



# Durham E-Theses

---

## *Plato's Later Dialectic*

HAYASE, ATSUSHI

### How to cite:

---

HAYASE, ATSUSHI (2010) *Plato's Later Dialectic*, Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/406/>

### Use policy

---

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

---

Academic Support Office, Durham University, University Office, Old Elvet, Durham DH1 3HP  
e-mail: [e-theses.admin@dur.ac.uk](mailto:e-theses.admin@dur.ac.uk) Tel: +44 0191 334 6107  
<http://etheses.dur.ac.uk>

## Material abstract

Atsushi Hayase  
Plato's Later Dialectic

This thesis proposes to examine the method of collection and division, Plato's philosophical method prominent in certain later dialogues, i.e. the *Phaedrus*, *Sophist*, *Politicus*, and *Philebus*, with a particular emphasis on the continuity of his methodology throughout his career. In the modern development of the interpretation of Plato's later metaphysics, scholars have often assumed a revisionist interpretation of this method: collection and division were advanced by Plato in the dialogues listed as a revolutionary method for the investigation of the interrelation of transcendental Platonic Forms with each other. By contrast, on the basis of a close examination of relevant texts, this thesis tries to defend a unitarian interpretation of collection and division. The argument of this thesis comprises three main proposals: (1) that the method of collection is equivalent to Socrates' procedure for definition, as described in the early dialogues; (2) that the objects of the method of collection and division are Socratic forms as distinguished from Platonic Forms; and (3) that there are two kinds of application of collection and division: one is the procedure for definition, the other internal analysis. The procedure for definition provides us with knowledge of a Socratic form, i.e. the understanding in the form of a simple proposition that distinguishes a subject-matter from all the other things, while internal analysis provides us with expert knowledge or knowledge of a Platonic Form.

# PLATO'S LATER DIALECTIC

Atsushi Hayase

Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Classics and Ancient History  
Durham University  
2010

## Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	page	8
<i>Notes on texts and translations</i>		9
<b>Introduction</b>		
§1. <i>The background of my research</i>		11
§2. <i>An overview of my argument</i>		15
§2.1. <i>The general purpose of my study and my main proposals</i>		15
§2.2. <i>A synopsis of my argument</i>		16
<b>Chapter 1</b>		
<b>Socrates' procedure for definition and the positive use of examples</b>		
§1. <i>Introduction</i>		30
§2. <i>Two interpretations on Socrates' positive use of examples</i>		31
§3. <i>The true belief theory</i>		38
§4. <i>My interpretation</i>		43
§4.1. <i>F as instantiated in a certain situation, action, or thing</i>		47
§4.2. <i>Parts (or kinds) of F</i>		52
§4.3. <i>Particular types of actions or things</i>		55
§4.4. <i>Individual actions or things</i>		64
§5. <i>Conclusion</i>		65

## Chapter 2

### The Priority of the definition of the whole

§1. Introduction	66
§2. The text: <i>Theaetetus</i> 146c7-147c6	68
§3. An analysis of the text	70
§4. The <i>Meno</i> and the principle of the priority of the definition of the whole	79
§5. <i>Sophist</i> 239c9-240a8	82

## Chapter 3

### Socratic forms and Platonic Forms

§1. Introduction	87
§2. Socratic forms and contexts	90
§2.1. Immanence	92
§2.2. The approximationist and the contextualist approach to Socratic forms	109
§3. The Socratic model of knowledge and its limit	117
§4. Platonic Forms	128
§4.1 The ascent passage in the <i>Symposium</i> and the context-independence of Platonic Forms	130
§4.2. Socratic forms and Platonic Forms in the <i>Phaedo</i> and the <i>Republic</i>	145

## Chapter 4

### Dialectic in the *Phaedrus*

§1. Introduction and the outline of the <i>Phaedrus</i>	159
---	-----

§2. <i>The crucial passages and some preliminary observations</i>	171
§3. <i>The traditional interpretation</i>	176
§4. <i>The role of definition in the Phaedrus</i>	181
§4.1. <i>The role of definition in Socrates' first speech</i>	182
§4.2. <i>The discussion on the content of a speech (261a7-266c1)</i>	188
§5. <i>Definition and internal analysis</i>	199
§6. <i>Concluding remarks</i>	208

## **Chapter 5**

### **Dialectic in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus***

§1. <i>Introduction</i>	211
§2. <i>An analysis of the procedure for definition through collection and division</i>	212

## **Chapter 6**

### **Dialectic in the *Philebus***

§1. <i>Introduction</i>	234
§2. <i>The context</i>	235
§3. <i>One and Many</i>	254
§3.1. <i>The text and interpretation of 15b1-8</i>	255
§3.2. <i>An examination of proposed interpretations of (Q2)</i>	262
§3.3. <i>My interpretation</i>	272
§4. <i>The dialectical method in the Philebus</i>	282
§5. <i>Two more issues: Theuth's case and Platonic Forms</i>	307

## **Conclusion**

*§1. A systematic recapitulation of Plato's method* 313

*Bibliography* 317

*List of quoted passages* 327

## Statement of Copyright

*The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.*



## Acknowledgements

This thesis was supervised by Christopher Rowe and Luca Castagnoli. I owe greatest thanks to Christopher Rowe not only for his valuable comments on my work, but also for his constant encouragement which helped me sustain motivation necessary for the present work. Acute comments on my argument from Luca Castagnoli were beneficial for clarifying my thought and argument. I am also grateful to my friends, Bilal Demir and Oliver Pearson; without their friendship, I would not have been able to devote myself to my project during my stay in Durham.

## Notes on texts and translations

I have used the OCT (Oxford Classical Texts) edition of Plato's texts. For the first volume (which includes the *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Phaedo*, *Cratylus*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Politicus*) I have referred to the new edition of E. A. Duke, W. F. Hicken, W. S. M. Nicoll, D. B. Robinson, and J. C. G. Strachan (1995), for the *Republic* to the new edition of S. R. Slings (2003), and for all the others to the editions of J. Burnet (1900-03).

In quoting passages from Plato, I have used published translations (except for a couple of passages which I translated). I have used the translations included in John M. Cooper, ed. (1997) *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis) except for the translations of the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*. As for these two dialogues, I have used Christopher Rowe's translations: (1986) *Plato: Phaedrus* (Warminster), and (1998) *Plato: Symposium* (Warminster). The translations quoted have been modified when necessary. I have attached passage numbers, e.g. (P32), to key passages. I have tried to make clear which passage I am referring to in each case, but I have also attached the list of my key passages at the end of my thesis.

