias Minor* and the definitional dialogues absurdly or aporetically reflects a relative degree of emphasis on and preference for conveying the significance of justifying ethical belief.

This explanation of the conclusions of the definitional dialogues and *Hippias Minor* ironically suggests that it is the non-definitional dialogues' non-aporetic, non-absurd conclusions that require explanation. Such explanations are readily available. For example, *Apology* and *Crito* constitute a distinct set. Were Socrates unable to present a compelling defence of his mission or to offer a compelling explanation of his decision to remain in prison, this would trivialize his life's activity. In so far as Plato wished to examine whether Socrates' activity was just or whether he should have escaped from prison, there was no question of concluding consideration of these topics in *Apology* and *Crito* aporetically.

In sum, the aporetic conclusions in some early dialogues es-

pecially demonstrate Plato's emphasis on the process of rational enquiry and justification. In sacrificing explicit endorsement of a particular proposition, aporia serves to endorse the authority of reason.

4. Audience and α -structure

Just as distinct objectives inform individual dialogues, Plato most likely did not compose every early dialogue with precisely the same audience in mind. Still, generally speaking, Plato's intended audience must have been mainly drawn from the Athenian leisured class.²¹ This is clear from the fact that serious pursuit of philosophy would have required means for ample leisure time. Also, many dialogues are set in locations that only the wealthy would have frequented; for example, public and private training grounds and wrestling schools: the Lyceum (*Euthydemus*), Mikkos' palaestra (*Lysis*), Taureas' palaestra (*Charmides*); or the homes of the rich: Callias' (*Protagoras*)²² and Cephalus' (*Republic* 1).²³ Moreover, the dramatic characters are engaged in costly or distinctly upper-class activities: seeking a teacher of hoplite exercises (*Laches*), attending a private epideictic demonstration (*Gorgias*, *Hippias Minor*).

Given the prevalent theme of educating the youth and the role of youths,²⁴ the dialogues appear to have targeted the young adults of this social class as well as its older members. Moreover, foreigners might have constituted part of the intended audience, but abundant topical allusions suggest that familiarity with Athenian social history was necessary for comprehending the texts' historical dimensions.²⁵

²¹ J. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families* (Oxford, 1971), pp. xvii-xxxi, argues that this group consisted of approximately 1,200 adult Athenian males.

²² As Hippias notes, Callias' is 'one of the most opulent houses in the city' (*Prot.* 337 D 6-7).

²³ Cephalus was known as the wealthiest Athenian metic. See Nails, *People*.

²⁴ In *Apology* Socrates is on trial in part for corrupting the youth. In *Euthyphro* Socrates announces that Meletus is prosecuting him for corrupting the youth. In *Charmides* Socrates is concerned with the state of the Athenian youth. In *Laches* Lysimachus and Melesias are seeking proper education for their sons. In *Protagoras* Hippocrates is seeking education from Protagoras. In *Lysis* Socrates is focused on the youth Lysis and Menexenus.

²⁵ Note that, aside from the famous itinerant teachers, the foreigners in the early dialogues are resident aliens. Meno is an exception; Euthyphro is too, although Naxos, his home, was under Athenian jurisdiction.

The early dialogues were not written for *philosophers*. Rather, their intended audience consisted of potential adherents. This follows from the claim that the texts are propaedeutic, but it is particularly evident from another common feature of the dialogues which I call 'α-structure'. α-structure fulfils a linear pedagogical function: to lead the intended audience from a conventional or traditional conception of a topic to a novel, unconventional, Socratic-Platonic²⁶ conception of that topic. In the non-aporetic dialogues the discussions conclude by affirming the Socratic-Platonic conception. In the aporetic dialogues they advance towards such a conception without confirming it.

In fact, *aporia* often results from a conflict of conventional and novel views. For example, at the beginning of the investigation in *Laches* it is assumed that courage is part of excellence, a conventional view. At the end of the discussion courage is defined as the knowledge of good and bad. The final definition is rejected because excellence is thought to be the knowledge of good and bad, and courage and excellence are not identical. Similarly, in *Lysis* the traditional view of friendship based on likeness is introduced and refuted early in the discussion. By the end of the investigation, Socrates has developed a novel conception of friendship based on belonging (*οἰκειότης*). However, in clarifying a final description of this view, *Lysis* and *Menexenus* confusedly propose that the good is friend to the good, the bad to the bad, and the neither-good-nor-bad to the neither-good-nor-bad. This suggestion, which Socrates' novel conception of friendship does not compel, conflicts with the refutation of friendship based on likeness; thus, the investigation ends.

