

HESIOD, PRODICUS, AND THE SOCRATICS ON WORK AND PLEASURE

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1. Socrates and Hesiod's *Works and Days* 287–319

SINCE poetry, especially the epic poetry of Homer and Hesiod, was central to Greek culture in the late archaic and classical periods, those individuals engaged in the formation and early development of philosophy, in many ways a reaction and alternative to conventional culture and forms of expression, inevitably engaged with their illustrious predecessors. Plato's criticism of poetry in the *Republic* is the most obvious example. But in general, philosophers' engagements range from criticism of the poets as established authorities to employment of them, in various ways, as constructive models or as corroborators of their ideas. In all cases, interpretation of the poetry itself was required, and this too ranged from the conventional to the idiosyncratic. The aim of this paper is to shed light on the ways that one passage in Hesiod's *Works and Days* particularly served Prodicus and in turn the Socratics in the formulation of their ethical thought.

The encomium on work in Hesiod's *Works and Days* 287–319 was much discussed in Socratic circles. Socrates himself seems to have been one important impetus to this discussion. Evidence comes from Xenophon's response to accusations made against Socrates:

his accuser said that he selected from the most renowned poets the most base verses and used them as evidence in teaching his associates to be malefactors and tyrants. For example, Hesiod's line 'No work is a disgrace,

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but idleness is a disgrace'.¹ His accuser said that Socrates explained this line as an injunction by the poet to refrain from no dishonest or disgraceful work, but to do even these for gain. Now when Socrates agreed that it is a benefit and a good to a person to be a worker, harmful and bad to be an idler, and that work is in fact a good, while idleness is bad, by 'working' and 'being a worker' he meant doing something good, and it was those who gamble or do anything else that is wicked and harmful that he called idle. On these assumptions, it would be correct to say: 'No work is a disgrace, but idleness is a disgrace.'²

In this case, the accuser claims that Socrates misappropriated lines of poetry to authorize his own corrupt ethical views. In defence, Xenophon claims that Socrates drew on the poets for salutary wisdom. Contrast Xenophon's account with Libanius', which attributes to Socrates the use of Hesiod's line in a *reductio* of the poet:

And in his cross-examinations Socrates pursues the following sort of method . . . [He] asks his interlocutor whether Hesiod is wise, and the latter, under the influence of common opinion, is compelled to agree. 'But doesn't Hesiod praise all work and claim that no work is a disgrace?' When Socrates poses this second question, one cannot deny it. 'So a burglar or tomb-robber has a wise man, Hesiod, as his witness that he does no wrong.' . . . But no one hurries off from this conversation bent on sordid profit; exactly the opposite happens. For since the poet has been proved wrong . . . they know that one should not engage in every sort of work without exception. (*Decl.* 1. 86)

Libanius has Socrates use Hesiod's line critically, not only to undermine the poet's authority, but also to affirm his own ethical principle.

Again, Plato deploys Hesiod's line in *Charmides* in his own provocative and ironic manner. Critias, future leader of the Thirty Tyrants, has submitted τὸ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν as a definition of sound-mindedness. The phrase literally means 'doing one's own things'; but it is more naturally taken as idiomatic for 'minding one's own business' and so as an antonym of meddlesomeness (*πολυπραγμοσύνη*). As such, in late fifth-century Athens τὸ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν is a catchphrase for anti-democratic sentiment: withdrawal

¹ The line ἔργον δ' οὐδὲν ὄνειδος occurs at *WD* 311. The natural reading is to take οὐδὲν as modifying ὄνειδος, viz.: work is no disgrace. But Socrates takes οὐδὲν as modifying ἔργον, viz.: no work is a disgrace.

² *Mem.* 1. 2. 56-7. Cf. Eust. *In Il.* 1. 382. 28; *In Od.* 2. 143. 4.

and quietism follow disenchantment with Athenian politics.³ In response to Critias' definition Socrates initially takes the phrase in its literal sense and presents an argument to show that making things for others may also be sound-minded. Then, in defence of his definition, Critias insists on distinguishing doing (*πράττειν*), working (*ἐργάζεσθαι*), and making (*ποιεῖν*):

'Tell me,' [Socrates] said, 'do you not call making and doing the same thing?' 'Not at all,' [Critias] replied, 'nor working and making either. I learnt this from Hesiod, who says that no work [*ἔργον*] is a disgrace. Now, do you suppose that if he had given the names of working and doing to such things as you were mentioning just now, there would have been no reproach in shoemaking, selling salt fish, or owning a brothel? . . . For it is things honourably and usefully made that he called works [*ἔργα*]. (*Chrm.* 163 A-C)

Critias defends his definition of sound-mindedness by arguing, on the alleged authority of Hesiod, that *ἔργον* means something well done and beneficial. In this respect Critias' use of Hesiod is akin to Xenophon's in his defence of Socrates. But Critias' use has an ideological edge, for Critias explicitly distinguishes occupations of the lower, predominantly democratic, class from good work.⁴ In short, Critias cites Hesiod approvingly, but gives a distorted interpretation of *ἔργον*. In turn, Plato's use of Hesiod's line is ironic precisely because a future tyrant employs it in the expression of an anti-democratic sentiment, just as Socrates' accuser alleged that Socrates himself misused the line to promote malfeasance and tyranny.