I have adopted the abbreviations of the titles of Plato's works from H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, H. S. Jones, eds. (1968) *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford):

*Ap.* = *Apology*

*Men.* = *Meno*

*Chrm.* = *Charmides*

*Phd.* = *Phaedo*

*Cri. = Crito*

*Cra. = Cratylus*

*Epist. = Letters*

*Euthd. = Euthydemus*

*Euthphr. = Euthyphro*

*Grg. = Gorgias*

*Hi. Ma. = Hippias Major*

*La. = Laches*

*Lg. = Laws*

*Ly. = Lysis*

*Phdr. = Phaedrus*

*Phlb. = Philebus*

*Plt. = Politicus*

*Prm. = Parmenides*

*Prt. = Protagoras*

*R. = Republic*

*Smp. = Symposium*

*Sph. = Sophist*

*Tht. = Theaetetus*

*Ti. = Timaeus*

## Introduction

### §1. *The background of my research*

I have entitled my thesis *Plato's Later Dialectic* because I intend it to be a counterpart of Richard Robinson's famous study of Plato's method: *Plato's Earlier Dialectic*.<sup>1</sup> His book was written more than 50 years ago, but still remains one of the most important studies on Plato's dialectical method. However, as his title announces, his seminal work is not concerned with Plato's entire method. Robinson opens his preface by saying 'This book is called *Plato's Earlier Dialectic*, and not simply *Plato's Dialectic*, because it contains no examination of the theory of synthesis [or collection] and division prominent in certain late dialogues, namely the *Phaedrus*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, and *Philebus*.'<sup>2</sup> I would like

---

<sup>1</sup> I divide Plato's dialogues into 'early', 'middle', and 'late' roughly in accordance with commonly accepted chronological order, following the present custom of Platonic scholarship. Early dialogues are (in alphabetical order): *Apology*, *Charmides*, *Crito*, *Cratylus*, *Euthydemus*, *Euthyphro*, *Gorgias*, *Hippias Major*, *Hippias Minor*, *Ion*, *Laches*, *Lysis*, *Menexenus*, *Meno*, *Protagoras*. Middle dialogues are: *Symposium*, *Phaedo*, *Republic*, *Parmenides*, *Phaedrus*, *Theaetetus*. Late dialogues are: *Sophist*, *Politicus (Statesman)*, *Philebus*, *Timaeus-Critias*, *Laws*. (According to the stylometrically established order, the *Symposium* and *Phaedo* belong to the 'early' group, but I have moved them to the 'middle' group, since scholars usually refer to them as middle dialogues. For a concise and useful review of the past studies on the chronology of Plato's dialogues, see Kahn (2002)). I have arranged my chapters or sections accordingly, but no substantial part of my argument depends on this supposed chronological order.

I sometimes attribute philosophical ideas proposed in the early dialogues to 'Socrates', and, by contrast, those proposed in the middle and late dialogues to 'Plato', following again the present custom of Platonic scholarship. Thus I discuss the *Socratic* method or *Socratic* forms in contrast to the *Platonic* method or *Platonic* Forms in my thesis. This custom is based on a belief commonly held by scholars that Plato's early dialogues depict the historical Socrates truthfully, while Plato expresses his own ideas in the middle and late dialogues. By adopting the distinction between Socrates and Plato, however, I do not mean to commit myself to any specific views about the relation between the Socrates described in Plato's early dialogues and the historical Socrates.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson (1953, v).

to supply here at least some of what he omitted.<sup>3</sup> My work is especially concerned with an examination of the method of collection and division prominent in the dialogues listed. Keeping in mind the development of the studies on Plato's later dialogues after Robinson—briefly summarised below—I believe that there is a growing need for such a work.

But first some explanation of 'dialectic' is in order. In a word, dialectic is Plato's archetypal philosophical method for giving an account of the essence of each thing. The word 'dialectic' (διαλεκτική) is an abbreviation of 'the science of dialectic' (διαλεκτική τέχνη or ἐπιστήμη, see *Phdr.* 276e5; *Sph.* 253d2-3), and is derived from the verb διαλέγεσθαι, 'to make conversation', 'to discourse', or 'to discuss'.<sup>4</sup> An apparent gulf between the philosophical method and ordinary conversation may be bridged by the historical Socrates, who was fond of transforming casual conversation into philosophy: once he is engaged in a conversation with somebody about something, in one way or another he directs his interlocutors towards discussing a particular philosophical topic, e.g. the nature of a virtue, or of beauty (cf. *La.* 187e6-188a2). Plato saw the dialogue form as encapsulating Socrates' philosophical spirit, and established 'dialectic' as a systematic method available for philosophers generally in their pursuit of knowledge.

Now Robinson, among others, proposed that Plato calls different methods

---

<sup>3</sup> My own conclusions, however, are significantly different from Robinson's. For example, in Chapter 1 I reject his interpretation of Socrates' procedure for definition (see pp. 49-53 in his (1953)), and my general view of the method of collection and division is completely different from his, which he outlines when he deals with possible interpretations of the upward path in the *Republic* (see pp.162-65, *ibid.*).

<sup>4</sup> Dixsaut (2001, 354-54) offers useful classifications of the occurrences of the words διαλέγεσθαι, διαλεκτικός, διαλεκτική, διαλεκτικόν, διαλεκτικῶς in Plato's dialogues.