Other examples of α-structure include the following. *Apology* begins with Socrates clarifying the popular conception of himself and his guilt for impiety and corrupting the youth. It ends with his clarification and justification of his mission and his innocence. The investigation in *Charmides* begins with Charmides' popular conceptions of self-control as quietness and modesty and concludes with a conception of self-control as a kind of epistemic state. *Crito* begins with Crito's suggestion, explicitly based on appeal to com-

²⁶ By 'Socratic-Platonic' I mean a view identifiable with the historical Socrates or with one that Plato intended to advance as a compelling alternative to the related conventional or traditional view. In fact, occasionally these may be identical. In any event, the views Plato advances in these texts are clearly indebted to the historical Socrates.

mon opinion, that Socrates should escape from prison. It ends with Socrates' argument for remaining in prison. *Ion* begins with the false assumption that, as an inspired rhapsode, Ion has knowledge; it ends with the view that he lacks knowledge and that knowledge and divine inspiration are distinct. The investigation of the relation between the components of excellence in *Protagoras* begins with the conventional conception that the principal components of excellence are indeed distinct and not identical to knowledge. It concludes with the unconventional conception that the putative parts of excellence are similar, if not identical, and a kind of knowledge.

α-structure pervades the early dialogues. It operates as a broad structuring principle organizing entire discussions as well as parts of these. It also operates in relation to minor aspects of the dialogues. For example, in the early dialogues where Socrates' interlocutor is an alleged expert—*Gorgias*, *Protagoras*, *Hippias Major*, *Hippias Minor*, *Euthydemus*, *Euthyphro*, *Laches*, *Ion*—the text begins by conveying an impression of that figure as wise. However, through the investigation, the figure is exposed as ignorant in so far as he fails to resolve the discussion's central problem. Similarly, Thrasymachus, Meno, and Critias are unable to offer satisfactory accounts of justice, excellence, and self-control.

Some scholars have also observed the following related characteristic of the dialogues. In texts where Socrates engages multiple interlocutors, the views of successive interlocutors are increasingly more sophisticated, unconventional, or difficult.²⁷ For instance, Critias' views are more sophisticated than Charmides', Nicias' more unconventional than Laches', Thrasymachus' more challenging than Cephalus' or Polemarchus'. Moreover, in some cases a single interlocutor's views are more sophisticated at the end of the investigation than at the beginning. The hypothesis that the interlocutor has gained insight from the intervening discussion is not always defensible, for this condition can be extremely pronounced. For example, in *Hippias Major*,²⁸ even granting the intervening discussion, it seems implausible to assume that certain of Hippias' later remarks are psychologically consistent with

²⁷ See H. Benson, 'The Priority of Definition and the Socratic Elenchus', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 8 (1990), 19–65 at 25–6.

²⁸ Contrast Socrates' criticism, through his alter ego, of Hippias' initial definitions as simple-minded (*H.Maj.* 293 D 8) with Hippias' relatively sophisticated criticism of Socrates' method late in the investigation (*H.Maj.* 301 B 2–C 3).

his earlier ones.²⁹ The operation of α -structure offers a more compelling explanation.

Generally speaking, the contrast between conventional or traditional opinions and Socratic-Platonic opinions about which the dialogues are organized according to α -structure corresponds to the opposition of philosophy and non-philosophy in so far as conventional or traditional opinions represent social, political, and, broadly, established authoritative positions that Plato aimed to criticize. This is as much true of the early non-aporetic dialogues as of the aporetic ones, and it occurs with regard both to the specific propositions debated in the discussions and to the grounds of those discussions. Precisely, with respect to the latter point, the value of the rational justification of ethical belief often either implicitly or explicitly contrasts with the disvalue of the following alternative grounds of ethical belief. It is unsatisfactory to maintain given ethical positions merely because they are common or held by the majority, traditional, advanced by an allegedly wise person or expert, or because the position has been expressed in a rhetorically compelling manner. In short, the early dialogues expose as inadequate conventional and traditional views as well as the traditional or conventional grounds upon which such views are maintained.

