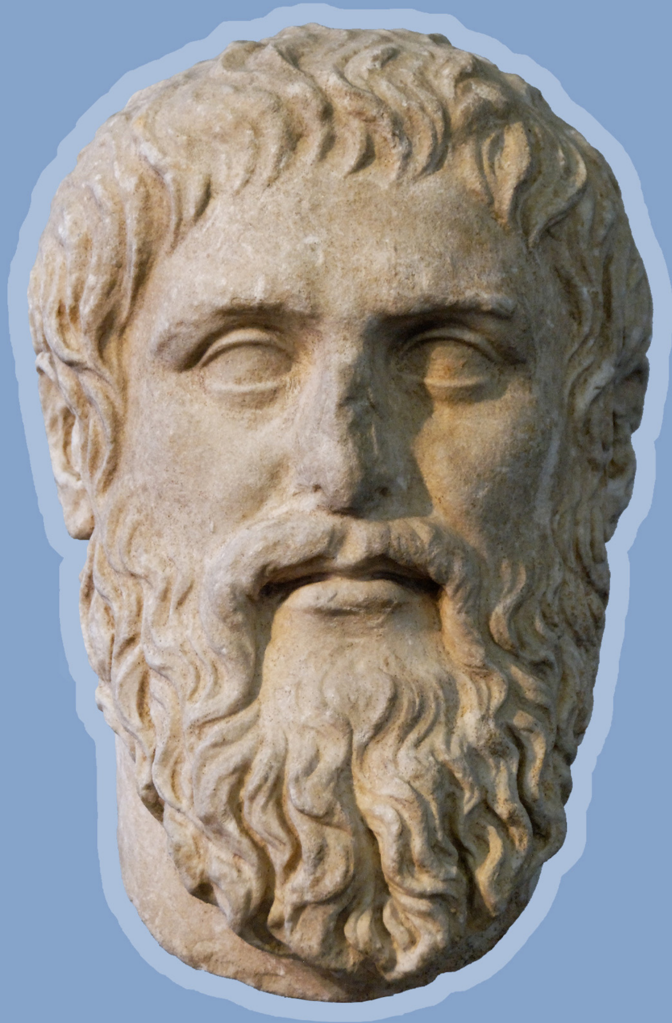
Plato and His Legacy



Edited by Yosef Z. Liebersohn, John Glucker and Ivor Ludlam

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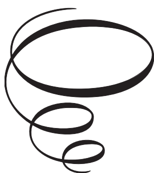

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PREFACE

This volume originates from an international symposium entitled Plato, His Dialogues and Legacy, held at Bar-Ilan University, Israel, on 5-6 June, 2018.

Part I, Plato and Platonism, offers two different general approaches to Plato's philosophy in antiquity.

Chapter One, The Platonic System in Historical Perspective, by Lloyd Gerson (Toronto, Canada), proposes a general view of the various elements and aspects of what the author takes to be Plato's own unified and consistent system of philosophy.

Chapter Two, The Origins of Platonist Dogmatism, by John Dillon (Dublin, Ireland), provides a historical view of early Platonism, suggesting that it began to develop as a system of Philosophy in the early Academy, after Plato.

Part II, Platonic Issues, offers two new readings of some aspects of one of Plato's most influential dialogues.

Chapter Three, *Rep* I: Early Lessons on Justice, by Roslyn Weiss (Lehigh, USA), is an analysis of some of the discussions in *Republic* I, suggesting that they anticipate much of what is said about justice in Book IV.

Chapter Four, A Paradigm Shift in Reading Plato, by Ivor Ludlam (Haifa, Israel), demonstrates how Plato may have constructed at least some of his early and middle dialogues.

Part III, Plato's Legacy, the main section of this book, provides new information and insights into some crucial episodes and aspects of Plato's interpretation, reception, and influence in various periods, from antiquity to our own age, and in various countries, from Germany and Italy to Japan and Israel.

Chapter Five, Stoic Cosmology and Plato's *Timaeus*: Some Further Notes, by Keimpe Algra (Utrecht, Netherlands), presents further developments of the author's former contributions to the study of Plato's *Timaeus* as a source for Stoic cosmology.

Chapter Six, The Principle of "Doing One's Own" in the Platonic-Stoic Tradition, by Tomohiko Kondo (Hokkaido, Japan), is an analysis of Platonic

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and Stoic texts showing the continuity and differences between Plato's and Chrysippus' thought on this issue.

Chapter Seven, Marsilio Ficino's Interpretation of Plato's *Philebus*, by Dorothea Frede (Hamburg, Germany), provides an assessment of the origin and nature of Ficino's comments on *Philebus*.

Chapter Eight, Ficino's *Argumentum in Euthydemum* and the Tradition of the Exegesis of the Platonic Dialogues, by Michael Erler (Würzburg, Germany), is a discussion of the influence of Ficino's approach to one Platonic dialogue on later exegetical tradition, especially in Germany.

Chapter Nine, The Case of Plato's *Charmides* in the Fifteenth Century: Ficino, Poliziano, and a Lesson from Bruni. Preliminary Notes, by Amos Edelheit (Maynooth, Ireland), is a preliminary study of some different methods and approaches to translating Plato into Latin in the first generations of the Renaissance.

Chapter Ten, Plato's Influence on Analytic Philosophy: Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Mathematics, by Yannis Stephanou (Athens, Greece), offers an exposition of some Platonic influences on analytic philosophers in Britain and the USA, from Russell to some of our contemporaries.

Chapter Eleven, How Modern Japanese People Read Plato's *Politeia*, by Noburu Notomi (Tokyo, Japan), provides a description of the special place of Plato's *Republic* in the intellectual and cultural life of modern Japan.

Chapter Twelve, Plato in *Eretz-Israel*, by John Glucker (Tel-Aviv, Israel), is a historical exposition of Plato's late arrival in Hebrew letters, from the first Hebrew translation in 1914 to the study of Plato in Israel's universities today.

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PART I:

PLATO AND PLATONISM

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PLATONIC SYSTEM IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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1.

Among contemporary Plato scholars, few would claim that Plato has a systematic philosophy. Far more frequently, it is held that we find in the dialogues arguments for doctrines or positions that may be woven into some sort of systematic unity by *soi-disants* Platonists, though this was certainly not done so by Plato himself. In the extreme, we find the hermeneutical position according to which Plato's philosophy must be rigorously segmented into exactly the size and shape of a particular dialogue.[1] That is, the manifest literary form of each dialogue tracks the philosophy such that it is dubious at best to appeal to one dialogue for doctrinal clarification of what is said in another. Now much depends, of course, on what we mean by the word "system." But even a fairly lax definition will very likely meet significant resistance if it is claimed that, according to the proffered definition, Plato's philosophy is systematic.

Let us begin, then, with the most anodyne possible sense of "system." A systematic philosophy must (a) have one or perhaps a few unifying principles, that is, reductively unifying the disparate *explananda*. These principles must (b) be posited as providing explanatory ultimacy. Without explanatory ultimacy, a supposed unifying principle need be nothing more than the statement that the universe includes everything that there is or everything that is the case. Unification in the strong sense implies

[1] This is an approach inspired in the English-speaking world by Paul Shorey's *What Plato Said* (Shorey 1933), though Shorey, purporting to confine his accounts of Plato's philosophy to a "dialogue-by-dialogue" principle, provides ample cross-references to other dialogues in the margins.

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explanation, and explanation without explanatory ultimacy is no explanation at all. Finally, (c) there must be some indication that the unifying principle or principles guarantee the dynamic continuity of the system, lest that system is reduced into disarray by entropy.

On this rather slim basis, there is no doubt that Plato presents us with a system in the dialogues. And if we acknowledge the testimony of Aristotle and the indirect tradition as providing a more or less accurate account of Plato's philosophy both within and apart from the dialogues, we have a highly elaborate account of that system.[2] The unifying principle, according to Plato, is the unhypothetical first principle of all, the Idea of the Good. That the Good is the principle of explanatory ultimacy follows alone from its being the hypothetical first principle, but it also follows from the identification of the Idea of the Good with the "something adequate" (τι ἱκανόν) in Socrates' "autobiography" in *Phaedo*, where he seeks to substitute Anaxagoras' *inadequate* explanations for the way things are with his own metaphysical account (101E1). That account, beginning with the hypotheses of Forms, ends with the unhypothetical first principle of all in *Republic*. And as for dynamic continuity, the Good, the source of all that is, is also the goal of all that is; it is what all things desire precisely because it is that from which all things come.[3] So, dynamic continuity is built into the system from its inception.

The elaboration of this system is found first in the writings—now unfortunately existing only in fragmentary form— of the other members of the Old Academy, Speusippus and Xenocrates, but also more clearly in Aristotle where we learn that, along with the Good, identified by Plato with the One, Plato introduced another principle, the Great-and-Small or the Indefinite Dyad, the primary instrument of the One's generation of all things and with the One the source of their systematic unity.[4] Just how the Indefinite Dyad is related to the One, that is, whether it is an independent principle or a subordinate principle, is a difficult question and I shall return to it later in this paper. A far more fine-grained elaboration of the system is found in Plotinus who not only tries to fill in details which are

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[2] I shall here not recount the reasons for rejecting the approach of Harold Cherniss in *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* (Cherniss 1944) and *The Riddle of the Early Academy* (Cherniss 1945). See Gerson 2014.

[3] See Proclus, *Platonic Theology* II 6, p. 40, 9-19 Saffrey-Westerink, on the systematic link between the One as cause and the Good as goal. The fundamental Platonic principle is that the investigation of the goal must focus on the source or origin of whatever has a goal.

[4] *Meta.* A 6, 987a14-18. See also B 1, 995b15ff; Z 2, 1028b19-21; K 1, 1059b2; Λ 1, 1069a33ff; M 1, 1076a19ff; 9, 1086a11-13; N 3, 1090b35-36.

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missing from the dialogues, but also to show how the system "works" by its application to a range of philosophical problems. He tries to show, in effect, that explanatory ultimacy is the desideratum in every phenomenon in need of explanation. Plotinus is in fact the first philosopher (so far as we know) to articulate explanatory ultimacy as belonging to that which is αἴτιον ἑαυτοῦ ("self-explaining" or "autoexplicable").[5]

In response to those who would say that Aristotle is not a reliable witness to Plato's philosophy and that Plotinus, removed from Plato by more than 600 years, is an original thinker, only inspired by Plato and not a reliable exegete of his philosophy, I will only here make the following very brief remarks. As for Aristotle, he nowhere says that his account of Plato's philosophy is based solely on the dialogues; on the contrary, his account refers both to the dialogues and to Plato's unwritten teachings. To those who want to insist that Aristotle is not a reliable witness to Plato's unwritten teachings—assuming he had any—I can only ask what is the basis for rejecting the testimony of the man who insisted that he loved Plato and the other members of the Academy, but that he loved the truth even more, the man who spent almost 20 years in close physical proximity to Plato in a fundamentally oral culture?

Since I have claimed that the fundamentals of Plato's system are to be found in plain sight in the dialogues and in Aristotle's testimony, I think it is incumbent on me to at least try to explain why so many reject the systematic representation of Plato's philosophy out of hand. I'm afraid that I shall disappoint you if you expect me to try my hand at psychoanalysis. But one sort of explanation for this curious phenomenon does strike me as at least plausible. It is the belief that the systematic representation of Plato's philosophy is bound to diminish to negligibility the chances that Plato is speaking the truth. By contrast, this or that insight presented by Plato in one or another dialogue—say the elenctic method or the psychology of the erotic or the failings of democracy—can be massaged or "renovated" in such a way that it stands a chance of being true or perhaps at least just respectable. One should not, I think, underestimate the self-regarding motivations of those who have devoted their adult lives to the study of Plato and who, at all costs, do not want their colleagues to believe that they have devoted their lives to a nut. They want to make Plato respectable and so they strive to present the world with a bowdlerized Plato or Plato "lite."

I realise that what I am saying is harsh. But I would like briefly to adduce the following examples of what I am talking about and appeal to

[5] See *Enn.* VI 8 [39], 14.41.

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whomever is interested to offer a better explanation than I have of what exactly is going on here. I should make clear that I am focusing primarily on the English-speaking world of Platonic scholarship, since in Europe the systematic nature of Plato's philosophy is, if not a commonplace, certainly a widely held view. Consider the book edited by R.E. Allen and published in 1965. This book, titled *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics*, purports to be a collection of essays that give us the state-of-the-art in scholarship on Plato's metaphysics.[6] In these 20 or so essays, all by distinguished Plato scholars, there is not a single mention of what Plato's calls the unhypothetical first principle of all, the Idea of the Good. One innocent of the sociology of the academy might well be forgiven for being surprised that multiple studies of Plato's metaphysics would not even mention what Plato's calls his first principle, the source of everything else in the universe. It is much as if someone wrote a book on the metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas and neglected to mention what Aquinas calls *ipsum esse* or *esse subsistens*, namely, the first principle of all, God. What, we may ask, could be the reason for not even mentioning it even if just to make some argument for dismissing its relevance? Consider another example. I.M. Crombie wrote a two-volume work called *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines* published in 1963.[7] The second of the two volumes, comprising some 550 pages, has the subtitle "Plato on Knowledge and Reality." And perhaps by now you will not be surprised to learn that not one word is said in this volume about the Idea of the Good, in which case there is of course no mention of the systematic nature of Plato's philosophy. Crombie does mention Aristotle's account of Plato's unwritten doctrines, though he insists that these doctrines are "not to be found in the dialogues." Just two more examples among scores of examples that I could adduce. First, there is the article by Verity Harte in the volume edited by Gail Fine, *The Oxford Handbook of Plato*, titled "Plato's Metaphysics", and published in 2011.[8] Professor Harte has quite a lot to say about Forms, but nothing at all to say about the superordinate Idea of the Good. And here it is rather clear that she does this because she wishes to focus on those aspects of Plato's metaphysics that have some relevance to contemporary metaphysical discussions, the implicit assumption being that a superordinate Idea of the Good would have none. Finally, there is a recent book by Blake Hestir called *Plato on the Metaphysical Foundation of Meaning and Truth*, published in 2016.[9] I must admit that when I saw this book advertised in

[6] Allen 1965.
[7] Crombie 1963.
[8] Harte 2011.
[9] Hestir 2016.

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the Cambridge University Press catalogue, I was as thrilled as Plato represents Socrates as being thrilled when he heard that Anaxagoras has published a book in which he claimed to show how a divine intellect arranged everything here below for the best. Since Plato says that the Idea of the Good gives truth to the Forms, that is, since Plato tells us explicitly what is the metaphysical foundation of truth, I naively thought that Hestir's book would be entirely devoted to the Idea of the Good. Like Socrates, I was to be disappointed. For although Hestir does not *completely* ignore the Idea of the Good, it would have perhaps been better if he had. For in the one paragraph devoted to the Idea of the Good, he does quote the passage in which Plato says that the Good provides truth to the Forms, though he adds that there is an "ambiguity" between this truth and the semantic truth in which he is primarily interested, an ambiguity that works in Plato's favour. So, Hestir suggests to us that the Idea of Good is not really relevant to a discussion of the metaphysical foundation of meaning and truth, since "truth" is used equivocally in referring to ontological truth and semantical truth, the former having apparently no relevance to the latter.

In adducing these examples, I do not mean to suggest that no scholars have paid any attention to the Idea of the Good and therefore to the systematic nature of Plato's philosophy. I will just mention the names of Adam, Joseph, Santas, Patterson, Annas, Irwin, and Kraut, all of whom have devoted, it is fair to say, a bit of attention to the Idea of the Good. It would take me too far afield to try to show that in each case what is said is demonstrably false to the text of *Republic*, to say nothing of the passages in *Philebus*, *Phaedo, Timaeus*, and elsewhere where the Good is discussed. In *Republic* alone, there are about two dozen distinct substantive claims made about the Idea of the Good over and above the one I have mentioned, namely, that the Good is the unhypothetical first principle of all.[10] The most common view among those who have rather diffidently written about the Idea of the Good is that it is either the "sum" of all Forms or the "Form of Forms" expressing what all the Forms have in common. But neither of these interpretations can stand up to even a cursory examination of all the relevant texts. I certainly do not want to minimise the difficulties of making sense of all these texts or, indeed, making the same sense of all of them. I should add, though, that a great many Platonists and Plato-scholars had striven mightily to make sense of

[10] See Szlezák 2012 for a convenient digest of the claims made about the Idea of the Good in *Republic*.

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these passages. It just seems, though, that their works did not make it to the reading lists of many North American scholars of Plato.

In any case, I hope it is clear that any claim to the systematic nature of Plato's philosophy must have its primary focus on the Idea of the Good and that, by contrast, an unwillingness to recognise the systematic nature of Plato's philosophy is, not surprisingly, quite easily explained by an unwillingness to take seriously the explicit words of Plato himself. I hope it goes without saying that this unwillingness is deserving of ridicule when it is found in a self-declared historian of ancient philosophy. But I think it is also true that if the study of ancient philosophy is relevant to philosophy, then it is also bad philosophy to distort its history.

2.

When I claim that the Idea of the Good is the lynch-pin of Plato's systematic philosophy, I am saying something beyond the obvious fact that it is said by Plato to be the first principle of all. In addition, I claim that any discussion not only of Plato's metaphysics, but of his epistemology and ethics as well, is going to be impeded and probably doomed to fail if it does not bring the Idea of the Good into the discussion. This is part of what I meant above by explanatory ultimacy. If, within any area of philosophy, explanatory ultimacy is achieved, it is not an unreasonable conjecture that in a philosophical system, these *explanantes* will converge. Such convergence or reduction to unity is as much a desideratum of science as it is of Platonism.

Let us consider first the so-called theory of Forms which, even in the literally deracinated contemporary versions of Plato's metaphysics, plays a prominent role. As we learn from *Phaedo*, Plato posited Forms as provisional explanations for physical phenomena.[11] These phenomena are, roughly speaking, the "non-exclusive having" by a physical individual of a property. "Non-exclusive having" is distinguished from "exclusive having" which is the unique possession of a property, that which, by definition, nothing other than its subject can have. The phenomenon of non-exclusive having covers all cases in which we can accurately say that "S if f" and imply that it is possible that "R is f" is also true where S and R are not equivalent and where "f" stands for the identical property numerically multiply instantiated. As we learn from Socrates' "autobiography", the Forms are posited to explain the possibility of such phenomena because the sort of explanation that Anaxagoras provided could not serve to

[11] See *Phd.* 95A4-102A9.

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explain the teleological dimension of the phenomena. Socrates explicitly conflates the explanation for the fact that "S is f" with the explanation for why it is good that S is f (97C6-D3). That it is only the Idea of the Good that can provide a sufficient explanation is hammered home by Socrates just a couple of pages later when he says that "it is the Good or that which is binding that truly binds or holds things together (99C5-6)."

Let us reflect for a moment on why Plato apparently thought that the Form of Beauty is not an adequate explanation for Helen's beauty or that the Form of Equality is not an adequate explanation for the equality of two things that are equal. Socrates' "simple hypothesis" succeeds in explaining anything if and only if there is a λόγος or account of the Form. Without that, we cannot know if the word or concept "beauty" refers to that which actually explains. In general, a Form can only explain if its nature is real and it is non-exclusive participating in it that explains the property rather than a reductivist explanation of another sort. For example, a Form of Rationality could not explain why this animal is rational if it turned out that rationality was reductively analysable into electro-chemical brain states. So, being able to give a λόγος of a Form is a central part of the putative explanation it provides. But there is an obvious problem with this. For, to put it simply, a λόγος has multiple elements but a Form is simple or one or uniform (μονοειδές) in its nature. If a λόγος says what a Form is, how can a Form be multiple?

The summary answer to this difficult question has already been provided in the sentence just above that I quoted, "It is the Good or that which is binding that truly binds or holds things together." But if this is thought to be too opaque or allusive, let us recur to *Republic* 509B6-7 where the Good is said "to provide existence (εἶναι) and essence (οὐσία) to the Forms."[12] It is the unique superordinate and unhypothetical Good which makes a unity of that which is intrinsically multiple, as expressed in a λόγος of its οὐσία. Of course, this provision of unity or oneness is eternal, meaning among other things that the Good is inseparable from any account of the being of anything intelligible. That is why Plato is conflating—purposefully, I suppose—explanations by Forms and teleological

---

[12] It should be stressed that the fact that the Good transcends the "existence (εἶναι)" of Forms does not entail that the Good itself does not exist. The Idea of the Good is the "happiest of that which is (εὐδαιμονέστατον τοῦ ὄντος)" (526E4-5, referring to E2), the "brightest of that which is (τοῦ ὄντος τὸ φανότατον) (518C9)," and "towards the vision of the best among things that are (πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ἀρίστου ἐν τοῖς οὖσι θέαν)" (532C6-7). The Good does, however, transcend the "essence (οὐσία) of the Forms. So, Plato is positing a first principle of all whose existence is such that it has no finite nature.

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explanations. So, the Idea of the Good is not just the unhypothetical first principle of all, but it is inseparable from the sorts of explanation that Plato's metaphysics seeks to provide and which, most importantly, he thinks cannot in principle be provided by a naturalist or physicalist philosophy.

This interpretation no doubt raises many questions of its own. Before I try to answer at least a few of them, let me emphasise that the intelligibility of such questions or the relevance of such questions to Plato's philosophy is entirely a function of our assumption that Plato's philosophy is systematic. Many scholars, eschewing explanatory ultimacy in Plato, refuse the relevance of such questions because the answers are not in the text. But if Plato is presenting us with the outline of a system and its application to the solution of numerous philosophical problems, then we may assume that he is doing so because he thinks that this system is true. That is, it is within this system that these problems can be solved. So, insisting that these questions are unanswerable and thus irrelevant is treating Plato's philosophy like Shakespeare's plays and insisting that the question of what size shoes Hamlet wore is a badly formed question. On the contrary, asking these functional or causal questions about the Platonic system is more like asking such questions about an ecosystem or an astronomical system. We know that there are answers to these questions if we are in fact dealing with a system.

The first question I wish to address is how exactly does the Idea of the Good provide the unity that a complex Form possesses? It is true, but not very illuminating, to respond to this question by citing the same passage in *Republic* just mentioned where the Good is said to "exceed everything else in its seniority (πρεσβείᾳ) and in its power (δυνάμει) (509B8-9)." Plato does not tell us wherein lies this power, only that there must be something that has it given the existence of its effects. Later Platonists understood this to mean that the Good, which is absolutely simple, must somehow be that which is expressed multiply in the array of Forms. The most penetrating interpretation of this power—originally proposed by Damascius, I believe—is that it is analogous to white light which is virtually the entire colour spectrum. Or to use a contemporary example, it is analogous to a function which is virtually its domain and range. Since the Good is, then, virtually all the Forms we need to explore how this can be so, that is, how that which is "above οὐσία" and incomposite can be virtually all that is intelligible. Much of the history of ancient and medieval metaphysics, which is of course the history of Platonic metaphysics, is concerned with characterising the first principle of all in such a way that its virtuality is perspicuous. For what it is worth, I think this line of investigation

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culminates in the idea of the first principle of all as *ipsum esse* or *actus essendi*, meaning that its existence is an act or actuality over and above the actuality that is the essence of any Form. I shall not here pursue this point further, only noting in passing that the claim that Plato's philosophy is a system does not stand or fall on showing that the system is perfect or complete, at least as we have it.

I want to turn now to why it is inadequate to say merely that there is an array of Forms and a superordinate Idea of the Good providing existence and essence to the Forms and to leave it at that. For even if the Good is virtually the Forms and even if their complexity is rooted in the simplicity of the Good, the interconnectedness of the Forms is not explained. I mean that the Good is posited to explain how a complex entity can be one, but it does not explain the interconnectedness of the complexities that each Form is. That *something* must explain this is obvious from Plato's refinement in *Phaedo* of his simple hypothesis, namely, the cleverer hypothesis, according to which we should not simply say that something is hot because there is hotness in it, but that it is hot because there is fire in it and fire always brings with it hotness (105B5-C7). It does so, of course, because a Form of Fire and a Form of Hotness are supposed to be eternally and therefore necessarily interconnected. Similarly, something is not adequately explained by saying that there is oddness in it, but by saying that there is fiveness in it and fiveness always bring with it oddness. The extremely important point of these homey examples is that somehow or other the Form of Fire and the Form of Hotness must be necessarily connected such that whatever participates in the one participates in the other. But the Forms are supposed to be "monads" (μονάδες) and "incomposites" (ἀσύνθετα). How then is it possible for them to be eternally necessarily "connected"? Plato returns to this puzzling fact again in *Sophist* where he speaks about the "association of Forms" (κοινωνία τῶν εἰδῶν), their "plaiting" (συπλοκή), and "their being mixed with those [other γένη] necessarily forever" (…συμμειγνυμένω μὴν ἐκείνοις ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἀεί) (254E4). How are these metaphors to be analysed?

It seems clear that Plato needs a principle to unify that which is conceptually diverse. So, Hotness and Fire are hypothesised as one in reality but multiple in their intellection. But their oneness in reality must still make room for saying that the oddness of five and the evenness of four are one in reality without falling into self-contradiction. Since Forms are unchangeable in their identity and atemporal and so necessarily interconnected if they are interconnected at all, the guarantor of their eternal interconnectedness must be an intellect that is equally unchangeable and atemporal. For if it were possible that the intellect were

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temporal and so changeable, it would be possible that it should not think the necessary interconnectedness of the Forms, in which case that interconnectedness would not be necessary. On this interpretation, what is "one in being" is intelligible Being itself. But it is also multiple in the eternal intellection of it. Here we have yet another reason why only that which is absolutely simple and "sufficient" for explanation must be "above" οὐσία and Being, that is, the Being with οὐσία.

On this interpretation, intellect and Forms are cognitively identical but distinguishable *quoad nos*. To be aware of our own intellect, as when we are self-reflexively aware of a unity amidst some diversity, is implicitly to be aware of the Forms which are in fact cognitively identical with that intellect of which we are images. I would suggest that the doctrine of recollection may be understood as our making actual this implicit awareness. But there is an insuperable bar to our thereby having embodied knowledge. It is that we can only think the identities-in-diversity representationally, in words, even "mentalese" or in images. And to do this requires a temporalised existence. To see that 5+3=8 is not to do what an eternal intellect does eternally. But doing this in a temporalised manner does give us an intimation of eternity. And the difference between on the one hand seeing 5+3=8 as an eternal truth eternally cognised as a unity-in -diversity in an eternal intellect and on the other hand seeing it as an abstraction from the temporal is that in the former case we see that it is an eternal truth, whereas in the latter case its truth is purely stipulative or tautologous. Therefore, it is only in the former case that 5+3=8 could be an *explanans* since no tautology explains anything.

This eternal intellect, adduced but unused by Anaxagoras, is the Demiurge of *Timaeus* which not only serves as the locus of eternal and necessary truths, but is also the instrument of the Idea of the Good in the provision of intelligibility to the sensible world. Plato gives us quite an elaborate account of the quasi-anthropomorphic attributes of the Demiurge, which even if mythological, are still unambiguously located as an instrumental or subordinate principle. This is evident from two passages in *Timaeus* where Timaeus himself declines to give an account of the "first principle or principles of all" in the dialogue because their discussion requires employing a different method from the one presently being used (48C2-6, 53D4-7). So, the Demiurge cannot be the first principle of all, a point that seems quite lost on the so-called Middle Platonists.

This leaves us with the additional question of why the first principle of all acts at all. Again, in *Republic* we learn that the Good, like the Sun, is "overflowing" (506B3, 508B6-7). In addition, in *Timaeus* we learn that the

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Demiurge is good and *for that reason* "ungrudging" (ἄφθονος) (29E1-3). What the two passages tell us is that the Good is essentially diffusive. Stated otherwise, from the variety in the cosmos, which includes the variety of Forms, and from the explanatory inadequacy of any composite to explain anything here below, we can infer that the explanation will be an incomposite whose explanatory adequacy consists in its nature being essentially productive of all composites. But because it is incomposite, that nature cannot be distinct from its existence.

So much might seem to justify the identification of the first principle as the One (not, of course, the number one), but why is it the Good, too? The line of reasoning Plato seems to be following is this: all action or activity aims for a good. The Good is that at which all things aim (*Rep.* 505D5-9). Since the first principle of all is essentially productive, it is unlimited in its productivity. So, everything that is, that is, every composite, is the Good's product either immediately, like the Forms, or mediately, through the Forms. But the first principle's activity in production cannot be of a good outside itself since that would indicate a defect in it, namely, not "containing" beforehand what it produces. Therefore, the good it seeks is itself or in itself. Whatever it produces has its good in it; otherwise, there would be goods outside of it, goods that would be additions to itself, resulting in it being defective with respect to goodness. So, the good that everything else seeks is just that first principle. The result of this line of reasoning is that the first principle of all is the One viewed as the incomposite adequate or ultimate explanation for the existence of everything and the Good as that which everything seeks. So, goodness must be essentially diffusive.[13] In addition, the identity of Good and One enables us to give substantial content to the former. We are able to determine proximity to the Good by degree or level of unity, not absolutely, but relative to the kind of unity something has or is as explained by its eternal Form.

Given the above, the ascent to the Good should be understood as the reversion of the effect to its cause. Expressed systematically, the fundamental dynamic structure of the universe is "remaining" (μονή), "procession" (πρόοδος), and "reversion" (ἐπιστροφή). The most extensive treatment of this structure is found in Proclus' *Elements of Theology*. [14] As we have seen, procession and reversion are grounded in the overflowing of the Good and the desire of all things for the Good, that from which they originate. The idea of remaining is based on the text in *Timaeus* in which it

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[13] See Kremer 1987 for a useful sketch of the history of this idea among Platonists.
[14] See *Elements of Theology* Prop.75, 70.28-72.4 Dodds.

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is said that the Demiurge "remained in himself in his accustomed manner" (ἔμενεν ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ κατὰ τρόπον ἤθει) (42E6) while ordering the cosmos. If the Demiurge remained, then so did its principle. The structure is dynamic owing to the essential activity of the first principle of all. The dynamism does not result ultimately in dissolution because reversion is guaranteed by the remaining and the procession. It is so guaranteed because the procession is from the self-loving first principle. If its self-loving were a property of it, that is, if it were distinct from its self-loving, then procession from it would not produce eros in everything else. Procession, if it is to be part of a system, must be from the nature of that which proceeds. And reversion must be an integral part of the whole dynamic.

This dynamic structure is primarily eternal. In the eternal realm, procession and reversion are no less eternal than the remaining of the Good. Because the temporalised cosmos is an image of this eternal dynamic structure, it represents it imperfectly. Thus, in all erotic activity the relation between eternal intellect and the Good is recapitulated in a diminished way. That is, the lover satisfies his desire for the Good by achieving the fulfilment of his own nature as intellect. Beauty is the Good as attractive. But the intellects of embodied human beings are the intellects of temporalised souls. So, the desires of embodied souls are themselves images of intellectual desire. The reversion of all embodied souls to the Good is, in one sense, a quest for the unknown. But no one seeks for that which is completely unknown, a point made in a limited and focused manner in Meno's paradox. The quest for the unknown is a reversion because it is a quest to return to the source of one's own being. The soul that reverts is engaged in an attempt to recover itself as it is found in its cause. The recovery is re-integration with the ultimate cause; the opposite of this is dis-integration or dissolution.

The reversion to the Good is the metaphysical foundation of the passage in the *Republic* (505D5-9) where Socrates asserts that, though people are content with the seeming just or beautiful, no one is content with the seeming good. Platonists connect this passage with the numerous passages in which Plato says that no one willingly does wrong. Plato does not ever say, however, and he certainly does not mean to imply by this that no one willingly does right either. On the contrary, our freedom is found entirely and exclusively in our pursuing the Good. The asymmetry underlying this theory of action is anathema to any Naturalist since the Naturalistic explanations for action cannot discriminate between those that are oriented to the good—whatever that means—and those that are oriented to the bad. Indeed, a Peripatetic such as Alexander of Aphrodisias,

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counters the Stoic compatibilist position by insisting that only if we are free to choose contraries ("to do otherwise") are we free at all.[15] There are few things that more vividly express the systematic nature of Platonism than the asymmetry of human action which is only explicable if there is a distinction between the real good and the apparent good and if the real good is universal.[16] For if the real good is only objective for each individual and not universal, there is no way to maintain asymmetry. For in that case, every action will have as its goal the apparent (objective) good. It cannot be the case that we are free when we do what we think is good for ourselves and not free when we do what we think is good for ourselves even though objectively it is not. For the difference between the two case is something that is external to the psychology of the agent. Without the universal Good, we have no grounds to resist symmetry, whether that of the Naturalist or that of the Peripatetic. With the universal Good, and with its everlasting "overflowing," the perpetuity of the dynamic system is assured.

What I have tried to do in this section of the paper is to show the poverty of a truncated account of Plato's metaphysics. Such an account omits the superordinate Idea of the Good and an eternal intellect eternally engaged in thinking the unity-in-diversity that is the foundation of necessary truths. Time permitting, it would be possible to produce a parallel discussion concerning knowledge or ἐπιστήμη. Multiple contemporary efforts to make Plato into an empiricist or, somewhat less absurdly, into an empirically rooted epistemologist, all falter on their inattention to the systematic nature of Plato's philosophy. For knowledge is what the Demiurge has, and what a disembodied intellect such as our own has. Embodied intellection, insofar as it requires representations of that which is cognised, can in principle only contain as content images of or diminished versions of the paradigm cases. So, if by "knowledge" we mean ἐπιστήμη, there can be no knowledge of the sensible realm, but only δόξα or belief. That this is a systematic point follows from the fact that the only way to understand ἐπιστήμη is as the mode of cognition that defines philosophy in *Republic* and that pertains to intelligibles. This is the mode of cognition of the intellect that the Demiurge is. In addition, as we learn in the Divided Line passage, the *ne plus ultra* of cognition is only possible

[15] Originating in Aristotle, *EN* Γ 3 and 5; *EE* B 6 and 10. See Cicero, *De fato* 40; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De fato* 169, 13-15; 181, 12-14; 196, 24-25; 199, 8-9; 211, 31-33; *Mant.* 172, 30-31.
[16] See Plotinus, *Enn*. III 1 [3], 9.4-16. Cf. VI 8 [39] 6, 27-29, where Plotinus argues that our will (βούλησις) is free even when we are constrained by "externals" because our wills are permanently oriented to the Good.

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if the Forms are seen to be derived from the Good. Without the Idea of the Good, knowledge for Plato would not even be possible. And if knowledge is not possible, then we cannot have it. And if we cannot have it, then the reason for the theory of recollection is gone.

3.

In the remainder of this paper, I want to turn to ethics. Since almost all discussions of Platonic ethics in contemporary scholarship ignore the Idea of the Good as being irrelevant, it will be helpful to see why this is a mistake or, more precisely, why to exclude the Idea of the Good is to distort Plato's ethics into something that is either fundamentally indefensible or question-begging at best. Recall, first, that Plato has said that the subject matter of philosophy is the intelligible world broadly speaking. He has also maintained that the determination of what is good and bad, right and wrong is a philosophical matter. Plato thinks that the naturalist, whether as relativist or hedonist, does not have the resources to defend a coherent position about these. For on naturalistic terms, they have the resources only to express what is ἴδιον for a particular person, not what is κοινόν to all persons, whereas what is really good belongs to the latter not the former. That is, what is needed in ethics, according to Plato, is universality, not merely objectivity, which of course can be indexed to the individual.

Discussions of Plato's ethics typically either invoke as the basis for a claim that virtues are good a co-ordinate Form of the Good, that is, a Form like every other Form, or else they eschew any appeal to metaphysical altogether. The latter alternative has its roots in a strategy first to set apart a Socratic non-metaphysical ethical doctrine. Then, with this in place, the manifestly metaphysical framework for ethics in the so-called Platonic (as opposed to Socratic) dialogues can be ignored as irrelevant or unnecessary for the ethical doctrine. On the former alternative, a co-ordinate Form of the Good serves as the anchor for the general argument: everyone desires the real good; the virtues are the real good; therefore, everyone desires the virtues. Since it is obviously the case that many people do not desire to be virtuous, it is concluded that this must be a failure of knowledge. If one knew that the virtues were the real good, then one would desire them. It is not clear, though, whether, say, the knowledge of Justice or the ability to give a λόγος of Justice is supposed to suffice for knowing that Justice is good or that knowing that Justice is good is supposed to be an additional piece of knowledge, additional to the knowledge of the λόγος of Justice. For someone who wants to be just, knowing what Justice is would seem to

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suffice; however, for someone who has no particular inclination to being just, knowing what Justice is in itself could not motivate just behaviour, even granting that one desires the real good for oneself. For saying that justice is a virtue and virtue is good because the Form of Justice is a species of the generic Form of the Good will have probative force for someone only if it follows that what is good *simpliciter* is good for me; otherwise, what is good for me—objectively good for me—can diverge from what is good and no reason can be given why one should seek the latter rather than the former. But a generic Form of Good cannot provide the requisite universality as is evident from the miscreant's perfectly legitimate question: I acknowledge that justice is a type of goodness but why should I be good? It does not help to reply that everyone seeks the real good, not the apparent good. For one might well maintain that what is really good for me—that which I certainly and ardently seek—is, alas, really bad for you. Too bad for you. Universality cannot be achieved by a generic Form of the Good as Aristotle's criticism in the *Nicomachean Ethics* makes clear just because of the equivocity of "good." Just as "good" differs across the categories, it can well differ across individuals.[17]

The nexus virtue-knowledge-happiness or the human good is the focus of most studies of Plato's ethics. The relation between virtue and knowledge and the relation between virtue and happiness are central. It is within this nexus that the so-called Socratic paradoxes are critically examined. So, the claims that it is better to suffer than to do evil, that a bad person is worse off if he is not punished than if he is, that no one does wrong willingly, that tyrants do what seems best to them but not what they want, and that a worse person cannot harm a better person are analysed in order to reveal the assumptions according to which these claims would be true, even if paradoxical. Thus, a typical analysis of the paradoxes would aim to show that virtue is necessary and sufficient for happiness and accordingly that vicious behaviour cannot make one happy. So, the evildoer cannot be better off than the one who suffers evil; that a bad person unpunished is deprived of the possibility of rehabilitation in virtue, that wrongdoing is exclusively the result of lack of knowledge of virtue, that a tyrant is ignorant that wrongdoing is conducive to happiness, and that a virtuous person is somehow impervious to the harm inflicted upon him by a vicious person.

Such an analysis clearly depends on a certain understanding of virtue. But as Plato says in Book 10 of *Republic*, there is a considerable difference between virtue with and without philosophy (619B7ff). The

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[17] See *EN* A 6.

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difference is evident in the fact that someone who is virtuous without philosophy is not happy. And if he is not happy, then it is far from clear why such a person would be better off suffering rather than doing evil or why he would not be better off going unpunished for an occasional bad deed or why the knowledge that he must have if he is virtuous is not sufficient to prevent him from wrongdoing.

Those who are committed to staying within the ambit of the paradoxes and who simultaneously eschew any recourse to the superordinate Idea of the Good should be troubled. For though they can agree that philosophy does transform ordinary virtue into something else and that it is only this something else that is the foundation for the truth of the paradoxes, the conception of philosophy must necessarily exclude what Plato says philosophy is in the *Republic*, the desire for knowledge of perfect Being (τὸ παντελῶς ὄν), knowledge which, as he then tells us, is only possible in the "light" of the superordinate Idea of the Good.

There are perhaps two possible paths that one can take in order to integrate philosophy into the account of virtue such that virtue remains necessary and sufficient for happiness and the paradoxes can be defended on that basis. One path takes philosophy as refutation in the manner of Socratic elenchus. According to this, one embraces one's own ignorance or at least is continuously open to refutation of any claim. But this stance cannot be what turns mere popular virtue into true virtue. The unnamed virtuous individual who in *Republic* 10 chooses the life of a tyrant does so because there is something he is ignorant of not because there is something he believes he knows that in fact he does not. There is no indication that he embraces the wicked life for any reason other than his ignorance of the ineluctably bad consequences of such a life.

Second, there is the banal recourse to philosophy as an examination of life, the soul-care Socrates pronounces himself devoted to in *Apology* (29E2). But soul-care in itself is highly problematic as a basis for defending the paradoxes and the absolutism of Platonic ethics. For someone might well acknowledge the desirability of soul-care at the same time as insisting on the necessity of body-care. Given a devotion to both, circumstances could well indicate from time to time attention to one rather than the other. For example, Socrates might be well advised to flee from prison on behalf of body-care, even if he thereby neglects soul-care temporarily.

In order to make soul-care robust enough to be the substance of the philosophy that turns ordinary virtue into the virtue that is sufficient and necessary for happiness, one would need to argue that soul-care alone is self-care, that is, that the soul is the self. On this basis, one could argue

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that body-care is only care for one's possession and care for one's possession over care for oneself is never a rational strategy. This may well be the case, but it is disingenuous to claim that body-care is care for a possession like the "externals" that one may possess. For though it may be that caring for one's fingernails as opposed to one's soul is indefensible, the situations in which body-care and soul-care are in real-life tension are those in which the subject of bodily states and the subject of non-bodily states conflict. The most obvious examples in the dialogues are those in which one is faced with a choice between pursuing appetites the satisfaction of which one believes to be pleasurable and refraining from their pursuit because one believes their pursuit would be harmful. Since the subject of the appetites is, according to Plato, a psychical subject, the conflict is not between soul-care and body-care, but between care for one part of the soul as opposed to another. It is mere rhetoric to suppose that this is a choice which is always obvious. One can, for instance, easily imagine a Callicles sincerely endorsing the desirability of soul-care so long as it does not conflict with the duties and the pleasures of a grown-up Athenian citizen.

The implausibility of both of these interpretations of the philosophy required for happiness diminishes even further when we consider that Plato tells us exactly what philosophy is in *Republic*. Someone devoted to philosophy seeks knowledge of τὸ παντελῶς ὄν.[18] But Plato also tells us that this knowledge depends upon a cognitive assent to the Idea of the Good. So, it is puzzling, to say the least, how we are to arrive at a non-question-begging, non-prudential, defence of the Socratic paradoxes without recourse to metaphysics, specifically to the first principle of all.

From the above, it would be easy to conclude that if Plato's ethics does indeed rest on the metaphysical first principle of all, it either proves too much or, what amounts to the same thing, it proves nothing at all. Let there be a superordinate Idea of the Good such that everything that can be said to have "good" predicated of it does so because it partakes indirectly or directly of the Good. If just acts are good because just acts instantiate

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[18] *Rep.* 476A9-D6. Cf. 484B3-6. That philosophy is associated with the truth is a claim that is ubiquitous in the dialogues. See *Ap.* 29E1-2; *Cr.* 47C8-48A1; *Phd.* 65E2, 66D7, 67B1-2, 84A8-9, 99E6; *Phdr.* 249B5-C8; *Rep.* 475E2-4, 484C9, 485C3-D5, 490B5-6, 611E1-612A4; *Parm.* 135D6, 136C5, E1-3; *Tim.* 90B6-C4; *Ep.* VII 344A8-B2. In *Republic*, we get the crucial additional information that it is the Idea of the Good that provides truth to the Forms and that dialectic, the name for philosophical methodology, must ascend to the cause of truth to understand Forms.

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Justice and Justice partakes of the Good, this does not even begin to tell us whether a contentious ethical or political or social act is just or not. If, to take another example, Euthyphro agrees that piety is good ultimately because of the Idea of the Good and the Form of Piety, how does that concession help us to know whether prosecuting his father for the homicide of a slave is pious or not? This problem remains, of course, even when we have agreed that "good" and "good for me" are identical or at least extensionally equivalent.

I believe that the answer to this question rests entirely on giving credence to Aristotle's testimony that the Good is identical to the One. We must again stress that the Good or One is a principle and a principle stands outside what it is a principle of. Since the first principle of all is unqualifiedly unique and simple, the way this principle is manifested is according to composition. That is, something is good insofar as or to the extent that it is an integrated unity.[19] Every Form is an integrated unity by definition because it is an eternal and unchangeable one, composed of its existence and the οὐσία in which it partakes. But the integrated unities of the things that instantiate Forms are necessarily more complicated because Forms are manifested in things which "are and are not simultaneously" (*Rep.* 478D5-6). In addition, since Forms can be variously manifested, the integrated unity of a just act, a just person, a just city, or a just law may all be manifested differently. To say this is only to elucidate the obvious point in *Symposium* that a beautiful body and a beautiful institution both manifest Beauty but they do not do so in the same way. As a first attempt at understanding how integrated unity provides a criterion for ethical prescriptions, the proper question would be: does this action or policy arise from or contribute to the integrated unity of the natural kind to which it is attached. For example, the *polis* is, according to Plato, an integrated unity when all the essential parts are doing their job. So social or political policies can be judged if they arise from the actions of the legislators, doing their job of conserving the unity of the *polis* or if they arise as attempts by the legislators to repair or preserve that unity. A similar account would apply to the actions of the virtuous individual. In the case of both, the integrated unity entails the rule of reason for the benefit of the whole *polis* or the whole individual human being. As Plato insists later in *Republic*, the opposite of the rule of reason entails the dis-integration of the self.

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[19] See *Rep.* 422E-423B, 462A-B, where it is clear that the difference between a successful or good state and a bad one in the presence or absence of integrative unity. Also, cf. *Symp.* 192C-D on love as integrative unity. See Aristotle, *EE* A 8, 1218a19, discussing the Good, on justice and health as τάξεις.

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The rule of reason in the virtuous individual is established in *Republic* Book 4 with the definition of the virtues. But the rule of reason there described, although it produces virtue does not produce virtue with philosophy, which is not even thematised until Book 5. Book 4 establishes the integrated unity of the human being; not until Book 9 do we arrive at the integrated unity of the philosopher. This is a higher unity since it achieves separation from the body, separation in the sense of psychological distancing. Living thus according to the rule of reason is to become detached—or as much as is physically possible to be detached—from the idiosyncratic, from that which is ἴδιος. Adhering to the deliverances of universal reasoning, the identity of "good" and "good for me" becomes as obvious as the identity of "true" and "true for me."

It is not, I think, a serious criticism of this interpretation to say that it leaves many or perhaps even most actions and states below the threshold of relevance to integrated unity. There will be many actions that, as the Stoics insisted, will be indifferent. But the absolutism that Socrates insisted on in *Crito* (49B8; cf. 49A6-7; *Ap.* 29B6-7; *Gorg.* 469B12, 508E, etc.), namely, that one must never under any circumstances commit an unjust deed, thinking that it is unjust, remains and is clarified. For to do that, is to be oriented to self-disassociation. And there can be no scenario under which one could benefit from this. We can, though, readily concede that this claim would make no sense unless the soul were the self and the soul were immortal.

More than any other dialogue, *Philebus* explicitly connects the Idea of the Good with the normative idea of integrated unity. Everything that is said to exist is a composite of "one and many", having within themselves a principle of limit (πέρας) and unlimitedness (ἀπειρία) (16C9-10, 23C9-10). The "one" presumably refers to the Forms already indicated as "monads." The "many" refers to the divisible or "scattered" essence that is the result of sensible embodiment of immaterial Forms. The principle of limit is the One and the principle of unlimitedness is the Indefinite Dyad. Everything is a composite of limit and unlimited and in addition to these there is a cause of the mixture, intellect (νοῦς). Under the rubric "unlimited" comes all that which admits of degrees, of more or less, and under the rubric "limit" comes all that admits of quantification, whether continuous or discreet (24E7-25B2). As we learn from *Timaeus*, the divine Intellect imposes shapes and numbers on the pre-cosmic "soup" in order to make a cosmos that is as good as possible, that is, a cosmos that resembles the Living Being. Normativity enters the picture with the idea of "measure" (τὸ μέτρον) which indicates the correct or exact imposition of mathematical order as opposed to any deviation from this.

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An integrated unity is just the product of the imposition of limit on the unlimited. An optimal integrated unity possesses the correct or exact ordering of the instantiations of the principle of unlimitedness by the instantiations of the principle of limit. The integrated unity of the parts is the best possible instantiation of the paradigm. In *Republic*, the integrated unity of the soul is that of the parts of the soul ordered according to the rule of reason. In *Philebus*, a different question is raised, namely, that of the optimal integrated unity of a human being which, being a complex of soul and body is different from the soul and, ideally, of the subject of the immortal part of the soul. The embodied soul is the subject both of psychical states and acts and the subject of bodily states, including pleasure and pain. And this dialogue raises the very specific question of what constitutes optimal integrated unity for the human being so conceived, the locus of multiple subjectivities.

The Good is manifested in integrated unity. To put it in Aristotelian terms, integrated unity is the essence of the manifestation of goodness. That is why the principle of limit—not limit itself—is the One and also why it is repeatedly emphasised that the manifestation of the Good for a human being will be in integrated unity. The problem with which *Philebus* wrestles is that, though we are really intellects for whom bodily pleasure is nothing, we are in fact now embodied and embodied souls do desire pleasure. But the strictures that the dialogues discover for pleasure, the distinction between true and false ones, are intended to minimise the self-disassociation of the intellect while embodied, thereby impeding its destiny.

Built upon this metaphysical foundation, ethical prescriptions can be judged according to whether or not they inhibit or promote integrated unity. The quantitative nature of the optimal integrative unity renders futile the claim that unlike "true" and "true for me" which are identical, still "good" and "good for me" can diverge. It is, for Plato, a mathematical impossibility that my good can be achieved at your expense even if you or I or anyone else may take it to be so.

All this metaphysical and mathematical heavy equipment, which I have tried to sketch in a highly compressed manner, perhaps unduly, is necessary to allow Plato's ethics to be reduced to something other than a banal exhortation to soul-care or to prudentialism under the guise of something else, that is, a refutation of subjectivism which only leaves us with objectivism rather than with universality.[20]

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[20] See Penner 2003, who makes an heroic effort to support prudentialism by offering an interpretation of the Idea of the Good that makes it a universal of sorts, equivocally instantiated by the particular good of each individual.

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Apart from the overwhelming evidence for the systematic nature of Plato's philosophy, perhaps the best argument for it is that if it were not a system, the fidelity of philosophers to Plato's philosophy for well over 2,000 years would beggar belief. This fidelity did not preclude disagreements among Platonists regarding matters large and small. But adherence to the system endured despite the disagreements.

Let me conclude by trying to make the point about the Platonic system in a different way. Contemporary naturalism, the polar opposite to Platonism, has a systematic basis, namely, theoretical physics. The Platonic system endured and even dominated so long because there was no other plausible system. With the rise of the new physics in the 17th century, and for reasons that have a great deal to do with the arguments that Plato makes about being and knowledge, an alternative system gradually came into view, a system not fundamentally at odds with the naturalism of Anaxagoras, though immensely more sophisticated. But this new system came at a price, as David Hume so clearly saw. The price was that the study of intellect, being, goodness, and beauty had either to be abandoned or folded into physical science. As Plato insisted, however, the subject matter of philosophy removes it from the physical sciences because it is removed from the sensible realm. To locate philosophy in the intelligible realm inevitably leads one to the systematic reduction to an unhypothetical first principle of all. My claim, then that Platonism is a system is my claim that Plato thought that philosophy must be systematic or else it must cede its claim to having a distinct subject matter. The late Richard Rorty was exactly right in maintaining that Platonism is the polar opposite of naturalism. He was also right in maintaining, although many will disagree, that Platonism is identical with philosophy, understood as having a distinct subject matter.[21] Since Rorty rejected out of hand the existence of that subject matter, he rejected philosophy. I have been arguing only that Plato's philosophy is systematic. And if Rorty is right that Platonism is the only alternative to naturalism, then it would be well to bring the systematic nature of Plato's philosophy into the discussion. Why would anyone suppose that Platonism stripped of its systematic framework could be anything but a feeble opponent of naturalism?

[21] See Rorty 1979, esp. Part III, 2.

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CHAPTER TWO

XENOCRATES AND THE ORIGINS DOGMATISM[1]

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The philosopher Plato, as all his friends would agree, was a man of strong views on most subjects, but it is a notable fact that, in his published works, he chooses to present these views in a distinctly devious way. The Platonic dialogue, after all, is a literary form designed to advance philosophical positions *aporetically* and *dialectically,* not dogmatically. If we derive doctrines from them, it is, so to speak, at our own risk.

Nonetheless there is indubitably a body of doctrine associated with the Platonic School. Even within Plato's own lifetime, we have the (admittedly tendentious) testimony of Aristotle as to the existence of certain philosophical principles of Plato which he on occasion[2] terms *agrapha dogmata,* and which have come to be known as the "unwritten doctrines". I have taken up a certain position on these myself,[3] seeking to strike a judicious balance between what I would regard as the extreme views of Harold Cherniss and his followers, such as Leonardo Tarán, on the one hand, and the "Tübingen School" of Konrad Gaiser, Hans-Joachim Krämer, and *their* followers (such as Giovanni Reale), on the other. To summarize my position here, I see no problem about there being a body of doctrines, or at least working hypotheses, which do not find their way into the dialogues, except in devious and allusive forms, and that these doctrines, such as that of the derivation of all things from a pair of first

[1] This article, based on a lecture given at our Plato Conference in Bar-Ilan University, has already been published in a slightly different form in Dillon 2019, 7-23 "The Origins of Platonist Dogmatism". It is reprinted here with the kind permission of Cambridge University Press.
[2] E.g., *Met,* A 6, 987b29ff. A useful collection both of Aristotelian passages and of Neoplatonic commentaries on them is to be found in Krämer 1964.
[3] Dillon 2003, Ch. 1: "The Riddle of the Academy".

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principles (a One and an Indefinite Dyad), should be of basic importance to Plato's system; but I see no need, on the other hand, to hypothesise a full body of secret lore, present in the Academy from its inception, which is preserved as a sort of "mystery" for the initiated.

Short of this, however, it seems to me entirely probable that a great deal of philosophical speculation went on in the Academy which does not find its way into a dialogue. After all, Plato never promises to reveal his whole mind in writing—very much the opposite, indeed, if one bears in mind such a text as *Phaedrus* 275DE, or the following notable passage of the Seventh Letter (341C-E):[4]

> But this much I can certainly declare concerning all these writers, or prospective writers, who claim to know the subjects which I seriously study (*peri hón egó spoudazó*), whether as having heard them from me or from others, or as having discovered them themselves; it is impossible, in my judgement at least, that these men should understand anything about this subject. *There does not exist, nor will there ever exist, any treatise of mine dealing therewith*. For it does not at all admit of verbal expression like other studies, but, as a result of continued application to the subject itself and actually living with it, it is brought to birth in the soul all of a sudden (*exaiphnés*), as light that is kindled by a leaping spark, and thereafter it nourishes itself.

Even if this not Plato himself talking, as I say—though I believe it is—it is surely someone who was well acquainted with the situation obtaining in the school. Plato never really gave up on the Socratic idea that philosophy must always be a primarily oral activity, and also an open-ended process. So, talk and argumentation prevailed in the groves of the Academy. And the members of the Academy of whom we have any knowledge – figures such as Speusippus, Xenocrates, Aristotle, Eudoxus of Cnidus, or Heraclides of Pontus—were a pretty talkative and argumentative bunch; not the sort of people to sit around as mute as cigar-store Indians until Plato had completed another dialogue!

At any rate, whatever the status of these "unwritten doctrines", we are, it seems to me, left with the interesting problem that, from the perspective of the later Platonist tradition, beginning with Antiochus of Ascalon in the first century B.C.E., a firm conviction arose that Plato and the Old Academy had put forth a consistent and comprehensive body of doctrine on all aspects of philosophy, and this belief continued throughout later

[4] Which I would certainly regard as authoritative (that is to say, emanating from sources in the Old Academy who knew what they were talking about), even if its provenance from the hand of Plato himself is disputed.

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antiquity. Not that Platonism was ever seen to be a monolithic structure; there was room for a fairly wide spectrum of positions on most ethical and physical questions. But there was a solid consensus that Plato *did* dogmatize, and did not, as the New Academicians, from Arcesilaus to Carneades, maintained, simply raise problems and suspend judgement.[5] What I would like to enquire into on this occasion is (a) whether there might be any justification for this belief, and (b), if there is, at what stage might this dogmatism have arisen.

It seems to me best, in approaching this question, to start at the end, so to speak—that is, with the evidence of Antiochus—and work back. What we find with Antiochus—or rather, in a number of significant texts of Cicero, in which his spokespersons are expounding Platonic doctrine along Antiochian lines[6]—is, first of all, a clear division of the subject-matter of philosophy into the three domains of ethics, physics (including what we would consider rather "metaphysics", or the discussion of first principles), and logic, and then a set of confidently proclaimed doctrines, under each of those heads. It has long been assumed, without much dissent, that this construction is very largely a fantasy of Antiochus', concocted by dint of extrapolating back onto his heroes in the Old Academy a body of doctrine largely gleaned from the Stoics, by whose teachings he was deeply influenced.

I entered a plea against this assumption in *The Middle Platonists,* some thirty years ago now, arguing on the one hand that there was little point in Antiochus' trying to put over on a fairly sceptical and well-informed public a claim for which there was no justification whatever,[7] and on the

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[5] Cf. the discussion of the question at the beginning of the *Anonymous Theaetetus Commentary*, a work emanating possibly from the late 1st. cent. B.C.E., but more probably from the following century. As regards the New Academy, indeed, an interesting belief arose in later times (doubtless a pious fiction) that the New Academics did not believe this themselves, but only maintained this position in public to combat the Stoics, while dogmatizing in private! Cf. Sextus Empiricus, *PH* I 234, and Aug. *C. Acad,* 3. 20, 43 (quoting a lost section of Cicero's *Academica*).

[6] We are concerned chiefly with such works as *De Finibus* IV and V (for ethics), and the *Academica Priora* and *Posteriora* (for "physics"), but there are a number of other significant passages also. For a fairly comprehensive treatment of Antiochus, see Dillon 1996, Ch. 2; but also, in a more sceptical mode, Barnes 1989.

[7] He is never, as I pointed out, accused of anything like this by Cicero, who himself, despite his great personal affection and respect for Antiochus, maintains a position loyal to the New Academy. All that Cicero accuses him of is being himself too close to the Stoics (*si perpauca mutavisset, germanissimus Stoicus,*

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other hand recalling how little we really know of doctrinal developments within the Old Academy, especially under the leadership of Xenocrates and Polemon. I was still, however, in that work pretty wary of attributing too much in the way of doctrine to Polemon in particular, since we seemed to know so little about him, despite his forty-year tenure of the headship. But since then, I have been much encouraged by a most perceptive article of David Sedley's, "The Origins of Stoic God", published in 2002[8], which, it seems to me, opens the way to recovering much of Polemon's doctrinal position, and I have rather taken this ball and run with it, I'm afraid, in Ch. 4 of *The Heirs of Plato.*

I will return to David Sedley's article presently, but for the moment I want to concentrate rather on the topic of ethics, and even before that to focus on the question of the formal division of philosophy into topics at all, which seems to me to be bound up with the establishment of a philosophical *system.* We learn from Sextus Empiricus, in fact (*Adv. Log.* I 16), that the first philosopher formally to distinguish the three main areas or topics of philosophy, which Sextus names in the order "Physics—Ethics—Logic", but which can occur in virtually any order, was Xenocrates.[9] However—and, I think, significantly—Sextus precedes this announcement by saying that Plato himself had already made this division "virtually" (*dynamei*), since he discussed many problems in all these fields.[10] The true significance of this statement, I think, is that Xenocrates himself, in making this formal division, sought to father the concept on Plato himself, possibly in his attested work *On Philosophy* (DL IV 13). He could, after all, without difficulty have adduced various passages from the dialogues, and indeed whole dialogues, such as the *Timaeus,* for physics, *Republic* IV for ethics, or the *Theaetetus* for epistemology (as part of logic)—or indeed the second part of the *Parmenides* in the same connexion—which would support his contention, very much as is done by later composers of Platonist handbooks, such as Alcinous or Apuleius.

Acad. Post. 132; *a Chrysippo pedem nusquam, Acad. Post.* 143; and cf. also *Acad. Pr.* 135, where Cicero seeks to nail him on the particular point of virtue being sufficient for happiness, which he declares was *not* the view of the Old Academy). All this, I maintain, does not amount to a dismissal of Antiochus' overall project—and it is, in any case, inter-school polemic.

[8] Sedley 2002.

[9] Actually, if Antiochus is following Xenocrates in this, Xenocrates' order will have been "Ethics—Physics—Logic", and Sextus is merely following the preferred Stoic order.

[10] He might also have added that Aristotle seems to recognise a tripartition of philosophy at *Topics* I 14 (105b19 ff.).

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If this be so, it can be seen as the tip of a rather large iceberg. First of all, in order to make appeal to the works of Plato, one needed to have a definitive edition of them. It was the suggestion long ago of Henri Alline[11] that the first edition of the works of Plato was instituted in the Academy under Xenocrates, and although this has been much impugned over the years as unprovable, I must say that it seems to me an entirely probable conjecture. Such an early edition was certainly made, since we have what appears to be Plato's entire oeuvre surviving to us—something that cannot be claimed for any other ancient philosophic author, except perhaps Plotinus (and we know how *that* happened)—and I feel it to be unlikely that Speusippus ever got around to such an enterprise. It would most effectively underpin what seems to have been Xenocrates' main project, which is that of defending the tradition of Platonism against the attacks of Aristotle and his associates, such as Theophrastus, since to perform this duty plausibly he needed to have the Master's works to hand in a definitive format.

Once he had an authoritative corpus, he could proceed – though I think also that he had no hesitation in appealing to "unwritten doctrines" when required, relying not only on his personal experience of what went on in the Academy, but on such a text as that from the *Seventh Letter* quoted above (if he did not actually compose that himself!). His purpose will have been to hammer out something like a coherent body of doctrine from this rather unpromising material.

If we take the sphere of ethics for a start, the sort of issues that were arising, in the wake of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (in whatever form that might have been available), would have been the relative importance of the virtues and the lesser goods, those of the body and external circumstances, in the achieving of happiness, or *eudaimonia,* and the overall purpose of life, whether *theoria* or *praxis.* From Plato himself, one might derive rather mixed signals, after all. From the *Phaedo*, for instance, one might conclude that the concerns of the body are simply a distraction for the philosopher, and should be unhitched from as far as possible, even before death (the philosopher should, precisely, practice death!), whereas from the *Republic,* particularly Book IX (cf. esp. 580D-592B), one might deduce that the lesser goods, desired by the spirited element (*thymos*) and the passionate element (*epithymia*), though far inferior to the goods of the soul, are to be accorded a limited status, in a suitably controlled and moderated form. This ambiguity continues in the *Laws,* where, in Book I,

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[11] Alline 1915.

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631BC, we learn that "goods are of two kinds, human and divine; and the human goods are dependent on the divine, and he who receives the greater acquires also the less, or else he is bereft of both." These "human" goods, such as health, beauty, strength and wealth, Plato goes on to say, are far inferior to the "divine" goods of the soul, which are the four virtues, but they are not to be dismissed from consideration. He goes on to characterize them, however, somewhat later (II 661A-D), as "conditional goods", which are really good only for the virtuous man, and actually evils for the bad man, who will be liable to misuse them.[12]

In face of all this, let us consider the definitions of happiness put forth by Xenocrates and Polemon respectively, as relayed to us by the Alexandrian Church Father Clement (*Strom.* II 22). First that of Xenocrates, presumably derived from his treatise *On Happiness*:

> Xenocrates of Chalcedon defines happiness as the acquisition of the excellence (or virtue, *aretê*) proper to us, and of the resources with which to service it. Then as regards the proper seat (*to en hôi*) of this, he plainly says the soul; as the motive causes of it (*hyph' hôn*) he identifies the virtues; as the material causes (*ex hôn*), in the sense of parts, noble actions and good habits and attitudes (*hexeis kai diatheseis*); and as indispensable accompaniments (*hôn ouk aneu*), bodily and external goods.

There is much of interest here, if we can trust the basic fidelity of Clement. First of all, can we conclude from this that the distinctive "metaphysic of prepositions", presumed by such an authority as Willy Theiler to be a product of the scholasticism of the first century B.C.E. or later, is already being utilized by Xenocrates at the end of the fourth century? I'm not sure why not, really. There is nothing inherent in the formulation, I think, that could not have been derived by a scholastically-minded man from the existing, somewhat less systematic usage of prepositions for this purpose by Plato and Aristotle, and I am not sure how or why Clement would have arrived at this application of the prepositional terms, had he not had some stimulus to it from Xenocrates.

More important, however, is the content of the doctrine. We can deduce from this, I think, that *eudaimonia* is for Xenocrates not solely a matter of the acquisition or possession of *aretê,* but "the resources with which to service it," that is to say, the bodily and external goods which are its *hôn ouk aneu,* which I have rendered its "indispensable accompaniments."[13]

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[12] This topic has recently been discussed, in rather exhausting detail, by Christopher Bobonich in Ch. 2 of his vast work, *Plato's Utopia Recast* (2002).

[13] The issue of the role of the *hexeis kai diatheseis* as the "parts" out of which happiness is constructed is also of interest, as it seems to embody a doctrine, also

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This in turn may be connected with evidence that can be derived from Cicero in *De Finibus* IV 15-18, where, in confutation of the Stoics, he is presenting the Antiochian view of the doctrine of the Old Academy and Peripatos, or more specifically, of Xenocrates and Aristotle. After declaring that these two start out from the same ethical first principles as do the Stoics later, the "first things according to nature", or *prôta kata physin* (*prima naturae,* in Cicero's Latin), he proceeds to give a summary of their position. As this account does not accord particularly well with Aristotle's surviving views (though it may have accorded better with early works of his available to Cicero, but not to us), it seems reasonable to claim it, broadly, for Xenocrates:[14]

> Every natural organism aims at being its own preserver, so as to secure its safety and also its preservation true to its specific type.[15] With this object, they declare, man has called in the aid of the arts to assist nature; and chief among them is counted the art of living, which helps him to guard the gifts that nature has bestowed and to obtain those that are lacking. They further divided the nature of man into soul and body. Each of these parts they pronounced to be desirable for its own sake, and consequently they said that the virtues (or excellences) also of each were desirable for their own sakes; at the same time they extolled the soul as infinitely surpassing the body in worth, and accordingly placed the virtues also of the mind above the goods of the body. But they held that wisdom is the guardian and protectress of the whole man, as being the comrade and helper of nature, and so they said that the function of wisdom, as protecting a being that consisted of a mind and body, was to assist and preserve him in respect of both.

The principle with which this passage begins does not, admittedly, seem to reflect closely anything appearing in the Platonic dialogues; but it could well be a development of a principle enunciated by Plato's companion Eudoxus of Cnidus, who was noted for maintaining that pleasure was the highest good, on the grounds that the maximization of pleasure was the first thing sought by any sentient organism from its birth on.[16] If so,

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expressed by Aristotle at the beginning of Book II of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1. 1103a14-b25), that *ethical* virtue arises from *ethos,* from good training and from the *practice* of noble deeds.

[14] I borrow the Loeb translation of H. Rackham.

[15] *Omnis natura vult esse conservatrix sui, ut et salva sit et in genere conservetur suo.*

[16] Cf. Aristotle, *EN* I 12,1101b27-31; X 2, 1172b9-18. Aristotle remarks, in the second passage, that Eudoxus' views gained considerably in credibility because of his own high personal standards of morality.

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Xenocrates has adapted it to a rather different purpose, to establish a justification for maintaining a concern for physical survival and comfort as a base on which to build. On the other hand, the sentiments expressed in the rest of the text are readily derivable from the passages of the *Laws* mentioned above.

The establishing of "the things primary according to Nature" as the basis for an ethical theory is attributed by Antiochus also to Polemon (e.g., *De Fin.* IV 50-1), but we may discern from reports of his position a slight increase in austerity, in comparison with his master Xenocrates. It can only have been slight, as they are consistently lumped together in the doxography, but it is significant that Polemon was the teacher of the future Stoic founder Zeno, and he plainly transmitted to him an austere ethical stance, which Zeno then developed further.

Clement reports Polemon's position, immediately following that of Xenocrates (*Strom.* II 22):

> Polemon, the associate of Xenocrates, seems to wish happiness (*eudaimonia*) to consist in self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*) in respect of all good things, or at least the most and greatest of them. For he lays it down that happiness can never be achieved apart from virtue, *while virtue is sufficient for happiness even if bereft of bodily and external goods.*

It is in this last specification, if in anything, that Polemon is distinctive. One can see here, I think, traces of an on-going argument within the Academy as to the precise status of the so-called "mortal" goods. Nevertheless, it would seem from Antiochus' evidence that Polemon did not entirely dismiss these lower goods. Here is the passage alluded to above (IV 50-1). Cicero is in the process of criticizing Cato for indulging in various specious Stoic arguments:

> As for your other argument, it is by no means "consequential", but actually dull-witted to a degree--hough, of course the Stoics, and not you yourself, are responsible for that. "Happiness is a thing to be proud of; but it cannot be the case that anyone should have good reason to be proud without virtue." The former proposition Polemon will concede to Zeno, and so will his Master (sc. Xenocrates) and the whole of their school, as well as all the other philosophers who, while ranking virtue far above all else, yet couple some other thing with it in defining the highest good; since if virtue is a thing to be proud of, as it is, and excels everything else to a degree hardly to be expressed in words, Polemon will be able to be happy if endowed solely with virtue, and destitute of all besides, and yet he will not grant you that nothing except virtue is to be reckoned as a good.

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We have here, then, the lineaments of a Platonist doctrine on the first principles of ethics and the components of happiness, which, while allowing for variations of emphasis, yet can form the basis for a coherent position. In later times, it rather depended on whether you were more concerned to combat Stoics (as, for example, was Plutarch) or Peripatetics (as was the later Athenian Platonist Atticus) that you took a more or less austere line in ethics—that you favoured, for example, *metriopatheia* over *apatheia* or the reverse—but in either case there was a deposit of Platonist doctrine to fall back on, and that doctrine, I would maintain, was laid down by Xenocrates and Polemon, not immediately by Plato.

The case is similar in the area of the first principles of physics. Plato had left a rather confusing legacy to his successors—or so it must seem to us. We have, on the one hand, the Good of the *Republic,* a first principle which is in some way "beyond" (*epekeina*) the rest of existence, of which it is the generative ground, as well as an object of desire; but then there is the Demiurge of the *Timaeus,* who is described as an Intellect, but who is represented as contemplating a Model in some way above and beyond himself, in his creation of Soul and of the world (unless the Demiurge and his creation are a myth, and to be deconstructed, as was stoutly maintained, against the criticisms of Aristotle, by both Speusippus and Xenocrates); then there is the One of the hypotheses of the second part of the *Parmenides,* which may or may not have been intended by Plato as a first principle, but which was certainly taken as such in later times; further, there are the first principles set out in the *Philebus* (26Cff.), Limit, the Unlimited, and the Cause of the Mixture, which seem to have a fairly close relationship to the One and Indefinite Dyad of the Unwritten Doctrines; and then, last but not least, we seem to have the doctrine, firmly enunciated first in the *Phaedrus* (245Cff.), but also dominant in Book X of the *Laws,* of a rational World Soul as the first principle of all motion, and therefore of all creation. What are we to do with this embarrassment of riches?

It is fairly plain what Xenocrates did with it; it is less plain in the case of Polemon, but I think that his position is recoverable, if certain minimal clues are probed closely. In either case, the result is interesting. In the case of Xenocrates, what is attested (though only by the doxographer Aetius, who is a rather doubtful witness)[17] is a pair of Monad and Dyad, the former being characterized as "Zeus and Odd and Intellect", and spoken of in addition as "having the role of Father, reigning in the heavens"—which

[17] *Placita,* I 7, 30, p. 304 Diels = Fr. 15 Heinze/213 Isnardi Parente.

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latter description seems to connect him, remarkably, with the Zeus of the *Phaedrus* Myth (246E), and to place him, not in any transcendent relation to the physical cosmos, but rather as resident in the topmost sphere of it. In respect of his consort, however, there is what seems to me a serious difficulty in the text, which I have had various stabs at solving over the years, but which still bothers me. Here is the text as it appears in the *Placita:*

> Xenocrates, son of Agathenor, of Chalcedon [holds] as gods the Monad and the Dyad, the former as male, having the role of Father, reigning in the heavens (*en ouranôi basileuousan*), which he terms "Zeus" and "odd" (*perittos,* sc. numerically) and "Intellect", which is for him the primary god; the other as female, in the manner of the Mother of the Gods (*mêtros theôn dikên*), ruling over the realm below the heavens, who is for him the Soul of the Universe (*psychê tou pantos*).

Here, on the face of it, it seems that the female principle which is the counterpart of the Monad, while being characterized as "the mother of the gods", is also presented as a World Soul, whose realm of operations is "below the heavens". Now I am on record as declaring that either Aetius has gone seriously astray here, or the manuscript tradition has suffered corruption.[18] My reason for maintaining that is that we learn also, from the rather more reliable source that is Plutarch (*Proc. An*. 1012D-1013B = Fr. 68 H/188 IP), that, when Xenocrates is interpreting the creation of the soul in the *Timaeus* (35AB), he takes the "indivisible substance" (*ameristos ousia*) as being in fact the Monad, and "that which is divided about bodies" (*hê peri ta sômata meristê*) as Multiplicity (*plêthos*),[19] or the Indefinite Dyad, while the Soul, characterized as a "self-moving number" is the product of these two. So, the Indefinite Dyad cannot itself be the World-Soul.

I would like to think that what is happened is that a line has fallen out of the Aetius passage, between *metros theôn* and *dikên,* in which we learned that the Dyad was female, "holding the rank of Mother of the Gods, which he terms 'Rhea' and 'even' and 'Matter'", while *dikên* actually is to be taken as a proper name, Dikê—the assessor of Zeus in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (256-7), and his "follower" in *Laws* IV 716A—characterizing the World Soul as the offspring of these two entities, rather like Athene (who may also have been mentioned). This would, at any rate, provide us with a coherent account of Xenocrates' system of first

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[18] Dillon 1985. I have set out my arguments at more length in Dillon 2003, 98-107.
[19] This is actually Speusippus' preferred term for the female principle, but Xenocrates doubtless employed it as well.