'dialectic' at different stages of his career.<sup>5</sup> He recognised a significant gap between the account suggested in the *Phaedo* and *Republic*, on the one hand, and the one provided in the *Phaedrus*, *Sophist*, *Politicus*, and *Philebus*, on the other.<sup>6</sup> I suspect that the gap as he saw it has considerably widened in the minds of Platonic scholars since the publication of his book in 1953—the year in which G. E. L. Owen published his deeply influential paper,<sup>7</sup> which gave rise to the still now continuing controversy over Plato's theory of Forms between the so-called 'unitarians' and 'revisionists'. Broadly speaking, the unitarians are those scholars who believe that Plato's theory is consistent throughout the dialogues, while the revisionists think that Plato changed his fundamental doctrines at one or more points of his career apparently in order to overcome certain weaknesses of his theory.<sup>8</sup> Owen put forward a radical revisionist view; he argued that Plato completely abandoned his theory of transcendent Forms after having described some difficulties it involved, in the *Parmenides*. Under his influence, the interpretative pendulum has decisively swung to the revisionist side. It is true that few scholars would fully accept his radical claim now, but many have

---

<sup>5</sup> See Robinson (1953, 70): 'The fact is that the word "dialectic" had a strong tendency in Plato to mean "the ideal method, whatever that may be". In so far as it was thus merely an honorific title, Plato applied it at every stage of his life to whatever seemed to him at the moment the most hopeful procedure'. Cf. also Hackforth (1952, 135): 'It should be realised that there can be no objection to Plato, or any philosopher, having two or even more *διαλεκτικαὶ μέθοδοι*, according as he *διαλεκτικῶς μετέρχεται* this goal or that'.

<sup>6</sup> See Robinson (1953, 69-70).

<sup>7</sup> Owen (1953).

<sup>8</sup> This is a simplified way of characterising different approaches to Plato's theory of forms/Forms. Complexity may arise from the fact that some scholars prefer 'development' or 'sophistication' to 'revision' (I think no unitarian is willing to say that there is no development at all in Plato's theory after e.g. the *Euthyphro*), and that they may think of Plato as refusing to commit himself to ideas he discusses. Because of this complexity and for other reasons, it is not easy to say who exactly belongs to which group, 'unitarians' and 'revisionists'.

licensed themselves to believe that a revisionist view less radical than Owen's is the most balanced and plausible choice. In the context of this trend and especially when they are examining one of the late dialogues without considering its connection with other dialogues, scholars tend to assume the following revisionist interpretation: in the middle dialogues Plato posited Forms as simple, uniform, solitary entities, but in the late dialogues, in order to overcome the difficulties he himself posed in the *Parmenides*, he changed them into complex, manifold, interrelated entities; the task of new dialectic, or the method of collection and division, introduced in the late dialogues is to examine the interrelation of Platonic Forms with each other.<sup>9</sup>

To my mind, the fact that such an interpretation has been widely assumed, while no systematic treatment of Plato's later dialectic is available, shows the necessity for a reassessment of this revisionist interpretation in connection with Plato's methodology. For once we start to think about these issues with a particular emphasis on our understanding of Plato's method, some objections can be easily raised: for example, why did Plato introduce the method of collection and division in the *Phaedrus*, the dialogue which is usually supposed by revisionists to have been written *before* the *Parmenides*? Or, how is it possible for us to investigate the interrelation of Platonic Forms (if they are the quasi-religious entities described in the middle dialogues, and do not exist in our world), and even if it is possible, what is the use of such an investigation?

In this thesis I shall defend a version of the unitarian interpretation. I shall attempt to undermine the assumption made by Robinson and others that there

---

<sup>9</sup> I shall list some supporters of this view in Chapter 3 §1, n.59.

opens up a huge gap between Plato's earlier and later methods. My aim, which I admit to be ambitious, is to push back the pendulum of the interpretation of Plato's intellectual history towards the unitarian side, if only to a small extent, in the belief that, whenever it is possible, being able to understand Plato's view as a coherent whole is preferable to making him inconstant in the most important aspects of his philosophy.

## *§2. An overview of my argument*

In view of the complicated nature of the subject of my argument, I think it is useful to present its detailed summary as an aid which a reader can always refer back to while he or she is working through the chapters. I advise the first-time reader who is not already familiar with the specific texts and arguments discussed in my thesis just to have a quick look at it or to skip it entirely at this stage. This summary is chiefly intended to clarify my position in relation to the topic dealt with in each chapter, and to explain how my arguments in different chapters can be connected together so as to constitute one single argument. (I am not going to describe the progress of my discussion in detail section by section; for the structure or outline of successive chapters, see the individual chapter-introductions.)

### *§2.1. The general purpose of my study and my main proposals.*

The general purpose of my thesis is to investigate the method of collection and division which Plato describes and/or employs in the *Phaedrus*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, and *Philebus*. I have three specific proposals that constitute the kernel



of my overall interpretation:

(1) The method of collection is the same as Socrates' procedure for definition, as described in the early definitional dialogues.

(2) The objects of investigation through collection and division are Socratic forms as distinguished from Platonic Forms.

(3) There are two kinds of application of collection and division: one is the procedure for definition, the other internal analysis. The procedure for definition provides us with knowledge of a Socratic form (or knowledge by definition), i.e. the understanding of a simple proposition that distinguishes a subject-matter (*F*) from all the other things, while internal analysis provides us with knowledge of a Platonic Form or (the theoretical aspect of) expert knowledge.<sup>10</sup>

## §2.2. *A synopsis of my argument*

**Chapters 1 – 3 (The preparatory part of my thesis):** Since my main proposals are essentially concerned with what may be characterised as the Socratic features of Plato's method, I shall first clarify what Socrates' procedure for definition is (in Chapters 1 and 2) and what the Socratic forms are (in Chapter 3) before turning to the proper examination of the method of collection and division.

---

<sup>10</sup> I use *F* as a variable that is to be filled out with the name of any kind of characteristic shared by many things, without being committed to the precise range of such characteristic (Socrates' favourites are things like goodness, beauty, virtue, but he also mentions speed, colour, shape, clay, etc.). The 'definition' is a proposition that specifies this characteristic by distinguishing it from all the other characteristics. Scholars sometimes characterise the Socratic definition as 'real' definition in contrast to 'lexical' or 'nominal' definition. See e.g. Fine (1993, 46-49; 265 n.10).