In sum, Plato composed the early dialogues according to α -structure for propaedeutic reasons, to turn his readers from the non-philosophical to the philosophical life. More precisely, he attempted to address his intended audience in the doxastic condition in which he found them, namely, committed to conventional or traditional beliefs and modes of life. Consequently, the dialogues tend to begin with the expression or affirmation of such beliefs. In the course of the discussions, these views are scrutinized, undermined, and rejected. Meanwhile, novel, Socratic-Platonic views are introduced. The latter are often introduced as a means of criticizing the former. Thus, ideally, the reader is led through a critique of his own views; he is impressed by the problems of the grounds of his belief; and he is shown, if not superior beliefs, at least an alternative and superior manner of grounding his belief and, more generally, orienting his life.

The prevalence of α -structure and the notion that the early dialogues' target audience consisted not of adherents, but *potential*

²⁹ In particular, I am thinking of Hippias' critique of Socrates' method at *H. Maj.* 301 B 2-C 3.

adherents of philosophy also relates to an important idea regarding the interrelation of the early dialogues. Although the topics treated among the texts are related and overlapping, no early dialogue demands another as a prerequisite for its comprehension. Every text has the same point of departure, common opinion. In this respect, the texts function as self-contained explorations. Contrast this with a textbook the understanding of whose successive chapters logically depends upon prior ones. Accordingly, it seems that Plato did not intend the early dialogues to be read in a particular order. Rather, each text serves as a fresh occasion to explore an ethical or epistemological topic, and, again, that exploration begins with conventional and traditional opinions. As will be seen, the notion that the early dialogues share a common *doxastic baseline* (as I call it) is particularly important for interpreting Socrates' utterances.

5. The uses of Socrates

The foregoing considerations provide more secure foundations upon which to understand the uses of Socrates in Plato's early dialogues and so to interpret Socrates' utterances and their relation to Plato. In so far as the texts dramatize the opposition of philosophy and non-philosophy, Socrates is clearly the outstanding proponent of philosophy. In so far as the texts criticize established authority, Socrates serves to interrogate and undermine the claims of alleged experts and authority figures. This suggests that Socrates' beliefs should be identified with Plato's. However, this claim requires several qualifications.

First, it is necessary to distinguish Plato's beliefs from views that in a particular dialogue he intended to advance as compelling alternatives to related conventional and traditional views, particularly those scrutinized and rejected in the given dialogue.³⁰ In a given case, the two might be identical. But Plato's views on a particular topic were probably deeper and more elaborate than those advanced in a given dialogue. The *aporiai* in which more than half the early dialogues end support this view. For instance, Plato surely believed that human excellence was a kind of knowledge. But no

³⁰ It is also necessary to distinguish between Plato's beliefs at various times in his career and perhaps also between those he held when he first wrote the given dialogue and, if applicable, those he held when he completed revision of that dialogue.

definitional dialogue concludes with Socrates, however tentatively, affirming that the definiendum is a kind of knowledge. A similar point pertains to *Hippias Minor*'s conclusion. Plato surely did not endorse the view that the good person voluntarily does wrong. Moreover, he must have had some understanding of the problems of the argument on the basis of which Socrates and Hippias reach this conclusion.

Furthermore, in some dialogues Plato simply withholds information that, as other dialogues indicate, he thought necessary for full comprehension of the subject matter treated. For example, in *Apology* Socrates stresses the importance of pursuing ethical knowledge. However, in contrast to the definitional dialogues, he says nothing about the importance of pursuing definitions. There is no compelling reason to believe that when Plato composed *Apology* he considered definitional knowledge unnecessary for ethical knowledge. It is more plausible that his objectives in *Apology* simply did not require him to introduce that point. Likewise, in *Laches*, *Charmides*, and *Republic* 1 Plato does not indicate that the definiendum is a form (εἶδος), whereas in *Meno*, *Euthyphro*, and *Hippias Major* he does. Again, there is no compelling reason to believe that when Plato composed the former set of texts he did not view the definienda as forms. In the light of such considerations, it makes more sense to examine the relation between Socrates' beliefs and those that in a given text Plato intended to endorse as compelling alternatives to the relevant conventional and traditional views, as opposed to Plato's beliefs *per se*.