2. Some Prodician distinctions in Plato

In his response to Critias in *Charmides*, Socrates refers to Prodicus:

'Critias,' I said, 'you had hardly begun when I grasped the significance of your speech: you call one's proper things and one's own things good things and the making of good things you call doings. Indeed, I have heard Prodicus make countless distinctions among words.' (163 D)

Socrates' point may simply be that Critias' attempt to distinguish making, doing, and working is akin to Prodicus' well-known prac-

³ See L. B. Carter, *The Quiet Athenian* (Oxford, 1982).

⁴ Socrates then interprets Critias' definition, to Critias' satisfaction, as doing good things.

tice of making semantic distinctions. On the other hand, it is likely that the texts in view of which Prodicus made his semantic distinctions were canonical works of the poetic tradition, including Hesiod's *Works and Days*. Generally speaking, this is consistent with the *ὀρθοπέπεια* we know other sophists, such as Protagoras, practised.⁵ Thus, possibly, the distinction that Critias in *Charmides* introduces echoes one that Prodicus himself made in discussing the Hesiod passage.

In Plato's *Protagoras* Protagoras criticizes and Socrates attempts to defend the consistency of Simonides' Scopas ode. Protagoras claims that Simonides contradicts himself by criticizing Pittacus' maxim that it is hard to be (*ἔμμεναι*) good, while elsewhere in the ode claiming that it is hard to be (*γενέσθαι*) good (339 A–D). Socrates defends Simonides by arguing that the verbs *ἔμμεναι* and *γενέσθαι* mean 'be' and 'become' respectively. Accordingly, Simonides is arguing that it is difficult to become good, but, having once achieved goodness, it is not difficult to remain in that condition. In support of his defence, Socrates calls on Prodicus and cites Hesiod, *WD* 289–92:

Now, as our friend Prodicus says, Protagoras, being and becoming are not the same thing. And if [so], then Simonides does not contradict himself. Perhaps Prodicus and many others might say with Hesiod that to become good is hard, for the gods have placed sweat before excellence. But when one reaches the summit, then it is easy, although it was hard. And when Prodicus heard this he gave me his approval. (340 C–D)

In line 292 of *Works and Days* Hesiod uses the poetic verb *πέλει* in speaking of the ease of possessing goodness, and the regular participle *εὐούσα* in speaking of the difficulty of the attempt to possess goodness: *ῥηιδίη δὴ ἔπειτα πέλει, χαλεπή περ εὐούσα*. Possibly the historical Prodicus used Hesiod's line to distinguish words for being and becoming.⁶

Again, in Plato's *Protagoras*, immediately before the discussion of Simonides' ode, Prodicus and other members of the audience at Callias' house deliver speeches to encourage Socrates and Protagoras to resume their suspended discussion regarding the partition

⁵ See D. Fehling, 'Protagoras und die *ὀρθοπέπεια*', in C. J. Classen (ed.), *Sophistik* (Darmstadt, 1976), 341–7; C. J. Classen, 'The Study of Language amongst Socrates' Contemporaries', *ibid.* 215–47 (Classen treats Prodicus at 230–8).

⁶ If so, I would assume that Prodicus argued that *πέλει* here means 'become'. In that case, Prodicus' assent to Socrates in *Protagoras* would be dramatically ironic.

of goodness.’ Within his speech, Prodicus distinguishes ἡδονή and εὐφροσύνη, the latter of which I translate as ‘appreciation’:

we in the audience would be extremely appreciative [εὐφραίνεσθαι], not pleased [ἡδοίμεσθα]—for being appreciative [εὐφραίνεσθαι] is a condition of learning something and partaking of understanding [φρονήσεως] with the intellect [διανοία] itself, whereas being pleased [ἡδεσθαι] is a condition of one eating something or experiencing some other pleasure [ἡδύ] with the body [σώματι] itself. (*Prot.* 337 C 1–4)

Prodicus’ statement indicates an explanation for his distinction. The use of the word φρόνησις suggests that the basis for Prodicus’ distinction is etymological. In fact, we have a report from Galen in support of the view that at least some of Prodicus’ semantic distinctions had this kind of etymological basis.⁸ In *Protagoras* Prodicus’ distinction between pleasure terms is not connected to Hesiod’s *Works and Days*. However, as we shall see, there is reason to believe that Prodicus’ interest in Hesiod’s encomium on work might have encouraged these distinctions as well.