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principles, which in turn can be seen as an attempt to bring some order into the Platonic *testimonia.*

If we can take this as being the position, we can see, I think, Xenocrates going to work to create a coherent Platonist doctrine to counter the attacks of Aristotle (e.g., in the *De Caelo* I 12). An important part of his strategy is insisting on a non-literal interpretation of the *Timaeus,* since a literal interpretation creates various major embarrassments, which indeed Aristotle picked on. The first problem is the inconsistency of postulating something, to wit, the physical cosmos, that has a beginning but (by arbitrary decree of the Demiurge) no end. That is a logical absurdity, but there is also the difficulty of the Demiurge, though he appears to be a supreme deity, nonetheless contemplating a *paradeigma,* or "model", in accordance with which he performs his creative work, which is independent of, and co-ordinate with, himself; and there is also the oddity (though it is explained away by ingenious feats of modern exegesis) that, although Timaeus has stated that an intellect cannot be present in anything without a soul (30b2-3), the Demiurge is precisely that—an intellect without a soul.[20]

However, once one has postulated that the account of demiurgic creation is a myth, all these problems dissolve satisfactorily. What the Demiurge then becomes, it seems to me, is nothing other than a divine Intellect, contemplating its own contents, which are the totality of the Forms, conceived by this stage as numbers, or at least numerical formulae of some sort, and projecting them, eternally, onto a substratum—which Plato himself, notoriously, does not present as matter, but which Aristotle, and very probably both Speusippus and Xenocrates also, did. This is also the Zeus of the *Phaedrus* myth, and perhaps also the Good of the *Republic.*

What, however, of the World Soul of *Laws* X, which would seem to be Plato's last word on the subject of supreme principles? It is not entirely clear to me what is going on here, and I am not sure that Polemon may not have had a slightly different take on it from Xenocrates, but I would suggest that, for Plato in the *Laws,* the supreme principles are indeed still the One and the Indefinite Dyad, but that they are seen as somehow, when considered separately, only *potential* principles, which must come together to be actualized, and the result of their coming together is the generation, first of the whole system of Form-Numbers, and then, with the addition of

[20] The ingenuity I refer to is to make a distinction between *having* an intellect, which would require something to have a soul, and *being* an intellect, which need not involve having or being anything else. That is all well and good, but, in the myth, the Demiurge is more than just a disembodied intellect; he is presented as a divine personage who *has* an intellect, and thus must also have a soul.

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the principle of mobility, of Soul. Since this whole process must be conceived of as being eternal, and indeed timeless, the actively cosmogonic principle, and the cause of motion to everything else, is in fact the World Soul.

At any rate, that is one version of a system of first principles that is bequeathed to later generations of Platonists, in the form of the triad of God—Forms, or even Form (*Idea*)—Matter, and this goes back, I suggest, primarily to Xenocrates, who, however, was assiduous in fathering it on Plato, and was able to quote a number of proof texts in support of this. That is not, however, the only system that emerges from the Old Academy, and this brings me back to Polemon, and to David Sedley.

We had long had the problem, and it was one that bothered me when I was surveying the Old Academy in the first chapter of *The Middle Platonists,* and for a long time after that, that, although Polemon presided over the Academy for fully forty years, and was a deeply respected figure, all we seemed to know of him, apart from a cluster of anecdotes and sayings, was a modicum of ethical theory; he did not seem to have had any view on physics or logic at all. And yet could that be true? How could one profess to be a Platonist, after all, and disregard the whole metaphysical structure that underlay Plato's ethical theories? Certainly, Antiochus' spokesman Varro, in a passage of Cicero's *Academica,* I 24-9, gives us what purports to be a survey of Old Academic physics, but it comes across as so palpably Stoic in content that no one gave it a second thought.

However, one small clue does exist to Polemon's doctrine in this area which, if properly pressed, can yield interesting results, and it was this that David Sedley fastened on in his article, "The Origins of Stoic God". Immediately following on from Aetius' rather extensive report of Xenocrates' theology, he appends a single line: "Polemon declared that the cosmos is God (*Polemôn ton kosmon theon apephênato*)."

There were some who noted this doxographic snippet without finding it very interesting, as they felt that it could be rendered, "Polemon declared that the cosmos is *a god*"—which would be a fairly uninteresting piece of information. But, in the context, it cannot mean that; Aetius is presenting various philosophers' views about the supreme deity, not about any old god. So, we are faced with the testimony, albeit baldly doxographic, that, for Polemon, Platonist though he was, the supreme principle is none other than the cosmos. How can that be so?

We must first of all, I suggest, think back to Plato's last thoughts on the subject in *Laws* X—and, more particularly, to his faithful amanuensis,

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Philip of Opus', appendix to that work, the *Epinomis.*[21] Philip, in the *Epinomis* (e.g. 976Dff.; 981B-E), comes out unequivocally in support of the position that the supreme principle is a rational World Soul immanent in the cosmos, and indeed that the study of astronomy is the highest science, since one is in fact thereby studying the motions of the divine mind. Philip had presumably convinced himself that this was indeed Plato's final view on the question, but he is actually presenting a rather radical take on Plato's thought, which was plainly not shared by his colleagues Speusippus or Xenocrates. Polemon, however, I would suggest, may have been attracted by it. But if indeed one adopts this view of the active first principle, what follows for one's doctrine of the dynamic structure of the cosmos as a whole? Let us consider Antiochus' account of the Old Academy's physical theory:

> The topic of Nature, which they treated next (sc. after ethics), they approached by dividing it into two principles, the one the creative (*efficiens* = *poiêtikê*), the other at this one's disposal, as it were, out of which something might be created. In the creative one they considered that there inhered power (*vis* = *dynamis*), in the one acted upon, a sort of "matter" (*materia* = *hyle*); yet they held that each of the two inhered in the other, for neither would matter have been able to cohere if it were not held together by any power, nor yet would power without some matter (for nothing exists without being necessarily somewhere).[22] But that which was the product of both they called "body" (*corpus* = *sôma*), and, so to speak, a sort of "quality" (*qualitas* = *poiotês*).

What we have here is a two-principle universe admittedly very similar to that of the Stoics—but it is also, interestingly, similar to that attributed to Plato himself by Theophrastus in his curious little work, the *Metaphysics* (6a24-5). These two principles can, after all, be taken as the One and the Indefinite Dyad, or Limit and the Unlimited, neither of which can exist without the other, and the union of which generates, first Number and Soul, but ultimately the cosmos. Even the denominating of the active principle as a *dynamis,* and the formal principle (for that is what is being referred to) as *poiotês,* could be seen as deriving from a scholastic exegesis of the *Theaetetus,* first of 156A, where Socrates refers to active and passive principles in the cosmos as *dynameis,* and then to 182A, where

[21] I must say that I am entirely convinced by the arguments of Leonardo Tarán in his fine edition of this work, *Academica: Plato, Philip of Opus and the Pseudo-Platonic* Epinomis (Tarán 1975), that this work is by Philip.
[22] An interesting reference, this, to a passage of the *Timaeus,* 52B: "Everything that exists must necessarily be in some place (*en tini topôi*)."

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he coins the term *poiotês.* So even if we are driven to admit that Antiochus is giving something of a Stoic gloss to the material here, it seems reasonable to argue that he cannot have done so without some warrant from the Old Academic sources available to him.

A little further on, in ss. 27-8, the active principle is identified as a rational World Soul, residing primarily in the heavens, but pervading all parts of the cosmos (it is in this sense that the cosmos as a whole can be described as God). It is "perfect intelligence and wisdom (*mens sapientiaque perfecta*), which they call God, and is a sort of providence, presiding over all things that fall under its control." There is nothing here, I think, that cannot be derived from a non-literal interpretation of the *Timaeus.*

We can see, then, I think, as in the case of ethical theory, something of a difference of emphasis between the doctrinal positions of Xenocrates and Polemon, though without constituting anything like a contradiction. The first beneficiaries of Polemon's doctrinal stance were the Stoics, but he then became available to such later figures as Eudorus of Alexandria, Nero's court philosopher Thrasyllus, and even the Platonizing Jewish philosopher Philo, all of whom adopted a rather Stoicizing logos-theology; while other philosophers, such as Plutarch and Atticus, will have been more influenced by Xenocrates. Between the two of them, however, they provided the basis for a body of Platonist dogma.

I will pass lightly over the topic of logical theory and epistemology, since really most later Platonists adopted as Platonic the whole Aristotelian system of logic, together with such innovations as were added by Theophrastus and his successors. The Old Academic system of division of all things into categories of Absolute and Relative was not entirely forgotten, but relegated rather to the background. The section of the *Academica* (I 30-2) devoted to logic, though, is not without interest, and indicates that Polemon was not oblivious to that either.

I could also have gone in considerably more detail into the areas of ethics and physics, but I hope that enough have been said here to make my point, which is that the exigencies of inter-school rivalry, initially between the Academy and the Peripatos, but then between later Platonists and both Stoics and Aristotelians, demanded that Platonism become more formalized than it was left by Plato himself, and that it was primarily Xenocrates, in a vast array of treatises, both general and particular, who provided the bones of this organized corpus of doctrine. Not that the Platonists were ever subject to anything like a monolithic orthodoxy. Platonic doctrine was not anything handed down centrally, from above; it

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was rather a self-regulating system, in which everyone knew what it meant, broadly, to be a Platonist (which could, in later times, embrace being a Pythagorean as well), and managed to stay within those parameters, while squabbling vigorously with each other, as well as with the other schools.

The Origins of Platonist Dogmatism

Illustrative Passages

1. "But this much I can certainly declare concerning all these writers, or prospective writers, who claim to know the subjects which I seriously study (*peri hón egó spoudazó*), whether as having heard them from me or from others, or as having discovered them themselves; it is impossible, in my judgement at least, that these men should understand anything about this subject. *There does not exist, nor will there ever exist, any treatise of mine dealing therewith.* For it does not at all admit of verbal expression like other studies, but, as a result of continued application to the subject itself and actually living with it, it is brought to birth in the soul all of a sudden (*exaiphnés*), as light that is kindled by a leaping spark, and thereafter it nourishes itself." (Plat. *Ep.* VII 341C-E).
2. "Xenocrates of Chalcedon defines happiness as the acquisition of the excellence (or virtue, *aretê*) proper to us, and of the resources with which to service it. Then as regards the proper seat (*to en hôi*) of this, he plainly says the soul; as the motive causes of it (*hyph' hôn*) he identifies the virtues; as the material causes (*ex hôn*), in the sense of parts, noble actions and good habits and attitudes (*hexeis kai diatheseis*); and as indispensable accompaniments (*hôn ouk aneu*), bodily and external goods." (ap. Clem. *Strom.* II 22).
3. "Every natural organism aims at being its own preserver, so as to secure its safety and also its preservation true to its specific type.[23] With this object, they declare, man has called in the aid of the arts to assist nature; and chief among them is counted the art of living, which helps him to guard the gifts that nature has bestowed and to obtain those that are lacking. They further divided the nature of man into soul and body. Each of these parts they pronounced to be desirable for its own sake, and consequently they said that the virtues (or excellences) also of each

[23] *Omnis natura vult esse conservatrix sui, ut et salva sit et in genere conservetur suo.*

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were desirable for their own sakes; at the same time they extolled the soul as infinitely surpassing the body in worth, and accordingly placed the virtues also of the mind above the goods of the body. But they held that wisdom is the guardian and protectress of the whole man, as being the comrade and helper of nature, and so they said that the function of wisdom, as protecting a being that consisted of a mind and body, was to assist and preserve him in respect of both." (Cic. *Fin.* IV 15-18).

4. "Polemon, the associate of Xenocrates, seems to wish happiness (*eudaimonia*) to consist in self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*) in respect of all good things, or at least the most and greatest of them. For he lays it down that happiness can never be achieved apart from virtue, *while virtue is sufficient for happiness even if bereft of bodily and external goods.*" (Clem. *Strom.* II 22)
5. "As for your other argument, it is by no means 'consequential', but actually dull-witted to a degree—though, of course the Stoics, and not you yourself, are responsible for that. 'Happiness is a thing to be proud of; but it cannot be the case that anyone should have good reason to be proud without virtue.' The former proposition Polemon will concede to Zeno, and so will his Master (sc. Xenocrates) and the whole of their school, as well as all the other philosophers who, while ranking virtue far above all else, yet couple some other thing with it in defining the highest good; since if virtue is a thing to be proud of, as it is, and excels everything else to a degree hardly to be expressed in words, Polemon will be able to be happy if endowed solely with virtue, and destitute of all besides, and yet he will not grant you that nothing except virtue is to be reckoned as a good." (Cic. *Fin.* IV 50-1)
6. "Xenocrates, son of Agathenor, of Chalcedon [holds] as gods the Monad and the Dyad, the former as male, having the role of Father, reigning in the heavens (*en ouranôi basileuousan*), which he terms 'Zeus' and 'odd' (*perittos,* sc. numerically) and 'Intellect', which is for him the primary god; the other as female, in the manner of the Mother of the Gods (*mêtros theôn dikên*), ruling over the realm below the heavens, who is for him the Soul of the Universe (*psychê tou pantos*)." (ap. Aetius = Xenocr. Fr. 15 Heinze/ 213 Isnardi Parente)
7. "The topic of Nature, which they treated next (sc. after ethics), they approached by dividing it into two principles, the one the creative (*efficiens = poiêtikê*), the other at this one's disposal, as it were, out of which something might be created. In the creative one they considered that there inhered power (*vis = dynamis*), in the one acted upon, a sort of 'matter' (*materia = hyle*); yet they held that each of the two inhered in the other, for neither would matter have been able to cohere if it

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were not held together by any power, nor yet would power without some matter (for nothing exists without being necessarily somewhere).[24] But that which was the product of both they called 'body' (*corpus = sôma*), and, so to speak, a sort of 'quality' (*qualitas = poiotês*)." (Cic. *Acad.* I 27).

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[24] An interesting reference, this, to a passage of the *Timaeus,* 52B: "Everything that exists must necessarily be in some place (*en tini topôi*)."

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PART II:

PLATONIC ISSUES

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CHAPTER THREE

EARLY LESSONS ON JUSTICE IN PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*

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As the second book of Plato's *Republic* begins, we see Glaucon challenging Socrates to "truly persuade" rather than merely "seem to persuade" "that it is in every way better to be just than unjust" (357a).[1] In drawing a distinction between truly persuading and seeming to persuade, Glaucon anticipates what is to be the core of his and Adeimantus' case against justice, the idea that whatever benefit justice affords is in the seeming and not in the being. Absent, however, from Glaucon's demand for a renewed Socratic effort is any call for an improved *definition* of justice. Glaucon and Adeimantus know what justice is; what they wish to know is what can be said in its favour.

Glaucon's portrayals of the just and unjust man are on target and astute—no confusion here. And in his account of the genesis of justice, its *nature* is never in doubt. Furthermore, as we see from Glaucon's presentation of the story of Gyges' ring,[2] Glaucon understands that justness cannot be gauged by outward action alone: we cannot know that a man who acts justly is *truly* just until we know how he would behave were he in possession of the miraculous invisible-making ring. The wretched and foolish *truly* just man does not *want* the same things as the fake just man: although, broadly speaking, no one is just willingly, the truly just man is

[1] This clearly signals Socrates' awareness that his arguments were flawed and not substantive.

[2] Kirby Flower Smith argues convincingly that "of Gyges" was interpolated. The original text, he contends, said simply, "ancestor of the Lydian," since Gyges was the ancestor of *the* Lydian, the King Croesus, last king of Lydia (560-546). The ancestor would be the famous founder of the line of kings. See Flower Smith 1902, 261-82.

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an exception: he embraces not the seeming-just but the being so (360d, 361b).

Thrasymachus, too, has contempt for the just man precisely because he knows him. He gets caught up at first in his own political bluster, and so it takes him a while to make his way to the just *man*. But, once he gets there, he sees the just man quite distinctly. Like Glaucon, Thrasymachus recognises the just as "those would not be *willing* to do injustice," and, like Glaucon, he regards such men as wretched (344a).

The champions of injustice—and those who speak on their behalf (as Glaucon and Adeimantus claim *they* do)—are, it seems, arguably also those who see the just man most keenly. Ironically, perhaps, it is those who approve of or have an appreciation for justice who have greater difficulty seeing justice for what it really is. In the *Republic*, the characters who place a premium on justice are Cephalus—in his old age, at any rate—and Polemarchus. It is they alone whom Socrates must set straight with respect to *what justice is*. By the time he converses with Thrasymachus, Socrates has turned to justice's defence—or, rather, to a *dis*crediting of *in*justice.

To put the point bluntly, the reason justice *needs defending* is that justice is precisely what most people know it to be: the virtue and practice that serve the interests of *someone else*. If a defence of justice requires supplying an answer to the question, "what's in it for me?" how can its defender succeed? Justice demands that one refrain from hurting others; it perhaps even mandates helping others under certain circumstances. It is the virtue that has regard for others; it is the least selfish and least self-interested of the four so-called "cardinal" virtues. As Thrasymachus, Glaucon, and Adeimantus all insist, it is *in*justice that is beneficial to oneself. If justice is a virtue at all, it is a virtue of dupes and fools. The problem with justice is that its immediate beneficiary is not me, but my neighbour, my friend, or even my enemy.

Although it would appear that Socrates offers in *Rep*. 4—and in his own name—a straightforward definition of justice to which he subscribes, a definition that must, one would think, surely supersede all earlier attempts by his interlocutors to define justice, the fact is that what justice really is is not the clearly beneficial-to-oneself internal order that Socrates *calls* justice in Book 4. The harmony among parts—whether in the city or in the individual soul—is moderation; internal order fails to capture the distinctive feature of justice. As almost everyone knows, what is unique about justice among the virtues is that it concerns one's relations with

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others;[3] internal good order is at most a necessary condition for, and a likely consequence of, justice.

In *Rep*. 1 Socrates' first task is to correct Cephalus' and Polemarchus' conceptions of justice. In addressing Thrasymachus, however, Socrates turns to deflating an exaggerated and offensive praise of injustice. Initially resisting being drawn into the near-impossible task of defending justice (362d, 368b), Socrates, as the *Republic* continues, defends not justice but moderation, a virtue that is notably more defensible than justice—certainly to gentlemen like Glaucon and Adeimantus. One of the great paradoxes of justice is that no one wants to be just but everyone wants just associates. It is for this reason that the just man is at one and the same time a subject of ridicule—and of admiration. For, if the benefits of justice—its wages and consequences—attach to those who *seem* just, that can only be because justice is surely something we value in people; otherwise, it would do no one any good to seem just. Only Thrasymachus, though even he senses the oddness of placing justice in the category of vice (348c),[4] does not include appearing just as part of perfect injustice.[5]

There is something particularly interesting about Socrates' conception of justice as it emerges in *Rep*. 1. What we find is that justice comes in two varieties, which I shall call (1) lay justice and (2) expert justice.[6] Lay justice is ordinary justice, the kind that disposes us to relate to and treat others justly.[7] The justice that is new and unfamiliar—both to Socrates' interlocutors and to us—is the other kind of justice, the justice that is like the practice of a craft. It is this second sort of justice that Socrates often

[3] See Aristotle *EN* 5.1.1129b25-33.

[4] Though this may be because Thrasymachus does not think justice is clever or intelligent.

[5] This is something noticed by Jill Frank (2018, 211). It is noteworthy that Thrasymachus finds nothing admirable in the just man—and does not think anyone else does either.

[6] The great confusion that has arisen concerning whether justice is or is [not] analogous to crafts can be at least partially dispelled by distinguishing these two senses of justice. In the same way, we might speak of a physician as a practitioner of health or as a health-expert or health-craftsman whose job it is to make other people healthy, to produce in them, as it were, lay-health. Physicians can produce not only other physicians but also healthy people

[7] One might further subdivide lay justice into justice as a disposition in the soul and justice as action. A just soul would be one that is disposed to treat others justly. Just action concerns how one actually treats others. As we shall see, just treatment of others might flow from the soul's disposition to justice, but it might be motivated by other considerations. The person who treats others justly but is not disposed to have regard for them is not a fully just person.

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calls the political art, the craft of ruling. It is the business of this latter sort of justice and its practitioners to promote the psychic welfare of those they rule—specifically, if not exclusively, to instil in them *lay* justice. As we shall see shortly, the two forms of justice are not easily kept distinct: they shade off into one another as circumstances dictate, and they are also on occasion in tension with one another.

In what follows, I tease out of *Rep*. 1 the lessons about justice that Socrates seeks to convey—if sometimes by way of logically dubious arguments[8]—to Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus. Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus represent distinct challenges to Socrates. Cephalus' view of justice is the least threatening to Socrates' conception of it; Polemarchus' is a bit more dangerous; but Thrasymachus' radical view would turn the virtue of justice into something shameful.

I. Cephalus

When the *Republic* begins Cephalus is an old man. Although we are not explicitly told what kind of man he was when he was younger, it is not easy to avoid the suspicion that his current chastity, piety, and justice stand in sharp contrast to former excesses.[9] One thing, at any rate, is certain. Cephalus is afraid to face death as an unjust man: what if the stories he has heard about the punishments for which the unjust are destined in the afterlife are true after all? Tales he dismissed as nonsense when he was young now suddenly both frighten him and spur him to righteous action. Cephalus is glad to be wealthy: he can repay his debts and offer his sacrifices.[10] But, how did he make his money? We are left, again, to our suspicions.[11]

Socrates extracts from Cephalus' ramblings something approximating a definition of justice, but the definition Socrates constructs as if a mere

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[8] Hence Glaucon's complaint at the start of Book 2.

[9] See Ruby Blondell (2002), 170, 173.

[10] Leo Strauss (1964, 67) thinks Cephalus worries that he may have "involuntarily" done injustice to someone—cheated or lied. But in fact, Cephalus regards as one of the great benefits of being wealthy that one need never be in the position of having to do injustice "involuntarily"—that is, when one does not wish to, presumably because one's poverty leaves one little choice. See n. 12.

[11] Cephalus says of himself that he inherited much of his money (330b). But he clearly also made money: he calls himself a "money-maker" (*chrēmastistēs*), and situates his moneymaking achievement midway between that of his grandfather, who increased his own inheritance many times over, and his father, who depleted his inheritance.

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paraphrase is designed not merely to refine and formalise Cephalus' conception, but to change it. For Cephalus, justice amounts to paying one's debts to gods and men, and not lying or cheating to avoid payment.[12] These are duties owed from a position of subordination: one has borrowed and one must repay; one is in another's debt; it is *not* up to the borrower to determine whether or not it is "best" for the creditor to be repaid. Lying and cheating to avoid paying one's debts is simply forbidden. But *Socrates'* recasting of Cephalus' conception in the form of a definition—"the truth[13] and giving back what a man has had given to him by another" (331c)—and the illustrations he offers place the agent in a position of power: in Socrates' first example, the agent who has had a weapon *entrusted* to him, must consider whether or not to return it to its rightful owner; in the second, he is in possession of a truth, or of the "whole" truth, and he must now decide whether or not, or how much of it, to reveal. Socrates does not directly challenge the bindingness of Cephalus' rules of justice[14]: he does not ask Cephalus whether there might be an occasion on which it is unjust to repay a debt or lie or cheat to avoid doing so.[15] And, if he were asked, Cephalus would surely say (as perhaps he should) that there is not. Instead, Socrates presents cases in which the agent must

[12] The term *akonta*, "unwillingly," in the phrase "to not cheating or lying *akonta*," signifies "when one does not want to." In other words, now that Cephalus wishes to pay his debts and not to cheat or lie, he is relieved not to have to cheat or lie because he lacks sufficient funds.

[13] Later, "to speak (*legein*) the truth" (331d).

[14] We see later on, in Book 4, that Socrates clearly regards as injustices such things as stealing, committing adultery, neglecting parents, etc. (442e-443a).[14] And, although in Book 4 he recognises the standards violated by these acts as "commonplace" (or "vulgar"—*ta phortika* – 442e1), he nevertheless sees in the tendency not to violate them a mark of the just man, and in the contrary tendency a mark of the unjust. A similar list of offences appears at 344b, courtesy of Thrasymachus (though his list includes more egregious offenses such as kidnapping and enslaving); and at 360a-c, where Glaucon imagines the unjust activities of the man in possession of the ring of Gyges (these activities include murder, which is interestingly absent from both Socrates' and Thrasymachus' lists). See also the unjust acts said to be committed by gods against other gods that Socrates wants stricken from the literature to which his young guardians will be exposed (378b-d): wars, mistreatment of parents, beating, tying up, and exiling, and the particular crime visited by cities on other cities, viz. enslavement (351b); see, too, the injustices enumerated in the Myth of Er at 10.615b-c.

[15] That Socrates' case differs from Cephalus' is evident in the agent's reason for considering not complying with the rules of justice. In Cephalus' cases any violation of the rules would be self-serving; in Socrates' examples, the violation would benefit not the agent but the other.

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exercise discretion with respect to the rules, cases in which Socrates' question, "is to do these very things sometimes just and sometimes unjust?" (331c), is reasonable. Moreover, in Socrates' cases, the agent must address *a particular person in a particular situation*. Whereas in the sorts of cases Cephalus speaks of, those on the receiving end of just acts are mere place-holders, Socrates designs cases that force the agent to look at the person, see him, and ask with respect to *him*: is there anything about the immediate particular circumstances of this individual that might make my doing what is normally the right thing to do harmful to him? For Socrates, then, although the directives of justice are for the most part perfectly acceptable rules of thumb, that is, reliable guides to just action in most instances, when one is put in the position where there is the possibility of an imminent harm that one can either enable or avert, that which is normally the right course of action might on this occasion not be right. In such a position one is both permitted and required to assess potential harm. And in order to do this the agent must *see* the person whose interests stand to be adversely affected by his actions; in ordinary rule-following there is no comparable demand because there is no comparable permission.[16]

Although the agent in Socrates' cases must see the other, he need not know anything more about him than how likely he is to be adversely affected by the agent's action. Who the person is and in what relationship he stands to the agent is wholly irrelevant. It is true that in Socrates' first example, it is a *friend* who stands to be harmed if his weapon is returned to him when he is not of sound mind;[17] nevertheless in the second, Socrates' concern is for *anyone* who might be harmed by being told the truth. Thus, for Socrates justice does not differentiate between a friend and everyone else.[18] One thing, then, that Socrates seems to have in common with Cephalus—albeit not for the same reason—is that it makes no difference to either of them whether the person on the receiving end is friend or foe,

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[16] The normally forbidden practice notoriously permitted in the *Republic* is, of course, lying, but certainly not lying to escape one's obligations. For there to be even the possibility of a justifiable lie the lie would have to be for the sake of averting harm to which the person lied to is vulnerable—not for the sake of benefiting the liar. The first instance in which falsehood is condoned appears in Book 2 with the education of children.

[17] Perhaps Socrates thinks that Cephalus could relate more easily to a case in which it is a friend who entrusted his weapon to someone.

[18] In Socrates' subsequent reference to this case, he emphasises "any man whatsoever" (*hotōioun*): one must not return to any man whatsoever something he has deposited when he is not of sound mind (331e-332a).

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good or bad. In Cephalus' case, this is because he follows rules mechanically—and blindly. In Socrates' case, as we shall see, it is because he thinks a just man harms *no one*.

We learn, then, at least two things from Socrates' conversation with Cephalus. The first is that, although justice can most of the time be served by following rules—and indeed following the rules is important—there are occasions on which we find ourselves in a position in which justice requires of us that we take care lest a person come to harm.[19] This is because the basic *principle* of justice is one of not doing or causing harm. It is from this principle that the rules derive; they are based or grounded on it. When we owe a debt we are almost always required to pay it and not to lie or cheat to avoid doing so. But when something is entrusted to us or when we are in possession of a truth that may do harm if divulged, we are often in a position where we must appeal directly to the *principle* of justice rather than rely on the rules based on that principle. The second thing we learn is that both the straightforward obligation to pay our debts and the less determinate duty to avert harm[20] obtain regardless of whether the other is friend or foe.

On this account of justice, Cephalus—even in old age—fails to be just. He pays his debts and offers his sacrifices, hoping to save his own self. He acts "justly" for the sake of reward, or at least for the sake of avoiding punishment. He gives no thought to the needs of others. Socrates has now raised doubts about such self-serving justice, for what lies at justice's core is regard for others.

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[19] By not returning a weapon to a madman, one protects not only the madman but potentially others as well. A just man's vigilance thus extends beyond the one person with whom he has dealings. One might say, too, that embedded in Socrates' lesson to Cephalus is an anticipation of the formulation soon to rival Thrasymachus' pronouncement that justice is the advantage of the stronger. For, when one looks out for the interests of the man not in his right mind, one promotes the advantage, not of the stronger but of the weaker.

[20] One way, perhaps, to capture the difference between Cephalus' cases and Socrates' is to say that the former are cases in which one breaks the rules to another person's expense or to his detriment; the latter are cases in which one breaks the rules to the other person's benefit.

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II. Polemarchus

Cephalus' son Polemarchus "inherits" his father's argument, just as he stands to inherit his possessions (331d).[21] The son, however, unlike the craven aged father cowering in the face of impending death, approaches the matter of justice as a man at the height of his power. Polemarchus had earlier *ordered* (*keleuei*) his slave to run after Socrates and Glaucon. The slave tugged on Socrates' cloak and told them that Polemarchus *orders* them to wait.[22] He tried to intimidate Socrates by calling attention to the large number of men in his entourage (327c). He declared himself and the others in his group not open to persuasion (327c), finally silencing all dissent by commanding: "So stay, and do not do otherwise" (328b).[23] Polemarchus' dominance is signalled in other ways as well: He is identified at first as Cephalus' son (327b), but it is not long before Cephalus is identified as Polemarchus' father (328b); Lysias and Euthydemus are called Polemarchus' brothers rather than Cephalus' sons (328b); the house in which both Cephalus and his son Polemarchus live is referred to as "the home of Polemarchus" (328b); and although Cephalus has three sons who no doubt will share their father's estate equally (330b),[24] Polemarchus declares himself his father's heir (331d). This brazen son now rudely interrupts (*hupolabōn*) his father's conversation with an old friend.[25] Citing the poet Simonides, Polemarchus boldly expresses his conviction that justice is indeed giving to each what is owed

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[21] Rather than Bloom's: "'Am I not the heir of what belongs to you?' said Polemarchus," it should be: "'Am I, Polemarchus, not the heir of what belongs to you?' he said," That this is the correct reading is confirmed by Socrates' saying at 331e6-7: *su men, ō Polemarche*. (Bloom 1968).

[22] See, too, the beginning of Book 5 (449b), where Polemarchus tugs on Adeimantus' cloak.

[23] At 340b Polemarchus characterises Thrasymachus' view that rulers make laws for their own advantage as: "sometimes the strong *order* (*keleuein*) those who are weaker…" (emphasis added). Note, too, how Socrates at 335a gently chides Polemarchus for his bullying ways by saying, "Polemarchus orders," just when Polemarchus had actually conceded a point to Socrates. Our early passage at 327c is the first of many references in the *Republic* to the distinction between coercion and persuasion. Though distinct, coercion and persuasion are in the *Republic* not always at odds; on occasion they work in tandem (see, e.g., 7.519e).

[24] According to the Gortyn code of Greek law (c. 450 BCE), VII, sons inherit equally, with shares twice those of daughters. Note 330b, where Cephalus says: "I am satisfied if I leave not less, but rather a bit more than I inherited, to these here"—*toutoisin*, referring to his three sons, Lysias, Euthydemus, and Polemarchus.

[25] His companion Adeimantus does the same.

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him—in other words, friends helping friends, enemies harming enemies. As a man of means, Polemarchus is in a position to dole out to others both good things and bad.

Although Polemarchus presents his account of justice as if it were a mere seconding of his father's view,[26] his view differs significantly from his father's. First, it takes no notice of rules: Polemarchus acknowledges no constraints on what may be done to benefit friends and harm enemies.[27] Second, Polemarchus' account, insofar as it associates justice with benefit and harm, requires, unlike Cephalus', that one *see* the person on the receiving end. One can hardly give friends and foes "what is owed" to them without seeing them. And third, Polemarchus repositions justice as something bestowed, as something that does its work top-down. Whereas Cephalus saw justice as repayment of debt, in which as debtor he is obliged to the creditor who is the superior in their relationship, Polemarchus' agent occupies the higher ground. Indeed, when Socrates, in talking to Cephalus, envisioned an agent who must exercise discretion for the sake of protecting unstable people from harm, he helped facilitate the transition from Cephalus' original conception of justice as rule-following to Polemarchus' casting of justice as dispensing benefits and harms.

Socrates further eases the transition from Cephalus' justice that is bottom-up to Polemarchus' justice that is top-down in two ways: (1) he replaces "what is owed" (*to opheilomenon*) with "what is fitting" (*to prosēkon*)—importantly underscoring the change in the just man's position from low to high; and (2) he compares justice to the medical art and the cooking art, asking Polemarchus to identify the specific work in which the

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[26] In the *Meno*, Meno's conception of how he would exhibit the virtue of a man in his prime is to "engage in public affairs and so to help friends and harm enemies" (71e). Interestingly, he leaves the management of the household to women, and at 73a Socrates preserves Meno's distinction between the managing of public affairs which is men's work and household management which is women's. Tellingly, however, when Socrates at 91a reviews for Anytus' benefit the virtue Meno is hoping to acquire, he replaces "helping friends and harming enemies" with "looking after parents" and assigns to men the management of household affairs.

[27] Both Thrasymachus in Book 1 and Glaucon in Book 2 associate helping friends and harming enemies with *in*justice. Thrasymachus thinks the just man is the one who "incurs the ill will of his relatives and his acquaintances when he is unwilling to serve them against what is just" (343e). Thus, the "helping friends" that Polemarchus sees as integral to justice, Thrasymachus sees as incompatible with it. Glaucon, as we shall see, thinks it is the *un*just man who, thanks to his wealth, "does good to friends and harm to enemies" (362c). In the *Meno* (71e), however, Meno (like Polemarchus) considers helping friends and harming enemies a mark of virtue for the adult male. (See previous note.)

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just man is most able to help friends and harm enemies—that is, is most useful. Yet, once Polemarchus attempts to identify *how* the just man is useful, he loses his grip on the just man as dispenser of benefits and harms and slips into the common, pre-reflective view of the just man. For surely the reason Polemarchus thinks the just man is useful in war, and useful in partnerships, contracts, and money matters in peacetime, is not because of any special expertise the man has in distributing benefits and harms but because he thinks the just man is honest and does not steal or cheat, that he is just—in the lay sense. When Polemarchus says that the just man is more useful than other experts in those partnerships in which gold and silver "must be deposited and kept safe," it is clear that he is thinking about the just man as the kind of man one can trust.

To get Polemarchus' just man back on top Socrates argues that justice would not be "anything very serious (*spoudaion*)" if the just man who is useful for *guarding* gold and silver is useful only when something is not being used or, as Socrates colourfully puts it, "for useless things." And so, to make justice more "serious," to give it, as it were, more heft, Socrates makes the man useful for guarding useful, too, for stealing. At least now the just man is good for something. From this shaky start Socrates produces a shamelessly faulty argument to conclude: (1) that "the just man has come to light as a kind of thief" (334a),[28] and (2) that justice is the art of stealing "for the benefit, to be sure, of friends and the harm of enemies" (334b).[29] This argument's flaws are considerable. Is the man who is clever at guarding money also clever at stealing it? And must we conclude that this is so even if (doubtfully) (a) a boxer who is cleverest at landing a blow is also cleverest at guarding against it, (b) a man who is clever at guarding against disease is also clever at producing it (and getting away with doing so), and (c) a man who is good at guarding an army is also good at stealing the enemy's plans? Furthermore, must one who is *clever at* stealing money actually be a thief so that justice is actually therefore an art of stealing (334b)?[30] Despite its glaring flaws, however, Socrates' argument makes a strikingly important point. If, as Polemarchus believes, just men harm as

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[28] See *Hippias Minor*, where the good man is "he who does wrong willingly" (376b). In the *Hippias Minor* the offensive conclusion derives from the assumption that justice is a craft, that it is "power or knowledge or both" (375d). See following note.

[29] The reasoning here seems to be: if justice is a craft, then, like other crafts, its practitioner ought to be equally skilled at satisfying and at sabotaging the craft's proper end; contrary ends are achieved via the same skill.

[30] The thief will appear again in Socrates' argument against Thrasymachus concerning the value of perfect injustice.

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readily as they help, it follows that there would be nothing—certainly not any concern never to do harm or any rules of justice—to keep them from stealing, albeit only to benefit their friends and harm their enemies. If they are good at stealing, they will steal—especially since justice for Polemarchus involves *actually* benefiting friends and harming enemies. Socrates wants his audience to see that Polemarchus' moral universe, unlike his father's, is not constrained by rules of justice. It can accommodate even such patently unjust acts as stealing. Whereas Cephalus' justice was a matter of mechanical adherence to a set of moral rules, Polemarchus cares not at all for ordinary moral rules. And since for Polemarchus the rules of morality have not even *prima facie* force[31]—his sole care is to benefit friends and harm enemies—Polemarchus' just man would indeed be a thief, a liar, a cheater, a killer, an adulterer—to help his friends and harm his enemies.

Despite Polemarchus' unhappiness with the conclusions Socrates draws from this argument, he remains steadfast in his view that justice is a matter of helping friends and harming enemies.[32] Socrates now asks whether one might misidentify one's friends, understood suddenly to mean men who are good and thus just,[33] and might consequently assign benefits to people who do not merit them. And worse: would not misidentifying one's enemies, understood now as men who are bad and unjust, result in inadvertently *harming* good and just men?

Note that in Polemarchus' belief that "it is just to harm the *unjust* and help the *just*" (334d), just and unjust men have now moved to the *receiving* end of the dispensing of benefits and harms. The unjust and the just *to whom* the harm and help are distributed are surely not themselves the *dispensers* of harm and benefit that Polemarchus originally intended but those who are just and unjust in the ordinary rule-following way, men who are just in the lay sense. Thus, what Socrates argues is that if justice-experts need to be able to distinguish lay-just men from the lay-unjust in order to dispense benefits and harms appropriately, they need to be able to

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[31] Virtuous fathers whose sons are less virtuous than they are not uncommon in Plato. (See *Prot*. 319e-320b, *Meno* 93c-94c; in the *Meno* (89e-90b), a case in point is Anytus and his father, Anthemion.)

[32] See *Crito* 45c, where Crito is ashamed of Socrates and regards him as unjust because he allows his enemies to get away with doing him harm. Note that Crito does not say on his own either that the *verdict* was unjust or that Socrates' accusers or jurors were committing an injustice—only that they were Socrates' enemies and what is due enemies, in accordance with justice, is harm.

[33] In a move no doubt surprising to Polemarchus and hardly in line with his intentions, Socrates turns friends into good men and enemies into bad ones, and then good men into just men and bad men into unjust.

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distinguish the man who *seems* lay-just from the man who *is* lay-just. Polemarchus concedes the point, yet all he is willing in the end to say is that "it is just to do good to the friend, *if* he is good, and harm to the enemy, *if* he is bad" (335a). Socrates has still not succeeded in persuading Polemarchus to give up altogether the notion that justice is associated with helping friends and harming enemies.

Socrates' only hope now is to introduce a notion of expert justice that is wholly unfamiliar to Polemarchus, the notion that expert justice, rather than doling out benefits and harms, has the task of *making* others just—lay-just. If to harm entails causing the thing harmed to be worse with respect to its particular virtue—if indeed this is the worst harm one can inflict[34], then surely if *horsemanship* cannot harm horses, it cannot make horses worse in their horse-virtue. Nor, by the same token, can *music* make men unmusical. It follows then that, if the specifically human virtue is justice, just men cannot make others unjust by justice; good men are not able to make other men bad by virtue, by *aretē*.

Socrates has here introduced what he regards as the worst harm one human being can visit on another (or even on animals), namely, making them worse with respect to their proper virtue.[35] This is what a justice *expert* would never be able to do by justice as expertise. Polemarchus has apparently already forgotten the recent argument in which Socrates contended that whoever can land a blow can also guard against one, and whoever can guard against disease is also cleverest at getting away with producing it. Has Socrates forgotten as well? Hardly. If Socrates does not now argue that the very musicians who can make men musical by music can also make them unmusical, that the very men who are skilled in horsemanship are those who can make men by horsemanship incompetent riders, and therefore that the very men who are experts at justice are those

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[34] Even if not the only harm. Socrates recognises other things besides corruption as harms. In the *Apology* he feels it would be unjust to inflict upon himself either prison, which would deprive him of liberty, or exile, which would entail the unpleasantness of being expelled from city after city, at his advanced age (*Ap*. 37b-e).

[35] See *Ap*. 20a-b, where Socrates says that young human beings need someone to improve them in human virtue just as the overseer of colts and calves makes them "noble and good in their appropriate virtue." In the *Euthyphro* (13a-c), the definition of holiness as *therapeia* is abandoned because the tendance of horses, dogs, and cattle benefits them by making them better, yet men cannot make the gods better. And, of course, the reason Socrates thinks his accusers cannot really harm him (though they intend to – *Ap*. 41d-e) is that, although they can kill or banish or deprive him of the benefits of citizenship, they cannot make him—that is, his soul—worse (*Ap*. 30c).

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who can by justice make men unjust,[36] it can only be because this way of arguing does not serve Socrates' *present* purpose. Socrates' goal *now* is to secure Polemarchus' consent to the proposition that a just man cannot by justice make another man unjust.

Not wishing to take any chances, Socrates' bolsters his argument. Rather than rely on a comparison of justice only to such things as horsemanship and music—arts that can accomplish both benefit and harm—Socrates now compares justice to heat and dryness: just as it is not the work of heat to cool and it is not the work of dryness to wet;[37] so it is not the work of the good to harm. And since the just man is good, it is not the work of the *just* man to harm—anyone.[38] The idea here is that coolness cools but heat does not, wetness wets but dryness does not, so the bad bads, that is, harms—and the good does not. And as in the earlier argument with Polemarchus in which a mistake about who are one's friends and who are one's enemies becomes a mistake about who is good and who is bad, which in turn becomes a mistake about who is just and who is unjust, the good here is immediately assimilated to the just. (Thrasymachus, as we shall see, will challenge this automatic association of good with just.) The just man is good; it is the bad who harm; so the just man never harms anyone.

Despite the general and unqualified conclusion—"it is not the work of the just man to harm either a friend or anyone else" (335d); and "it is

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[36] The idea that the skilled person can use his skill to produce good things or bad is found in the *Hippias Minor*. See, too *Crito* 44d: "Would that the many could produce the greatest evils, Crito, so that they could also produce the greatest goods!"

[37] The case of heat heating and coolness cooling, and of wetness wetting and dryness drying, is different from the horsemanship and music cases in two ways. First, horsemanship is not a horse and music is not musical, but wetness is wet and heat hot. To be a doctor one does not need to be healthy. Heat could not heat unless it were hot; could a musician teach if he were not musical? It is an interesting and important question whether an expert at justice who makes others just in the lay sense must himself be just in the lay sense. Second, whereas Socrates *could* argue, if he so wished, that it is the musician who is most able deliberately to make someone unmusical through musicianship, heating and cooling cannot do anything but heat and cool, respectively.

[38] The conclusion, "It is not the work of justice to make men unjust," precedes the examples of cooling and dryness that are adduced subsequently to support it. Nevertheless, the final conclusion also derives—and more successfully so—from the examples of cooling and dryness: since (1) it is not the work of the *good* to harm, and (2) the just man is good, it follows that (3) "It is not the work of the just man to harm—anyone."

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never just to harm anyone" (335e)—the argument works only if (1) "to harm" is taken to mean "to worsen the condition of," especially or most prominently in the sense of "making someone less just," and (b) the just man is taken to denote the justice expert—he who is in a position to make others just. Since Polemarchus sees the just man as the dispenser of goods *and bads*, Socrates tries to teach him that a just man *in that superior position*, cannot dispense bad and injustice—that is, cannot visit upon others anything that would make them worse.[39] Like heat that cannot have the effect of cooling—cooling is not among the effects it can have—and so, too, dryness that cannot have the effect of wetting, so goodness and justness, as well as the man who is good and just, can have no harmful (bad) effect on other persons—and, in particular, cannot make them worse.

In nothing Socrates has said up to this point does he go so far as to associate justice with *helping* all people,[40] though the point is implicit. (Socrates will make the point explicit in his conversation with Thrasymachus.) If we consider: "Cooling is not the work of heat, but of its opposite… nor wetting the work of dryness but of its opposite… nor harming the work of

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[39] Socrates reveals his disapproval of Polemarchus' view of justice by supposing it to be the view of Periander, Perdiccas, Xerxes, Ismenias the Theban, "or some other rich man who has a high opinion of what he can do" (336a). This "other rich man" is surely none other than Polemarchus himself, who not only proposes the view in question (as his interpretation of Simonides) but holds on to it with rather fierce tenacity. Socrates nevertheless permits him to save face.

[40] This is true also in the *Crito*, where at 49b-c, Socrates says: "…one must in no way commit injustice… surely there is no difference between doing bad to human beings and doing injustice"; and in the *Gorgias* as well, where Socrates says at 460c: "The just man will never wish to do injustice." In the *Apology* (37b), Socrates says he never did injustice to anyone, so he will not do injustice to himself now by proposing a penalty that is harmful to himself. When Socrates at *Ap*. 32d establishes his credentials as a just man, he says he has placed above all else not committing unjust or impious deeds. Although Socrates sees himself as Athens' greatest benefactor (36c-e), he nevertheless tends to associate his justness with not harming others. And, of course, all the just acts at *Rep*. 4.442 are negative—including not neglecting parents or the gods. It is probably fair to say that justice is a virtue that for the most part enjoins refraining from doing harm. Would it not be odd, however, for a just man to strain to define harm as narrowly as possible so that it positively excludes helping others, or to be on his guard lest he actually help someone? Although Polemarchus speaks of helping friends as part of his conception of justice, Socrates' response is not to validate that part of Polemarchus' definition but to ignore it: what is essential to justice is not harming. (See Eric Brown (2004), 293, n. 3], who thinks Socrates does preserve the first part of Polemarchus' definition.) Socrates emphasises that a just person mistreats no one; he teaches that in that sense justice is blind.

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the good but of its opposite… and it is the just man who is good," the unmistakable implication is that benefiting (or making better or more just) *is* the work of the good or just man. Just as heat does not cool *but heats*, and dryness does not wet but dries, so would the just man not harm but benefit. It is only because of the refutative nature of Socrates' engagement with Cephalus and Polemarchus that he goes no further than he needs to in order to discredit the objectionable aspects of their views: Socrates shows Polemarchus that one cannot be just even as one harms (= worsens) someone—even if one's victim is one's enemy.[41]

Although Cephalus and Polemarchus do not represent justice accurately, neither of them disparages it.[42] For the former, justice is a way to ensure a torment-free afterlife; for the latter, it is the *proper* way to exercise power. The view that justice is a bad thing awaits the outburst of the by now utterly exasperated Thrasymachus. Thrasymachus is irritated, first, by the conciliatory or deferential spirit Socrates and Polemarchus exhibit toward one another. For Thrasymachus, the purpose of debate is to win, to outshine the others, not to reach consensus together. But, beyond that, what surely provokes him most of all is the respect all participants thus far have shown for justice—even though, as everyone knows, justice is another man's benefit and one's own harm. For Polemarchus, the person in power is one who exercises justice and who is constrained by some sort of principle of justice. Yet for Thrasymachus, as we shall see, the person in power is not just; there are no constraints on him beyond the consideration of his own advantage. And if we were to say, with Socrates, that the function of justice is to make *others* just, Thrasymachus would surely disagree. As we shall see, for Thrasymachus to make others just is the function of injustice.

[41] Socrates could easily have extended his argument as follows: it is the work of wetting to make things wet; so, it is the work of a good (just) man to confer benefit. Some scholars rightly attribute to Socrates the view that justice goes beyond not harming to engaging in a kind of benevolence. See Strauss ("his goodness toward his fellows, his willingness to help them, to care for them, or to serve them… as distinguished from unwillingness to harm them", Strauss 1964, 110) and Mitchell Miller (1986), 163-93.

[42] Kenneth Dorter (2006, 32) rightly notes that Socrates at no point in his conversation with Cephalus and Polemarchus argues that justice is beneficial to just people themselves but only that it is beneficial to others. But, of course, Cephalus embraces justice for his own sake; and Polemarchus never raises the question.

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III. Thrasymachus

Thrasymachus enters the scene belligerently. Unlike Cephalus and Polemarchus, he has no interest in hearing what Socrates has to say; he wants to be the one to be heard. As Socrates observes, "Thrasymachus clearly desired to speak in order to win a good reputation, since he believed he had a very fine answer. But he feigned wanting to prevail upon me to be the one to answer" (338a). Thrasymachus offers what can only be characterised as a cynical view of justice.[43] What he proposes is not a serious *definition* of justice; instead, he sneers at justice, seeking to expose it for what he thinks it truly is: weakness, incompetence, and stupidity on the part of those who advance the interests of others at their own expense.[44] When Thrasymachus contends that justice is "the advantage of the stronger" (338c),[45] what he means is that justice obligates the weak, that is, the ruled, to obey the rules that the strong, those who have political power, impose on them, thereby advancing the interests of the strong. His alternate formulations, "Justice is the advantage of the rulers" and "Justice is someone else's good," amount to the same thing.[46] Just men are fools

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[43] Thrasymachus has little interest in offering a serious *definition* of justice. In fact, he does not appear to have what Marina McCoy (2007, 112) calls, "a genuinely intellectual position about the nature of justice," one that is simply at odds with Socrates'. On the contrary, Thrasymachus' "very fine answer" ridicules justice, seeking to expose it for what he thinks it truly is: weakness, incompetence, and stupidity on the part of those who advance the interests of others at their own expense. It is what the strong force the weak to do to the weak's detriment and the strong's advantage.

[44] For Thrasymachus, being just is not a good thing in any way. The rulers are not just but unjust when they make laws for their own advantage that others must obey. The others are the ones who are just.

[45] For a comparison of Thrasymachus to Callicles in the *Gorgias*, see Weiss (2007), 93-96. Also see Alessandra Fussi (2007), 43-69 and Rachel Barney (2017).

[46] Were someone to object to Thrasymachus' view on the grounds that on those occasions when a ruler obeys the law or, in other words, does something just, he could not then be said to be furthering "someone else's" good but his own (since the laws advance the interests of the rulers), my guess is that Thrasymachus would no doubt reply that at those times such a man will have ceased to be a ruler "in the precise sense." For Thrasymachus, since the true ruler operates above the law and outside of justice, the ruler who obeys the law—even if it is of his own making—serves not his own interests but those of others, and no longer qualifies as a real ruler. (This is, of course, the strategy Thrasymachus employs in order to avoid admitting that when rulers mistakenly make laws that fail to reflect their advantage, justice turns out not to be "the advantage of the stronger.") From Thrasymachus' point of view, one man's gain is always another man's loss. (This

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and dupes. They get the short end of the stick. They advance the interests of those who compel them to do their bidding. Justice is bad for those who are just, and good only for others. Justice has, according to Thrasymachus, no redeeming value for the just man himself.[47] Justice is unequivocally bad—because unprofitable—for those who are conventionally just. It is incorrect to suppose, as many have, that when Thrasymachus says that justice is the advantage of the stronger, he means that the rulers' *own* justice is good for them. The fact is that the only justice that is good for the rulers is the justice of the ruled. Only two things are good for the rulers themselves: the justice of the ruled and their own *in*justice.[48]

Thus, in addition to serving their own interests by way of justice, that is, by securing the obedience of their subjects to the self-serving laws that they, the strong, impose, the strong secure their advantage as well, Thrasymachus maintains, by way of injustice, that is, by exploiting others, cheating others, "gaining the advantage" (*pleonektein*) over others, and taking from others what is not theirs to take. Thrasymachus has nothing but praise for injustice. Injustice, he asserts, is goodness and prudence; the unjust man is the man who is good and wise. For Thrasymachus, the better and smarter man will serve his own interests by short-changing other men.[49] It is, furthermore, the *life* of injustice that is the more profitable.

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is not to say that Thrasymachus has fully thought out his "position" on the nature of justice and injustice.) I suppose it is not impossible that Thrasymachus would say that, so long as the ruler's interests are being served, he may obey the law. This response is not, however, as faithful as the first to Thrasymachus' tone. Thrasymachus has disdain for justice—and so, too, for law-abidingness generally.

[47] Whereas Polemarchus appreciates the usefulness of justice in the matter of contracts and partnerships (333a), Thrasymachus will observe that in contracts, when the just man is a partner of the unjust man, he will never have more, but always less, than the unjust man when the partnership dissolves (343d). For Thrasymachus, then, the reason a just man would be useful in partnerships is that he can be taken advantage of.

[48] It is incorrect to suppose, as many have, that when Thrasymachus says that justice is the advantage of the stronger, he means that the rulers' own justice is good for them. The only justice that is good for the rulers are the "just" rules they set down for the ruled to obey. It is not, however, the rulers' own *being* just that is good for the rulers. The only *being* just that is good for them is the being just of the ruled. Indeed, even for the ruled themselves, being just is nothing but disadvantageous. The only thing Thrasymachus prizes is injustice. See 8.545a, where Socrates says: "…we may be persuaded… by Thrasymachus and pursue injustice…".

[49] Within a single speech Thrasymachus shifts, apparently unawares, from political justice, by which the ruler benefits from the obedience of the ruled, to interpersonal justice, in which "the just man everywhere has less than the unjust

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Thrasymachus points out that an unjust man gets more money and property,[50] that he, unlike the just man, preserves the good will of friends and relatives,[51] that he is thought by others to be blessed and happy, that he subjugates cities and men to himself. Yet it is not just any injustice that Thrasymachus thinks makes people exceedingly happy. The injustice that he applauds is injustice "in a big way" (341a1), injustice that is "perfect" or "the most perfect," whether in a person or in a city (344a, 348b, 351b), injustice "on a sufficient scale" (344c), and injustice "entire" (344c). It is this kind of injustice that is "mightier (*ischuroteron*), freer (*eleutheroteron*), and more masterful (*despotikōteron*) than justice" (344c). It is this kind of injustice that distinguishes the tyrant (344a), who not only takes the money of the citizens but also kidnaps and enslaves them. It is those who practice injustice on this level, that is, perfectly—and not simple cutpurses (348d)[52]—whom everyone calls happy and blessed (344b-c). Those who blame injustice do so only out of fear of suffering it (344c-d).[53] Injustice, when it is of the greatest magnitude, renders a man invulnerable by dint of his vast power.

It is up to Socrates to challenge Thrasymachus on two counts: on his contention (1) that justice is the advantage of the stronger, and (2) that *perfect* injustice is best of all. With respect to the first, Socrates, we note, is not generally unsympathetic to the idea that justice is advantageous. On the contrary, it seems that, had he been given the chance to say what he thinks, he would have defined justice, as Thrasymachus anticipates (336d), in terms of such "inanities" (*huthlous* - 336d), as Thrasymachus calls

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man" (343d). This is true even "when each [the just and unjust man] holds some ruling office" (343e).

[50] The just man, of course, ends up having less (*elatton echei* – 343d). Cf. the good father of the timocratic youth in Book 8, who is willing to "be gotten the better of" (*elattousthai* – 549c) rather than trouble himself to pursue honours, ruling offices, lawsuits, and "everything of the sort that is to the busybody's taste."

[51] See n. 27.

[52] Although the man whom Thrasymachus extols is the one who succeeds in being *perfectly* unjust, Thrasymachus actually thinks that all injustice—on any scale—is desirable so long as one escapes punishment (348d). Of course, less crafty and less powerful committers of injustice do get caught and, when they do, pay a hefty price (344b). But Thrasymachus is not one to do a cost-benefit analysis and determine as a result that justice is on occasion (viz. when the committer of injustice gets caught and punished) more profitable than injustice. The fact is that Thrasymachus has such antipathy toward justice that he sees the just man as always the dupe, as someone who on every occasion loses out to the unjust man (343d-e).

[53] Cf. *Gorg*. 492a.

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them, as "the requisite (*to deon*), or the beneficial (*ōphelimon*), or the profitable (*lusiteloun*), or the gainful (*kerdaleon*), or the advantageous (*sumpheron*)." Indeed, from Socrates' perspective, his being forbidden the inclusion of any of these terms in the definiens is tantamount to his not being permitted to say that 12 is 2x6, or 3x4, or 6x2, or 4x3.[54] Moreover, Socrates never disputes Thrasymachus' notion that justice is "someone else's good."[55] The only thing he finds objectionable in Thrasymachus' formulation is his identification of the beneficiary of justice as "the stronger."[56]

The strategy Socrates employs to cast doubt on Thrasymachus' view that justice is the advantage of "the stronger" is reminiscent of the one he adopted with Polemarchus: just as he earlier suggested to Polemarchus the possibility that one might misidentify one's friends and enemies, Socrates now wonders if rulers, otherwise known as "the stronger," might not similarly mistake their interests or advantage. For if they do, Socrates reasons, the laws they establish for the ruled—obedience to which

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[54] Socrates' listing of 2x6, 3x4, 6x2, and 4x3 mimics all the synonyms for "advantageous" that Thrasymachus forbade! It's particularly funny because Socrates lists 2x6 as well as 6x2, and 3x4 as well as 4x3.

[55] The question is not whether Socrates thinks justice benefits the just man but whether benefiting oneself is central to the just man's project. Is his own benefit what the just man pursues? Is it what makes justice worthwhile in his eyes?

[56] That Socrates defines justice as the advantageous, the profitable, etc., or that he would so define it if permitted to, is often taken to imply that Socrates subscribes to some form of egoism or eudaimonism, to the view that justice is to be pursued because of the advantages and benefits or the happiness that accrue to the just agent. In my view, however, for Socrates justice is advantageous simpliciter or, if that seems odd, then, advantageous to all, in the same way that goodness is. See 10.608e, where Socrates says: "What destroys and corrupts everything is the bad, and what saves and benefits is the good," speaking of the bad and good as having, respectively, general and widespread bad and good effects. Also 5.457b: "The beneficial is noble and the harmful shameful"—the beneficial and harmful are not relativised. See Penner 2007, 93-123. Socrates would leave off the "for whom," even as Thrasymachus supplies "for the stronger." At 6.486b, Socrates characterises the just man as tame, and as the opposite of someone who is "hard to be a partner with and savage." In his exchange with Polemarchus (1.333a-d), Socrates had tried to get him to name the enterprise in which a just man makes a good partner, yet it is evident that for Socrates a just man is always and in all things a good partner. See, too, 2.358a, where Socrates says that justice is likable for itself and "for what comes out of it"—again, with no specification of for whom. At 344e, Socrates beseeches Thrasymachus to help determine the course of life that would yield "the most profitable existence." Here, too, there is no reason to assume that a "profitable existence" is one in which all profits redound to the agent.

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Thrasymachus calls justice—will fail to reflect the rulers' advantage, with the result that justice would not on those occasions *be* "the advantage of the stronger,"[57] and hence not justice after all. To counter Socrates' objection, the obstinate Thrasymachus insists that rulers "in the strict or precise sense" never err concerning their advantage.

The ensuing debate between Thrasymachus and Socrates on what is meant by and what is true of rulers "in the precise sense" brings out most sharply the critical difference between Thrasymachus' association of rule with ensuring the rulers' advantage, on the one hand, and, on the other, *Socrates'* insistence that a true ruler promotes the advantage of the *ruled*, that of the weaker, not of the stronger.[58] Socrates' ruler would enact laws that justice then requires the ruled to obey, but these rules would advance the interests of the ruled. Of course, if ruling strictly speaking advances the interest of the subjects, then justice (or at least political justice), insofar as it consists in the people's obedience to laws enacted by the rulers, would no longer be "the advantage of the stronger," but rather "the advantage of the weaker."[59] The aim of a ruler in the precise sense would have to be to

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[57] Thrasymachus' rulers, from the Socratic perspective, necessarily misjudge their advantage. Those who by their actions seek only and always to advance their own interests are fated to fail to advance their true interests, for such men are deeply deluded about where their true advantage lies. See *Gorg*. 466-468, where Socrates contends that tyrants and rhetoricians, by killing, confiscating, and banishing at will, may nevertheless fail to "do what they want" if they thereby do only what appeals to them but not what is truly to their advantage.

[58] Socrates starts out as "the weaker" to Thrasymachus' "stronger" but emerges as "the stronger" who cares for the weaker.

[59] See Strauss 1964, 127-28. Strauss takes Socrates to be defining *justice* as the advantage of the weaker. Socrates actually defines ruling that way. The two come together, however, when justice is taken to be the expertise with which the rulers rule. If the laws the rulers enact promote, not the rulers' interests but the interests of the ruled, then the people's obedience to these laws promotes the interests, not of the stronger, but of the weaker. The notion that justice serves the interests of the weak is preserved in Book 2, where in Glaucon's account of the genesis of justice, justice is instituted to serve the interests of those who cannot commit injustice without also suffering it. The strong, those who can do injustice and not suffer it, Glaucon says, would not be parties to the justice compact (359b). In Glaucon's account of the origins of justice, unlike in Thrasymachus', however, justice is self-imposed—by the weak, on the weak, for the weak—and its aim is to minimise exploitation, not foster it.

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keep the people from all harm and, in particular, from what is arguably the worst harm of all: that of being or becoming unjust.[60]

In making his case, Socrates appeals to other "ruling" craftsmen and crafts: the pilot who rules sailors, the doctor who rules bodies, and the horsemanship that rules horses. Since crafts and craftsmen are not deficient (342a-b), Socrates contends, they seek the advantage, not of themselves, but of "what is weaker and ruled by" them (342d). In no case do crafts or craftsmen "in the precise sense" (342b) seek their own advantage.

Thrasymachus is utterly flummoxed by the notion that anyone might deliberately seek someone else's advantage. He rants about shepherds who, he says, seek either their masters' good (which presumably redounds ultimately to their own) or their own, but certainly not the good of the sheep.[61] Indeed, the very thought that rulers might "consider night and day anything else than how they will benefit themselves" (343b-c) prompts Thrasymachus to ridicule Socrates' naïveté with respect to justice: justice is always, Thrasymachus asserts, "someone else's good, the advantage of the man who is stronger and rules, and a personal injury to the man who obeys and serves" (343c). Thrasymachus derides justice and the just man, holding up large-scale injustice as the source of power and freedom, and as profitable and advantageous "for oneself" (344c).

Socrates, in turn, heightens his own rhetoric. Arguing that "every kind of rule, insofar as it is rule, considers what is best for nothing other than for what is ruled and cared for, both in political and private rule" (345d-e), he now makes the further, shocking, claim that "no one is willing (*ethelei*) to rule willingly (*hekōn*)" (345e), a claim that is designed to, and that indeed does, elicit a scornful snicker from Thrasymachus. Asked if he thinks that "those who truly rule, rule willingly," Thrasymachus replies: "By Zeus, I don't think it; I know it well" (345e).[62]

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[60] cf. *Gorg*. 517b, where Socrates says that a good politician "leads the desires in a different direction, not yielding, but persuading and forcing them toward the condition in which the citizens would be better."

[61] Cf. Aristotle, *EN* 8.xi.1161a: "The friendship of a king for those who live under his rule depends on his superior ability to do good. He confers benefits upon his subjects, since he is good and cares for them in order to promote their welfare, just as a shepherd cares for his sheep, and a father for his sons." For Aristotle, it is only the wicked tyrant who seeks his own advantage.

[62] It will become clear later on, particularly in Book 7, that Socrates knows full well that nearly everyone clamours to rule; this is what makes the philosophers' reluctance to rule so remarkable. Indeed, Socrates recognises right here in Book 1 that men now do actually "fight over ruling" (347d). What Socrates means when he says that no one rules willingly is, of course, that the aspect of ruling that no

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Yet Socrates declares with respect to each of the ruling crafts, that "if pay were not attached to it," the craftsman would derive no benefit from his art, and would not practice it: *no one* willingly chooses to rule (346e; first, at 345e). By insisting that those who rule, rule unwillingly, Socrates surprisingly echoes Thrasymachus' notion that justice is "a personal injury to the man who obeys and serves" (343c); Socrates twists "benefiting others" into something necessarily repugnant; and he portrays all rulers as resentful of having to "straighten out other people's troubles" (346e).[63] The money and honour most rulers demand for their trouble is now fit remuneration for the unwelcome burden they assume.[64]

Indeed, Socrates maintains, all rulers require compensation of some kind for their loss. If money and honour are the "wages" of most men—that is, of ordinary men—there must be yet another sort of wage that compensates the better run of men, men who are "good and decent" (or, as they are called at first, "best" and "most decent" – 347b[65]), men who are not motivated (or at least not outwardly so) by the desire for money and

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one finds appealing is the one that involves caring for others; the aspect of ruling that causes everyone to "fight over" it is ruling's perquisites of wealth, power, and honour. For those rulers who, in ruling, take care of no one but themselves, ruling would not be undesirable in any way.

[63] Even in Glaucon's taxonomy of goods in *Rep*. 2, where the money-making arts are assigned to the third and lowest class, the one that contains "goods" that are in themselves undesirable drudgery but are undertaken for the sake of the wages they provide, it is not because they help others that they are disliked. But it is noteworthy that Glaucon does regard money-making arts as not beneficial in themselves to the practitioner; their sole benefit is their wages.

[64] When the compensation for ruling is wealth and honour it is a virtual certainty that ruling will attract the worst element. It is no doubt partly for that reason that Socrates forbids the rulers of Callipolis to own private property and sees to it that their wages suffice only for bare subsistence with "no surplus" (4.416e). In light of Socrates' having maintained that the arts and their practitioners lack nothing, the supplementary wage-earner's craft must be thought to supply the many needs craftsmen have as people—not as craftsmen. David Roochnik (1996, 143-144), rightly criticises Bloom (1968, 333) for taking the wage-earner's art too seriously and seeing it not only as "ubiquitous" but as an "architectonic art" that is needed by all the others and completes them. Arts lack nothing; they are complete in themselves.

[65] It may well be significant that Socrates immediately downgrades these men to "good" and "decent" from "best" and "most decent." They are never called just. See n. 68.

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honour.[66] The wages of these men is avoidance of a kind of penalty: they rule lest they be ruled by lesser men than themselves.[67]

In declaring that even good and decent men require inducements to rule, Socrates takes Thrasymachus' unsentimental view of rulers to the level of absurdity. For Socrates' perverse contention that good and decent men (note, however, that Socrates cannot bring himself to call them just),[68] eschew ruling altogether, since they recognise that ruling is profitable to others and a drain on themselves, makes good men like *all* men. If *no one* rules willingly (345e, 346e), then all men, it seems, are equally selfish. Superior men, on this account, exhibit the very traits that Thrasymachus, as we saw, ascribes to all rulers: "day and night they consider nothing else

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[66] These men may not be entirely free of the desire for money and honour. With respect to money Socrates says of them that ". . . they do not want to take wages openly . . . and get called hirelings, nor secretly on their own to derive profit from their ruling and get called thieves" (347b). And although he declares that they are not lovers of honour, might not their concern with appearances, their concern lest they be *called* hirelings or *called* thieves, belie that pronouncement just a little? These are dignified and self-respecting men who would not demean themselves or besmirch their reputations by appearing to be money-grubbing and who do not pursue honour in the obvious and vulgar way some politicians do.
In Book 10 it is said of "decent men" that they, with rare exceptions, "enjoy" Homer and other tragedies (605e). Behaviour that such men would not wish to be seen indulging in when they suffer their own personal grief, they allow themselves to indulge in in response to tragedy. The man who is just even when no one is looking is perhaps best described by Adeimantus at 366c-d: because of his divine nature he finds injustice disgusting or has attained the kind of knowledge that keeps him away from it. The distinction between being just and seeming just will be critical to the arguments of Glaucon and Adeimantus in Book 2.

[67] It is difficult to see how it could ever actually happen that good men would replace bad and corrupt men as rulers. Would the bad men simply step aside to be ruled by their superiors? As we see in Book 6, philosophers who are decent men are forced out of the public sphere by the "sailors" who wish to rule the ship (488-489) and by the city's rampant corruption (496-497). It is only in the rare "obedient city" (499b, 502b), the city that is founded in speech, from scratch, that men seek to be ruled by their superiors in wisdom, that is, by philosophers.

[68] Socrates seems to be avoiding calling the good and decent men, "just." That this is not simply a casual omission on Socrates' part may be seen from its stark contrast with what Socrates had said without hesitation in conversation with Polemarchus: "Yet the good men are just and such as not to do injustice?" (334d); and "And it's the just man who is good?" (335d). One reason that Socrates now avoids the term might be contextual: Thrasymachus has just maintained, after all, that just men are not good or admirable. A second reason might be that Socrates can simply not bring himself to apply the term "just" to men who are so callously indifferent to the needs of others.

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than how they will benefit themselves" (343c). Far from being more concerned about others than most men, far from having any sort of heightened awareness of the needs of others for moral guidance and a willingness to address those needs, the only way good and decent men differ from others is in the type of "wage" that would be effective in persuading them to rule.[69] Ruling is not a good thing in their eyes, not something that would enhance their lives (*hōs eupathēsontes en autōi*), but something they regard as a necessity (347c-d).[70] If there were someone better than themselves or even someone their equal, they would gladly pass the job of ruling on to him (347d).[71] So, in a city in which all men are good, a city in which there are no men worse than themselves, good and decent men would fight each other to avoid ruling (347d).[72]

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[69] It is Glaucon who breaks into the conversation, eager to learn what Socrates could possibly mean when he says that "a penalty" (347a) is the better man's inducement to rule. Surely the reason Socrates adds the penalty as the third kind of wage is in order to arouse Glaucon's curiosity. It is likely that Glaucon has been all along and will continue to be Socrates' primary concern, the one to whom all his words are directed regardless of his actual addressee. Glaucon, after all, is the companion who accompanies Socrates to the Piraeus and who would have left with him had Polemarchus not stopped them. (We recall that Adeimantus was Polemarchus' partner, both at the dialogue's inception and at the start of Book 5.) Glaucon is also the interlocutor to whom Socrates turns to ask: "Which [opinion—Socrates' own or Thrasymachus'—concerning the superior life] do you choose, Glaucon, and which speech is truer in your opinion?" (347e). See Miller 1986 for the idea that Socrates often means to provoke his interlocutors. Also, Strauss 1964, 85. See, too, G. R. F. Ferrari 2005, 15-16, who attributes to Glaucon a kind of hauteur that is responsible for his resistance to hearing justice praised in terms of its material rewards; no doubt his keen interest in hearing what would induce the better run of man to rule is reflective of that same hauteur.

[70] The philosopher-rulers of Book 7 also regard ruling as a "necessity." So says Glaucon at 520e, and Socrates at 540b.

[71] We are reminded of these good and decent men when we encounter in Book 7 philosophers who are most eager to "educate other like men and leave them behind in their place as guardians of the city" (540b)—rather than do the ruling themselves.

[72] There is one inducement for ruling others willingly—if ruling others indeed entails improving them morally— that is not mentioned here, namely, so as not to be in the company of corrupt men at whose hands one is likely to experience harm. In this connection, see *Ap*. 25d-e, where Socrates argues that for him to corrupt his companions intentionally, he would have to be so egregiously naïve as not to recognise that bad people do bad things to their associates. See also *Prot*. 327b, where Protagoras makes the point that since no one wishes to live among bad

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Has not something gone terribly awry when good and decent men would do just about anything to avoid helping someone else?[73] Are we not meant to see that this portrayal of good and decent men is a grotesque distortion of them? Are we to believe that in Socrates' eyes the mark of a good and decent man is extreme selfishness, that a truly good man, a truly decent man, would refuse to rule even when the cost to himself is minimal—that is, when he would be ruling other good men[74]—just because under such conditions there's no discernible "wage" to be earned?[75] Indeed, Socrates compounds the preposterousness of this result by saying next that "everyone who *knows* (*gignōskōn*) would choose to be benefited by another rather than to take the trouble (*pragmata echein*) of benefiting another" (347d).[76] Only a *fool*, in other words, would willingly help someone else.[77]

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people, everyone makes it his business to teach virtue all the time. The same point is probably being made at *Meno* 92a.

[73] Note that the good and decent men make their appearance again in Book 6 at 496a-e, where, as we shall see, they are finally rehabilitated: they are not there depicted as being averse to ruling; it is only that prevailing conditions render their ruling untenable. Compare the gentlemen (*kaloi kagathoi*) of *Meno* 93c who would certainly, if only they could, pass along their goodness to their children. Surely, Socrates says, they would not begrudge their children the virtue they themselves possess.

[74] Nor would there be reason to fear becoming corrupted as there would in a city of bad men (see *Rep*. 6.496).

[75] Irwin charitably misunderstands Socrates' take on the good and decent men. What Socrates argues is that since the only "wage" that good and decent men would accept as compensation for ruling is not having to be ruled by their inferiors, once there are no inferiors—that is, when everyone in the city is a good man—they refuse to rule: they are, after all, not so foolish as actually to want to benefit someone else (347d). Irwin, however, attributes the just person's unwillingness to rule in a city of all good men to that he "finds the advantages to be gained from ruling so unappealing" (1995, 299).

[76] Compare the "good father" (of the timocratic man), who is "willing to be gotten the better of so as not to take trouble (*pragmata echein*)" (8.549c)—where the trouble he does not wish to take is not the kind associated with helping others, but the kind involving honours, ruling officers, lawsuits, etc. See, too, 2.369e-370a, where Socrates asks Adeimantus whether in the small city of four or five men, each man ought to spend his time producing enough of one commodity that he can then supply to the others, or making everything he needs for himself, "not taking trouble (*pragmata echein*) to share in common with others." It is evident that Socrates prefers that each share with the others—that each "take the trouble" to do so.

[77] As we know, Thrasymachus regards the just man as simple, innocent, and naïve—that is, as a fool (343c). He will reaffirm this view twice more, at 348c and 349b. See, too, Glaucon at 2.361b.

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It should be evident that Socrates does not actually subscribe to this view, regardless of how forcefully he advances it. For, first, the sheer moral repugnance of such a view makes it unlikely that Socrates would subscribe to it. Second, on this account there would be no difference between the best and most decent and knowing, on the one hand, and everyone else, on the other: *no one* wants to benefit another if they can help it; no one wishes to rule willingly. Third, this idea relies on the patently *Thrasymachean* view that everyone, from shepherd to ruler, is ineluctably selfish, and that one man's gain must be another man's loss, that the just man's justice is "the advantage of the man who is stronger and rules, and a personal injury to the man who obeys and serves" (343c).[78] Fourth, Socrates sharply reprimands Thrasymachus, in the passage immediately preceding this one, for exhibiting the very sort of selfish behaviour that Socrates now ascribes, seemingly approvingly, to good and decent men. "You have no care for us," Socrates scolds him, "and aren't a bit concerned whether we shall live worse or better as a result of our ignorance of what you say you know" (344e). Is it not clear that Socrates expects of a good and decent—and knowing!—man that he would care enough about others to take the trouble to set them straight, to share with them for their sake what he thinks he knows[79]—particularly when the matter at hand is how human beings ought to live if they are to have "the most profitable existence,"[80] that is, if they are to live well?[81] Realising on

[78] Were this view actually Socrates' as well, why would he later (at 3.392b) forbid poets in the newly constructed city to write that "justice is someone else's good and one's own loss"? This idea is the last of several Socrates would prevent the poets from promulgating in his city, all of which are Thrasymachean in spirit: ". . . that many happy men are unjust, and many wretched ones just, and that doing injustice is profitable if one gets away with it." Thrasymachus promotes these ideas in his long speech at 343b-344c in which he extols injustice and defames justice.