Granting this, not all of Socrates' utterances should be identified with those Plato intended to advance in a given text. Consider Socrates' outlandish interpretation of Simonides' ode in *Protagoras*. It may be objected that in such cases one must distinguish Socrates' utterances from his attitude towards them; like any complex personality, sometimes Socrates is insincere. For various reasons, sometimes he does not say what he believes; occasionally he is portrayed as joking, deploying *ad hominem* arguments, deliberately refuting his interlocutor, being ironic, or simply polite.

In many instances Socrates is being sincere, but still, his views should not be identified with those Plato intended to endorse. For example, when Plato intended to compose a dialogue to advance a particular ethical proposition, he tended to make Socrates advance

that position (*Gorgias*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Ion*, *Protagoras*).³¹ But when Plato intended to conclude a dialogue in aporia or with a conclusion to which he was unsympathetic, he used Socrates to do that as well. Specifically, he made Socrates succumb to aporia. Yet it is doubtful that Plato was perplexed, at least not precisely as Socrates is. Most generally, Socrates' beliefs are constrained in so far as he is a character in a fiction. He cannot foresee how his discussion will go, whereas Plato does.

Inconsistencies in Socrates' beliefs among texts (intertextually) and within individual texts (intratextually) provide the most significant and decisive evidence that these beliefs should not always be identified with views Plato intended to advance. For example, Socrates' view of death differs in *Apology* and *Gorgias*.³² Socrates' attitude towards Pericles differs between *Protagoras* and *Gorgias*.³³ In *Protagoras* Socrates argues that holiness and justice are identical or as similar as can be; in *Gorgias* he implies that they are distinct; in *Euthyphro* he says that holiness is part of justice.³⁴ In *Protagoras* Socrates argues that courage is the knowledge of what is to be feared and dared; in *Laches* he argues against this view.³⁵ At the beginning of *Hippias Major* Socrates concedes to Hippias that the questions 'What is the beautiful?' and 'What is beautiful?' are equivalent. However, in *Euthyphro* and *Meno* (and later in *Hippias Major*) he emphasizes the distinction between forms and their instances.³⁶ In *Gorgias* Socrates says that like is friend to like; in *Lysis* he argues against this view.³⁷ The list could be extended to include some deep and controversial matters; for example, Socrates' views on the relation of definitional knowledge to non-definitional knowledge, on that between the components of excellence, and on that of pleasure to goodness.³⁸

³¹ Although notably in *Protagoras*, for example, Socrates does not begin the investigation believing that excellence can be taught.

³² *Gorg.* 523 A 1–526 D 5; *Ap.* 40 C 4–41 C 7.

³³ *Prot.* 319 D 7–320 A 2; *Gorg.* 515 B 6–516 D 3.

³⁴ *Prot.* 330 C 1–332 A 1; *Gorg.* 507 B 1–3; *Euthph.* 12 D 5–E 2.

³⁵ *Prot.* 360 D 4–5; *La.* 196 C 10 ff.

³⁶ Cf. *H. Maj.* 287 D 3–10; *Meno* 72 A 6 ff.; *Euthph.* 5 C 4–D 5; 6 D 8–E 1. Note that I am using the word 'instance' to cover types as well as tokens. See D. Wolfsdorf, 'Understanding the "What-is-F?" Question', *Apeiron*, 36 (2003), 191–204.

³⁷ *Gorg.* 510 B 2–4; *Lys.* 213 E 3–215 A 4; 222 B 6–8.

³⁸ Also, on the highly controversial topic of inconsistencies among Socrates' avowals and disavowals of knowledge, see D. Wolfsdorf, 'Socrates' Avowals of Knowledge', forthcoming in *Phronesis*, 49 (2004).