3. Prodicus on the distinction between pleasure terms

In *Topics* Aristotle suggests a criticism of an interlocutor who mistakenly treats co-referring expressions as though one could be predicated of the other:

In addition, look and see if he has stated a thing to be an accident of itself, taking it to be different because it has a different name, as Prodicus used to divide pleasures into joy [χαράν], delight [τέρψιν], and good cheer [εὐφροσύνην]; for all these are names for the same thing, pleasure. And if anyone says that joy [τὸ χαίρειν] is an accident of good cheer [τὸ εὐφραίνεσθαι], he would be declaring it to be an accident of itself. (112^b21–6)

Aristotle thus confirms Prodicus’ interest in semantic distinctions between pleasure terms. On the other hand, Aristotle’s description does not agree with Plato’s treatment. We also have a testimony regarding Prodicus’ distinction of pleasure terms from Alexander’s comments on Aristotle’s passage:

⁷ Here and throughout I translate ἀρετή as ‘goodness’. This is rather anaemic, but very convenient given the wide range of senses which this word bore from the time of Hesiod to the 4th cent.

⁸ *Nat. fac.* 2. 9.

For ἡδονή and χαρά and εὐφροσύνη and τέρψις are the same thing with respect to their underlying nature and significance. But Prodicus tried to distinguish particular significances for each of these words, just as the Stoics did; for they say that χαρά is rational elation, whereas ἡδονή is irrational elation, and that τέρψις is ἡδονή through the ears, while εὐφροσύνη is ἡδονή through discourse. (*In Top.* 2. 96 Wallies)

But Alexander's report can be explained away. While Alexander states that Prodicus distinguished various pleasure terms, the distinctions he proceeds to clarify are Stoic, not Prodician.

This leaves the discrepancy between Plato and Aristotle. Prodicus surely distinguished pleasure terms, but Plato probably adapted Prodicus' distinctions for his own purposes.⁹ In general, we should be wary of attributing to Prodicus the exact distinctions Plato associates with him. In fact, this is consistent with our conclusion regarding the distinction between πέλαι and εὐσα. Plato makes Socrates speak of a distinction not between these words, but between ἔμμεναι and γενέσθαι. Finally, it is also possible that Prodicus distinguished ἔργον from other senses of 'work', but not necessarily as Critias does.

4. Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles* and Hesiod's *Works and Days*

Although our evidence that Prodicus drew distinctions between words for work and being and becoming on the basis of Hesiod's *Works and Days* is indirect, to say the least, and although we have as yet seen no evidence that Prodicus drew distinctions between words for pleasure on the basis of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, we have good evidence that Hesiod's poem, in particular lines 287–319, influenced Prodicus. The central idea of Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles*, in which the hero must decide between the paths of good-

⁹ Note that Plato reuses the distinction he attributes to Prodicus in *Protagoras*. In *Timaeus* Timaeus discusses the experience of harmonious and inharmonious sounds: 'so they produce a single experience, a mixture of high and low. Hence the pleasure [ἡδονήν] they bring to the ignorant [ἄφροσιν] and the appreciation [εὐφροσύνην] they provide—by their expression of divine harmony in mortal movement—to those of understanding [ἐμφροσιν]' (*Tim.* 80 B 4–8). Note here again that the use of εὐφροσύνη, in contrast to ἡδονή, is related to the word φρόνησις. Consider also the *Timaeus* passage in relation to Socrates' etymology of εὐφροσύνη in the *Cratylus*: 'εὐφροσύνη needs no explanation, for it is clear to everyone that since it is conveyance [φέρεισθαι] of the soul in concord with the world, its name derives from εὐφροσύνη' (*Crat.* 419 D 4–9).

ness and badness, is an allegorical adaptation of the metaphor of the two paths in *WD* 287–92:

It is easy to get hold of badness in abundance. The road to it is smooth, and it dwells close by. But between us and goodness the immortal gods have placed the sweat of our brows. Long and steep is the path that leads to it, and it is rough at first. But when one reaches the summit, then it is easy, although it was hard.¹⁰

These lines occur in the context of Hesiod's exhortation to Perses to cease his idleness and injustice and to devote himself to honest toil. But while justice plays an important role in Hesiod's exhortation, M. L. West, among others, correctly emphasizes that goodness and badness in this particular passage refer less to morality than to prosperity, poverty, and social class. In particular, the fruits of toil are not virtue itself, but an ample store of grain and produce.¹¹