**Chapter 1:** I start my discussion by establishing the following two points: (i) that Socrates' procedure for definition is the method of generalization or abstraction, and (ii) that it uses obviously true examples, or what I shall call 'instances', as data before proposing a definition. Socrates' use of examples as data for a definition has been a matter of controversy among scholars: some scholars have proposed that Socrates' procedure for definition is the method of generalization or abstraction based on examples, while others have claimed that he cannot know which examples are genuine or bogus (and so cannot use examples as reliable data), because of his commitment to the following aspect of the principle of the priority of definition:

**(PD)** If one fails to know the definition of  $F$ , then one fails to know, for any  $x$ , that  $x$  is an  $F$ .

I shall propose a solution to this issue by making **(PD)** weaker. I shall first point out that there are different kinds of examples Socrates and his interlocutors mention before proposing a definition: (1a)  $F$  as instantiated in a certain thing, action, or situation (e.g. the virtue of a man), (1b) a part or kind of  $F$  (e.g. courage as a part of virtue), (2) a particular type of thing or action (e.g. being able to manage public affairs, which one might think is an example of virtue), (3) an individual action or thing (e.g. Pericles, who was thought to be virtuous by many people). I shall then suggest that in the case of (1a) it is absurd, and in the case of (1b) it is implausible, to hold **(PD)**; everyone knows that the virtue of a man is virtue, or that courage is a virtue, even if he or she does not know the

definition of virtue. I shall propose to call (1a) and (1b)—obviously genuine examples of *F*—‘instances’ as distinguished from mere ‘examples’ which can belong to any one of the four kinds described above (i.e. *both* examples which are merely ostensibly *F* and are bogus in reality *and* those which are genuinely *F*). I shall then undertake a close examination of Plato’s text, in order to show that it is exactly these ‘instances’ that Socrates in the early definitional dialogues makes use of as data before proposing a definition. My conclusion is that Socrates is not committed to **(PD)**, but to the following weaker principle:

**(PDweak)** If one fails to know the definition of *F*, then one fails to know, for any *x* that is not an instance of *F* (but may nevertheless be an example of *F*), that *x* is an *F*.

**(PDweak)** certainly restricts the range of examples as data for a definition to instances (i.e. (1a) and (1b) above), but it does not prevent Socrates from employing the method of generalization and abstraction for acquiring a definition. On the basis of this analysis, I shall propose that Socrates’ procedure for definition is the method of generalization or abstraction based on instances, or, in other words, that it is the examination of various instances with a view to finding the distinctive characteristic that is common to them all and thus providing the definition of a subject-matter.

**Chapter 2:** Next I shall turn to a passage close to the beginning of the *Theaetetus*, in which Socrates resumes his favourite ‘What is *F*?’ question. My argument in Chapter 1 is at odds with the explanation usually given of

Socrates' rejection of Theaetetus' enumeration of various kinds of knowledge (e.g. geometry, cobbling) as an answer to the question, 'What is knowledge?' (*Tht.* 146c7-147c6). Many scholars suppose that in rejecting Theaetetus' answer Socrates is appealing to **(PD)**; he is not only pointing out that the enumeration of examples is not the answer he is after, but is also suggesting that examples do not offer reliable data for a definition, since those who are looking for the definition of *F* are not in a position to know that the examples of *F* are really examples of *F*. By contrast, my argument in Chapter 1 indicates that Theaetetus' examples do offer reliable data for a definition, since they are (1b) parts or kinds of knowledge, and so 'instances' of knowledge. By closely analysing the passage at issue, I shall argue that Socrates is not appealing to **(PD)**, but to a different principle, i.e. what I shall call the principle of the priority of the definition of the whole (over the definitions of parts):

**(PDWP)** If one fails to know the definition of *F*, then one fails to know the definition of any part (or any kind) of *F*.

**(PDWP)** prevents us from knowing, for example, the definition of cobbling, i.e. 'knowledge of making shoes', before knowing the definition of knowledge. But it does not prevent us from using cobbling as a reliable datum for the definition of knowledge. My suggestion is, then, that Socrates is committed to two independent principles, i.e. **(PDweak)** and **(PDWP)**, and not to the single principle **(PD)**, as many scholars have supposed.

Through the discussion in Chapters 1 and 2, I wish to call attention to the

fact that Socrates' procedure for definition described in the early definitional dialogues and the *Theaetetus* anticipates the method of collection and division developed in later dialogues. First, it seems fairly clear that Socrates' procedure for definition anticipates the method of collection. My discussion in chapter 1 shows that Socrates' procedure for definition consists in examining many instances of *F* in order to find the distinctive characteristic (*F*) that is common to them all, and to provide the definition of *F*. In the *Phaedrus* Plato describes the method of collection as 'perceiving together and bringing into one form items that are scattered in many places, in order that one can define each thing [...]' (265d3-4). I shall argue in Chapter 4 that these two procedures are one and the same. Second, an obvious implication of **(PDWP)** is that one must first define *F* as a whole before turning to define parts or kinds of *F*. In Chapters 4 – 6, I shall make it clear that, in applying the procedure of division, one must first define *F* as a whole (or consider *F* as a whole to be something obvious), and then proceed to define a part of *F* by providing the distinctive characteristic that distinguishes the instances of this part of *F* from the whole set of instances of *F*. **(PDWP)** offers a good reason why Plato invented such a procedure.

**Chapter 3:** Having discussed Socrates' procedure for definition, I shall next turn to the objects of this procedure, i.e. Socratic forms. The main purpose of Chapter 3 is to bring home the idea that Plato maintains Socratic forms in the middle and late dialogues too. It has been almost unanimously believed by scholars that in the middle dialogues Plato replaced immanent Socratic forms, which had been at issue in the early dialogues, with his own transcendent entities, i.e. Platonic Forms. This belief seems to have made scholars inclined to

take such views as that Plato's later method is radically different from his earlier method because of the difference between their respective *objects*, and that Plato in the late dialogues launched the examination of the interrelation of Platonic Forms with each other. I do not share such a belief. Instead, I shall argue that Socratic forms play a role different from that of Platonic Forms in Plato's ontology, and that he simply added Platonic Forms to the Socratic framework as the ultimate goal of our search for knowledge.