Beyond such intertextual inconsistencies are numerous intratextual inconsistencies. For example, early in *Apology* Socrates emphasizes his ignorance of the value of death. However, at the end of *Apology*, although he continues to disavow knowledge of the value of death, the outcome of the trial persuades him that death is a good thing. Thus, his conviction regarding the positive value of death shifts.³⁹ At the beginning of *Protagoras* Socrates denies that excellence can be taught, but at the dialogue's conclusion he believes it can be taught.⁴⁰ In *Lysis* Socrates initially believes that the presence of badness in the neither-good-nor-bad is responsible for friendship. He then rejects this view and suggests that friendship could occur if badness did not exist because desire is responsible for friendship.⁴¹ In *Charmides* Socrates initially thinks it would be a great good if every member of society performed only those tasks in which he is knowledgeable. Subsequently, he suggests that only the knowledge of good and bad would bring happiness to society.⁴²

The pervasive theme of opposition between philosophy and non-philosophy again provides some clarification of such inconsistencies and their prevalence. In endorsing the value of philosophy over non-philosophy Plato's objective was not merely to replace established authority figures with Socrates. Given Plato's critique of authority, this would be inconsistent with the spirit of philosophy itself. In fact, Socrates is generally portrayed as paradigmatically anti-authoritarian. He often proclaims himself to be a layperson in contrast to the many alleged experts he engages. He generally describes himself as speaking with the vulgar, not in a trained or rhetorically sophisticated manner. He sometimes claims to have had no teacher, and he tends to disavow ethical knowledge. In *Apology* he characterizes himself as the wisest Greek, but only in so far as he recognizes the triviality of his knowledge. He consistently disclaims the ability to teach, and he clearly does not teach, at least not in a conventional way, let alone dogmatize. Accordingly, Socrates is often portrayed as hesitant to assert his views, open-minded, willing to hear others' opinions, and intent upon engaging his interlocutors in joint investigations. Socrates' occasional shifts of opinion in the course of investigations, his development of new views on the basis

³⁹ *Ap.* 29 A 4–B 1; 40 B 7–C 3.

⁴⁰ *Prot.* 319 A 9–B 1 (and 319 B 1 ff. for Socrates' justification for his belief); 361 A 6–C 2.

⁴¹ *Lys.* 218 B 8–C 2; 218 C 5 ff.

⁴² *Charm.* 171 E 6–172 A 3; 172 C 4–D 5.

of new arguments, and his capacity to admit mistakes are explicable, at least in part, in this light. Recognition of one's epistemic limitations, willingness to admit ignorance, to subject one's beliefs to scrutiny, and to revise these in the light of alternative explanations is consonant with and indicative of philosophy. In addition, shifts in Socrates' views in the course of some early dialogues also demonstrate how understanding develops through the process of rational enquiry.

Occasionally Plato also makes Socrates assert conventional or traditional views that Plato did not intend to advance, irrespective of the function of α -structure. The reason for these occurrences pertains to the point, introduced earlier, concerning the texts' doxastic baseline: each text serves as a fresh occasion to explore a given ethical or epistemological topic, and the point of departure for each exploration is common opinion. Accordingly, unconventional Socratic-Platonic views tend to emerge through the course of the discussion. Otherwise, if they were made without prior justification, the unconventionality of the view might provoke confusion in the interlocutor and, given the propaedeutic function of the text, the intended reader. In that case, the author would be obliged to have Socrates explain or defend that unconventional assertion. This, of course, does occur to some extent. However, Plato cannot have Socrates asserting the unconventional Socratic-Platonic view of every concept that might arise in the course of a discussion. That would result in a full-scale exposition of Plato's philosophical views and thus entirely transform the dialogues into treatises. Accordingly, Socrates' assertions occasionally conform to common opinions, especially in cases where the subjects of those opinions are not the main subject of the discussion. Such common opinions are, therefore, simply employed in passages whose objective is the investigation, problematization, or advancement of some *other* view. An indication that Plato did not intend to advance a given Socratic assertion in such cases is the conjunction of that assertion with the following features: (1) the opinion asserted is conventional or traditional; however, it is not scrutinized or contested within the passage or text in which it is employed; (2) in another text Socrates does problematize or even refute it; (3) Socrates does not repeat the assertion in several dialogues.

Whereas the operation of α -structure often explains intratextual inconsistencies among Socrates' assertions, the texts' doxastic

baseline often explains intertextual inconsistencies. For example, in *Gorgias* Socrates assumes that friendship is based on likeness. The assumption is employed, for convenience, to advance a different point, namely, that in befriending a tyrant one corrupts one's soul. The argument begins with the assumption that in order to avoid suffering harm one must either be a ruler in one's own city or else a supporter of the government (*Gorg.* 510A 6–10). Socrates then suggests that because friendship is based on likeness, to befriend a tyrant one must make oneself like a tyrant and thereby corrupt one's soul.