[79] In *Rep*. 2 Socrates stays on to discuss justice, but not because he is paid. He is concerned that it might be "impious" of him to fail to help "when justice is being spoken badly of . . . and I am still breathing and able to make a sound. So, the best thing is to succour her as I am able" (368b-c).

[80] There is every reason to believe that Socrates'—though not Thrasymachus' or Glaucon's—sense of "profitable" extends beyond profitability "to oneself." ("Profitable" [*lusiteloun*], we recall, is just another of the terms alongside "advantageous" [*sumpheron*] in the list of "inanities" that Thrasymachus forbids Socrates to use to define justice [336c-d].)

[81] Since Socrates did not think he could be of benefit as a politician, he found another way to make himself useful. Indeed, he says of himself that he sought to "perform the greatest benefaction," and he calls himself a "benefactor" (*Ap*. 36d).

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second thought that Thrasymachus is not a good and decent man, not a man who would help others without compensation, Socrates offers him the only incentive that is likely to work; he assures him that if he benefits his audience it will be worth his while: "But, my good man," Socrates says, "it wouldn't be a bad investment for you to do a good deed for so many as we are" (345a).[82] It is noteworthy that Thrasymachus had earlier refused to give his best answer to the justice question until he was paid a fee. Socrates' friends had to pledge payment on Socrates' behalf, and only then could they demand that Thrasymachus speak "for money's sake" (337d). And, finally, Socrates in the *Apology* describes himself as Athens' great benefactor; he never takes wages or gets anything out of it! When answering why he never entered politics, he does not say: "how stupid do you think I am to benefit others rather than being benefited by others?" (which *is* what he says when he denies corrupting the young intentionally: "am I so stupid as to corrupt the young intentionally when I know that bad people harm those they associate with?"), but he says instead that he realised that as a public politician he couldn't be of benefit to anyone. The implication is: if he could have been of benefit, he certainly would have served.

No doubt the most disturbing feature for Socrates—by far—of Thrasymachus' perspective on justice and injustice is the esteem in which he holds injustice, regarding it as a virtue. Of course, Thrasymachus does not quite regard justice as a *vice*—it is too simple and naïve for that[83]—but when asked to assign justice and injustice to the camps of virtue and vice, he *is* willing to put justice in the camp of vice in order to place *in*justice in the camp of virtue. The unjust for Thrasymachus are good and wise—so long as they can do injustice perfectly, though even petty crime is profitable if one can avoid getting caught. What can Socrates say to such a man? He is used to people who concede that injustice is profitable but is

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For Socrates, "acting in a manner worthy of a good man" is equivalent to "coming to the aid of the just things and, as one ought, regarding this as most important" (*Ap*. 32e). Socrates is thus a practitioner of therapeutic justice. Anyone who puts his own well-being above serving justice can clearly not be a good man in Socrates' estimation.

[82] For Thrasymachus, the bad man, the remuneration would have to be money. So, he is not like the good and decent men for whom money could not be an incentive to rule.

[83] The implication of Thrasymachus' resistance to calling justice a vice is that to do so is to credit it with intelligence and cunning. It may also just sound wrong to call justice a vice, though to Thrasymachus this is not the sort of thing that would—or does—hold him back.

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vice and shameful; it is most uncommon, however, in his experience, for someone to pronounce it noble. Just as Socrates could not straightforwardly disabuse Polemarchus of the idea that justice involves helping friends and harming enemies, so he cannot argue directly against Thrasymachus that the unjust are ignorant and the just wise. In both cases he does the best he can. With Polemarchus he argued that experts cannot with their expertise worsen the condition of their subjects. With Thrasymachus he argues that just men are *like* experts; they are like, for example, the musical man and the medical man. Just men and experts share a common feature: they all seek to outdo only those who are unlike them but not those who are like them. One might say, then, that the just man is in the same camp as they. If these men are all in the same camp, and this camp is the camp of the good and skilled and wise, and the unjust man is in the other camp—since the unjust man seeks to outdo everyone—then surely the unjust man is like the bad and ignorant. Since Socrates and Thrasymachus agree that a man *is* as he is like, the just man turns out to *be* good and wise, the unjust man bad and ignorant.

We turn now to Socrates' refutation of Thrasymachus' second contention, namely, that it is the *perfectly* unjust who do best and are happiest.[84] Socrates contends, against Thrasymachus, that it is precisely the *perfectly* unjust who can accomplish nothing, for surely some measure of justice is needed if anything is to get done. Indeed, whereas injustice produces factions, hatreds, and quarrels among men, justice inspires the accord (*homonoia*) and friendship (*philia*) that make it possible for people to work together in any enterprise, just or unjust (351d-e). All groups, whether they are as large as a city or as small as two men (351e), will be hobbled by injustice and bolstered by justice. So, too, will the single man.

There are only superficial similarities between this early argument and the city-soul analogy that appears later on in the *Republic*.[85] For Socrates does not say here that an entity is just or unjust on account of its internal accord or discord.[86] On the contrary, Socrates contends explicitly that a

[84] Of course, what Thrasymachus means by this is that it is extreme injustice, the most horrific injustice, that is the most profitable. Petty theft, though surely profitable, in no way compares to the thoroughgoing injustice of a tyrant. What Socrates did earlier with Thrasymachus' notion of a ruler "in the precise sense" he now does with Thrasymachus' notion of "perfect" injustice: he utterly distorts its meaning.

[85] See Weiss 2007.

[86] In Glaucon's account in Book 2 of the genesis of justice (358e-359b) there is likewise no suggestion that the agreement among the city's members to refrain from harming one another makes the *city* just.

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city is unjust when it commits injustices *against* other cities: "would you say that a city is unjust (*adikon*) that tries to enslave other cities unjustly, and has reduced them to slavery, and keeps many enslaved to itself?" (351b). What marks bands of pirates and robbers—two of the groups Socrates cites in making his point—as unjust is not, after all, their internal dissent but the crimes they commit against outsiders. In fact, were it not for the justice their members exhibit toward one another—"honour among thieves," "thick as thieves"— these groups could not be effectively *un*just.

In *Rep*. 1's account, the justice and injustice that are "in" the city or in the other groups are not the properties of the groups but of the groups' members as they interact with one another: "Do you believe," Socrates asks Thrasymachus, "that either an army, or pirates, or robbers, or any other tribe that has some common unjust enterprise would be able to accomplish anything, if *its members* acted unjustly *to one another*? . . . it is injustice that produces factions, hatreds, and quarrels among themselves, and justice that produces unanimity and friendship… Will injustice not also cause them *to hate one another* and to form factions, and to be unable to accomplish anything in common *with one another*?" (351c-e). Whereas injustice *in* the group ignites hatred among the group's members, it is not the group itself that is unjust on account of that hatred; the group is unjust because of how it relates to those outside it.

The same is true for an individual. Projects undertaken by an unjust individual working alone will fail if there is also injustice within him. Socrates asks: what is the effect of injustice's "coming into being" within one man? (351e).[87] If injustice in a city, a clan, an army, "or whatever else" is crippling, making the unit unable to function and dividing it against itself so that it becomes its own enemy (as well as an enemy of the just), so, too, Socrates supposes, will injustice render the single man unable to act, "because he is at faction and is not of one mind with

[87] It is clear from the discussion in *Rep*. 1 that Plato is not, as Walter Runciman charges, "wedded to a preconceived and empirically unsustainable belief that psychic harmony—or, as we might say, a well-adjusted personality—is attainable only by someone who is steadfastly and consistently disposed to behave in ways which, by his criteria, count as just" (Runciman 2010, 27-28). The discussion suggests, on the contrary, that those who undertake unjust endeavours will succeed only if they have attained some measure of psychic harmony. Nor is Runciman (2010, 52) right to imply that Socrates dismisses out of hand the possibility that men might, "as Thrasymachus expects them to do, apply such wisdom, courage, and temperance as they have to the pursuit of their selfish ends." In *Rep*. 1 Socrates actually argues that people who are psychically harmonious are best equipped to achieve their unjust ends—though he calls such people "imperfectly" unjust.

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himself" and is "an enemy both to himself and to just men" (352a).[88] If one regards the parts of a man's soul, however improbably, as independent agents, it will still be the case that the man who commits injustice toward others, like the group that does so, is unjust, regardless of how his parts treat one another; if anything, internal justice, whether in a group or in a single man, only maximises the entity's ability to commit injustice and thus to be unjust. When injustice comes into being "within one man," the man indeed suffers the experience of being at odds with himself, of suffering internal faction and disharmony—but that is because his "parts" are at war *with one another*. The unwelcome state of discord, however, is not what makes a man unjust any more than internal strife is what makes a group unjust. As in the case of a group, the effect of internal fractiousness in an individual is at most able to render the individual's injustice less effective. What makes single men unjust, as what makes cities so, is how they comport themselves with respect to others; what makes parts unjust—whether in a group or in one man—is how *they* relate to one another. Justice and injustice are oriented outward: a just or unjust man is just or unjust toward other men; a man's just or unjust parts are just or unjust toward other parts. All Socrates has added for the sake of discrediting Thrasymachus is that an unjust entity whose parts are also unjust is more fully unjust (and therefore less successful in executing its unjust projects) than one whose parts are at least just toward one another.

What Socrates shows in this argument, then, is that, oddly, *im*perfect injustice—that is, injustice whose efficiency is boosted by internal justice—is more profitable than perfect injustice. What he does not show, however, is that it is not profitable for a group—or for a man—to be unjust. He establishes in the case of a group that it is less profitable to have men *in it* who are unjust toward one another, and by analogy, that it is less profitable for a man to have parts in him that are unjust toward one

[88] We note that Socrates offers no justification for the riders he tacks on to his pronouncement about the effect of discord on the group. He introduces without warrant or support the idea that the group will be an enemy to its opposite and to the just (352a), and so, too, the notion that the individual who experiences internal disharmony will be an enemy to just men and to the gods who are just (352a-b). Perhaps Socrates wishes to counter Thrasymachus' notion expressed earlier (344b-c) that everyone—not only the citizens but whoever hears that a man has done injustice entire—thinks well of such a man, calling him blessed and happy (i.e., he is someone whom the gods love). This may be why Socrates says now: no; they do not. It is unlikely that Socrates is saying that *internal* disorder is what is not a friend to the just and to the gods, but rather that the other sort of injustice that characterises a group or an individual, namely, the injustice that seeks to harm others, is what has this effect.

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another—because both groups and individual men who experience internal conflict have difficulty accomplishing their own ends. To be sure, by contending that an entity's being completely unjust entails its harbouring debilitating friction internally, Socrates is able to fend off the Thrasymachean contention that perfect injustice is the most profitable condition of all. The fact remains, however, that since a man's injustice is not the enmity between him and himself any more than a group's injustice is its internal disharmony, injustice cannot be so handily dismissed as unprofitable.

The aim of Socrates' argument is to disarm Thrasymachus, to make him doubt the one thing he is most sure of, namely, that one's own injustice is profitable for oneself, one's own *justice* only for someone else. All Socrates establishes, however, is that it is beneficial for a group, as for an individual, to have accord among its parts. For that reason, Socrates' success is only apparent[89]; he can do little more than state that as "it *seems*" to him (*hōs ge moi dokei*) men who are just "do look as though" they are happier than men who are not (352d). Most important, he has said nothing in any of his arguments that would explain *why* justice is profitable and injustice not.

And so, Socrates introduces the soul. Insofar as justice is the virtue of the soul, Socrates contends, it is the *sine qua non* of a life well-lived. The particular argument Socrates offers for this last point, however, is perhaps the most frivolous of all the arguments he has advanced thus far. He presents the following analogy—(Note that I will be supplying the missing pieces that Thrasymachus was unable or unwilling to provide). There is a certain task, seeing, that a man cannot perform without an eye. There is, too, a certain virtue or excellence that an eye has that enables it to see *well*, namely, sharpness or clarity; and without this virtue the eye cannot see well. Socrates now poses the corresponding argument about the soul. There are certain tasks, he says, that a man cannot perform without a soul: managing, ruling, and deliberating. In order to perform these tasks well, the soul needs its proper virtue (just as the eye needed its proper virtue in order to see *well*). But there is among the tasks that a man cannot perform without a soul yet another task: the task of living.[90] Yet, if the soul's

[89] As Glaucon notes at the beginning of Book 2.

[90] Socrates, as we see, does mention other activities of the soul, namely, managing, ruling, deliberating, and all such things (353d). But these only serve to obscure the fact that the argument is really about *living*. Although, to be sure, a bad soul will rule and manage badly, and a good soul will perform these tasks well, a just soul and a just man will also *live* well (*eu biōsetai* – 353e10; *eu zōn* – 354a1), because living, too, is one of the soul's *erga*, and justice, the soul's virtue, enables the soul

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proper virtue is justice,[91] and a soul cannot perform well without its proper virtue, then is it not the case that a man cannot *live well* without justice? (This idea corresponds to: isn't the eye's proper virtue sharpness or clarity, so that a man cannot see well without sharpness or clarity?) There is, however, blatant equivocation in this argument on the phrase "live well." For the living that is the soul's obvious and uncontroversial task—and the one Thrasymachus no doubt thinks he has agreed to—is living in the sense of keeping the body alive or sustaining it in life. And what is required for keeping the body alive *well* or sustaining it in life well is not the same as what is required for living well, understood as living a flourishing and worthy existence. One might just as well say: "You must think well of me because you're very intelligent and very intelligent people think well."[92] We may note for comparison the same sort of equivocation found at *Gorg*. 507c, where Socrates by a similar equivocation argues that the moderate man must be blessed and happy since he "must *do what he does well* and nobly," and "the man who *does well* must be blessed and happy." Here the flaw—and the humour—lies in the unwarranted shift from the transitive to the intransitive sense of "do well." Despite the dubiousness of Socrates' argument as *Rep*. 1 draws to a close, however, its conclusion could not be more serious. Indeed, the idea that a person cannot live well without the soul's proper virtue, justice, is at the heart of Socrates' life and thought. Yet, Socrates is content to allow his conversation with Thrasymachus to end with a merely verbal victory: he does not say why justice is critical to a life well-lived.

What are the lessons about justice that Socrates teaches in his conversation with Thrasymachus? First, that justice as a ruling craft seeks the advantage of the ruled, the weaker: rulers, like doctors, care, qua experts, for those they rule. Second, that the just man is the wise one and the unjust the ignorant. Third, that no group project can be executed

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to perform well its *ergon* of living. (The plural, *ta erga*, at 353e1 signifies that each of the functions of the soul is distinct from the others. It is by virtue, then, of one's soul's performing well its particular *ergon* of *living* that one's soul "*lives* well;" by its performing well its particular *erga* of ruling and managing, the soul, as Socrates explicitly says, "rules well" and "manages well.")

[91] Polemarchus had agreed that justice is human virtue at 335c. It is not clear that Thrasymachus actually already agreed to this. At 350d he reluctantly concedes that justice is virtue and wisdom.

[92] Dorter (2006) acknowledges the equivocation on "living well," but seeks to diminish its importance by contending that for Socrates the virtue of the soul "includes also performing the other functions well—caring, ruling, deliberating" (50). To include these, however, is to take the fun out of Socrates' argument. Also see T. M. Robinson 1970, 35-36.

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efficiently when people are uncooperative—and so, too, for an individual: a single person requires cooperative "parts" to carry out his or her initiatives. And fourth, that living well is living justly, because justice is the soul's virtue.

IV. Conclusion

The attitudes and views of the participants in Book 1 of the *Republic* are increasingly threatening to justice as Socrates understands it. For Cephalus, justice is a good thing inasmuch as it provides inoculation against anticipated evils in the afterlife. For Polemarchus as well justice is valued—but for him it is an exercise of power in the distribution of benefits and harms as "is fitting," that is, to friends and enemies respectively. For Thrasymachus, justice has no saving grace: it is the mark of the weak, the stupid, the dupe; it is associated not with goodness in any form but with all that is undesirable: poverty, impotence, dishonour. Socrates' lessons are keyed to his interlocutors. For Cephalus' edification, Socrates argues that justice can be more than a matter of following rules for the sake of self-protection; for there are people and not just rules, people who are on the receiving end of one's actions who must be seen if justice is to be done. Socrates' lessons to Polemarchus are that: (1) it is unjust to harm *anyone*—it makes no difference whether it be friend or foe; and (2) the specific harm to be avoided by the justice-expert is that of making another person worse by making him less just. Socrates' lessons to Thrasymachus are an effort to curtail his admiration for the unjust man and disdain for the just: it is the just man, Socrates argues, who is strong, wise, and lives well; the unjust man fails by all measures of might, wisdom, and happiness. Is injustice profitable? Well, not if the unjust are wretched. For, as Socrates concludes: "But it is not profitable to be wretched; rather it is profitable to be happy" (354a).

Of all *Rep*. 1's lessons, the most striking is one that Socrates proposes to Thrasymachus, namely, that justice is the advantage not of the stronger but of the weaker. Indeed, throughout *Rep*. 1, Socrates places regard for others at the heart of justice. But whereas in his conversations with Cephalus and Polemarchus justice appears in its most rudimentary form of not harming people, in his exchange with Thrasymachus justice expands to include bestowing benefit on others, on those in one's care. Both in his reprimand of Thrasymachus for selfishly withholding the full measure of his "wisdom" concerning how human beings ought to live, and in his recasting of the ruler "in the precise sense" as one who promotes the advantage of the weaker, Socrates indicates that the business of just men

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in their role as rulers, as justice-experts, is to bring the ruled closer to justice. Book 1 thus inoculates the *Republic*'s readers against the view of justice, presumably suddenly discovered in Book 4, according to which justice is a wholly internal affair—by showing that internal harmony enhances one's ability to accomplish one's ends whether they be virtuous or vicious, just or unjust—as well as against accepting as ideal philosopher-rulers who are utterly selfish and who have to be compelled to rule.

Whereas there is no great danger in reading *Rep*. 1 on its own and discerning its lessons about justice, it is at our peril, then, that we read the rest of the *Republic* without it. For it is *Rep*. 1 that teaches what we all instinctively know—and what the unjust know best of all—that justice's first concern is always and essentially the welfare of another.

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Chapter Four

A Paradigm Shift in Reading Plato

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Plato, despite himself, is one of the most significant figures in Western civilisation. He is considered to be a prolific thinker with views on many subjects, including art, history, law, literature, and psychology, to name but a few, making him a favourite with teachers of first-year introductory courses in these and other subjects. It is in such courses that the vast majority of students learn and adopt one or other approach to understanding Plato. Most of these approaches, however, have had to struggle with, or indeed ignore, a fundamental difficulty, that Plato wrote dialogues and is not a speaker in any of them. The dominant traditional approach to interpreting his dialogues ever since Plato's own time some 2,400 years ago has been to assume that one or other leading speaker in each dialogue is a mouthpiece for Plato, be it Socrates, Timaeus, the Athenian guest, or the Eleatic guest. The small detail that the speakers are inconsistent, not just between dialogues, but in one and the same dialogue, often from one sentence to the next (especially in the case of Socrates)[1] necessitated already in Plato's time a further assumption, that Plato's mouthpiece was often "ironic", deliberately saying things he did not mean, for one reason or another, while only occasionally expressing his own opinion. The resulting cluster of putatively consistent notions across dialogues would be further moulded in light of earlier tradition or contemporary philosophies. This general methodology has led to many a brilliant or not so brilliant Platonist system, not a few of which have played a significant part in the history of philosophy, and in the interests of understanding the history of philosophy we should never lose touch with this outmoded and deeply unscientific methodology which has led to a range of Platos from the dogmatic philosopher with outlandish

[1] J.A. Corlett (2005) criticises several approaches to reading Plato, and makes some strong arguments against what he calls the "Mouthpiece Interpretation".

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theories of Ideas and ideal states, to a sceptic claiming that nothing may be known. Philosophy has usually developed as a series of reactions to preceding philosophies or claims, thus making the philosophies and claims reacted against an important element in understanding the development. It therefore seems to me that the study of the legacy of Plato could only be enriched by attempting to understand what Plato himself was actually doing in his dialogues, and why his writing led to such a remarkable panoply of philosophies.

I must confess that the legacy of Plato was far from my mind in the 1980s when John Glucker, who had been wrestling with the problem of Platonic dialogues for some time, first caused me to question what was actually going on in Platonic dialogues. I wrote for John a seminar paper in 1982 on the second half of the first book of *Politeia* and had wrongheadedly begun by trying to make sense of the philosophical intricacies in papers on the Thrasymachus debate; when I turned to the text, it came as a shock to discover that Socrates and the sophist Thrasymachus were actually having an eristic debate, not a philosophical argument.[2] One common objection to my interpretation of this debate (among fellow students) was that if it could not be taken seriously, we would have to conclude that Plato was not a philosopher. I did not have a clear answer to that at the time, especially since the philosophical significance of the characters Thrasymachus and Socrates could only be discerned after a painstaking analysis of the remaining nine books of that dialogue.

For my Classics MA thesis, John and I decided that I should analyse a dialogue much shorter than *Politeia,* shorter even than the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus (which emphasises just how long the ten-book *Politeia* is). This was *Hippias Major*, a dialogue discussed in the literature for two centuries mainly in order to prove or disprove its authenticity. I ignored the authenticity question and simply analysed the dialogue as a philosophical drama. I was eventually able to show how all parts of the dialogue worked together, and how an understanding of the characters as models was essential for cracking the dialogue, which had until then remained a mystery.[3] This was the first time, to my knowledge, that a dialogue had been exhaustively analysed in a holistic fashion to explain all phenomena in the dialogue with one consistent theory. I extended the analysis and published it in book form in 1991.[4]

[2] My analysis of the debate developed over the years, and was finally published as Ludlam 2011.
[3] Ludlam 1986.
[4] Ludlam 1991.

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With Thrasymachus still nagging at me, I knew that the next dialogue to be analysed fully had to be *Politeia*, the very long and universally acknowledged masterpiece, which nevertheless had so far been unsatisfactorily explained, particularly with regard to its structure, and especially with regard to the apparent change in style from the "early" first book to the "middle" later books. While this dialogue is generally considered to be one of the middle dialogues, the first book is so different that some scholars had speculated that it began life as an independent early dialogue. It was only in 2015 that I finally published my analysis of *Politeia*. The theory had had to arise from all the parts of the dialogue and not be forced onto it from above. One unforced theory explaining all the characters, all the apparently contradictory and puzzling phenomena and arguments, and incidentally the apparent difference between the first book and the subsequent nine, seemed to me to have more chance of being closer to what Plato had intended than any previous theory explaining one feature but not others.[5]

Already thinking about the comparison of conclusions to dialogues, it seemed to me to be worthwhile comparing *Hippias Major* with *Hippias Minor*, and this analysis was published in 2017.[6] The three sets of conclusions (*HMin, HMaj, Politeia*) pointed to a uniform pattern manifesting in each: a puzzling, ever shifting, dialogue; stable characters; and concepts exemplified by the characters. Only then did I realise that this pattern was being spelled out (so far as that is possible in a Platonic dialogue) in the otherwise inexplicably long *Politeia*, and that the almost explicit exposition and explanation of all the structural elements manifesting in early to middle dialogues was the reason for the great length of the dialogue.

These structural elements are already utilised in the early dialogues and even in *Politeia* itself, but the latter dialogue also goes out of its way to present self-reflexively the elements of a Platonic dialogue in as orderly fashion as possible, with commentary and explanation, as it were, within the limitations of the dialectical exercise which is a Platonic dialogue. The philosophical content of the dialogue could have been dramatised in much the same way as previous dialogues in far less than one of the ten books the dialogue actually fills. Therefore, before outlining the way Plato may have planned the three dialogues under discussion, I shall first summarise the elements and general structure of (at least) early to middle-Platonic dialogues as may be gleaned from the extra information in *Politeia*. The summary of the elements must also include how I arrived at these elements from *Politeia* which itself exemplifies these elements, by taking into account the shifting and inconsistent surface text, itself one of the elements.

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[5] Ludlam 2015.

[6] Ludlam 2017.

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Structure

Politeia is devoted in large part to an exposition of various types of soul. Accounts of *politeiai*—constitutions of city-states—are fabricated by Plato's Socrates in order to serve as analogies for accounts of *politeiai* of souls, all this in Books 8-9. In Books 1-2, however, we have cameo performances by the characters in the dialogue which (in hindsight, after reading the later books) exemplify those spoken accounts. Various traits mentioned in Socrates' later accounts of constitutions match various traits to be found in the characters (particularly regarding their views of justice, a subject all the character types are made to say something about). Due to all the characters attempting to appear other than they are, for various reasons in keeping with the various constitutions, it takes much careful analysis before a definitive match may be made between each character and a constitution of soul.[7]

The three representatives of the lowest class of soul—the pleasure-dominated—turn out to be Socrates' three main interlocutors in Book 1, in the order of degeneration presented in Books 8-9: Cephalus ("oligarch"); Polemarchus ("democrat" —the other "democrat", Clitopho, appears briefly but significantly during the conversation with Thrasymachus); Thrasymachus ("tyrant"). Book 2 opens with the two competing speeches of Glauco and Adimantus ("timocrats"), whose timocratic competitive desire to appear to excel is dramatised not only in their rival speeches but also in their alternating as Socrates' interlocutors for the rest of the dialogue, including Book 8, where Socrates provides his account of "timocrats". It is in Book 8 where Adimantus suggests that Glauco is the "timocrat", as close to a Platonic hint as we get that the verbal accounts should be applied to the participants themselves. One may object that Socrates proves there and then that Glauco is not the "timocrat", but we should tread carefully. The "timocrat" is explicitly a degeneration of the "aristocrat": Adimantus wishes Glauco to be seen as the "timocrat" in order to position himself as the superior "aristocrat" (he is, after all, a "timocrat" like his brother, wishing to appear to excel); Socrates cannot afford to offend Glauco (and lose him as an interlocutor) and he uses spurious arguments to appear to prove that Glauco is not the "timocrat".

Verbal accounts and arguments in this dialogue are akin to the shadows on the wall of the cave—flickering, vague, and ever-changing. The characters are the consistent models which throw their shadows onto the wall; the characters, therefore, have priority over the accounts of constitutions

[7] The analysis of the characters is to be found in the first half of Ludlam 2015.

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in terms of accuracy, yet there would have been no reason to pay attention to the characters as models of constitutions were it not for the shadowy accounts. The accounts and the characters are a dialectic device, encouraging as they do comparison and contrast, and a particular way of looking at the characters.

There are two “timocrats” and two “democrats”, to dramatise variation within a rigid constitution. The two “democrats” allow the dramatisation of that constitution’s penchant for playing at being any another constitution, if only for a moment: Polemarchus plays the philosopher (“aristocrat”), as we see him take over from his father Cephalus in Book 1 for a short and lightweight discussion, and he is associated upwards with the “timocrat” Adimantus (both exploited by Socrates to lead to the digression of Books 5-7); Clitopho appears briefly (and sufficiently for the needs of the dialogue) in “downward” support of the “tyrant” Thrasymachus, by playing the sophist and attempting a piece of sophistry in a lightweight fashion. The upward and downward associations are also seen in the two “timocrats”, with Adimantus attempting to impress Polemarchus the (lower) “democrat”, and Glauco attempting to impress Socrates the (higher) “aristocrat”. Having two “timocrats” also allows a dramatisation of a development over time in the soul of the “timocrat” while maintaining the static quality of each character as a model. Glauco the younger brother, in his speech at the beginning of Book 2, merely wishes Socrates to praise justice and refute Thrasymachus, whose support of injustice as the means to a good reputation entices both the “timocrats”. Glauco, of course, is still careful to appear to be on the side of justice, for the sake of his reputation. Adimantus in his rival speech reveals his bitterness towards those “aristocratic” teachers—parents and poets—who falsely promised “timocrats” the outward trappings of a good reputation acquired through appearing to be just (he too is careful to appear to support justice, for the same reason as Glauco); Thrasymachus and other sophists reveal a much easier route to these same trappings through being unjust, something which the “timocrats” have been educated against being. Thus, the two static models allow a dramatisation of development within one constitution: Adimantus the older brother is more resentful to the extent that he is more frustrated than Glauco by the failure of justice (and the apparent superiority of injustice) to attain the material goods indicative of a good reputation.[8] We are to understand that the resentment increases with disillusionment over time.

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[8] To complicate matters, these are the same material goods which also attract the lower three constitutions, all three motivated as they are by pleasure in one way or another. Socrates’ exploitation of a “timocratic” bias has him distinguish between constitutions using attitudes towards wealth as opposed to the possession of wealth,

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In what way are the "timocrats" lower than "aristocrats" but higher than the desire-dominated? According to Socrates' account in Books 8-9, the degree of degeneracy in the soul is determined by the increasing subservience of *logos* or reason to the other parts of the soul. The "aristocratic" constitution is not degenerate; it is purportedly analogous to the city set up in Books 2-4, the "aristocratic" or "kingly". The reason-dominated class is exemplified on the one hand by "aristocrats" such as the good poets, and fathers of "timocrats" (e.g., Aristo, the father of Glauco and Adimantus); they manipulate members of the other constitutions into behaving in a more just manner despite the inability of those other constitutions to understand justice. The "aristocrats" deceive them by using the expectations and desires of the other constitutions in such a way that justice appears to be the means to their desired end. This is what Adimantus is so bitter about: his desired end is better served by injustice, but his education has ingrained in him a need to appear just. The "aristocratic" class is also exemplified, on the other hand, by Socrates, who, like the poets and the father of the "timocrats", also deceives in an attempt to lead unjust people to behave justly while remaining unjust, but unlike those conventional "aristocrats", he also attempts something new, namely the transforming of other constitutions into the "aristocratic" constitution by means of dialectics, returning *logos* to its proper interest, the contemplation and understanding of the good and of being. The threat of punishment and the promise of reward are conventional deceits which we see on display, e.g., in the Myth of Er at the end of the dialogue; for Socrates, these deceits are a fall-back ploy which may well work should the *logos* of his interlocutors remain subservient to acquiring reputation or pleasures.

Kick-starting dialectic thought, judging by the way Socrates does it, involves setting up contradictions between opinions held by his interlocutors in such a way that they become aware of their contradictions and begin to think about them, using their reason for the first time as nature intended. His interlocutors should puzzle over the inconsistencies he sets up, but they do not. This is not because Socrates is a useless teacher, but because Plato uses all his characters as models, and models do not change with respect to the elements of their constitution. The main point to appreciate here is just how much Socrates distorts, deceives, and misleads in his attempts to provoke dialectic thought, and just how successfully Plato still manages to allow a dialectical reader to penetrate the absurd surface nonsense to the rational and clear-cut dynamic pervading the whole dialogue, thanks to the

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which emphasises the problem with appearance while also providing a non-philosophical but fool-proof method of identifying the characters with their constitutions.

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consistency of the models with regard to the constitutions they represent. Despite his relentless falsehoods and confusions, Socrates the narrator still manages to inform the dialogue with a fairly neat structure: cameos of the characters themselves (Books 1-2), the account of the aristocratic city and soul (Books 2-4), the accounts of the degenerate cities and souls (Books 8-9), and the absurd but necessary account of the simple soul (Book 10) to parallel the preliminary simple city set up in Book 2.[9] All this in addition to the remarkably consistent models throughout the dialogue.

The accounts of constitutions concern the *paradeigma* (general pattern) of each type, but the characters are necessarily *deigmata* (particular examples) having all the features of a *paradeigma* with additional details (Greek, man, short, ugly, etc.). This is made clear in the dialogue by the fact that there are many "aristocrats", such as Socrates, the poets, the father of the "timocrats"; many "timocrats", such as Glauco and Adimantus, and the wall-watchers in the Cave Analogy; the "democrats" Polemarchus and Clitopho; the "tyrants" Thrasymachus and "myriads" of others like him. Only the "oligarch" is exemplified by one character, Cephalus—perhaps a nod to the miserliness of the "oligarch".

Since the "aristocratic" Socrates is talking to two "timocratic" brothers, the main conversation (Books 2-10) is shot through with "timocratic" bias, as Socrates attempts to engage his self-absorbed interlocutors in rational discussion. Since Socrates must keep them interested, allow them to feel that they are controlling the conversation, or convince them to take a crucial step to move the presentation along, he rarely uses philosophical reason in his speech. Dramatic devices often replace truth to allow the "timocrats" to feel in control: for their benefit, for example, the classes of souls are distinguished less by their distance from reason than by the dramatic and non-philosophical criterion of money-making as observed earlier (n.8). To take another example, the tripartite polis is introduced to facilitate the acceptance of the soul as tripartite, although the tripartition is achieved through addition rather than division, firstly by the addition of soldiers, and then guardians, both types also being used to draw the "timocrats" upwards in the hierarchy as they identify with each new superior character.[10]

It is essential to understanding the digression of Books V-VII, including as it does the Sun, Line, and Cave Analogies, to recognise the inordinate amount of "timocratic" bias in what is usually considered to be profound philosophy. The Three Waves are no more than "timocratic" prejudices

[9] The digression of Books 5-7 will be addressed soon.

[10] The soldier and the guardian are dissimilar to the superior person advocated by Thrasymachus, although that unjust person is also attractive to the "timocrats" precisely because he is superior.

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easily dismissed by references to "timocratic" experience: the first wave—the community of women and children—and the second wave—the idea that women, albeit somewhat weaker, might perform the same functions as men—are easily dealt with by reference to the "timocratic" breeding of hunting dogs; the third wave, the most absurd notion, from the point of view of a "timocrat", that rulers should be philosophical or that philosophers should be rulers, actually commits the "timocrats" to a discussion regarding education, since, although they are averse to education, they are attracted to ruling, and philosophy is presented as an easy way in this conversation to appear to be worthy to rule. Not only is this education supposedly necessary for the putative ruler, but Socrates dangles before the "timocrats" nothing less than the highest object of knowledge, which they expect him to reveal to them in due course.

The Sun Analogy is designed to whet the "timocratic" appetite for this highest object of knowledge. The highest object of knowledge, Socrates tells them, is the Good. Socrates has prefaced this discussion with a similar observation about *to kalon*, the Fine, which is common to all fine things and is that by which fine things are fine. Thus the Good should be that which is common to all good things and is that by which they are good. The Good, however, is "timocratically" presented as the best, the most noble, more honourable than its products, and excelling even Being itself. Even Glauco makes a joke about the hyperbole, but this is lost on many Platonists. It should also be noted that Glauco, having made his joke, goes along with all the hyperbole.

The Divided Line Analogy externalises and objectifies one's internal ability to perceive reality.[11] Four parts of a line represent the clarity with which reality is perceived: from the shortest to the longest part, these are "likening", "conviction", "intention", and "intelligising",[12] with only the latter being the degree of clarity at which dialectic takes place,[13] as if dialectic is the final stage of education and not a basic tool throughout the education process. The first two parts of the line pertain to opinion and becoming; the latter two parts pertain to understanding and being. Glauco with typical "timocratic" laziness accepts this account uncritically.

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[11] The Good has already been made concrete in the Sun Analogy, externalising what should in fact be a common feature of all good things. "Timocrats", among others, have a problem with abstraction; Socrates acts like any conventional "aristocrat" here, by having his "timocratic" interlocutors be impressed with the Good in terms of superior reputation, since they are unlikely actually to understand it.

[12] εἰκασία, πίστις, διάνοια, νόησις.

[13] See Ludlam 2015, 190 and nn. 58-59.

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The Cave Analogy adds to the previous analogies the element of movement from one state to another. It is again a poor presentation of reality, but well suited to the expectations of a "timocrat". The prisoner suffers pain when released, and is dragged kicking and screaming up to the cave entrance, where, finally, he may gaze passively at the sun. This is not an accurate account of the dialectical process but, just as the accounts of the constitutions draw attention to the constitutions themselves as represented in the characters in the dialogue, so too does this account draw attention to the "timocratic" prisoners and the various attempts in the dialogue to engage their attention through shadow-play. The "timocrats" are guided by the opinions of others, and this is what is represented by the first scene in the Cave Analogy.

The Divided Line and the Cave Analogies need to be considered together, along with what we know about opinion-formers in this dialogue. The first part of the Cave Analogy turns out to depict conventional "aristocratic" and "tyrannical" opinion-formers mimicking people to be emulated by the "timocratic" captives staring at the cave wall. The captives receive the echoes and images uncritically, which is to say that they have their opinions formed for them by others (they are concerned, after all, with the opinions of others, since the others are the people the "timocrat" needs to impress). This lowest perception of reality is equivalent to the short line ("likening") of the divided line. The unconventional "aristocrat" (Socrates) is also required to provide them with opinions, due to their own passivity, but his main concern is to puzzle them with inconsistencies in an attempt to change their constitution to "aristocratic". At the very beginning of the Cave Analogy, Socrates asks Glauco to "liken" the cave. Glauco proceeds to accept uncritically whatever Socrates tells him about the cave, failing even to catch how impossible it is for the captives to see their own shadows.[14] Socrates' accounts of constitutions (of cities and souls) are also at this level of likening. They are shadowy, shifting, and inaccurate—designed to puzzle the soul of the captive precisely in order to release it from the shadows in a search for something more stable. That a dialectician needs to cast shadows is because the gaze of his interlocutors is, as it were, transfixed on the cave wall. That Socrates never succeeds in perplexing his interlocutors[15] is

[14] Their shadows would not reach the wall opposite them, and in any case, the shadow of the raised path would obliterate their shadows. The fire, the light source for the shadows, is expressly above (and behind) them and must be at least at the level of the raised path upon which the opinion formers (as we may call them) hold up their models.

[15] There seem to be exceptions in some dialogues, e.g., Meno's slave, and Theaetetus. I suggest that their ability to be perplexed is a feature of the *paradeigma*

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simply because Plato provides us with immutable examples, *deigmata*, "intending" (the third stage of perception) paradigmatic aspects of one or other *idea*.

Politeia provides us with no less than four iterations of the Cave Analogy in which captives may have their opinions formed for them by mimics: (1) The best mimic is Plato himself, paralleled in the dialogue by Homer. It is suggested at one point in the censorship of poetry that an epic poet would imitate only the best characters, and narrate the rest (396e4-7, with context). Plato goes one better by imitating just the one best character, Socrates the narrator, and narrates nothing in his own person.[16] We are Plato's audience. (2) Socrates the narrator, unlike Plato, mixes narrative with his imitation, and when he imitates, he imitates not only the best of characters but also the worst, and every type in between. Socrates the narrator's audience is unknown, but, since the narration is unbroken throughout, we may conclude (according to the exigencies of this dialogue) that it is a "timocrat"—they love listening to stories, and if there is no other audience, there is no need for the "timocrat" to participate in the conversation in an effort to appear good. (3) The narrated Socrates of the day before manipulates his interlocutors with his puzzlingly inconsistent verbal descriptions of constitutions and, in the digression, of the dialectic process. It is as if this Socrates is independent of Socrates the narrator and of Plato, being portrayed as responsible for much of the confusion in the conversation. As the dialectician discoursing directly with his confused interlocutors, he is indeed to be considered responsible for much of the explicit confusion. (4) We may piece together from the speeches at the beginning of Book II by Glauco and Adimantus that the two "timocrats" have had their opinions formed for them by their father and the poets who, in their conventional "aristocratic" way, have attempted to make the "timocrats" act justly, albeit not for the correct reasons; they have tempted the "timocrats" with rewards to be received if only they have a good reputation for justice, such as marrying well and holding high office, promises which the older brother, Adimantus, increasingly finds hard to believe, since the same rewards are promised more enticingly by the "tyrannical" Thrasymachus and many others like him for being the very opposite—superior but unjust. We know from Socrates' account of the "timocrat" that the "timocrat" despises his "aristocratic" father for ruining

they represent, and not a change of character.

[16] It should be noted that Socrates the narrator corresponds with the simple city of Book II, and they are simple because they represent a holistic non-analytical view of the "aristocratic" constitution. Socrates the narrated is the same Socrates, but to be regarded more analytically.

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the family fortune because of his just dealings in politics. The unjust model held up by the "tyrant" is far more to his liking, especially because it emphasises the superiority of the unjust man. The "timocrat" is held back only by his former education as someone well-reputed through being just. It is interesting that even with the presentation of the just and unjust man by the two opposing camps (the "aristocrats" and the "tyrants"), what would spark puzzlement in a dialectically disposed mind arouses only a passive desire in the "timocrats" to hear what Socrates tells them to think, which is exactly what Socrates does (with all the confusions he can muster) in the third iteration.

Of all these four iterations, the fourth is the most degenerate, since neither the conventional "aristocrats" nor the "tyrants" consider the possibility of improving the constitution of the captives, but only the possibility of changing their behaviour through emulation of the models presented; it is the unconventional "aristocrat", Socrates, who attempts to release the *logos* in the "timocrats" by puzzling it. The three dialectical imitators—Plato, the narrator Socrates, and the narrated Socrates—all contrive to puzzle their respective audiences with inconsistencies, and these inconsistencies require the conversation to take place at the stage of "likening", as if the reader is looking at shadows on the wall when listening to the surface conversation.

The Divided Line is divided into two unequal lengths, one twice the size of the other, and each of these lengths is similarly divided. A simple calculation reveals that the two middle pieces must therefore be of equal length (this is not stated explicitly, in keeping with the dialogue itself being a dialectical exercise). The equal length of the two middle sections is strange in the context, since "conviction" belongs to the world of becoming and opinion, while "intention" belongs to the world of being and understanding. How can these two levels of the perception of reality be the same, given that length represents clarity of perception? We should, once again, compare the Divided Line Analogy with the Cave Analogy.

"Conviction", the next stage of awareness in the Cave Analogy after "likening", occurs when the captive turns away from the shadows on the wall, and sees the source of the shadows, the models held up by one or other opinion-former.[17] Just as the source of shadows of trees are models of trees,

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[17] Only the unconventional "aristocrat", Socrates, wishes this to happen. The conventional "aristocrats" and the "tyrants" have no intention of turning the captives away from the wall, but their combined puzzling effect would explain how the first captive escaped without the aid of a rescuer. A Platonic dialogue usually allows no loose strings to remain untied within the terms of the dialogue, and this is a case in point. No rescuer as described by Socrates would be able to force a captive away from the wall; only shadows sufficiently puzzling would cause someone to question

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so too, the words of the dialogue itself have their source in the puppeteers working their various puppet *deigmata*. Plato makes it as explicit as a blueprint in a dialectical exercise may be explicit that we are to turn away from the echoing words to the characters apparently speaking those words (it is here that we depart from conventional Platonism). The characters may appear to be alive and changeable while sensed as shadows and echoes, but the models casting the shadows are unchanging. It is the unchanging nature of models which make them so useful to the philosophical dramatist; but so long as the models are taken to represent changeable characters, they remain in the realm of Becoming and Opinion.

"Intention", equal in length (and hence purportedly also in clarity) to "Conviction", is actually the lower of the two sections in the realm of Being and Understanding. In *Politeia*, it is exemplified by the shapes made by geometricians. The shapes are intended to represent the ideas of squares, circles, and so on. To regard such shapes as particular with extraneous qualities such as colour is to remain at the level of "conviction"; to understand that they intend abstract ideas is to advance to the level of "intention". Note that the shapes themselves do not change, and only in this regard, I suggest, are the two middle sections equal (the equal length is still wrong according to the criterion of clarity). The inconsistency is a clue directing us to the fact that the models of characters may be seen from two aspects (as described in the ascent). When the captive turns away from the wall, the models appear to represent Socrates, Thrasymachus, and all the other participants in the dialogue; after passing the fire and looking back at the exposed opinion-former holding up models, the dialectical thinker may appreciate that they are indeed models, "intending" abstract ideas. At both levels of perception, the models *per se* remain the same.

Minimalist concrete representations of abstract forms are known in Greek crafts as *paradeigmata*. A potter, for example, would look to a *paradeigma* of a certain form of pot when making pots of that form; the new pots have the general form of the *paradeigma*, but also other details, such as patterns and colours not to be found in the abstract form. The new pots are *deigmata*, samples the potter may show his clients. I shall use both terms, although the term *deigma* is rarely used in Platonic dialogues, if at all (where it does appear, it may be a corruption of *dogma*), and certainly not in *Politeia*. In a Platonic dialogue, then, the characters are *deigmata,* but through a dialectic comparison of these it is possible to work up to the *paradeigmata* of which they are *deigmata*. *Politeia* spells this out by

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the source of opinions. The rescuer himself would originally have escaped his bonds through turning away from the wall in a fit of perplexity.

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showering us with many characters hinting at[18] a few *paradeigmata*: Socrates, Aristo, and the poets are *deigmata* of the *paradeigma* "aristocrat"; Glauco and Adimantus (the sons of Aristo) are *deigmata* of the *paradeigma* "timocrat"; Cephalus is the only *deigma* in the dialogue of the *paradeigma* "oligarch"; Polemarchus and Clitopho are *deigmata* of the *paradeigma* "democrat"; Thrasymachus and myriads of others are *deigmata* of the *paradeigma* "tyrant".

The *paradeigmata*, finally, intend abstract forms, but these are all specifically aspects (*eide*) of an *idea*.[19] The *idea* will be that which is common to all the *eide*. Another way to look at this is to see each specific aspect (*eidos*) as a species comprising the *idea* itself with a specifying difference. An *idea* may be divided differently according to different criteria, but once a criterion has been established, the *eide* should be exhaustive according to that criterion.[20] The *eide* and finally the *idea* are abstracts and as such cannot be dramatised *per se* in the dialogue, but they are to be arrived at by the dialectical thinker using hints and *deigmata* intending them in the dialogue. The best Socrates can do for Glauco is to present him with a *deigma* of the Good; but it is necessarily a very bad account of the Good, merely enticing the "timocrat" by virtue of its being purportedly the most noble *idea* and the cause of all things which are.

This brief summary should suffice to outline the blueprint for Platonic dialogues. A dialogue deals essentially with one *idea*, although more *ideai* may be implicated. The *idea* is divided one way or another exhaustively into *eide*. To approximate a dramatisation of the *eide*, Plato would have begun by developing *paradeigmata*, a mimimalist embodiment of the *eide*, but these would then be dressed up with the additional details required to

[18] Hinting, because the accounts are necessarily fallacious or insufficient to some extent, but serve their purpose in drawing attention to the need for identification between the characters and constitutions. When working on the earlier dialogues without the *Politeia* blueprint, I was under the impression that the characters themselves were *paradeigmata*, but with hindsight I would now call them *deigmata.* In dialogues where one character represents the entire *paradeigma,* the lack of distinction between *deigma* and *paradeigma* does not fundamentally affect the final analysis.

[19] To take the present example, the various abstract *eide* of the *idea* of *politeia* are implicitly turned into *paradeigmata* which then manifest as various *deigmata.*

[20] For example, animals may be divided according to habitat: "animals: of land, and not of land"; but the exhaustive *eide* would be "animals: of land, of air, of water". Among many alternative divisions of animals, we may find "gods, men, other animals", but an exhaustive division would be "animals: rational/mortal (men); rational/immortal (gods); irrational/mortal (other earthly animals); irrational/immortal (creatures such as Cerberus).

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resemble ordinary Greek people in an appropriate setting, and these are *deigmata* of the *paradeigmata*. It follows that Plato's Socrates is not the historical Socrates, since this would compromise our understanding of the *paradeigma* of which he is a *deigma* in any given dialogue, and the same is true for all the other characters who have some resemblance to historical figures. All the more crucial is the confirmation (it was always my working hypothesis) that Plato does not express his own views through a spokesman, be it Socrates, Timaeus, or any other character. What is said between the characters must always be in character, and the characters being what they are, the conversation is usually perverse. I shall avail myself here of my three published analyses to outline how Plato may have set about structuring these dialogues from the *idea* down to the conversation (something I could not have done, and did not do, in the individual analyses working from the text up, as it turned out, to an *idea*). Among other things, this procedure should help to clarify the distinction between *paradeigma* and *deigma*, a distinction which was not sufficiently clear in my original analyses.

Hippias Minor

Many Platonic dialogues pertain to positive concepts such as "justice", "courage", "friendship", and "the Good"; but they are rarely treated as concepts in conversation, since that requires a degree of abstraction of which The Many are incapable. While nearly all Socrates' contemporaries appear to agree that these things are good, The Many misconstrue them to the extent that a person actually beneficial is considered harmful, and a person actually harmful is considered beneficial (a plotline of *Hippias Major*). In addition to the positive concepts, there are other abstractions which The Many consider to be good although they represent only a means to an end, whether good or bad. One such neutral abstraction is power, *dynamis*, which Plato tackles in *Hippias Minor*.

The word *dynamis* appears late in the text, at 375d8ff. where *dikaiosyne* is either a *dynamis* or an *episteme* ("justice is either a power or a knowledge"), leading to the absurd conclusion at the end of the dialogue that if there is someone who commits injustice, that person is the just man. Despite the late appearance of the term, *dynamis* has been on display throughout the dialogue. The term *dynamis* embraces power and ability, which are both considered good in themselves even today.[21] Plato regards[22]

[21] See successful political slogans such as "Yes we can!", or the earlier רק הליכוד יכול, which carefully do not specify what the party can do.

[22] I say what Plato thinks following a thorough analysis of the dialogue, and not from something a character says in the dialogue.

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power/ability as a means to an end, which makes it intrinsically neutral.[23] The Many ignore the end of power/ability, and it is this omission which allows them to consider *dynamis* to be a good *per se.*

Plato divides *dynamis* into two main types (his reasoning will become apparent later): (1) a means always aiming at a good end, necessarily not admired by The Many; (2) a means treated as an end in itself, necessarily admired by The Many. For an exhaustive division, Plato subdivides the second type into the two subtypes admired by The Many, namely (2a) political *dynamis* and (2b) technical *dynamis*. D*ynamis* (1), always aiming at a good end, necessarily incorporates both the political and the technical, but it may be admired as such only by those recognising the *dynamis* in question, namely dialectic.

Plato now sets about dramatising the various types, beginning with the *paradeigmata*: one *paradeigma* is the powerful politician intent on appearing good through his political power, and indeed admired by The Many for his apparent ability to get his own way—but he is actually manipulated by the other two *paradeigmata;* the second *paradeigma* is the larger-than-life expert at all crafts (apart from dialectic) who uses his technical ability only to appear good, with no thought of benefitting others—he too is manipulated; the third *paradeigma* is the dialectician whose concern is to use the craft of dialectics to benefit everyone (and hence mirrors the two subtypes, being political and technical at the same time). Dialectic would benefit, in this dialogue, by causing the other *paradeigmata* to realise the need to use power/ability for a good end. This will not happen, however, precisely because the others are *paradeigmata*, immutable models. The dialectician manipulates the other *paradeigmata* so far as is possible, leading the conversation to absurdities designed to cause puzzlement, but cannot make the final step for them.

After the *paradeigmata* come the *deigmata*. For the able technician admired by The Many, Plato chose the nearest example from real life. Hippias the sophist had the greatest reputation for practising many crafts, and Plato simply expanded his abilities to meet the needs of the *paradeigma*.

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[23] The second half of the *Hippias Minor* hammers home the point that power/ability is the *dynamis* to do something; Socrates asks Hippias a string of questions which essentially emphasise that a bad outcome is bad whether one reaches it with ability or without ability ("willingly or unwillingly"); Hippias answers as if attaining a bad outcome willingly (i.e., with ability) is preferable. In *Hippias Major*, the same point is spelled out explicitly, that although what is able is useful, what is able for bad is harmful, while only what is able for good is beneficial. Of more significance, however, is the dramatisation of people with ability failing to be able to a good end, for one reason or another.

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Hippias is not the *paradeigma* itself, but only a *deigma* of it, since in addition to being an expert Jack-of-all-trades, he has additional traits, such as being a Greek man from Elis. Furthermore, he is in Athens, which requires him to be on some errand or another; to display his many crafts, Plato chooses to portray him having just finished an exhibition, advertising his wares to an admiring crowd. He composes Hippias' after-exhibition potential-student group from *deigmata* of the next *paradeigma*, the powerful politician. They serve as a reason for further displaying Hippias' many crafts, but they also display the conspicuous consumption of the wealthy youths who have nothing better to do than waste time examining a sophist they may study with. This is also now the perfect setting for the *deigma* of the dialectical *paradeigma*, Socrates, who is portrayed overtly as influenced by both other types of *deigmata*, while covertly manipulating them to his intentions (which are to benefit them).

In practice, three *deigmata* take part in the discussion. For the chorus of youths, there is but one spokesman, Eudicus, to keep the conversation manageable, and to provide Socrates with the initial hook (Eudicus' father) to lead Hippias by the nose throughout the rest of the conversation; Hippias allows Eudicus to think that he is manipulating him, but he is only positioning himself to be able to display his talents in the best light; Socrates allows Eudicus to think he, Eudicus, is manipulating the poor fool, Socrates, into cross-examining the great Hippias, and Socrates allows Hippias to believe that the examination will afford the sophist an opportunity to show off yet another skill, namely eristics ("coincidentally" the moral and logical inverse of dialectics).

Steering the examination to a display of eristics provides a plausible reason for Socrates being able to foresee the course of the entire conversation,[24] which in turns enables him to put Hippias in the position of effectively arguing against himself:[25] Hippias must defend an uncontroversial position which Socrates claims was held by the father of Eudicus, that Homer made Achilles better than Odysseus. Socrates suggests that Odysseus

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[24] That is to say, Plato provides us with a dramatically plausible reason for Socrates' ability to plan out the entire conversation, and we are to imagine that the planning began well before the opening of the dialogue, since Socrates could predict Hippias' desire to attract students after the exhibition, and that Hippias would be amenable in such a situation to engage in eristics.

[25] That Socrates is more expert at eristics (apart from the end of eristics, which is to "defeat" the opponent) may be ascribed to eristics being an incidental outcome of knowing dialectics (but dialectics is not an outcome of knowing eristics). Socrates knows the techniques of eristics, but is not motivated by a desire to "win" an argument.

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is better than Achilles inasmuch as Odysseus is the most *polytropos* ("many-turning", already an epithet of Odysseus at the beginning of the Odyssey), knowing that Hippias will be driven by eristic necessity to state that Odysseus is the worst man precisely because he is most *polytropos*, and that (therefore) Achilles is best because he is the opposite, the most simple. The eristic gambit necessitates Hippias interpreting *polytropos* as "many-turning" in a negative sense, and "simple" in a positive sense; thus, Achilles is most true, and Odysseus consequently most deceitful, the ultimate liar. Socrates has contrived this outcome because Hippias usually portrays himself as most *polytropos* in a positive sense, as the person who can turn himself successfully to any craft. Now Hippias will appear (at least eristically) to be arguing against himself, in that he must support the most simple against the most *polytropos*.

Since Socrates does not have the eristic motive to "win", he allows Hippias to wriggle out of "losing" the debate at two critical points in the conversation, one punctuating the break between two distinct movements, the other marking the end of the conversation. The first movement concerns the ability to lie (an ability common to all the *paradeigmata* for different motives); the second is an extended attempt to make Hippias see the harmfulness of ability if it is for a bad end. Since Socrates does not refute Hippias eristically, we may infer that the aristocrats, at the end of the dialogue, are satisfied that Hippias is a worthy teacher, and are satisfied with themselves for having caused Socrates and Hippias to put on a show for them. However, it is not the characters who need to learn to think dialectically, but the readers. This dialogue was written and was already being read long before *Politeia*, but it follows the "blueprint". The conversation between the characters is initially perplexing, like shadows on the cave wall; but an examination of the characters as *deigmata* leading to *paradeigmata* leads the dialectical reader to the understanding that ability *per se* is neutral, but that it is conceived to be a good thing by those who do not consider the end of ability (the reason for this failure is not hinted at until *Hippias Major*). Only dialectical ability is consistently good, by virtue of its intended end, the attainment of dialectic thought in others, and the understanding of concepts in oneself. That Socrates fails in his attempt to benefit his interlocutors does not detract from the intrinsic benefit of dialectic, and he fails only because for Plato the dramatist (1) models do not change, and (2) answers should not be spoonfed in a dialectical exercise.

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Hippias Major

From *dynamis* as a good to the Good itself: *Hippias Major* is a significant expansion upon *Hippias Minor* and tackles the supreme concept head on (so far as that is possible in a dramatisation). Plato begins as usual with a subdivision of his main concept, necessitating a preliminary definition of some terms: Good is Fitting (*agathon* = *prepon*); Fine is Apparent Fitting (*kalon* = *phainomenon prepon*). "Apparent" is subdivided exhaustively into Intelligised; Sensed; Conceived (*nooumenon; aisthoumenon; dokoumenon*). The first is apparent only to *nous*, which only rational thinkers have; the second requires *aisthesis*, which everyone has; the third occurs when the irrational (usually The Many) use sense in an attempt to grasp the intelligible. A person sensed to be good is conceived by The Many to be beneficial (we may think of wise-looking politicians or newsreaders wearing an appropriate tie or dress). Rational people will intelligise the pragmatically good person as beneficial, and sense the aesthetically good person to be beautiful, but will not confuse the two. The main problem is that intelligising requires connecting cause and effect, which is perception over time, while The Many are trapped by their senses in the immediate. This provides the explanation missing in *Hippias Minor* why The Many admire politicians and showy sophists, but see no fittingness in the dialectician.

To recapitulate, apparent fitting is exhaustively subdivided into intelligised pragmatic fittingness (benefit), sensed fittingness (aesthetic beauty), and conceived pragmatic fittingness (immediate, sensed, fittingness being mistaken for something beneficial which in fact requires a comparison of cause and effect over time).

To dramatise these three aspects, Plato requires only two *paradeigmata*: (1) the dialectician, able to distinguish intelligised and sensed fittingness, but himself sensed to be unfitting and hence conceived by The Many to be harmful; (2) the non-dialectician, able to sense fittingness, while concentrating on appearing to The Many to be beneficial by making an effort to be sensed as fitting aesthetically, socially, and (emphasised to a lesser extent than in *Hippias Minor*) technically.

The *deigmata* based on the dialectician *paradeigma* are Socrates and a fabricated Questioner, required by Socrates to ask awkward questions of Hippias without having the sophist walk away from an unfitting conversation.[26] Socrates must lie, deceive, and even subvert reason in an effort to shock Hippias into beginning to think dialectically. The *deigmata*

[26] Hippias states explicitly that he would not talk with someone saying to him what the Questioner says to Socrates.

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of the non-dialectical *paradeigma* are Hippias and the oft-mentioned but absent Many. The Many are the reason for Hippias' behaviour: he has developed the ultimate technique of appearing at all times to all people fitting, by adapting himself to the opinions and expectations of his audience. He is willing to lie, deceive, and otherwise subvert reason in his pursuit of appearing to be good. Of course, with Socrates as his sole audience, this technique breaks down, although Hippias does not realise this. Socrates tests this technique to absurd extremes; if Socrates thinks that the Spartans are lawbreakers by not paying Hippias for educating them (as Socrates appears to think), then Hippias will go along with the nonsense, rather than, as Socrates would have preferred, realising that he should reconsider his behaviour. If Socrates is the most beneficial of people in his attempting to make others think dialectically, Hippias, who has no intention of causing others to think critically but rather allows them to be self-satisfied with their current opinions, must be considered the most harmful of people. Yet the Many would regard Socrates as most harmful (because he is aesthetically and socially most unfitting), and would regard Hippias as most beneficial (because he is aesthetically and socially most fitting).

Socrates appears bad in every aesthetic way, and at first might also appear to be insane, since much of what he says is absurd (such as the Spartans being lawbreakers). He is in fact merely doing everything possible to appear as though he is impressed by Hippias, since it is in the nature of the expert at appearing to be fitting to leave a conversation in which he appears to be unfitting (he is that dependent on the opinion of his audience). Socrates, however, is not merely wasting his time praising Hippias, but exploits the stages of the conversation to prepare conflicts designed to shock Hippias into realising the folly of his *techne* of appearance. All this makes the conversation puzzling enough, but Plato also has the main discussion centre on what *to kalon* (the Fine) might actually be despite its intrinsic connection to appearance, leading to some easy refutations of proposed definitions.

Given the opportunity for complete mayhem, the dialogue is surprisingly well structured. After a long set-up showing how Hippias adopts one criterion of wisdom held by his audience only to jump to another contradictory one when that is what his audience appears to hold, the dialogue settles down to a discussion of *to kalon*. Socrates fabricates a rude questioner which enables him to criticise Hippias' answers to the question "What is *to kalon*?" by portraying himself as the idiot giving these answers to the questioner in front of an imaginary crowd. Hippias supplies (1-3) three eristic responses designed to silence the questioner, but after three failed attempts, the questioner himself (through Socrates) suggests that (4)

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to kalon is *prepon* (which is very near the mark), based on an observation made by Hippias a little earlier, that stone is fine if it is fitting (part of a sophistic defence of another definition). Socrates refutes this definition, but then offers three of his own: (5) the Fine is the Able/Useful: Socrates notes that the able or useful is for bad as well as good (this harks back to *Hippias Minor*), but Hippias sophistically defends this definition too with the rider that the Able/Useful is fine when it is able/useful for good. While Hippias had been satisfied with his defence of the previous definition, Socrates incorporates the good end of ability into his definition by suggesting that (6) the Fine is the Beneficial. We know that apparent *prepon* is not actual *prepon* for a *prepon* end, but Socrates does not refute the new definition using truth. He introduces the Good and makes a deliberate hash of the relationship between Good and Fine, successfully refuting the definition, but in a perplexing way. Both definitions have effectively, if badly, dealt with intelligised pragmatic fittingness. Socrates follows these with the final definition of the dialogue: (7) the Fine is the Pleasurable, which is so badly framed that it leads to a lengthy and perplexing argument and a refutation that works because pleasure is conceived as somehow external to the fine thing sensed, and not intelligised as a response in the beholder to the perception (whether intelligised or sensed) of fittingness.

The answers therefore make a 3-1-3 pattern, beginning with eristic responses by Hippias, then an almost correct general definition by the questioner, followed by definitions pertaining to the aspects of the general definition by Socrates himself.

Socrates has made the conversation perplexing in order to shake Hippias out of his complacency, but Hippias is convinced that he appears wise and fine to his immediate audience, Socrates, and this is all that concerns him as the expert on appearing good. This dialogue, like *Hippias Minor,* was clearly written before *Politeia*, but it follows the blueprint. The conversation throughout the dialogue is an extreme form of shadow-play, and it cannot be understood at all without first grasping the *deigmata*, and subsequently, the *paradeigmata*. The true definitions of the Good and the Fine are never expressed verbally, but are dramatised consistently throughout the dialogue in Hippias (aesthetically fitting, pragmatically unfitting) and Socrates (aesthetically unfitting, pragmatically fitting) with the necessary addition of The Many, who conceive Hippias as pragmatically fitting, and Socrates as pragmatically unfitting.

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Politeia

This dialogue does not deal with the definition of Good *per se* (already dealt with in *Hippias Major*), but the Good interpreted as (1) Benefit, (3) Pleasure,[27] or (2) Neither; Plato subdivides Pleasure to produce an exhaustive array of aspects of Good as conceived or perceived by various types of people: (1) Benefit, (2) Reputation,[28] (3) Pleasure {(3a) few pleasures; (3b) all pleasures one at a time; (3c) all pleasure, to be snatched from those who have it}. Plato dramatises these in the *paradeigmata* conveniently labelled as "aristocrat", "timocrat", "oligarch", "democrat", and "tyrant" respectively. The *idea* Good is made concrete in the *paradeigma* of someone living according to Good; the *eide* of Good are made concrete in the *paradeigmata* of people living according to their various notions of Good. When working from the text up to the *idea*, we have to be aware that anything involving people is still not the final *idea* being dramatised in the dialogue in all its apparent aspects. The dialogue may be regarded as concerning the notion of living the good life, with an exhaustive array of perceptions regarding the good life, but this is still only at the level of "Intending", only slightly more refined than regarding the dialogue as a representation of Socrates and some of his contemporaries.

The *paradeigma* "aristocrat" is Benefit personified, and this itself is exhaustively divided into expert and non-expert. The expert is the most beneficial and this is the dialectician, since only the dialectician may understand general concepts such as the Good and act upon them, consequently being the only one to be able to attempt to turn others into dialecticians (with the proviso, of course, that other *paradeigmata* cannot be modified). A change in constitution requires a change in the circumstances of the *logos*, which may be achieved, if at all, by guided puzzlement. The dialectician also has the fall-back of deceiving others to behave in a good way albeit for the wrong motives, which indeed is the only technique

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[27] The alternative to pragmatic fittingness in *Hippias Major* is aesthetic fittingness, and we recall that the last definition of that dialogue framed *to kalon* in terms of pleasure. While there it was a red herring, or at most a consequence of the perception of fittingness (intelligised or sensed), in this dialogue, it is pleasure itself which the Many regard as the Good; to put it another way, for the Many, aesthetic fittingness is a means to pleasure. The concepts of Good and Fine as dramatised in *Hippias Major* still hold; the emphasis in *Politeia* is on the way the Good itself is perceived/conceived by different groups of people.

[28] The "timocrat" is above the rabble who crave pleasure, but has no grasp of benefit, and therefore goes through life attempting to appear good by being superior, guided by various types of opinion-formers.

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available to the second-best "aristocrat" who lacks both the dialectic method and an understanding of the Good itself with all that that entails. For convenience I call the former the unconventional "aristocrat", the latter the conventional "aristocrat". The unconventional "aristocratic" *paradeigma* needs but one *deigma* in this dialogue, the ubiquitous Socrates, as narrator or narrated. By extension, the author of the dialogue, Plato himself, might be considered another *deigma* of this *paradeigma*, but he functions only as the unseen puppet master mimicking Socrates the narrator, slightly superior to Homer or the narrated Socrates, who both mimic characters not only good but bad as well. There are somewhat more *deigmata* for the conventional "aristocratic" *paradeigma,* namely the father of the "timocrats" (Aristo) and the poets.

The *paradeigma* of Reputation is someone aspiring to appear good through being superior and who is therefore perpetually concerned with the opinions of others. For convenience this is called the "timocratic", and the *deigmata* for it are based on Plato's own brothers, Glauco and Adimantus, who evidently came to Plato's mind as competitive reputation-seekers. Plato uses these as rival interlocutors thirsting for Socrates' opinions, which is unfortunate for Socrates who would prefer them to turn away from the wall of shadows (representing the opinions cast by the various opinion-formers). They do not, and the dialogue is consequently shot through with nonsense based on the concerns and prejudices of "timocrats", despite which, we receive the fairly clear layout already described in my remarks on the blueprint.

Pleasure is subdivided into few, many, and one all-encompassing. The *paradeigmata* are the pleasure-seekers, respectively the "oligarch", the "democrat", and the "tyrant". The *deigma* for the "oligarchic" *paradeigma* is Cephalus, ingeniously dealt with and dismissed in the first few pages of the dialogue. His character adds to Socrates' verbal account some insights regarding the fear of pleasure-seekers when facing the prospect of pain, albeit after death. The *deigmata* for the "democratic" *paradeigma* are Polemarchus and Clitopho, who between them demonstrate the ability of the "democrat" to play at being (a *deigma* of) another *paradeigma* for the pleasure of it. Their continual pursuit of new pleasures detracts from their present pleasure, but this is as nothing when compared with the constant pain of the "tyrant" who is obsessed with taking all pleasure from others, and ironically has no pleasure himself, but only envy and anger. The *deigma* for this is Thrasymachus the sophist ("and many others" like him), who does everything to acquire short-term pleasure for himself, at the expense of truth, harmony, politeness, decency, law, justice, and the very fabric of society. Thrasymachus is the only model who appears to have a major

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change in behaviour during the dialogue, but this is actually in keeping with his *paradeigma*. Lacking a strong *logos* which can keep the other parts of his soul at bay, he is susceptible to the strong *logos* of someone else, and indeed, he is dominated by Socrates after his “defeat” in the eristic battle of Book I.

As already mentioned, *Politeia* appears to be as close as a Platonic dialogue could be to an exposition of the way a Platonic dialogue is structured and should be read (in addition to being a dialogue concerning the major conceptions of the Good as Benefit, Pleasure, and Neither). I conclude this from the surprisingly good order of exposition of the *deigmata* in Books I-II, followed by accounts of the corresponding *paradeigmata* in Books II-IX, taken together with the three-book digression (V-VII) which hints at the way a reader should move from the confusion of the text to the relative stability of the characters (*deigmata*) and thence to the *paradeigmata* (the *deigmata* stripped of individual traits) which intend exhaustively the various aspects of an *idea* (Perceived Good).

Plato was clearly more interested in his readers exercising their dialectic thinking in order to understand concepts *per se* than in telling them what to think. At the same time, he was not interested in merely encouraging his readers to think critically, but in guiding his readers towards particular understandings of concepts, without which the dialogues make little sense. It would have been the concepts rather than the dialogues which Plato wished us ultimately to understand, and the dialogues are to be seen as something like geometrical forms “intending” *ideai*.

All this being the case, it is not surprising that philosophers from Plato’s own time down to the modern day, requiring “philosophical” (non-literary) answers to questions regarding Plato’s own thought, have developed a rich legacy of remarkable and imaginative techniques to address what they see as the Platonic problem.

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Part III:

Plato's Legacy

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CHAPTER FIVE

STOIC COSMO-THEOLOGY AND PLATO'S *TIMAEUS*: EXPLORING SOME FURTHER CONNECTIONS

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1

The influence of Plato, especially the *Timaeus*, on early Stoic cosmo-theology is now widely recognised and has been a prominent topic in recent scholarly literature.[1] Through Zeno' studies under Polemo there is a direct historical connection between the founder of the Stoa and the early Platonic tradition, but of course there is no reason to assume that the acquaintance with Platonism was confined to the figure of Polemo.[2] It is very likely that it included the cosmological model of the *Timaeus*, which by the late fourth century had acquired a powerful presence in philosophical circles inside as well as outside the Academy. Aristotle provides abundant references to it, Crantor may have been the first to come up with some sort of commentary (on the evidence of Proclus *In Tim*. 1, 76, 2),[3] and Theophrastus epitomised at least parts of it, as in fact Aristotle himself appears to have done as well (Diogenes Laertius 5, 25).

We know that Chrysippus and Posidonius read, and reacted to, the *Timaeus*. Chrysippus took over the *Timaeus*' providentialist explanation

[1] But see already Krämer 1971, ch. 2 ('Theologie und Prinzipienlehre vom Timaios zum Frühhellenismus'). See further Reydams-Schils 1999, 41-83, also for further references; I have provided a brief overview of *theologoumena* shared by Plato (not just the *Timaeus*) and the Stoics in Algra 2017, 158-159.
[2] Sedley 2002 has argued that Stoic physics and cosmology basically derives from Polemo. But see my re-examination of the relevant evidence in Algra 2017.
[3] We should probably think of a selective commentary on the philosophical main passages, not of line-by-line treatment; see Tarrant 2000, 54.

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(75a7 ff.) of the fragility of the human skull in his *On Providence* (Περὶ προνοίας, Aulus Gellius *NA* 7, 1, 7; SVF 2, 1170), on which more below. At the same time, he seems to have felt free to keep his distance where appropriate. Thus, in his *Physical Theses* (Φυσικαὶ θέσεις, Plutarch *SR* 1047c; SVF 2, 763) he criticised the *Timaeus*' claim (70c-d and 91a) that liquid nourishment goes to the lungs. Posidonius is known to have been engaged rather extensively in exegesis of the *Timaeus*,[4] although the old idea, based on a passage in Sextus (*M* 7, 93; fr. 85 EK), that he wrote a commentary no longer seems fashionable.[5] We have no direct evidence of Zeno's dealing with the *Timaeus*, but given the fact that he is said to have claimed that nature does not just work *like* a craftsman but actually *as* a craftsman (*plane artifex,* Cicero *ND* 2, 58; SVF 1, 172)) it is not outlandish to suppose that he may well have found the model of the *Timaeus* inspiring and more congenial than other variants of Platonism. We do in fact find some striking resemblances. Thus, the teleological argument, ascribed to Zeno by Sextus (*M* 9, 104; SVF 1, 111), that whatever possesses reason is better than that which does not, and that the cosmos, being the best thing there is, therefore must possess reason, is strongly reminiscent of the Demiurge's reasoning, as presented in the *Timaeus*, that "no work that is without mind will be better than one with mind" (30a-b).[6] And the idea, ascribed to Zeno by Cicero *ND* 2, 22 and Sextus *M* 9, 85 (printed together in SVF 1, 114), that living sentient beings are part of the cosmos as a living sentient whole reminds us of the *Timaeus*' claim that the cosmos is an image of "that living being of which the other living beings individually and generically are parts" (30c). The latter example, in pointing to the ideal model, at the same time draws our attention to the metaphysical differences between the *Timaeus*' account and Stoic cosmology, which are rather obvious and need not be spelled out here. In virtue of these differences Plato's text can hardly have counted as straightforwardly authoritative for the Stoics, but it offered a cosmological model that was at least in part congenial and that could be adopted but also adapted in various ways. The resemblances were noted in antiquity; Sextus Empiricus, writing in the second century AD, has this to say:

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[4] See the texts printed as frs. 49 (on the Atlantis myth), 141, and 291 (exegesis of Plato's account of the generation of the World Soul) in the edition of Edelstein and Kidd (EK). Also fr. 205 (motion of the fixed stars) may come from a context of exegesis of the *Timaeus*.

[5] See on this, and for an overview of earlier scholarly opinions, the comments in Edelstein and Kidd 1988, 339-340.

[6] See Hahm 1977, 136-137.

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> He [Plato] gave virtually the same argument as Zeno. For the former also said that the universe was the most beautiful of all the things accomplished according to nature, and that according to the likely account it is an ensouled, living being, gifted with mind and reason (ζῷον ἔμψυχον νοερόν τε καὶ λογικόν (Sextus Empiricus, *M* 9, 107; *SVF* I, 110).