In order to show this, I shall first clarify the ontological and epistemological status of Socratic forms. In connection with their ontological status, there are two points particularly relevant for my overall argument. The first is that the following widely-shared view is not correct: Socratic forms are *always* considered by Socrates as immanent, or spatio-temporally located, in concrete *particulars*. I shall argue that actually he sometimes regards a Socratic form as the common characteristic of many *universals* having it (for example, Socrates says that the virtue of a man, the virtue of a woman, etc. have virtue as their common characteristic; see *Men.* 72c6-d1). This point is significant insofar as it recognises the fact that the distinction between universals and particulars (or between types and tokens) does not constitute the basic framework of Socratic ontology. Thus, for instance, there is absolutely no ground for the claim sometimes made by scholars that Socrates in the early dialogues is solely interested in the relation between one universal and many particulars sharing it, while Plato in the late dialogues turns his attention to the investigation of the interrelation of universals. The second point about the ontological status of Socratic forms is that every Socratic form is both one and many, since it is the

common characteristic shared by many instances (which may be either particulars or universals). That is to say, the Socratic form of *F* is one because every instance of *F* is liable to *one and the same* definition, but the Socratic form of *F* is also many because it is instantiated in *many* things and actions. In Chapter 5, this point will turn out to be crucial for our understanding of 'dividing a form' through the procedure of division; I shall argue there that 'dividing the form of *F*' means dividing the 'plural aspect' of the Socratic form of *F*, or dividing many instances of *F*, into certain subgroups. Next, in connection with the epistemological status of Socratic forms, I shall argue that knowledge of the Socratic form of *F* merely consists in knowing a definition, i.e. a certain simple proposition. The implication is that knowledge of the Socratic form of *F* does not make one an expert in *F*, since it is unlikely that one can be an expert in anything just by knowing a simple proposition.

With this argument about Socratic forms in mind, I shall next attempt an elucidation of the status of Platonic Forms which basically relies on what is commonly called the 'ascent' passage in the *Symposium*. I suggest that in this passage Plato distinguishes three items: (1) beautiful things (e.g. beautiful bodies), (2) beauty in things (e.g. beauty in bodies), and (3) the Platonic Form of Beauty, and then propose that (2) beauty in things corresponds to the Socratic form of beauty. These two kinds of beauty/Beauty are different in status and have different roles: the Socratic form of beauty is instantiated in things and actions, is both one and many, and is known by the definition of beauty, while the Platonic Form of Beauty is never instantiated in things or actions, is simply one, and is known only at the end of a certain systematic process of

understanding various kinds of beauties. Bearing these different status and roles in mind, I suggest that Plato has both Socratic forms and Platonic Forms in view in the middle and late dialogues. (After this argument, I shall briefly argue that my interpretation is compatible with, and even sheds a new light on, metaphysical passages in the *Phaedo* and *Republic*.)

**Chapters 4 – 6 (The main part of my thesis):** Armed with a clear understanding of Socrates' procedure for definition and its objects, I shall embark on my principal topic: the method of collection and division. The main part of my thesis is divided between those dialogues in which Plato explains or employs collection and division: in Chapter 4 I shall discuss the *Phaedrus*, in Chapter 5 the *Sophist* and the *Politicus*, and in Chapter 6 the *Philebus*. I basically intend my argument as developed in each one of these chapters to be understandable independently of the other chapters. For example, in each chapter I shall offer independent reasons for identifying the 'forms' or 'kinds' that appear as the objects of collection and division with Socratic forms. However, I claim that one of the real advantages of my interpretation is that it enables us to explain relevant passages in all four dialogues consistently in the same way.

**Chapter 4:** By analysing canonical passages about the method of collection and division in the *Phaedrus*, i.e. **(A)** 265c8-266c1 and **(B)** 277b2-c6, together with their surrounding context, I shall propose in this chapter (1) that the method of collection is the same as Socrates' procedure for definition, and (2) that there are two kinds of application of the method of collection and division: one is the procedure for definition, the other what I shall call 'internal analysis'. I shall



also propose (3) that, when the procedure for definition is at issue, division (of the genus of a definiendum) is applied *in the course of* collection (of the definiendum). In bringing forward these proposals, I intend to refute a dominant view about the method in question, or what I shall call the traditional interpretation, according to which (i) collection is the procedure for the identification of the genus of a definiendum, and (ii) collection is applied *before* division. Scholars tend to support this interpretation by relying on the canonical passages without paying much attention to their context. I wish to show that a good grasp of the context uncovers serious defects in the traditional interpretation.

I shall first discuss passages closely connected with (A) (265c8-266c1), paying particular attention to Socrates' reference to the benefit of definition or collection. My basic argument runs as follows. There is little room for doubt that in (A) Socrates is suggesting that the method of collection provides speeches with self-consistency and clarity. It follows from this that the traditional interpreters, who identify collection with the determination of the genus of a subject-matter, would by implication be claiming that the determination of the genus is beneficial in this regard. However, Socrates reiterates the benefit of definition without saying anything about the benefit of the specification of the genus: first, at the beginning of Socrates' first speech (237b7-238c4) an imaginary speaker indicates that the definition of the subject of a speech helps interlocutors agree with themselves and with each other; second, in the course of the examination of scientific features of speeches Socrates suggests that the definition of the subject-matter created structure within his

first speech (see 263d1-264e3). These passages testify to the view that, in referring to the benefit of collection in **(A)**, Socrates has in mind these benefits of definition. Accordingly, I shall propose that collection is the procedure for definition, and not simply for the identification of the genus. The description of collection naturally indicates that this is indeed Socrates' procedure for definition: examining many instances of *F* in order to specify the common characteristic, or the Socratic form of *F*, so that one can provide the definition of *F*. My suggestion that division is applied in the course of collection also naturally follows from this proposal, since in his first speech Socrates applied the division of desire in the course of the procedure for the definition of human love.

Next, I shall turn to passage **(B)** (277b2-c6), which is quoted by some of the traditional interpreters as crucial evidence for their view. I shall argue that the superficial plausibility of their claim can be explained away by taking into consideration the fact that in this passage Socrates has two kinds of application of the method of collection and division in mind. I shall suggest that these constitute (1) the procedure for definition and (2) what I call 'internal analysis'. The procedure for the definition of *F* is simply concerned with *F* as a whole and provides the definition—a simple proposition—of *F*. By contrast, the internal analysis of *F* Socrates introduces later in the dialogue (269c6-272b6) analyses *F* as a whole into its species and subspecies, and provides the definitions of every internal element of *F*. The procedure for definition provides us with knowledge by definition, while internal analysis provides us with (the theoretical aspect of) expert knowledge. In Chapter 6 I shall suggest that internal analysis is

ultimately concerned with Platonic Forms; the immediate or direct objects of internal analysis are the Socratic form of *F* and its species-forms and subspecies-forms, but the goal of this method is to acquire knowledge of the Platonic Form of *F*.