In *Gorgias* Socrates does not problematize the nature of friendship. In *Lysis* Socrates does; this is the central topic of the text. Furthermore, Socrates' view of friendship in *Gorgias* is traditional, based on received wisdom, whereas early in the investigation in *Lysis* he argues against the view of friendship based on likeness. In contrast, the view of friendship based on belonging—towards which the investigation develops—is unconventional. Furthermore, the argument in *Gorgias* is *ad hominem* or *ad hoc* in that Plato did not intend to endorse the view that in order to avoid suffering harm one must either be a ruler or a supporter of the government. Rather, evidence from *Gorgias* and other dialogues such as *Apology* suggests that Plato intended to advance the view that the conventional conception of harm is unsatisfactory and, accordingly, that a good person can suffer none. These considerations support the view that neither in *Lysis* nor in *Gorgias* did Plato intend to advance the view that friendship is based on likeness—even though in *Gorgias* Socrates assumes that it is.

Another example is Socrates' claim in *Euthyphro* that holiness is part of justice. In *Euthyphro* Socrates problematizes the nature of holiness. However, he does not problematize the relation of the putative components of excellence. He does not argue that holiness is part of justice, but simply asserts it. In *Protagoras* Socrates does problematize the relation of the putative components of excellence; this topic is central to the discussion. Moreover, he argues for the unconventional view that holiness and justice are identical or at least as similar as can be. Furthermore, evidence from other early dialogues such as *Charmides* and *Laches* suggests that Plato intended to advance the view that the components of excellence are identical or at least more closely related than in the conventional conception Protagoras expresses. In *Euthyphro* Socrates' view of the

relation of holiness and justice is commonsensical, at least within the legalistic context of the dialogue. Socrates and Euthyphro are engaged in cases concerning impiety. In so far as matters of justice are conceived as coextensive with matters of positive law, matters of holiness clearly do form a subset of judicial matters. In short, there is good reason to believe that Plato did not intend to endorse the view that holiness is part of justice, even though in *Euthyphro* Socrates says it is.

In sum, Plato sometimes conveniently put conventional, traditional, or commonsensical views into Socrates' mouth, but without intending to advance those views. Of course, Socrates occasionally also asserts conventional or traditional views that Plato did intend to advance, e.g. the view that the components of excellence are good and beautiful. But in this case it is clear for the following reasons that Plato intended to advance that view. First, Socrates never objects to it. Second, Socrates repeats the view in several dialogues. Third, in *Republic* 1, when Thrasymachus suggests that justice is not a component of excellence and so neither good nor beautiful, Socrates is shocked and forcefully argues against him. In short, it is necessary to evaluate Socrates' conventional or traditional assertions in the light of their functions within the dialogues in which they occur. In particular, this involves the recognition that the early dialogues share a particular doxastic baseline.

The foregoing considerations about Plato's uses of Socrates, and the general conclusion that Plato uses Socrates in various ways to achieve various objectives and that these uses can result in inconsistencies and even psychological implausibilities, provoke a deeper question about the character Socrates in the early dialogues. To what extent should interpreters treat the main characters in the early dialogues as a single character with a transtextual identity?

Consider Socrates' intertextual and intratextual inconsistencies. One may be inclined to wonder why—despite a long history of experience in philosophical discussions—Socrates has not come to stable, if not certain, views on the ethical topics he examines; or, why Socrates continues to express some naive conventional or traditional beliefs; or again, why, if in one dialogue Socrates advances a given proposition, in another dialogue he asserts a contrary or adjusted view.

The basic and general solution to such particular difficulties requires relinquishing the view that the Socrates of a given early

dialogue is in a strong sense identical to the Socrates of another early dialogue. Instead, it is more reasonable to adopt the following weaker view. Plato had his reasons for creating a main character named 'Socrates' to serve as the philosophical protagonist in his early dialogues. These reasons clearly include debt and tribute to the historical Socrates. Still, Plato did not feel so bound to the historical Socrates that the Socrates in any one dialogue had to be strictly identifiable with the historical Socrates, and that, as a result, Socrates in one early dialogue had to be strictly identifiable with Socrates in another early dialogue.