Thus far scholars studying the relation between Stoicism and Plato *in physicis* have mainly focused on the more metaphysical aspects, in particular on the origins of the Stoic two-principles theory in Plato and Platonism.[7] Understandably, since it is tempting to see the Stoic system as the result of a 'telescoping' of Plato's Demiurge and World Soul, and the Stoic active principle, god, as a corporealist version of the incorporeal, but immanent, extended, and moving World Soul of the *Timaeus*.[8] In this paper I want to shift attention to some general features of Stoic cosmology and cosmological explanation, with a special focus on astronomy (or perhaps we should say: astrophysics).[9] In the latter area the resemblances between Plato and Stoicism have not received the attention they deserve.[10] I want to

[7] Cf. Reydams-Schils 1999, 42-60, who adds briefer sections on soul, fate and providence, and the Cosmic State. Also, Frede 2004 mainly concentrates on the metaphysics of Stoic cosmo-theology. Betegh 2003 comes closer to the approach I advocate here (especially in part of section 2 of this paper) in so far as he focuses on the question how both in the *Timaeus* and in Stoicism human rationality and cosmic rationality are supposed to be aligned (hence, on the relation between cosmology and ethics).

[8] Plato's incorporeal World Soul is described in strikingly physical terms: "In the centre he set a soul and caused it to extend (ἔτεινε) throughout the whole and further wrapped its body round with soul on the outside" (*Tim.* 34a). It is not a huge step from here to the Stoic idea of a *corporeal* divine fire, pneuma or *tonos* perfusing the body of the world and, by working from the centre to the periphery and backwards, securing both the world's extension and its coherence.

[9] In the case of the Stoics the term "astrophysics" may be preferable to "astronomy", in order to indicate that in their system the study of the heavenly bodies is part of philosophical physics and not approached through the recently developed methods of astronomy, as a form of applied mathematics. In the words of Jones 2003, 331, "little of this cosmological speculation is properly astronomical".

[10] The subject is not systematically covered in Hahm 1977 and not at all in Reydams-Schils 1999. Hahm 1977, 136-152 (the chapter on "Cosmobiology") does offer a useful discussion of the idea that the heavenly bodies are ensouled, divine, self-movers (particularly on the basis of Cicero *ND* 2, 39-44), which he (rightly) connects with Plato's World Soul; he also discusses the Stoic idea that these heavenly bodies are nourished from moist exhalations from the terrestrial sphere, which he (rightly) connects with Heraclitus. But the broader context in which these ideas figure and can be connected and the more general resemblances between Platonic and Stoic cosmo-theology are not examined.

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start out, in section 2, by examining in what sense the *Timaeus* can be regarded as a typological model for Stoic cosmology: to what extent do the two systems share the same approach? I will then, in section 3, turn to two specific cases where Stoic cosmology seems to be indebted to, or even borrowing from, the *Timaeus*. In section 4, I will go on to suggest that also the Stoic explanation of planetary motion can be regarded as a creative adaptation of the model to be found in Plato. Section 5 contains my conclusions.

It should be noted that when speaking of "Stoic astrophysics" I am referring to the system as broadly accepted, but perhaps also partly further developed, by Stoics between the days of Zeno and Posidonius. Indeed, there is some evidence that Posidonius worked out the theory in its fullest form: from the *laudationes* in the astrophysical section of Diogenes Laertius' account of Stoic physics (7, 144-146) only one concerns Zeno's Περὶ τοῦ ὅλου, the others refer to works by Posidonius (his Φυσικὸς λόγος and his Περὶ μετεώρων), and he appears to have been the most important (though not the exclusive) source for the astronomical parts of Cleomedes' cosmological treatise that was probably written in the first half of the second century AD.[11] This same Cleomedes happens to be one of the main sources adduced in the present article, the other being the second book of Cicero's *De natura deorum*, which has also often been claimed—though never conclusively proven—to depend to a large extent on Posidonius.[12] So it is possible that some or even most or all of the "creative adaptations" which I signal in sections 3 and 4 of this paper were to be found in Posidonius' writings. However, it should also be noted that neither Cleomedes nor Cicero suggest that Posidonius views were not in line with those of earlier Stoics—they both used him, in so far as they did in fact used him, to create a "common Stoic" account—and in one case (the argument for the sphericity of the cosmos) Cicero is quite clear in his suggestion that it was a view commonly and traditionally subscribed to by "the Stoics", just as it was collectively opposed by the Epicureans. Moreover, it is quite conceivable that Posidonius was simply the fullest or most recent source available, rather than the inventor of all the ideas presented. The tools of nineteenth century *Quellenforschung* are now largely discredited, and it appears that we cannot distinguish "early Stoic" and Posidonian material with any certainty in the texts of Cicero and Cleomedes. My reconstruction,

[11] See Algra 2000, 165-168 on the date of Cleomedes' treatise; and 173-177 on Cleomedes' use of Posidonius (and other sources).
[12] A brief, but convenient, overview of various 19th and 20th century hypotheses concerning the source or sources of the second book of Cicero's *ND* is provided by Kleywegt 1961, 1-9.

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accordingly, concerns "Stoic cosmology" in the more or less unified form in which it was presented by authors like Cicero, Diogenes Laertius and Cleomedes.

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Their shared conception of an ensouled and "intelligent" cosmos characterises the systems of Plato and the Stoics as not just cosmologies, but as cosmo-*theologies* and sets them off as one type of theory from other types, not only from their mechanistic counterparts in Democritus or Epicurus but also from the naturalism of Aristotle, even if Aristotle was in other respects much closer to Platonism than to ancient atomism. Despite the all too real metaphysical differences, it endows these two systems with a structurally similar approach, which shows itself in at least three significant resemblances.

First, a corollary of the idea, common to Plato and Stoicism, that the world is ensouled and intelligent, is that the providential manifestation of this intelligence overrules, or at the very least *uses*, the rules of ordinary "horizontal" physical causation, i.e., what Plato calls "necessity". And cosmo-theology should focus on this. In a well-known passage, following the "appendix" on mirror images, the *Timaeus* (45c-46c) speaks of the so called "accessory causes" giving only the "how" but not the "why" of our ability to see. The message here is clearly that the "how" of vision is much less important than its teleological "main cause", i.e., the benefits to be drawn from sight by us humans. Timaeus (46d) adds that "the great mass of mankind" regard these accessory causes as the sole causes of all things. A proper explanation, however, should rather focus on the level of the overall providential ordering.

This "two level" approach can be found in Stoic astrophysics as well. At the physicalist level of explanation, we are told that the heavenly bodies, even though ensouled, are *corporeal* beings. As such they need nourishment. Following the model of some Presocratic materialists (versions of which appear to have been presented by Heraclitus, Anaximenes, and Xenophanes) the Stoics hold that the heavenly bodies get this nourishment through exhalations from the (salt and fresh) waters and from the earth.[13] Hence at this most basic physicalist level of explanation, the trajectory of the sun, for example, is at least to some extent determined by the availability, particularly between the tropics, of sustaining moist evaporations from the ocean:

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[13] The account of Stoic astrophysics in Diogenes Laertius 7, 144 (quoting the sixth book of Posidonius' Φυσικὸς λόγος) claims that the sun is nourished by the ocean, the moon by sweet waters, and the other planets by exhalations from the earth.

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> Do not the people of your school hold that all fire needs fuel, and that it cannot possibly endure unless it is fed? And that the sun and the moon and the other stars are nourished by the waters, some by sweet waters, others by the waters of the sea? This is the reason which Cleanthes adduces why the sun "turns back nor farther does proceed/ upon his summer curve" and upon his winter curve likewise, so that he will never stray too far from his fuel (Cicero *ND* 3, 37).[14]

However, in Stoicism, as in Plato, these materialistic explanations are embedded within an overall providential and teleological framework, which offers a second level of explanation, which we might call the properly cosmo-theological level. According to the Stoics, the pneumatic heavenly bodies are not just material entities. They are also intelligent—in fact they constitute the leading part (*hêgemonikon*) of the cosmic intelligence—and as such they constitute a major part of an overall providential cosmic system. From this point of view the sun's moving between the tropics is also an arrangement for the best, since it produces seasons which change in a nice slow pace:

> Providence has marvellously fashioned the relation of the zodiacal circle to the tropics in such a way as to ensure that changes in the seasons occur imperceptibly rather than abruptly (Cleomedes 1, 4, 42-44 Todd).[15]

How exactly these two explanatory levels relate, i.e., how providence and necessity are supposed to fit together, is a question not explicitly addressed in any of our sources. The idea may have been that the location of the oceans, including its effects on the course of the sun, had itself been part of the overall providential design all along. Alternatively, the availability of moist evaporations may have been regarded as an example of a physical constraint to be observed by the divine and intelligent demiurge—or more specifically: by the divine and intelligent sun—which finds a parallel in other ways in which the Stoic demiurgic god is bound by physical constraints (the inevitability of the conflagration, at least according to orthodox Stoicism, being a case in point).16 Seen from this perspective, the

[14] See also *ND* 2, 40, and ps. Plutarch's version of Aetius 2, 23, 5 (SVF 1, 501, last part): "the Stoics say that the sun moves over the region where there is food available; and this is the ocean or the earth, of which it consumes the evaporations" (Stobaeus' version has added the name label "Cleanthes", probably on the basis of Aetius 2, 20, 6, but the text he renders still has the plural "they say", φασι).

[15] See also the Stoic account in Cicero *ND* 2, 49, which makes the same point.

[16] Chrysippus' explanation of the inevitable fragility of the human skull, referred to in the introductory section of this paper, may count as another case in point. On

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sun may be forced to move within the boundaries of the tropics, but within these constraints it does follow a perfectly circular, though necessarily oblique, annual path. And so, even on this line of thought, providence shows itself able to accommodate necessity. But in whichever way the Stoics may be taken to have answered this question, it is clear that for them, as for the *Timaeus*, an astrophysical theory that exclusively sticks to the physicalist level is not good enough. However much material a Stoic may want to borrow from Heraclitus, it will in the end have to be embedded within a providentialist framework. Indeed, this providential perspective even colours for the rest more or less technical treatises such as Cleomedes' introduction to cosmology, which praises the usefulness of everything in the cosmos, and even contains a kind of hymn to the sun,[17] or Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones*, which in many places highlights the *mira ars naturae* and the great and beautiful structure of the heavens.[18] This providentialist approach often also entails a markedly anthropocentric perspective. Thus, in both systems the planets (including sun and moon) are primarily introduced as measurers of time, and hence as useful to humans; a move which, to my knowledge, has no counterpart in Aristotle's remaining school writings. In his engaging book *To Explain the World*, Stephen Weinberg, Nobel Prize laureate and self-professed "Whiggish" historian of science, finds fault with much of ancient philosophical physics for, among other things, its excessive teleology.[19] From the perspective of modern science he is of course right.[20] But Plato and the Stoic had different aims. They were not just interested in explaining the world, but also, and

God's being limited by this kind of physical constraints, see also Epictetus *Diss*. 1, 1, 7-13 and 2, 5, 27.

[17] Usefulness of everything: *Cael*. 1, 1, 14-15 Todd. "Hymn" to the sun: *Cael*. 2, 1, 360-403 Todd.

[18] See e.g., Seneca *NQ* 1, 3, 1 and 1, 3, 4 on the *mira ars naturae*; 7, 24, 3 on the heavens as a "beautiful structure"; 7, 27, 6 on the beauty of comets not being accidental.

[19] See Weinberg 2015, 23 (emphasis on teleology) and 145 (on his own professed Whiggishness).

[20] One may compare Vlastos 1975, 29, who complains about the "retrograde turn which Plato gives to cosmological enquiry when he converts so blatantly preconceptions of value into allegations of fact". At the next page he adds that, fortunately, there is also another side to Plato's project, where he uses "facts derived from a scientific discipline" (astronomy). Vlastos' focus on these "scientific" aspects leads to a rather one-sided account of Plato's theory of celestial motion, on which see below, n. 47.

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primarily, in showing its goodness, beauty, and rational and providential order. Any physical theory that failed to do so was in their view defective.[21]

A second feature by which Stoic cosmo-theology (including astrophysics) aligns itself with the approach of the *Timaeus*, and rather distances itself from Aristotle, is closely related. Both in the *Timaeus* and in Stoic astrophysics the emphasis on the importance of providentialist explanations over more purely physicalist ones fosters a certain generality and lack of attention for the details, for example when it comes to describing and explaining the actual trajectories of the planets. Here the Stoics just pointed out that the apparently irregular motions of the planets remained *within the confines of the zodiacal band*, as is claimed by Cleomedes:

> All these planets have a motion opposite to the heavens, and so are seen in different positions at different times, yet they do not effect a disorderly course (οὔτε ἄτακτον) that is, they do not go through random parts of the sky (οὔτε δι᾽ ὧν ἐπέτυχε), but through what is called the "zodiac", though without going beyond it […] they effect a motion through the zodiac that is neither straight, or simple, like the Sun, but is like a spiral (Cleomedes 1, 2, 43-46 and 63-64 Todd).

Or they claimed, as does Cicero's Stoic spokesman, that the movements of the planets *though* very complicated, are yet in the long run regular, in so far as they together constitute the cycle of the Great Year:

> Most marvellous (*maxime admirabiles*) are the motions of the five stars, falsely called planets or wandering stars—for a thing cannot be said to wander if it preserves for all eternity fixed and regular motions, forward, backward and in all other directions. And this regularity is all the more marvellous in the case of the stars we speak of, because at one time they are hidden, and at another they are uncovered again; now they approach, now they retire; now precede, now follow; now move faster, now slower, now do not move at all but remain for a time stationary. On the diverse motions of the planets the mathematicians have based what they call the Great Year, which is completed when the sun, moon, and five planets having all finished their courses have returned to the same positions relative to one another (Cicero *ND* 2, 51).

These rough indications of spatio-temporal regularity were apparently thought to be sufficient in a context emphasising providentiality—in particular the idea of the planets working together as a gigantic cosmic clock.

[21] For this aspect of Plato's *Timaeus*, see also Johansen 2004, 69-76.

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Plato's *Timaeus* rounds off its discussion of planetary motion by pointing out (39 c-d) that people only devised names for the cycles of moon ("month") and sun ("year"), and that they "barely know that the wandering of the others are time at all", because these wandering motions are "bewildering in number and of a surprisingly intricate pattern" (πεποικιλμένας θαυμαστῶς—compare Cicero's *maxime admirabiles*). Plato as well then merely adds a general reference to the regularity of the Great Year. True, earlier in the text he presents some first attempts to create an *ideal* astronomy of the planets, one which reduces their trajectories to a combination of two types of circular motion, to which I will revert in section 4 of this paper. However, there he sticks to the bare outlines, and only gives some details for the planets Mercury and Venus. He claims that giving the details for the other planets as well would be going too far, in constituting only more of a digression, the main purpose of his account apparently being to highlight the providential function or functions of these motions:

> As for the other heavenly bodies, if I were to spell out where he situated them, and all his reasons for doing so, my account, in itself a digression (πάρεργος), would make more work than its purpose calls for (*Tim.* 38d).

Perhaps we may compare a passage later on in the *Timaeus* (54a-b), where Plato has just presented his account of the two types of triangles, the right-angled isosceles and the half-equilateral scalene, that may be supposed to constitute the regular polyhedrons that inform matter. Concerning his choice of the latter type he then adds that "the reason why is too long a story; but should anyone refute us and discover that it is not so, we begrudge him not the prize". Here as well, conveying the intuition of geometrical order and beauty seems more important than going into the details. This not only sets this approach apart from modern science, but also from the practice of someone like Aristotle.[22] The same goes for what the Stoics and the *Timaeus* have to offer on planetary motion: it remains a far cry from what we find in Eudoxus, or in Aristotle's physicalised version of the latter's system, even if Aristotle is cautious enough to add some disclaimers as to the certainty of his reconstruction. It is to be noted that also in a broader sense other ancient sources were aware of a certain tendency towards generality *in physicis* on the part of the Stoics, especially when compared with the Peripatetic

[22] Weinberg 2015, 12, wittily comments, as a modern physicist: "I can imagine the reaction today if I supported a new conjecture about matter in a physics article by saying that it would take too long to explain my reasoning, and challenging my colleagues to prove the conjecture is not true".

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tradition.[23] Strabo, for example, remarks that Posidonius' interest in detailed *aitiologia* goes beyond what is common within the Stoic school and should be labelled as a form of "Aristotelianising":

> For there is much enquiry into causes in him, that is, "Aristotelianising", a thing which our school sheers away from because of the concealment of causes (διὰ τὴν ἐπίκρυψιν τῶν αἰτίων) (Strabo 2, 3, 8; Posidonius T. 85 EK).[24]

Finally, there is a third feature that connects the cosmo-theology of the Stoics with that of the *Timaeus*: when we are doing (astro)physics, ethics is never far away, for doing astrophysics will affect our attitude towards life and the world, and this is precisely what it is meant to do. Many texts bear this out. We will later on examine the *Timaeus*' and the Stoics' claims that contemplation of the heavenly bodies will readily lead us to the other parts of philosophy, ethics in particular. As for the *Timaeus* itself, we may add that it has often been argued that the way it was embedded in the unfinished trilogy suggests that it was ultimately designed to place man in his setting in the world and draw out the implications of cosmology for human life and aims.[25] And the dialogue itself of course famously claims at 47c, that "by learning to know the revolutions in heaven and acquiring the power to compute them, we might reproduce the perfectly unerring revolutions of the god and reduce to settled order the wandering motions in ourselves".[26]

Pointing out that numerous Stoic texts bear out the same sort of idea, may seem to be labouring the obvious.[27] Let me just give a few examples. In Stoicism physics itself, like the other parts of philosophy, was regarded as a virtue (*aretê*); which, given the fact that the virtues were thought to naturally hang together, implies that doing ethics and doing physics are two

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[23] On the general difference between Stoics and Peripatetics, see the Antiochean account in Cicero *Fin*. 4, 12-13 ("materiam vero rerum et copiam apud hos exilem, apud illos uberrimam reperiemus"); and *Fin*. 5, 9-10 on the wide-ranging aetiological investigations of the Peripatetics.

[24] Compare Seneca's "sceptical" claim at *NQ* 7, 29, 3 (speaking about comets) that "nobis rimari illa et coniectura ire in occulta tantum licet, nec cum fiducia inveniendi, nec sine spe"; see also *NQ* 7, 30, 6: "rerum natura sacra sua non semel tradit. Initiatos nos credimus, in vestibulo eius haeremus".

[25] See e.g. Johansen 2004, 7-23.

[26] A full discussion of the relation between cosmic and human rationality in both the *Timaeus* and Stoicism is provided by Betegh 2003.

[27] See also Boeri 2009 and Inwood 2009.

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sides of the same coin.[28] We may also point to such fragments as suggest (Diogenes Laertius 7, 130) that the *bios theôrêtikos* and the *bios praktikos* should be subsumed under the *bios logikos*, or to a fragment from Chrysippus' *On Ways of Living* (Περὶ βιῶν) quoted by Plutarch (*SR* 1033c-d) which suggests that a life of intellectual activity for its own sake—philosophy performed, so to speak, in an almost Aristotelian way, as *l'art pour l'art* – is not much different from a hedonistic lifestyle. Philosophy without existential import, in other words, is not really worth doing. Once again, in its general approach (even if not in its metaphysics) Stoicism appears much closer to the spirit of the *Timaeus* than to the Aristotle of the school writings, let alone to modern science.[29]

3

These general resemblances in approach seem to facilitate the borrowing, on the part of the Stoics, of specific motifs or arguments from the *Timaeus*. In the introduction I have already alluded to a famous passage from Chrysippus' *On Providence* rendered in Latin by Aulus Gellius, in which Chrysippus seems to copy the *Timaeus'* argument concerning the providential usefulness of the at first sight deplorable fragility of the human skull. We may now consider two further examples where parallels seem to be significant and specific enough to suggest that we are dealing with Stoic borrowings from the *Timaeus*. The first concerns the argument for the sphericity of the cosmos as we find it in *Tim.* 33b:

> And he gave it [the world] a shape appropriate to the kind of thing it was. The appropriate shape for that living thing that is to contain within itself all the living things would be the *one which embraces within itself all the shapes*

[28] See also Cicero *Fin*. 3, 72-73; *Tusc*. 5, 68-72. Note that since there is a kinship between cosmic and human rationality—or rather: since human rationality is part of cosmic rationality—claiming that physics is thus somehow at the basis of ethics does not amount to introducing an element of heteronomy, contrary to what Annas 1993, 159-179 presupposes. Also note that the "two sides of the same coin" idea can also work the other way round: Cleomedes 2, 1, 406-414 complains that the moral vices of the Epicureans keep them from being decent physicists; and Seneca *NQ* 1, praef. 6, claims that moral virtue frees the mind (*laxat animum*) for knowledge of celestial realities; at the end of book 7 (7, 31-32) of the same work he makes clear that there is so much that we do not know about the heavenly bodies (his focus there is on comets) because we are all too much ensnared in our vices.

[29] Note, however, that the moral relevance of doing (mathematical) astronomy is part and parcel of the (in this respect Platonising) approach Ptolemy takes in his writings. For a brief overview, see Taub 1993, 146-153.

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> *there are*. Hence he gave it a round shape, the form of a sphere, with its centre equidistant from its extremes in all directions. This *of all shapes is the most complete* and most like itself, which he gave to it because he believed that likeness is incalculably more excellent than unlikeness (Plato *Tim*. 33b).

Especially if we focus on the italicised phrases, we find virtually the same argument in the introduction to cosmology of the Stoic Cleomedes:

> It is also entirely plausible that the most complete of bodies has the most complete of shapes. And the cosmos is the most complete of all bodies, while the sphere is *the most complete of all shapes*. For the sphere *can enclose every shape that has the same diameter as it,* but no other shape can enclose a sphere that has a diameter equal to it. So it is absolutely necessary that the cosmos be a sphere (Cleomedes 1, 5, 139-145 Todd).

The argument recurs in the account of Stoic theology in the second book of Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods* (*ND* 2, 47), and in that very work its Platonic pedigree is explicitly recognised. In the first book (1, 24) the Epicurean spokesman Velleius scathingly remarks that the only reason for the Stoics to have adopted this conception of a spherical cosmos and a spherical god—a notion that is anathema for an Epicurean: the incompatibility of sphericity and happiness was already pointed out in Epicurus' own letter to Herodotus[30]—was that Plato had thought it was the best. Balbus, the Stoic spokesman of book 2, replies in an equally polemical fashion by claiming that Epicureanism once again shows itself to be rather uneducated (*indoctius*) by ignoring such a splendid geometrical argument and by claiming that the cosmos could really have *any* shape.[31] It is worth pointing out, by the way, that this particular argument does *not* figure in the long list of arguments for the sphericity of the cosmos offered by Aristotle in the second book of the *De caelo*.[32] That this is a borrowing from the *Timaeus* seems entirely likely.

My second case concerns a parallel that is less close: we seem to be dealing with a Stoic adaptation, rather than with the mere replication, of an

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[30] Epicurus *Ep. Hdt*. 77 claims that it would be inconsistent to think of the fiery balls which are the heavenly bodies as "happy" or as being "willing" to move in the way they do move.

[31] Epicurus of course claimed (*Ep. Pyth*. 88) that we cannot *see* the outer rim of our actual cosmos, and that, in general, a cosmos may in principle have *any* form; in his view there is no epistemologically responsible way for us to prefer one form to the other.

[32] *Pace* Bowen and Todd 2004, 73, n. 39: the argument in *De Caelo* 286b 1-7 is also of a geometrical nature, but in fact a different one.

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idea found in the *Timaeus*. It concerns the argument that the contemplation of the heavenly bodies actually led humankind to the further development of philosophy. In the well-known passage on accessory causes giving only the "how" but not the "why" of our ability to see—a passage to which I referred earlier—the message is clearly that the "how" of vision is much less important than its teleological "main cause", i.e., the benefits to be drawn from sight by us humans.[33] And this teleological account involves mentioning not only smaller everyday benefits, like being able to tell the time or the season, but also the major benefit of philosophical contemplation to which the phenomena give rise:

> As it is, the sight of day and night, of months and the revolving years, of equinox and solstice, has caused the invention of number and bestowed on us the notion of time and the study of the nature of the world; whence we have derived all philosophy, than which no greater boon has ever come or shall come to mortal man (Plato *Tim.* 47a).

We find a variant of the same argument in Cicero's Stoic account in *ND* 2:

> We alone of living creatures know the risings and settings and the courses of the stars, the human race has set limits to the day, the month and the year, and has learnt the eclipses of the sun and moon and foretold for all future time their occurrence, their extent and their date. And contemplating the heavenly bodies the mind arrives at a knowledge of the gods, from which arises piety, with its comrades, justice and the rest of the virtues, the sources of a life of happiness that vies with and resembles the divine existence, and leaves us inferior to the celestial beings in nothing else save immortality, which is immaterial for happiness (Cicero *ND* 2, 153).

In principle, the resemblances between this passage in Cicero and the *Timaeus* could be due to Cicero rather than to his Stoic source or sources—after all he knew the *Timaeus* well and was probably already working on his translation of the Platonic dialogue when he wrote the *ND*. However, there are some minor but significant differences between the two passages that are suggestive of the authenticity of the Stoic view here rendered by Cicero, and rather suggest a creative adaptation of the Platonic idea by the Stoics: whereas in Plato the psychological effect of our contemplation of the heavens works through the conception of *number* (a mathematical ordering principle) and from there moves on to philosophy, the Stoic account remains

[33] We should distinguish, in other words, between a truly causal account on the one hand, and what looks like a causal account but is in fact a mere description of a necessary condition on the other.

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at the level of physics, with a psychological effect working through knowledge of *the gods*, i.e. of god, the qualitative ordering principle of the Stoics.[34] And of course, as indicated in the previous section, the link between cosmological contemplation and ethics in general is attested for the Stoics in many passages.[35]

4

I now come to the final part of my paper in which I want to examine one further case which is arguably comparable to the one just described, in so far as it appears to be a case of adaptation rather than replication of the model of the *Timaeus* by the Stoics. It concerns the explanation of planetary motion. The evidence for the Stoic view is scanty. We know that from Zeno onward (see Arius Didymus fr. 33 = SVF 1, 120) the Stoics considered the heavenly bodies as intelligent (νοερὸν καὶ φρόνιμον) manifestations of creative fire (πῦρ τεχνικόν), with the implication that they were self-movers. But only a few texts remain which more or less explain how this is supposed to work in the specific case of the planets, most notably: (i) a brief passage in Diogenes Laërtius 7, 144, which specifies that the fixed stars are carried round (συμπεριφέρεσθαι) “with the whole heaven”, whereas the planets “have their own motions” (κατ᾽ ἰδίας κινεῖσθαι κινήσεις) and (ii) a rather more detailed, but compatible, account in Cleomedes, to which I will revert below. Both texts may depend on Posidonius,[36] but there is no indication, here or anywhere else, that the theory described was original with him. Before going on to explore whether and how these accounts can be brought in connection with the *Timaeus* some preliminary remarks will be in order.

Theorising about planetary motion, both in philosophy and in the newly developed specialised field of mathematical astronomy, only really got going in the fourth century. Earlier forms of nautical and agricultural astronomy were merely focused on the risings and settings of the fixed stars

[34] This has already been pointed out by Betegh 2003, 285, who adds, as a further difference, that the Stoic account also consciously seems to downplay the element of immortality.

[35] Thus, a fragment from Chrysippus, preserved by Cicero *ND* 2, 37, claims that man came into being “for the purpose of contemplating and imitating the cosmos”; a passage which is further echoed in Seneca *De Otio* 5, 1 (“natura nos ad utrumque genuit, et contemplationi rerum et actioni”). And the end of the Preface to book 1 of Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones* (1, *Praef.* 16-17) famously claims that the ultimate value of physics is to be found in its ability to help us, so to speak, to transcend our mortality (compare Cicero’s claim that it leads to happiness that “vies with the divine existence”).

[36] On which see my observations at the end of the introductory section of this paper.

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and the uses that could be made of them,[37] and the use of astronomical data for calendrical purposes in the fifth century by Meton and Euctemon was equally limited in scope (primarily focusing on the lunisolar cycle). The discussion among presocratic philosophers, moreover, appears to have focused on the *nature* rather than the *trajectories* of the heavenly bodies. In this sense, the Stoics did not have much on which to orient their thinking about the regularities of planetary motion. In fact, we would do well to realise that, once it was grasped that the apparently wandering motions of the planets in fact displayed certain regularities, there were basically three *types* of explanation available, in the absence of later theories of gravity and attraction.

A first option would be to explain the motions of the planets by reference to external moving causes. One may think of the kind of materialistically conceived mechanisms, such as the vortex, presented in the old cosmologies of Democritus and Anaxagoras, or of the types of possible explanations mentioned by Epicurus, such as air currents blowing the planets about.[38] It is clear that such mechanisms were in the end inadequate to explain the observed regularities.

A second possibility was to explain this regularity in terms of intelligent self-motion, the option chosen in the *Timaeus*, but also, in slightly different forms, in the *Laws* and the *Philebus* (though *not* in the earlier *Republic*), as well as in Aristotle's early *On Philosophy* (Περὶ φιλοσοφίας).[39]

A third, more naturalistic option would be an explanation in terms of the inner *nature* of the heavenly bodies, i.e., in terms of the natural motion of the element which constitutes them, even if they are still considered as "divine". Thus, in the first book of his *De Caelo* (1, 2) Aristotle suggests that the celestial spheres rotate in virtue of the natural (circular) motion of *aether*. In a sense, then, their motion is as constrained as the rectilinear natural motions of earth or fire, and not like that of voluntary self-movers. True, later on, in particular in *Metaphysics* 12, Aristotle adds unmoved movers and, ultimately, a transcendent first unmoved mover, on the ground that everything that is moved is moved by something (i.e., by a suitably

[37] In this connection the *Epinomis* (990a) criticises Hesiod for not being a proper astronomer, since he only dealt with "observed settings and risings" but did not study orbits.
[38] On Anaxagoras, see Hippolytus *Ref.* 1, 8, 3-10; on Leucippus/Democritus, see Diogenes Laertius 9, 31-32 and Lucretius 5, 622-649. Epicurus *Ep. Pyth.* 93 mentions air currents, the availability of fuel and an original spiralling impetus as possible explanations.
[39] See the excellent overviews in Gregory 2000, 64-67 and 125-128 (on the *Republic* including the myth of Er) and 109-111 (on celestial motion in the later dialogues).

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external cause). And in so far as this unmoved mover figures as an object of thought and desire and as such actualises the perfectly circular rational motion of the outer sphere, we are in a sense back at the notion of "intelligent heavens". Yet it is the spheres, not the individual heavenly bodies themselves, that do the moving, and the trajectory of each individual planet is then explained by the combination of various rotating spheres.

It is obvious that the first option would be unacceptable to the Stoics: it would be inadequate in so far as it would amount to ascribing the observed regularities to chance. Moreover, given the general nature of their cosmology, being in fact a cosmo-*theology*, they also preferred the second to the third option, once again taking recourse to the same *type* of theory Plato had opted for as well. In a sense the three options are neatly delineated, and the Stoic choice defended, in the Stoic account in Cicero's *ND*:

> The order and eternal regularity of the stars indicates neither a process of nature (*natura*), for it is highly rational, nor chance (*fortuna*), for chance loves variation and abhors regularity. It follows therefore that the stars move of their own free will (*sua sponte*) and because of their intelligence and divinity (*suo sensu ac divinitate*) (*ND* 2, 43).

Here both a purely mechanistic explanation and a naturalistic explanation along Aristotelian lines (referring, so to speak, to a form of design without a designer) are represented as insufficient to explain the rationality and order of the movements of the heavenly bodies. David Furley has commented on this choice by claiming that "the disappointing truth" is that the Stoics thus fell back upon "an old mythical notion".[40] I do not think that this is an entirely correct or fair way of putting it, unless we are prepared to relegate the whole of Stoic cosmo-theology to the category of myth. In fact, we are not dealing with a return to mythical gods who can act capriciously or at random, for example by temporarily stopping the motion of the sun or by suddenly causing an eclipse, but with a divinity that represents a kind of exceptionless regularity and order in the heavenly region that the Stoics thought could not be explained otherwise.[41] The fact that also Plato rather associates the rationally ensouled heavenly bodies with order and precision rather than with capriciousness is emphasised by *Laws* 967b, where it is claimed that "those who engaged in these matters accurately would not have

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[40] Furley 1999, 448.

[41] For a similar defence of the astronomy of the *Timaeus*, for example against Burkert's claim that "here sophisticated Greek science harks back to the pre-scientific way of thinking and comes to rest in it", see Gregory 2000, 159-160. Note that even in Ptolemy's astronomically sophisticated system the planets are still represented as self-movers, on which see below, n. 45.

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been able to use such wonderfully accurate calculations if these entities did not have souls". And, as we saw, intelligent self-motion is what the *Timaeus* ascribes to the heavenly bodies as well. Immediately after the passage just quoted, Cicero adds a similar but slightly different argument from Aristotle, presumably from his *On Philosophy* (Περὶ φιλοσοφίας): that the motion of the heavenly bodies is either due to nature (*natura*), or to force (*vi*), or to will (*voluntate*). Aristotle then plumps for the last option.[42] It is possible that Cicero found this reference in his Stoic source or sources, which would in its turn testify to the (additional) influence of the *On Philosophy* on early Stoic cosmology. Even so the ideas are Platonic: the *Timaeus* still arguably constitutes the intellectual background, with similar ideas being found, as we saw, in the *Laws*, but also in the *Epinomis* now commonly attributed to Philippus of Opus.[43] Aristotle would abandon these ideas in his later school writings.[44]

So as a first resemblance we may note that Stoicism and the *Timaeus* offer the same *type* of theory or explanation: in their ensouled cosmoses both systems have the planets execute their providentially ordered motions as self-movers. In the *Timaeus* the planets are specifically said to have 'learnt' their appointed duties concerning their required motions (*Tim*. 38e):

> But when each of the beings which were to join in the making of time […] had learnt their appointed task (τὸ προταχθὲν ἔμαθε), then they began to move in the motion of the Different, which was oblique and crossed the motion of the Same and was controlled by it (κρατουμένην) (Plato *Tim*. 38e).

Also, in Stoicism the planets, as part of the *hêgemonikon* of the cosmos, have internalised their providential, ordered courses. In Cicero *ND* 2, 42-44 they are said to move *sua sponte, suo sensu ac divinitate*, but also with design (*consilium*).

A second similarity concerns the fact that in both cases the voluntary motion of the planets appears to be *added* to their daily circular motion from east to west together with the fixed stars, with which they are *forced* to move along.[45] The latter idea is conveyed by Plato's use of the term κρατουμένην

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[42] The passage is printed as part of fr. 21 in Ross' edition of the remains of the *On Philosophy* in the OCT *Fragmenta Selecta*.

[43] As Festugière 1949, 256 put it, "entre le Platon du *Timée* et l'Aristote du *Peri Philosophias* les ressemblances sont flagrantes. C'est, au fond, la meme doctrine".

[44] See e.g., *Cael*. 2, 284 a28-35.

[45] This sets them apart from a presocratic like Democritus, according to whom the planets are rather "left behind" by the fixed stars (on which see Lucretius 5, 622-649), but also from Eudoxus, where each individual planet has its *own* outer sphere accounting for its movement in parallel with the fixed stars, and from Ptolemy,

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in the text just quoted, but also by his speaking of the circle of the Same (on which more below) giving all the planetary circles a spiral "twist" (πάντας τοὺς κύκλους αὐτῶν στρέφουσα ἕλικα, 39a). A similar idea is conveyed in the following passage from the cosmological treatise of the Stoic Cleomedes, who distinguishes between motion that "necessarily accompanies the heavens" and motion "based on choice":

> As the heavens move in a circle above the air and the earth and effect this motion as providential for the preservation and continuing stability of the whole cosmos, they also necessarily carry round all the heavenly bodies that they encompass. Of these, then, some have as their motion the simplest kind, since they are revolved by the heavens. But others move both with the motion that necessarily accompanies the heavens (they are carried round by them because they are encompassed), and with still another motion based on choice (προαιρετική), through which they occupy different parts of the heavens at different times (Cleomedes 1, 2, 1-9 Todd).[46]

In both systems, in other words, the voluntary motion of the planets is invoked primarily to explain the extent to which their trajectory *differs* from that of the fixed stars.

A third similarity, already outlined in section 2 of this paper, is that both in the *Timaeus* and in Stoic cosmology the motions of the planets are characterised as very complicated, and described only in rough outlines (with the exception of the account of Mercury and Venus in the *Timaeus*), with the added note that in all its complexity it remains confined within the time-unit of the Great Year.

Here, however, we run into a remarkable difference as well. For all the generality of its account of planetary motion, the *Timaeus* does take some first steps in the direction of an idealised astronomy, a quasi-Eudoxan modelling of the motions of the heavenly bodies in terms of a combination of perfectly circular trajectories. It does so by presenting the Demiurge as creating a kind of cosmic armillary sphere with two circles or hoops as the basis for planetary motion (36c-d). The two circles are created as part of the World Soul. They are called the circle of the Same and the circle of the Different, with the circle of the Different being cut up in seven parallel parts, corresponding to the seven separate planets (i.e., sun, moon, and planets proper).

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where each planet moves itself without interference from any other body, on which see Taub 1993, 105-134, esp, 117-123.

[46] Compare Seneca *NQ* 7, 21, 4 who ascribes to the planets both their "own" motion and the motion by which they are "carried away": "ob hoc duplex iis motus est, ille quo eunt et hic quo auferuntur".

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These circles represent two forms of circular motion: the daily rotation of the heavens as a whole from east to west (circle of the Same), and the motions of the seven planets in the contrary direction through the (inclined) zodiacal band (circle of the Different). Remarkably, these circular trajectories come into being *before* the planets themselves are created: they are first described as motions *of the circles* (36c-d), i.e., of the circle of the Same and of the seven parallel circles of the Different. It is only at the next stage that the planets themselves are formed (38c) "to define and preserve the numbers of Time" and that each of these is subsequently put into its appropriate circle (38d). The idea is, presumably, that the voluntary motion of the planets follows a providentially predetermined perfectly circular trajectory.

To these two explanatory factors a third one is added in the case of Mercury and Venus, in order to explain the fact that these planets do not appear to move with uniform speed, but are seen to "regularly overtake and be overtaken by one another". This third factor, which is for the rest left unexplained, is called a "contrary power" (ἐναντία δύναμις, 38d) which these planets possess with respect to the motion of the sun. Scholars are divided as to the real nature and effects of this "contrary power", but the most likely account has is that it represents the power of these planets to vary their speed in relation to that of the sun.[47] In that case the introduction of the "contrary power" does not involve the planets leaving their perfectly circular course, although it does imply a break in the uniformity of their motion. Whether and how this explanation should be adduced in the case of

[47] In so far as I can see, Vlastos 1975 does not account for the ἐναντία δύναμις at all, and actually criticises Cornford for believing that Plato introduced a "third force" as an ancillary hypothesis. According to Vlastos, the value of such an ancillary hypothesis would be "bogus" (ibid., 59), because the *explanans* would be at least as obscure as the *explanandum*. However, it seems to be there in the text and Vlastos does not explain how else the ἐναντία δύναμις of 38d should be taken. Cornford 1937 himself thought the ἐναντία δύναμις applicable to *all* planets (i.e., to the planets in the narrow sense, not to sun and moon), on the basis of his exegesis of the words κατὰ τἀναντία ἀλλήλοις in Timaeus' enigmatic description of the planetary trajectories at 36d. In his view, it explains variations in speed, with respect to the motion of the Different (the latter being exemplified by the Sun), without any changing of track: causing a constant diminished speed in the case of the outer planets, and an intermittently diminishing in speed for Venus and Mercury. Gregory (2000) offers a similar explanation of the mechanism involved, while rightly pointing out in addition that, this mechanism as presented by Plato *cannot* explain stations and retrogradations and while preferring to take the "contrary power" to apply only to Venus and Mercury. Earlier attempts to explain the "contrary power" are critically discussed by Heath 1913, whose conclusions seem to be aporetic.

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the other planets as well, Plato does not say, although some scholars have taken it to be *implied* by the words κατὰ τἀναντία ἀλλήλοις in the description of the moving circles (before the planets themselves have been created) at 36d; but once the planets have been created at 38c only the motions of Venus and Mercury are focused on, the motions of the outer planets are not discussed at all.

Although this account remains rudimentary, it does represent an attempt to geometrise the theory of the trajectories of the planets, and thus to lay bare a mathematical ordering principle in the world, next to the geometrisation of matter discussed later on (53c-55c). It is clear from our sources (Diogenes Laertius and Cleomedes) that the Stoics did *not* follow the *Timaeus* in this particular respect. Their motives are not spelled out anywhere, but some possible reasons can be reconstructed.

First of all, the *Timaeus*' model is obviously empirically inadequate in the form in which it is presented. It more or less works for the sun, but it is unable to explain either the retrograde motions that we find in the planets, or their deviations in latitude within the zodiacal band: they are all supposed to follow the path of the sun (or a path precisely parallel to that of the sun) and thus, in an important sense, not to "wander" at all in the way they are observed to do. In his important book *Plato's Philosophy of Science* Andrew Gregory has convincingly argued that there are signs that Plato was aware of this, and that the model of the *Timaeus* should be seen as having been designed by him as a two-sphere *prototype*, rather than as a finished product.[48] Indeed, Plato seems to acknowledge the inadequacy of the model of the *Timaeus*, in those passages, quoted in section 2 of this paper, where he gestures towards the possibility of further modelling, but also where he speaks of the trajectories (πλάναι) of the planets as "bewildering in number and of surprisingly intricate patterns" (πλήθει μὲν ἀμηχάνῳ χρωμένας, πεποικιλμένας δὲ θαυμαστῶς, 39d). No reason, then, to think that he thought of his rudimentary model as sufficient.

Secondly, it is true that, as a prototype, the model of the *Timaeus* can be said to anticipate the more complex models (introducing more than two spheres for each planet) used by Eudoxus to account for *all* aspects of planetary motion, including latitudinal deviations and retrogradations. Indeed, as exemplifying a new *type* of explanation rather than a fully worked-out model, it could in principle justify Simplicius' famous claim that Plato set the task to later astronomers to save the *phainomena* of

[48] Gregory 2000, 148-152.

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planetary motion by using combinations of perfectly circular motions.[49] At the same time, however, a more complicated system of concentric spheres, along the lines proposed by Eudoxus, might seem to jeopardise the idea of "self-motion": we may recall that especially in the physicalised version of Aristotle it is no longer the planets themselves, but the spheres that do the moving. Given their principled choice for self-motion of the divine planets as an explanatory principle, this may have been a reason why the Stoics did not even accept a more fully worked out and empirically more adequate version of Plato's model, such as those worked out by Eudoxus or Aristotle.

Thirdly, there may well have been further philosophical considerations at play. Given their own corporealist ontology, according to which the objects of mathematics seem to have been thought of as either aspects of corporeal reality or mere thought constructs,[50] and according to which motion is always the motion *of a body*,[51] they must have baulked at the idea of having two circles, or two kinds of motion, *before* the bodies that were supposed to move along those circles came into existence. But even if this element could be explained away as part of the mythical embroidery of the story, we know from some explicitly methodological fragments on the difference between the explanatory powers of philosophical physics and applied mathematics, that only philosophical physics was thought to be able to deal with the causes of things, their internal *dunamis*, and the question whether the way they have been constituted and behave is "for the best".[52] Mathematical models, on the other hand, were considered as essentially hypothetical. They need a basis in physics, rather than the other way round. As Seneca puts it, "if astronomy were to go unaided to the truth, if it could

[49] Gregory 2000, 128-156, esp. 148-153. Incidentally, the idea that the astronomy of the *Timaeus* offers an unfinished prototype was also central in the interpretation of Vlastos 1975.

[50] Some sources suggest that the Stoics thought of points, lines, and surfaces as incorporeals, i.e., entities that have some sort of reality as features of the outside world, but that are not real in the proper sense of being corporeal, comparable in this respect to space (place and void) and time. See, e.g., Plutarch *Comm. Not.* 1080e (SVF 2, 487); Aetius 1, 16, 4 (SVF 2, 482); Cleomedes *Cael.* 1, 1, 139 ff. (not in SVF). Some modern scholars have argued, by contrast, that points, lines, and surfaces were primarily seen by the Stoics as thought-constructs, rather than as part of the furniture of the world. See, e.g., Long & Sedley 1987, 301; Sedley 1999, 401-402. It is clear, at any rate, that like Aristotle, the Stoics rejected the Pythagorean and Platonic "hypostatisation" of mathematical entities.

[51] See the definitions provided by Arius Didymus fr. 22 Diels and Sextus *M* 10, 52, printed together as SVF 2, 492.

[52] See in particular the quotation from Geminus' *epitome* of Posidonius' *Meteorologika*, preserved (through Alexander of Aphrodisias) by Simplicius, printed as fr. 18 EK.

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embrace the nature of the whole universe, I would say that it had much to contribute to our minds which expand with the examination of the heavens".[53] Unfortunately, it does not, in his view, have this force. As a matter of principle, then, the Stoics preferred to adduce purely *physical* causes for physical processes such as motion and change. This, in fact, is precisely what they appear to have done in the present case.

They could, in a sense, go along with Plato in accepting *one* of the two perfectly circular spheres, viz. that of the heavens as a whole which carries along both the fixed stars and the planets, i.e., Plato's circle of the Same. After all, in their system this outer sphere is not some kind of geometrical entity, let alone a pre-existing one, but a really existing physical entity capable of causing its own motion. However, no similar materialistic interpretation could be given to Plato's circle of the Different: there is no second really existing aetherial sphere, or band or hoop. The eastward motion of the planets through the Zodiac does not correspond to a really existing cosmic "stream" in that direction, as is evidenced by the fact that the planets, unlike the fixed stars, move at different speeds. We just have the individual planets with their individual motions. So here a different *physical* cause should be found, and it was found in what looks like an adaptation of the *Timaeus*' third factor: the individual intelligent choices of the planets themselves. Again, they do move along with the sphere of the heavens as a whole, but for the rest they have they their own motions of choice (see Cleomedes 1, 2, 1-9, quoted earlier in this section) which, otherwise than the *Timaeus* suggested, need not be circular but, as Cleomedes points out elsewhere (1, 2, 63-64, quoted above in section 2 of this paper), "is like a spiral". Cleomedes then (1, 2, 15-19) adds a memorable image: the planets are like a passenger walking along on a moving ship, or like ants crawling over a rotating potter's wheel.

The astronomy of the *Timaeus* combines two elements that are not necessarily connected: the idea of the planets as divine self-movers and the basic idea that their trajectories can be explained by a geometrical model. In his interpretation of the *Timaeus*, Vlastos, as we saw, focused on the second element as being the only scientifically fruitful element of the story. If my reconstruction is correct, the Stoics made the opposite choice: they stuck to the notion of self-movers while rejecting the geometrisation of their trajectories. It is true that in doing so the Stoics cannot boast to have contributed to, or to have benefitted from, the glorious development of Greek mathematical astronomy. It is also true that the self-motion of the divine planets is, in Vlastos' words, a "bogus" explanation in that it cannot truly explain, or help to predict, the details of planetary motion, because we

[53] Seneca *Ep.* 88, 28.

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don't really know why at any particular point of time a planet "decides" to go this way or that.[54] But it does in an important sense explain what for the Stoics, as we saw, was the most important *explanandum*: the overall order and regularity of planetary motion, even if the details remain obscure.

Moreover, it is not as if the notion of planetary self-motion *as such* impeded the possibility of progress, for as the case of Ptolemy shows, it could in principle be combined with geometrical modelling. We do in fact have one rather exceptional example of a later Stoic—Cleomedes, who here most probably follows Posidonius with his characteristic openness to the special sciences—accepting a form of geometrical modelling in making sense of recent astronomical discoveries. It shows that the Stoic approach could be instrumental in adopting astronomical evidence that was incompatible with the concentric spheres model preferred by Plato, Eudoxus, and Aristotle. In his description of the sun's motion through the zodiac "based on choice" (1, 4, 1), Cleomedes shows himself aware of the differing lengths of the "astronomical seasons", i.e., of the inequality of the time intervals taken by the sun to move between the tropics and the equinoctial circle, as discussed by Hipparchus in the second century BC.[55] He also gives the numbers, roughly as provided by Hipparchus (1, 4, 44-48). And he basically subscribes to the explanation put forward by Hipparchus, viz. that the sun's trajectory is slightly eccentric (that is: the centre of the heliacal circle is not the same as the centre of the zodiac). In other words, the idea of the sun as a self-mover gave him the flexibility to adapt this new information.

To sum up, in the end the Stoics deviated from the account of planetary motion of the *Timaeus* in some important respects. Given these differences, we cannot exclude in principle that the Stoics devised their own theory of planetary motion completely independently of Plato's example. However, given the similarities that we also noted, and given the fact that the differences are readily explicable in terms of the metaphysical and methodological views of the Stoics, it is possible, and to my mind plausible, to see their theory as a creative adaptation of what they found in the *Timaeus*, i.e., as a corporealist and de-geometrised version of the *Timaeus*' account of planetary motion. In other words, while sticking to the general model of treating the planets as self-movers, they may be taken to have chosen to replace the *Timaeus*' explanatory model of two spheres *plus* an ἐναντία δύναμις, by a model with only *one* (physically existing and *de facto* causally active) sphere *plus* the προαιρετικὴ κίνησις of the planets.

[54] See above, note 47.

[55] For comments and parallels see Goulet 1980, 195 and Bowen & Todd 2004, 53. For chronological reasons, it is very likely that Posidonius was Cleomedes' source here.

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Let me try to draw some threads together. I have tried to further elaborate the idea that there is a strong family resemblance between Plato's *Timaeus* and Stoic cosmology, which shows itself first of all, and despite metaphysical differences, in a *shared approach*. Both in their providentialism and in their claims about the moral relevance of doing cosmology they belong to the same family or type of theories. In so far as the general outlines of Stoic cosmology are concerned, the influence of the model of the *Timaeus* (partly taken up again in Aristotle's early *On Philosophy*) appears to have been rather more conspicuous than the influence of Aristotle's school writings, which Hahm's *The Origins of Stoic Cosmology* tried so hard to prove.

This must have facilitated some direct borrowings, such as the skull-argument, the argument for the sphericity of the cosmos, and the creative adaptation of the idea of the link between contemplation of the heavens and the development of the rest of philosophy. In general, there is a strong case to be made for seeing Stoic cosmo-theology as a corporealist, immanentist and de-Pythagoreanised version of Platonism, and although proof is hard to come by, I have tried to show that Stoic astrophysics in general, and its theory of planetary motion in particular, may well be a case in point.

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CHAPTER SIX

THE PRINCIPLE OF "DOING ONE'S OWN" IN THE PLATONIC-STOIC TRADITION

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In Book IV of Plato's *Republic*, the concept of justice is explicated through the principle of "doing one's own" (τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν), whose historical background and philosophical implications have been the subject of much scholarly debate.[1] In this essay, however, I shall not discuss its Platonic original but pursue some of its later adaptations in the Platonic-Stoic tradition in antiquity. I shall begin by reconstructing Chrysippus' appropriative reading of Plato's *Republic*, by which he applied the Platonic principle of "doing one's own" to the Stoic concept of freedom (Section 1). I shall then consider two different repercussions that this Chrysippean adaptation has arguably evoked: one from Panaetius (as developed in

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[1] For the historical background on Plato's use of the concept of "doing one's own", see Leigh 2013, esp. 16–22.

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Cicero's *De Officiis*) and another from the two Neoplatonists, Plotinus and Proclus (Section 2). Although their adaptations may at first seem to be based on arbitrary readings of Plato's text, it will be argued that they revolved around one of the central issues raised by Plato, that is, the issue of how ideal human agency can externally manifest itself in many different ways while maintaining its unity and consistency.

1. Chrysippus' Adaptation[2]

1.1. From Platonic Justice to Stoic Freedom

"Freedom" (ἐλευθερία) is one of the ideal characteristics that the Stoics considered to be only attributable to the sage. For example, the fifth of Cicero's *Stoic Paradoxes* claims that "only the sage is free (ἐλεύθερος) and every fool is a slave".[3] What I shall attempt to show here is that Plato's *Republic* provided a main point of departure for the early Stoics, especially for their most significant theoriser, the fourth scholarch Chrysippus of Soli, to form their concept of freedom.[4] The founder of the school, Zeno of Citium, had already introduced the notion of freedom to the Stoic school, as shown by several reports.[5] It is a matter of scholarly dispute whether the freedom that Zeno praised was only the freedom of the sage or also the freedom of the *polis*.[6] I wish to leave open the question of what Zeno's notion of freedom precisely was. For present purposes, we have only to note that it was in the treatise entitled the *Republic* (Πολιτεία) that Zeno reportedly wrote something about freedom.[7] Plato's *Republic*, especially

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[2] An earlier and abridged version of this section has appeared as Kondo 2018b.

[3] See also Cic. *Acad*. 2.136, Stob. 2.101.15–20 Wachsmuth.

[4] I do not claim, of course, that Plato's *Republic* was its only source, as it is clear that the Stoic concept was preceded by the Cynic praise of freedom. Further study is especially needed to examine to what extent Diogenes of Sinope's *Republic* mediated between Plato and the Stoics on this point. Moreover, the Stoics must have read and used Platonic dialogues other than the *Republic*. The dialogues that may particularly concern us include the *Charmides* (the definition of temperance (σωφροσύνη) as "doing one's own" (τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν)), the *Gorgias* (the distinction among types of desires and its implication to the concept of freedom) and the *Laws* (the reappraisal of the concept of freedom). For the early Stoic reception of Plato, see especially Barnes 1991, Long 2006, Long (ed.) 2013, Alesse 2018.

[5] D.L. 7.32–33, Ath. 561C, Cic. *Mur*. 61, Plu. *De audiendis poetis* 33C–D.

[6] Schofield 1991, 48–56.

[7] D.L. 7.32–33, Ath. 561C.

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its peculiar features of the ideal *polis*, was clearly an important reference point (if not the only or even the main one)[8] for Zeno's work of the same title[9]. Therefore, it would be natural for Chrysippus to follow Zeno in consulting Plato's *Republic* in his discussion of freedom.

The starting point of our enquiry will be the official Stoic definition of freedom as "the licence (or power) of self-action" (ἐξουσία αὐτοπραγίας), which is preserved in Diogenes Laertius' Stoic doxography (D.L. 7.121). We may confidently attribute this definition to Chrysippus, since the very rare word "self-action" (αὐτοπραγία), as we shall see, appears in one of his fragments.[10] This definition has been generally interpreted as meaning "the power of doing what you want or what you should do"[11] or "[the power to act] according to one's own will".[12] This interpretation is supported by several sources, derived more or less from the early Stoic view, in which freedom is explained as "the licence (ἐξουσία/*potestas*) to live/do as one wills (ὡς βούλεται/*ut velis*)" (Arr. *Epict*. 4.1.1, 2.1.23, Cic. *Parad*. 34, Ph., *Quod Omnis Probus Liber* 59, D.Chr. 14.17, Pers. 5.83–87). Malcolm Schofield suggests that such freedom was advocated "very likely for the Socratic reason that none but the good and wise choose to do what they really want".[13] These explanations alone seem sufficient to account for the typical Stoic definition of freedom, and I think, are entirely correct *per se*.

However, we should also look at Chrysippus' own use of the term "self-action" (αὐτοπραγία), which is reported as follows: "The work *On Ways of Life* (Περὶ Βίων) is a single treatise in four books. In the fourth of these he [i.e., Chrysippus] says that the sage is uninvolved (ἀπράγμων) and acting privately (ἰδιοπράγμων) and doing one's own (τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν). These are his [i.e., Chrysippus'] words: 'For I think that the prudent man is uninvolved and unofficious (ὀλιγοπράγμων) and doing one's own, self-action (αὐτοπραγία) and unofficiousness being alike matters of decency (ἀστεῖα)'." (Plu. *SR* 1043A–B, tr. Cherniss, adapted). It is reasonable to

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[8] Vogt 2008, 65–70, *contra* Schofield 1991.

[9] Zeno is known to have written against Plato's *Republic* (Plu. *De Stoicorum repugnantiis* [hereafter referred to as *SR*] 1034E).

[10] Bobzien 1998, 339–340 cautiously argues that D.L. 7.121 is one of the few passages that deal with freedom and "might be reasonably be thought of as early Stoic". Frede 2011, 67 points out that the word αὐτοπραγία "almost always occurs in the context of this definition and apparently is a Stoic coinage". I adopt the translation of αὐτοπραγία as "self-action" proposed by Cooper 2004 [2003], 210.

[11] Bobzien 1998, 340.

[12] Cooper 2004 [2003], 210.

[13] Schofield 1991, 49.

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suppose from this passage that the term "self-action" (αὐτοπραγία) was originally used by Chrysippus as an abbreviated form of the phrase "doing one's own" (τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν). This equation is supported by the later use of this term: Proclus, in his commentary on Plato's *Republic*, uses the term "self-action" (αὐτοπραγία) in the exegesis of the Platonic concept of justice as "doing one's own" (τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν) (Procl. *in R.* 1.220.5–8 Kroll).[14]

What is remarkable here is that similar expressions are found in Plato's *Republic*, where justice in both the *polis* and the soul is said to consist somehow in "doing one's own and not being officious" (τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν καὶ μὴ πολυπραγμονεῖν) (433A–B). This parallel has been already noted by scholars, but, to my knowledge, no one has pursued its implications fully enough.[15] At this point, I would like to propose the following hypothesis: Chrysippus picked up the definition of justice in Plato's *Republic* as "doing one's own" and applied it to the Stoic concept of freedom. But why, then, it might be asked, did he have to leave justice behind? We are informed that Chrysippus, in a treatise *On Justice Against Plato* (Περὶ δικαιοσύνης πρὸς Πλάτωνα), criticised the definition of injustice in Plato's *Republic* (Plu. *SR* 1041B–E). The point of his critique is

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[14] Cherniss 1976, 491 n.c.. Procl. *in R.* 1.220.5–8 Kroll: "[...], when three classes together in mutual relation to each other keep its self-action in respect of ruling and being ruled, which he [i.e., Socrates] demonstrated as being justice." ([...] τῶν δὲ τριῶν ἅμα γενῶν ἐν τῇ πρὸς ἄλληλα κοινωνίᾳ ἀρχῆς τε πέρι καὶ τοῦ ἄρχεσθαι τὴν αὐτοπραγίαν φυλαττόντων, ἣν ἐπέδειξεν οὖσαν τὴν δικαιοσύνην·)

[15] Cooper (2004[2003], 210 n.11) writes: "Chrysippus equated the Platonic phrase, familiar from the *Republic* (and the *Charmides*), 'to do one's own' (τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν, characteristic of virtuous people, e.g., just or temperate ones), with αὐτοπραγία or 'self-action'". The same point is made by Collette-Dučić (2011, 93–99; 2014, 425), but he does not take into account the context of Stoic reception of Plato's *Republic* in his interpretation of the above Stoic definition of freedom. Furthermore, it may be misleading to interpret the Chrysippean definition, as Collette-Dučić does, in light of the Epictetan distinction between "the things that depend on us/everything that is our own affair" (τὰ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν/ὅσα ἡμέτερα ἔργα) and "the things that do not depend on us/everything that is not our own affair" (τὰ οὐκ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν/ὅσα οὐχ ἡμέτερα ἔργα) (cf. Epict. *Ench.* 1.1–2), and to consider the concept as a kind of inner freedom that will be attained "if we only keep ourselves occupied with the domain that depends on us, the domain upon which we have the licence (ἐξουσία)" (2011, 95, my translation; cf. 104 n.35). My interpretation, on the contrary, argues that the primary emphasis of Chrysippean freedom is that it can be realised in many externally diverse ways. I follow Bobzien (1998, 331–338) in interpreting that, unlike Epictetus, Chrysippus was not interested in singling out the *domain* of the things that depend on us. See also Gourinat 2007 (referred to in Collette-Dučić 2011).

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that the Platonic definition deviates from the "common conception" of injustice, which, as Chrysippus claims, necessarily "exists in relation to another (πρὸς ἕτερον)". Correspondingly, then, he would have discarded the principle of "doing one's own" as unsuitable for defining justice. I have argued elsewhere that Chrysippus' critique did not have a mere polemical purpose, but intended to discover and develop Stoic doctrines out of Plato's *Republic*.[16] Then, it is not so far-fetched as it might at first seem to reutilise the Platonic principle of "doing one's own" in the explication of the concept of freedom, especially because the latter concept is not extraneous to Plato's *Republic*.[17]

The similarity between the Stoic concept of freedom and Plato's theory in the *Republic* has been noted by scholars.[18] It is true that, in the *Republic*, the phrase similar to the Stoic formula of freedom, "the licence to do what one wills" (ἐξουσία [...] ποιεῖν ὅτι ἂν βούληται/ὅτι τις βούλεται), is found in a *derogatory* description of the "freedom" enjoyed in the democratic *polis*, in which everyone is said to have "the licence to do whatever one wills" (ἐξουσία [...] ποιεῖν ὅτι τις βούλεται) (557B).[19] Another instance is found in the prologue to the tale of Gyges, in which "the licence (or, here, power) to do whatever one wills" (ἐξουσία [...] ποιεῖν ὅτι ἂν βούληται) is used to describe the power conferred by the ring of Gyges (359B–C; cf. 445B1–2). So understood, "the licence to do what one wills" cannot be the ideal as the Stoic counterpart. However, Chrysippus need not have opposed himself to Plato in this respect, since Socrates in Plato's *Republic* does not repudiate "the licence to do whatever one wills" as contrary to justice. In fact, the conclusion of the dialogue appears to be that an unjust person could never really "do what one wills". This is clearly indicated by the claims that the tyrannical *polis* and the tyrannical soul, which are both unjust in the extreme, are said to be "least likely to do what it wills" (ἥκιστα ποιεῖ ἃ βούλεται/ἥκιστα ποιήσει ἃ ἂν βουληθῇ) (577D–E) and, therefore, that "the true tyrant is really a slave" (ὁ τῷ ὄντι τύραννος τῷ ὄντι δοῦλος) (579D–E). By reversing these claims, Chrysippus could unearth the Stoic doctrine that only the virtuous sage is the person who can really "do as he wills" and,

[16] Kondo 2013.
[17] The following two paragraphs overlap with Kondo 2018a, 174–175.
[18] For example, Vogt (2008, 187 n.63) mentions, as the predecessors of the Stoic concept of freedom, "such discussions as Socrates' ideas about the tyrant's soul in Plato's *Republic*, where freedom and slavery are presented as states of one's soul, ways of mastering oneself or being controlled by one's desires".
[19] However, I would take it that Adeimantus' nuanced reply, "That is certainly what is said" (Λέγεταί γε δή) (557B), indicates a reservation on Plato's part.

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therefore, is really "free".

But how can we say that a vicious and unjust person can never really "do what one wills"? Plato's strategy to reach this conclusion in the *Republic* appears to be what we might call *idealisation*—that is, to count as the desires to be satisfied not whatever desires one may actually happen to have, but only the rational desires towards what is truly good and valuable for oneself.[20] The Stoics, according to my interpretation, explicitly followed this path. Several sources tell us that the Stoics actually attempted the *idealised* definition of the term 'to will' (βούλεσθαι) or 'volition' (βούλησις) as "a wish for something *in accordance with reason*" (*quae quid cum ratione desiderat*) (Cic. *Tusc*. 4.12; cf. D.L. 7.116).[21] Then, "the licence to do as one *wills*" would be, by definition, only possessed by the sages. Likewise, the term "licence" (ἐξουσία) was re-interpreted by the Stoics, possibly by Chrysippus himself, as having a normative meaning; that is, "the *lawful* power of deciding" (νομίμη ἐπιτροπή) (Origenes, *Commentaria in Evangelium Ioannis* 2.10).[22] Even this re-definition of "volition" (βούλησις) could have emerged from the critical reading of Plato's *Republic*. "The licence to do as one wills" would be negatively assessed, in so far as it is assumed that there are "volitions"—"desires" would be a more appropriate translation here—that could be in conflict with right reason. This assumption is precisely made in Book IV of Plato's *Republic*, in which

[20] The term "idealisation" is borrowed from Santas 2010, 178–182.

[21] Inwood 1985, 237.

[22] I translate ἐξουσία as "licence" rather than as "power". The impersonal verb ἔξεστι and its cognate noun ἐξουσία seem to have two primary meanings: (a) having the ability or power to act in a certain manner independently of anyone permitting it and (b) having the permission or authorisation to act in a certain manner bestowed by someone. The latter meaning is to be preferred for it corresponds to the Stoic testimony given by Origenes: "Only the sage, and every sage, is free because he has received the licence of self-action from the divine law (ἐξουσίαν αὐτοπραγίας ἀπὸ τοῦ θείου νόμου εἰληφότα)" (*Commentaria in Evangelium Ioannis* 2.10). I owe this point to Professor John Glucker in correspondence. See also Collette-Dučić, 2014, 433. Interestingly, the conception of the "licence" (ἐξουσία) received from the divine law reappears in another paradox of the Stoics, "everything belongs to the sage" (D.L. 7.125). This paradox could have been derived, possibly mediated by the Cynics (D.L. 6.37, 72)—from the famous proposal to abolish private property among the Guardians in Plato's *Republic*. The Stoics appropriated it, not in the sense that the sage literally possesses everything, but in the sense that she "knows how to make use of everything" (Cic. *Fin*. 3.75). If we may connect these testimonies with the Stoic formulae of freedom, then what the sage is said to be given the licence of, that is, "self-action" and "doing one's own", would be equivalent to making use of "everything" correctly.

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Socrates, in his account of the tripartite theory of the soul, tentatively places several terms like "to will" (βούλεσθαι), "to desire" (ἐπιθυμεῖσθαι), "to want" (τὸ ἐθέλειν), "to seek" (ἐφίεσθαι) etc. on the same level (437B–C). On the contrary, as Galen reports rather critically, some Stoics introduced a quite delicate philosophical distinction between these terms (Gal. *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 5.7.27–29). Although it is uncertain whether this argument derives from Chrysippus, it reveals how he could have responded to Plato.[23] It could have involved a critique of some Platonic arguments, possibly including his tripartite psychology, but it could also have argued that such conceptual distinction would correspond to what Plato wrote in the above-mentioned passage of Book IX in which the specific *idealised* usage of the verb "to will" is introduced.[24]

1.2 Freedom in Action

If so, then, was Chrysippus' concept of freedom nothing but a rewording of Plato's theory? This section will investigate how Chrysippus developed his own concept of freedom by incorporating Plato's argument in the *Republic* while distancing himself from Plato. Let us return to the passage in which Chrysippus uses the expressions "self-action" (αὐτοπραγία) and "doing one's own" (τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν) (Plu. *SR* 1043A–B). This fragment is taken, as Plutarch reports, from Book IV of his *On Ways of Life*. We know from several sources that this treatise examines different ways of life in relation to philosophy.[25] Chrysippus admits that a broad spectrum of different ways of life are compatible with philosophy, from the life of kings or courtiers to the life of philosophy teachers (Plu. *SR* 1043B–1044A, 1047F);[26] however, Chrysippus takes the life of engaging in politics as the most preferable (D.L. 7.121). One must ask then, does the concept of "self-action" or "doing one's own"—and therefore, possibly, the concept of freedom—have something to do with the debate on the appropriate ways of life?

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[23] Gill 2010, 220 n.184.

[24] To this one can add that this usage is consistent with some Socratic arguments in Plato's earlier dialogues (cf. *Grg*. 466A–468E, *Meno* 77C).

[25] Bréhier 1951, 51.

[26] In his critique of this Chrysippean view, Plutarch claims that Chrysippus offers no consistency in life "as the highest and lowest tones produce concord" (καθάπερ ἐκ νήτης καὶ ὑπάτης γίγνεταί τι σύμφωνον) (Plu. *SR* 1043C), borrowing the metaphor from Plato's *Republic* 443D–E. This expression will be better understood as a critique if it ironically alludes to Chrysippus' prior adaptation of precisely this Platonic metaphor.

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The connection can be tenuously reconstructed by combining several related sources. First, let us look at a passage in Arius Didymus' epitome of Stoic ethics (Stob. 2.109.10–110.8), the main part of which is likely to be derived, directly or indirectly, from Chrysippus' *On Ways of Life*.[27] Here, the "three principal ways of life" for the sage are presented, that is, the "regal" (βασιλικός), the "political" (πολιτικός), and the "intellectual" (ἐπιστημονικός). Next, we find an allusion to these three ways of life in Cicero's *De Officiis* (1.69–70).[28] Although the principal source of Books I and II of Cicero's *On Duties* is generally assumed to be Panaetius, it is probable that this passage retains some vestiges of Chrysippus' argument, especially since the latter's view on this matter remained influential for some time.[29] The essence of this Ciceronian passage is as follows: the most preferable way of life is to engage in politics; however, there are two other options, which are the life of kings (to which Cicero only alluded) and the life of leisure (*otium*). These latter two options, Cicero says, "should not be utterly despised", because their "aim" (*propositum*) itself—"to enjoy freedom" (*libertate uti*)—is correct. Note also that the concept of freedom assumed here, "to live as one wills" (*sic vivere ut velis*) is orthodox Stoic. I take this to imply that, given the correct understanding of freedom, the life of engaging in politics can also be said to lead to freedom and that those who consider the life of leisure (or the life of the king) as the only way to achieve freedom are wrong.

This, I propose, precisely reveals the context in which Chrysippus, in his *On Ways of Life*, employed the concept of freedom and explicated it in terms of "self-action" (αὐτοπραγία) or "doing one's own" (τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν). It would, then, be likely that Chrysippus used these concepts in discussing the old question of the relation between *theoria* and *praxis*, or between philosophy and politics, again the problem raised in Plato's *Republic.* Indeed, it is significant here that this treatise is considered to have been written in explicit opposition to earlier thinkers, especially Plato. Plutarch quotes Chrysippus' argument in the same Book IV of the treatise, where he accuses those who assume that "the life of leisure/study" (ὁ σχολαστικὸς βίος) is the most preferable for philosophers inclined towards hedonism (Plu.

[27] Bénatouïl 2007, 6–10.
[28] Dyck 1996, 199–200.
[29] Cf. Sen. *De Otio* 8.1: "Note also that the law laid down by Chrysippus allows you to live in leisure (*uiuere otioso licet*)—I do not mean just putting up with leisure, but choosing it" (tr. Cooper & Procopé, adapted). Gill 1994, 4609–4610 takes this passage as representing the orthodox Stoic view rather than the distinctively Panaetian one.

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SR 1033C–D). I follow Thomas Bénatouïl in taking the principal target of Chrysippus' criticism here to be Plato rather than the Peripatetics or the Epicureans.[30] With regard to those who are alluded to here as revealing their hedonistic tendency "more obscurely" (ἀδηλότερον), the most likely candidate is, according to Bénatouïl, the famous idea of the philosopher's "return to the cave" in Plato's *Republic*. In the *Republic*, Socrates argues that the philosophers must be compelled to "return to the cave", that is, to engage in politics, since the philosophical life on "the Isles of the Blessed" is naturally preferable to the political life; philosophers finally engage in politics "not as if he were doing something fine, but rather something compulsory" (519B–521B, 540A–B; cf. 347C).

Such a dichotomy between the philosophical life and the political life is quite alien to the Stoic spirit. The Stoics claim that "he who has virtue both theorises (θεωρητικός) and practises (πρακτικός) what is to be done" (D.L. 7.126; cf. D.L. 7.130). We can reasonably expect that Chrysippus' *On Ways of Life* included this topic. Plutarch reports that the same Book IV of this Chrysippean treatise argues about the three branches of philosophy, writing that "the philosopher's theorems/contemplations (θεωρήματα) are of three kinds, logical, ethical, and physical" (quoted in Plu. *SR* 1035A–B, tr. Cherniss, adapted). Then, the treatise likely included some argument like the following, which appears in a Stoicising teaching of Philo of Alexandria:[31] "Virtue is both theoretical and practical; for clearly it involves theory/contemplation (θεωρία), since philosophy, the road that leads to it, involves it through its three parts, logic, ethics, physics; and it involves action, for virtue is the art of the whole of life, and life includes all kinds of action" (Ph. *Legum allegoriae* 1.57–58, tr. Colson, adapted). The Stoic position becomes clear when we compare the philosophical life idealised in Plato's *Republic* and the "intellectual" (ἐπιστημονικός) life of the philosophy teachers permitted by the Stoics. The latter is considered as one of the proper ways of "making money" (χρηματισμός) (Stob. 2.109.12) or "earning one's living" (πορισμός),[32] far different from "the life of leisure/study" criticised, as we have seen, by Chrysippus. Moreover, the same testimony shows that inside the Stoic school there was a controversy, unthinkable for Plato, about whether they should allow the philosophy

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[30] Bénatouïl 2007, 1–6.

[31] Bénatouïl 2009, 3–11.

[32] One of the sources of Chrysippus' *On Ways of Life* reveals its full title as *On Ways of Life and Earning One's Living* (Περὶ βίων [Arnim: βίου codd.] καὶ πορισμοῦ) (D.L. 7.188).

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teachers to be considered as "practising sophistry" (σοφιστεύειν) or not (Stob. 2.109.20–110.8). It would continue to be an object of scholarly dispute whether such passages in the *Republic* should be interpreted as revealing an "unpolitical" tendency of Plato. Be that as it may, Chrysippus presumably viewed those Platonic arguments, not unreasonably, as being too introverted and escapist.

One might wonder why Chrysippus ever bothered to appeal to the Platonic concept of "doing one's own" (τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν) if he wished only to criticise Plato. The answer can be found if we understand Chrysippus' strategy of reading Plato's texts as a kind of appropriation used to extract the best from them by making certain conceptual adjustments, an approach which he must have thought necessary to achieve a unified and consistent theory. Now, we find Plato using the very concept of "doing one's own" in the *Republic* in depicting what a philosophical person's escapism would lead him/her to, that is, "keeping quiet and doing one's own (τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττων)" (496D).[33] Here, the Platonic use of "doing one's own"—which Plato equated elsewhere with justice—may perplex readers, since a little later the life of "keeping quiet and doing one's own" is claimed to be "not the greatest", for it would be much better if a philosopher would, living under "a suitable constitution", "save the community as well as himself" (497A). One possible solution to this problem, which I believe was actually adopted by Chrysippus, is to interpret "doing one's own" here, not as referring only to the quiet life of an escapist philosopher, but as referring to something achievable, not only through the quiet life, but also, in a way more appropriately, through the political life, that is, "to enjoy freedom". This would have justified Chrysippus in his radical re-reading of the *Republic*, which abandons the simple dichotomy between the philosophical life and the political life and rather asserts that the "free" life of philosophy can be externally realised in many different ways, including, above all the active life of politics.[34]

Let us return once again to Chrysippus' words in his *On Ways of Life*: "I think that the prudent man is uninvolved (ἀπράγμων) and unofficious (ὀλιγοπράγμων) and doing one's own (τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν), self-action (αὐτοπραγία) and unofficiousness (ὀλιγοπραγμοσύνη) being alike matters

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[33] The phrase "doing one's own" is used in the sense of leading the quiet life devoted to philosophy also by Plato in *Grg*. 526C.