**Chapter 5:** I shall then move on to discuss the *Sophist* and the *Politicus*, in which the Eleatic Stranger extensively employs the method of collection and division in order to define sophistry and statesmanship. In this chapter I am chiefly interested in clarifying the mechanism of single steps of division, thereby making it clear that *dividing* the form of *F* implies *collecting* the form of *G*, a species-form of the form of *F*. My first step is to clarify the elements involved, at least tacitly, in each single step of division: (1) the form of *G* that results from a particular step of division, (2) its instances, (3) its genus (*F*) and *differentia*, (4) its detailed explanation, and (5) its name. I shall then argue that the controversial operation, 'dividing the form of *F* into the form of *G* and the form of *H*', should be understood as *dividing* the plural aspect of the Socratic form of *F* (or dividing many instances of the Socratic form of *F*) into the instances of the form of *G* and those of the form of *H*. When seen from a different point of view, this operation is *collecting* the instances of the form of *G* and those of the form of *H* into unities by finding their common characteristics (*G* and *H*) and providing their definitions. My conclusion is that Socrates' procedure for definition is working in each step of division as described in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus*. I shall also argue that the seventh, successful definition of sophistry, taken as a whole procedure, can be seen as a clear example of Socrates' procedure for definition: it starts by surveying the instances of

sophistry (see *Sph.* 232b1-234e4) and moves on to provide the distinctive characteristic common to all these instances, first roughly describing it as ‘a kind of imitation’, but eventually, with the help of the method of collection and division, reaching the accurate definition.

**Chapter 6:** In the final chapter I shall minutely examine the opening passages of the *Philebus* in which Socrates discusses methodological issues (14c1-18d2). My main task is to show that the dialectical method described at 16c10-e2 is the same as the internal analysis we have been introduced to in the *Phaedrus*; in the *Philebus* Plato is merely re-describing the same method in a slightly different manner, before applying it in the main part of the dialogue for the scientific investigations of pleasure and knowledge. This task, however, cannot be carried out straightforwardly, because the description of the method is prefaced with extremely controversial passages.

I shall first explicate the flow of the argument in the opening passages. Two points are particularly important. First, the purpose of the ‘opening skirmish’ between Socrates and Protarchus (12c1-14b8) is to establish the following principle about one and many:

(OM1) *F* is one *qua F*, but *qua* instances of *F* it is many, and these instances are dissimilar to one another.

Second, Socrates says that the objections described at 15b1-8 can be raised easily against a case of (OM1), e.g. ‘pleasure is one *qua* pleasure, but *qua* instances it is many’, which implies that one thing is many, or many things are just one (see

14c8-9), and which posits something universal as one (see 15a1-2). He also says that it is generally admitted that one should not try to deal with or refute the case in which someone posits something particular as one, for instance:

(OM2) Protarchus is one by nature, but is many and opposite Protarchuses by being tall and short, heavy and light, etc.

This second point indicates that it is misleading to contrast (OM2) as the 'easy one-and-many problems' with the objections described at 15b1-8 as the 'serious one-and-many problems', as many scholars do. (OM2) is contrasted by Plato with (OM1), and not with the objections.

I shall then turn to the objections described at 15b1-8 which Socrates says are easy to raise, and which I shall propose to call the 'apparent objections'. It has been fiercely discussed by scholars (a) whether there are two or three objections, and (b) how these objections are dealt with by Socrates. I shall suggest that there are only two objections, and that at 16e4-17a5 Socrates dismisses these objections as merely eristic, together with a young boy's way of dealing with cases of (OM1) described at 15d8-16a3. This reading would require an emendation of the text (I shall propose to replace ὅμως at 15b4 with ὄντως or ὅλως), but it is perfectly harmonious with the context. Many scholars have argued recently that there are three questions, the second of which is crucial for understanding the context, because it deals with what they think is Plato's main concern in the late dialogues, i.e. the interrelation of the Platonic Forms. This second question, according to these scholars, asks how one genus-Form (e.g.

Pleasure) can be many species-Forms (e.g. Pleasure-in-Body, Pleasure-in-Soul). I shall argue, however, that my discussion of the opening passages shows that their interpretation does not fit the context: if this line of interpretation were to be correct, the answer to the second objection would have already been given in the opening skirmish (12c1-14b8), before the apparent objections are described.

I shall then address the dialectical method described at 16c10-e2, by discussing three points particularly significant for our understanding of the method. First, the objects it directly deals with are Socratic forms. Second, the 'unlimited' (ἄπειρον) in the dialectical method refers to an unlimited quantity of instances. Third, the function of the illustration of the dialectical method (17a6-17e6) is merely to show that grasping the number between one and the unlimited makes one knowledgeable in each case; Socrates does not mean to offer examples of the *actual process* of the application of dialectic. In relation to the second and third points, I shall defend the traditional interpretation against the view that has recently become very influential, according to which the dialectical method in the *Philebus* is essentially the method for finding certain ratios (e.g. 2:3, 4:5) on a certain continuum (e.g. the hot-and-cold continuum). I shall conclude my argument by pointing out that the dialectical method in the *Philebus*, when its controversial points are clarified, turns out to be the same procedure of internal analysis as described in the *Phaedrus*.

## Chapter 1: Socrates' procedure for definition and the positive use of examples

### §1. Introduction

Socrates as described in Plato's early definitional dialogues is notoriously persistent in asking his interlocutors for the definition of a certain item (e.g. courage, justice, beauty) and in destructively examining definitions proposed by them. It is not the case, however, that he is only interested in knocking down proposed definitions; he also seems to have a constructive procedure for acquiring a correct definition. I shall call this 'Socrates' procedure for definition'. In this chapter, I wish to show that Socrates' procedure for definition is the method of generalization or abstraction based on obviously true examples, or what I shall call 'instances' (i.e.  $F$  as instantiated in certain things, actions, or situations, or parts of  $F$ ). My interpretation offers a solution to a puzzle as to how Socrates can make use of examples for acquiring a definition while being committed to what is called 'the principle of the priority of definition'. More importantly, it will provide, I believe, a valuable insight into Plato's later dialectic, which is centrally concerned with definitions and instances.