Prodicus' allegorization of Hesiod's metaphor of the two paths accords with the ethical-political concerns of his age as well as serving his professional interests. Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles* was an epideictic work, composed above all for the sons of wealthy citizens and their guardians in an effort to win students for his more costly lecture course.¹² Prodicus casts Heracles' choice between good and bad as between civic virtue and somatic pleasure.¹³ The

¹⁰ Compare David Sansone: 'It would appear (a) that this Hesiodic passage provided the text on which Prodicus based his sermon (so W. Nestle, "Die Horen des Prodikos", *Hermes* 71 (1936) 151–70, at 164–5; E. Dupréel, *Les Sophistes. Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus, Hippias*, Neuchâtel, 1948, 121) and (b) that the historical Socrates was influenced by both the Hesiodic text and the use to which Prodicus put it' ('Heracles at the Y', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 124 (2004), 125–42 at n. 48). For a more general discussion of the two-paths theme in Greek literature, see J. Alpers, *Hercules in bivio* (diss. Göttingen, 1912); M. C. Waites, 'Some Features of the Allegorical Debate in Greek Literature', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 23 (1912), 1–46 at 12–19; G. K. Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme* (Oxford, 1972), 101–3, 162. Sansone cites a number of additional references at nn. 1–2. For a critique of Sansone's thesis that Xenophon presents Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles* more or less verbatim, see V. Gray, 'The Linguistic Philosophies of Prodicus in Xenophon's "Choice of Heracles"?', *Classical Quarterly*, ns 56 (2006), 426–35.

¹¹ 'κακότης and ἀρετή are not "vice" and "virtue" but inferior and superior standing in society, determined principally by material prosperity' (*Hesiod: Works and Days*, ed. M. L. West (Oxford, 1978), 229).

¹² Compare the comment of Aristippus to Antisthenes, on the latter's *Heracles*, in *Socr. ep.* 9. 4: 'I will send you large white lupins so that you will have something to eat after you have produced your *Heracles* for the youths.' (The Socratic epistles are assembled and translated in *The Cynic Epistles*, ed. A. Malherbe (Missoula, Mont., 1977).)

¹³ I use the phrase 'somatic pleasure' here and below to refer, above all, to pleasures of eating, drinking, and sex.

path of badness is replete with, so to speak, lower sensual pleasures, while the fruits of civic virtue above all include social recognition:

The young enjoy the praises of their elders. The old are glad to be honoured by the young. They recall their past deeds with pleasure, and they take pleasure in doing their present deeds well. . . . Because of me [Virtue] they are dear to the gods, loved by their friends, and honoured by their native land. And when their appointed end comes, they lie not forgotten and dishonoured, but flourish in memory and song for all time.¹⁴

Prodicus' casting of badness as endorsing somatic pleasure and goodness as endorsing pleasure in social recognition, a kind of cognitive pleasure, would have provided him with a good opportunity to reflect upon semantic distinctions between pleasure terms, even if he did not in fact apply them. Indeed, in Xenophon's recounting of Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles* all four of the pleasure terms Aristotle attributes to Prodicus occur, but not consistently with the meanings Aristotle attributes to them.¹⁵

5. Prodicus, Hesiod, and Xenophon

Prodicus' allegorization, in terms of the values of somatic pleasure and civic virtue, of Hesiod's two paths in turn influenced the Socratics' considerations of Hesiod's encomium on work. Most explicitly, in *Memorabilia* 2. 1 Xenophon makes Socrates cite *WD* 287–92 to Aristippus in an effort to exhort Aristippus to cease his self-indulgent lifestyle and to devote himself to goodness (2. 1. 20). Xenophon is explicit that Hesiod's lines have the same meaning as Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles*, which he makes Socrates subsequently paraphrase at length: 'the wise Prodicus expresses himself in the same way concerning goodness' (2. 1. 21).

The somatic pleasure of the path of badness in Prodicus' *Choice*

¹⁴ *Mem.* 2. 1. 3 3. Goodness also includes some material comforts, peaceful sleep, and the pleasures of simple meals. But the emphasis is on what might be called social pleasures of recognition.

¹⁵ Badness says that Heracles will taste all pleasures (*τερπνῶν*) and will delight (*τερφθείης*) in sounds and sights (2. 1. 23, 24). Badness speaks of enjoying (*εὐφρανθείης*) sex, then later criticizes the hard-won pleasures (*εὐφροσύνας*) that Goodness recommends (2. 1. 24, 29). Finally, Goodness uses the verb cognate with *χαρά* to refer to the pleasures that the young enjoy (*χαίρονται*) in receiving praise from their elders (2. 1. 33).