[34] I have elsewhere argued in full against traditional views of Stoic freedom and happiness as an inner mental tranquillity achieved by curbing one's desires and withdrawing from the external world (Kondo 2018a).

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of decency" (Plu. *SR* 1043A–B). What does Chrysippus mean when he aligned the adjective "uninvolved" (ἀπράγμων) and "unofficious" (ὀλιγοπράγμων) with the phrase "doing one's own" (τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν)? The clue is found in one of only two instances of the word "uninvolved" (ἀπράγμων) appearing in Plato's *Republic*,[35] which is very likely to be in Chrysippus' mind. The myth of Er tells that, when the souls were gathered to choose their next life, Odysseus' soul received the last lot, but was happy to find the life of "an uninvolved private man" (ἀνὴρ ἰδιώτης ἀπράγμων) (620C). Odysseus' choice, which sought to avoid "sufferings" (πόνοι) and to remain uninvolved in politics, appears to be the choice that Plato himself preferred. This preference must not have pleased Chrysippus. However, rather than reject this choice as totally misdirected, what he actually did was—if we are permitted to read the following doxographical report in this context—re-defined the concept of "uninvolved" (ἀπράγμων) and save Odysseus (as Plato describes him) and Plato. To do this, he shifted the meaning of the term "uninvolved" (ἀπράγμων) from the ordinary one of "to refrain from meddling in politics" (as in LSJ) to the revised one of "to avoid doing anything contrary to appropriate action" (ἐκκλίνειν γὰρ τὸ πράττειν τι παρὰ τὸ καθῆκον) (D.L. 7.118). Odysseus, along with Heracles, was admitted as one of the rare Stoic sages,[36] and Athenaeus interestingly reports that Chrysippus praised the Homeric heroes, particularly Odysseus, for their practical competence in "self-cooking" (αὐτοδιακονία) (18B). If my interpretation is correct, all these arguments are consistent with Chrysippus' strategy of appropriating Plato's *Republic*, that is, to overcome the introverted and quietist tendency lurking therein and represent the "free" life of the philosopher as actively engaging with the external world.[37]

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[35] The other instance is in Pl. *R*. 565A, where this adjective qualifies the ordinary people in a democratic *polis* who would take no part in politics. The words "ὀλιγοπράγμων" and "ὀλιγοπραγμοσύνη" (and also "ἰδιοπράγμων" in Plutarch's paraphrase) do not appear in Plato's *Republic*. For the possible Democritean origin of these terms, see n. 39 below.

[36] Sen. *De Constantia* 2.1, ps.-Plu. *Vit. Hom.* 2.136; cf. Brouwer 2014, 111.

[37] It is also worth noting that the Ciceronian exposition of the ethical doctrine of Antiochus of Ascalon, trying to re-establish the primacy of "contemplation" (θεωρία), presents Odysseus as an exemplar (Cic. *Fin*. 5.49–53). Antiochus praises, probably in opposition to Chrysippus and appealing to Plato and Aristotle, the pure pleasure of knowledge, something enjoyed by the sage in the trouble-free life on "the Isles of the Blessed" (Bénatouïl 2009, 17; see also Tsouni 2012). We may catch a glimpse of Hellenistic rivalry in appropriating the figure of Odysseus as well as Plato here. On the philosophical appropriation of Odysseus by Plato and the Stoics in general, see Montiglio 2011.

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2. Later Repercussions

2.1. Panaetius

It has been pointed out that the four-*personae* theory, presented in Cicero's *De Officiis* 1.107–121 and generally attributed to the Stoic Panaetius of Rhodes,[38] and in particular its teachings on the second *persona*, makes use of the Platonic principle of "doing one's own" (τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν).[39] Concerning the second *persona*, the theory tells us that each person should weigh and hold on to "what is one's own" (variously expressed in Latin as

[38] The generally accepted Panaetian origin of the theory is assumed here (e.g., De Lacy 1977, Gill 1988). This may be disputed, but nothing much of what follows depends on this question. Sceptics could easily replace "Panaetius" with "some Stoic (or Stoicising) philosopher, or even Cicero himself, who propounded the *personae* theory preserved in Cicero's *De Officiis*".

[39] Alesse 2018, 53. Gill (1994, 4608 n. 33) also compares Plato's *Republic* 433a–434c with Cicero's *De Officiis* 110, 114–115 (cited by Dyck 1996, 270, Vimercati 2004, 272–273 n. 80). However, Gill (1993, 1994) argues for the Democritean provenance of Panaetius' theory. It is clear that Panaetius' emphasis on individual nature as well as on "peace of mind" (εὐθυμία) relies at least partially on Democritus. To quote one fragment of Democritus, "The man who wants contentment [or 'peace of mind'] (τὸν ἐυθυμεῖσθαι μέλλοντα) should not undertake many activities (μὴ πολλὰ πρήσσειν), on his own or in company with others, nor should he choose activities beyond his own capacity and nature (ὑπέρ τε δύναμιν αἱρεῖσθαι τὴν ἑωυτοῦ καὶ φύσιν)" (B3 DK; tr. Gill 1993). It is entirely possible that Panaetius incorporated both the Platonic and the Democritean ideas or that Chrysippus already had Democritus in mind when he referred to the concept of "unofficious(ness)" (ὀλιγοπράγμων/ὀλιγοπραγμοσύνη) along with the concept of "self-action" (αὐτοπραγία) and "doing one's own" (Plu. *SR* 1043A–B). The interesting argument in this respect is provided by Marcus Aurelius who, after quoting the Democritean saying, "do a small number of things (ὀλίγα πρῆσσε) if you want contentment", recommends a practical and political life, thereby making an implicit critique of Democritean quietism: "Would it not be better to do what is necessary and what the reason of a naturally political animal requires and as it requires? This brings not only the contentment that comes from acting rightly but also that which comes from doing a small number of things. Most of what we say and do is not necessary, and if you get rid of that, you will have more leisure and be less disturbed. [...]" (μήποτε ἄμεινον τἀναγκαῖα πράσσειν καὶ ὅσα ὁ τοῦ φύσει πολιτικοῦ ζῴου λόγος αἱρεῖ καὶ ὡς αἱρεῖ; τοῦτο γὰρ οὐ μόνον τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ καλῶς πράσσειν εὐθυμίαν φέρει, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὀλίγα πράσσειν. τὰ πλεῖστα γὰρ ὧν λέγομεν καὶ πράσσομεν οὐκ ἀναγκαῖα ὄντα ἐάν τις περιέλῃ, εὐσχολώτερος καὶ ἀταρακτότερος ἔσται.) (4.24, tr. Gill 2013)

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"*sua cuique*", "*quid quisque habeat sui*", and "*quod est cuiusque maxime suum*") (1.110, 113) and that "we shall exert ourselves above all in those things to which we are most suited" (*ad quas* [...] *res aptissimi erimus, in iis potissimum elaborabimus*) (1.114, tr. Griffin & Atkins). These phrases recall the discussion of justice in Plato's *Republic*, which begins with the introduction of the principle that "each individual should follow, out of the occupations available in the *polis*, the one for which his natural character best fitted him (εἰς ὃ αὐτοῦ ἡ φύσις ἐπιτηδειοτάτη πεφυκυῖα εἴη)" (433A, tr. Ferrari & Griffith). Panaetius is known in antiquity as being "a great lover of Plato and Aristotle" (ἰσχυρῶς φιλοπλάτων καὶ φιλοαριστοτέλης) (Philodemus, *Stoicorum historia*, *PHerc.* 1018, col. LXI), and he regards Plato's works as "genuine" Socratic dialogues (D.L. 2.64).[40] Therefore, it is hardly surprising that he uses any Platonic passage. Still, I would like to explore Panaetius' use of the Platonic principle even further in this section by interpreting it as a peculiar development of Chrysippus' re-reading of Plato.

Panaetius follows Chrysippus by making a critique of Plato's view of the choice of life, if it is assumed that Cicero's *De Officiis* 1.28 is also derived from Panaetius. The critique is aimed at Plato's view of the ideal philosophical life, arguing: "We must watch out in case Plato's words about philosophers prove not to be sufficient (*videndum est ne non satis sit id quod apud Platonem est in philosophos dictum*). For he said that they are immersed in the investigation of the truth and that, disdaining the very things for which most men vigorously strive and even fight one another to the death, they count them as nothing" (Cic. *Off.* 1.28, tr. Griffin & Atkins, adapted). It is to be noted that these words do not dismiss Plato's doctrine as entirely wrong; instead, they argue that Plato's words appear to be insufficient (*non satis*). The passage alluded to here must be, together with the "digression" of the *Theaetetus* (173D–E),[41] the aforementioned argument on philosopher kings from Books VI and VII of the *Republic* (519B–521B, 540A–B), as is clear from the following remark: "And so, he thinks that they should not even embark upon public life unless they are compelled to do so" (Cic. *Off.* 1.28, tr. Griffin & Atkins, adapted). More relevant to my interpretation is the following passage, which reads: "There are also some who, whether through devotion to preserving their personal wealth or through some kind of dislike of mankind, claim to be doing their

[40] Apart perhaps from the *Phaedo* (Asclepius, *In Metaph.* 991b3, *Anth. pal.* IX 358, Elias, *In Cat.* 113.18-19 Busse). But see now Alesse 2015.
[41] Dyck 1996, 123.

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own (*suum se negotium agere*), and appear to do no one any injustice. But though they are free from one type of injustice, they run into another: such men abandon the fellowship of life (*vitae societas*), because they contribute to it nothing of their devotion, nothing of their effort, nothing of their means" (Cic. *Off.* 1.29, tr. Griffin & Atkins, adapted). If this passage reflects Panaetius' original Greek wording, "*suum se negotium agere*" is most likely a translation of τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν. I take this as a reflection of Panaetius' reading of Book VI of Plato's *Republic*, also referred to in the previous section, in which we find Socrates' depiction of what a philosophical person would do if she found herself living in a badly governed *polis* or, in other words, "keeping quiet and doing one's own (τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττων)" (496D).

What is interesting in the present context is that pseudo-Plato's *Ninth Letter*, in which the concept of "doing one's own" (τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν) is taken to mean living a quietist and escapist life, was read by Panaetius as a genuine work of Plato. This pseudo-Platonic letter claims to have been sent to a Pythagorean philosopher, Archytas of Tarentum, who reportedly "thinks it a heavy trial not to be able to get free from the cares of public life" (τῆς περὶ τὰ κοινὰ ἀσχολίας ἀπολυθῆναι) (357E, tr. G. R. Morrow in Cooper 1998). The author of the letter attempts to persuade the philosopher to participate in public service as follows: "It is indeed one of the sweetest things in life to do one's own (τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν), especially when they are such as you have chosen; practically everyone would agree. But this also you must bear in mind, that none of us is born for himself alone; a part of our existence belongs to our country, a part to our parents, a part to our other friends, and a large part is given to the circumstances that command our lives" (358A, tr. Morrow, adapted). This passage is now cited in Cicero's *De Officiis* as the genuine words of Plato with a clear Stoic emphasis on the importance of fellowship (*societas*) among human beings with one another:[42] "We are not born for ourselves alone, to use Plato's splendid words (*ut praeclare scriptum est a Platone*), but our country claims for itself one part of our birth, and our friends another" (1.22, tr. Griffin & Atkins). Evidently, Panaetius believed that what Plato really believed was expressed *praeclare* in the letter rather than in the *Republic*.[43] Nevertheless, he most likely considered Plato's *Republic* as a whole to be advocating a positive

[42] This passage is also cited in Cic. *Fin.* 2.45. Dyck (1996, 85) suggests that both passages in *De Finibus* and *De Officiis* are derived from the same source, i.e., Panaetius.

[43] Panaetius could have Plato's involvement in Sicilian politics in mind. We know that Cicero regarded Plato's *Seventh Letter* as genuine and took it seriously (Cic. *Tusc.* 5.100, *Att.* 9.10, 9.13; cf. McConnell 2014, esp. ch. 2).

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attitude towards political activity, especially if we take into account the following advice directed at would-be politicians, which is clearly based on Plato's *Republic*: "First to fix their gaze so firmly on what is beneficial to the citizens that whatever they do, they do with that in mind, forgetful of their own advantage; second, to care for the whole body of the republic rather than protect one part and neglect the rest" (Cic. *Off*. 1.85, tr. Griffin & Atkins, adapted; the first advice comes from Pl. *R*. 342E, the second from Pl. *R*. 420B, 465D–466C, 519E). If so, Panaetius also had reason to undertake a subtle re-reading of the Platonic principle of "doing one's own" that follows Chrysippus' precedent but incorporates an additional element—the consideration of the second *persona*.

There are two points that now merit particular consideration. First, the Panaetian version of the principle underlines the Stoic view that the universal rationality shared by all human beings, the first *persona*, can be externally realised in many ways reflecting, among other things, differences in individual nature, which is the second *persona*. It is true that Cicero's *De Officiis* does not explicitly apply this principle to the choice between the life of politics and the life of leisure/study. The choice of lives (and in particular the choice of a philosopher's life) appears in the *De Officiis* 1.115 as being the matter of one's own volition, which is the fourth *persona*. However, it becomes clear that in the very choice of the fourth *persona*, the most important element to consider is said to be "nature", the second *persona*, followed by "fortune", the third *persona* (1.120).[44] Therefore, the choice between the life of politics and the life of leisure/study must be considered as a matter that involves the second *persona*. In fact, we find the most explicit example of this in Seneca: "You must consider whether your nature is more suited to active business or leisured study and contemplation (*agendis rebus an otioso studio contemplationique*), and lean in the direction your power of talent (*vis ingenii*) will carry you" (*De Tranquillitate Animi* 7.2, tr. Fantham in Fantham, Hine, Ker & Williams 2014, adapted).[45] Following one's individual nature alongside universal rationality is deemed so important because, as is repeatedly emphasised, it preserves "an evenness both of one's whole life and of one's individual actions" (*aequabilitas cum universae vitae, tum singularum actionum*) or, in a single word, "constancy"

[44] Griffin & Atkins 1991, 47 n.1, Dyck 1996, 285, Machek 2016, 172.

[45] Machek 2016, 185–187. Fantham translates *vis ingenii* as "power of intellect", but it would be better to take the word *ingenium* here to mean "natural talent" as it does in Cic. *Off*. 1.114.

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(*constantia*) (1.111, 1.119–120).[46] The assumption that agency requires unity or consistency will be taken up in the next section.

Second, Panaetius' use of the principle is also relevant to the concept of freedom. In the *De Officiis*, some examples are given in relation to the second *persona*. The example of Cato the Younger, who killed himself, was obviously introduced by Cicero (1.112), but the examples of Ulysses and Ajax were likely derived from Panaetius.[47] Regarding the choice to commit suicide in order to preserve one's own *dignitas*,[48] it would be sufficient for now to bring to mind several well-known examples evoked by the Roman Stoics, in which what is at stake is, of course, freedom (ἐλευθερία/*libertas*).[49] Brad Inwood insightfully points out that the most important aspect of Seneca's approach to death and freedom is "the central importance of agency", that is, "the possibility of being an agent in the proper sense of the word which is most decisively though paradoxically preserved by a timely or even premature death by one's own hand".[50] I entirely agree with this; I want to add, though, that this is not limited to Seneca but also applies to Panaetius/Cicero's examples of Cato and Ajax. Seen in this light, the example of Ulysses is more interesting (1.113, tr. Griffin & Atkins, adapted). Ulysses' actions are most likely appraised as appropriate in view of his characteristic nature in the Panaetian original. Emphasised here is the servitude that Ulysses had to—or rather, chose to—endure. For example, he "was a slave" (*inserviret*) to Circe and Calypso, and "even when home he endured the insults of slaves and maidservants". However, Panaetius must have thought that Ulysses' apparent servitude was not genuine. Rather, he did achieve true freedom, because he endured his state of servitude "in order to attain what he desired" (*ad id* [...] *quod cupiebat, veniret*). What is at stake is, again—to use Inwood's phrase—"the possibility of being an agent in the proper sense of the word". The actualisation of this can take diverse external forms depending, this time, on each agent's individual nature.

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[46] The theme of the importance of playing a unified and consistent "role" (*persona*) appears also in Sen. *Ep*. 120.19–22. I owe this reference to Professor Brad Inwood.
[47] Gill 1988, 186–187, Alesse 1994, 65 n.86, 67–68, Alesse 1997, 198–200, Vimercati 2004, 130.
[48] Griffin 1976, 379.
[49] Arr., *Epict.* 1.2.19–37, Sen., *De Providentia* 6.7–9, *De Ira* 3.14–15, *Ep*. 77.14–15; cf. Hor., *Ep.* 1.16.63–79, Plu., *De Traquillitate Animi* 476B–C.
[50] Inwood 2005, 306.

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2.2. Plotinus and Proclus

While probing into human freedom, Plotinus, in the sixth chapter of the treatise "On the Voluntary, and the One's Wishing" (VI.8 [39]), alludes to the passage describing the principle of "doing one's own" in Plato's *Republic*, as recently argued in full by Eyjólfur K. Emilsson (2012). The text of Plotinus in question is this: "The result is, we will say, that in practical actions autonomy (ἀυτεξούσιον) and what is up to us (τὸ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν) are not to be referred back to action (τὸ πράττειν), i.e., the external activity (τὴν ἔξω [ἐνέργειαν]), but to the internal activity (εἰς τὴν ἐντὸς ἐνέργειαν), i.e., the intellection and the contemplative activity of virtue itself" (VI.8 [39] 6.19–22, tr. Gerson et al., adapted). The Platonic passage that Plotinus has in mind undoubtedly is: "[Justice] was not concerned with the external action (τὴν ἔξω πρᾶξιν) of a man's own function, but with the internal action (τὴν ἐντὸς [πρᾶξιν]) of it, with what is truly oneself and one's own" (443C–D, tr. Ferrari & Griffith, adapted). Emilsson acknowledges that one question remains to be addressed and attempts to provide an answer in the following: "[Plato] is not directly concerned with questions of autonomy as Plotinus is. I find it likely, however, that Plotinus relates the part of Plato's sentence that speaks about 'what is truly oneself and one's own' to his own concerns with autonomy".[51] However, we can give a more direct answer to this question by placing this Plotinian adaptation of Plato within the Platonic-Stoic tradition from Chrysippus onwards.[52]

As expected from this interpretation, we find that when Plotinus writes about human freedom, incorporating and adapting the Platonic principle of "doing one's own", he faces the familiar problem of the relation between *theoria* and *praxis*. In chs. 5–6 of the present treatise in which the above passage occurs, Plotinus, in conscious opposition to the Stoics, depreciates external action by representing it as a by-product of internal contemplative activity.[53] Plotinus begins his inquiry as follows: "If indeed we grant these

[51] Emilsson 2012, 353.

[52] Emilsson (2007, 22–68, esp. 53–54) traces the origin of Plotinus' "double act" theory (i.e., his fundamental doctrine that the internal activity of anything, identified with its being, is distinguished from the external activity, which is considered to be a by-product of the internal activity) to Plotinus' interpretation of Platonic causality and denies the Stoic provenance propounded by some scholars (*contra* e.g., Hadot 1968, I, 225–234, Narbonne 2001, 61–97). I do not consider Emilsson's dismissal of Stoic influence to be persuasive, but I do not intend to make any claim about the provenance of the "double act" theory in its entirety.

[53] Graeser 1972, 119–122, Eliasson 2008, 190-206, Lavaud 2007, 178, 259–260

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attributes [i.e., autonomy or 'up to us'] to a soul engaged in action, first we should not grant it to the soul in respect of the attainment [i.e., what is attained externally in the action] (τεῦξις). [...] But if we grant it [i.e., autonomy or 'up to us'] to acting beautifully and bringing about everything in our power, then that would be said correctly." (5.3–7, tr. Gerson et al., adapted). So far, Plotinus follows the Stoics.[54] The Stoics argued that the ultimate goal of human action consists in doing everything in one's power to achieve desired outcomes, not in actually attaining these outcomes (e.g., Cic. *Fin*. 3.22). Epictetus also teaches that "the attainment (τεῦξις) of those things in which I can be hindered or compelled is not up to me and is neither good nor bad, but the use which I make of them is either good or bad, and is up to me" (Arr. *Epict*. 2.5.8, tr. Oldfather, adapted). At this point, however, Plotinus diverges in his distinctive move from the Stoics: "But how is even that up to us? For example, if we are courageous because there is war. I mean how is the activity then up to us, when, if war had not taken control of the situation, we would not have engaged in this activity?" (5.7–10, tr. Gerson et al.) Based on such cases, Plotinus argues that any external action, however virtuous, inevitably involves the element of compulsion. In other words, "virtue is always *compelled* to do this or that in view of the circumstances" (5.11–13, tr. Gerson et al., adapted).

We here see the obvious opposition between the Stoics and Plotinus. It may seem that the above quote from Plato, which draws a clear distinction between internal and external activities, suits the ideas of Plotinus well but not those of the Stoics.[55] However, the contrast between the two is subtler than it may at first appear and I would venture that the Stoics anticipated Plotinus precisely where they themselves had already developed the insights of Plato found in the *Republic*. First, the Stoics already acknowledged a

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nn.67–69. For Plotinus' view of external actions as a "by-product" (παρακολούθημα) or an "image" (εἴδωλον) of contemplation, see e.g., Plot. III.8 [30] 4–5. For recent detailed discussion, which I cannot pursue here, see esp. Schniewind 2003, Wilberding 2008, Remes 2017.

[54] Before this, Plotinus has proceeded with his search for genuine autonomy through the same strategy of the *idealisation* of the "volition" (βούλησις) as Chrysippus did, as is stated in the following passage: "We have now attributed what is up to us (τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν) to volition (βούλησις), and next posited this as lying in reason, and next in correct reason" (3.2–4, tr. Gerson et al., adapted). This notion of freedom as the realisation of the *idealised* will is then transferred to the Intellect (and to the One) by Plotinus (Bene 2013, 148–149). This, however, is a matter for a separate study.

[55] The passage would be much more Plotinian if Pl. *R*. 443B–C is read as claiming that justice exhibited in external actions is a sort of "image" (εἴδωλον) of internal justice within the soul (Emilsson 2010, 358–367).

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distinction between the internal and external *aspects* of action if not between the two activities themselves. Cicero reports that the Stoics made a distinction between the wrongdoings "by reference to outcome" (*in effectu*) and the ones "without reference to outcome" (*sine effectu*), and that they argued that a virtuous action should be judged "at its inception, not its completion" (*susceptione prima, non perfectione*) (*Fin.* 3.32, tr. Annas & Woolf). It may not be coincidental that the examples of wrongdoings *in effectu* here, "betraying one's country, assaulting one's parents, robbing temples", overlap with the examples cited by Plato's *Republic* as actions a Platonically (internally) just person would never (externally) take (442E–443A).[56] Second, the Stoics noted self-reversion as a distinctive capacity of rationality, which constitutes a person as a unified being capable of engaging in activity in the fullest sense. Plotinus makes it explicit that the internal activity of virtue is that of intellect, the complete autonomy of which is characterised by its self-reversion: "It reverted entirely towards itself and its function, lying itself in the Good with no deficiency and fulfilled, living in a way in conformity to volition" (VI.8.6.32–36, tr. Gerson et al., adapted). A similar thought is found in the Stoics: "Wisdom (*sapientia*) is like acting or dancing [...]. Here the goal, namely the performance of the art, is contained within the art itself, not sought outside it. […] Only wisdom is directed at itself in its entirety" (Cic. *Fin.* 3.24, tr. Annas & Woolf, adapted; cf. Arr. *Epict.* 1.20).[57]

Delving into these issues is beyond the scope of this study; however, we cannot fail to notice that each of them points to a fundamental problem of what might be called the "One and the Many" of virtuous activities, that is, how virtuous activities, while inevitably done in diverse ways externally, can nevertheless preserve a kind of unity and consistency. It is tempting to suppose that Chrysippus, in appropriating the Platonic principle of "doing one's own", also dealt with this problem. Unfortunately, however, given the lack of evidence, this cannot be assumed. Nevertheless, Chrysippus must have at least realised that the culmination of Plato's treatment of the principle in Book IV of the *Republic* is reached with a full recognition of precisely this "One and the Many" problem. There, justice in the soul is

[56] Plotinus argues that a good soul sometimes abandons one's country as well as life, possessions and children (VI.8 [39] 6.14–18). It can be taken as a conscious disagreement with the Stoics (Remes 2007, 221–222), but it is unclear whether the Stoics never allowed the betrayal of one's country even in special circumstances (Inwood 1999, 103 n.28).

[57] For an inspiring interpretation of the Platonic-Stoic conception of self-reversion, see Coope 2016.

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defined as the internal "doing one's own", by which a person "emerges as a perfect unity of diverse elements, self-disciplined and in harmony with himself. Only then does he act" (ἕνα γενόμενον ἐκ πολλῶν, σώφρονα καὶ ἡρμοσμένον, οὕτω δὴ πράττειν ἤδη) (443D–E, tr. Ferrari & Griffith, adapted).

This somewhat enigmatic passage has invited a variety of interpretations, one of which—proposed by Christine Korsgaard but preceded by a Japanese scholar of Plato, Yuji Matsunaga—is both interesting from a philosophical point of view and suggestive of the ways in which the Stoics and Plotinus might have been inspired by it.[58] Based on this passage, Korsgaard interprets Platonic justice to be a principle of self-constitution that brings order to the disparate desires of a human being so as to constitute him/her as "a single unified agent" capable of engaging in "action" in the proper sense of the term.[59] According to Matsunaga, Platonic justice is a principle that constitutes each human being as "being" in the first place and as a proper "self" for which its own being can be an issue.[60] Whether their interpretations of Plato are correct or not, the Stoics can be interpreted as incorporating this idea into their broader ontological framework. The Stoics propose the theory of *scala naturae*, that is, the hierarchy of beings based on the degree of tension (τόνος) in the pneuma, which gives each level of being—i.e., from the lower to the higher levels: inanimate things, plants, animals, and, finally, rational agents—its degree of unity and self-motion.[61] As we can see from this, the ontological function of rationality is to enable its participator to achieve the highest degree of unity and self-motion. According to one source, the highest level of self-motion "from rational impulse" is called 'action' (πράττειν),[62] or even more specifically, to be active (ἐνεργεῖν) in accordance with virtue" (Simp. *in Cat.* 306.19–27). Inspired by Korsgaard,[63] I take this to mean that only an activity done with virtue, or perfect rationality, is properly called "action", whereas other activities with imperfect rationality may also be called actions but are *defective* actions. This way of thinking explains why virtue makes a human being truly "free" and "autonomous" in the proper Platonic-Stoic sense; it is because perfect rationality bestows on one the power of the highest degree

[58] Much of what is written in this paragraph is taken from Kondo 2018a, 175–177.
[59] Korsgaard 1999; 2009, ch. 7. For an attempt to interpret Proclus in the light of Korsgaard's conception of self-constitution, see Griffin 2015.
[60] Matsunaga 1993, esp. chs. 9 and 10.
[61] Hahm 1994.
[62] πράττειν is Kalbfleich's widely accepted correction of the manuscripts' πλάττειν.
[63] Korsgaard 2009, ch. 8.

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of activity by constituting her as a unified being.

I shall not look here into the Platonist versions of *scala naturae*, whose most well-known exposition we find in Plotinus' *Ennead* VI.9 [9], or those of the hierarchy of virtues (e.g., Plot. I.2 [19], Porph. *Sent*. 32). The principal difference from the Stoics lies in their reintroduction of the Platonic degrees of "being" in addition to degrees of unity. Instead, I shall end this paper with a passage from the third essay of Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Republic* in which precisely this line of interpretation of Plato is developed by utilising the concept of "self-doing/doing one's own" (αὐτοπραγεῖν).[64] The passage interpreted by Proclus is from the Book I of Plato's *Republic* (351A–352D), in which Socrates retorts Thrasymachus by arguing that justice is more powerful than injustice in that it makes any group or individual, even a band of thieves, more capable of action by rendering its internal members or elements harmonious and consistent with one another. In his interpretation, Proclus adds that injustice not only makes the soul "incapable of action" (ἄπρακτος) but also deprives the soul of its "being" (τὸ εἶναι). He says, for example, that "if complete and utter injustice were to be engendered in a soul, a soul would perhaps lose its very being" (1.23.16–17, tr. Baltzly, Finamore & Miles). Proclus specifies this self-constituting function of justice by expressing it as "self-doing" (αὐτοπραγεῖν): "What is the distinctive feature of justice but 'self-doing'?" (τί γὰρ ἴδιον δικαιοσύνης ἢ τὸ αὐτοπραγεῖν;) (1.23.3–4, tr. Baltzly, Finamore & Miles, adapted). It may be possible that Proclus constructed his interpretation solely on his reading of Plato. However, if what I have argued so far is not entirely pointless, Proclus' use of the concept of "self-action" (αὐτοπραγία) or "self-doing" (αὐτοπραγεῖν) in Late Antiquity reflects the long Platonic-Stoic tradition of re-reading and adapting the Platonic principle of "doing one's own".

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[64] A similar argument, citing the same Platonic passage, also appears in Proclus' *De malo* 52.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

MARSILIO FICINO ON PLATO'S *PHILEBUS*

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1. The *Philebus* – A Neglected Gem?

Up to the 1990's, the *Philebus* was one of Plato's least known works, as I witnessed when I worked on a translation and commentary of that dialogue.[1] While certain other late and difficult Platonic dialogues, such as the *Parmenides* or the *Sophist*, were treated as challenges to the sharpest minds from the 1950's on, the *Philebus* was given a wide berth. Many philosophically well-educated people did not even know that there was a dialogue with that name. This neglect of the Philebus has notably changed within the last decades, but the reasons for that sudden change must remain *allês pragmateias*.

It has to be admitted that the *Philebus*, at first as well as at second glance, is no easy reading. For the dialogue presents Socrates engaged in argument with a group of upper-class young men on the question of whether knowledge or pleasure is the state of mind that renders human life most happy.[2] That question is indeed pursued with great persistence, with longwinded and complex arguments, but they eventually lead to the result that neither of the two contestants by itself, but rather a mixture of them constitutes the best state attainable by human beings.

If this result does not, *prima facie*, present a particularly uplifting spiritual message, the investigation that leads up to that result does so even less. The arguments that are employed are not only longwinded but also

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[1] See Frede 1993; 19997. There were, of course, exceptions: see Bury 1897; Gadamer 1931; Hackforth 1945; Taylor 1950, Striker 1970 *et al*.

[2] As Socrates indicates at the outset (11b-c), there are quite different forms of intelligent abilities and pleasant states of mind; "knowledge" and "pleasure" are used, here, only as generic names for the two parties.

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often difficult to follow, because they contain unexpected turns whose rationale is puzzling. Socrates first tries to convince his young interlocutors, who initially favour an undifferentiated form of hedonism, that pleasure and knowledge are not simple, but complex phenomena that require careful sorting out. And that sorting out in turn requires a special method—it is the "dialectical" method of collection and division that purports to show that the objects in question represent not only strict and unchangeable unities, but also contain a plurality of species and, finally, an indefinite number of variable participants.[3] Socrates insists, at this point, that only a meticulous study of all elements of a given field, their different kinds and their interrelations, will guarantee proper knowledge and sufficient competence.[4]

If readers therefore expect a careful dialectic treatment of the two candidates, of pleasure and knowledge respectively, this expectation is disappointed. Socrates—due to a "sudden dream or waking insight"—realises that such a painstaking investigation of the two candidates is unnecessary, because neither of them taken by themselves makes for a good life but a mixture of the two is preferable. The question the partners are to concern themselves with is, therefore, whether pleasure or knowledge deserves second prize as the more important ingredient of the good life. In order to make that decision Socrates deems it necessary to introduce, without much further justification or explanation, a "fourfold division of all that exists now in the universe": the class of limit, the class of the unlimited, the class of the combination of limit and the unlimited, and the class of the causes of such mixtures. As it emerges, pleasure belongs to the class of the unlimited, and knowledge to the class of the causes of successful mixtures.[5]

This, quite abstract, determination of the nature of pleasure and knowledge provides the basis for a critical evaluation of the two contestants, an evaluation that in the case of pleasure is carried out in great detail.[6] Pleasure turns out to be a mixed blessing. For, Socrates depicts it as a phenomenon that is closely tied to the fulfilling of needs and the restoration of deficiencies of both body and mind. Once a state of harmonious

[3] For the dialogue's "dialectical part", explaining collection and division, see *Phil.* 14c-17e.

[4] *Phil.* 19b: "Unless we are able to do this for every kind of unity, similarity, sameness, and their opposite, in the way that our recent discussion has indicated, none of us will ever turn out to be any good at anything."

[5] The dialogue's dialectico-metaphysical part, and its explanation of the distinction of the "four kinds of being", is contained in *Phil.*23b-31b.

[6] The critique of pleasure gets the lion's share of the dialogue (*Phil.* 31b-55c); while the discussion of the different forms of knowledge is kept remarkably short (55c-59d).

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equilibrium is reached, the respective pleasure is gone. Thus, pleasure turns out to be a kind of "remedial good"; for without the need to replenish deficiencies and to attain a healthy equilibrium, there would be no pleasure. In addition, as Socrates points out at great length and in detail, pleasure is subject to "falsity" of different kinds. There is the possibility of being mistaken about the object of one's pleasure. There is the possibility of overrating the amount of pleasure. Pleasure can be mistaken as freedom from pain. And pleasure can be impure, if it is intrinsically mixed with pain.

Compared with this long critique of pleasure, knowledge gets very short shrift. Its critical evaluation separates the precise "philosophical" sciences that are concerned with the highest principles from the applied sciences that necessarily involve mere opinions and may even have to rely on lucky guesses, as in the case of music. Despite this differentiation, Socrates suggests that the good human life must contain all kinds of knowledge, including the less precise ones, along with the pure and true kinds of pleasure.[7] Socrates justifies his unusual leniency concerning all kinds of knowledge by the fact that knowledge of ideal objects (the "Forms") alone will not be sufficient for life's needs: An architect cannot work with ideal circles or straight lines, and we would never find our way home if we insisted on ideal straight lines. A "life" must after all, be a life. The comparison between pleasure and knowledge and their function in the good life is concluded with a very brief ranking of all the factors that constitute a good state: first place goes to "measure" or "limit", second place to what *has* measure or limit, third place to reason, fourth place to the arts and sciences, and fifth and last place to pure and true pleasures.[8]

As this necessarily short summary of the dialogue's progress and result shows, the dialogue differs in significant ways from other Platonic work. Plato displays here a rather unexpected leniency when he determines happiness as a mixed state that contains both pleasure and knowledge of all kinds. If this leniency recommends the dialogue to modern readers, it still leaves them with many open questions concerning the dialogue's procedure and inner coherence. Why is the method of collection and division first introduced as an indispensable vehicle of knowledge, but then unceremoniously dropped? What justifies the ontological division of four classes of being? And what ensures the right kind of mixture in life? While Plato leaves such important points without clear answers, he engages in longwinded discussions concerning the different kinds of "false" pleasure, with explanations that are not always as transparent as one might wish. Because

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[7] *Phil*. 59d-64b.
[8] *Phil*.64b-66c.

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of such problems with the dialogue's overall coherence the *Philebus* used to receive bad grades from admirers of Plato's dramatic art in the 19th and in most of the 20th century. They regarded its composition as a sign that in his old age Plato either no longer cared about the dramatic form, or had lost his "dramatic touch" and his sense of balance of form and argument altogether.

Given the—undeniable—difficulties with the dialogue's composition, it should come as no surprise that a study of its reception throughout history did not lead to the discovery of any previously unknown treasures. For although the *Philebus* apparently received quite some attention among the Neo-Platonists,[9] the only extant testimony from antiquity, the commentary by Damascius in the 6th century AD, is a rather dry and pedestrian work, perhaps the lecture-notes taken by a student.[10] And although Plato's philosophy dominated the Greek East throughout the Byzantine age, there is no information about an important role assigned to the *Philebus*. In the Latin West, knowledge of Plato's works was very limited, anyway; for only a few translations of Plato's dialogues were available, such as the (partial) translations of the *Timaeus* by Cicero and by Calcidius from antiquity, and translations of the *Meno* and of the *Phaedo* that originated in the 12th century.[11] But even these works seem to have played only marginal roles. Philosophy in the Latin West throughout high and late scholasticism focused almost exclusively on the works of Aristotle.

As is well known, there was a thorough change in that respect in the early renaissance, when Florence became the centre of Platonic study at the instigation of Cosimo de' Medici (1389-1464), patron of the arts and sciences. Cosimo's interest in Plato's philosophy seems to have been fuelled by Georgius Gemistus Pletho (1360-1452), the Byzantine philosopher and Neoplatonist, whose acquaintance Cosimo had made at the council of Florence (1438-39). It may have been due to Pletho's influence that Cosimo instigated a large collection of valuable Greek manuscripts, a collection that was greatly increased by Greek refugees immediately before and after the conquering of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. This influx of learning did not focus exclusively on Plato, nor did it curb the influence of Aristotelian philosophy in Florence; for Aristotle's texts remained the

[9] The *Philebus* is referred to several times in Plotinus and in the Greek commentators. Simplicius (*In Phys*. 453.25-554, 11) in his report on Plato's famous public lecture *On the Good* mentions that Porphyry assumed that traces of the so-called unwritten doctrine are contained in the *Philebus*.
[10] The commentary used to be ascribed to Olympiodorus, but has been reassigned to Damascius, the last scholarch in Athens, by Westerink 1959.
[11] See Klibansky, 1982².

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mainstay of the instruction in the "*artes*"-faculty at the universities. But an interest in Plato's philosophy seems to have spread among the city's intellectual élite, so that Florence became the centre of Platonic studies in the renaissance, an interest that eventually spread all over the learned world and that has not flagged to this day.[12] The availability of Latin translations of Plato's dialogues was an indispensable precondition for the propagation of Platonic philosophy, because knowledge of Greek was still rare. This fact explains why Cosimo encouraged the young Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) to learn Greek and to provide translations of all of Plato's works.[13]

2. The *Philebus*' Rise to Eminence

The *Philebus* was to play a prominent role in the first set of translations; for it was one of the works that Cosimo wished to have read to him on his deathbed in 1464. To everyone familiar with the *Philebus* this must, *prima facie*, seem like an odd choice, and not only because of the dialogue's structural difficulties, but also because of its content. For, unlike the *Phaedo* and other Platonic works that are concerned with the soul and its fate after death, the *Philebus* is unlikely to provide a "*consolatio philosophiae*" to a dying man. As the short summary of its content indicates, it is neither concerned with the state of the soul after its separation from the body, nor with a vision of the afterlife. Neither of these points is even as much as mentioned in that dialogue; the mixture of pleasure and knowledge is concerned only with the earthly life. God/the gods do not play any prominent role either, nor does the Form of the Good, at least not in its orthodox version that has been regarded as the hallmark of Plato's philosophy for centuries. So, what explains the prominent role assigned to the *Philebus*?

Cosimo's wish cannot have been based on any knowledge of that dialogue, because at the time of his death Ficino had just finished the

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[12] The status of the Platonic "Academy" in Florence cannot be pursued here. Although Cosimo provided a house as a meeting point, it seems not to have been a formal institution, but rather the centre of an informal discussion group, patronised first by Cosimo and later by his grandson Lorenzo "the Magnificent".

[13] Ficino seems to have enjoyed the patronage of Cosimo de' Medici from early on, because his father was Cosimo's physician. Young Ficino probably studied both philosophy and medicine, but never took a degree. It is uncertain who taught him Greek; but he soon became a masterly and indefatigable translator of Greek texts. In addition to the entire *Corpus Platonicum* he not only translated all of Plotinus' works, but also the so-called *Corpus Hermeticum, the Orphic* writings, as well as selected works of Porphyry, Proclus, and (Ps.-) Dionysius Areopagita.

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translation of the first set of works, a selection that had been determined by Cosimo's wish that it should concern "every precept for living, all the principles of nature and all the sacred mysteries of divine things."[14] Cosimo must have been quite ignorant of the *Philebus*' structure and content, beyond the fact that it contained a discussion of the conception of happiness. That Cosimo expected some soul-lifting reading is indicated by the fact that he urged Ficino in a letter to come to his bedside and not to forget his "Orphic lyre",—no doubt a reference to the Orphic hymns that do indeed deal with sacred mysteries.[15] Given Cosimo's special interests it is likely that Ficino confined his reading of the *Philebus* to those parts that he regarded as particularly suitable for his dying patron's concern with the notion of happiness, leaving aside the dialogue's dry methodological disquisitions.

It must have been the dialogue's general topic, the conception of happiness (*eudaimonia*), that explains Ficino's continued interest in that dialogue. For he used the *Philebus* as the topic of lectures he gave to a general public in Florence who shared his interest in Plato's philosophy, soon after Cosimo's death. There are, at any rate, good reasons for the assumption that the so-called *Philebus-Commentary* is based on the manuscript that he used for those public lectures.[16] That Ficino regarded the *Philebus* as suitable material for a general introduction into Plato's philosophy can already be seen from that commentary's form. For it is a "commentary" only in a quite extenuated sense. Ficino clearly does not address an audience with knowledge of, or an interest in, a precise exegesis of Plato's text. Instead, he uses the dialogue as the material for a broader introduction of its topic. This assumption explains why the first six chapters

[14] See Allen 1975, 3. Quotations from the text in this article refer to the Latin pagination in Allen's 1975, edition; Allen also includes the pagination of the folio-edition *Opera Omnia*, Basle 1576. In how far Cosimo's interest determined the selection of the first ten dialogues is unclear: *Hipparchus*, *On Philosophy*, *Theages*, *Meno*, *Alcibiades* I and II, *Minos*, *Euthyphro*, *Parmenides*, *Philebus*. Some of those dialogues were regarded as spurious already in antiquity. But Ficino wanted to provide as much variety as possible:

[15] Cosimo had also asked Ficino in 1463 to translate the *Poimandres* of the legendary Hermes Trismegistos—and the so-called Orphic poems that were still regarded as genuine in the 15th century. Ancient wisdom-literature seems to have been of special interest to Cosimo.

[16] On the title see the note in Allen 1975, 71.

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of the commentary do not deal with the *Philebus* at all, but present a kind of general introduction into the question of the highest good.[17]

An explanation of Ficino's choice of the *Philebus* as a work that is particularly apt to provide an initiation into philosophy can only be gleaned from a side-remark. He criticises the dialogue's traditional subtitle "On pleasure", [18] and objects that "On the highest good" or "On felicity" would be a much more appropriate characteristic of the dialogue's intention. There is indeed, no other Platonic dialogue that has happiness—*eudaimonia*—as its main topic. Plato does, of course, mention happiness often *en passant*, but he nowhere else makes it the subject of investigation.[19] That fact may well be the reason for Ficino's choice of the *Philebus* as an introduction to Plato's philosophy to a general audience.

That Ficino's intention is to provide a kind of "encyclopedic" initiation into Plato's philosophy explains many of the features that must irritate modern readers who expect a detailed exegesis of the dialogue and a concentration on what is unique in it. Ficino, by contrast, draws, without comment, on material that is derived from other works of Plato's and attempts to show that thoughts that seem particularly intriguing and unique in the *Philebus* are quite in tune with Plato's philosophy in general. For instance, Ficino does not draw attention to the fact that the dialogue starts out as a *controversy* between Socrates and a group of youngsters on the question whether reason or pleasure is the state of the soul that provides happiness to human beings. Nor does Ficino take up the question that Socrates raises immediately in that connection and pursues in what follows at quite some length, namely whether the two contestants, pleasure and knowledge, have a uniform nature or each come in different forms, so that while some types of them are good, others are bad.

Instead, Ficino starts out with the depiction of a kind of hierarchy that is supposed to show that the ultimate good is something that exceeds all multiplicity—including that of soul and intelligence. The justification for this ascent to the highest good lies in the fact that Socrates mentions—by way of example of the kind of beings that stand in need of a closer

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[17] The topics of the first chapters, the need to determine a first and highest good, seem intended to provide a counterpart to the beginning of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, a work that Ficino's audience would be very familiar with.
[18] See Ch.9, 127. The traditional subtitles are found in Thrasyllus' organisation of Plato's works in tetralogies, after the pattern of the division of tragedies, in the 1st century AD (see Diogenes Laertius 3.56). The subtitles may, of course, have been much older.
[19] This is one of the reasons why Annas, 1993, 17-20, does not start out her investigation with a chapter on Plato.

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investigation as to the way they are at the same time a unity and a multiplicity—the good itself, the beautiful itself, man himself or ox himself (*Phil*. 15a). But while Socrates treats these concepts only as examples, Ficino constructs a hierarchy of unities for which Plato's text does not provide any basis. It rather reflects the general tendency of the Neo-Platonists not only to present Plato's philosophy as a unified whole, but to present it as deducible from one and the same ultimate principle: The Good is the *One*, and the One is the same as the *Good*, and it is also the same as *God*. This reduction constitutes a kind of metaphysical *Schwärmerei* that tends to level down philosophical problems rather than putting them into full relief.

If Ficino expects his audience to understand his introduction, he must also expect their familiarity with details from other Platonic dialogues, like the Simile of the Sun in the *Republi*c, the focus on the One in the *Parmenide*s and the treatment of the Beautiful as the ultimate insight in the *Symposium*. In addition, he seems to expect his audience to be sympathetic to the syncretistic treatment of Plato's philosophy that is typical of the Neo-Platonist tradition and its tendency to gloss over particular problems. But this syncretistic tendency is not the only salient characteristic of Ficino's treatment of the *Philebus*. For in addition to resorting to other dialogues, he also brings in other sources that he regards as important, because Plato represents for him the culminating point of a much older philosophical tradition that started with the *prisca theologia* of the ancient sages, such as Zoroaster, Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, and Pythagoras—a tradition that Ficino regarded as continued by the Neo-Platonists, by Dionysius Areopagita, by Augustine and still reflected in certain works of Thomas Aquinas.[20] Given these, often quite extensive, eclectic and syncretistic excursions, it is in fact not easy for present-day students with a special interest in Ficino's treatment of Plato's *Philebus* to find their way through that commentary. They will therefore be grateful to Allen's inclusion of the Stephanus-pagination in the margin of his edition; for they provide sign-posts to those passages that actually focus on the text of the *Philebus*, which are often few and far between.

Ficino's ambition to make the *Philebus* into a kind of key to the philosophical tradition that he regards as a *philosophia perennis* lets him ignore many of the factors that are of interest to present-day readers of the

[20] This is not the place for an encompassing assessment of Ficino's mission. For a more penetrating explanation of Ficino's role in the revival of Platonism in and beyond 15th century Florence see Celenza 2007 and 2017. As he points out, Ficino's activities were not confined to Florence, but included a wide network of correspondents all over the learned world.

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Philebus, who focus on particular problems in Plato's text.[21] An example of such an "integrative reading" is, for instance, Ficino's treatment of one of the, in our eyes, most intriguing and at the same time most problematic points of the *Philebus*, namely the way in which it addresses—and professes to solve—the "serious problem of unity and plurality" in *Phil*. 15a. For the modern critical reader Socrates' explanations are not designed to establish a cosmic hierarchy that culminates in the highest good, but rather to show how to cope with the unity and plurality of different concepts in general, as a model for the further treatment of pleasure and knowledge (*Phil*. 15b-c).

Whether the solution of the "serious problem", the dialectical method that Socrates is commenting on in what follows, has wider-reaching consequences concerning Plato's theory of Forms is a question that goes beyond the scope of this article.[22] But Socrates' brief characterisation of the dialectical procedure of collection and division at least indicates that he regards the establishment of a systematic order as the benefit of that procedure: The application of this method will lead to the establishment of a unified and unchangeable genus in any field, with a limited plurality of subgenera or species, and an unlimited number of particulars that represent in different ways and to different degrees, the characteristic species it belongs to. In Socrates' eyes the discovery of how to establish such an order in every field, so that it comprises both unity and a definitive plurality, represents a crucial step in the intellectual history of humankind. That is why Socrates calls it "a gift of the gods" that had been handed down to human kind like the fire of enlightenment by some Prometheus. It is enlightening because the principled search for unity and plurality is the way that humans are able to inquire, to learn and to teach one another (*Phil*. 16c-e). Because of the importance of that ordered procedure Socrates goes to unusual lengths in illustrating the benefit of that "divine gift" with the example of the discovery of the alphabet by the Egyptian god Theuth/Thot and with the example of the modes of music.[23]

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[21] According to Celenza 2017: "Ficino regarded himself as a Platonist, but this did not mean that he was interested in finding Plato's intentions in a historicist manner. Instead, he saw himself as one member of a venerable sequence of interpreters who added to a store of wisdom that God allowed progressively to unfold."

[22] It is one of the much-debated questions nowadays, whether the dialectical method is to provide the solution to the problem of 'participation' in the Forms, as discussed in in the first part of the *Parmenides*.

[23] The *Philebus* explains, then, in what way the two concepts in question, pleasure and knowledge, are at the same time one and many. That procedure is not supposed to explain how the particular specimens come to be, or acquire that nature. The

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Ficino deals with that passage in a way quite different from that suggested by my summary of Plato's text. He takes it for granted that there are Forms of all those unities and pluralities, in the sense that Plato has indicated in other dialogues, such as the *Phaedo* or the *Timaeus* (Ch. 16, 175-177). And instead of going directly to a discussion of Socrates' examples of *synthesis* and *diairesis*, Ficino dedicates several chapters to a general discussion of the Forms (Chs. 18-22), a discussion that meanders through the way the Forms are understood not only in other Platonic dialogues, but also throughout the Platonic tradition.

Ficino thereby ends up with a solution that takes him far from what is discussed in the *Philebus*. For he relies on the explanation, first voiced in Middle Platonism, that the Forms themselves are the contents of the divine mind and that, as such, they are eternally self-same.[24] But the Forms are at the same time also *powers,* and in that sense, they are not only contained in the divine and in the human mind, but they are also in the entities that partake of them. By virtue of their power, each Form is present everywhere and imparts its nature to the particular objects. It is, however, not the Form itself that is present in its participants. It manifests itself only by similitude, not by its essence. And that is why we do not see the "real thing", i.e., the Form, if we look at material entities, but only their images, as if in a dream. If we concentrate on what we have in mind when we understand the Forms, then we have a reflection of the real thing—of the thing that is actually in God's mind. It is this Neo-Platonist divine hierarchy, which explains the existence of the multiplicity of the copies of the one Form: They are reflections of the real thing in the many corporeal entities, just as there are many copies of the same thing in many mirrors. The power that is imparted to the many copies is like the light that comes from the *one* sun; it illuminates many different objects as images. And since corporality is nothing but *matter in extension*, the copies are recognisable as the extended images of the one Form.

Because Ficino resorts to the Neo-Platonic explanation of the relation between the Forms and their participants he does not make much of the examples that Plato uses in his text to explain the procedure of collection and division. For Ficino does not focus on the examples themselves, but rather buries them in a mass of information that obfuscates rather than explicates the technique of division and collection. Thus, he does not explain the modes in music (*Phil.* 17b-e) as cases of collection and division, but rather refers to the mathematical proportions as specified in the *Timaeus*

Forms are not causes of processes of coming to be; they rather explain the structure that characterises the particulars.

[24] On this issue see Kristeller 1989.

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(Ch. 28, 267-269). The same is true of Plato's presentation of the discovery of the alphabet by the Egyptian god Theuth (*Phil*. 18b-d). While the *Philebus* presents it as the discovery of a system that proceeds from the unity of the genus through the different species to the particular letters (or vice versa), Ficino's comments are so convoluted that readers need to consult Plato's text in order to understand them (Ch. 29, 271-275). Given that Theuth is none other than Hermes Trismegistos—one of Ficino's most venerated authorities—is seems strange that Ficino, instead of hailing the systematic clarity of his hero's discovery, is more concerned with information about different systems of writing, their character, intention, and with the way they eventually reached Greece.[25]

Ficino's lack of interest in a clarification of the method itself may be due to the fact that Socrates describes the discovery of the alphabet as a kind of systematic empirical procedure rather than as the result of divine illumination. I call this procedure "empirical", because Socrates depicts the method of collection and division as a matter of observation—and grants that that methodical procedure may work top-down, starting with the highest genus, as well as bottom up, starting with the identification of the particular types (18a-b). The crucial point, according to Plato's conception of dialectical procedure, is not to overlook any of the intermediary kinds, so as to ensure the completeness of the system.

For Ficino this procedure is clearly not a viable path towards the recognition of the Forms themselves. He therefore downplays the importance of the examples of the dialectical procedure, of the "gift of the gods" to humankind. This fact also explains why he is not alarmed, as are most modern readers, by the fact that Socrates, after his high praise of that method, suddenly declares the application of that method to pleasure and knowledge as unnecessary on the grounds that neither of the two will in isolation be the state of mind that guarantees happiness (*Phil*. 20b-23b). In Ficino's eyes, Socrates' sudden renunciation of the dialectical method does not present a problem, because he thinks that Plato is not really concerned at that point with the recommendation of a mixture of pleasure and knowledge as a higher good, but rather with the fact that neither pleasure nor knowledge is *the* good (*ipsum bonum*). That is a point Ficino comments on at great length, over many chapters, and with the support of many other

[25] Ficino's musings on various different discoverers of the alphabet are quite interesting, especially in view of the fact that he suspects that Hermes Trismegistos was concerned with hieroglyphs rather than with letters; but Ficino seems unaware of the fact that Plato is not concerned with historical facts but rather with a clear and simple illustration of the method of collection and division.

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Platonic texts.[26] His fascination with the conception of "the good", which is at the same time "the *one*", lets Ficino discuss this part of the dialogue *sub specie unitatis*, in anticipation of the dialogue's ultimate result, that whatever is good must possess truth, proportion, and beauty.[27]

This holistic procedure allows Ficino to brush aside the fact that Socrates' alleged dream that is responsible for his change of procedure does not require any high-flying explanations, but focuses on a quite pedestrian question, namely why a life of pleasure or reason alone is not satisfactory, so that a mixture of the two is preferable. Although Ficino in a way acknowledges this fact, his main concern is with what he regards as Plato's salient point: that both intelligence and pleasure are hierarchically beneath "the good", so that—in the end—it is the superiority of *the good* that he pays most attention to in his long disquisition of the reason why neither of the two candidates turns out to be the highest good.[28]

3. *The* Philebus' *Fall from Eminence*

Given Ficino's ability to accommodate seeming difficulties by resorting to a wider picture of Plato's philosophy and to the philosophical tradition in general, it comes as quite a surprise that the "fourfold division of all there is now in the universe" into limit, the unlimited, the mixture of limit and the unlimited, and the cause of that mixture (*Phil.* 23b-27c) seems to have presented an insurmountable embarrassment to Ficino. For his commentary breaks off right at the beginning of the discussion of that division, at 24a (Allen 425). So, the commentary, despite its considerable length, breaks off after only 13 of the dialogue's 56 Stephanus-pages.

The abrupt ending of Ficino's commentary at that early point of the dialogue is strange indeed, because Ficino was still quite young when he presented his lectures on the *Philebus* in Florence. And the abrupt ending cannot have been due to the fact that Ficino was unaware of the importance of the fourfold division for the rest of the dialogue, because his commentary contains a kind of synopsis of the dialogue's entire content (Ch. 9), a synopsis that includes short characteristics of the content of the later parts

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[26] The discussion fills many pages of the rest of part I of the commentary (Ch. 30 - 37).

[27] *Phil.* 64b-65b, Ficino invokes this result in his interpretation of Socrates' mixture already in Ch. 35; 36. But readers will hardly be enlightened by those anticipations, especially in view of the fact that Ficino expresses himself in highly speculative and enthusiastic language that has no counterpart in Plato's own summary.

[28] The discussion of these issues is so detailed that it exceeds the concerns of this article.

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of Plato's text.[29] Furthermore, as the Annotations and Appendices reprinted in Allen's edition show, Ficino continued to reflect on the *Philebus* throughout his life. He seems never to have relinquished his intention to bring his commentary to completion. That intention may well explain the fact that he published the collection of his commentaries on Plato's dialogues rather late, in 1496, not long before his death.[30]

It is unclear whether the sudden end of the commentary after only about 1/5 of the dialogue was caused, at least in part, by the reception of Ficino's public lectures. Although there is no information about the success of those lectures, it stands to reason that certain members of his audience felt overwhelmed by the mass of information he provided and overtaxed by the amount of knowledge he presupposed, not only concerning Plato's dialogues but also concerning the philosophical tradition in general. But this is, of course, sheer speculation, as are most of the explanations provided by other scholars. As Allen mentions, certain scholars assume that Ficino suffered from a period of melancholic depression, while others suggest that Ficino got distracted by other projects that were more germane to his concern with Plato's philosophy, such as his commentary on the *Symposium*, but most of all by the project that became his major work of many years, his multi-volume *Theologia Platonica*.[31]

But the most plausible explanation for the fact that Ficino broke off the commentary right at the point where Socrates turns to the "fourfold division of all there is in the universe" (*Phil*. 23c-27c) seems be that Ficino was at a loss to explain that distinction: limit, the unlimited, the mixture of limit and the unlimited, and the cause of such a mixture, as the basis of a further determination of the nature of knowledge and pleasure. For this division to this very day presents a challenge to interpreters of the *Philebus,* for various reasons. First of all, it is unclear what kinds of objects Plato has in mind, given that he speaks of "all things that exist *now* in the universe" (23c4-5: *panta to nyn onta en tôi panti*). For he may want to limit the distinction to

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[29] It divides the *Philebus* into 12 parts (127-131), albeit in quite a general way that is not very informative, concerning the content of the seven missing parts; it provides no clue about what Ficino regarded as so problematic that he did not carry out his plan to discuss the entire dialogue.
[30] The first edition of Ficino's *Commentaria in Platonem* came out in 1496, only three years before his death; it includes the fragment of the *Philebus*-commentary.
[31] Even Michael Allen, who is as sympathetic a commentator as can be, admits that Ficino came to realise that his commentary on the *Philebus* was lacking in direction and plan; a fact that may have encouraged him to start on the "much more clearly organised *Platonic Theology*" (Allen 1975, 11). But this does not explain why Ficino never returned to the *Philebus* and supplied what was missing.

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concrete things in the temporal order; but he may also want to signal that he is referring to the reality of all there is, the Forms as well as their participants.

Second, there is also an uncertainty among the commentators whether this division represents an *ad hoc* invention of Plato's, designed to provide an account of the genera of pleasure and knowledge respectively, or whether it represents a new ontological distinction of general relevance for his philosophy *tout court*. There is no clear answer to this question, because the fourfold division has no counterpart in any of the other late Platonic dialogues. An answer to the question to what degree the fourfold division is geared to meet the special needs of the competition between pleasure and knowledge would, of course, presuppose a full-scale discussion of the assignment of them to their respective genera and of the plausibility of the further development of the dialogue in that respect. In short: concerning the fourfold division and its role in the *Philebus* (and possibly beyond that dialogue) readers have to keep themselves in suspense to see what Plato makes of that distinction in his further treatment of pleasure, knowledge and their mixture in the rest of the dialogue.

But *ad hoc* decisions on Plato's side and a "pragmatic suspense of opinion" seem to be quite alien to Ficino's approach to Plato. He regards Plato's philosophy as a unitary doctrine; the thought of a development and change of mind on Plato's side is as foreign to him as it was to his predecessors in antiquity. This clearly makes it difficult for him to integrate conceptions that are without precedent or parallel in other Platonic texts. This inflexibility explains not only the way Ficino tries to account for the fourfold division in terms of standard Platonic metaphysics, but also why he does not make any attempt to incorporate the examples that Plato gives in his elucidation of those four classes of being. Thus, Ficino neither discusses the fact that Plato specifies "limit" by numbers and proportions, nor that he characterises as "unlimited" those kinds of things that do not have a quantitative limit or a degree, such as the hot and the cold, the fast and the slow, i.e., entities that have in common the fact that they admit "the more and the less". Ficino also does not comment on the fact that reason, as the cause of the right mixture of limit and the unlimited, refers not just to divine but also to human reason.

That Ficino does not engage in any closer analysis of the fourfold division by grappling with Plato's examples must be due his tendency to resort to the most general principles that represent an amalgamation of Platonic and Aristotelian doctrine. For in his long first chapter of the abortive Part II he claims that limit refers to "form" in the sense of *actuality*, while the unlimited refers to "matter" in the sense of *potentiality*. The

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mixture of the two consists—according to Ficino—in the combination of form and matter, while God is the cause of the mixture, who turns all beings from potentiality into actuality. In addition, because Ficino translates "*apeiron*" by "infinite", rather than "unlimited", he insists that Plato distinguishes between two senses of "infinity": one is the infinity of God, which is, of course good, the other is the indefiniteness of matter, which is mere potentiality and therefore not good.

Because Ficino assumes that the crucial terms in the fourfold division are form and matter, he expatiates over many pages on the difference between these two concepts, on how the essence of all things is constituted by the form—while matter by itself is nothing beyond potentiality. His discussion contains vague reminders of the cosmology of the *Timaeus*, but Ficino's does not explicitly refer to the *Timaeu*s, but rather to those of Plato's ancient predecessors who regard matter as the "dark counterpart of form" (403).

In a kind of appendix Ficino confronts the fourfold division with other kinds of metaphysical distinctions that are to be found in Plato. He first refers to the four "greatest kinds" of the *Sophist*: motion, rest, sameness, and difference; he then increases their number to five on the grounds that there is also *essence*, which is, after all, the Form. But there are still further kinds to consider. Because every entity consists of being, essence, identity, difference, motion, and rest, there are actually six principles. But even the six kinds do not comprise all there is: There will be seven greatest kinds if God is added to the six; and if one counts absolutely everything there is, then one will end up with nine principles: God, the infinite, limit, being, essence, rest, motion, identity, and difference (407).

Whether Ficino thereby wanted to indicate that there is a certain arbitrariness to Plato's choice of the four classes in the *Philebus*, must remain a matter of speculation. He admits, at any rate, that he has digressed. But that admission does not prompt him to attempt a more germane analysis of Plato's text. Instead, he transforms the fourfold division into an account of the creation of the universe. For he claims that all things have limits—due to the act that comes from God—as well as unlimitedness—as the potentiality that makes the object fall away from the One and that brings in difference and motion, instead of unity, identity, and rest. Limit represents the good element in that creation, while the unlimited is a bad element. For from limit comes beauty, from the unlimited comes deformity and ugliness (Ch. 3, 409). "From limit comes action, from the unlimited comes passivity; for everything acts through acts, sustained through potentiality. They are what everything has in common." And in what follows Ficino treats limit and the unlimited as the two opposed cosmological principles that jointly

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explain what is in flux in the world as well as what is stable in quality and quantity (411).

Ficino's identification of "limit" with form, of the "unlimited" with matter, and of "what is limited" with a combination of matter and form makes him even change the text at the only point where he actually turns to the *Philebus* at all in that part of his commentary. For his version of Socrates' introduction of the fourfold division in 23c diverges in a significant way from Plato's text. According to Plato, Socrates says: "We agreed earlier that the god had revealed a division of what is into the limited and the limit. Let us now take these as two kinds, while treating the one that results from the mixture of the two as our third kind." Socrates thereby refers back to the "divine gift" of collection and division in *Phil* 16c-17a. Ficino, instead, has Socrates say: "All the things which are now in the universal order of things and descend from the one leader of the entire order, let us separate into two elements, that is into the limit and the infinite, that is, into the universal matter and the universal forms and the conditions that follow from them." (Ch. 5, 415).

In his further discussion Ficino speaks as if Plato is concerned with divine creation out of a disordered mass, as he is in the *Timaeus*. He therefore makes God mix limit and the unlimited in everything. For everything is to consist of limit and the unlimited, as of matter and form: "For matter and form joined together are one being, not two, just as the operation shines out as one." And God himself is the fourth kind, the kind that mixes together the things in the universe. "Therefore, God is always the cause of unity. God's countenance is the cause of the unity which results in things joining together. God's sublimity is the cause of the unity which preserves the proper simplicity of each thing" (421).

This is quite a drastic re-interpretation of the text of the *Philebus*. It is worth noting the importance of that reinterpretation, because it explains why Ficino could not continue the discussion of the *Philebus* any further. He must have realised that what Socrates says at *Phil*. 24a is much more pedestrian than Ficino's own, high-flying, general metaphysical interpretation would lead one to expect.[32] Socrates intends to explain the genus their candidates belong to, pleasure and knowledge respectively, and comes up with the result that pleasure belongs to the class of the unlimited, because it allows for the "more and less", while knowledge is the cause of mixtures of limit and the unlimited.

[32] The rest in the volume put together by Michael Allen are just scattered notes on the *Philebus*, plus a number of Appendices containing Ficino's treatment of pleasure elsewhere.

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But if the unlimited, according to Ficino, is *matter*, it is not suitable as the genus of pleasure. Nor could his determination of the unlimited as matter provide a suitable basis for the further contention, in the *Philebus*, that pleasure consist in the "*filling* of a lack" or in the "*restoration* of a deficiency", a contention that explains why Plato finally assigns pleasure to the category of *genesis* and distinguishes it from *being* as the end and aim of all such processes of fulfilment (*Phil*. 31b-55c).

If "matter" does not provide an adequate explanation of the class of the "unlimited", Ficino would have had an equally hard time explaining that knowledge is the cause of mixtures of limit and the unlimited. For according to Ficino, the only such cause is God. Now Plato does, of course, in the *Philebus*, mention god as the highest kind of such a cause (*Phil.* 28c-30e). But Plato also includes human reason in that genus, even if it is a much more modest kind of cause of good mixtures than divine reason (*Phil*. 28c-31a). But despite that marked difference between the divine and the human kind of reason, the assignment of knowledge of any kind to the class is the point of Plato's introducing the cause of successful mixture as the fourth class of being. The fourfold division of all that exists now in the universe is designed by Plato to provide an account of the class of pleasure and knowledge respectively, so that he then can go into more detailed explanations of their respective nature, and, after a careful scrutiny of their different kinds, come to the determination of the kind of mixture of pleasure and knowledge that constitute the state of mind that characterises human happiness.

Ficino must have realised that his highly general Neo-Platonist principles of form and matter do not provide a proper basis for a further discussion of Plato's treatment of pleasure as a restoration of deficiencies of all sorts, nor of the different kinds of knowledge that turn out altogether to be necessary for a good life. That is why he does not even enter into a discussion of the way the fourfold division is introduced in Plato's text. His comment ends with his rather peculiar twist to Socrates' pronouncement on the first two classes in *Phil.* 24a. While Plato states that: "The two kinds are the ones I referred to just now: the unlimited and what has limit. That the unlimited in a way is many I will explain now. The treatment of what has limit will have to wait a little longer," Ficino's paraphrase of this pronouncement, by contrast, leaves the reader at a loss concerning its exact meaning: "Socrates begins with the infinite. In it he first discovers the many, since the many are better known. He will then reduce the many to the one. So, the topics to be dealt with are these and here is the way of dealing with them." Ficino must have realised that he had nothing substantial to offer on

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the different kinds of the fourfold distinction; his commentary on the *Philebus* therefore peters out, so to speak, in mid-sentence.[33]

4. The Nature of Pleasure

Plato's conception of pleasure as unlimited in kind, as a process that represents at best a "remedial good" of restoration, has its problems; for at certain points Plato seems to attribute a higher value to the true and pure kinds of pleasure. However that may be, it seems that several of Plato's disciples disagreed with his conception to limit pleasure to the filling of a lack. Among the dissenters was Aristotle, who associates pleasure with "unimpeded natural activities" and treated it as a "crowning component of a perfect activity".[34] That there was no unanimity among the Platonists concerning the nature of pleasure is also reflected in Ficino's treatment of pleasure, for he presupposes a kind of dichotomy of the conception of pleasure (Chs. 34-37). On the one hand he assigns certain kinds of pleasure to the unlimited kind. On the other hand, he treats pleasure as a close associate to perfect acts. That is the gist of his explanation why pleasure by itself is not *the* good:

> Pleasure is said to be dual. One pleasure is in the *act* itself of knowing *completely*; and it's in the knowing power. The other pleasure accompanies knowing: this is in the power of the appetite. The former pleasure is the same as the pure *unimpeded act*, the latter is the assent of the appetite. The former is the same as the genus of knowing, since it belongs to the genus of the limit, as it's the limit of unimpeded knowing. The latter is in the genus of the infinite, since it is in the inclining and reaching out of the appetite towards the thing that knowing has decided is good. Plato doesn't bring the first sort of pleasure into the argument to compare it with intelligence, for it is the same. Rather, he introduces the second sort … to compare it with knowing. We will show below that it isn't sufficient in itself, and it's what both we and Plato are referring to here, when we say that pleasure is not sufficient. (Ch. 32, 327).

[33] Ficino had given a short preview of the dialogue's ultimate result earlier, but he seems to have realised that his interpretation of Platonic metaphysics did not pave the way towards an explanation of how beauty, truth, and proportion were the entrance to "the house of the good" (Phlb. 64c).

[34] Aristotle's critical discussion of pleasure in *EN* VII 11-14 and X 1-5 does not only show that, and why, he disagreed with the Platonic conception of pleasure, but also suggests that it had been the subject of an intensive discussion in the Academy.

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Ficino's discussion of the nature of pleasure is further complicated by his tendency to establish a close tie between pleasure and desire, and *via* desire to the notion of the *will* (*voluntas*), as the force that determines the desire for the ends of actions. He therefore treats Plato's question of whether the intellect or pleasure is the higher good against the background of the conflict between intellectualism and voluntarism, a conflict that Ficino decides, after a lengthy discussion in favour of the intellectualist side. The fact that he dedicates so much time to this question is a clear indication of the continued influence of the controversies between the voluntarists and the intellectualists in scholasticism, as is confirmed by Ficino's addition of a long quotation from Thomas Aquinas that pleads for the superior nature of the intellect over the will. The will is not only shared as a kind of desire by the non-rational animals, but it can also be false. Intelligent understanding, by contrast, is what ties humans to their true nature and to their ultimate end, which is God (Ch. 387). Ficino's attempt to achieve some kind of reconciliation between the intellect and the will was to serve as the solution of Plato's contention, at the end of the dialogue, that the human good is a state that contains both knowledge and pleasure. [35] .

To contemporary scholars the attempt to bring in the "will" as an ally of pleasure must appear quite wrong-headed. For it is by now commonly accepted that the will, as an independent psychological force, was a discovery of late antiquity and has therefore no place in either Plato or Aristotle.[36] Moreover, "desire" and "love", which Ficino treats as the next of kin to the notion of the will, do not play any prominent role in the *Philebus* either, and he nowhere treats them as synonyms of pleasure. Plato is quite explicit about the difference between pleasure and desire; for he treats desire as a kind of pain that may give rise to the pleasure of expectation of fulfilment. But that does not make desire itself a pleasure (*Phil*. 34b-c; 36a-b). If Ficino tries to forge an alliance between pleasure, desire, and love, he must be prompted by other Platonic dialogues, such as the *Republic*, the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*. But such syncretistic readings of Plato's dialogues have their dangers, especially if they, in addition, import concepts that are totally alien to Plato's philosophy, like the concept of the will.

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[35] Allen tries to tie pleasure and the will together as the two forces that are responsible for the ascent of the soul, 1975, Introduction 12; 25-29; most importantly: 35-48: "I turn now to the intellect/will controversy: The Philebus commentary is among other things an apology for ethical intellectualism."

[36] This complex question cannot be addressed here, for recent discussions see Bobzien 1998, M. Frede 2012

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Ficino must have realised that the long critical discussion of pleasure as a kind of means of restoration in the *Philebus* (31b-59d) does not easily accommodate an interpretation of pleasure in terms of the "will". And this may have been one of the reasons why he broke off the commentary at the beginning of the detailed discussion of the conception of pleasure. Ficino may also have realised that the anthropological presuppositions that led Plato to the final determination of the good life as a combination of true and good pleasures with all kinds of knowledge are not germane to Ficino's own conception of human perfection. For he nowhere mentions that Plato regards human beings as inevitably subject to deficiencies in both body and soul, but, instead, expects an ultimate unity as human perfection.[37] If Ficino is ready, nevertheless, to accept a mixed life as a Platonic ideal, he does that on the basis of quite different presuppositions: "Ultimately, perhaps the safer approach is not to think of the will as [something] cut off from the intellect, but to think of it and pleasure as though they were in the intellect itself. From all that has preceded we can conclude that man's end is *one*, that is, it is the one act of the life mixed from wisdom and pleasure, which is for the one good and in the one." (381) It seems to be this Neo-Platonist "metaphysical Schwärmerei" that always leads to an ultimate One, that seems to stand in the way of Ficino's coming to terms with Plato's text in the *Philebus*.

5. Ficino in Hindsight

As mentioned above, there is no information about the success of Ficino's attempt to propagate Platonism to the educated citizens of Florence on the basis of the *Philebus*. But the fact that he left the commentary unfinished would suggest that he encountered problems with his attempt to present it as the key to Plato's philosophy. The dialogue, despite its promising thesis, namely that human happiness consists of a mixture of pleasure and knowledge, is not the best choice for a Neo-Platonist-cum-Aristotelian interpretation of Plato's view of the human good.

This is, of course, an insight that is not hard to come by at a time when Plato's philosophy is no longer treated as a monolithic monument of ancient thought. For nowadays even the most ardent supporters of a unitarian

[37] Ch. 35, 355: "After they've been formed, at last the unity, since it's no longer impeded, will plunge itself into the first one absolutely. The unity's good will be to become the one itself. But the intellect's and the will's good will be to become one act for the one's sake." This contention supposedly is to make sense of Socrates' argument that the best state of human beings contains both knowledge and pleasure—because human beings will find a different state not to their liking.

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reading of Plato's philosophy do not deny that there are different approaches to problems in Plato's different dialogues, different aspects under which he discusses them. Nor do they deny that his philosophy widened in scope during his long life. Evolutionists go even further and attribute a change of mind to Plato in certain respects.