In section 2, I shall describe two views about Socrates' positive use of examples. Some scholars think that it is clear from the texts that Socrates makes use of examples as data for acquiring a definition. Other scholars suggest that he cannot consistently use examples for that purpose, since his commitment to

the principle of the priority of definition implies that he does not know which examples are genuine. These two opposing views have created a puzzle about Socrates' procedure for definition. In section 3, I shall critically examine the single solution that has been proposed so far, namely that Socrates can *have a true belief* as to which examples are true (and so he can use examples as data for acquiring a definition), even when he does not *know* which examples are true. In section 4, I shall offer my own solution. First, I shall point out that scholars have failed to notice that there are different kinds of 'examples'. In my view, some of them are obviously true examples, or 'instances', and when these kinds of examples are at issue, it is not problematic that Socrates claims to *know* that such and such things are true examples. Second, by closely examining the relevant texts, I shall argue that he uses only these kinds of examples as data for acquiring a definition.

## §2. *Two interpretations on Socrates' positive use of examples*

It is a controversial issue whether Socrates makes use of examples in order to reach a definition or not. A general impression we get at the beginning of Socrates' attempt at defining a virtue or beauty in the early dialogues is that Socrates' interlocutors, when asked the definition of a thing under consideration, offer an example rather than a definition at first, and then Socrates rejects their answer as inappropriate, sometimes having pointed out that there are other examples as well (cf. *Euthphr.* 5d8-6d10, *La.* 190e4-192b8, *Men.* 71e1-77b1, *Tht.* 146c7-148d7). Broadly speaking, some scholars think that the fact that examples are usually mentioned at the beginning of the search for a



definition is a clear indication that the review of these examples is an essential part of Socrates' procedure. By contrast, others underscore Socrates' rejection, and deny any use of examples as data for a definition, thereby appealing to the so-called 'principle of the priority of definition'.

Those who take examples as the primary source for a definition (let us call them 'example-prioritiser') suppose that, first, Socrates' procedure for definition consists in the method of abstraction or generalization, and second, examples are often given by Socrates' interlocutors.<sup>11</sup> Thus, in the inquiry into a subject-matter (*F*), Socrates first collects many examples of *F*, which are often given by his interlocutors, and then examines these examples in order to find out the distinctive characteristic that is common to them and to provide the definition of *F*. The first attempt at defining courage in the *Laches* is often quoted in this connection: Laches, Socrates' interlocutor, proposes 'remaining at one's post and defending oneself against the enemy without running away' as the definition of courage. The example-prioritiser understand this inchoate stage of the dialogue in the following way.<sup>12</sup> First, although Socrates does not think Laches' proposal is a proper one since he is not asking for an example of courageous act but for the definition of courage, at any rate Socrates *accepts*

---

<sup>11</sup> The clearest statement of this interpretation is given by Guthrie (1971, 112-14): 'According to his [Socrates'] method, [...] the inquiry consists of two stages. The first is to collect instances to which both parties to a discussion agree that the name under consideration may be applied, e.g. if it is piety, to collect instances of agreed pious acts. Secondly, the collected instances are examined in order to discover some common quality in them by virtue of which they bear that name. [...] The fault that he usually had to correct in his interlocutors is that when faced with a question of definition like 'What is courage?' or 'What is piety?' they saw no further than the first stage of the dual process.' Other example-prioritiser are e.g. Cornford (1957, 185), Santas (1972, 133), Beversluis (1987 [1992, 109-10; 121 n.13]), Vlastos (1990 [1994, 74-75]). Cf. also Benson (1990, 44 n.41).

<sup>12</sup> See Beversluis (1987 [1992, 109-110]), Vlastos (1990 [1994, 74-75]).

Laches' proposal as an example of courageous act:

(P1) SOCRATES: That man, I suppose, is courageous whom you yourself mention, that is, the man who fights the enemy while remaining at his post?

LACHES: Yes, that is my view.

SOCRATES: And I agree.

(191a1-5)

Next, Socrates encourages Laches to examine a wide variety of examples before stating the definition of courage, by offering a host of examples himself:

(P2) SOCRATES: So as I said just now, my poor questioning is to blame for your poor answer, because I wanted to learn from you not only what constitutes courage for a hoplite but for a horseman as well and for every sort of warrior. And I wanted to include not only those who are courageous in warfare but also those who are brave in dangers at sea, and the ones who show courage in illness and poverty and affairs of state; and then again I wanted to include not only those who are brave in the face of pain and fear but also those who are clever at fighting desire and pleasure, whether by standing their ground or running away. [...] So try again to state first what is the courage that is the same in all these cases. (191c7-e11)

This procedure is even clearer in the definition of speed which Socrates gives as a paradigmatic case of the procedure for definition immediately after (P2) in

order to clarify for Laches the sort of definition that is required:

(P3) SOCRATES: Suppose I asked what speed was, which we find in running and in playing the lyre and in speaking and in learning and in many other instances—in fact we may say we display the quality, so far as it is worth mentioning, in movements of the arms or legs or tongue or voice or thought? [...] Then if anyone should ask me, “Socrates, what do you say it is which you call swiftness in all these cases,” I would answer him that what I call swiftness is the power of accomplishing a great deal in a short time, whether in speech or in running or all the other cases. (192a1-b3)

In (P3), Socrates, apparently applying the procedure of generalization or abstraction, first collects various examples of speed or swiftness, abstracts the common factor that exists in all these examples, and offers a concise definition by describing this common factor. The example-prioritiser think that, at the beginning of the other definitional dialogues in which Socrates’ interlocutors offer examples, a similar procedure is being applied too (see *Euthphr.* 6d6-e1, *Hi.Ma.* 288a8-9, *Men.* 73c6-8), although none seems as clear as (P3). In short, according to this interpretation, the survey of examples, which are often given by Socrates’ interlocutor, is an essential part of Socrates’ procedure for definition.

By contrast, other scholars (let us call them ‘definition-prioritiser’) reject the interpretation described above, claiming that Socrates cannot consistently use examples as data for a definition because he is committed to the principle of the

priority of definition or, more precisely, to one aspect of that principle, namely:<sup>13</sup>

**(PD)** If one fails to know the definition of  $F$ , then one fails to know, for any  $x$ , that  $x$  is an  $F$ .<sup>14</sup>

According to **(PD)**, those who are still in pursuit of the definition of  $F$  cannot know, for anything that is given as an example, if it is a genuine example of  $F$  or a bogus one. Therefore, they conclude, it is impossible to reach a definition by way of the examination of examples. For instance, consider the following passage from the *Hippias Major*.