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of *Heracles* and retrospectively in Hesiod's *Works and Days* well suits the identity of Socrates' interlocutor Aristippus, whose hedonistic development of Socratic ethics troubled most Socratics. On the other hand, Xenophon's reading of Hesiod under the influence of Prodicus' allegorical adaptation of Hesiod is objectionable. Consider again lines 291–2:

[The long and steep path to excellence is] rough at first [τὸ πρῶτον]. But when one reaches the summit, then it is easy, although it was hard.

The significance of these lines seems to be twofold. First, unless idleness led to more suffering than a life of labour *per se*, exhortation to toil with no reward would be absurd. Yet Hesiod does not view life in the Iron Age as necessarily devoid of pleasure. Honest toil does yield enjoyable rewards. This point is confirmed by the second reason why lines 291–2 are significant: if the achievement of goodness did not relieve difficulty and suffering, the unacceptable conclusion would follow that the life of the gods in particular would be distressing. But in the poem Hesiod is explicit that the life of the gods, as of mortals in the Golden Age, is free from toil and replete with enjoyment:

First, the immortal gods who dwell in Olympian chambers made a golden race of mortal men . . . And these men lived just like the gods [ὥστε θεοί] without sorrow in their hearts, remote and free from toils [πόνων] and grief. Miserable old age did not oppress them, but, their limbs ever strong, they always took pleasure in feasts, beyond the reach of all badness. (109–15)¹⁶

In short, Hesiod's lines are consistent with a form of hedonism that Xenophon rejects. Hesiod endorses a rationally tempered pursuit of somatic pleasure. Moreover, given Prodicus' distinction between pleasure terms, it is doubtful that Prodicus himself would have viewed the contrast between the paths of badness and goodness simply as one of self-indulgence and self-sacrifice. Thus, despite the fact that the somatic pleasure-seeker is the butt of Xenophon's appropriation of Prodicus' adaptation of Hesiod's lines, Aristippus had grounds for debate.

¹⁶ Compare the following statement attributed to Aristippus: 'If it were base to live luxuriously, it would not occur among the festivals of the gods' (D.L. 2. 68).

6. Aristippus and Hesiod

There is direct evidence that Aristippus himself was drawn into the discussion around Hesiod's encomium on work and that his conception of these verses was informed by Prodicus' allegorization. In his commentary on Hesiod's *Works and Days* Plutarch refers to Aristippus in the context of his own comments on lines 293–7. Hesiod's lines, which immediately follow the description of the paths of good and bad, run:

That man is altogether best who considers all things himself and marks what will be better afterwards and at the end. And he, again, is good who heeds a good adviser; but whoever neither thinks for himself nor keeps in mind what another tells him, he is an unprofitable man.

Hesiod thus ranks three characters from best to worst: the self-sufficient wise person, the person who follows the good counsel of another, and the person who does neither. Plutarch comments:

Zeno the Stoic changed the lines around and said: 'That man is altogether the best who heeds a good adviser; and that man is also good who considers all things himself.' [In saying this,] he gave the first prize to heeding well and the second prize to wisdom. In contrast, Aristippus the Socratic said that it is worse to seek an adviser than to beg. (Plut. fr. 42 = *Schol. vet. in Op.* 293–7)

Further, though less direct, evidence of Aristippus' engagement with Hesiod's encomium on work comes from Diogenes Laertius. Diogenes reports that Aristippus identified pleasure with smooth motion (*λεία κίνησις*, 2. 85).¹⁷ This report is credible because, given the Socratics' interest in definitions, it is reasonable to suppose that Aristippus would have been inclined or compelled to offer a definition of goodness as he viewed it.

Diogenes also reports that the Cyrenaics identify pain as rough motion (*τραχεῖα κίνησις*, 2. 86). If Aristippus identified pleasure as smooth motion, it is likely that the Cyrenaic view of pain also derives from him. Now, among surviving Greek fragments and literature to the end of the fifth century, the only instance of the use of the adjective *λείος* contrasted with *τραχύς* in an ethical context is

¹⁷ Cf. Cic. *Fin.* 2. 18; Clem. *Strom.* 2. 20. 106. 3; S.E. *PH* 1. 215. More precisely, Diogenes, Cicero, and Clement report that pleasure is smooth motion that is perceived or sensed.

Hesiod's *WD* 287–92.¹⁸ Moreover, as we have seen, Hesiod's lines are consistent with a kind of hedonism: pleasure is toil's reward. Finally, Hesiod, like Aristippus, values somatic pleasure. In short, by identifying pleasure with smooth motion, Aristippus is treating Hesiod's smooth path—itsself a metaphor, and one that Prodicus subsequently allegorized as a life of self-indulgence—as a metaphor for the nature of pleasure itself.