But such heretical thoughts were never entertained in antiquity, and they were not entertained in the early Renaissance either. Thinkers in the Latin West at first tried not only to resurrect Plato as a counterpart to the omnipresent Aristotle, but also tried to present philosophy as a unitarian world-view that—while avoiding conflicts with Christian faith—presented a religious view that could do without doctrines like hereditary sin, the need for redemption, and the like. In short, Ficino was addressing an audience that was quite unlike today's scholars. Plato for him was a matter of life and death—which is hardly what he is for any of us. That is why Ficino is to this day rightly regarded as a key figure in the "renaissance" of Platonic philosophy. He was an important part of the movement that helped to establish a distinction between Christian faith and philosophical religion and thereby put an end to the subservience of philosophy as the handmaiden of theology.

But those fundamental concerns explain at the same time why Ficino was no longer treated with favour by the philosophers of enlightenment who insisted on a strict separation of philosophy and theology. Neo-Platonism therefore lost its dominant role in the reception of Plato.[38] And Ficino's 'unitarian' interpretations of Plato's dialogues were no longer influential with the philologists of the 19th century who insisted on rigorous textual criticism. For better or worse, unanimity about Plato's philosophy has become quite the exception; unitarian interpretations have become sectarian movements.[39]

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[38] The first critical historian of philosophy, Johann Jakob Brucker, wrote in the 1740s that Ficino "obtained a humble rank" because, "captivated by the trifles of later Platonists, he feigns, re-feigns, and changes Plato" (Brucker, 4.1: 55). For Brucker, as for many who followed him, the history of philosophy needed to become a critical, rationalistic enterprise rather than a religious ideology.

[39] "Citizens of this new philosophical republic had little time for semi-mythical ancient sages, hidden natural sympathies, and the interpretive style of philosophising (concerned more with styles of life and less with systematic theories) at which Ficino so excelled. Yet his thought permeated many aspects of western intellectual life. Making Plato and Platonism respectable subjects of research and philosophical reflection; embracing a broad view of human religious history; and focusing overtly, through practice as well as theory, on the importance of teaching the young: these aspects of his achievements and more make Ficino a Renaissance philosopher worth remembering today."

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But while Ficino is no longer treated as a great authority in the interpretation of Plato's dialogues, he has been re-discovered as an important witness and part of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Platonism by students of the rise of humanism in the Renaissance. The work by great authorities like Cassirer, Kristeller, and others in the 20th century has led to a new appreciation of the variety and importance of the different factors that were at work in the transitory period to early modernity, and of Ficino's central role in that period.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

FICINO'S *ARGUMENTUM IN EUTHYDEMUM* AND THE TRADITION OF THE EXEGESIS OF THE PLATONIC DIALOGUES

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1. Introduction

In my paper, I wish to describe, to analyse, and to discuss a particular approach to Plato's dialogues as it is suggested, practised, and illustrated in the *argumenta* or *epitomai* which the Renaissance philosopher and Platonist Marsilio Ficino added to his famous translation of Plato's dialogues into Latin.[1] These *argumenta* resemble embryonic commentaries rather than simple textual summaries as the title might suggest. They are important because Ficino as an interpreter of Plato's dialogues here discloses some of the rules which guided his reading of Plato's dialogues and which, according to him, Plato followed[2] when writing the dialogues, and therefore could and should be used as hermeneutical tools for interpretation. Now, there are many aspects of Ficino's approach that will seem foreign to modern interpreters. For instance, he treats the dialogues as a unity and denies any change in the author's mind. For Ficino is convinced that Plato's writings are inspired by divine wisdom. He reads Plato's dialogues as a kind of holy text and as a source of truth, very much like the Platonists of late antiquity did. Chronology and historical aspects are of no importance to him. Ficino is a unitarian and less concerned with developments, for he

[1] Cf. *Marsilii Ficini Opera omnia*, vol. 2, P.O. Kristeller &M. Sancipriano (edd.), Turino 1962; Hankins 1986; Leinkauf 2006; Hankins 1990; Edelheit 2014; Edelheit 2008.
[2] Cf. Fic. *arg. Ti. op. fol.* 1443-1444; on this see Leinkauf 2006, 92 and 103f; cf. Hankins 1986; Neschke-Hentschke 1999, esp. 224f.

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believes that Plato's "didactic strategy" explains all the differences that might be observed in the dialogues.

Despite what modern interpreters will regard as curious approaches in Ficino's interpretation, I shall ask whether the *argumenta* nevertheless have something to offer to modern scholarship, which even might help to understand better the literary composition and philosophical message of Plato's dialogues**.** For some of Ficino's suggestions will make us more sensitive to the close relationship between the dramatic and the philosophical aspects of the dialogues. For example, Ficino reminds us that the contexts of arguments, which Plato constructed so carefully in the dialogues, are indeed of importance for a better understanding of their philosophical message.[3] I shall therefore focus on this aspect of Ficino's approach to the dialogues and especially concentrate on the *argumentum* to the dialogue *Euthydemus*. In this *argumentum*, Ficino is talking about what he calls the *mos Socraticus*, which, according to Ficino stands for a "rhetorical" strategy that forces Socrates to adapt himself—and his arguments—to the horizon of his partners. Because of this *mos Socraticus*—or so Ficino suggests—the interpreter of Plato's dialogues is invited not only to consider what is being said, but also who is the speaker, who is the addressee, and what is the particular context. Ficino, it seems to me, uses the *mos Socraticus*, as a hermeneutical tool to explain some peculiarities in Socrates' performance, for instance, the *necessaria quaestio*, as he calls it, of the Socratic irony.

I first shall remind us of the outline of the *Euthydemus* and discuss Ficino's *argumentum* in *Euthydemum* as well as the question what exactly is meant by Ficino's so-called "*mos Socraticus*"; then I shall remind us of its tradition and at last I shall suggest that this "rule" really might function as a hermeneutical tool. For it actually helps to understand some aspects of Plato's Socrates.

2. *Euthydemus*

Let us begin with the *Euthydemus* and Ficino's *argumentum* of that dialogue. I have chosen Ficino's *argumentum* to the dialogue *Euthydemus* because in this epitome Ficino stresses questions of method, since questions of method are a topic of the dialogue *Euthydemus* itself. In contrast to other dialogues involving sophists, the *Euthydemus*[4] does not deal with political and ethical problems but rather makes the sophistic art of disputation itself

[3] Cf. Erler 2015.
[4] Cf. Hawtrey 1981; Sprague 1962; Euthydemos. Platons Werke Übersetzung und Kommentar von M. Erler, Göttingen 2017, esp. 87-110.

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a central theme while contrasting it with the Socratic-Platonic introduction to philosophy (Protreptic). In their exhibition of the art, the specialists in eristic provide fallacies which provoke but also impress, and they use these to advertise their school. This procedure creates interesting problems but also absurdities of speech. So, the readers of this dialogue become witnesses to a dispute concerning the best methods to win students and to teach them. The eristic battle of words between the two *virtuosi* in the art of disputation, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, who refute "whatever is said, whether true or false",[5] illustrates the sophistic method of argumentation in practice. It belongs to the irony of the Platonic art of portrayal that an eristic game devoid of meaningful content nevertheless raises true elements of Platonic philosophy—the doctrine of anamnesis, for instance, the right understanding of what learning means or the immortality of the soul—if one follows the indications which Socrates introduces, apparently by accident, into the discussion.[6] These indications demonstrate that the aficionados of eristic are not seeking solutions, but only want to be provocative through their use of fallacies. But even if they would be willing to find solutions—or so the performance of Plato's Socrates suggests—they would not be in a position to do so. Socrates himself, by contrast, not only indicates that he would have more to say, but also signals that despite his ability to do so, he refuses to say more because of the disposition and nature of his partners who are just not fit for doing philosophy.[7]

3. *Mos Socraticus*

It is the performance of Socrates and the eristics which, amongst other things, Ficino focusses on in the *argumentum* to the *Euthydemus*.[8] Ficino characterises the sophists as dangerous, greedy or over-ambitious, and their performance as a way of gambling with words, in contrast to Socrates whose method and behaviour is accepted as that of a true philosopher who, according to Ficino, obeys a rule that he calls *mos Socraticus*.[9]

What does Ficino mean by the "*disputandi mos Socraticus*"? One gets an idea of it when Ficino in the *argumentum* interprets the ending of the

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[5] Cf. Pl. *Euthd*. 272ab.
[6] Cf. Pl. *Euthd*. 295e and *Men*. 86ab; see Erler 2015, 98-100.
[7] He is applying the argumentative strategy of the chain of argument topos, cf. Erler 2013.
[8] Cf. Erler & Neschke-Hentschke 2012.
[9] Fic. *arg. Euthd. op. fol.* 1303: *Socrates tamen hic inter adolescentes atque sophistas, mysteria haec relevanda non censet, mos enim Socraticus adolescentes exhortatur solum, sophistas solum confutat, viros denique legitimos docet*.

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protreptic part of the *Eutyhdemus.*[10] Socrates and his partner are looking for a kingly art, which should lead to happiness because it helps to govern other sciences. They tentatively decide that this art might have something to do with dialectic.[11] But the nature of this art eludes them. For it is not clear to them what kind of knowledge is needed in order to practice this method. Thus, the discussion ends up in an *aporia*. Socrates himself comments on the helplessness he and Kleinias experience and says that he feels as if he were in a sort of labyrinth out of which there seems to be no way (*poros*).[12] Here Ficino disagrees, for he does not believe that Socrates is genuinely at a loss. Rather, he claims that Socrates knows very well how to avoid that *aporia*.[13] Ficino is convinced that Socrates conceals what he knows. According to Ficino, all depends on how dialectic is understood. Socrates believes—or so Ficino argues—that dialectic does not stand for something like an Aristotelian syllogistic but rather for Platonic dialectic as a form of theology and an art which is supposed to govern all other sciences. To prove this, Ficino refers to other dialogues, especially the *Republic* and *Philebo*s,[14] where Plato indeed deals with dialectic and gives us an idea of its relation to the other sciences, which might help to find a way out of the *aporia* in the *Euthydemus*.

Now, to refer to other dialogues in order to kind of fill in "a gap" left in a dialogue will seem problematic to modern interpreters, not least because of chronological reasons. Ficino, however, does not see a problem here. He considers the dialogues as a unity and regards them as a kind of "academy".[15] Nor is he prepared to accept any development in Plato's intellectual *vita* or any change of mind since he believes that Plato was an inspired thinker who knew the truth. From that, according to him, it follows that any change of mind would be impossible because it would signal ignorance on Plato's side.[16] Of course, Ficino recognises differences of argument or teaching in the dialogues. He is well aware that in one dialogue Socrates claims not to know what he is well-prepared to reveal and discuss in another. Ficino, however, claims to know why Socrates is doing this—and here the *mos Socraticus* comes into play. In the *argumentum* to the

[10] Socratic or protreptic part, cf. Pl. *Euthd*. 278e-282d; 288d-292e, esp. 290dff.; see ERLER 2017, 177-192.
[11] Cf. Pl. *Euthd*. 290c.
[12] Cf. Pl. *Euthd*. 290d.
[13] Cf. Fic. arg. *Euthd*. op. fol. 1302.
[14] He might have referred to passages like Pl. *R*. 505a, 518b-535a or *Phil*. 55c; cf. Knox 1989, 122, note 80.
[15] Hankins 1990, 328.
[16] Hankins 1990, 329.

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Euthydemus, Ficino insists that Socrates does not wish to unfold the *mysteria* of Platonic teachings to young people like Ctesippus or Clinias or sophists like Euthydemus—although he would be able to. For—according to Ficino—it is Socrates' custom only to admonish young people, to refute sophists, and to teach adults who are open for philosophy.[17]

Ficino does realise that differences between doctrinal teachings may exist in different dialogues and that Socrates behaves differently in different contexts. But he does not attribute this difference to a variation or development in Plato's spiritual vita as documented in the dialogues. He rather perceives these differences as expressions of a general rhetorical strategy, which explains why Socrates in one dialogue reveals doctrines which in another context he refuses to disclose. It all depends on the audience and its capacity to swallow what Socrates has to say.

Since in the *Euthydemus* Socrates has discussions with sophists and very young men who are unfit to be initiated into the mysteries of philosophy—or so Ficino argues—Socrates decides not to reveal the truth but only to allude to the solution, veiling his words with *ironia* and dissimulation or pretending to be in an *aporia*.[18] This ability and willingness of Socrates' to adapt to different contexts, occasions and capacities of his partners, which Ficino analyses also in other dialogues like the *Protagoras* or the *Menon*,[19] Ficino calls *mos Socraticus*. It allows Socrates to pretend to be at a loss on one occasion but will permit him to be more positive in a different context when he is discussing the matter with philosophically more advanced partners.

To adapt to the intellectual capacity of his partner, to restrict information in one context, but to disclose it on another occasion—this method, which elsewhere[20] Ficino also calls a *Pythagorae, Socratis et Platonis mos* is, according to Ficino, an essential strategy in Socrates' conversations and serves as a hermeneutical tool for interpreting Plato's dialogues. For instance—as Ficino explains in the *argumentum* to the *Apology*—in the *Apology*[21] Socrates leaves open the question whether he believes that his soul is mortal or not, whereas in the *Phaedo* he is arguing in order to prove that the soul is immortal.

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[17] Cf. *Fic. arg. Euthd. op. fol.* 1303.
[18] Cf. Fic. *arg. Euthd. op. fol.* 1303.
[19] Cf. Fic. *arg. Lys. op. fol.* 1491.
[20] Cf. Fic. *op*. 1576, 1137 *Pythagorae Socratisque et Platonis mos erat ubique divina mysteria figuris involucrisque obtegere, sapientiam suam contra Sophistarum iactantiam mod(e)ste dissimulare, iocari serio et studiosssime ludere*; cf. Knox 1989, 122 A 79.
[21] Cf. Pl. *Ap*. 40cf.

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Ficino agrees that there is a difference of content, which, however, does not signal a change of Plato's position. He argues that it should and can be explained if one considers the differing occasions and audiences. For in the *Apology*, "Socrates looks to the *persons of his adversaries*", as Ficino explains, who, "since they were the ones studying to do him most harm, were arguing that death would undoubtedly be the worst thing that could happen to him. Socrates argues to the contrary, therefore, that death is in *no respect bad*, whether our circumstances turn out like his or otherwise".[22]

In the *Phaedo*, however, one may add, Socrates discusses the question with philosopher friends, and this allows him to reveal what he really thinks about death.

All this illustrates well what Ficino's *mos Socraticus* stands for a rhetorical strategy which Socrates uses and which Ficino employs as a hermeneutical tool to prove that differences in what Socrates says in different contexts are not necessarily to be considered as differences of content or of a change of opinion on Plato's side. In the *argumentum* to the *Euthydemus*, Ficino also applies this method in order to discuss the "*necessaria quaestio*" of Socratic irony[23]. According to him, Socrates is not an ironic person habitually but for strategic reasons. In the *Euthydemus*, for instance, he behaves like an ironic person when he is overstating the knowledge possessed by the eristics and at the same time understating his own wisdom, although it becomes clear that he would have much more to say about the problems. He does so in order to unmask their pretension of knowledge, which they, of course, do not possess. Ficino would agree that this irony is a form of self-deprecation, but he would not join critics like Thrasymachos who regard this behaviour as insincere;[24] according to Ficino, Socrates' irony forms part of his pedagogical strategy.

4. Tradition

Adversariorum suorum personas in presenti respicere[25]—adapting to one's audience: Modern interpreters of Ficino like James Hankins[26] have compared Ficino's analysis of the *mos Socraticus* with the *decorum* rule that was practised by other authors of Ficino's time like, for instance, Lorenzo

[22] Cf. Fic. *arg. Ap.* Transl. by Allen in: Edition and translation of the argumentum Manilii in Apologiam, in Allen 1998, 197-201.
[23] Cf. Fic. *arg. Euthd. op. fol.* 1303.
[24] Cf. Pl. *R.* 337aff.
[25] Cf. Fic. *arg. Ap.;* Allen 1998, 201.
[26] Cf. Hankins 1990, 330-31.

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Valla in his book *De voluptate*[27]. It even became a *leitmotif* for the composition of Raphael's *School of Athens*, where the different groups of philosophers are characterised—and some even can be identified as Epicureans, as I have argued elsewhere—by their different kinds of philosophical discourse.

Hankins' thesis, of course, is important and helpful. But it is also of interest that Ficino's use of the *mos Socraticus* as a hermeneutical approach can be traced back to commentators in imperial times, who indeed stressed the importance of contexts, for instance when analysing Plato's arguments or discussing whether or why remarks of Socrates or other persons could be called ironic. David Sedley and David Blank have discussed some of the passages in question.[28] Despite some disagreements, they seem to agree that there was a dispute about whether one should focus only on what is said in the dialogue or should also take into account who is saying what to whom, i.e., whether the addressee or audiences are of relevance. Proclus, for instance, seems to suggest that context and addressee are of importance for reading and interpreting Plato's dialogues. In his commentary to the *Timaios*,[29] for instance, Proclus mentions that some interpreters understand Socrates' refusal to describe members of the ideal city in action as ironical; Proclus disagrees, for—as he argues—Socrates uses irony only *when talking to sophists and young people and never toward teachable persons like Timaios*—which strongly reminds one of what Ficino, who was familiar with Proclus' work, has to say about the topic, namely that irony never was used by Socrates when talking to people who can be taught (*docibilis)***.**

Damaskios,[30] too, demands that Platonists should not only ask who the speaker is, but also take into account *what* the audience looks like. *But* we also learn that other interpreters were not convinced that this was the right approach. The emperor Julian, for instance[31], argues that it is not right to only ask who is saying something, but one should always scrutinise what is being said. He seems to follow the advice already given in Diogenes Laertius. When reading Plato's dialogues, one should first analyse the meaning of each thing that is said and then its intention.[32] Thus, Julian's protest might reflect an on-going debate about the right method of interpreting Plato. In any case, it throws into relief what Ficino suggests in

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[27] Cf. Valla 1970.
[28] Cf. Sedley 2002; Blank 2002, 59-71.
[29] Cf. Prokl. Tim. 1, 62, 26; Diehl 1904, 200ff.; see Sedley 2002, 43.
[30] Cf. Damask. In Phlb. 23, ed. by L.G. Westerink, Amsterdam 1982^2. Cf. Sedley, 43, but also Blank 2002, 60-1.
[31] Cf. Jul. or. 7 (contr. Heracl.) 237c; see Sedley 2002, 42.
[32] Cf. D.L. 3, 65; see Blank 2002, 62.

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the *argumenta*. Like Proclus and others, Ficino obviously sides with those who propose to not focus on what is said alone but to take into account the contexts and to ask who is saying what to whom. According to them, Socrates uses different strategies with different addressees. In this context, it is of interest what Aristotle has to say about the great-souled man whom he describes in the *Nicomachean ethics*:

> [The great-souled man] must be open both in love and in hate, since concealment shows timidity; and care more for the truth than for what people will think; and speak and act openly, since as he despises other men he is outspoken and frank (*parrhesiastes gar dia to kataphronetikos einai*), except" – or so Aristotle adds – "when speaking with ironical self-depreciation, as he does to common people.[33]

This passage is interesting, firstly because irony here is used in a positive sense, as already the commentator Aspasios saw, although elsewhere irony is deemed a vice by Aristotle,[34] secondly because Aristotle argues that the great-souled man applies irony only *in special contexts*—namely when talking to common people, i.e., for strategic reasons—and thirdly and, I think, most importantly, because Aristotle here *brings* frank speech—*parrhesia*—into play. For the concept of free speech—*parrhesia*— as far as I can see, is not referred to by Ficino, while in the Platonic dialogues of course it as well as *eironeia* is attributed to Socrates.

5. *Socrates Parrhesiastes*

Frank speech or *parrhesia* indeed seems to be a hallmark of Plato's Socrates as much as is his irony. In the *Apology*, for instance, Socrates uses frank speech toward his judges, turning an apology into what could be called an accusation. In other dialogues, the *parrhesiastes*[35] Socrates often is harsh in his moral exhortations and confronts his partners with their deficiencies without respect for their age or status. And he expects to be treated the same way. "Do say what you believe" he often demands from them. In the *Laches*, for instance, Socrates is asked to give advice about how to educate young people in a frank manner and without reservation.[36]

More than that: Socrates not only makes use of frank speech—*parrhesia*—but even reflects upon the use of this originally political

[33] Arist. *EN* 1124b 28, transl. H. Rackham, London 1934, 223f.
[34] Cf. Arist. *EN* 1108a; 1127a13ff.
[35] Cf. Erler 2011.
[36] Cf. Pl. *Lach.* 189a.

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concept[37] in his philosophical discourse. In the *Gorgias*, frank speech—*parrhesia*—is not only addressed as a topic and exercised. In this dialogue, Socrates discusses and illustrates how political *parrhesia* should be transformed in order to integrate it into philosophical discourse. Socrates declares[38] that frankness of speech (*parrhesia*) is the precondition of a coherent argument and the lack of *parrhesia* will be the cause of self-contradiction. Socrates even claims that frank speech is the basis of his eclectic method, for to become a good man one ought to have three qualities: knowledge, good-will, frankness (*parrhesia*).[39]

Socratic *parrhesia*, it seems, includes openness of mind and the ability to defend positions without regard for the status of one's partner and his position. That is why Socrates banishes Homer from Callipolis although this poet is dear to him;[40] that is why Socrates treats partners like young Lysis in a humiliating manner, because he is a stubborn young man; this is why he deals with Nikias in a milder way, because this general proves to be well-prepared to accept criticism;[41] frank speech indeed is part of Socrates' philosophical strategy and influenced pedagogical theory and practise of later philosophic schools like that of Epicurus.[42]

6. Irony

Now, if this is the case, one wonders, of course, how Socrates could possibly combine this behaviour of a *parrhesiastes* and the concept of frank speech with irony at all. He was criticised for that, for instance, by the Epicureans.[43] For both characteristics of Socrates seem to exclude each other. In Plato's dialogues, Socrates does not always *behave* like a *parrhesiastes*; sometimes he does not speak openly but gives only hints or even bluntly refuses to help, or at least seems to conceal what he knows or what he is up to. This is the case, for instance, in the so-called aporetic dialogues and most prominently in the *Euthydemus*, where he uses concealment and irony as a means to unmask the wrong pretension of knowledge of the eristics. It is ironic, for

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[37] Cf. Scarpat 1964. For the political aspect see Bonner 1933.
[38] Cf. Pl. *Grg*. 482e.
[39] Cf. Pl. *Grg*. 486ef.
[40] Plat *R*. 595bc.
[41] Cf. Pl. *Lys*. 210e; L*a*ch. 200a-b.
[42] Cf. *Philodemi Peri Parresias libellus*, ed. by A. Olivieri, Leipzig 1914; see Clay et al. 1998: Philodemus accepted that the Epicurean wise man should criticise, but insisted, that the criticism had to be adjusted to the disposition of the partner (Philod. De lib. Dic. Fr. 60 Olivieri).
[43] Erler, 2011, 160f.

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instance, when Socrates praises the knowledge the eristics claim to have and when he repeatedly asks them to share with him their knowledge instead of hiding it.[44] He does so because this query is ironic and part of his strategy to unmask false self-assessments that becomes one of the main themes of the *Euthydemus*. Indeed, the eristics lay claim to extraordinary skills, thereby playing their parts as braggarts (*alazones*)[45] and making fools of themselves. For it quickly becomes clear that they in fact have nothing to conceal or to hide. Socrates therefore wishes to unmask their pretensions. On the other side it also becomes evident that it is Socrates himself who is able to conceal his knowledge. He does not wish to share wisdom with the eristicians because he regards them as hopeless philosophers. In other dialogues as well Socrates is often ironical, and many interpreters of the dialogues have wondered how this attitude is to harmonise with Socrates' claim to be a philosophical *parrhesiastes*. The Epicureans for instance made it abundantly clear that Socrates' indirect way of communication was regarded as inimical to the frankness of speech, which they strongly advocated and turned into a pedagogical tool.

Now, seen against this background, Aristotle's description of the great-souled man gains significance. For it can be read as an attempt to solve the paradox that Socrates seems to be an ironist and a parrhesiast at the same time. For Aristotle seems to suggests that the great-souled man does use frank speech and irony—but he is ironic only when talking to common people. It all depends on the addressee.

7. Plato's Solution

Aristotle's description of the great-souled man anticipates in a way what Ficino, Proclus, Damaskios, and other commentators have to say about the problem. But it also describes well—or so I shall argue—Socrates' performance as it can be observed in Plato's dialogues. Let me remind you of just one example. We already mentioned that in the *Euthydemus* Socrates uses concealment and irony when he wants to unmask the claim of the eristicians to possess knowledge, which, however, they do not wish to share with Socrates.

In a different context in a different dialogue addressing different partners, however, Socrates reacts in a different way, although here as well

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[44] For instance, *Euthd*. 278a, 293a, 294b; cf. Erler 2018. The eristicians, of course, are unable to share serious knowledge, cf. T.A. Szlezák 1985, 49-65; Socrates' *eironeia* is analysed by Boder 1973.

[45] Cf. Ribbeck 1882.

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he is convinced that his partner will not be able to follow his argument but is a well-disposed friend who is open to philosophy. At a central point of Socrates' conversation with Glaukon and Adeimantos in the *Republic*, for instance, the question crops up concerning the nature of the Good. Although his partners insist, Socrates refuses to explain what he thinks it really is, although he makes clear that he at least might be able to give some more information. Instead, he offers the famous similes of the line, the sun and the cave. More than that. He tells his partners why he refuses to give them the information they require. Socrates indicates that he might have more to say about the problem—he leaves open whether he has got the solution,[46] but he does so in a very frank manner, which might hurt, because he openly refers to the competence or rather the lack of competence of his partners. For he frankly tells them that he doubts whether they will be able to understand what he would say: 'Dear Glaukon, I said, you will not be able to follow me here, though I would do my best'. Socrates is always afraid that his partners think that they would understand what he is arguing, although they do not.[47]

His partners are not at all offended by this open—parrhesiastic—remark. Glaukon even encourages him to proceed as he wishes to[48] "as far as I am able to follow", as he says. Glaukon obviously approves of Socrates' performance, which he recognises as part of his educational method, just as other partners of Socrates do in Plato's dialogues—and as Socrates himself does when being lectured by his teacher Diotima in the *Symposium*. In the *Symposium*, Plato illustrates how the parrhesiast Socrates himself was treated parrhesiastically by Diotima. For when Diotima lectures Socrates about *eros* she humiliates him and even casts doubt on his competence in a very direct manner. She even wonders whether she should tell him everything she knows.[49] In that scene, Socrates plays the role of a docile pupil, who happily accepts this treatment from his teacher Diotima. This little scene—or so I suggest—can and perhaps should be read *as Plato's commentary* on the parrhestiastic method which Socrates himself applies in the conversations with some of his partners as described in the dialogues. Like Diotima, Socrates indeed expresses his hope that his partners will follow him, but sometimes he also openly casts doubt on their capacity to do so and even frankly declares that he has decided to hold back information from his partners in order to avoid misunderstandings.

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[46] Cf. Pl. *Tht*. 184a.
[47] Jowett 1895, 360f.; cf. Pl. R. 533a.
[48] Cf. Pl. *R*. 534ab.
[49] Cf. Pl. *Smp.* 209eff.

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When one compares Socrates' performance in the *Euthydemus* with that, for instance, in the *Republic*, it becomes clear that Socrates indeed is a parrhesiast and an ironist—he can play both roles; but he does so in different contexts and with different partners. Socrates is parrhesiastic—as Diotima taught him to be—when talking to philosophical friends; and he is an ironist when debating with people like the eristicians. Plato's Socrates—it seems—indeed behaves like Aristotle's great-souled man and he follows the *mos Socraticus* as it is described by Ficino. Socrates in fact seems to behave as Democritus recommended,[50] who claimed that frank speech is a proper sign of character but that the danger lies in working out *the right point in time* or—as we may add—the right context. To be aware of the right context: The fact that Plato was well aware of the importance of the rhetorical rule—i.e., always to adapt to contexts—even in philosophical conversation is illustrated by Plato himself in the *Timaios*. In the first part of his great monologue, Timaios assumes that the world is divided into the realm of becoming and the realm of what exists always. Later in the monologue, Timaios utters the thought that it would be better to supplement a third realm, the *chora*. He does so, he says, because he thought that the dichotomy would *be sufficient in the context* where it first occurred but that the later context demanded a further differentiation and hence the introduction of the aspect of the *chora.*[51]

This performance of Plato's Timaios-figure illustrates that Plato indeed accepts the rule to adapt what one has to say to different occasions and contexts for strategic reasons. This is exactly what Socrates does when he performs as a parrhesiast communicating with philosophical friends—*docibiles*—and as an ironist talking to sophists. Thus, I do think, Ficino makes a good point when he draws our attention to what he calls the *mos Socraticus* as a characteristic of Socrates' behaviour.

9. Conclusion

To conclude, we started with the question of whether there is something to profit from reading commentaries on Plato's dialogues like the *argumenta* written by Ficino despite their occasional curiosities. I argued that this might be interesting for historical reasons—i.e., to realise how Ficino's approach is embedded in an ancient tradition, at least as far as some aspects are concerned. And I claimed that reading the *argumentum* in *Euthydemum*—and other *argumenta*—might be inspirational for our own reading of Plato's

[50] Cf. Democr. frg. DK 225f.
[51] Cf. Ti. 27d, 48ef.

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dialogues. For some aspects brought up by Ficino, like the *mos Socraticus* and the stress he lays on the relevance of contexts, i.e., not only to analyse what is being said but also to consider who is saying what to whom, indeed are helpful for interpretation even today.

I do not suggest, though, that this method should be used in order to get rid of every inconsistency of content, which indeed can be observed in the dialogues, and to confirm the unitarian approach, as Ficino does. But I do suggest that this element of Ficino's method may encourage us to be sensitive to the rhetorical and literary aspects of the dialogues and to analyse each passage carefully. Inconsistency of content may testify to a change in Plato's mind but also might be due to the contexts[52] and to the literary or rhetorical strategy applied there. Hermann's developmentalism and Schleiermacher's unitarianism therefore should not be considered as exclusive *aut-aut-*, but rather as *vel-vel-*options. This is why I think it might be worth studying commentaries like that of Ficino, despite all their curiosities.

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[52] Cf. Erler 2015, 91-105.

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CHAPTER NINE

THE CASE OF PLATO'S *CHARMIDES* IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY: FICINO, POLIZIANO, AND A LESSON FROM BRUNI. PRELIMINARY NOTES

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The history of philosophy teaches us that almost every generation creates another image of Plato. If we consider, for instance, images of Plato in late antiquity, following our keynote speaker in this conference John Glucker, we find at least three: a skeptic, a dogmatic—that is a Neoplatonic—and a more popular image of a φυσιολόγος, a natural philosopher.[1] And what about the fifteenth century, when Plato was finally rediscovered in the Latin West?

It seems that after a very short period of hesitation, not to mention embarrassment, as to how to deal with the Platonic dialogues without a Neoplatonic agenda or ideology, as reflected in Leonardo Bruni's translations of ten Platonic dialogues in the early years of the Quattrocento, the dogmatic, Neoplatonic image of Plato became yet again dominant during the second half of the fifteenth century thanks to the translations and commentaries of Marsilio Ficino. This image of Plato, in the image and likeness of Ficino, was to become the standard way of understanding Plato in the Latin West well into the nineteenth century and beyond, with some very few exceptions.[2]

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[1] Glucker 1991. For the later parts of the tradition, see Tigerstedt 1974.

[2] For example, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who explicitly criticised Ficino for his dogmatic, Neoplatonic interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides*, thus pointing out the difference between Plato and the Neoplatonists. See Pico della Mirandola,

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Let us start with this period of hesitation and with Leonardo Bruni. Was it really hesitation—in other words, a sincere effort to deal with some brilliant and at times difficult pieces of Greek prose—or purely incompetence in understanding the true philosophical meaning of Plato's dialogues? Since one influential scholar—James Hankins—has opted for the second option and provided some evidence for this, I would like to reconsider some of this evidence and some of the conclusions drawn from it.

Hankins[3] is probably right in criticising Bruni for rendering ἀληθέστατον as *veritas* only, thus not paying enough attention to the fact that in this place in *Phaedo* (the passage under scrutiny is 65c2-e2) the emphasis is that there is some truth also in sense perception, but the truth found by the mind working on its own is ἀληθέστατον, that is the truest. The following sentences, which Hankins does not cite (65e2-5), confirm this interpretation. But with regard to four other cases cited in the same remarks of Hankins on the same passage from *Phaedo* (*aliquid* for τι τῶν ὄντων; *ex putando*

2010/2011, 208: "His illi rationibus innituntur, quas priusquam dissolvamus, non ab re fuerit quid de hac quaestione a Platone expressum inveniatur in medium attulisse. De ente et uno duobus locis invenio Platonem disputantem, in *Parmenide* scilicet et *Sophiste*. Contendunt Academici utrobique a Platone unum supra ens poni. Ego vero hoc de *Parmenide* primum dixero: neque toto illo dialogo quicquam asseverari nec, si maxime asseveretur quicquam, tamen ad liquidum inveniri unde Platoni dogma istius modi ascribamus. Certe liber inter dogmaticos non est censendus, quippe qui totus nihil aliud est quam dialectica quaedam exercitatio"; *ibid*., 212: "Quibus etiam testimoniis si non credimus, ipsum percurramus dialogum videbimusque nusquam aliquid affirmari, sed ubique solum quaeri, hoc si sit, quid consequetur, quid item si non sit… Attende autem etiam, si haec dialectica non sit exercitatio, sed de ente unoque dogma tradatur, quantum haec differant asserere scilicet unum super ens esse et hoc asserere futurum ut, si omnia sint unum, illud unum ens non sit." On the tradition of different interpretations to the *Parmenides* and for further relevant references, see Ebgi's remarks *ibid*., 422-426. And see also Allen 1986; Monfasani 2002.

[3] Hankins 1990, vol. 2, 388-389. And see also Hankins' remarks in vol. 1, 47: "Yet Bruni's translation does have its weaknesses, the chief of which is his failure to understand the metaphysical and methodological background of the dialogue, which in the *Phaedo* especially tends to be assumed rather than explained. Combined with a general inconsistency in the rendering of technical terminology, the effect is sufficiently serious to prevent a philosophically-minded reader from extracting from the dialogue a clear account of such important Platonic doctrines as participation, the separate existence of the Forms, and the hypothetical method. Bruni may have made Plato more readable, but that does not mean that Platonic philosophy was thereby made more intelligible to the Renaissance reader." For a general assessment of Bruni as a translator, with further references, see Botley 2004, 5-62.

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for ἐν τῷ λογίζεσθαι; *veri inveniendi flagrat cupiditate* for ὀρέγεται τοῦ ὄντος; and *quid unumquodque sit* for ὃ τυγχάνει ἕκαστον ὄν), Bruni translates fairly accurately the words of Plato without reading into them what Hankins calls "Plato's view of the matter". I do not see any reason to accuse Bruni of "a failure to grasp Plato's belief" in these cases.

In his remarks on the translation of the second *Phaedo* passage (this time 92c11f.), Hankins blames Bruni for translating εἰκός as *quod decet* or *decentia*, since he thinks that the right translation of εἰκός is "analogy". He is right in rejecting *decentia*, but the right translation of εἰκός is "probable", as in Jowett's translation.[4]

While Hankins is right in rejecting Bruni's translation of δι᾽ ὑποθέσεως ἀξίας as *solidis rationibus*, I cannot understand his objection to Bruni's translation at 92d8, ὥσπερ αὐτῆς ἐστιν ἡ οὐσία as *ut ipsius est essentia*. Hankins offers his own translation, "just as surely as [its object] Being exists". I do not understand how the words "its object" fit into the sentence, nor do I understand why they should be added to the translation and why "being" should be spelled with a capital letter.

According to Hankins "… he [Bruni] had not made much progress… in understanding Platonic methodology or Platonic metaphysics. In this section, we shall give some examples of Bruni's difficulties in handling Plato's philosophical thought." The assumption behind this statement is that there is some kind of Platonic thought including crystal clear methodology and metaphysics, which is obvious and indisputable. This is a legitimate approach to Plato's philosophical conversations, and it may be still dominant among Platonic scholars nowadays. Yet this is essentially a modern systematising approach which one cannot legitimately impose on a translator like Bruni, whose main concern was rendering Platonic texts, on many occasions for the first time, in an adequate manner, and without any general presuppositions. And in case Bruni's general competence in understanding philosophical works, not only the Platonic dialogues, is being questioned, let us just remember that his translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* into humanist Latin very soon replaced the medieval translations and was widely accepted and used in many corners of the academic world of the fifteenth century and beyond.

It seems that before Ficino published his translations of all the Platonic dialogues in 1484, probably during the earlier 1470s, Angelo Poliziano

[4] Hankins may well have taken this translation of εἰκός as "analogy" from John Burnet's edition with notes of *Phaedo* (Oxford 1911 and reprints), 92, n. on 92d1, where Burnet translates it as "specious analogy" and quotes two passages from other dialogues which may or may not support his translation; on this see Glucker 1995, esp. 124-125, which deal with some Platonic passages.

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worked on his own translation of Plato's *Charmides* which he aimed as a gift to Lorenzo de' Medici but, for different reasons, never managed to complete. What we have is only a short and unpolished piece of the opening scenes of the dialogue (about 3 Stephanus pages) to which we shall come back later. But we do have the entire preface which Poliziano prepared for his translation, addressing Lorenzo.[5] A comparison between this preface and Ficino's *argumentum* to his translation of *Charmides* might reveal two different approaches to Plato and his dialogues. As far as I am aware, a detailed comparison between these two texts has never been made. Thus, while Hankins has argued for the later 1470s as a probable date for Poliziano's preface and translation, and speculated that Poliziano during these years was under Ficino's influence and in his preface "associates himself with the *Platonici* and develops a number of Ficinian themes", Sebastiano Gentile offered another hypothesis, with some evidence, for the earlier 1470s as the probable date and presented a close analysis of the preface, and Maude Vanhaelen only focused on the Neoplatonic sources behind Ficino's *argumentum*.[6]

As against Hankins, I shall contend that in Poliziano there is more than "one interesting contrast with Ficino", beyond one famous passage where Socrates is described as full of passion towards Charmides (155c5-e2; e.g., d3-4: … εἶδόν τε τὰ ἐντὸς τοῦ ἱματίου καὶ ἐφλεγόμην...), which Ficino preferred to leave out of his translation and Poliziano did translate, and this contrast is to be found in the preface.

While in Poliziano's preface we can hardly find any sign of Neoplatonic influence, Ficino's *argumentum* is full of Neoplatonic images, themes, and references. It is clear, for instance, from several explicit references that Poliziano, while writing this preface, had Homer in mind, probably since it was not so long after he had finished his translation of the *Iliad*, in the early 1470s. In a sense, Homer and Homeric imagery function here as the Neoplatonic apparatus in Ficino's *argumentum*. And so for Poliziano, a certain φύλλον which is suggested together with a certain ἐπῳδή as possible medicine for Charmides' headache in 155e5-6, might be associated with the antidote against Circe, described by "our Homer" with

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[5] Poliziano's preface to his "fragmentary translation of the *Charmides*" was published, with a short discussion, in Hankins 1990, vol. 2, 449-453, 623-626. The same text edited by Hankins was republished with an added *apparatus fontium* in Gentile 1998, 382-385. Poliziano's preface and translation are found in his *Omnia opera* (Venice 1498), 309-313 (preface) and 313-315 (translation).

[6] Hankins 1990, vol. 2, 451-452; Gentile 1998, 365-381; Vanhaelen 2001 (including a partial edition in the appendix of Ficino's *argumentum* to *Charmides* on pp. 48-52).

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his "divine wisdom", since it is very difficult for mortals to find such a herb by themselves and without the intervention of the gods.[7]

It does not take very long for Ficino to bring into his *argumentum* typical "Platonic" and mainly Neoplatonic terminology which cannot be found at all in *Charmides*—such as *idea*, understood as the one among the many, or the relation between corporeal and incorporeal beauty and the role of *amor* in this process of ascending from the individual form to the species and to the Idea, or the common beauty of the entire species, or even the so-called "theory of recollection". Let us examine the following passage where we find all these Neoplatonic components:

> First, what Socrates said, when he was [sitting] between this beautiful [lad] and that beautiful [lad], that he is not distinguishing [between them] but rather all beautiful [lads] equally please him, as if to say that one should not put his foot on a form of one body but rather should rise to that common beauty of the entire species. Since one [beauty] exists in many [bodies], Socrates refers to one Idea of beauty above many [bodies]. Just as we transcend by thinking from the individual to the species and from the species to the Idea, so, in the same manner, [we transcend] first, from the love of this form to the love of the common form, and then we are led to proceed to the love of the ideal form.[8]

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[7] Poliziano 1990, vol. 2, 623: "Nempe vero hoc illud est quod Homerus ille noster divinae sapientiae quasi quidam Oceanus herbam quam moly vocat quaque Ulysses a Iove per Mercurium accepta quasi quodam antidoto contra Circes veneficia usus sit, nigra quidem radice ipsam, flore autem lacti quam simillimo virisque mortalibus inventu difficillimam esse dicit." For a different interpretation of this passage see Gentile 1998, 368. I agree with Gentile (e.g., 375) concerning the lack of evidence for any influence of Ficino on Poliziano and his preface. I disagree with Gentile's final interpretation (381), according to which Poliziano at the time he wrote this preface was too young and inexperienced.

[8] Marsilio Ficino, *Argumentum in Charmidem Platonis de temperantia*, in Vanhaelen 2001, 49: "Primum, quod inquit Socrates, se inter pulchrum hunc, et pulchrum illum, nihil discernere sed pulchros sibi cunctos aeque placere, quasi dicat, non in unius corporis forma sistendum esse pedem, sed ad ipsam communem speciei totius pulchritudinem adscendendum. Quae cum una sit in multis, ideam pulchritudinis unam refert super multa. Quemadmodum igitur ab individuo ad speciem, et a specie ad ideam cogitando transcendimus, ita et ab amore formae huius ad amorem communis forme primo, deinde ad formae idealis amorem pergere admonemur." Ficino's *argumentum* or *epitome* can be found in Ficino 2008, 2 vols. (Basel 1576; repr. Paris 2008), vol. 2, 1304-1307. The same text together with the translation of *Charmides* are found in *Platonis opera*, 2 vols. (Basel 1542), vol. 1, 277-289.

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Ficino in this *argumentum* presents to his readers some of the main lines of argumentation in the dialogue combined with such "Platonic" doctrines where the role of the soul is emphasised and with references to *Phaedo*, *Gorgias*, *Cratylus*, *Timaeus*, *Alcibiades*, and *Laws*, where some "similarities"—and a resulting "coherence"—could be established (thus assuming no chronological development and changes in Plato's philosophy). But what exactly provoked Ficino in *Charmides* to mention all these Neoplatonic doctrines in the passage above? It must be Socrates' remark on 154b9-10: σχεδὸν γάρ τί μοι πάντες οἱ ἐν τῇ ἡλικίᾳ καλοὶ φαίνονται. We shall come back to this sentence in the last section of this paper.

Thanks to temperance, Ficino explains, the mist of confusion is dispersed, and our mind becomes clearer; now it can be surrounded by the light of the divine sun and, first of all, regain wisdom; then it would be able to obtain prudence, since wisdom and prudence follow temperance. Referring to *Charmides* Ficino points out that Socrates instructs Charmides to look inside himself for temperance since only by turning towards ourselves can we understand human temperance through that Idea of temperance which is innate in the mind. Only then can one understand the moderation with which God moderated from the start the parts of the soul.[9]

We do find in Poliziano's preface references to *Protagoras*, *Republic*, and *Phaedo*, but they are really only mentioned in passing and do not aim at anything like showing one consistent doctrine in the entire *oeuvre* of Plato. We find there once the term ἄδυτον, and a standard praise for Plato

[9] Ficino, *Argumentum*, 50: "… quo fit ut temperantia opus sit in primis, per quam expulsa perturbationum caligine mens facta serenior, divini solis lumine abunde circunfundatur unde sapientiam primo recuperet, deinde prudentiam adipiscatur. Quoniam igitur temperantiam sapientia prudentiaque comitatur, ideo Plato saepe alibi et in hoc dialogo, sub ipso temperantiae nomine sapientiam quoque vult et prudentiam contineri. Monet autem Socrates Charmidem, ut respiciat in seipsum de temperantia verba facturus, nam et haec ipsa in seipsum conversio est huius virtutis officium et quisquis in seipsum penitus conversus fuerit, tum per ipsam temperantiae ideam innatam menti, humanam intelliget temperantiam, tum moderationem ipsam agnoscens, qua deus animae partes ab initio invicem temperavit cognoscet qua ratione sit affectus animi temperandus." Ficino even draws for his readers some obvious conclusions following some of the discussions, going just beyond the dialogue itself, e.g., criticising Critias and determining that knowledge without an object is just absurd; see *ibid*., 51-52: "Sed ad Critiae ineptias redeamus, dicentis esse scientiam quandam quae tam se quam scientias omnes sciat, res vero ipsas quarum sunt scientiae nesciat, quod quidem ideo est absurdum quia veritas ipsa ratioque scientie in ipso eorum quae sciuntur quasi quodam contactu congruentiaque consistit."

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which is only to be expected in this context.[10] To my mind this is not enough to declare that Poliziano in this preface is a Platonist or rather a Neoplatonist. Nor is the one reference to "those ancient theologians" (*prisci illi theologi*), where we find Homer, Orpheus, Hesiod, Pythagoras and Plato, but also "so many other priests of the muses and of true wisdom" (*aliique quamplurimi Musarum veraeque sapientiae antistites*) enough evidence. The context of this reference is emphasising the role of *temperantia* in fighting against *intemperantia* and preparing the human souls for the understanding of true wisdom, which was transmitted by these ancient priests under cover against the profanations of the Eleusian mysteries.[11]

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[10] Poliziano 1990, 623: "Sed cum et natura quidem ipsa ad felicitatis indagationem quosdam quasi igniculos nostris mentibus inseruerit, et (quod in *Protagora* Plato ait) neminem omnium non invitum peccare sapientes arbitrentur"; 624: "Verum enimvero ut non ex omni ligno veteri proverbio Mercurius fingitur, ita profecto non cuiusvis naturae est intima philosophiae adyta penetrare. Qui enim animo angusto sordidoque essent rerumque humilium cupiditatibus mancipato, eos Plato in eo quem *De republica* inscripsit libro a sacrosanctae philosophiae limine, ceu profanos quosdam atque ad eam capessendam minime idoneos, non iniuria ablegavit"; "Est enim Platonis eiusdem in *Phaedone* vera illa et tibi Laurenti certe non inaudita vox par omnino esse, ut qui ad sapientiae studium se conferant"; 625: "Atque ego quidem cum ad eum qui hoc provinciae susciperet perquirendum toto animo et cogitatione converterer, in ipsum peropportune incidi Platonem philosophorum omnium sine controversia parentem ac deum, totius sapientiae quasi quoddam (ut aiunt) terrestre oraculum." The spelling *adyton* is usual in Augustine, and is derived from Neoplatonic sources. Classical Latin has *adytum*. But *intima philosophia* is a Ciceronian expression (*Ac*. I, 8). Poliziano may have learned the form *adyton* from Augustine, but here he uses it in a plain philosophical context.

[11] *Ibid*., 625-626: "Ut enim agricola cum iam stirpibus sentibusque agrum bene omnem purgarit, tum demum sementem ipsam aggreditur, ita profecto homines debent, cum iam omnem rerum sordidarum cupiditatem atque intemperantiam ex animis porro eiecerint caeterosque huiuscemodi affectus ferro atque igni variaque disciplinarum machinatione persecuti fuerint, tum demum purgatis iam animis verae sapientiae semina excipere oportet, ut nulla pullulantium cupiditatum quasi spinarum conmixtione suffocata ad ipsam beatitudinis frugem mature perveniant. Atque hoc est, scilicet cur prisci illi theologi Homerus Orpheus Hesiodus Pythagoras item et hic ipse de quo agimus Plato aliique quamplurimi Musarum veraeque sapientiae antistites multiplicem illam totius philosophiae cognitionem per quaedam fabularum atque aenigmatum involucra integumentaque tradiderint, et quasi saepibus quibusdam cancellisque obstruxerint, ne religiosa quodammodo Eleusinarum dearum mysteria profanarentur et quasi suibus (quod dici solet) margaritae obiicerentur." See Gentile's observations on Poliziano's version of the

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Poliziano opens his preface with a speculation concerning the human condition which, according to him, is worthy of both admiration and compassion, since while everyone strives for happiness (*felicitas*), only a few are marching in the right way of virtue in order to obtain it. He identifies the cause of all evils in human life not with the will—a very standard perception at least since Augustine—but rather with the difficulty in finding happiness through virtue.[12] Philosophy is regarded by Poliziano as the leader (*dux*) of all life, the explorer (*indagatrix*) of virtue and as the purifying force (*expultrix*) against vices, which we must follow; it was sent down as a divine gift in order to rule over human life, and without philosophy we shall never be able to shine in pure light or dig up that precious pearl (an allusion to Matthew 13, 45-46) or escape the charms which turn us into wild beasts.[13] For this reason when we first begin to study philosophy we come across temperance; it accompanies through careful testing those who are considered worthy of the concealed secrets of wisdom so that for them nothing could be seen obscure, and, no matter how vast and exceptional it is, people could easily surpass it, understand and profess it—those who are not ashamed to take for themselves the name "philosopher", and especially the name "Platonist".[14]

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prisci theologi in Gentile 1998, 369-370, where he points out that Ficino never included Homer in his different versions of the ancient theologians.

[12] *Ibid*., 623: "Cum saepe mecum animo reputarem, magnanime Laurenti Medices, et tamquam ex alta quadam specula humanae huius vitae conditionem intuerer, illud in primis cum admiratione mihi tum miseratione dignissimum visum est, quod cum omnes homines pari quidem studio ad felicitatem ipsam tamquam ad portum aliquem tutissimum viam affectent, adeo tamen pauci praesertim tam multorum investigatione existerent qui ad eam adipiscendam recto virtutis itinere ingrederentur… illud mihi profecto maxime extare visum est, omnem malorum omnium causam, quae quidem humano generi plurima sane atque acerbissima incubuerint quibusque universa vita nostra velut turbulentissimis tempestatibus hinc illic perpetuo iactetur, non tam nostra nobis voluntate quam illius inveniendae difficultate emanasse."

[13] *Ibid*., 624: "Nisi enim philosophiam ipsam totius vitae ducem et virtutis (ut ille [Homerus] inquit) indagatricem atque expultricem vitiorum assequamur, quae immortalis dei munere e caelo in terras ad regendum gubernandumque hominem demissa est, numquam profecto nobis vel pura in luce refulgere vel preciosam illam margaritam nostro (ut aiunt) Marte eruere vel ab humanae huius vitae illecebris quae nos Circaei poculi instar in feras bestiasque convertunt, ullo pacto evadere licebit."

[14] *Ibid*.: "Quamobrem cum ad philosophiam ingredientibus prima nobis censorio quasi supercilio Temperantia occurrat, eademque diligenti examine multum ac diu pensitatos ad recondita usque sapientiae arcana comitetur, nemini profecto obscurum videri potest, ingens omnino quidem atque eximium maiusque multo

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Following these words of praise, and in direct contrast to what he has just said, Poliziano proceeds to attack some contemporary philosophers, probably scholastic, whom he regards as babbling (*garruli*), trifling (*nugaces*), stinking (*putiduli*), tasteless (*inepti*), unimportant (*leves*), petty (*pusilli*), envious (*invidi*), pretentious (*gloriosi*), and addicted to avarice and extravagance. These philosophers, he continues, contaminate with their filthy hands the sacred name of philosophy, they break into the shrine (*sacrarium*) of the Academy just like dogs in a temple.[15] As against all these philosophers Poliziano puts Plato (see n. 10, last quotation), who seems like the best weapon in the struggle against "the apes among the philosophers" (*philosophorum simii*). Little apes (*simioli*) are mentioned a few sentences later: here Poliziano encourages Lorenzo to use temperance when the little apes again and again are insulting him.[16]

Poliziano, always addressing Lorenzo, argues that listening to Plato means struggling successfully against the seduction of the Sirens; having this dialogue on temperance in Latin means that Lorenzo could now fight back successfully by using his good judgement against that most trifling flock (*grex levissimus*) of wrangling advocates, those who claim for themselves in such a profane manner the sacred name of Platonic philosopher, but in fact are the cause of defiling religion and should be condemned.[17]

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quam quantum facile praestare homines possint suscipere ac profiteri, eos qui se philosophi nomine maximeque Platonici censere non erubescant."

[15]*Ibid*., 624-625: "Itaque cum complures id temporis garrulos nugaces putidulos ineptos eosdem leves pusillos invidos gloriosos avaritiae luxuriaeque iuxta addictos animadverterem, qui hoc sanctissimum philosophi nomen illotis (ut ita dicam) manibus Harpyiarum more attrectare et contaminare nefas non putent, atque in ipsum Academiae sacrarium refractis iam pudoris ac reverentiae claustris quasi canes in templum temere impudenterque irrumpant…"

[16]*Ibid*., 625: "Quem quidem ille [Plato] (quae sua est docilitas) ita sane avide celeriterque arripuit, ut ad litem iam ipsam philosophorum simiis intendendam omni studio accingi videretur"; "… te [Laurentius] unum sibi tam iusta in causa iudicem praecipue nuncuparet, tecum ut cum optimo Academiae patrono acceptas identidem a simiolis istis iniurias contumeliasque liberius expostularet, tecum de hac ipsa quam saepe diximus temperantia acutissime disputaret et, quid de ea ipse sentiret, subtiliter prosequeretur."

[17]*Ibid*., 626: "Si enim caelestis huius musae cantibus aures mentemque adhibueris, numquam profecto insidiosae illae nostri Homeri Sirenulae (quas tamen ipse ab ineunte iam aetate a tua non modo familiaritate, sed etiam congressu in hunc usque diem cana iam tum prudentia adultaque virtute prohibuisti) numquam illae te blandissimis noxiorum carminum irritamentis illecebrisque seducent, sed ut Platonem tandem ipsum Latine tecum de temperantia disputantem atque hunc

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I do not see in all this any special, personal, dogmatic commitment expressed by Poliziano to the Platonists; more than anything else, Poliziano contrasts in this context ancient classical philosophers, including the Platonists, and more specifically Plato himself, to scholastic philosophers. Moreover, let us try to read Poliziano's mind. If you are a Renaissance humanist, looking for the greatest contrast to the standard way of doing philosophy at the time, the Platonic dialogues are the obvious choice, representing since the times of Plato himself a perfect combination of style and content.

Poliziano is neither a Ficinian (Hankins) nor is he attacking Ficino (Gentile). There seems to be a specific polemic background in his preface to *Charmides* but this background is still unclear and further studies are needed. It is obvious that the polemic background is known to Lorenzo, and it is possible that Lorenzo is also involved in it; it is directed against a group of philosophers of some sort, all the references in the preface are to a group in the plural (and only the "name of a Platonic philosopher" is in the singular), and all the references seem to be to the same group since the rhetoric is similar. But why did Poliziano add this polemic background to his preface to *Charmides*? Is it because it has to do with this dialogue, with Plato or with the time during which he worked on this preface and translation, possibly around 1473-1474? Can it reflect some tensions between, say, a group of students around the Byzantine scholar and teacher Andronicus Callistus—including Poliziano himself—and some scholastic philosophers who attacked and possibly mocked them? What exactly is the meaning of the phrase *Academiae patronus* (see n. 16) by which Poliziano addressed Lorenzo several times in this preface? Is it connected to his role in the *Studio fiorentino*, the University of Florence (Hankins) or is it just a general term for a patron of studies, Platonic and other (Gentile)? Does the context of *Charmides* suggest a tension regarding proper education, a proper way of doing and teaching philosophy, anything to do with philology as against philosophy? This must remind us of a later debate, again probably against some Aristotelian-scholastic philosophers, which is echoed in Poliziano's *Lamia* of 1492-1493, his opening lecture for a course on the *Prior Analytics* and *On Sophistical Refutations* in the

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rabularum levissimum gregem qui sacrosanctum Platonici philosophi nomen tam profane sibi tamque impudenter arrogant pollutae religionis reum agentem eosque tua quidem potissimum sententia, omnibus vero deinceps suffragiis damnatos pronunciantem audias." I cannot see how this piece can be regarded as an attack on Ficino and his *conphilosophi* as Gentile argues in Gentile 1998, 380-381.

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University of Florence.[18] Is there any connection between these two polemic backgrounds (and between the "philosophical apes" of the earlier 1470s and the mythological *lamiae* of the earlier 1490s)? Could it be Poliziano's interest in Aristotle, from a philological and a philosophical (but not scholastic) perspective? We must also remember that a scholastic thinker, the Dominican Francesco di Tommaso, dedicated to Poliziano a dialogue on scholastic logic in 1480, probably the result of a private course he gave to Poliziano on Aristotelian logic—yet another piece of evidence for Poliziano's long-standing and serious interest in philosophical issues and in Aristotle.[19]

One notes that it is most unlikely that the object of Poliziano's attack is Ficino and a group of his followers, all of them "Epicureans", since I do not think that such a group ever existed. Poliziano's reference to "defiling religion" (*polluta religio*) (see n. 17) should most probably be taken in the classical-pagan sense, not in the Christian sense.

Not being a Platonist, Poliziano does not need to defend a certain image of Socrates or support, like Ficino, an allegorical interpretation of some erotic passages in Plato's dialogues, or—not putting his trust in some readers—still leave out a "problematic" passage while referring to Aristarchus' apologetic trick.[20] For this reason Poliziano simply translated without any problem the passage which was omitted by Ficino. Without a Neoplatonic agenda of transmitting Plato's "true philosophy" he reads and translates what is before his eyes. Earlier in this paper I argued that Bruni had more or less the same approach to the Platonic dialogues.

Let us have a look at the two translations. We can start with that sentence quoted earlier from 154b9-10: σχεδὸν γάρ τί μοι πάντες οἱ ἐν τῇ ἡλικίᾳ καλοὶ φαίνονται. While in Poliziano we find "Omnes enim fere qui ea aetate sint formosi mihi videntur", Ficino translates, "Fere enim omnes aetatis eius homines mihi pulchri videntur."[21] Two fairly adequate renderings. While Ficino is balancing the impression of "young and beautiful" with "homines pulchri", Poliziano is somehow smoother with

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[18] On this see Cristopher S. Celenza, "Poliziano's *Lamia* in Context", in Celenza 2010, 1-45.

[19] Hunt 1995. And see also Edelheit 2015.

[20] Ficino, *Argumentum*, 49: "Etsi omnia in hoc dialogo mirificum habent allegoriam, amatoria maxime, non aliter quam *cantica Salomonis*, mutavi tamen nonnihil, nonnihil etiam praetermisi. Quae enim consonabant castigassimis auribus Acticorum rudioribus forte auribus minime consonarent. Ideoque Aristarchus quidem Homericus, immo vero Platonicus, quae minus consonant diceret non Platonis esse sed Chroni."

[21] Poliziano, *Omnia opera*, 314; Ficino, *Platonis opera*, vol. 1, 280.

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"formosi". What can we say about the difference between *formosus* and *pulcher*? Ficino will avoid *formosus* in such contexts since it is too close to a beautiful *forma*, and he would not like to emphasise this aspect here; he will of course use *forma* in its abstract, philosophical meaning (see n. 8). Generally speaking, Poliziano tends to be more concrete in his translation while Ficino tends to be more absract. Thus, in the passage which was left out by Ficino we find in 155d4 ἐφλεγόμην which Poliziano translates with the expression "iam non amplius mei ipsius eram".

As we progress in the dialogue we are left with Ficino's translation only. In 162e1 we find, just as we have seen in Bruni, "decens" for εἰκός. In the Greek we have σὲ δέ που εἰκὸς εἰδέναι καὶ ἡλικίας ἕνεκα καὶ ἐπιμελείς. Ficino translates "Te vero decens est haec cognoscere, et propter aetatem et propter studium". We know that Ficino studied carefully Bruni's translations.

And what about a tricky piece of Socratic dialectics in 170c6-d10 for instance, in the midst of yet another effort by Socrates to show Critias that talking about knowledge without objects is absurd?

> But regarding temperance, in case it is only the knowledge of other branches of knowledge, how is it [possible] for it to know that it recognises health and building? It is not [possible]. It will not know *that which* it knows, since it does not know it, but only *that* it knows. So it seems. In this case to be temperate or temperance does not mean to know both *that which* it knows and *that which* it does not, but rather, so it seems, only *that* it knows and *that* it does not. I am afraid so. [emphases mine][22]

It is difficult to imagine what a Greekless reader, reading Ficino's translation, will get from this passage. Once Critias agreed that in fact it is not possible for temperance as temperance to know other branches of knowledge, Socrates concludes that temperance does not know what it does not know—that is, other branches of knowledge. In other words: the

[22] Plato, *Charmides*, 170c6-d10: "Σωφροσύνῃ δέ, εἴπερ μόνον ἐστὶν ἐπιστημῶν ἐπιστήμη, πῶς εἴσεται ὅτι τὸ ὑγιεινὸν γιγνώσκει ἢ ὅτι τὸ οἰκοδομικόν; Οὐδαμῶς. Οὐκ ἄρα εἴσεται ὃ οἶδεν ὁ τοῦτο ἀγνοῶν, ἀλλ' ὅτι οἶδεν μόνον. Ἔοικεν. Οὐκ ἄρα σωφρονεῖν τοῦτ' ἂν εἴη οὐδὲ σωφροσύνη, εἰδέναι ἅ τε οἶδεν καὶ ἃ μὴ οἶδεν, ἀλλ', ὡς ἔοικεν, ὅτι οἶδεν καὶ ὅτι οὐκ οἶδεν μόνον. Κινδυνεύει."
Ficino, *Platonis opera*, vol. 1, 287: "Temperantia vero inquam si scientiarum scientia est duntaxat, quo modo intelliget quod sanum salubreque cognoscit vel quod aedificium? Nullo inquit. Non ergo intelliget quid cognoscat, hoc ignorans, sed quia cognoscat tantum. Videtur inquit. Non igitur temperatum esse erit hoc, neque temperantia, intelligere quae novit quaeve non novit, sed ut videtur quia novit, et quia non novit solum. Apparet inquit."

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situation of knowing about other branches of knowledge without knowing them—that is, their objects, is denied. But temperance does know something, and the next question should be: what is the object of that knowledge called temperance? Ficino's translation is accurate as far as accuracy is concerned but the refined dialectics here is very slippery ("Non ergo intelliget quid cognoscat, hoc ignorans, sed quia cognoscat tantum"!) and Critias does not understand that his definition of σωφροσύνη once again was refuted. A Greekless reader may wonder in what sense we have here *dumtaxat*. Why did Ficino not translate μόνον as the simpler and more natural *solum*? Another misleading translation is *quia cognoscat* for ὅτι οἶδεν, and *quia novit et quia non novit* for ὅτι οἶδεν καὶ ὅτι οὐκ οἶδεν. It is true that in early Christian literature (at least as early as the Vulgate) and in medieval literature *quia* is often used in the sense of *quod* = that; but it has never lost its original, causal sense. In both places, *quod* would have made things easier and simpler. Or did Ficino understand the word ὅτι in these contexts as causal (the later διότι)? This would simply distort the meaning of the Greek.

The word δύναμις which appears in 168b3 and twice in 168d1-2 is translated with two different Latin words: *vis* in the first case and *potentia* in the second.[23] I see no reason for it except looking for variations in the translation—but this, again, might cause confusion among Greekless readers. In all these cases, *potentia* would have been better. Another possibility is that since we have οὐσία in 168d1 Ficino thought that a more philosophical term like *potentia* would be more proper in this context. Certainly when we have in 168d4 ἀκοή and φωνή, two of the human (and animal) sense-perceptions which, like ἐπιστήμη, have the ability to perceive external objects. This sense of δύναμις is usually *potentia* in medieval Latin but we do find also *vis* in such contexts.

The last question I want to address in this paper is what exactly in *Charmides* attracted Ficino. An early mention of *Charmides* is found in Ficino's *Oratio de laudibus medicinae*, a short rhetorical piece which is

[23] Plato, *Charmides*, 168b2-3: "... ἔστι μὲν αὕτη ἡ ἐπιστήμη τινὸς ἐπιστήμη, καὶ ἔχει τινὰ τοιαύτην δύναμιν ὥστε τινὸς εἶναι..."; Ficino, *Platonis opera*, vol. 1, 286: "Est ne scientia haec alicuius scientia habetque vim quandam huiusmodi, qua alicuius sit?"
Plato, *Charmides*, 168c10-d3: "... καὶ τἆλλα πάντα ὡσαύτως, ὅτιπερ ἂν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ δύναμιν πρὸς ἑαυτὸ ἔχῃ, οὐ καὶ ἐκείνην ἕξει τὴν οὐσίαν, πρὸς ἣν ἡ δύναμις αὐτοῦ ἦν;"; Ficino, *Platonis opera*, vol. 1, p. 286: "… et in caeteris omnibus eodem modo, quicquid suiipsius potentiam ad seipsum habet, nonne et illam habebit essentiam, ad quam est eius potentia?" In 168e5 and in 169a3 we have δύναμις again which Ficino (*ibid*., p. 286) renders with *vis* only.

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undated and included in Book Four of his letters, where we find, "For among the Egyptians and Persians the same individuals were both priests and doctors. Plato wrote in *Charmides* that those magicians were doctors of soul and body…"[24] Beside praising the divine origin of medicine and all the great figures associated with the medical tradition, it is here that Ficino, following *Charmides* 156d1-157c6 explicitly rejects the sharp dichotomy between body and soul and the effort to associate medicine with the body only. Curing always involves both the body and the soul.[25]

In Book 13, Chapter 1 of his *Platonic Theology* we find another reference to *Charmides*. Ficino demonstrates in this chapter the superiority of the soul over the body. We find here paraphrases from *Charmides* concerning the necessity of curing the body and the soul, that everything good and evil in the body comes from the soul, that it is impossible to cure the body without the soul, the part without the whole, and that the Thracian doctors were able to turn certain individuals into immortals thanks to their medical practices which were based on these principles.[26]

Charmides is thus important for Ficino in the context of establishing an essential connection between body and soul, as against different kinds of

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[24] Ficino, *Oratio de laudibus medicinae*, in *Opera*, vol. 1, 760: "Unde apud Aegyptios atque Persas idem sacerdotes erant et medici. Scribit in *Carmide* Plato magos illos animae corporisque medicos…"

[25] *Ibid*., p. 759: "Medicinae autem origo sive Hebraeos et Arabes sequaris sive Graecos Aegyptiosque theologos ab ipsa divinitate manavit. Nam Hebraei et Arabes primum humani generis parentem Adam eam divino lumine sapientiam adeptum asserunt"; "Num potest alicuius facultatis origo hoc medicinae ortu, non modo praestantior sed par aut similis inveniri? Cum a Deo, heroibus, regibus, ducibus, magis, philosophis, et illis quidem vetustissimis atque omnium sapientissimis proficiscatur"; 760: "Nec dixerit quispiam medicorum artem circa ipsum hominis corpus duntaxat versari. Siquidem Phoebus, ut in epistolis Hyppocratis legitur, animi atque corpus curationem coire in unum arbitrabatur."

[26] Ficino 2008, vol. 4, 116: "Scribit et in *Charmides* Magos illos, animae corporisque medicos, Zalmoxidis Zoroastrisque sectatores, arbitrari omnia corporis tum bona tum mala ab anima fluere in ipsum corpus, quemadmodum oculorum qualitas fluit a cerebro, cerebri qualitas a toto corpore; atque ut impossibile est oculos curari nisi curetur cerebrum, et cerebrum curari nisi corpus totum, ita corpus totum, nisi anima bene valeat, non posse bene valere. Valetudinem vero animae curari Apollineis incantationibus quibusdam, id est philosophicis rationibus. Socrates praeterea narravit vulgatum esse apud Thraces eos medicos tali quadam curatione nonnullos homines servare immortales consuevisse. Tantum est animae in corpus imperium, tanta potestas." And see another reference to *Charmides* in Ficino's commentary on Dionysius the Areopagite's the *Divine Names*; Ficino 2015, vol. 2, 68: "Plato rursus in *Charmide*, magos sequens, bona malaque corporum humanorum existimat a bonis animarum malisve proficisci…"

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dualisms, including Christian, and in agreement with Stoic and Neoplatonic conceptions of λόγος, συμπαθεία, προέλευσις, or the verb διήκω, which are among the crucial terms for the body-soul connection. This essential connection is necessary for curing both the body and the soul of the human composite, just as for reuniting medicine and philosophy, as against several humanistic efforts to separate the two disciplines, arguing for the superiority of moral philosophy, law, and the liberal arts over medicine.

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CHAPTER TEN

PLATO'S INFLUENCE ON ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY: METAPHYSICS, EPISTEMOLOGY, AND PHILOSOPHY OF MATHEMATICS

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Analytic philosophy began with Gottlob Frege in Germany in the late 19th century, but in the course of the 20th century it mainly prevailed in English-speaking countries, first in Great Britain and then in the United States and elsewhere. It may now represent the greater part of philosophical production worldwide. Most analytic philosophers have been empiricists, and the reason is no doubt that, on the one hand, there had been an empiricist tradition in Britain since the time of Francis Bacon and John Locke and, on the other, analytic philosophy in the United States was strongly influenced by German-speaking empiricists who fled there in the 1930s for political reasons. Because of those strong empiricist tendencies, one might expect that Plato's influence on analytic philosophy was negligible. In fact, analytic philosophers have often put forward views similar to Plato's and frequently done so with an explicit recognition of the Platonic origin of those views. My paper will present Plato's influence, focusing on metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of mathematics.

His greatest influence on analytic philosophy can be seen in metaphysics, particularly in discussions of universals. If we are to explain with some precision what counts as a universal in contemporary terminology, we need to refer to types or kinds of things, as well as to properties and relations. For example, the kind *man* and the kind *animal* are kinds of living beings. A word is a type; it is the common type of its utterances. Explosion is a type of event, and kinds like man and animal are also types of things. We are all familiar with some properties, such as whiteness, and some

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relations, such as equality. When I talk about properties and relations, I exclude what metaphysicians call *tropes,* which are not universals and which we may here ignore. Universals, if they exist, comprise types, properties and relations. Conversely, types, properties and relations, if there are such entities, are universals unless they are sets in the mathematical sense or mental representations. For neither sets nor mental representations count as universals.

Philosophers who believe that there are universals are called *realists.* They say that particulars (that is, the things that are not universals) instantiate universals. Those who deny the existence of universals are called *nominalists.* They have three options. They may claim that there are no types, properties or relations; there are only particular white things and individual human beings. Alternatively, they may claim that there are types, properties and relations but they are sets; the kind *man* is just the set of all human beings. Or again, they may claim that there are types, properties and relations, but they are mental entities and not universals in the world; whiteness is just a representation in our minds.

There are two kinds of realism. According to realism *in rebus,* a universal is in the particulars that instantiate it, in the sense that it occupies the same place in space as any such particular, or in the sense that it is a constituent of any such particular, or in the sense that universals and particulars jointly make up the spatiotemporal world. According to realism *ante res,* a universal is beyond the particulars that instantiate it; universals exist outside space and time. Also, the *ante res* theory accepts that there are universals which are not instantiated by anything, like the property of being a unicorn. The *in rebus* theory denies the existence of such universals. Plato's theory of Forms is a version of realism *ante res,* while Aristotle's views on universals are a version of realism *in rebus.* It has been argued (Tooley 1987, ch. 3) that some laws of nature require the existence of universals which are not instantiated by anything.

One difficulty with realism *in rebus* is that it leads to curious consequences about the location of universals in space. At each moment, whiteness must be located in distinct spatial regions, wherever there is a white object. The difficulty is already pointed out in Plato's *Parmenides:* "Hence, although it is one and the same, the whole of it will simultaneously be in many separate things, and so it can exist separately from itself" (131b1–2). Realists *in rebus* reply that the consequence seems curious only when we do not heed the differences between particulars and universals. A particular cannot exist in distinct places at the same time, but it is in the nature of a universal to be repeatable and multiply located.

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It seems that, in analytic philosophy, most realists adopt the *in rebus* version, yet some prefer the *ante res*. One of them is Bertrand Russell in his work *The Problems of Philosophy* (Russell 1967), which was first published in 1912. Russell was one of the pioneers of the analytic tradition. It was he, together with G. E. Moore, who brought analytic philosophy to Britain in the early years of the 20th century. Near the beginning of the chapters of *The Problems of Philosophy* on universals, he writes, "[t]he theory to be advocated in what follows is largely Plato's, with merely such modifications as time has shown to be necessary" (1967, 52).

Russell argues that all just acts must have something in common, which cannot be found in anything that is not just. Likewise, all white objects participate in a common nature. What is common cannot but be a universal, justice or whiteness (1967, 52–53). If we want to avoid the universal *whiteness,* we may choose a particular patch of white and say that something is white if it has the right sort of resemblance to that patch. But then, we have to admit at least one universal, the relation of resemblance which holds between many pairs of white things. It would be useless to consider that each pair has its own resemblance, for then we would have to consider that those resemblances resemble one another, and so at last we would be forced to admit the universal of resemblance. But once we have admitted it, there is no longer any point in avoiding whiteness and the other universals (1967, 55).

Here the point about resemblance is original with Russell, but the first part of his argument essentially reproduces one of the points that Plato makes in favour of the theory of Forms. The point is that whenever there are many things to which we apply the same name, there must be a Form in which they all participate; see e.g., *Republic* 596a6–7. The "name" here is of course an adjective or common noun.

Russell also argues that a property or relation is not a mental entity. The area of Edinburgh is connected to the area of London through the relation *north of.* The two areas bore that relation before we knew it, and they would bear it even if there were no human being and no mind in the universe. So, the relation cannot involve anything mental (1967, 55–56). Moreover, if whiteness were a thought, it would lack its characteristic universality. For someone's thought is a different thing from someone else's thought, and someone's thought at one time is a different thing from the same person's thought at another time. So, whiteness is not a thought; it is the object of the many different thoughts of whiteness (1967, 57).

Russell does not refer to the discussion in Plato's *Parmenides* of the idea that Forms are thoughts (132b3–c12), but his discussion is similar to

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Plato's. Plato argues that if a Form is a thought, the thought must have an object, which it grasps in each one of many particular things, and that object, being common to all those particulars, will be a nonmental Form. Plato also argues, as Russell does not, that if Forms are thoughts and the other things participate in them, then the other things are made up of thoughts, and so either they lack thought, although they are made up of thoughts, or they are thinking.