Clearly, a general body of commitments governs Plato's depiction of Socrates in every early dialogue. Socrates is not merely a vague stock character, the philosophical type. But again, Plato felt free to manipulate Socrates in various ways to achieve various ends.⁴³ Any interpretative project that aims to determine what Plato intended to advance in his early dialogues or in any given early dialogue must acknowledge and respect this fact. The attempt to assemble all of Socrates' utterances on a given topic and to distil from these a consistent conception of that topic may succeed in certain cases, but as a general interpretative principle it is naive. It ignores the dramaturgy and dramatic dimensions that distinguish Plato's literary-philosophical texts.

In place of the mouthpiece principle I offer the qualified conception of Socrates as Plato's favoured character.⁴⁴ Socrates is the character to whom, of all dramatic characters, Plato is most sympathetic. Accordingly, Socrates often expresses or develops views Plato intended to advance. Socrates is the philosopher in texts that dramatize the opposition of philosophy and non-philosophy and argue for the superiority of the former to the latter. Yet Plato did not intend to endorse all the views Socrates asserts. The central reasons for this qualification have been described above. Moreover, I regard them as quite comprehensive. Granted, it would be naive to assume that one could specify an exhaustive set of criteria for determining whether or not, in each case, Plato intended to advance a given Socratic assertion. The interpreter is bound to consider cases on an individual basis. Yet, as a general principle,

⁴³ The use of Socrates and his alter ego in *Hippias Major* is perhaps the outstanding example.

⁴⁴ This concept is first introduced in D. Wolfsdorf, 'Plato and the Mouthpiece Theory', *Ancient Philosophy*, 19 (1999), 13-24.

all such considerations should entail examination of the utterance's context and its function within the passage, within the economy of the text as a whole, and in relation to the contents and functions of the other dialogues as well. In the process, one of course enters the hermeneutic circle, and in the case of Plato's early dialogues this involves some remarkable difficulties. But it need not be vicious; the foregoing considerations and recommendations provide the requisite bearings.

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KNOWLEDGE AND TRUE BELIEF IN THE *MENO*

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I

IN *Meno* 97 A ff. Plato, for the first time, explains how, in his view, knowledge differs from true belief;¹ he also notes some similarities between them. This is often thought to be the first passage in Western philosophy to say that knowledge is true belief plus something. Some commentators think it is also the first passage to say that knowledge is justified true belief: that is, that justification is what must be added to true belief so as to yield knowledge.² However, both the view that the *Meno* says that knowledge is justified

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¹ The (probably earlier) *Gorgias* explicitly distinguishes knowledge (both ἐπιστήμη and εἰδέναι are used) from belief (πίστις), but not from true belief; see 454 c 7–E 9. Cf. *Chrm.* 168 A. *Meno* 85 B–D (which I discuss below) makes it clear that he thinks knowledge differs from true belief. But it is not until 97 A ff. that he says how they differ. Plato speaks interchangeably of true (ἀληθής) and of correct (ὀρθή) δόξα; contrast e.g. 97 B 1 with 97 B 9. I use 'belief' to translate δόξα; others sometimes use 'opinion' or 'judgement'. 96 E–100 C uses various forms of γινώσκειν, ἐπίστασθαι, εἰδέναι, φρονεῖν, νοεῖν, and σοφία. So far as I can see, Plato uses them all interchangeably here (though he does not always do so elsewhere). I render them all by 'know'.

² D. Armstrong, for example, says that this is the 'first recorded occurrence' of the claim that knowledge is justified true belief (*Belief, Truth and Knowledge* (Cambridge, 1973), 137; I assume he has 97–8 in mind, but it is miscited as 87–8). E. Gettier says that 'Plato seems to consider some such definition at *Theaetetus* 201 and perhaps accepts one at *Meno* 98' ('Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?', *Analysis*, 23 (1963), 121–3 at 121). Cf. D. Bostock, *Plato's Theaetetus* (Oxford, 1988), 203; M. Williams, *Problems of Knowledge* (Oxford, 2001), 21; P. Moser, *Knowledge and Evidence* (Cambridge, 1989), 232; J. Rosenberg, *Thinking about Knowing* (Oxford, 2002), 132.