These results encourage consideration of the meaning of Aristippus' comment on *WD* 293–7 and Aristippus' attitude towards Hesiod's encomium generally.¹⁹ To begin, Diogenes Laertius attributes to Aristippus an apophthegm similar to the comment on *WD* 293–7: 'It is better, [Aristippus] said, to be a beggar than to be uneducated; the one needs money, the other needs humanity' (D.L. 2. 70). In other words, wisdom or education is more valuable than money. Accordingly, Aristippus' comment on Hesiod would mean that one who needs an adviser and thus lacks wisdom is worse off than one who needs money.²⁰

While this much is clear, it is unclear why Aristippus would comment on Hesiod's lines in this way. First, it is unclear why Aristippus mentions begging. Immediately following the lines in question, Hesiod's poem continues:

But always remember my charge, high-born Perses: work, so that Hunger may hate you . . . Both gods and men are angry with him who lives idly, for in nature he is like the stingless drones who waste the labour of the bees, eating without working . . . Through work men grow rich in flocks and substance, and working they are much better loved by the immortals. Work is no disgrace, but idleness is. (*WD* 298–311)

In the context of Hesiod's injunction to Perses to work and desist from idleness, the contrast between heeding a counsellor's advice and begging now appears as the distinction between accepting Hesiod's injunction to work and rejecting it at the risk of destitution. Still, Aristippus' comment remains puzzling; it appears to suggest that Perses would be better off as a beggar than heeding his counsellor Hesiod's advice.

Here it is helpful to consider two points regarding Aristippus'

¹⁸ This result was derived from a TLG search.

¹⁹ Here, of course, conclusions must be more speculative.

²⁰ Cf. Plato, *Ap.* 30 B.

hedonism and lifestyle. The first relates to Aristippus' view of the role of fortune in human life:

[Aristippus] revelled in the pleasure of the present. He did not toil in seeking the enjoyment of what was not present. (D.L. 2. 66)

Aristippus appeared to speak with great force when he exhorted people not to belabour the past in retrospect or the future in anticipation, for this [not belabouring] is the sign of a contented soul and a demonstration of a cheerful mind. He enjoined people to focus their thought on the day at hand and more precisely on that part of the day when they are acting or deliberating. For he used to say that the present alone is ours; neither is what has passed, nor what lies ahead. For the one has perished; and in the case of the other, it is unclear whether it will be. (Ael. *VH* 14. 6)²¹

Further evidence for Aristippus' view of the obscurity of the future, specifically in conjunction with the problem of fortune, derives from some of the titles of his writings listed in Diogenes Laertius, in particular *On Fortune*, but also *The Shipwrecked*, *The Exiles*, and *To a Beggar*.²² In short, Aristippus would have rejected Hesiod's injunction to toil now in order to secure pleasure in the future.

Second, Aristippus dismissed his civic ties and thus a conventional means of making a living. In Xenophon's *Memorabilia* Socrates begins his exhortation to Aristippus by insisting that the education of a political leader requires self-restraint and abstinence. Socrates falsely assumes that Aristippus aspires to political success. Instead, Aristippus condemns the burdens of political participation as ruler or subject and advocates freedom from political obligations altogether:

I believe there is a path between both ruling and servitude, and it is the path that I try to walk. It runs through neither, but through freedom, which above all leads to well-being . . . I do not confine myself to a political constitution; I am a foreigner everywhere. (Xen. *Mem.* 2. 1. 11-13)²³

Aristippus evidently believed that a pleasant life with a certain

²¹ Cf. Athen. 12, 544 A-B.

²² Perhaps the quotation in Plutarch came from *To a Beggar*.

²³ Cf. Plut. *An virt.* 439 E; and consider the comments of Giannantoni on Aristippus' *The Exiles* (*Socratis Socraticorumque reliquae* (4 vols.; Naples, 1990), iv. 160-1). Compare also *Socr. ep.* 8, where Antisthenes begins his criticism of Aristippus with these words: 'It is not right for a philosopher to associate with tyrants and to devote himself to Sicilian tables. Rather, he should live in his own country and strive for self-sufficiency.'

kind of independence was possible without civic ties and without the literal or figurative cultivation of one's patrimonial land or homeland.²⁴ In forgoing such conventional securities, Aristippus, like other itinerant sophists, must have had an outstanding capacity to deal with a variety of people and circumstances. In his *Life of Aristippus* Diogenes seems to capture this capacity:

[Aristippus] was capable of adapting himself to place, time, and person and of playing his part appropriately under whatever circumstances. Hence he found more favor with Dionysius than with anybody else because he could always turn the situation to good account. He derived pleasure from what was present. (2. 66)²⁵