Russell then asks where and when the relation *north of* exists. It does not exist in Edinburgh rather than London, or in London rather than Edinburgh, for it is neutral between the two areas. And we cannot locate it anywhere else. Similarly, we cannot say that it exists at any particular time. So, Russell concludes that the relation is outside space and time (1967, 56). He thus adopts realism *ante res.* Later on, however, in his work *My Philosophical Development,* which was first published in 1959, he opts for a version of realism *in rebus* and argues that particulars are bundles of qualities (Russell 1959, ch. 14).

A few decades after Russell's *The Problems of Philosophy,* in 1939, Gilbert Ryle published a long paper in two parts on Plato's *Parmenides* in the journal *Mind* (Ryle 1939a; 1939b). Ryle, although he did some work in the history of philosophy, was primarily an original analytic philosopher, mainly known for his book *The Concept of Mind* (1949), in which he argues for a behaviourist philosophy of mind. In his paper on the *Parmenides,* he attempts to interpret the Platonic dialogue and exemplifies an attitude that is characteristic of how analytic philosophers who are not historians of philosophy approach a past work.

Ryle, who does not commit himself to the existence of universals, declares, "what I wish to show is that the *Parmenides* is an early essay in the theory of types" (1939a, 147). The theory of types is the mathematical theory that was developed by Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead in response to the set-theoretic paradoxes discovered in the late 19th and early 20th century. Ryle's declaration may be a humorous exaggeration. He does not interpret the dialogue in set-theoretic terms. What he does is interpret its long, second part as showing that there are different types of concepts, that "some concepts do not behave in the same way as some others", as he puts it (1939b, 312). More specifically, he considers that the second part of the dialogue is intended to show that unity and existence are not like classificatory concepts (that is, species and genera) or qualities (such as squareness), so, for example, the statements "Unity exists" and "Unity does not exist" are logically vicious and bound to lead to contradictions. At any rate, he wishes to show that Plato's dialogue is relevant to contemporary concerns. When someone who

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studies a past philosophical work has such a motivation, the risk of anachronism of course increases. But to the extent one avoids the risk, one may succeed in connecting the thought of the past philosopher with contemporary discussions.

Even more characteristic of Ryle's attitude is the fact that he philosophises himself, extending Plato's thought. After he has presented the difficulties that Parmenides finds in the notion of participation, Ryle proposes to go beyond his text, as he says, and argues that there can be no such relation as participation or instantiation (1939a, 137–38). When a relation connects two things, they jointly instantiate the relation. So, let's consider an object *a* that participates in squareness and an object *b* that participates in circularity. If participation is a relation, then *a* and squareness jointly instantiate participation, while *b* and circularity also jointly instantiate participation. If so, what is the relation between, say, *a* and squareness, on the one hand, and participation, on the other? It will have to be participation or instantiation number 2. And then the same reasoning will show that there is participation number 3, and so on *ad infinitum.* The infinite regress shows that participation or instantiation is no relation.

What is interesting here is not whether Ryle's argument is valid. It is not. For it may be that the relation between *a* and squareness, on the one hand, and participation, on the other, is participation again. It may be that the same relation *P* of participation connects *a* with squareness and is instantiated by the pair ⟨*a,* squareness⟩, and also connects the pair of *a* and squareness with *P* itself and is instantiated by the more composite pair ⟨⟨*a,* squareness⟩, *P*⟩. What is interesting is that Ryle adds to Plato's points, so that ancient and contemporary arguments become a unified whole.

In more recent times, other philosophers have also adopted a version of realism that is close to Plato's theory of Forms. One of them is Michael Loux in his book *Substance and Attribute* (Loux 1978). He argues (1978, ch. 4) that we need to espouse realism in order to provide an account of sentences that contain abstract terms, such as "wisdom", "man" or "red" (when used as a noun). We can intuitively recognise many such sentences as being true. Examples include the sentences "Red is a colour", "Wisdom is a virtue" and "Socrates possesses wisdom". It seems that their truth requires the abstract terms to have reference. And, according to Loux, the things referred to cannot but be universals.

Nominalists may claim that such sentences admit of paraphrases whose truth does not require the abstract terms to have reference. They may say that "Red is a colour" means "Every red object is coloured". Loux replies that "Wisdom is a virtue" cannot mean "Every wise man is virtuous",

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since wisdom is indeed a virtue, but a wise man may lack other virtues and so fail overall to be virtuous. Nominalists may here invoke a suggestion made by Ockham and claim that "Wisdom is a virtue" means "Wise men qua wise are virtuous". Loux replies that then "Socrates possesses wisdom" means "Socrates is wise qua wise", which, if it means anything at all, just means "Socrates is wise"; if so, the word "wisdom" must have a different role in the sentences "Wisdom is a virtue" and "Socrates possesses wisdom", since the latter sentence can be paraphrased, with no change of meaning, in terms of the simple "wise" while the former sentence cannot; but in fact, "wisdom" plays the same role, whatever that is, in both sentences. Loux also discusses and rejects various other paraphrases that nominalists can provide for sentences containing abstract terms in their effort to show that the truth of such sentences does not require the terms to have reference. (1978, 67–73 and 75–77.)

Alternatively, nominalists may admit that abstract terms have reference, but claim that they do not refer to universals. They may refer to sets. For example, "man" may refer to the set of human beings, and "wisdom" to the set of wise persons. Loux points out that sets are identical if they have the same members. So, the set of human beings is the same as the set of featherless bipeds, and the set of triangles is the same as the set of trilaterals. If abstract terms refer to sets, then "being human" and "being a featherless biped" have the same reference, as have "triangularity" and "trilaterality". But it is clear that in fact being human is a property other than being a featherless biped and triangularity is a property distinct from trilaterality. Loux also discusses and rejects other proposals that nominalists may make to show that abstract terms refer but not to universals. (1978, 65–67 and 73–75.)

Now, he considers it characteristic of the Platonic conception of universals that they exist independently of the particulars that participate in them. In his view, that independence is metaphorically expressed in Plato's picture of universals as making up a separate world. And he agrees with Plato; he argues that many universals could exist without being instantiated. Each universal, he claims, is a necessary being; it could not have failed to exist. For if we take the red colour (which is a property and so a universal) or if we take the kind *man,* we shall see that there are sentences such as "Red is a colour" and "Man is a substance-kind" (a kind of substances). Such a sentence is a necessary truth; it is true in all possible worlds. And its truth requires the existence of the universal that the subject term refers to; it could not be that red was a colour if red did not even exist. There are such sentences for each universal. So, each universal exists in all possible worlds. On the other hand, it is the case for

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many universals that there might have been nothing instantiating them. There might have been no human beings or no red objects. So those universals could exist without being instantiated. Given that, we have no reason to deny that in the actual world, too, there are universals which are not instantiated, like the property of being a unicorn. (Loux does not say that all universals could exist without being instantiated, since he believes that some universals, like the property of being a prime number, could not fail to be instantiated. Being prime could not fail to be instantiated by the number 3 and many other numbers.) (1978, 92–96.)

Just as Loux argues that a universal exists in every possible world, he similarly argues that it exists at every moment (that is, for ever) in each possible world that possesses time. So, he agrees with Plato that a universal is ingenerable and incorruptible: it cannot begin to exist and cannot cease to exist. He also agrees with Plato that, in an important sense, a universal is not subject to change; to be precise, it cannot undergo any change except in how other things are related to it (for example, which particulars participate in it). (1978, 97–99.)

There are, however, some significant differences between Plato and his modern followers. Most importantly, Plato's Forms are paradigms. The Form of beauty is beautiful. Indeed, it is absolutely beautiful; it is not beautiful in only some respects. The Form of largeness is large, and unqualifiedly large at that. Even in the case of relations, Plato seems to believe that e.g., the Form of equality consists in two things, or some things, that are perfectly equal to each other (*Phaedo* 74b7–c6) and the Form of resemblance consists in some things that are entirely similar to one another (*Parmenides* 128e6–129b4). No recent philosopher views universals as paradigms. Indeed, no recent philosopher considers that every universal is predicated of itself. It may be that some are; being a property is a property. But in general, they are not. Whiteness, the property of being white, is not white; it is a colour, but it is not coloured.

Also, Plato considers that we obtain knowledge of the Forms through our intellect and not our senses (see e.g., *Phaedo* 65d4–66a10). It is not true that according to him the senses play no role at all in our cognitive access to the Forms. They do, since they instigate the process of recollection, *anamnesis.* We see some beautiful things or some equal objects, and they remind us of beauty or equality. But sense-perception makes no deeper epistemic contribution. Recent followers of Plato attach a greater importance to the senses.

According to Russell, sense-data (that is, the representations produced in our minds by the senses) instantiate many universals. For they instantiate sensible qualities, such as colours, tastes, etc., and various

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relations. These include spatial relations (such as being to the left of), temporal relations (like existing before) and the relation of resemblance. Russell believes that we are acquainted with our sense-data and thus we are led, through a process of abstraction, to become acquainted with the universals instantiated by them. For example, we see many white patches and grasp the property of whiteness by abstracting it from them; or we have a number of sense-data in which one part is to the left of another, and through abstraction we conceive the relation *being to the left of.* So, Russell classes our knowledge of those universals as knowledge by acquaintance. He agrees with Plato that encountering many similar particulars leads us to grasp the universal. But in Russell the particulars are sensory representations rather than external objects, and he conceptualises the move from the particulars to the universal as a process of abstraction and not as a process of being reminded of something. (Russell 1967, 58–59.)

Russell also believes that "[i]t must be taken as a fact, discovered by reflecting upon our knowledge, that we have the power of sometimes perceiving such relations between universals" (1967, 60). The relations referred to are those expressed in statements of arithmetic and logic. Perception here is not sensory; it is what Plato would describe as intellectual access to the Forms. According to Russell, that power yields immediate a priori knowledge, from which we can then derive further a priori knowledge through deduction (1967, 60, 63 and 86).

Loux, on the other hand, considers, as Russell does not, that we can perceive some universals with our senses. As he puts it, "we see colours, hear sounds, and feel textures of different sorts" (Loux 1978, 99). We can say that at this point Loux, who has explicitly sided with *ante res* realism (1978, 92ff.), makes a significant concession to the *in rebus* version. Finally, both Russell and Loux accept that we also have knowledge about particular things (Russell 1967, 62 and 86; Loux 1978, 99), whereas Plato believes that particulars are not objects of knowledge (*Republic* 479e1–6).

In epistemology, Plato comes up when one discusses how the concept of knowledge can be defined. Such discussions begin with the classical, or tripartite, definition of knowledge as justified true belief, present Gettier's counterexamples to that definition, and then analyse various suggestions that have been made about how we could modify the definition so as to avoid the counterexamples. The classical definition is credited to Plato, and the usual reference is to the part of the *Theaetetus* (206c2–210b3) where Socrates and Theaetetus examine the idea that knowledge could be defined as true opinion with λόγος. So, Roderick Chisholm, in his book *Theory of Knowledge* (1989, 90), ascribes the classical definition to the

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Theaetetus, and Jonathan Dancy in his *Introduction to Contemporary Epistemology* (1985, 35) writes that perhaps the earliest discussion of the definition is in that Platonic dialogue.

The ascription to the *Theaetetus* is inaccurate, for the word λόγος in the relevant passages does not mean "justification". Socrates and Theaetetus discuss three possible senses of the word and find that none yields a satisfactory definition. According to the first, λόγος means speech that expresses the relevant opinion; according to the second, it means an account of the thing known mentioning the elements that make it up; and according to the third, it means an account of the thing known mentioning a characteristic that distinguishes it from other things. Nowhere can we see the notion of justification.

On the other hand, David Armstrong, in his book *Belief, Truth and Knowledge* (1973, 137), credits the classical definition of knowledge to Plato's *Meno.* Indeed, in that dialogue we do find something similar to the tripartite definition (97c11–98b6). For Socrates, there, claims, or rather conjectures, that true opinion turns into knowledge when it is secured by means of an explanation (αἰτίας λογισμῷ, a calculation of the cause).

For all the similarity between the conjecture and the classical definition, we should not miss two differences. First, explanation is a different concept from justification. One is justified in a belief if one possesses adequate evidence, whereas an explanation is an account of why something holds. We may possess strong evidence for a thesis without having any idea why the thesis holds. I am in that position when I accept a mathematical theorem on the basis of the testimony of reliable mathematicians and rightly trusted books. In that case, I have justification but lack an explanation. Conversely, we may accept a truth, together with a correct explanation of why it holds, on slender evidence. Then, we have an explanation but lack justification. Second, Plato does not accept that knowledge is a kind of true opinion. What he says is compatible with viewing knowledge that way, but it is also compatible with considering that true opinion, when secured by means of an explanation, becomes something that is no longer an opinion, namely knowledge. And, given his insistence in the *Republic* that knowledge and opinion are distinct powers with distinct objects (477b3–478b5), in all likelihood he has the latter option in mind.

In philosophy of mathematics, now, platonism (with a small *p*) is the view that there are mathematical entities, such as numbers and sets, and they are abstract objects existing independently of our minds and languages. Platonism focuses on numbers and particularly sets, since many other mathematical entities, like functions, can be defined as kinds of sets.

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To say that mathematical objects are abstract is to say that they exist outside space and time and neither cause nor are caused by anything. They are independent of minds and languages in the sense that they would exist and have the same mathematical properties as they actually have even if there were no mental or linguistic activity in the universe. According to platonism, numbers and sets are as objective as planets, and mathematicians discover their properties. Already at the beginning of analytic philosophy, Frege was a platonist. As he says in his *Foundations of Arithmetic* (Frege 1986), first published in 1884, the mathematician, like the geographer, discovers what is there and does not create it (1986, §96). Later on, platonism was adopted by people who otherwise had different philosophical outlooks both from Frege and from one another, such as Willard Van Orman Quine (1969, 97–100; 2008b, 308; 2008a, 11–13) and Kurt Gödel (1983a, 456–61).

The main argument for platonism, a version of which can already be found in Frege 1986, relies on the truth and commitments of mathematical statements; see e.g., Linnebo 2018. One premiss is that the statements which make up our mathematical theories include many that express existential quantification over sets, numbers and the like and many that are simple predications, combining a predicate with a singular term that purports to refer to a set or number. For instance, the sentence "There are prime numbers greater than 23" expresses existential quantification over numbers; so, if it is true, then there exist numbers. The sentence "The empty set is a subset of itself" is a simple predication involving the singular term "the empty set"; so, if it is true, there exists such a thing as the empty set. Some philosophers have argued that statements in our mathematical language do not have the semantic structure they appear to have, so "There are prime numbers greater than 23" is not genuinely an existential quantification and "The empty set is a subset of itself" is not really a simple predication.[1] But clearly the onus is on those philosophers to explain how it can be that the meaning of such sentences is not what one would expect from their syntax.

Another premiss in the argument is that the statements which make up our mathematical theories are true and so are in particular the statements that express existential quantification over mathematical entities or combine a predicate with a singular term purporting to refer to such an entity. Since the truth of those statements requires the existence of mathematical entities, and they are indeed true, it follows that there are such entities. The truth of our mathematical statements can be shown by

[1] Hellman (1989) argues along those lines about the language of arithmetic.

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either mathematical or empirical means. Mathematically, the statements must be considered true, since they have been proved. Empirically, one can argue that our best physical theories presuppose the mathematical theories, and indeed they cannot be reformulated so as to cease presupposing the mathematics. Those physical theories are very successful in explaining and predicting phenomena, so we should consider them true. But then, so are the mathematical theories they necessarily presuppose.

Once we have accepted that there are mathematical entities, it is rather easy to show that they, or at least many of them, are abstract. Numbers cannot be located in space or time, and one can hardly claim that they cause anything. As for sets, they are causally inefficacious too. Admittedly, a set of material objects may be located where those objects are, but *pure* sets (that is, the empty set and sets formed on the basis of the empty set) have no spatiotemporal location.

What remains to complete the argument is to show that mathematical entities exist independently of our minds and languages. It is hard to believe that numbers or sets would be different if the human race had not existed and the universe had remained at the level of inanimate matter. In science, we need to invoke our mathematics not only when we reason about what is actually the case, but also when we examine what would have happened in various counterfactual circumstances. These include circumstances in which there would be no minds or languages. For example, we examine what would be the case if things had gone somewhat differently after the Big Bang, if there had not been enough matter for galaxies to be formed, and so on. Thus, we have to accept that our mathematics is true with respect to such circumstances and not only with respect to the actual world. If so, mathematical entities would still exist in those circumstances, and have the same mathematical properties as they have in fact, although there would be no mental or linguistic activity. Hence, they are not a product of such activity.

Mathematical platonism is inspired by Plato's theory of Forms, but its proponents are not interested to see to what extent their views are similar to Plato's. In fact, there are significant differences between them and Plato. First, geometry is hardly touched upon in recent discussions, whereas it figures prominently in ancient philosophy. Second, Plato seems to consider that Forms and mathematical objects constitute two distinct subdivisions of the intelligible realm. That is clearly implied by the simile of the line in the *Republic* (509d4–511e5). Some scholars have doubted that Plato divides intelligible things into two groups of entities, one of them being mathematical objects. They believe that he just wishes to distinguish between two epistemic approaches to intelligible things, the mathematical

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and the dialectical approach.[2] But it seems to me that, as was traditionally thought, the simile makes an ontological distinction and not just an epistemological one, although it is unclear wherein the two groups of intelligible things differ from each other. There is also Aristotle's well-known testimony to the effect that Plato placed mathematical objects between Forms and perceptible things (*Metaphysics* 987b14–18).

A third difference between Plato and mathematical platonists is epistemological. According to Plato we gain knowledge of mathematical objects through our intellect and not our senses. Mathematicians use diagrams and other perceptible things that are similar to the abstract figures and numbers that they are really interested in, but those are just an aid to their intellect (*Republic* 510c1–511b2). Mathematical platonists are divided on the question what grounds mathematical knowledge. Gödel believes that we have a power of intuition or reason that is analogous to sense-perception and allows us to grasp the features of mathematical reality. His account of that power is not very different from what Plato says about the intellect (Gödel 1983b, 483–85). On the other hand, Quine and those who follow him believe that the evidence that supports our mathematical theories and turns them into "so-called knowledge" is holistic and empirical. In their view, empirical evidence cannot confirm or disconfirm an isolated statement. What faces the tribunal of experience is our total science. And total science, including its most abstract parts, such as mathematics and logic, is vindicated to the extent that it accommodates our experience in a simple manner (Quine 1980, §6).

Indeed, the main problem for platonism is epistemological. If we do not wish to espouse a Quinean holism and we seek grounds for our mathematical knowledge distinct from those we have for physical theories, it is difficult to see how there can be such grounds if platonism is correct. For if mathematical entities are independent of our minds, we cannot be aware of them in the way we are aware of our own mental activity. If they also constitute a part of reality that is causally inefficacious and distinct from the spatiotemporal world we encounter with our senses, then no information is transmitted from them to us. So, it is difficult to see how we can have any cognitive access to them. Platonists who do not espouse Quinean holism answer that objection by pointing out that it implicitly relies on a causal conception of knowledge. It presupposes that knowledge requires a causal connection between object and subject. But, according to platonists, no causal connection is needed for gaining knowledge about mathematical objects; see e.g., Lewis 1986, 108-13.

[2] See the references in White 1976, ch. 4, fn. 32.

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The problem is similar to a difficulty for the "friends of Forms" which Plato points out in the *Sophist* (248a4–e6). They accept that we contact becoming (that is, the world of changing things) through our senses and being (that is, Forms) through our intellect. But contacting something consists either in acting upon it or in being acted upon by it. They also accept that the soul knows being. But knowing something also consists either in acting upon it or in being acted upon by it. In fact, being cannot either act or be acted upon, since if it did, it would move, and being lacks movement. The implication in that passage of the *Sophist* seems to be that we should accept some sort of movement in the world of Forms. The difficulty is similar to modern concerns because acting on something is a causal relation. No recent philosopher, however, has suggested that mathematical entities, though existing outside space and time, are involved in causal relations.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

HOW MODERN JAPANESE PEOPLE READ PLATO'S *POLITEIA*

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1. Introduction: Greek Philosophy in modern Japan

Japanese culture is a mix of Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and Shintoism. When Japan came in contact with Western civilisation after opening the country in the mid-19th century, Western ideas and translations flooded the newly opened Japan and spread over East Asia. In the earliest stage (the 1870s-1880s), Japanese interest in the Western philosophers focused on positivism, utilitarianism, and evolution theory in France, Britain and America: namely Jean-Jacque Rousseau, Auguste Comte, John Stewart Mill, Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer. Then, in the next stage after 1890, German philosophy became dominant: Immanuel Kant, J. G. Fichte, and G. W. F. Hegel. In the early 20th century, Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche enjoyed a boom. While these modern thinkers, especially German idealist philosophers, were studied most in this period, the influence of ancient Greek philosophy was also remarkable.

In 1895, Anesaki Masaharu[1] 姉崎正治 (1873-1949, a leading scholar of religious studies) published an article entitled "Academic of our country and the study of Classics 我邦現時の学術と古典の研究", in which he severely criticised the current situations of Japanese academics for ignoring "classics" and passionately introducing British and American contemporary philosophies, above all Herbert Spencer. He argued that, whereas the latter was shallow and unimportant, the former, especially the study of classical

[1] In this paper, I put the Japanese name in the customary order of the family name first.

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philosophers in the West, e.g., Plato and Aristotle, in Greek and Latin was much more important and urgently needed.[2] Anesaki was a close friend of Ōnishi Hajime 大西祝 (1864-1900), the first philosopher who tried to translate Plato's dialogues into Japanese from the original Greek, though he died too early. These younger scholars shared a critical awareness of the necessity of studying Classical Philosophy as the basis for the whole of Western philosophy and sciences. Without a full knowledge of the Classical languages, however, Japanese people first read western classics in English or other modern translations.

The Japanese became familiar with Plato in the 20th century and his dialogue *Politeia* played an important role in the intellectual history of Modern Japan. In this paper, I briefly survey how the Japanese received this great work of Western philosophy from the late 19th to the mid-20th century.[3]

2. Plato in the Enlightenment Era

It is noticeable in the cultural history not only of Japan but also of East Asia that the earliest scholars of the enlightenment, in particular, Nishi Amane 西周 (1829-97), clearly recognised the fundamental significance of Greek philosophy for a full understanding of Western Civilisation. Their enlightening works introduced new Japanese vocabulary for Greek philosophical terms, but translation was not simple. Nishi Amane first translated Plato's keyword "Idea" as "*kan-nen* 観念", but the other candidates, "*ri-nen* 理念" and "*riso* 理想", were sometimes more popular. Since the word "idea" has been used differently in the history of Western philosophy, Japanese people gave up hope of fixing a single term. For Plato, we tend to use "*idea* イデア" in transliteration as distinct from "*keisō* 形相" (form) for Aristotle and "*kan-nen*" (idea) for modern philosophy.

It is noticeable that the two Japanese words, "*kan-nen*" and "*risō*", are allotted for two senses of "idea" or "ideal", depending on the context. The European word "idealism" (or "idealist") has two general meanings. "Idealism", in a philosophical sense, in contrast with empiricism or with

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[2] In *Tetsugaku-Zasshi* 哲學雜誌 (*Philosophical Journal*), 10-102, 1895 (Meiji 28).

[3] A longer version of this historical investigation was published in my Japanese book, Notomi 2012; see also my English article Notomi 2017. For Platonic studies in Japan in general, see Notomi 2001; for the reception of Socrates in modern Japan, see Notomi 2004.

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materialism is called *kan-nen-ron* 観念論. On the other hand, the everyday use of "idealist / idealism", which signifies someone who desires a perfect state, in contrast with "realist / realism" in an ordinary sense is called *risō-shugi* 理想主義. Plato's philosophy represents both these senses, but in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the latter word was preferred because it was associated with the ideal way of modernising Japanese society.

Plato's masterwork *Politeia* came to be known to the Japanese people gradually through scattered references or summaries in the works of European sciences, such as brief references in the translation of J. K. Bluntschli's *Allgemeines Staatsrecht* 国法汎論, as early as 1872 (the 5th year of the Meiji Era). Earlier references reflected a European understanding that places the dialogue in the socialist tradition. In 1878, Nishi Amane wrote a brief essay on socialist theories, in which he interpreted Plato's *Politeia (Republic)* as the origin of communism. This essay was written as advice to the Government against the radical People's Right Movement 自由民権運動. Plato's utopianism was thus understood as the starting point of socialist thinking and those who wanted any social change became interested in the *Politeia*. Among them, Kita Ikki 北一輝 (1883–1937), a famous ideologist of social and political reform, was fascinated by Plato's ideal in his youth, and commended its moralist politics as befitting the spirit of his own brand of National Socialism in his first book *Kokutai Theory and Pure Socialism* 国体論及び純正社会主義 (1906). Since he ceased to mention Plato in his later works, we may never know what his opinion on Plato's philosophy was when he was executed as the ideological leader of the 2.26 attempted coup d'état (1936).

On the other hand, earlier books on the History of Western Philosophy, such as those by Ino-ue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 (1856-1944) in 1883, by Hatano Seiichi 波多野精一 (1877-1950) in 1901 and by Ōnishi Hajime, posthumously in 1903, introduced Plato's thoughts in the *Politeia* in a brief but fair fashion.[4] They are based on German and English standard scholarly books.

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[4] Ino-ue Tetsujirō, *Lectures on the History of Western Philosophy* 西洋哲学史講義, 1883; Hatano Seiichi, *Concise History of Western Philosophy* 西洋哲学史要, 1901; Ōnishi Hajime, *History of Western Philosophy I* 西洋哲学史上, 1903.

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3. Kimura Takatarō's *Risō-koku*

Plato's works were introduced through modern European languages, namely English, German and French, so the Japanese titles reflect different traditions. Kimura Takatarō 木村鷹太郎 (1870–1931) is honoured as the first translator of the whole of Plato's dialogues, published between 1903 and 1911 in 5 volumes. The *Politeia* (called *Risō-koku* 理想国) is included along with the *Timaeus* and *Critias* in volume 2 (1906). Kimura did not read the original Greek text, but he was based on Benjamin Jowett's translation (3rd edition, 1892) and compared it with Schleiermacher's German and a few other English translations. Each dialogue is accompanied by a substantial introduction, which mixes Jowett's Introduction with Kimura's own comments.

Before translating Plato, Kimura translated Xenophon's *Memorabilia* in 1901 with the title of *Socrates Jinbutsu-yōsei-tan* ソークラテース人物養成譚 (*Stories of Educating People*). Since he published three other books of *Yōsei-tan* about Confucius 孔子, Mencius 孟子, Xun Kuang 荀子, Zhuangzi 荘子, and Wang Yangming 王陽明 in 1902, from the same Daigaku-kan 大学館, we understand that his intention was to juxtapose the Eastern and Western sages for the models of education.

Through the huge translation project, Kimura wanted to instruct the Japanese people in how to construct a new country by making the masterpieces of Western philosophy accessible to them. Just when Japan fought against Russia (Russo-Japanese War: 1904–1905), he was translating the *Politeia* in belief that this work is of utmost importance for introducing Plato's Idealist 理想主義 philosophy to Japan. Kimura saw some similarities between Plato's ideal and the Japanese *Bushidō* (the way of the *samurai*), and insisted that reading Plato was urgent in order for Japan to become a *modern* state 近代国家.

In the Meiji period, the title *Kyōwa-koku* 共和国 was first used as a literal translation of the English title *the Republic*, but Japanese intellectuals soon recognised that this translation was misleading, because the dialogue had nothing to do with the modern political concept of a "republic". Later, the scholars who went to Germany (Prussia) to study law and the social sciences started to use another title, *Kokka* 国家, from the German *der Staat*. This title strongly associated the dialogue with *Staatslehre*. On the other hand, Kimura Takatarō's first translation of the *Politeia* was entitled *Risō-koku* 理想国, *the Ideal Country*. This title is not a literary translation, but reflects the 19th-century understanding of the dialogue as a work of

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"utopian" literature, as Jowett's Introduction clearly indicates. This title was so popular and so dominant up to the mid-20th century that the Chinese still use it today. We have already seen that the Japanese word "*risō*" was coined by Nishi Amane for Plato's term "*idea*" and used for "ideal".

Another word, *Kokutai* 国体, meaning "national polity", was also used as the title of *Politeia*. Although this word may be the most suitable translation of the original Greek text, it contained strong nationalistic connotations: it was believed that Japan had a long, authentic *kokutai*, whose essence lies in the Emperor 天皇. This was probably the reason why this title was not widely used even before the Second World War.

After the War, almost all scholars came to call the dialogue *Kokka* 国家 (I discuss it in section 9).

4. Plato Boom in the Taisho Period

From the beginning of the 20th century, three professors of law, namely Uesugi Shinkichi 上杉慎吉(1878–1929) and Kakei Katsuhiko 筧克彦 (1872–1961) at Tokyo Imperial University, and Soejima Giichi 副島義一 (1866–1947) at Waseda University wrote on the *Politeia* and Plato's political philosophy. All of them studied law in Germany, where they discovered the crucial importance of Plato's philosophy. In particular, Uesugi believed that the ideal state of Plato was most realisable in Japan, where the Emperor (*Tennō* 天皇) ruled on the basis of Eastern morality. He even suggested that the Emperor was the ideal philosopher-King.

The liberal movement called Taishō democracy 大正デモクラシー focused on Plato's ideal of the philosopher-ruler. In the Taishō period 大正 (1912–1926), political confusion in party politics and the new-born democracy led conservative theorists like Uesughi to promote the necessity of the education of true statesmen who would coincide with philosophers. The 1917 New Year special issue of the journal *Nippon Hyōron* 日本評論 was dedicated to the topic of "studies of the philosopher-ruler". Uesugi Shinkichi, Kanokogi Kazunobu 鹿子木員信 (1884–1949) and two other authors contributed various aspects of this idea with some reference to Plato. They argued that present Japan needed philosopher-rulers and their education, so as to recover the political order and justice and to realise the ideal society. In that journal, Uesugi criticised the British model of Parliament and party politics, and instead suggested that the Platonic ideal should be realised in no other place than Japan. In this journal and elsewhere, many authors mentioned Plato's name without a fair understanding of the

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philosophical contents, in particular, the theory of Forms. But the situation clearly shows that Plato was fashionable in the political literature during this period. Plato became a symbol of Western civilisation and his name was used even in popular culture: the Platōn-sha プラトン社 published popular magazines and produced such stationary as *Platōn Fountain-pen* and *Platōn pencil*.

5. Politicising Plato in the Pre-War Period

In the first half of the Showa period (1926-1945), Japan was getting more unstable, and the right-wing militarists obtained power. In this political context, Plato's philosophy, in particular, the *Politeia*, was often misused or abused. As was the case in Nazi Germany, Plato was politicised in militaristic Japan.

Among the right-wing ideologues, Kanokogi Kazunobu, a specialist of Plato's philosophy, played an important role. He was an international scholar with a high intellectual ability but at the same time a romantic Nationalist and fanatic Tennōist. After going off to fight in the Russo-Japanese War, he studied philosophy in Kyoto University and Columbia University, and eventually obtained a Ph.D. in Germany under Rudolf Eucken. Back in Japan, Kanokogi taught Western philosophy, particularly Plato, at Keio University, Tokyo Imperial University and Kyushu University (Dean of the Law and Literature Faculty, resigned in 1939). He was a passionate lover of Plato and submitted his doctoral thesis on Plato's philosophy to Tokyo Imperial University, but then gradually moved to radical nationalism, although he never abandoned his hero Plato. Kanokogi is said to be the first Japanese scholar who used the word "totalitarianism 全体主義" in a positive way, with reference to Plato. He insisted that his new idea of "transcendent nationalism 超越的国家主義" is the way to realise the ideal society, in contrast to the corrupt democracy and individualism of the Western countries. He anticipated an "Era of Justice" after the global control by the "White people" in the modern era and defended the militarism, Pan-Asianism and imperialism of Japan. Kanokogi believed that this Era of Justice was what Plato had attained in his profound thought. During the war, Kanokogi played a significant role as a leading ideologue of military nationalism by promoting "cultural purification" though he himself did not take action.

Unlike Kanokogi, most scholars of Greek philosophy kept a distance from contemporary politics and remained in the academic world, but

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nevertheless, they discussed the political philosophy of the *Politeia* quite often and somewhat in relation to Japanese society and its critical situation.

In pedagogy, Plato's ideal of the philosopher-ruler was much recommended. Educators praised his thought as the supreme ideal of politics and education, suitable for Imperial Japan. Watanabe Nobuharu 渡邊信治, the headmaster of Hiroshima Teacher's College, published the article "Philosopher's rule 哲人政治" in the journal *Imperial Education* 帝国教育 in 1923. He emphasised the importance of education in the current political and social situation of Japan and praised Plato's ideal of philosopher-ruler. He suggested that people's education should be united with politics so as to realise the best politics on the basis of morality. Pedagogic professors, such as Fukushima Masao 福島政雄 and Ishiyama Shūhei 石山脩平, wrote several articles and books on Plato's theory of education, in which they somehow advanced the notion of nationalistic and totalitarian education by using Plato. These educators were, however, active even after the Second World War, showing little self-criticism of this commitment.

6. The Mystic Plato

I must add that the "politicised Plato" was not the only option for the Japanese. Izutsu Toshihiko 井筒俊彦 (1914-93),[5] who later obtained a global reputation as specialist in Sufism and Eastern Philosophy, published the book *Mystic Philosophy: a study on Greek philosophy* 神秘哲学 ギリシアの部 in 1949, based on the lectures given at Keio University before and during the War.[6] In that book, Izutsu tried to interpret the whole of Greek thought, from early poets and Ionian natural philosophers to Plotinus in terms of mysticism. He treated Plato as the first culmination of Greek mystical philosophy, which completed the Orphic and Pythagorean

[5] Izutsu learned many foreign languages, including Greek and Latin, but his main interest lay in Arabic and Islamic cultures. Later he taught and did research at McGill University, Canada and Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy in Tehran. His main interest was developed by the participation in the Eranos conference, where he discussed comparative philosophy with many scholars including Mircea Eliade, Gershom Scholem, Henry Corbin, Suzuki Daisetsu 鈴木大拙 et al.

[6] It was the first part of a huge project tracing the history of mystical philosophy from early Greece to 16th century Spain (esp. St. John of the Cross), but the other volumes were never published. After *Mystic Philosophy*, Izutsu wrote no monograph on Greek philosophy, although he occasionally mentioned Plotinus till his last work.

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mysticism of salvation of the soul. He explained two main Ways 道: the upward Way 向上道 to the Ideas takes either Way of Dialectic, Way of Love (*Symposium*) or Way of Death (*Phaedo*). The second is the downward Way 向下道 into the ordinary world. Obviously, this scheme shows the central role of the *Politeia* in his mystic philosophy. He claims that "Plato's dialecticians are nothing other than mystics", and that "Idea-experiences must precede the theory of Ideas". Izutsu's mysticism represents a common philosophical atmosphere in Pre-war Japan, in particular, Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治 (1900-90), an influential philosopher of the Kyoto School.

7. Controversy over Plato

In pre-war Japan, Plato became a focus, regarding his political ideas in relation to totalitarianism and Nazism.

Nanbara Shigeru 南原繁 (1889–1974), a law professor at Tokyo Imperial University, loved Plato and firmly defended his thought against those who used it in the service of fascist ideology. He was a Christian from the Non-Church movement of Uchimura Kanzō 内村鑑三, and studied Kant and Fichte in his youth. In 1936, Nanbara published an article entitled "The Plato revival and the problem of modern State philosophy" in the *Kokka Gakkai Zassi* 国家学会雑誌 (the *Journal of the Association of Political and Social Sciences*). He examined the recent trend of the George Circle and their new picture of Plato, which contained a strong reaction against modern rationalism. It is noteworthy that one of the George Circle thinkers, Kurt Singer (1886–1962), taught philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University in 1931–35 and that his book, *Plato* (or *Plato's Theory of the State*), was published in Japanese in 1936. Nanbara's careful study revealed serious dangers in the new revival of ancient mythology and the communist thought of a totalitarian model. His arguments were directed against the ideology of Nazi Germany, which was related to the revival of Nietzsche. These trends were hostile to science and rationality, which he saw as leading to authoritarianism in politics. Moreover, Nanbara's real target was clearly the contemporary situation of cultural reaction, nationalism and totalitarianism in Japanese society.

Nanbara emphasised the importance of rationality as represented in Kant's philosophy, but that also lay at the core of Plato's thought. He positively evaluated Plato's Ideal State of the *Politeia* and related it to the *Civitas Dei* of Christianity. A series of articles concerning Plato's *Politeia* were included in his book, *State and Religion: Studies on the Intellectual*

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History of Europe 国家と宗教 (Iwanami, 1942). It has been said that Nanbara's book were so erudite that his critical arguments fortunately escaped censorship. He avoided public appeal and occupied himself with research at the university, hence his younger colleagues, Maruyama Masao 丸山真男, described his attitude during the war as "the philosopher in the cave". His criticism of Nazi ideology and its abuse of Plato's *Politeia*, presented *before* the war, was so thorough and so just, seen from our later viewpoint, that it convinced him and his followers that Plato was totally innocent of the totalitarian movement both in Europe and in Japan. I suspect that this is one of the reasons why few Japanese scholars of post-war Japan took the criticism directed against Plato by Karl Popper and others seriously (see in section 9).

Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 (1889–1960), a leading scholar of ethics, criticised the *Politeia* in his article "Plato's Nationalistic Ethics プラトンの国家的倫理学", in the philosophy journal *Shisō* 思想 in 1939, while his thought is often supposed to show some inclination towards totalitarian nationalism. Watsuji concluded that Plato's thought of "Idea = species" was not dialectical enough, in that Plato emphasised totality alone but neglected individuality. His argument on "species" seems to be related to his contemporary philosopher of the Kyoto School, Tanabe Hajime 田邊元 (1885–1962), who developed the "Logic of the Species 種の論理". As Tanabe intended to argue against totalitarianism with this logic, it became a main issue how to consider the relationship between species and individuals. Watsuji's article shows that there was a certain awareness among the intellectuals of pre-war Japan of a danger in Plato's thought, which could be easily associated with totalitarian nationalism, or abused by its supporters.

8. Tanaka Michitarō's Challenge

It is interesting to see one prominent example of a Plato scholar's reaction to the War. Tanaka Michitarō 田中美知太郎 (1902-85), a pioneer and one of the few true specialists in pre-war Japan, read Plato's works in the original texts with a full knowledge of ancient culture.[7] He specialised in philological and historical studies of ancient philosophy, and refrained from

[7] Tanaka got interested in Plato at junior high school by reading the translation of Kimura Takatarō. He studied the *Parmenides* at Kyoto University (graduation thesis submitted in 1926) and published a translation of the *Theaetetus* with a commentary in 1938 from Iwanami Shoten.

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producing an *original* philosophy. This is partly a reaction to the Kyoto School, in particular Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎 (1870-1945),[8] who tried to integrate Western philosophy and Eastern thoughts, e.g., Zen Buddhism, into *original Japanese* philosophy. By criticising this philosophical tradition as easy-going, Tanaka believed that exact studies of Western classics alone could make true philosophy possible. For him, to read Plato's dialogues and to think with Plato was to face the fundamental issues of philosophy, namely the Good and reality, as his own problem.

The *Logos and Idea* ロゴスとイデア (Iwanami, 1947) contains eight articles originally published in *Shisō* between 1938 and 1943 (the dark period of Japanese totalitarianism and War).[9] Tanaka explained in the Postscript that this was a continuing and developing series of his philosophical consideration coming out of reading Plato and other Greek authors. As if the author holds a dialogue with himself, it guides readers to the philosophy of classical thinkers, above all Thucydides and Plato. He was looking at the depressing political and social situation of Japan through the critical eyes of Plato, in particular the *Politeia*.

The first chapter "*Genjitsu* 現実" examines what reality is.[10] Reality is not necessarily what we see as real. For this argument, he introduced and analysed the famous Melian dialogue of Thucydides, by which he might be asking whether Japan of 1942 (succeeding in occupation in South-East Asia) is the arrogant Athens or the reality-ignoring and self-comforting Melos. Whereas the Melians try to avoid seeing reality, the Athenians who believe they are the opposite, but they also escape from reality, and are destined to fall. He concluded that instead of adherence to reality, what we should rely upon is something beyond the present, i.e., something eternal. It is noticeable that he avoided the contrast between reality and *risō*. This sounds like a warning against his predecessors who used to appeal to *risō* easily and complacently. Tanaka's critical eyes saw the pathetic reality of an apparently victorious Japan through the historical learning of philosophy, above all Plato's philosophy of Ideas.

The penultimate chapter "*Meimoku* 名目" examines the relation

[8] When Tanaka was a student at Kyoto University, he attended Nishida's lectures but was critical of his method of philosophy and the enthusiastic followers of his philosophy.

[9] The first publication was "*Logos*" (1938), followed by "*Miso-logos*" (1939), "Time" (1941), "*Genjitsu* (reality)" (1942) and "Future", "*Meimoku* (nominal)", "Past", "Idea" (1943).

[10] Originally published in November 1942 (*Shisō* 246, pp.265-89).

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between "*onoma*" (name) and "*logos*" (using Plato's *Cratylus*).[11] Despite the outlook of a strictly academic discussion, its underlying message is clear in choosing this slightly unusual topic. He first says "those who are deceived by the nominal, seeking for life, have to get death instead"; "People fear or yearn for names, and die for or live for them, but it is not certain if they are right". The "nominal" prevailing in 1943 are such gallant words as "*Tennō-heika* 天皇陛下 (Emperor)", "*Dai-Nippon Teikoku* 大日本帝国 (Great Japanese Empire)" and "*Dai-tōwa Kyōei-ken* 大東亜共栄圏 (Great East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere)". Younger men, including many students of Tanaka, were sent to the battlefields to kill and be killed in the name of these. Tanaka calmly analysed and criticised the mechanism of "deception by the nominal" in the philosophical method.

The final chapter "*Idea* イデア" (1943) is the culmination of a discussion of the potentiality of Plato's philosophy of Ideas, based on the *Politeia*.[12] Tanaka protests against Japanese society and human life in general in an academic fashion:

> If what we rely upon is immediately lost and our entire existence is shaken from the very bottom, what shall we live on? When desperate endeavour with death in mind does not save us from the present situation and every hope becomes empty, we should hold something to believe, even in dying. But it will be pathetic if one lives or dies being deceived by nominal things. But if there is nothing other than what is called "reality", one can only despair and throw oneself upon the nominal, when that "reality" collapses. Yet, Socrates never despaired in life or in facing death. What did he rely upon? That is a mystery. But Plato took it to be Forms as "*risō*". (p. 290)

Here we hear a deep wrath against the situation, which was like a shadow deep in the Cave. Tanaka firmly believed that, in order to see reality, we must seek the absolute truth and standards. We should not *idealise* the reality, but investigate the Platonic Ideas as distinct from what we think as "reality", for practical problems. This, I believe, is what Tanaka learned from the *Politeia* and other dialogues through his own hard experience.[13]

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[11] Originally published in May 1943 in the name of "*Onoma*" (*Shisō* 252, pp.288-312).

[12] Originally published in three parts in October, November, and December 1943 (*Shisō* 257, pp.560-85, 258, pp.623-29, 42, 259, pp.643-66).

[13] Kumano Sumihiko 熊野純彦, after examining the Kyoto School philosophers, favourably comments on two scholars of ancient philosophy, Tanaka Michitaro and Ide Takashi 出隆 (1892-1980) as a very few philosophers who clearly saw their

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9. Innocent Plato in Post-War Japan

Plato's *Politeia* was used (misused or abused) by several nationalist ideologues and educators, but post-war academics made no serious reflection on or criticism of his philosophy. Soon after the end of the Second World War, Tanaka Michitarō focused once again on the *Politeia,* publishing a few articles to demonstrate that the Ideal State of the *Politeia* shows the right ideal for a new Japan. He became professor of ancient philosophy at Kyoto University in 1947 (until 1965), and his influence continued to make Plato one of the central figures in philosophical studies in Japan.

Kanokogi Kazunobu interestingly returned from fanatic Tennōism to Plato when he was in Sugamo Prison as a Class A war criminal suspect. In the last few years of his life, he was involved in translating the *Politeia*. However, this project remained unfinished due to his death in 1949. Kanokogi believed that Plato's *Politeia* would be the key to a new Japan after its defeat in the Second World War.

Finally in contrast to the huge controversy in Europe and America, the severe criticisms against Plato raised by Karl Popper[14] and others did not affect Platonic scholars in Japan. Fujisawa Norio 藤澤令夫 (1925–2004) and Saitō Ninzui 斎藤忍随 (1917-86), leading Plato scholars in Kyoto and Tokyo, flatly rejected it as a sheer misunderstanding or a malicious accusation. At least among the scholars of ancient philosophy, no serious reconsideration or criticism was made concerning the pre-war reading of Plato's *Politeia*. On the other hand, the title *Risō-koku* 理想国 ceased to be used probably because it reminded Japanese people of the failed attempt of pre-war modernisation and idealism.

While I do not discuss now the more recent studies of the *Politeia* (mostly sharing the topics of the Anglo-analytic philosophers), I believe that we should be seeking a future approach to the *Politeia*, by reflecting on the past.

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time through Greek Philosophy (*Nihon-tetsugaku Shōshi* 日本哲学小史 (*A Brief History of Japanese Philosophy*), Chūkō Shinsho 2009, pp.124-37).

[14] Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (the 1950 edition) was published in Japanese by Miraisha in 1980.

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Appendix: Japanese Translations of the *Politeia*

As we saw, Kimura Takatarō published a complete translation of Plato's dialogues (from Benjamin Jowett's English edition) in 5 volumes between 1903 and 1911. While several other dialogues of Plato were later translated directly from the original Greek texts, beginning with the *Apology* and the *Crito* in 1921 by Kubo Masaru 久保勉 (1883–1972), Kimura's translation was the only set of the complete works that appeared before the Second World War. As for the *Politeia*, there were three other translations made from modern European translations: Tasei Sukeshige 田制佐重 included a partial translation (up to Book 7) in an educational series in 1924; Tsukui Tatsuo 津久井龍雄 (1901–89) paraphrased Plato's work in a social philosophy series in 1925; and Muramatsu Masatoshi 村松正俊 published a full translation in 1928. Through these translations and several other summaries, the Japanese became familiar with this masterpiece. It should be noted that one of the translators, Tsukui Tatsuo, was a national socialist and later became a right-wing ideologue. In addition to the translations, a few scholarly guidebooks on the *Politeia* were published, including Kubo Masaru's monograph *Plato's Kokka* プラトン 国家篇 in the Iwanami "Great Thinkers" series (1936), in which he analyses Plato's arguments.

Just after the Second World War, three new translations from the Greek text appeared: Aoki Iwao 青木巖 (1900–73) translated it in 2 volumes in 1948; Okada Shōzō 岡田正三 (1902–80) included it in volumes 7 and 8 of his Complete Translation (12 volumes) in 1948; and Nagasawa Nobuhisa 長澤信寿 (1897–1972) published the first half of the *Politeia* in 2 volumes in 1949–52. However, these translations were not widely popular. Later, more popular translations were available by Yamamoto Mitsuo 山本光雄 (1905–81), originally published in 1955, and by Fujisawa Norio. Fujisawa initially translated the dialogue together with his colleagues twice, in 1969 and 1970, and he finally included a full translation of his own with notes and introduction in volume 11 of the *Iwanami Complete Works of Plato* 岩波プラトン全集 in 1976. This version was included in the *Iwanami-bunko* 岩波文庫 paperback series in 2 volumes in 1979 and has become the standard translation.

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Chapter Twelve

Plato in *Eretz-Israel*

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I. Introductory

My title is not accidental. Plato in Mediaeval Judaism is a different issue altogether. *That* Plato was never part of general Jewish culture: it belonged among the philosophically educated, and it was, of course, a "truncated" Plato, and in Arabic translation.[1] What we call Classical literature, either in its Greek or in its Latin form (or, later, in both), has never been an essential part of Jewish culture, as it has been in Byzantine and in Western European civilisations. For the average educated Jew, the classics were the Hebrew Bible and—especially—the Talmud and the so-called rabbinic literature which grew in the footsteps of Talmudic literature. The little he knew about ancient Greece and Rome came from such third-remove sources as *Sefer Yosippon*, a tenth century potted history, in Hebrew, of the Second Temple period, based on Latin translations of Josephus. Very few Jews knew any language except Hebrew and Aramaic—the languages of their sacred literature—and the local language which they spoke and often adapted into a Jewish dialect such as Jewish Arabic, Yiddish, or Ladino. The great literature of Alexandrian Jewry never became part of mainstream Jewish tradition, and what has remained of it, in Greek and in translations—including some of the Books of Maccabees and the writings of Philo of Alexandria—we owe to the Christian tradition. Even from the eighteenth century on, when more and more European Jews joined the

[1] In a recent Hebrew book (דב שוורץ, *רחוק וקרוב,—הגות יהודית בביזנטיון בשלהי ימי הבינים,* ירושלם 2016), Professor Dov Schwartz introduces us to a number of late Byzantine Hebrew thinkers who had direct access to Plato (and other ancient philosophers) in Greek. Whatever Platonic ideas they included in their—mainly theological—discussions never became part of mainstream Jewish thought.

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circles of the Jewish *Haskala*, Enlightenment, what most of them studied was first and foremost the great European languages, especially German and Russian, and the “enlightened and enlightening” literature in those languages, which would take them out of their Hebrew and Aramaic “Ghetto” into the great light of their contemporary Europe. Some modern educated Jews who took an active part in their surrounding literary and philosophical culture did occupy themselves with Plato and his philosophy: but they did it in their capacity as ‘others’, and in the languages of the surrounding society. Let me give two examples.[2]

a. In 1767, when he had already established himself as one of Germany’s leading philosophers, Moses Mendelssohn published a book called *Phädon, oder über die Unsterblichkeit der Seele*. This book confirmed his, already considerable, reputation as a philosopher, and he was now called by many “the German Socrates” or “the German Plato”. The book is divided into three *Gespräche*, and the speakers are familiar to the reader of Plato’s namesake dialogue: Echecrates, Phaedo, Simias, Cebes, and Socrates. The frame-story is taken almost verbally from Plato. But the arguments presented are adapted to philosophy as it has developed since Plato. As the author says in his preface,

> Ich habe mir die Einkleidung, Anordnung und Beredsamkeit desselben {Platos} zu Nutze gemacht und nur die metaphysischen Beweisthümer nach dem Geschmacke unserer Zeiten einzurichten gesucht... In dem dritten Gespräche mußte ich völlig zu den Neuern meine Zuflucht nehmen... Meine Absicht war nicht, anzuzeigen, welche Gründe der Griechische Weltweise zu seiner Zeit gehabt, die Unsterblischkeit der Seele zu glauben, sondern, waß ein Mann wie Sokrates, der seinen Glauben gern auf Vernunft gründet, in unsern Tagen, nach den Bemühungen so vieler großen Köpfe, für gründe finden würde, seine Seele für unsterblish zu halten.

Faithful to the fictional dialogic form of the book, set in ancient Athens,

[2] A popular work on “universal history” by Kalman Schulmann, published in Wilno (now Vilnius) in 1872, ספר דברי ימי עולם יכלכל תולדות בני האדם והעתים אשר עברו על כל ממלכות תבל מימות עולם, תולדות החכמות והמדעים וחרשת המעשה, תולדות בני ישראל מימי החשמונאים עד היום הזה, תולדות גדולי ישראל אנשי השם בכל דור ודור ותולדות ההשכלה בישראל מימי הר’ משה בן מנחם ז"ל עד ימינו אלה מאֻסף מבחירי החכמים והסופרים יודעי העתים על-ידי קלמן שולמאן, חלק ראשון, נדפס בפעם הראשונה בשנת תרכ"ה ועתה בפעם השניה ובתוספות רבות, ווילנא בדפוס האלמנה והאחים ראם, בשנת תרל"ב, contained in its first volume a chapter on Greek philosophy, with a section on Plato on pp. 166-173. Needless to say, this short section did not create a “Platonic revival”, or a major interest in Plato, among Hebrew readers. I owe this information to Professor Aminadav Dykman.

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the author does not quote modern authorities; but as he notes in the preface,

> Wenn ich hätte Schriftsteller ausführen mögen, so wäre die Namen Plotinus, Descartes, Leibnitz, Wolf, Baumgarten, Reimarus u. a. oft vorgekommen.

He does, however, add in later editions an *Anhang, einige Einwürfe betreffend, die dem Verfasser gemacht worden sind*. There he speaks entirely in his own person. But one notes that this is the work of "the German Mendelssohn" directed at the German (and international) readership, and there is nothing Jewish about it. It is not part of the work of "the Jewish Mendelssohn", written partly in Hebrew and partly in German and addressed directly to his Jewish readership with an aim of bringing them closer to the spirit of the Enlightenment without impairing their Jewish faith and practices. Those works exist in an entirely different compartment.[3]

b. Hermann Cohen wrote his doctoral dissertation in 1865 in Berlin, supervised by that great scholar of Greek philosophy Adolf Trendelenburg. Its title was *Philosophorum de Antinomia Necessitatis et Contigentiae doctrinae*. In the following year, 1866, he published his first article, "Die Platonische Ideenlehre Psychologisch Entwickelt," in *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie*, 1866, iv. 9. Most of his work as a member of the Neo-Kantian Marburg School (and a colleague of the Kantian Platonist Paul Natorp) was concerned with his own philosophy, strongly infused with the Kantianism of the school. But some years later he published a book on Plato's theory of Ideas, *Platon's Ideenlehre und die Mathematik*, Marburg, 1878. Cohen was not a fully assimilated Jew, a "German of Jewish descent". He was, in his own liberal way, an observant Jew, and he never forgot the extensive Jewish education, including a close familiarity with Talmudic and later rabbinic sources in the original Hebrew and Aramaic, which his father the cantor gave him in his youth. Indeed, his great systematic book, which was published posthumously by his widow in Leipzig in 1919, *Die Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums*, is full of references to rabbinic sources, and an appendix on pp. 545-552

[3] Twenty years later, a Hebrew translation was published in Berlin: פעדאן - הוא השארת הנפש להחכם השלם רבינו משה מענדעלסזאהן העתיקו משפת אשכנזית המשכיל רבי ישי בער יצ"ו ברלין בדפוס חברת נערים שנת תקמ"ז) 1787). As far as we know, it did not exercise any considerable influence on Hebrew literature, and it certainly did not bring about a discovery of Plato in Hebrew circles. I owe this information to Professor Aminadav Dykman.

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cites in full, in Hebrew and Aramaic, the texts which he mentions in the work itself, from the Hebrew Bible down to Maimonides and Ibn Pakuda. Plato figures quite widely in this book, as a look at the entry *Platon* in the index on p. 603 will show. Cohen even does, in various places in this book, compare some Platonic ideas with traditional Jewish ideas. But all this should not mislead us. Cohen wrote whatever he wrote for the general, and mainly the German, public. He believed that Jewish ethical standards could (and should) combine with German enlightenment to produce a new and superior philosophical civilisation. But this is exactly what made him an opponent of Zionism and of any form of Jewish nationalism. I do not know how far he may have been familiar as a reader with the modern Hebrew literature which was already flourishing in his later years; but he made no contribution to this Hebrew literature, and regarded himself as a German member of a superior religion. His view is not free of contradictions. He writes, for example (35-36):

> Aber so sehr diese, als messianische Religion, von Anbeginn an, auf die Weltreligion anstrebt, so ist sie doch in der ganzen Zeit ihrer Entwicklung bei allen Einflüssen, deren sie teilhaft geworden ist, überall ein einheitliche Erzeugnis des jüdischen Volksgeistes gewesen und geblieben.

How one reconciles such an obvious contradiction—especially since *das Germanentum* was also claiming its own status as a *Volksgeist*, especially after 1871—is another problem. It is not the only contradiction in Cohen's courageous attempt to unite *res olim dissociabiles* into a new Kantian amalgam. What matters to us is that Cohen's preoccupation with Plato, just like Mendelssohn's, belongs to his German, not to his Jewish, *persona*.

One more figure comes to mind: the only serious representative of the *Haskala* movement who was also the author of a significant work of philosophy, this time in Hebrew. Nachman Krochmal, 1785-1840, was one of the leading figures in the history of the *Haskala* movement in Galicia, a part of Poland which was then ruled by the Austrian empire. He spent most of his life plagued by various illnesses and eking out an existence as a shopkeeper. In his spare time, he studied not only German (the language of the state), in the literature and philosophy of which he was entirely at home, but also Latin, French, and some Arabic. There is, however, no evidence that he ever studied Greek. On his death he left a plethora of writings on philosophy and Jewish History, and in his will, he asked the great German Jewish scholar Leopold (Yom-Tov Lipmann) Zunz to prepare them for publication. They came out as a book, edited by Zunz, in 1851: *מורה נבוכי הזמן* (*Guide to the Perplexed of our Time*). The book

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presents a new philosophical view of history, based mainly on the philosophy of Hegel, but employing also arguments taken from other German idealists, to show that the Jews, unlike any other culture, are not bound by the laws of growth and decay, but are an eternal representative of "Absolute Spirit" (הרוחני המוחלט). It also has many purely historical chapters which were written in support of such a philosophical thesis. There is no evidence in the whole work of a first-hand familiarity with Plato, who is often casually mentioned, or with Greek philosophy. Indeed, even in the section on Philo, Krochmal refers to German translations and cites Philonian concepts in German.

For the average Jew who was not afraid of *Haskala*, Krochmal's work was the one example of modern philosophy made available in Hebrew. We have to wait for another sixty-three years before the first appearance of Plato—this time as proper Plato—in Jewish literature: in Hebrew, and in the new Jewish community in *Eretz Israel*, the Land of Israel.[4]

II. Translations into Hebrew

Some time in 1914, a Hebrew translation of Plato's *Symposium* was published in the new Jewish suburb of Jaffa which, four years earlier, had been given the Biblical name (*Ezekiel* 3 15) of Tel Aviv. The translator was Asher Ben-Israel (1887-1958), a secondary school teacher who had studied in the Jerusalem Teachers Training Seminary (הסמינר למורים העברי) founded by the Hebrew and Semitic scholar David Yellin and now called after him the David Yellin College. At the time, Ben-Israel was at home—apart from Hebrew and Yiddish on which he had been brought up in his

[4] My choice of this name has no political or religious connotations. It would be next to impossible to find one agreed-upon name for the territory between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean which would not upset someone these days. During the period discussed here, this part of the Middle East began as a section of the Syrian province of the Ottoman Empire. It then (1922) turned into a part (and later the whole) of the British Mandate of Palestine, known in Arabic as *Filastin* and in Hebrew as *Palestina (Eretz-Israel)*: the famous פלשתינה א"י, "Palestina A"I ". Its Jewish denizens always called it by the Biblical Hebrew name *Eretz-Israel*, "The Land of Israel" (e.g., I Sam. 13 19; II Kings 5 2). When the State of Israel was established in 1947 on what was only a part of the Biblical Land of Israel, it was called "the *State* of Israel", in order not to give the name of the whole Biblical land to the temporary boundaries delineated by the UN decision to divide it between the Jewish and the Arab inhabitants. Since we are dealing here with an issue which is part of the culture of the Jews living in this much-disputed territory, I have used the term current among these Jews.

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childhood in Safad—also in German and German literature, which he was taught extensively in the Seminary. In later life, he completed a PhD thesis in mediaeval Arabic-Jewish philosophy at the Sorbonne, taught in schools in Jerusalem, translated works of French and Yiddish literature, and published school editions of some mediaeval Jewish philosophical classics. As homage to his native land and city he published in 1936 a collection of *Legends of Eretz-Israel*, and in 1960 a collection of Safad stories and studies of Jewish mysticism. There is no evidence that Ben-Israel had any special interest in non-Jewish philosophy, and he certainly had no Classical education. The initiative for this translation came most probably from the publisher, the renowned (at the time) Hebrew writer, critic and literary *entrepreneur* Alexander Süsskind Rabinowitz (1854-1945), better known by his initials as "Azar" (אז"ר), who was the publisher of this and other works of world literature in Hebrew translation in a series called *Japheth* (יפת: a common Hebrew appellation for Western gentiles), which also included some of the classics of German, Russian, French and English literature in Hebrew. German was, at the time, one of the two *langues de culture* among the new Jewish population of Eretz-Israel (the other being French). In a Hebrew article investigating this translation and its background I have shown that Ben-Israel translated the *Symposium* not from the Greek, which he did not know, but from two recent German translations by Rudolf Kassner (1910) and Kurt Hildebrandt (1912).[5] To the best of my knowledge, this was the first ever Hebrew translation of this particular dialogue, and most probably of any Platonic dialogue.

A Hebrew scholar, writer and admirer of Plato who did have some Classical education soon came to the rescue and, not long after his arrival in Jerusalem, cooperated with an idealist Hebrew publisher of a philosophical series in launching what was to be a series of translations of Plato's dialogues into Hebrew.

In 1929, a volume came out in Jerusalem in "The Philosophical Library, published by Dr. Jehuda Junovitsch". It was "Plato, Translated from Greek into Hebrew, in twelve volumes, volume 1." The editor of this volume was Professor Dr. Joseph Klausner, and it contained translations of *Symposium* by Dr. Shaul Tschernichowski, with introduction and notes by the editor; *Euthyphro*, *Laches*, *Apology*, and *Crito,* with introductions and notes, by Aryeh (Leon) Simon, and *Phaedo*, with an introduction and notes, by Dr. Joseph Elijah Heller.[6] This was destined to remain the only volume in the

[5] יוחנן גלוקר, 'התרגום העברי הראשון של המשתה', ("The First Hebrew Translation of Plato's *Symposium*",) *Textus* XXV, Jerusalem 2010 (Dedicated to David Weissert), pp. 141-162 (original Hebrew), 163 (short English summary).

[6] ספריה פילוסופית יו"ל ע"י ד"ר יהודה יונוביץ. אפלטון, מתורגם מיוונית לעברית בשנים עשר

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projected series, since Junovitsch received meagre support "from the national Hebrew public", and his small and private publishing company soon became bankrupt. But it was the harbinger of a series of translations from the original Greek to follow in the next decades.[7]

Jehuda Junovitsch, 1878-1948,[8] son of the Rabbi of Sebastopol, studied philosophy and obtained his PhD in philosophy at the University of Straßburg (as it was then) in 1905. After a long teaching career in Russia and in Eretz-Israel, he founded in 1920 his own publishing company, dedicated to the publication of the classics of European and mediaeval Jewish philosophy in Hebrew. The series included Junovitsch' own Hebrew translations of the opening sections of Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1923) and of Kants *Zum Ewigen Frieden* (1926), as well as a revised edition (by Issachar Joel, following the edition of Salomon Munk) of the original Arabic text of Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* (1931).

The volume editor, Joseph Klausner, 1874-1958, had a distinguished career behind him when he arrived in Eretz-Israel in 1919. He had been the second editor, after the great founder Ahad Ha-Am (Asher Ginzburg), of the leading Hebrew literary periodical of the time, *Ha-Shiloah (השלח)*. He studied in Heidelberg, where he wrote a dissertation (later one of his major published works) on "The Messianic Idea in Judaism", and between 1907 and 1919 was at the head of the Hebrew Teachers' Seminar ("The Yeshiva") in Odessa, where he taught Hebrew literature and Jewish

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כרכים, כרך ראשון, המתרגמים ד״ר שאול טשרניחובסקי, א. סימון, ד״ר י. א. הלר, העורך פרופסור ד״ר יוסף קלוזנר. ירושלים תרפ״ט/1929. In his introductory remarks on the third page, Junovitsch says that he intends to produce the other eleven volumes, and a volume of index and bibliography, as soon as possible, ״ושבעוד שנים אחדות נוכל לברך על המוגמר, אם רק אמצא את הסיוע הדרוש, המוסרי והחמרי, מצד הצבור העברי והלאומי״ (And that in a few years' time we shall be able to complete the project, provided that I find the necessary moral and material support on the part of the national Hebrew public).

[7] This translation was used as late as 1942 (תש״ב) in a little volume in a series of "School Classics" (ספרי מופת לבתי הספר, מספר 4) published by The Reali School of Haifa. This particular "school classic" was called *Socrates and his Doctrines, from the Works of Plato* (סוקרטיס ומשנתו, מתוך כתבי אפלטון). The editor of this volume was Leon Roth, and all the passages included in it—parts of the last section of *Symposium*, the whole of *Apology* and *Crito*, and the final section of *Phaedo*—are taken from this 1929 volume. It soon became a popular school text: my own copy is "fifteenth impression, 1972", when all these dialogues were available also in Liebes' translation (on which soon).

[8] See G. Kressel, *Cyclopedia of Modern Hebrew Literature* (לכסיקון הספרות העברית בדורות האחרונים), Vol. II, Merhavia 1967, 67-68. I have used this extremely useful work for some of the other Hebrew literary figures as well.

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history. When the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was opened in 1925, Klausner became the first Professor of Modern Hebrew Literature and the founder of its Literature Department. This was his real *forte*. Beside editing *Ha-Shiloah*, he also discovered and published little known works of Hebrew literature, republished some of the classics of *Haskala* literature, and was the friend and literary patron of some of the greatest writers of his age, such as Bialik and Tschernichowski. It was he who encouraged Tschernichowski, whose passion for ancient Greek was well-known, to translate Plato's *Symposium* (first published in the 1929 volume) and *Phaedrus* (on which below). His *History of Modern Hebrew Literature* (היסטוריה של הספרות העברית החדשה), six volumes, Jerusalem 1936-1950 and reprints, is still a standard work—if only for the amount of information it offers and for the extensive bibliographies. On his own rather meagre and dubious contribution to explaining Plato to the Hebrew reader we shall have something to say in another section of this article.

Shaul Tschernichowski, 1875-1943, needs no introduction to anyone even slightly at home in modern Hebrew literature. He is one of the three greatest poets in the whole history of modern Hebrew literature, the other two being Chaim Nachman Bialik and Uri Zvi Greenberg. Apart from his magnificent corpus of poetry—including almost every poetic genre: ballads, sonnets, idyls, hymns, occasional, and narrative poems—he was also an indefatigable translator into Hebrew from many European languages. Beside Plato's *Symposium*, he also translated from the Greek Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* (1928-9), and Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (1930; 1940). His knowledge of Western literature in the original languages was as phenomenal as his productivity (in his spare time from his work as a paediatrician), and he translated, among other works, the Finnish epic *Kalevala*, Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, Henrietta Marshall's *Wilhelm Tell*, and Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. But his love for everything Greek was supreme, and not a few of his most famous Hebrew poems were on Greek themes—perhaps the most famous (and somewhat notorious) of them being *Before a Statue of Apollo*, in which he expresses his clear preference for ancient Greek over traditional Jewish culture. Tschernichowski's close friendship with Klausner began during his stay in Odessa between 1890 and 1896, when Klausner introduced him to the circle of Hebrew writers living in what was then (and for many years to come) one of the centres of Hebrew literature, and supported him in his first steps as a published Hebrew poet. It was confirmed during their years of study in Heidelberg, where Klausner studied in the Faculty of Humanities between 1897 and

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1902, while Tschernichowski studied medicine between 1899 and 1906.[9] Klausner remained a close friend and a staunch supporter of the doctor-poet, and it was he who suggested to Junovitsch that he should ask Tschernichowski to translate some Platonic dialogues, the obvious ones for a poet being *Symposium*, which was published in our 1929 volume, and *Phaedrus*, which Tschernichowski translated, but which fell overboard from a ship in which he sailed to Constantinople in 1928.[10] Klausner claims that Tschernichowski later made a new translation of this dialogue and delivered it to him, but he (Klausner) gave it to Junovitsch, and that is the last we hear of it.[11] His translation of *Symposium* was reprinted in 1947 by Schocken Publishers, Tel Aviv, who had by then acquired the copyright of all his works, and this separate edition went through a number of reprints in the following years.

The other two translators bring us to London. Aryeh Simon, known in England as Leon Simon, (Southampton 1881-London 1965), was given a thorough Hebrew education by his father, a rabbi in Manchester. He studied the Classics ("Mods and Greats") in Balliol College, Oxford, graduating with honours in 1902. Most of his life he was a civil servant in the British General Post Office. He was one of the inventors of the Post Office Savings Bank, and was knighted in 1944 for his services to the Post Office. Between his retirement in 1946 and his return to London in 1953 he lived in Jerusalem and was head of the board of directors and acting president of the Hebrew University. He was probably the first native-born English writer of modern Hebrew. During the years of Ahad Ha-Am's residence in London, 1907-1922, Simon, together with Heller and a few other young British Zionists, belonged to a circle of pupils and admirers; and in 1956 he published, in collaboration with Heller, a two-volume Hebrew *magnum opus* on *Ahad Ha-Am, the Man, his Work and Doctrines*. Simon began his activities as a Hebrew writer with a series of articles on ancient Greek literature which he published in 1910 in Klausner's *Ha-*

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[9] See Klausnert's autobiograp*hy:* פרופסור יוסף קלוזנר, *דרכי לקראת התחיה והגאולה*, תל-אביב וירושלים תש"ו, עמודים 32-37.

[10] See the latest, and fullest, biography of Tschernichowski: עידו בסוק, *ליופי ונשגב לבו עד: שאול טשרניחובסקי — חיים*, Carmel, Jerusalem, 2017, third printing, pp. 284; 314-315 and notes.

[11] יוסף קלוזנר, *שאול טשרניחובסקי האדם והמשורר*, ירושלים תש"ז, עמודים 155-156: "טשרניחובסקי תירגם באותם הימים {בתחלת שנות ה-20} גם את "פידרוס" לאפלטון, אך מכיון שיָצא אז תרגום עברי ל"פידרוס" של ד"ר צ. דיזנדרוק לא נדפס תרגומו של טשרניחובסקי וחוששני שהלך לאיבוד." שם, עמוד 156, הערה 15: "הוא היה בידי והחזרתיו לד"ר י. יונוביץ, שהיה המו"ל של "כתבי אפלטון" ". שם עמוד 341: "היה בידי גם תרגום ל "פידרוס" משל טשרניחובסקי, אך מסיבות שונות לא נדפס עד היום, ואפשר שאבד."

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Shiloah—later (1955) to be published as a Hebrew book, *Chapters in Ancient Greek Literature*. Beside his translations in the 1929 volume, he later translated into Hebrew Plato's *Theaetetus* (Jerusalem 1934), *Protagoras* (Jerusalem 1935), *Meno* (Jerusalem 1938), and Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (Jerusalem 1960). All these translations (including the 1929 dialogues, which became separate volumes later) went through many reprints and are still available today.

Joseph Elijah Heller was born in Lithuania in 1988, and studied in the Universities of St. Petersburg and Berlin (PhD 1928). After some years in Germany as editor of the Jewish encyclopaedia *Eschkol*, he came to London, where he taught in a rabbinic training college, edited the Hebrew periodical *Tarbut*, and died in 1957. Like Leon Simon, he was also a member of the (informal) Ahad Ha-Am circle, and collaborated with Simon on the great biography of Ahad Ha-Am (see above), to which he contributed the philosophical part. Apart from his translation of *Phaedo* in the 1929 volume, he also published a translation of *Phaedrus* (Jerusalem 1957). Both were reprinted many times and are still available.

During the same period, the 1920s and the 1930s, another Hebrew student of philosophy was active in translating Platonic dialogues—as far as I know, independently of Kalusner's project. Zvi Diesendruck was born in 1890 in Satri, Galicia, in the Austrian Empire, and was brought to Vienna as a child. He studied in schools in Vienna, spent the years 1913-1915 in Ottoman Eretz-Israel, was in Berlin in 1915, and in the last two years of the First World War, 1916-1918, served in the Austrian army. He continued his studies at the University of Vienna, and obtained the degree of PhD in philosophy in 1924. Between 1928 and 1930 he taught philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Some time in the 1930s he emigrated to the United States, and until his death in 1940 he taught philosophy at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. During his years in Vienna, he taught at the Jewish *Pedagogium*, and collaborated with the Hebrew writer Gerschon Schoffmann in editing a short-lived Hebrew periodical *Gevulot*. In addition to all these wanderings and activities, he found the time to translate into Hebrew some Platonic dialogues. *Phaedrus, or On the Beautiful* (פידרוס, או על היפה) was published by A. Y. Stiebel in Warsaw in 1923; *Gorgias, or on Rhetoric* (גורגיאס, או על הדברנות[12]) by the same publishing house in its Berlin branch in 1928; and *The State* (המדינה) was published by the Mizpeh, a co-publisher with Stiebel in Tel-Aviv, in three volumes in 1935-6.[13] Meanwhile, in 1934, he

[12] Obviously, a Hebrew rendering of German "Beredsamkeit".

[13] This translation was abridged and edited, in one volume, by Leon Roth in the

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also published a translation of *Crito, or On what Should be Done* (קריטון, או על הראוי לעשות) in volume 24, 1934, of the Hebrew literary periodical *Ha-Tekufah* (התקופה), which was published in Warsaw by the same Stiebel and edited by the great writer and critic David Frischmann.[14]

Thus, by 1957, twelve out of the thirty-five dialogues included in the MSS of the Platonic corpus were already available in Hebrew translations—two of them in two translations. They were: *Euthyphro* (1929); *Apology* (1929); *Crito* (1929; 1934); *Phaedo* (1929); *Symposium* (1929);[15] *Phaedrus* (1923; 1957); *Laches* (1929); *Protagoras* (1935); *Gorgias* (1928); *Meno* (1938); *Republic* ("*The State*" 1935-6); *Theaetetus* (1934).

Tschernichowski's 1929 translation of *Symposium* was made available in a separate volume by Schocken in 1947. Selections from *Apology*, *Crito* and *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and from *Republic* were also available in a series of school classics, in which they were edited by Leon Roth.[16] Four of the other dialogues, *Phaedrus*, *Protagoras*, *Meno*, and *Theaetetus* were available as separate volumes in the series of "Philosophical Classics", founded and supervised by Leon Roth and published by The Magnes Press of the Hebrew University. They are still available today.