Aristippus' comment on Hesiod's *Works and Days* 293 ff. and his attitude to Hesiod's encomium generally may now be explained as follows. The counsellor in *Works and Days*, Hesiod himself, enjoins toil for long-term gain. Aristippus rejects this counsel and conventional, burdensome means of making a living. While Hesiod or Xenophon might admit that toil for long-term gain itself is not free from some risk, they would emphasize that the alternative is certain destitution and beggary. But Aristippus maintains that there is an alternative to the conventional life, an alternative in which one can enjoy the present. The capacity to live such a life, namely wisdom, is more valuable than wealth. In short, both Aristippus and Hesiod endorse somatic pleasure, tempered by rationality. But whereas Hesiod conservatively emphasizes traditional labour to secure pleasure in the future, Aristippus emphasizes unconventional means of enjoying the present.²⁶

²⁴ For references to Aristippus' itinerant intellectualism and Dionysius' patronage of him, see testimonia IV A 1-14 in Giannantoni, *Socratis Socraticorumque reliquae*, ii. 3-8.

²⁵ C. J. Classen refers to Aristippus' 'Kosmopolitanismus' ('Aristippos', *Hermes*, 86 (1958), 182-92 at 188). Compare O. Gigon's discussion of the distinction between Aristippus' and his contemporaries' cosmopolitanism (*Kommentar zum zweiten Buch von Xenophons Memorabilien* (Basel, 1956), 35-6).

²⁶ In the light of this, we can also see why Aristippus would have appropriated Hesiod's adjectives *λείος* and *τραχύς* to identify pleasure and pain respectively, even though Hesiod himself condemns the smooth path. Note, however, that it remains obscure precisely how Aristippus understood the smoothness of pleasure and the roughness of pain.

7. Prodicus and Phaedo

Phaedo is another Socratic who seems to have engaged with Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles* and perhaps Hesiod's *Works and Days* under the influence of Prodicus' allegorical adaptation of it. In *Socratic Epistles* 12 and 13 Simon and Aristippus exchange letters. In *Epistle* 12, Simon to Aristippus, Simon rebukes Aristippus for ridiculing him by making fun of his life as a shoemaker:

I hear that you ridicule our wisdom in the presence of Dionysius. I admit that I am a shoemaker and that I do work of that nature, and in like manner I would, if it were necessary, cut straps once more for the purpose of admonishing foolish men who think that they are living according to the teaching of Socrates, when they are living in great luxury. Antisthenes will be the chastiser of your foolish jests. For you are writing him letters which make fun of our way of life.

In *Epistle* 13 Aristippus begins his reply to Simon:

I am not the one who is making fun of you; it was Phaedo. He said that you were better and wiser than Prodicus of Ceos, when you refuted him with regard to Prodicus' encomium on Heracles.

Neither of these letters is authentic. None the less, the contents of the epistles are most likely based on the works of historical figures and traditions that developed from them.²⁷ In particular, we know that Phaedo composed a dialogue called *Simon*.²⁸ Thus, given Aristippus' comment, it seems likely that in Phaedo's dialogue *Simon*, Simon *qua* craftsman was criticized and that the criticism concerned the value of Simon's work.

Phaedo's criticism of Simon might have occurred in the context of consideration of the role of work in the good life. As we have seen, in Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles* good work is associated with civic virtue. Of course, the Socratics debated the identity of civic

²⁷ Since the excavation of Simon's shop near the agora, the historicity of Simon the shoemaker has been corroborated (D. B. Thompson, 'The House of Simon the Shoemaker', *Archaeology*, 13 (1960), 234-40). Whether Simon composed Socratic dialogues remains controversial (John Sellars, 'Simon the Shoemaker and the Problem of Socrates', *Classical Philology*, 98 (2003), 207-16; R. S. Brumbaugh, 'Simon and Socrates', *Ancient Philosophy*, 11 (1991), 151-2; R. F. Hock, 'Simon the Shoemaker as an Ideal Cynic', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 17 (1976), 41-53).

²⁸ D.L. 2. 105. Diogenes also mentions a work called *Cobblers' Talks*, which 'some also attribute to Aeschines' (ibid.).

virtue as well as the relation between civic virtue and well-being (*εὐδαιμονία*). Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles* and Hesiod's encomium on work thus provided the Socratics with an opportunity to reflect on the question of good work. Consider the question of Simon's occupation in relation to Critias' question in Plato's *Charmides*:

'Now do you suppose that if he [Hesiod at *WD* 311] had given the names of working and doing to such works as you were mentioning just now, he would have said there was no reproach in *shoemaking*, salt-fish selling, or running a brothel?' (*Chrm.* 163 B, emphasis added)²⁹

In *Choice of Heracles* Prodicus advocates the cultivation of civic virtue to attain social recognition. I assume that in Phaedo's *Simon* Phaedo, Prodicus, Socrates, or some other interlocutor emphasized the same point. However, as Aristippus suggests in the epistle, Simon manages to achieve this end through a different kind of work; thus, he refutes Prodicus:

No, I do admire and praise you since, although you are but a shoemaker, you are filled with wisdom and you have long persuaded Socrates and the most handsome youths to sit with you, youths such as Alcibiades son of Cleinias, Phaedrus the Myrrhinean, and Euthydemus son of Glaucon, and of the men of public affairs, Epicrates, Sacesphorus,³⁰ Euryptolemus, and others. I also think Pericles son of Xanthippus was with you when he did not have to carry out the duties of a general or when there was not a war ensuing. (*Ep.* 13. 1)

I do not, on the basis of this, infer that Phaedo's point in *Simon* was that social recognition is a valuable object of desire; nor do I infer that Phaedo advocated a life of menial labour. Both positions are un-Socratic. I am merely noting that in *Simon* Phaedo made use of Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles* in the context of examining the relation between labour and success. This idea, of course, is central to Hesiod's *Works and Days*, and it is one of Prodicus' principal debts to Hesiod.

²⁹ On Phaedo's *Simon* compare U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 'Phaidon von Elis', *Hermes*, 14 (1897) 187–93, 476–7 (repr. in *Kleine Schriften*, iii. *Griechische Prosa*, ed. F. Zucker (Berlin, 1969), 41–8); L. Rossetti, *Aspetti della letteratura socratica antica* (Chieti, 1977), 146–53; and Giannantoni, *Socratis Socraticorumque reliquae*, vol. iv, nota 11, esp. 119–25.

³⁰ This name is not found elsewhere, which suggests that the manuscripts are corrupt.

8. Conclusion

The preceding discussion has suggested that Hesiod's *Works and Days* 287–319 provided Prodicus and, under the influence of Prodicus' allegorical adaptation in *Choice of Heracles*, the Socratics with a framework for ethical reflection. Hesiod's encomium gave rise to the following question: To what type of work should one devote oneself? In answering this question himself, Hesiod assumes the value of material goods and derivatively social status. His concern is how these goods are best achieved and maintained. Hesiod's answer conforms with the values of an aristocratic community whose social stratification is tied to an agricultural economy. Hesiod recommends assiduous farm labour as a means of securing prosperity. The rewards of toil are pleasures, indeed, bodily pleasures.

Prodicus in *Choice of Heracles* adapts Hesiod's metaphor of the two paths into an allegory of Heracles' ethical dilemma. Prodicus endorses Hesiod's encomium on work, but emphasizes that the work in question involves the cultivation of civic virtue rather than the relatively private practice of farming one's land. As such, Prodicus casts Hesiod's metaphor in relatively moralistic terms. I say 'relatively moralistic' because conventional conceptions of civic virtue in the classical period remained far more ethnocentric than more modern and abstract appeals to rationality, autonomy, and agency. Furthermore, Prodicus degrades self-indulgence by associating it with the path of badness. The reward of the cultivation of civic virtue, above all, is social recognition, a kind of cognitive pleasure. Indeed, Prodicus seems to have distinguished various terms, including pleasure terms, specifically through his examination of Hesiod's encomium on work.

Xenophon reads Hesiod's encomium under the influence of Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles* and thus casts Aristippus as a notorious somatic pleasure-seeker inclined to pursue the path of badness. But Aristippus himself rejects a Prodician interpretation of Hesiod's encomium, in two respects. First, Aristippus abandons political ties and thus dismisses the pursuit of civic virtue. Second, like Hesiod, and unlike Prodicus or Xenophon, Aristippus values somatic pleasure. On the other hand, with his concern over the obscurity of the future and the role of fortune, Aristippus rejects Hesiod's particular form of rationality, present work for future pleasure. Instead, he

endorses the unconventional cultivation of pleasures of the present. This Aristippus recasts as Hesiod's smooth path, and so identifies pleasure itself, metaphorically, with smooth motion.

Finally, Phaedo in *Simon* adverts to Prodicus' allegorization of Hesiod in the context of examining the value of work. Possibly, Phaedo criticizes Prodicus on the grounds that Simon achieved the goal of civic virtue, social recognition, even though he laboured as a lowly shoemaker. In this context it is worth noting—although we have not discussed the subject in this paper—how central consideration of craft-labour is for Plato, as he himself attempts to conceptualize the nature of civic virtue as a kind of knowledge in his early dialogues. Plato, like Critias in *Charmides*, might have a disparaging attitude towards craftsmen such as shoemakers, but the grounds of his anti-democratic, aristocratic sentiment differ from those of Critias. The particular difficulty for Socratics such as Plato, but also, for instance, Antisthenes, is how to make sense of good work if one rejects conventional conceptions of excellence as civic virtue as well as ethical hedonism in both its somatic and cognitive forms. In other words, at this point these heirs of Socrates must transcend their Hesiodic and Prodician inheritance and forge a new conception of ethical value.

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