It appears that, beside Klausner, Roth—who was a proper philosopher and a Classical scholar—played an active role in making Platonic dialogues available in Hebrew. Leon Roth, חיים יהודה רות, was born in London in 1896 and died on a lecture tour of New Zealand in 1963. Having obtained a double first in Oxford, in Post-Biblical Hebrew Studies and in the Classics ("Greats"), he was a lecturer in the University of Manchester, 1923-1928, and later in 1928 he became the first Ahad Ha-Am Professor of Philosophy, one of the two founders of the Department of Philosophy, at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 1940-1943, he was Rector of the University. He retired in 1953. In his first years as a university teacher he worked on Descartes, Spinoza and the influence of Maimonides on early modern philosophy. Following the publication, from manuscripts which he discovered, of his *Correspondence of Descartes and Constantyn Huygens 1635-1647*, he was elected an *Officier d'Académie* in

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"School Classics" (ספרי מופת לבתי הספר) series of the Reali School in Haifa (see note 7 above) in 1944, and went through six impressions at least in the following twenty years: ספר המדינה לאפלטון, על פי תרגומו של צבי דיזנדרוק ז״ל, מקוצר וערוך ע״י ח״י רות).

[14] This translation is available online:
http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/kitveyet/hatkufa/aplaton-4.htm

[15] Nor including Ben-Israel's 1914 translation, which was made from German, not from Greek. See note 2 and context.

[16] See notes 4 and 10 above.

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1926. In 1948 he was elected Fellow of the British Academy.[17] During his years in Eretz-Israel he devoted much of his time to making philosophy speak modern Hebrew. His love for ancient philosophy was almost boundless, and he taught most of the ancient philosophy courses at the Hebrew University. Roth himself translated only some of Aristotle's works; but he was one of the driving forces behind the publication of school editions and of separate volumes of Platonic texts. It was largely on his initiative that his fellow British Hebraists Simon and Heller translated, beside the 1929 dialogues, also *Theaetetus*, *Protagoras* and *Phaedrus*, which all appeared in his own Magnes Press series of "Philosophical Classics". His contributions to making Plato more accessible to the Hebrew reader include, of course, editing the two volumes in the Reali School Classics.[18] His popular Hebrew works about Plato and ancient philosophy in general will be discussed in the next section.

The task of translating the whole of the Platonic corpus from Greek into Hebrew was undertaken in 1955 by Yosef Gerhard Liebes, and he completed the work when the fifth volume was published by Schocken in Tel-Aviv in 1966. Liebes was born in 1910 in San Salvador to his father Leo Liebes, a German-Jewish entrepreneur who was co-founder there, in 1888, of the export company known, from 1908, as Casa Goldtree-Liebes, a family business which has survived, under various names, well into the twenty-first century.[19] His son, Yosef Gerhard, grew up in Hamburg, where he studied ancient Greek and Latin in a humanist *Gymnasium*. He spent the year 1928 studying at the Hebrew University, mainly Jewish subjects. Later in the same year he returned to Germany and studied Classics at the Universities of Heidelberg and Berlin. His work towards the doctorate was terminated when the National Socialist Party came to power in 1933, and he emigrated to Eretz-Israel with his first wife. For some years they lived in Pardes Hannah and grew oranges, while he continued his study of the Classics in his spare time. In 1941, having divorced his first wife and remarried, he moved to Jerusalem, where he spent the rest of his life. He died there in 1988. During his years in Jerusalem, he directed a small branch there of the family business, and spent his ample free time translating European classics into Hebrew. Among those translations are select poems of Hölderlin, Karl Wolfskehl's

[17] For more on Leon Roth see the Biographical Memoir by T. E. Jessup, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 50, 1963, 317-329, and www.leonroth.org/works-about-leon-roth. See in Hebrew זכרון לראשונים, חיים יהודה רות, in *קתרסיס* (*Katharsis*) 11, 2009, 196-200.

[18] See note 14 and context.

[19] http://exagroli.com/index-en.html

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Die Stimme spricht, selections from Virgil's *Aeneid*, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Anthony and Cleopatra*, and some of Plutarch's Roman biographies. In 1955, he was awarded the Tschernichowski Prize for translation. In the same year, he launched his project of translating the whole of Plato into Hebrew and published the first volume. During the years of translating Plato, he also found the time to translate, for the first time from the Greek, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Between 1961 and 1964 he was Vice President of the Hebrew University, but decided not to stand for reelection 'for his love of Plato and desire to continue with his translations'.[20]

In his introduction to Volume 1, Liebes states that the order of the dialogues in his translation will be "roughly" chronological—meaning that dialogues taken from each of the main chronological groups will appear as a group in their chronological place, but in no particular internal order. He also states that the text on which he will base his translation is John Burnet's Oxford Classical Text. In some places he acknowledges his indebtedness to former translators and commentators – to Cornford in translating *Parmenides*, or to Diès in translating *Laws*. But the final result is clearly his own. Here are the details of the five volumes:

Volume 1, 1955: *Protagoras, Ion, Hippias Minor, Laches, Charmides, Lysis, Apology, Crito, Euthyphro, Gorgias, Menexenus, Meno, Euthydemus, Cratylus*.
Volume 2, 1957: *Phaedo, Symposium, Politeia*.
Volume 3, 1959: *Parmenides, Theaetetus, Sophist, Statesman, Phaedrus, Philebus, Timaeus*.
Volume 4, 1964: *Critias, Laws*.
Volumes 5, 1966: *Letters, Epinomis, Clitopho, Theages, Hippias Major, Alcibiades 1-2, Minos, Hipparchus, Anterastae,*[21] Indices to all five volumes.

This is not the place to comment on the quality of the translations, and I have not investigated everything in the five volumes and compared the translations to the original.[22] I have only used Liebes' translations on those

[20] See the Hebrew daily מעריב (*Maariv*), 17 March 1964, 7.
[21] Liebes regarded all these dialogues, but not the letters, as spurious.
[22] One can always argue about the 'proper' rendering of a difficult Greek word. A notorious example is ἀρετή, where no single translation is adequate. Liebes translates it as סגולה טובה, roughly 'a good quality'. But in Hebrew, סגולה tends to imply permanence, while ἀρετή can be—has to be—acquired, and probably even lost, the question being only how. One of Liebes' more successful renderings is

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occasions when I had to teach a Platonic text to a Greekless or a mixed class in Israel. But the signs of haste are there, and can be discerned by any careful reader. To give but two examples: in *Meno* 85c, Liebes (Vol. 1, 439) omits lines 2-3. As a result, 85c4 which is a continuation of 2-3, becomes something of a *non sequitur*. In *Gorgias* 483a8, Liebes (ibid., 331) translates νόμῳ δὲ τὸ ἀδικεῖν as if it were νόμῳ δὲ τὸ ἀδικεῖσθαι, thus leaving us with a contrast between τὸ ἀδικεῖσθαι and... τὸ ἀδικεῖσθαι. I was told by the late Professor Yehuda Landau that he had found a whole paragraph of *Timaeus* missing in Liebes' translation. One could probably find other such examples. In the preface to Volume 1, Liebes thanks his friend the novelist and literary critic Yitzhak Shenhar (Schönberg) for reading the translation with him and improving the Hebrew style. In the preface to Volume 3, he laments the death of Shenhar, who read through the translations in Volume 2 as well. But Shenhar had no Greek and was no philosopher. It appears that there was no reader at hand to check the translations against the original, and the printer simply printed the translations as they were delivered to him by Liebes himself.

Be that as it may, the Hebrew reader now had at his disposal a translation into modern Israeli Hebrew of the whole of the Platonic corpus. Both admirers and critics of Liebes' translation agreed that, now that the five red volumes were readily available, it would take some time before anyone would bother to make a new translation of any of the dialogues—also considering that publishers would hesitate before producing new translations now that the whole corpus was within easy reach.

And indeed, the next two translations of Platonic dialogues appeared in the same year, 2001, exactly thirty-five years after the last volumes of Liebes' translation. They are Margalit Finkelberg's new translation of *Symposium* and Shimon Bouzaglo's *The Life and Death of Socrates*, which consists of new translations of *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, and parts of *Phaedo*. Margalit Finkelberg also published in 2009 a new translation of *Phaedrus*. Shimon Bouzaglo published in 2005 a new translation of the whole of *Phaedo*, and in 2013 a new translation of *Meno* and *Laches*. One notes that all these dialogues were available in Liebes' translation, the

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that of σωφροσύνη: ישוב הדעת. Readers of Hebrew will see how this Talmudic expression captures both the epistemological and the ethical aspects of this Greek term, acknowledged to be untranslatable already by Cicero. In *Euthyphro* Liebes renders ὅσιον and cognates as חסידות, a Hebrew word with so many meanings and historical reverberations that the reader may not see what it could mean in this context and why it should be related to justice. But is Simon's קדושה any better? Concepts like ὅσιον exemplify one of the difficulties inherent in reading Plato and other ancient philosophers in translation.

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Hebrew of which had not become obsolete by 2001, and that two of them (*Crito* and *Phaedrus*) had been available in one other translation each. As we have seen in the short biographical notes, these former translators were in no way unqualified for the work. What was the point of retranslating texts which one could read in Hebrew translation anyway rather than introduce into Hebrew literature works of Greek philosophy not yet available to the Israeli reader?

This was one of the main issues raised in a review of Finkelberg's translation of *Symposium* which I published on September 17, 2001 in the literary supplement of *Haaretz*, a supplement which devoted three full-scale broadsheet pages to articles, mostly epaenetic, about that translation.[23] Even in a fairly long article, I could not point out everything which I had found out about this translation. I take this opportunity to mention that the division of the dialogue into sections and the subtitles of these sections are not, as Finkelberg says in her introduction, "my own addition",[24] but are taken lock, stock, and barrel from Kenneth Dover's annotated edition, Cambridge 1980. The Hebrew reader can check this in any academic library. I did say that, by and large, the translation (by a professor of Greek) did not distort the meaning of the original, except in one crucial point, of which anon. The main issue was why the translator, and the publishers, thought that a third translation from the Greek, after Tschernichowski's and Liebes', was required. On page 14 of her introduction, Finkelberg writes (my translation): "In today's terms, one can compare the conversation which takes place in this dialogue to a conversation between intellectuals in a café. Hence, in order to convey in a useful manner the unique atmosphere of this Platonic dialogue, one should make it as close as possible to the language used by the present generation [of Hebrew-speaking intellectuals]". Using an example from all four Hebrew translations, I show that Finkelberg's Hebrew is no nearer the Hebrew spoken by Israeli intellectuals in 2001 than that of Tschernichowski's or Liebes'. But my main point is that *Symposium* is nothing like "a conversation between

[23] יוחנן גלוקר, ‘שיחת רעים בבית קפה? — לא ולא’, *הארץ, תרבות וספרות*, יום שני 17 בספטמבר 2001, עמודים 6 ו(המשך ב-) 8. Details of Finkelberg's translation: אפלטון, *המשתה*, תרגום מיוונית, מבוא והערות מרגלית פינקלברג, עם מאמרים מאת ורד לב כנען וחגי כנען, צחי זמיר, חרגול הוצאה לאור, תל-אביב 2001. (Plato, *Symposium*, translation from the Greek with introduction and notes by Margalit Finkelberg, with essays by Vered Lev Kenaan and Hagi Kenaan, and by Tzahi Zamir, Hargol Publishers, Tel-Aviv 2001.) My review is now availlable online:
https://dokumen.tips/documents/-563dba3d550346aa9aa3e0ae.html

[24] עמוד 15: "כותרות המשנה בדיאלוג הן תוספת שלי להקלת ההתמצאות ואינן במקור". The last two words are correct.

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intellectuals in a café". Here Finkelberg either misunderstood or mistranslated 177d2-3, ἕκαστον ἡμῶν λόγον εἰπεῖν ἔπαινον Ἔρωτος ἐπὶ δεξιὰ ὡς ἂν δύνηται κάλλιστον, as (her p. 31, my translation) "that each of us, from left to right in the order of seating, will offer as beautiful words as possible in praise of Eros".[25] These "beautiful words" have become, by the time she wrote her introduction, "a conversation between intellectuals in a café". This is to disregard both rhetorical terminology and the realities of the dialogue. Of course, λόγος is one of the most 'polysemic' words in Greek. But combined with the more technical ἔπαινος it would clearly mean "a *speech* of praise". And this is exactly what our symposiasts do: each of them in turn, and in his own manner, delivers a *speech* in praise of Eros. None of the speeches, not even that of the doctor Eryximachus, is couched in everyday language. One has to go to some parts of Aristophanes' comedies to get some impression of what everyday language was like (and one would in no way get such an impression from 'the same Aristophanes' speech in this dialogue). But if this is the case, then gone is the translator's own excuse for offering an "updated" Hebrew translation.

I shall not enter into the other articles in that issue of *Haaretz*, or to some of the ensuing debates, beginning with an article by Professor Ahuviah Kahane in the same supplement of *Haaretz* of October 12, 2001, which has nothing to say about the translation itself (except that Kahane himself is not entirely happy with it; why? αὐτὸς ἔφα), and everything to say against those creatures of his imagination, the Philological Hobgoblins who stand at the entrance to the cave and allow no translation to enter—chief among them my own unhappy self. Needless to say, whatever some Classical philologists may have said was soon forgotten, and on the back cover of reprints of this translation we have words of the highest praise by author and literary critic Batya Gur and journalist Arianna Melamed, neither of whom can be accused of a Classical education. Yifat Peleg, who at the time studied Classical archaeology in Finkelberg's own department, wrote (my translation): "Being a scholar of wide reputation, the translator has found fine solutions to the complications of the Greek language in which the original work was written." I have nothing to add to this new criterion of truth. As to the essays by the Kenaans and Zamir, the less said about them the better. None of them is an expert Platonist. The Kenaans know *some* Greek, Zamir is completely innocent of that strange language. Their essays are full of fashionable expressions such as "multivocal", and

[25] ... שכל אחד מאתנו, משמאל לימין לפי סדר הישיבה, יישא דברים יפים ככל יכולתו בשבחו של אל האהבה. A conversation between intellectuals in a café is not usually carried out in such an orderly manner.

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of what used to be called then postmodern ideas. Zamir refers to "a venerable exegetical tradition" of Plato, with which the reader is supposed to assume that he, Zamir, is intimately familiar. The Kenaans quote some words of Denys Page in Aharon Shabetai's translation, and offer a picture of Diotima as a feminist and/or homoerotic. Oh, well...

Finkelberg's 2009 translation of *Phaedrus*[26] is not much different, except that here the translator no longer offers a reason for the new translation, and that in the essays following the translation Tzahi Zamir has given his place to Aharon Shabetai—who is at least a man of considerable knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, ancient Greek, and a distinguished translator into Hebrew of Homer and of Greek tragedy, as well as a Hebrew poet in his own right. Finkelberg's introduction (7-18) offers a possible explanation to the problem of the unity of this dialogue—provided, of course, that one has to assume a unity of some dogmatic nature. It courageously disagrees (17-18) with Derrida's well-known view of this dialogue, which is endorsed in principle by the Kenaans (120-122; 124). It has, however, its awkward moments. On pp. 7-8, we are told that "The space of Phaedrus is an ideal space", since in this dialogue we cannot point out any possible event which would give it a "dramatic date"; and "Plato restages his city, thus immortalising it as a timeless model of philosophical activity". I leave it to the reader to ponder all this, except that to one simple-minded reader something which has no date is not necessarily dateless or timeless. Then, on p. 9, we are told that "Plato's Academy will continue to exist in Athens for centuries, will be closed and reopened, until its final closure by the Christian emperor Justinian in 529 CE". It is somewhat tedious and embarrassing to mention what the late Alan Cameron and I myself wrote about this issue in the 1970s.

The translation is, on the whole, fairly close to the Greek; but there are some oddities. I shall give one example: at 245e4-6 we have πᾶν γὰρ σῶμα, ᾧ μὲν ἔξωθεν τὸ κινεῖσθαι, ἄψυχον, ᾧ δὲ ἔνδοθεν αὐτῷ ἐξ αὑτοῦ, ἔμψυχον. Finkelberg translates ἄψυχον and ἔμψυχον as "inanimate and soulless" and "animate and alive" (דומם וחסר נפש; בעל נפש וחי). Why multiply entities? If Finkelberg has found some "authoritative" reason for this duplicate translation, she should have informed the Hebrew reader of its nature and reasons. In my experience, readers in translation have often drawn far-reaching, often entirely midrashic, conclusions from words or

[26] אפלטון, *פיידרוס*, תרגום מיוונית, מבוא והערות מרגלית פינקלברג, עם מסות מאת ורד לב כנען והגי כנען ומאת אהרן שבתאי. חרגול הוצאה לאור והוצאת עם עובד, תל-אביב תש"ע-2009. (Plato, *Phaedrus*, translation, introduction and notes by Margalit Finkelberg and essays by Vered Lev Kenaan and Hagi Kenaan and by Aharon Shabetai, Hargol and Am Oved, Tel-Aviv 2009).

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expressions which the translator added or altered for his own reasons, and which are not in the Greek text. The notes are brief, perhaps briefer than necessary. On p. 21, note 1 reads: "Lysias (459-380 BCE): the greatest speech-writer in Athens in Socrates' time". Would this explain the almost awesome attitude of Phaedrus (and, ironically, of Socrates) to this "speech-writer"? And anyway, what is that thing, "speech-writer"? An employee of some politician who writes his speeches for him? What is not explained on this page is what is the meaning of "Lysias has been in town". Which town, and where did he come from? Or p. 63, note 45: "The rhapsodes, the professional performers of Homer's poetry, were also regarded as his descendants". OK, but does this explain the nature of the ἀπόθετα ἔπη at 252b5, and why—as note 46 adds—these two verses are probably Plato's own invention?

Hagi Kenaan and Vered Lev Kenaan ("*Phaedrus*: A Moderate Conversation about Crazy Love", 117-138) offer us a medley of trivialities, sublimities, and post-modernisms. They refer, of course, to Derrida (as we have noted), and also, needless to say, to Roland Barth and Julia Kristeva. On p. 118 they write: "'Whence and whither?' is a call for self-examination, but at the same time it is a call to direct our gaze beyond the immediate horizons of the ego…" and so on in the same vein. I wonder what they would do with the opening sentences of *Ion*, with the attractive mention of Ephesus, Epidaurus, and Asclepius. Is it all that exceptional to ask someone you meet accidentally where he has come from and where he is going? Then on p. 119 we are told that when Socrates concludes from Phaedrus' answer that Lysias has been in town, "he thus testifies to the fact that he himself had not been invited and probably did not know about that assemblage in which Phaedrus participated. That is, Socrates, as against Phaedrus, appears at the very beginning of the dialogue as someone who is not included in an event of significance to the votaries of rhetoric, who is isolated from the multitude of Athenian speech-lovers". Wow! All that we are told at 227b4-7 is that Lysias was staying as a guest in the house of Epicrates, and that there were others there. This is unlike the opening scene of *Gorgias*, where Gorgias was not just staying in Callicles' house, but has delivered a model speech open to the public (ἐπίδειξις). It is more like the opening scene of Protagoras, where the great sophist stays in a private house surrounded by a group of admirers. But these, I suppose, are *Kleinspitzfindigkeiten*: what matters is the grand brush-strokes. As to Aharon Shabetai's "Desire and Language", 135-156, it starts with the author's reminiscences about his own reading and impressions of this dialogue in his student days, and continues with some more general comparisons between parts of our dialogue and various

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works of Greek poetry.

Margalit Finkelberg is, at least, a Classical scholar by training and profession, a professor of Greek in a university. Her proper field of research is ancient Greek poetry, and especially Homeric and Hesiodic epic and their literary and historical background, and ancient Greek narratology. But she is no stranger to any section of ancient Greek literature. Shimon Bouzaglo, on the other hand, is clearly an amateur and a scholiast. He has studied some Greek in the past, and he can make apparently impressive remarks in the notes to his translation which include Greek words, and even references to textual problems. Τέτοια πράγματα θαμπώνουν τοὺς βαρβάρους. But a proper scholar needs only read his translations of Plato to see through the chicanery. Fortunately for our particular theme, a proper scholar did write a thoroughgoing review of his first volume of translations from Plato. Ivor Ludlam's Review of Bouzaglo's *Plato: The Life and Death of Socrates*, *Three Dialogues*, published in the Hebrew literary periodical *Emda* in 2004, is a model of what a proper review by an expert should do.[27] It deals with everything, from the misguided title, through mistranslations and translations from translations, to pretentious, confused, and ignorant remarks on the text itself, on historical issues, on textual criticism and on other people's translations. Bouzaglo's bibliography is impressive at first sight, but Ludlam shows that it is both outdated and partial. I can only cite a few other examples. The title is wrong and misleading. The dialogues we have in this volume deal exclusively with Socrates' trial and death. In any case, Socrates' death is described only on the final pages of *Phaedo*, which are indeed included in the book, but not in its title. A comparison of a passage of Bouzaglo's translation with the same passage in Liebes' shows the obvious clarity of Liebes compared with Bouzaglo's complete muddle. In one of the sentences, we have a perfect tautology which makes nonsense of what—in the Greek and in Liebes' translation—is a proper argument. This, at least, can be safely attributed to Bouzaglo's own efforts. In another passage Ludlam shows that Bouzaglo copies out some sentences from Stokes' English translation of *Apology* as they stand, including words which the English translator added for smoothness of the English style, and follows this by a few sentences which amalgamate Liebes' and

[27] איוור לודלם, 'על: *אפלטון: חייו ומותו של סוקרטס, שלשה דיאלוגים*, מיוונית: שמעון בוזגלו, בסדרת *פרוזה: פילוסופיה* (עורך: יהודה מלצר), תל אביב 2001, 149 עמ' '. *עמדה, בטאון לספרות*, 13-12, 2004, עמודים 172-160. (Ivor Ludlam, "On *Plato, The Life and Death of Socrates, Three Dialogues*, translated from the Greek by Shimon Bouzaglo, in the series 'Prose, Philosophy', ed. Yehuda Melzer, Tel Aviv 2001, 149 pp." In *Emda, Literary Periodical,* 12-13, 2004, 160-172)

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Stokes' translations. His note on *Prytaneion* is, again, an amalgam between Stokes' note and some of the translations in LSJ, ending up with the brilliant suggestion that those who ate at the *Prytaneion* were parasites in our modern sense. In another place, to the greater glory of Greek philology, Bouzaglo declares his preference for the reading τούτοις αὐτοῖς over αὐτοῖς τούτοις, ascribing each of them to the wrong source, knowing nothing of the history of this reading in the manuscript tradition and modern editions, and making the fatuous assumption that by changing the order of these two words you also change the gender of the whole expression. One could go on and on, but I think that the examples I have just given should be enough to apprise us of the nature of this piece of work and of the incompetence of its author. Ludlam includes on the last page of his article a list of reviews and reactions to Bouzaglo's translation published previously by other scholars and critics. Bouzaglo, of course, has carried on regardless. Since then, he has published translations of plays by Sophocles and Euripides, poetry by Hesiod, Sappho, Anacreon and early Greek Lyric poets, Ezechiel the tragedian, as well as some works of Catullus, Ovid, and Horace. In 2008, he published a translation of Lorca's *Yerma*. When questioned about his command of Spanish, he replied that he had been helped by his Spanish-speaking mother. In 2010, he translated Chekhov's *Three Sisters*. No Russian mother was mentioned this time. His translations of many of these plays have been put on the Hebrew stage. His wife is an influential stage producer. In the light of the sheer incompetence and gigantic pretentiousness which Ludlam and some others—including the late Netta Zagagi, a leading expert on Greek literature and drama—have exposed in their reviews, I feel excused from going through Bouzaglo's later translations. He once hinted that he intended to replace Liebes' translations of most, if not all, of Plato's dialogues. In a free country, he is fully entitled to do this. In a *res publica litterarum*, it is the duty of scholars to warn the potential readers.

So much for Hebrew translations made so far.

III. Works on Plato in Hebrew and by Eretz-Israeli Scholars

a. Works of a More General Nature

Once again, we find ourselves in the company of Yosef Klausner. We have already pointed out Hebrew literature's debt to Klausner for initiating the translation of Plato from the original Greek and supervising the production of the first (and at the time, 1929, only) volume of this

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translation by many hands. Klausner was qualified to supervise such a translation since he did have some Classical education. But despite his Classical education, his familiarity with many modern languages, and his many essays on philosophers and philosophy, later collected together in his *Philosophers and Thinkers* (פילוסופים והוגי דעות), Tel-Aviv 1934 and *From Plato to Spinoza* (מאפלטון ועד שפינוזה), Jerusalem 1955, Klausner was no philosopher or historian of philosophy. His introduction to the 1929 Hebrew volume, pp. טו-לב,[28] could serve as an example: learned, with references to some works of scholarship in a number of languages, this introduction deals mainly, in the most general terms, with "surface" problems such as the place (or most commonly the absence) of Plato in Jewish thought and literature as against the literature and science of Western Europe—followed by 5-6 pages of a brief summary of some of the commonest Platonic concepts and ideas. This represents a tendency, common to other works of Klausner, to simplify matters, generalise, and have "the crooked straight and the rough places plane".[29] It is no accident that, when the fifth volume of *The Hebrew Encyclopedia* was published in 1961, one of the editors, Yeshaiahu Leibowitz, added after his name in the list of editors a note: "up to page 223". Leibowitz, a professor of biochemistry and a philosophical and theological polymath and original thinker, had objected to Klausner writing the long entry on Plato, beginning at that page. He maintained, rightly, that there were in Jerusalem, during the long preparation of this volume (1944+), some proper philosophers with a full Classical education, such as Leon Roth (retired 1953) and Yitzchak Julius Guttmann (d. 1950), who were far better qualified to write this entry. Klausner, who was at the time editor-in-chief,

[28] This introduction to the 1929 volume was reprinted, without acknowledgement, in his *Philosophers and Thinkers*, 32-49. It was then reprinted, again without acknowledgement, in his *From Plato to Spinoza*, pp. 33-56. His introduction to Tschernichowski's translation of *Symposium* in the 1929 volume, pp. 3-16, was reprinted, without reference to its 1929 source, in *Philosophers and Thinkers* pp. 50-63. It was also reprinted, with reference to *Philosophers and Thinkers* pp. 50-63, but without a reference to its ultimate 1929 source, in *From Plato to Spinoza,* pp. 57-76. Thus, each of his 1929 essays was published, with no variations, three times in twenty-six years.

[29] The Hebrew reader may enjoy a general appreciation of Klausner's pretence to all-embracing scholarship in a, now almost forgotten, article (דוקטור קלוזנר) by the Hebrew author and critic Micha Josef Berdyczewski, first published in his דור וסופריו in 1921, and now available through Project Ben Yehudah: http://benyehuda.org/berdi/doctor_klozner_no_nikkud.html See also Yoseph Hayim Brenner's article רגשים והרהורים ב, first published in 1909) הפועל הצעיר תר״ע): http://benyehuda.org/brenner/baaretz47.html

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insisted and had his way.[30] One gives Klausner the credit he deserves for helping Junovitsch produce the first volume of Plato in Hebrew translation from the Greek,[31] and notes some less pleasant facts since facts they are.

Leon Roth has already been discussed in our first section as a promoter of translations of Plato and other philosophers into Hebrew. Like Klausner, he was one of the "founding fathers" of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which he joined in 1928 as the first Ahad Ha-Am Professor of Philosophy. Beside his support for translating Plato into Hebrew and making the translations accessible also to schoolchildren, he published a number of semi-popular books, making philosophy, and ancient philosophy in particular, more accessible to Hebrew readers of all ages. Two of his popular books in Hebrew are מורה דרך בפילוסופיה היונית, *A guide to Greek Philosophy*, Jerusalem 1939 and reprints, and מורה דרך בתורת המדינה, *A Guide to Poltical Thought*, Jerusalem 1947. Both are outstanding in the clear presentation, in lucid and beautiful Hebrew, of materials which are often difficult and complex. In the first of these books, more than half the work deals with Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and it has a long Appendix B, 106-124, עצה לקריאה עצמית בכתבי אפלטון, (Suggestions for self-study of Plato's works), which includes a list of available translations, a discussion and analysis of some of the major dialogues available in Hebrew at the time, historical elucidations of events mentioned in Plato's works, and bibliographical aids. The second book contains long sections on Plato and Aristotle. Just in order to illustrate Roth's attachment to Plato, here, in my translation, is the opening paragraph of *A Guide to Political Thought*:

> There was once an old man of seventy who was prosecuted for an offence which he had not committed. He was brought to court, made his defence before the judges, and in spite of it he was sentenced to death. Between the verdict and its execution, he was held in prison like other people

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[30] For the basic story see ישעיהו ליבוביץ, *על עולם ומלואו, שיחות עם מיכאל ששר*, Jerusalem 1987, 136-137. Some additional details were narrated to me in the 1950s by the late Jacob (Eugène) Fleischmann and Yehuda Landau, who "stood by" when this episode took place. To the best of my knowledge, it has not been noticed that this entry, "Plato" by Klausner in volume 5, 223-236 of *The Hebrew Encyclopedia* reproduces with very slight changes the first essay, "Plato", in his *From Plato to Spinoza*, Jerusalem 1955, pp. 9-32. That essay (see note 28 above) was the second literal reproduction of Klausner's two introductions in the 1929 edition, to which he added in 1955 three sections on Plato's life, writings and influence. Thus, the major part of his encyclopaedia entry was a rehash of essays published thirty-two years earlier and reproduced twice since.

[31] For a short account by Klausner himself, see again Klausner's autobiograp*hy:* פרופסור יוסף קלוזנר, *דרכי לקראת התחיה והגאולה*, תל-אביב וירושלים תש"ו, עמודים 247-249

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> condemned to death. His friends beseeched him to make use of some subterfuges they had worked out and to escape.

Needless to say, this is the background story behind Plato's *Crito*, and Roth uses it as the most obvious opening for a general discussion of the nature of political thought through the generations.

As mentioned above, Roth taught most of the courses in Greek philosophy which were offered to philosophy students during his years at the Hebrew University. It is regrettable that someone with his extraordinary education, expertise and love for the ancients did not write a more comprehensive book in Hebrew on ancient philosophy in general, or on Plato in particular. But as can be gathered from what we have already seen of his various activities, he felt that as a professor of philosophy in a new university, in a new country, and in a revived language he should spend most of his efforts on making philosophy—which, for some centuries, had not been part of the standard Jewish education—naturalise itself in the new environment. It is no accident that his works on Descartes, Spinoza, and Maimonides which earned him his international reputation were written during his years in Manchester. In his Jerusalem period, he did not stop reading and inquiring, but most of his original contributions to philosophy from this period were restricted to articles, some of which still remain scattered in back volumes of periodicals.

His successors in the teaching of Greek philosophy at the Hebrew University were no match for his thorough knowledge and intimate attachment to the ancients. Their lectures were taken down by students and circulated in typewritten volumes for internal use, but were not available outside the Hebrew University. One exception was a book properly printed and available to the general public for many years. Most of it was based on stencilled volumes of lectures taken down by students, and the printed version was also published by the students' publishing company. Pepita Haezrahi, 1921-1963, was a graduate of the Hebrew University in Philosophy and Classics, who taught for some years at the University of Cambridge, and from 1954 until her premature death was a lecturer in philosophy at the Hebrew University. Her book, *On Perfect Being, Studies in Plato and his Predecessors*, was put together after her death by her husband, the Hebrew writer Yehuda Haezrahi, and published in 1964.[32] The first two parts, 15-270, consist of her lectures delivered during the early 1960s on the Presocratics and Plato, from the notes taken by various students. The third part, 273-365, is virtually a book expounding Haezrahi's ideas about Plato's "perfect being" (τὸ παντελῶς ὄν). Its kernel

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[32] פפיטה האזרחי, *על היש המושלם, עיונים באפלטון ובקודמיו*, ירושלם תשכ"ד (והדפסות חוזרות).

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is a long article which she had published in 1960 in the Hebrew Philosophical Quarterly *Iyyun*, with considerable additions which she made in manuscript, probably with the intention of turning it into a book. Since this was the first-ever long and detailed work on Plato and his predecessors in Hebrew, it was widely used by students for many years as something of a *textus nunc ab omnibus receptus*. When I taught as a visiting lecturer in Tel-Aviv University in 1973/4, I was struck by the sheer number of students' works which were largely based on, and often verbally copied from, Haezrahi's book. At the end of that year, I wrote a long belated review of it, which was published in *Iyyun* in late 1974.[33] Much of this article is devoted to the methodological issue of the relations between a precise philological examination of our texts and their philosophical interpretation. In matters of detailed criticism, I point out, for example, that Haezrahi's long and detailed discussions of the Presocratics tell the reader nothing about the problem of the transmission of their work through fragments and testimonia: the innocent reader may have the impression that Haezrahi has read all their writings in full and is summing them up properly and authoritatively. I point out here and there some basic mistakes in Greek, and some arbitrary interpretations of Greek words and expressions, made to suit her own conception of this or that Platonic idea or dialogue. The problem of the chronology of the dialogues is passed over in silence, and the reader may well think that Plato always held the same central ideas, and the various dialogues, including the later, "Eleatic" ones, only raise some questions within the safe and assured system: indeed, in some places he is virtually told that this was the case. As to the aim of the dialogues, we are told quite often that this or that dialogue deals with a question which is couched in modern, often Kantian, language, such as "the problem of the very possibility of cognition". Such Kantian language and interpretation make their appearances also in some of the discussions of Presocratic philosophers. Haezrahi herself had an intimate knowledge of, and love for, classical German philosophy, especially the philosophy of Kant. As to the long essay on "perfect being", which is also permeated with modern, and Kantian, ideas, it is dedicated to the structure of Plato's universe, beginning with the idea, current at various times and places, that Plato had "two worlds": the "world of phenomena" and the "world of ideas", and proposing (following Victor Brochard in one of his less fortunate moments) that there is also a third

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[33] ‘ על היש הבלתי מושלם. הערות מיתודולוגיות בעקבות ספרה של פפיטה האזרחי "על היש המושלם" ‘ , *עיון* כ"ה, ד', תשרי תשל"ה, עמודים 247-311. Two pages of an English summary.

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such "world": the "world of souls". Even assuming that Plato did have a coherent system, and that in that system the "two worlds" were no mere manner of speaking, I still find no basis for this "third world" in any Platonic text.

Something had to be done. When I came to Tel-Aviv University on a more permanent basis in 1978, I began to make my small contribution, mainly with an eye to the student and the beginner. In 1979, I published a Hebrew translation of Alexandre Koyré's *Introduction à la lecture de Platon*, first published in French and English in New York in 1945, and translated since into German, Spanish, Italian, Greek, Japanese, and other languages.[34] My aim with this translation was to make the sensitive reader aware of the obvious (but all too often ignored or brushed-off) fact that Plato chose to shape his philosophical works in the form of dramatic conversations, in which Plato himself does not participate, and to the idea that, with a great craftsman like Plato, this is no accident. I followed with two books which originated in series of lectures in the Israeli Broadcast University: *The Rise of Greek Philosophy* of 1982, and *Introductory Chapters to Plato* of 1985.[35] Neither of these two booklets lays any claim to originality. My aim was simply to present the plain meaning (as far as that is possible) of what we have in the remains of the Presocratics and the dialogues of Plato, ἐχόμενος ὅτι ἐγγύτατα τῆς ξυμπάσης γνώμης τῶν ἀληθῶς λεχθέντων. I do briefly discuss the state of our evidence, the problems of reconstruction and interpretation, and the various theories and approaches, attempting to make the reader aware of the inherent and adherent difficulties. Whether I have succeeded in alerting the reader to the problems and snares and in offering him a balanced presentation is not for me to judge.

I mention in passing a book on *Plato, his Life and Personality* by Plato's Hebrew translator Yosef G. Liebes, published in 1968.[36] The book is a biography of Plato based entirely on the works of Plato as handed down to us in the manuscript tradition. It accepts all the Epistles as genuine, or at least as written by people close to Plato himself, and relies on them for much of its reconstruction of Plato's life. It is a relief to find someone writing on Plato the person without involving himself in problems of Platonic philosophy; but Liebes' book is to a large extent raw and uncritical.

One turns with some compunctions to the late Samuel Scolnicov,

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[34] אלכסנדר קורא, *אפלטון כפשוטו*, תל-אביב 1979.

[35] *עלייתה של הפילוסופיה היוונית*, תל אביב 1982; *פרקי מבוא לאפלטון*, תל אביב 1985.

[36] יוסף ג. ליבס, *אפלטון חייו ואישיותו*, ירושלים ותל-אביב תשכ"ט, 128 עמודים.

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1941-2014, a native of Brazil who emigrated to Israel in 1958, studied Philosophy and Hebrew Language at the Hebrew University, and obtained his PhD (on hypothesis in Plato's middle dialogues) in Cambridge in 1969, under the supervision of Bernard Williams. For thirty-seven years, 1974-2010, he taught ancient philosophy at the Hebrew University and published a number of books and articles in Hebrew and in other languages in this field, almost all of which have something to do with Plato. Scolnicov was one of the founding members of the International Plato Society and its president between 1998 and 2001. In that year, 2001, the Society held its sixth international Symposium Platonicum, on Plato's *Laws*, in Jerusalem, and Scolnicov, who organised that Symposium, was then editor (with Luc Brisson) of its Proceedings, published in 2003. Scolnicov's background made him fluent in a number of modern languages, including his native Portuguese and its neighbouring (in more than one sense) Spanish, as well as Hebrew, English, and French from his Jewish school in Brazil, and German and Italian which he studied later. This, together with a considerable organising ability, made him popular in international meetings and conferences and enhanced his international standing. I would not be surprised if some people in my audience are, or have been, his friends. Ἄμφοιν δὲ φίλοιν ὄντοιν... Scolnicov was not a great scholar. He was not even a competent scholar, and his ability to think clearly and consistently was not all that great. All these features emerge more forcefully from a reading of his Hebrew publications, which—unlike his publications in other languages (mainly in English)—have not been vetted and corrected by competent editors.

In 1997/8, the Open University of Israel published three volumes of a book called "Greek Philosophy", as the textbook for a course by that name. Volume One was called "Before Socrates"[37], Volume Two "Socrates and Plato", and Volume Three "Aristotle". The authors were named as Samuel Scolnicov and Elazar Weinrib; but since Weinrib is a professor of modern philosophy with no Classical background and no claim to expertise in the field, it seems clear that the principal author, if not the "onlie begetter", is Scolnicov.[38] I prepared a review of this new textbook for the Hebrew literary periodical *Emda*. Since users of this new textbook are required, while following the new course, to refer constantly to two former Hebrew works by Samuel Scolnicov, I included them in my review. They are *A History of Greek Philosophy: The Pre-Socratics* of

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[37] A common mistranslation of "Vorsokratiker". Diels explains clearly in his introduction what he meant by his title.

[38] שמואל שקולניקוב ואלעזר וינריב, *פילוסופיה יוונית*, כרך א. *לפני סוקרטס*, כרך ב. *סוקרטס ואפלטון*. כרך ג. *אריסטו*. האוניברסיטה הפתוחה, תל-אביב תשנ"ז-תשנ"ח, 1997-1998.

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1981[39], and *Heraclitus and Parmenides, The Testimonia and Fragments, translated from the Greek with Introductions and Notes* of 1988.[40] My review article became too long—over ninety pages—and the editors decided to publish it as a separate book, *Greek Philosophy's New Clothes*, 2001.[41] One can only offer a few specimens of these books' "scholarship" and "philosophy".

In some places in these works we have such gems as the "Latin words" *de elementibus* and *praefatium*; the "Greek adjective" θεός ("The epithet 'divine' rendered by Greek *theos*", writes Scolnicov: forgetting not just basic grammar, but also the distinction made by Plato himself at *Soph*. 216b8-9 and *Legg*. 2, 657a8-9). Theodorus Gaza (> Θεόδωρος Γαζῆς) is "Palestinianised" as "Theodorus of Gaza"; a work by Plutarch is called *De Pythia* [SIC] *Oraculis*; Isocrates' Ἀντίδοσις is called "the Reply Speech"; and a play called *Troades* is ascribed to... Sophocles (probably a misreading of "*Tr*." = *Trachiniae*.) On pp. 12-16 of the third volume in the Open University textbook, Scolnicov has "lifted" whole passages concerning the life of Aristotle from a Hebrew book by the late Yehuda Landau—except that, on page 15 of that volume Scolnicov did not quite get Aristotle's reason for leaving Athens in 323, "so as not to allow the Athenians to sin against philosophy for the second time", and tells his reader that it meant a second accusation of impiety proffered against Aristotle himself. [42] In his Presocratics book, p. 107, Scolnicov misconstrues a statement he has found in Guthrie's *History of Greek Philosophy*, and concludes that Melissus defeated the Athenian navy and Pericles in TWO sea-battles.[43] One could cite more and more of the same. I leave it to the Hebrew reader to find more in my book.

But it is not only in matters of scholarship and plain knowledge of

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[39] שמואל שקולניקוב, *תולדות הפילוסופיה היוונית, הפילוסופים הקדם-סוקרטיים*, תל-אביב תשמ"א, 1981.

[40] הירקליטוס ופרמנידיס, *עדויות ופרגמנטים*, תרגם מיוונית והוסיף מבואות והערות שמואל שקולניקוב, ירושלים תשמ"ח.

[41] *בגדיה החדשים של הפילוסופיה היונית*, תל אביב תשס"א, 2001. English summary of three pages.

[42] On pp. 18-27 of my book (see last note) I also cite passages which Scolnicov "lifted" with very little variation, from Guthrie, Kirk, and Raven, Untersteiner and the second edition of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*.

[43] Guthrie is Scolnicov's main source for his 1981 Presocratics book. Some chapters are centos of sentences and passages from Guthrie. On a relatively few occasions like the present one, Guthrie is misunderstood. But even in this book, which for a while, *faute de mieu*x, I had to recommend to beginners, there are some silly mistakes, such as the description (p. 27) of Tiamat as an Egyptian goddess.

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Greek, Latin, and ancient history (although why should one say “only” in the context of work on the ancient world?) that Scolnicov shows his *mentis acies*. The books are about ancient philosophy: let us take one or two philosophical statements:

> *“Greek Philosophy” 2, p. 77 (my translation):*
> Nowadays the distinction is widely accepted between our factual knowledge of the world as it is and our evaluation of what occurs in it—an evaluation which dictates to us how to change it.[44] Eventually, even in philosophy itself, epistemology (the theory of knowledge) and the philosophy of morals, or ethics, developed into separate branches. Socrates denied this distinction.[45] For him, all questions of evaluation are dependent on questions of knowledge, and the philosophy of morals is nothing but a part of the theory of knowledge.
> And since comprehension of the outside world is dependent on sense-perception, comprehension is nothing but a part of sense-perception.
> But for the long shade of Occam one could easily multiply such parallels.

> *"Greek Philosophy" 3, p. 164 (my translation):*
> Aristotle is thus objecting to the Platonic view, according to which it is the task of the philosopher to dictate the principles of morals.
> —Dictate? Principles of Morals? Translate into Attic Greek. In any case, please point out any passage in a Platonic dialogue which claims that this is the task of the philosopher.

> *“Greek Philosophy” 1, pp. 96 and 100 (my translation):*
> 96. The distinction between nature and Law is therefore [according to Thrasymachus] total.
> {Three lines below}. Yet one could say [according to Thrasymachus] that every ruler legislates in his own interest “in a natural fashion”.
> —*Ergo*, law is natural and there is no distinction.
> 100. Thrasymachus accepts the distinction and puts his weight on the side of Law. For him, Law is a totally artificial product.
> —So, the distinction is back, and the ruler does not legislate quite "in a natural manner".
> Come on, Thrasymachus, make up your mind!

A final, somewhat more interesting example:

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[44] “DICTATES to us”? In any case, if this were so, what was the point of Karl Marx’ famous conclusion of his *Theses against Feuerbach*, "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to *change* it"?

[45] That is, Socrates denied a distinction which was developed later and was unknown in his time. *Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis*!

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On p. 41 of his translation of Heraclitus and Parmenides, Scolnicov had to render in Hebrew the words of Diogenes Laertius 9.12, τρόπου κόσμον ἕνα τῶν ξυμπάντων. His Hebrew translation is something like “the plank of the world for every single one” (קורת העולם לכל אחד ואחד). How come – and what does this mean?

Readers of R. D. Hicks’ Loeb will soon discover that he has emended the MSS reading and has τοῦ δ’ ὅλου κόσμου τρόπιν ἑνός τε ξυμπάντων τε.[46] He translates: “the keel of the whole world, for one and all alike”. This—Hicks’ English—was obviously Scolnicov’s source. Since a keel consists of a plank, why bother the Hebrew reader with the proper (and rare) Hebrew term (שידרית)? Make it a simple plank, and give one to all and sundry in order to weather the sea-storms of our short, nasty and brutish life.

In 2008, the Magnes Press of the Hebrew University published a volume of articles by Samuel Scolnicov called *Idea and Method, Thirty-Three Platonic Studies*.[47] These articles, except for an introduction written especially for this volume, had been published by the author over the years, mostly in Hebrew and English, but some in French, Italian, and Portuguese. The articles in other languages were translated into Hebrew under Scolnicov’s supervision. This book thus forms something of a *Platonica Minora* of an author who had spent much of his life and teaching activities on Plato and his dialogues. I reviewed this book in the Hebrew critical review *Katharsis*.[48] Again, one can only cite some typical examples. Greek is still suffering from Scolnicov’s old tendency to improve upon the accepted norms and expressions, and we have such innovations as συμφονέω, δυναμήνη, ὁ χρηστὸς οὑτοσὶ νεανία, καθόπιν ἑορτῆς, ἀναμιμνέσθαι, δεμοτική, δόχα μετ’ αἰσθήσεος, ἡγεμικόν, as well as the Latin neologism *praestisse* (in a passage quoted from Vlastos, who—needless to say—has the “more traditional” form). In the introductory chapter, written for this book, we read (my translation):

> Thus, we have in the Platonic dialogues no speaker who is Plato’s mouthpiece—not excluding Socrates. Even in the middle and late dialogues the discussion is always in a given context, and should be thus understood. Anything said must be taken as expressions uttered within their context, inseparable from the speaker.

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[46] No editor known to me has accepted this emendation.

[47] שמואל שקולניקוב, *אידאה ומתודה, ל"ג עיונים באפלטון*, ירושלם תשס"ח/2008, 492 עמודים.

[48] ‘מדרשי אפלטון’, *קתרסיס* 19, אביב תשע"ג/2013, 18-42. English summary, ‘Meta-Platonism’, pp. VI-X

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A reader who feels that Scolnicov has now converted to the "Philosophical Drama" heresy has only to turn to the articles themselves, where expressions like "Plato says", "Plato always believed", "Plato understood this to mean", "Plato argues", and the like abound as the sand which is upon the sea shore. It seems fairly clear that Scolnicov took it for granted most of his life that Socrates, the Eleatic guest, or the Athenian guest are Plato in disguise—a legitimate approach, as long as one sticks to it. Having heard from friends and colleagues of the new fashion of treating the dialogues as philosophical dramas, he decided when writing the new introduction that one had to pay one's homage to this approach as well, perhaps in order not to appear to be lagging behind. On the other hand, changing all those "Plato says" expressions in the earlier articles collected here would impair many of the main arguments of these articles. The reader, one assumes perhaps, will not notice.

One "discovery" of Scolnicov is announced in one of the two articles in this volume dealing with the dialogue *Euthydemus*. What speakers say in a Platonic dialogue, observes Scolnicov, can be expressed either in a "binary" manner—that is, "A is A", with no mention of the speaker—or in a "tertiary" manner—"S says/holds/ believes, and the like, that A is A". Citing a few passages of *Euthydemus* where Socrates uses the "tertiary" manner and the other two use the "binary" manner, Scolnicov concludes that Socrates *always* uses this "tertiary" manner, while the others *always* employ the "binary" manner, which deals with things in the abstract, regardless of speakers and context—as befits such eristic gentlemen. Unfortunately, even in that dialogue there are quite a few places where Socrates uses the "binary" manner while the others use the "tertiary" one, and the Socrates of other dialogues often uses the "binary" manner. In fact, Scolnicov himself also states in the same article that Socrates uses the "tertiary" manner only in cases where it is important for him to emphasise something by placing it in this or that context. So much for the great "linguistic discovery". The article was, of course, delivered as a lecture in a Symposium Platonicum, published in its Proceedings, and has now been made available to the Hebrew reader.

Concerning the scholarship of Samuel Scolnicov may so much have been said.

But this collection of his articles, independently of the nature of his scholarship, also raises a question which is appropriate to the state of Platonic studies in Israel. As we have seen, it is only since 1966 that the whole Platonic corpus has been available to the Israeli reader whose first and major language is Hebrew in his own language, and there was no Hebrew translation of any Platonic dialogue before 1914. Former writers

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on Plato tended, therefore, to publish in Hebrew only non-technical works, directed at the general educated reader or the non-specialist student. The more technical debates and discussions have been carried out in larger and more international languages, and we shall soon see that the few Israeli scholars who have written more technical books and articles about Plato have done so generally in an international language—in most cases in English. This makes sense. An article which deals, say, with the use of clausulae as one of the keys for dating a dialogue will find, in the very best case, forty native readers of Hebrew who are able to follow and appreciate it. Written in English—and I am referring to a real article which we shall soon come to—it can be understood and followed by hundreds of readers and exercise some influence on international research.[49] Many, if not all of, the articles in Scolnicov's Platonic collection were written as part of debates going on among specialists, in English, French, German and other languages. In English, such an article will be read by experts in many countries, since English is one of the languages of international scholarship. In what concerns ancient philosophy Hebrew is as yet far from this position, and having these technical articles published in Hebrew makes them accessible only to a very few Israeli scholars, all of whom could also read them in a larger language. Scolnicov's *Idea and Method* is no introduction to Plato for the Hebrew reader. A general and extensive introductory book in Hebrew on Plato (with the inevitable shortcomings of any such work) is yet to be written.

Before I pass on to more properly technical works, two Hebrew books may be briefly mentioned.

In 1985, Arieh Simon (not to be confused with Aryeh—Sir Leon—Simon) published a book called *Plato and Education in Our Time*.[50] Simon (1913-2002) was born in Germany and educated in Heidelberg and Freiburg (Law) and Bern (Classics and Philosophy). In Israel he became a leading educationalist, ending up as headmaster of the famous Ben Shemen agricultural school. He received the Israel Prize for education in 1975. He makes it clear in the first chapter and elsewhere in the book that he believes that there is a fairly consistent Socratic and Platonic system of philosophy. But what interests him is not Plato's philosophy as such, but rather the various Platonic ideas and observations concerned with good and evil, intellect and eros—and of course, the various educational plans—scattered throughout Plato's dialogues, as relevant to education today:

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[49] The late Chaim Wirszubski used to remark that anyone who publishes a technical book or article on a Classical subject in Hebrew alone "gives it a Jewish burial" (מביא אותו לקבר ישראל.)

[50] אריה סימון, *אפלטון והחינוך בימינו*, ספרית פועלים תשמ"ה-1985, 207 עמודים.

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indeed, as a corrective to many of the ills of modern education. The book is in no way an introduction to Plato and his dialogues—the author denies having any such intentions from the outset—but rather a critique of education in late twentieth-century Israel, using some of the insights the author has found in the Platonic dialogues during a lifetime of educational activities and of reading Plato and much of the literature about him in his spare time. In this modest manner it seems to achieve its aim of criticising our own age by offering alternatives from an older stage of our civilisation.

Of a very different stamp is a book published two years later, Nachum Arieli's *From Logos to Myth in Plato's Republic* of 1987.[51] Nachum Arieli, 1939-2001, was for many years a lecturer in philosophy at Bar-Ilan University. He was the son of a great rabbinical teacher and Talmudist, and over the years he published some useful popular introductions to mediaeval Jewish religious thought. He also published a number of novels which were widely read at the time and won some prizes. His one "systematic" book, *The New Man*,[52] is an extremely unimpressive attempt at creating a new type of philosophy and humanism which takes the Holocaust as its starting point. Arieli was perfectly innocent of any Classical education, and his European culture consisted of an imperfect reading acquaintance with English. The very title of his Plato book is pretentious: in a period when Nestle's *Vom Mythos zum Logos* was almost required reading for anyone working on early Greek literature and philosophy, and summaries of it were readily available in many English books, a title like that of Arieli's book would appear to be innovative and revolutionary. In fact, the book is shallow, confused and pompous, and it would be a compliment to it to say that it proves any point whatsoever. A few examples will suffice to show the author's lack of any qualification for writing any work of scholarship, let alone a work of Classical scholarship. On p. 19 we are told that "The *Republic* opens with a description of Socrates going down to Piraeus, Athens' harbour, to watch the Olympic festivities in honour of one of the goddesses". On p. 21, these have already turned out to be "the Olympic games". Back on p. 19, note *, we are told that "The pages are those of the Hebrew edition (מהדורה) of Plato's works, translated by Y. G. Liebes." On p. 200, in reference to *Phaedrus*, we read that "The dialogue deals, as we have noted, with the problem of the possibility of cognition".[53] On p. 221, note 20, we read:

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[51] נחום אריאלי, *מן הלוגוס אל המיתוס ב"מדינה" לאפלטון*, תל-אביב תשמ"ז-1987, 261 עמודים.
[52] *האדם החדש*, תל אביב 1980.
[53] This Kantian expression is obviously a homage to Haezrahi—although this question of "die Möglichkeit von Erkenntnis" is not mentioned in so many words in Haezrahi's section on *Phaedrus*.

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"The image of Socrates as drawn by Plato is close to Xenophon's description"—such an easy solution to the age-old "Socratic Problem". Xenophon's work is cited in Sir Leon Simon's Hebrew translation, and to assist the perplexed Latin-speaking reader Arieli adds: "The Latin name of this work is *Memorabilia*." On p. 229, note 69, Arieli quotes a sentence of Ross, "It is to be noted that Greek slavery was for the most part free from the abuses which disgraced Roman slavery and have often disgraced the slave system in modern times [SIC]". He translates: "One should remark that Greek slavery was in its essence freed from the abuses inherent in it and it disgraced Roman slavery and often disgraced slavery in modern times". Arieli's notes are full of such mistranslations of English sentences and passages (which are fortunately often quoted also in the original, perhaps for those who wish to make some sense of them). In a larger language such as English or German it would be enough if some reviewers pointed out the utter absurdity of a book (and there are some absurd and preposterous books on Plato in most languages) to warn most readers away. In Hebrew, with the scarcity of books on Plato and of proper reviewers, and with the growing success of Hebrew as the full-scale language of a modern state, many students whose knowledge of English may not be all that much better than Arieli's would clutch at any straw to read something on Plato in Hebrew. Arieli's book is such a straw.

I pass with some relief to more technical works on Plato.

b. Works of a More Technical Nature

It is a pleasure to "unearth" a forgotten Eretz-Israeli scholar whose first contribution to scholarship is still taken seriously by the experts after almost a century. Lewis Billig—known in Jerusalem by his Hebrew name Levi Billig—was born in London in 1897 to Russian immigrant parents and brough up in a traditional and Zionist home. He studied Classics and Arabic at the Universities of London and Cambridge, and received his MA with distinction in 1920. He was already then regarded as a brilliant scholar and was sought after by some British universities. But after a few years back in London he accepted an invitation from the newly-founded Hebrew University and joined its staff as a lecturer in Arabic in 1926. During the next ten years he taught in the new Arabic department and published a few Arabic reading books, including one which he edited together with his colleague Avinoam Yellin, another Arabist (and son of the distinguished Hebrew and Arabic scholar David Yellin) and published in London. On the night of 21 August 1936, he was sitting in his private library at home and writing an article on some problems in Islam (one of

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his special fields was Shiite Islam) when an Arab terrorist found his way into the room and shot him in the head at close range. This was part of the 1936 Arab uprising against the Jews, called at the time by the euphemism "the 1936 Occurrences" (מאורעות תרצ"ו). His colleague Avinoam Yellin also lost his life in those "occurrences" in 1937. As one of the ironies of history, both Billig and Yellin were active in the movement called "Peace Covenant" (ברית שלום), which aimed at friendship and common life between Jews and Arabs in a bi-national free Palestine.[54]

Clausulae (artistic prose rhythms) had been regarded as one of the means of dating Platonic dialogues ever since Lewis Campbell's epoch-making edition of Plato's *Sophist* and *Politicus* of 1867. But this issue lay somewhat dormant until, in 1904, one W. Kaluscha[55] published an article on this issue accompanied by statistics.[56] Sixteen years had to pass before this issue was taken up once more—this time by "L. Billig" in an article in the—now defunct—*Journal of Philology*.[57] Billig's article has by now become partly outdated, but it is still used, after almost a hundred years, as one of the "musts" in many discussions of Plato's style and the dating of his dialogues. In his classic book, *The Chronology of Plato's Dialogues*, Cambridge 1990, Leonard Brandwood, himself a leading expert on Plato's style and chronology, sums up more than a century of stylometric studies. Chapter 18, pp. 167-206, is wholly dedicated to "W. Kaluscha and L. Billig". They find themselves in the company of such eminent scholars as Friedrich Blass, Martin Schanz, Hans von Arnim, and Paul Natorp. One is tempted to speculate on what might have happened had Billig decided to stick to the Classics and to remain in England. He made his choice—but not before he had already made a solid contribution to ancient philosophy at the age of twenty-three.

I have discussed Samuel Scolnicov's scholarship at some length in the last section. As I pointed out, the main difference between his Hebrew and his English publications is that, since most of his Hebrew publications were not checked and corrected by competent editors, they manifest more clearly his linguistic and philological shortcomings. His other faults can be

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[54] See Sylva M. Gelber, *No Balm in Gilead, Personal Retrospective of Mandate Days in Palestine*, Montreal 1989, p. 95. Other prominent members of ברית שלום were Samuel Hugo Bergmann, Judah Leon Magnes, Leon Roth, and Martin Buber.

[55] I have not been able to find any information about this scholar apart from references to his article.

[56] W. Kaluscha, "Zur Chronologie der platonischen Dialoge", *Wiener Studien* 26, 1904, pp. 190-204.

[57] L. Billig, 'Clausulae and Platonic Chronology' *Journal of Philology* 35, 1920, pp. 225-256.

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detected just as well in his English publications. One example I used of his philosophical muddle-headedness was his so-called new linguistic observation expressed in one of his articles on *Euthydemus*. That article was originally published in English. The same "linguistic insight" is repeated at some length in his English book about that dialogue,[58] where it is presented as part of the Socratic, as against the sophistic, method. Another such "Platonic insight", that language is not communicative, and that one arrives at philosophical ideas by some form of intuitive grasp, is also expressed in this book and is repeated in the long introduction to his Hebrew collection of Platonic essays. Admirers of the Seventh Epistle must be pleased; but it seems to one reader of the dialogues to play havoc with Socrates' search for definitions (including his "definition of definition" in *Euthyphro*) and with the Eleatic's linguistic disquisitions in some of the later dialogues. Scolnicov also expresses in this book the idea that some of Socrates' arguments against the others' eristic in this dialogue are aimed, not only, or chiefly, at getting some (intuitive?) idea of things as they are, but at establishing some ethical standards. That the Socrates of this dialogue, as of some others, performs what is a moral duty by searching for the truth is obvious. He more than hints to it himself. But does this imply that the *purpose* of searching for the truth is first and foremost ethical? Does the truth not have its own value independently of its instrumentality in the process of establishing ethical standards?

One is reminded of Scolnicov's first book, *Plato's Metaphysics of Education* of 1988. I admit that I tried to wade through this book a number of times and only succeeded in reading enough of it to get some idea of what it was driving at. The very title, "metaphysics *of education*", is enough to put one off. Nobody would deny that in some Platonic contexts knowledge of the truth includes moral knowledge—ideas are not only of "the equal" and "the different" but also of "the good" and "the beautiful", and those who know these ideas are best fit to run the state and educate the young. But in *Republic* itself the philosopher is described as reluctant to "get back into the cave", since what interests him more than everything else is the pursuit of truth—not exactly for the sake of education.

Scolnicov's translation, with introduction and notes, of Plato's *Parmenides*, published by the University of California in 2003, is another work which I would have found disappointing if I still had any great expectations of the translator/commentator. Much of the translation and some of the materials in the notes are taken, more or less literally, from Cornford's *Plato and Parmenides*. The notes vary immensely in length.

[58] *Euthydemus, Ethics and Language,* Sankt Augustin 2013, 180 pp.

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On some passages the notes are very long and constitute almost an independent study. This is usually the case in those passages which have any relevance to the law of contradiction: here Scolnicov has the chance of expounding at length his theory of the difference in the basic concept of contradiction between the historical Parmenides and Plato. He may well be right on that point. But Plato's *Parmenides* is not just about contradiction. In many other passages the notes are so thin on the ground that the reader would not be able to follow the drift of the discussion, or even find information about some basic facts. But enough of this.

A refreshing contrast to Scolnicov's somewhat confused dogmatism is a work published in Paris in 1979 by a professor (then lecturer) of French at Bar-Ilan University: Evelyne Méron's *Les idées morales des interlocuteurs de Socrate dans les dialogues platoniciennes de jeunesse*. The book is concerned only with the "other speakers" in some of the so-called early Socratic dialogues, and it treats them as independent characters rather than as mere targets for an all-knowing Socrates. It may overdo the philosophical, almost systematic, character which it ascribes to each of them, but the very attempt to regard Socrates' interlocutors as living characters in a dramatic conversation is a welcome contrast to much of what has been written about the dialogues. It does, however, come at the expense of Socrates himself, who often appears to be not much more than a catalyst for the others' view—in fact, a foil to the others, with the difference that he is not a mere foil to them but rather a "midwife" to their endeavours. But sometimes a tendency to pull too strongly in the other direction is a necessary reaction against long-standing approaches. Evelyne Méron has not carried on her work on Plato, and her later publications were mostly in her professional field of modern French literature—and in any case, many of those who have written about Plato in Israel in recent years are not entirely aware of what is going on in languages other than Hebrew and English. The ground was left for Scolnicov and his ilk to dominate the scene for some time.

Tzahi Zamir has already earned a brief mention for his essay on *Symposium* included in Finkelberg's translation.[59] Despite his total lack of a Classical education, Zamir regarded himself in the early years of his career as competent enough to publish two articles on Plato. One of them, in English,[60] asks the "surprising new" question "Why did Plato write dialogues?" His answer is that the dialogues demonstrate how time and pain lead one to acquire knowledge: *to pathei mathos*, as one says in Latin transcription. One need only look at the immense length of time and the

[59] See above.

[60] Tzahi Zamir, "The Face of Truth", *Metaphilosophy* 30 1/2,1999, pp. 79-94.

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great suffering which characters like Euthyphro, Laches, Gorgias, or Callicles go through in their respective dialogues in order to see how, at the end of the dialogue, they have acquired knowledge which they did not possess at its beginning. Zamir's other article, about "Phaedo's Hair", was published in Hebrew in *Iyyun*.[61] The main idea of this article is that the passage at 89b, where Socrates strokes Phaedo's hair and tells him not to cut it after his death, is central to the whole dialogue, since it represents "body language" as against "mouth language", and thus contributes to the multivocality of the dialogue, contrasting Socrates' conception of the philosopher as someone engaged in issues of this life as against the Platonic philosopher who is abstract, detached—and so on in the same vein. The absurdity of all this should be clear to anyone who has read the dialogues, and who remembers that Plato is their author. I published a response to this article in *Katharsis*.[62] Tzahi Zamir has since turned his creative attention to more modern themes. He has been, for some years now, professor in the Departments of English and of General Literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

One turns with relief (again) to two Israeli scholars who are present in this conference, and whose contributions to Platonic studies treat the dialogues not as treatises *manqués* but as philosophical dramas. This manner of reading the dialogues is relatively recent, and follows in the footsteps of such figures as Alexandre Koyré, Jacob Klein, Ronna Burger, and Michael Stokes. Its advantage is that it can do justice to what people used to treat as the "cover story" which should be dealt with and dispensed with as soon as possible, and to characters other than Socrates, who are not treated just as foils to the One True Philosopher. One can draw different conclusions from such an analysis of a dialogue, but it does require a close reading of the text in the original and against its background, with an emphasis on the Platonic works rather than on "the latest book" or "the latest article" on Plato. This in itself is not all that harmful. Secondary literature comes and goes[63]. The text remains—or has remained so far. (Let us pray!)

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[61] צחי זמיר, ‘שערותיו של פידון’, *עיון* נ"א, ניסן תשס"ב, אפריל 2002, עמודים 139-154.

[62] ‘הפיג’מה של סוקראטיס: על מאמרו של צחי זמיר’, *קתרסיס* 1, אביב תשס"ד 2004, עמודים 85-62. English summary pp. VI-VII.

[63] Many years ago, I read, out of sheer interest, Gottfried Stallbaum's long Latin introduction to his edition of *Republic*. Much of it summed up the views of many—mainly Germans—of Stallbaum's contemporaries and took issue with some of them. I noticed how many of the views of these people, most of whom have since been forgotten, bore an impressive resemblance to the views of some twentieth-century Platonists.

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Ivor Ludlam presented his MA dissertation in Tel-Aviv University, on *Hippias Major*, in 1986, and published an expanded version of it a few years later.[64] In it he analyses the dialogue step by step, learning in the process also about the characters as they are slowly revealed in the course of the drama. He points to fallacious arguments—by Socrates as well as by Hippias—which are meant to alert the reader to various issues. His conclusion may or may not be accepted by all and sundry; but what matters is the manner in which he approaches the dialogue. An important part of his work, which should be read and pondered by anyone with any interest in such problems, is the introductory first chapter of this book, in which Ludlam warns the student of Plato against some unwarranted assumptions such as "selective comparison" —and, of course, against the "Plato says" approach. I shall not sum up this chapter: *lector intende, laetaberis*. (Or not, if you are an intransigent "Platonist").

Ludlam's more recent book, on *Republic*,[65] applies the same approach to that long and tortuous dialogue. This dialogue has long been considered as (apart from Book I) virtually a monologue, in which "Socrates" expounds most of Plato's own philosophy, from theories of knowledge and being to ethics, political philosophy, the philosophy of education, literary criticism, and aesthetics. Ludlam shows the weakness of so many of the "expositions" of such "doctrines". Some of 'Socrates' arguments in Book I are clearly as eristic as those of Thrasymachus. The Idea of the Good, the "head of the pyramid", is something which "Socrates" himself claims that he does not know, and its "substitute", the simile of the cave and the sun, does nothing to solve the problem. Ludlam may have been the first to draw attention to the fact that Socrates the speaker in this dialogue is not the same as Socrates the narrator, not to mention Plato. These are only a few hints to the wealth of ideas one finds in this book. Once again, one does not have to agree with all or most of them, but unlike some more traditional approaches which take it for granted that Socrates is Plato's mouthpiece, or that the "ideal" state (it is not: it is second best, as admitted by "Socrates" himself at *Rep*. II, 372d7ff.) is literally meant as a recipe for solving all social conflicts—indeed, as a colleague once put it, that *Republic* is "a hundred ways of saying 'yes, Socrates'" —Ludlam asks questions. And, as he points out, the whole discussion of the polis is, so

[64] Ivor Ludlam, *Hippias Major: An Interpretation* (Palingenesia XXXVII), Stuttgart 1991. See now also his article "Plato on the Good; *Hippias Minor* and *Hippias Major*", in *For a Skeptical Peripatetic, Festschrift in Honour of John Glucker*, Sankt Augustin 2017, pp. 78-100.

[65] Ivor Ludlam, *Plato's Republic as a Philosophical Drama on Doing Well,* Lexington Books, 2015

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says "Socrates" himself, only a look in a magnified form ("big characters") at the problem of justice. It is a challenging book for those who are willing to be challenged. Those who wish to remain within the safe limits of Platonism need not bother.

Yosef Liebersohn, the organiser of this conference, has published widely on Plato, Epicurus, the Stoics, and on ancient rhetoric. His two main projects in connection with Plato are taking a second look, as a historian as well as a philosopher, at *Crito* against the background of Athenian democracy and the way the average citizen interprets it; and a reassessment of *Gorgias* as a document in the history of rhetoric and rhetorical theory, in which the author of this drama foresees as a philosopher some of the forthcoming unfortunate consequences of an attitude to rhetoric as a morally neutral τέχνη. This part of his Platonic work has benefited from his first book, which deals with a Hellenistic controversy about the nature and functions of rhetoric and traces its sources back to Plato and his contemporaries.[66] Needless to say, Liebersohn's starting-point is always the Platonic text, not "the latest" this or that, and, like Ludlam, he treats the dialogues not as failed treatises but rather as philosophical dramas. His book *Who is afraid of the Rhetor*, published by Gorgias Press (no invention of mine), New Jersey, 2014, is a good specimen of his approach to the problems of rhetoric and its relation to philosophy and democracy. I have disagreed with some parts of it, but I have no quarrel with the manner of looking hard at the texts. Since all his publications are available online through Academia.edu, the reader can go to his site and pick and choose. Many of the articles deal with *Crito*, and especially with the manner in which an honest citizen of Athenian democracy regards his duties to the state in theory and in practice. Of these, I would recommend the following articles, which I shall cite by title only: "Socrates, wake up! An Analysis and exegesis of the 'Preface' in Plato's *Crito* (43a1-b9)"; "The Place of ψυχή in Plato's *Crito*"; "Crito's Character in Plato's *Crito*"; and "Rejecting Socrates' Rejection of Retaliation". Of his articles on *Gorgias*, I would single out "Polus the Unsung Hero". Yosef Liebersohn is slowly working on a book on Crito, which will embody and develop the insights he has already expressed in his articles. In Liebersohn's publications the texts are usually cited in Greek in the Byzantine characters, at least in footnotes, and they are free of the farce of transliteration.

Both Ivor Ludlam and Yosef Liebersohn bring with them into their

[66] *The Dispute concerning Rhetoric in Hellenistic Thought*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (Hypomnemata 185), 2010.

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writings on Plato, and on the ancients in general, a proper Classical education—a qualification which old, and old-fashioned, people like myself still regard as the most basic entrance requirement. So does Gabriel Danzig, whose work, mainly about the philosophical writings of Xenophon, is based on the Greek texts. He published, some years ago, a Hebrew translation of Xenophon's shorter Socratic works (all but *Memorabilia*.) He has recently published a book on the Socrates of both Plato and Xenophon: *How Plato and Xenophon Created our Socrates*, New Jersey 2012. The book has many interesting analyses of passages of both authors, and it brings some new insights into the philosophical ideas of Xenophon. I cannot, however, accept its main thesis in what regards Plato. Danzig maintains that Plato's main aim in writing the dialogues in which Socrates is one of the speakers is to apologise—in the ancient sense—for his friend and master. One can agree that Xenophon and some of the minor Socratics wrote with an aim of defending Socrates and showing that he was really quite a decent chap, who went to the right sort of church every Sunday and kept a strictly kosher kitchen. But even in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* we find quite a few doctrines ascribed to Socrates which are not necessary, or even not all that useful, for such a defence. The image of Socrates in Plato's *Apology* and *Gorgias* would hardly endear him to the average Athenian—who might find Callicles' depiction of Socrates and his preoccupations more congenial. One also wonders why spend so much time on subtle issues of epistemology, metaphysics, and logic (to use our terminology), much of which will be far too complex for the average reader, rather than concentrate on the more likeable and popular virtues of Socrates, such as his fondness for good-looking boys and his courage in battle—and of course his support for democracy. Plato is our source for much of this as well, but if he were only writing as a posthumous attorney for the defence, why bother with all the rest of that muddle?

My last two Israelis who have written about Plato are philosophers who "did Greek" when they decided to specialise in ancient Greek philosophy. Andrew German teaches ancient philosophy at Ben-Gurion University, Beer Sheva. He studied political science and Judaic studies at Rutgers, law at Bar-Ilan, and did his PhD on Plato and Hegel in Boston University. His publications—also readily available on Academia.edu—include articles on Plato, Hegel, Heidegger, and some of our contemporary commentators on Hegel, such as Dieter Henrich. In writing on Plato, he tends to deal with large and impressive themes, such as "Is Socrates Free: The Theaetetus as a Case Study", or "Chronos, Psuché, and Logos in Plato's Euthydemus". Unlike many writers on Plato these days (and not only these days), he does not merely start with the most recent literature and merely

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go a few inches ahead of "the latest": he asks his own questions, and he does offer long passages of text for discussion—in translation, with the odd "important" Greek words (what Kenneth Dover mockingly called "aces") in transliteration. But the ambience of his articles is that of recent English-language secondary literature, and one does find here and there some "crippled quotations", such as "ten psuchén toi autes kosmoi"[67] His articles are never uninteresting, but they are, in the last resort, part of our contemporary Metaplatonic industry.

Naly Thaler, who succeeded Scolnicov as the ancient philosopher at the Hebrew University, graduated in philosophy from Tel-Aviv University, where he "did some Greek", and got his PhD from Princeton with a thesis on "Plato on the Metaphysical Foundations of Syntax", supervised by John Cooper. He has since published some articles, mainly on Plato's *Theaetetus*. A list can be found on Academia.edu. His articles are also part of today's Metaplatonic industry. They take their cue from the most recent discussions in English-language secondary literature and try to add something, without offending the great names or forgetting any of "the latest". He does quote some Greek words and sentences, sometimes in the Byzantine characters.

I have discussed almost entirely the written contributions made by Eretz-Israeli scholars to the study of Plato and to making him available and intelligible to various classes of Hebrew readers. Unlike European and American culture, Plato has never been a major figure in Jewish and Hebrew literature and culture. In Hebrew literature he was, as we have seen, a very late arrival on the scene. The Israeli academic world today has some room for philosophy, including ancient philosophy; but the study of ancient philosophy, even at the universities, is somewhat marginal. Introductory courses on "Thales to Plato" or "Thales to Aristotle" are taught in all universities and in some of the academic colleges, and in most universities, there are also reading classes and seminars in Greek philosophy, where Platonic texts are often read; but these courses are not infrequently taught by people with no real Classical education and no living relationship to those ancient Greeks. Plato is mostly read in departments of philosophy, where students are expected to know only Hebrew and English; and it has not been an uncommon phenomenon for a student to write an MA, or even a PhD dissertation on some Platonic theme without either the student or the supervisor being able to read Plato

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[67] Article "Is Socrates Free", presented on Academia.edu as "Accepted Manucsript Version", note 7: "*Phaedo*,114e4-115a1 ranges freedom alongside moderation, justice, courage and truth as one of the soul's proper adornments (ten psuchén toi autes kosmoi)", but this is not further elaborated, there or elsewhere.

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in his own language. This, of course, is not a specific Israeli contribution to illiteracy: it is part of the worldwide decline in the proper study of the humanities. Yet there are in a few Israeli universities some people who have come to Plato with the obvious entry requirements, converse with him regularly in ancient Greek, and some of them are doing their best to perpetuate the spirit of proper scholarship in their own little corners. I can only pray for them.

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