(P4) SOCRATES: So when I go home to my own place and he [Socrates' imaginary second-self] hears me saying those things [e.g. that it is excellent to be able to present speeches well and finely], he asks if I'm not ashamed that I dare

---

<sup>13</sup> This interpretation is supported by e.g. Robinson (1953, 51), Burnyeat (1977, 384), Benson (1990, 44-64).

<sup>14</sup> As is made clear by Beversluis (1987 [1992, 108]), Vlastos (1990 [1994]), and Benson (1990, 19 n.2), the principle of the priority of definition consists in the conjunction of **(PD)** and the following principle:

**(PD\*)** If one fails to know the definition of  $F$ , then one fails to know, for any property  $G$ , that  $F$  is  $G$ .

For instance, if one fails to know what temperance is, then one fails to know that temperance is fine. But **(PD\*)** is irrelevant to the positive use of examples we are considering here, and so I shall simply discuss **(PD)** in what follows.

Whether Socrates is committed to the principle of the priority of definition (**(PD)** and **(PD\*)**) or not has been a matter of considerable discussion, and accordingly the relevant literature is very extensive. Cf. Geach (1966), Santas (1972), Nehamas (1975a [1999]), Burnyeat (1977), Irwin (1977a), Woodruff (1982 [1992]), Nehamas (1987 [1999]), Beversluis (1987 [1992]), Leshner (1987), Vlastos (1990 [1994]), Benson (1990), Prior (1998), Wolfsdorf (2003), Forster (2006). However, I think that Benson has persuasively shown Socrates' commitment to this principle. See the next note.

discuss fine activities when I've been so plainly refuted about the fine, and it's clear I don't even know at all what that is itself! 'Look', he will say. 'How will you know whose speech—or any other action—is finely presented or not, when you are ignorant of the fine? And when you're in a state like that, do you think it's any better for you to live than die?' (*Hi.Ma.* 304d5-e2)

It is clearly suggested in this passage that Socrates fails to know, for any given activity, if it is fine or foul as long as he does not know the definition of the fine. Such activities, then, cannot be used as data for the definition of the fine, on the basis of which the common factor, the fine, is to be generalised or abstracted. Indeed, so long as we are not certain about the fineness of such activities, there will be no guarantee that the common factor found in them will be the fine, or even that any common factor should be found in them.

On the other hand, the definition-prioritiser admits that the definitional dialogues are full of arguments based on examples. They claim, however, that Socrates' use of these examples is restricted to the examination of a proposed definition, for which knowledge of examples is not necessary. Following an interpretation that is supported by many scholars, they consider that Socratic argument in the definitional dialogues essentially consists in the examination of the consistency of the interlocutor's beliefs. A typical procedure is that, after a definition is proposed, Socrates, putting forward several premises, asks his interlocutor whether he agrees to these premises or not, and then, having secured agreement, moves on to show the inconsistency between the proposed definition and the agreed premises. The definition-prioritiser assumes that

Socrates makes use of examples just to create these premises. If this is the case, then Socrates and his interlocutor need not know the genuineness of the examples, for what matters in argument is simply whether these are accepted by the interlocutor or not. Therefore, they conclude, Socrates' predilection for examples in argument does not cause any difficulty to their claim; Socrates is committed to **(PD)** and uses examples only in a way that does not require knowledge of their authenticity.

In my view, Socrates' use of examples has not been sufficiently understood by either the example- or the definition-prioritiser. On the one hand, Socrates' commitment to **(PD)** has been persuasively argued by Benson,<sup>15</sup> and in this

---

<sup>15</sup> Benson's argument runs in essence as follows. There are many passages that seem to show Socrates' commitment to the principle of the priority of definition: *Euthphr.* 4d9-5d1, 6e3-6, 15d4-e1; *La.* 190b7-c2, 189e3-190b1; *Chrm.* 176a6-b1; *Prt.* 312c1-4; *Grg.* 463c3-6; *Hi.Ma.* 286c8-d2, 304d5-e2; *Ly.* 223b4-8; *Men.* 71a5-b7, 100b4-6. It is true that each passage, taken separately, admits explanations based on a weaker principle, and that there is no one passage that shows Socrates' commitment to the principle by itself. However, when taken together, these passages demand an explanation about why Socrates is committed to many different weaker principles, and his commitment to the principle of the priority of definition provides this explanation.

As reported by Benson (1990, 21 n.3), many scholars have thought that Socrates is committed to the principle of the priority of definition or one of its two aspects (i.e. **(PD)** or **(PD\*)**): e.g. Ross, Robinson, Crombie, Friedländer, Geach, Gulley, Allen, Cherniss, Guthrie, Santas, Taylor, Irwin, Burnyeat, Woodruff. By contrast, some scholars have tried to deny Socrates' commitment to this principle: e.g. Nehamas (1987 [1999]), Beversluis (1987 [1992]), Vlastos (1990 [1994]), Kahn (1996), but I do not think that their arguments are convincing. First, Vlastos, Beversluis, and Kahn, while admitting that there are passages in which Socrates' commitment to the principle of the priority of definition is described, deny *Socrates'* commitment on the basis of different assumptions, none of which I share. Vlastos and Beversluis, on the one hand, attribute the commitment in question to *Plato*, not to Socrates, by assuming a distinction between the transitional dialogues (*Hi.Ma.*, *Ly.*, *Men.*) that show certain Platonic aspects and the elenctic dialogues that are really Socratic. Kahn, on the other hand, denies Socrates' commitment by assuming that the *Hippias Major* is not composed by Plato himself. Second, Beversluis and Nehamas argue that Socrates is committed to a weaker principle:

**(C)** If one fails to know what *F* is, then one fails to know, for any *x* that is a controversial or borderline case, that *x* is *F*.

But as Benson has argued (1990, 31-33), there seems to be no textual evidence that Socrates distinguishes controversial cases from non-controversial cases. (It should be noticed in this connection that this distinction is different from the one between controversial concepts (e.g. good, just) and non-controversial concepts (e.g. iron, silver),

respect and in its consequence (i.e. that Socrates cannot use examples as data for a definition) the view of the definition-prioritiser seems to be justified.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, the passages quoted by example-prioritiser (i.e. (P1) – (P3)) strongly suggest that Socrates uses examples constructively in order to reach a definition, and not just destructively in order to create premises that will eventually show the inconsistency of his interlocutor's beliefs as the definition-prioritiser claim, and in this respect the view of the example-prioritiser seems to be justified. In a nutshell, we have a dilemma: Socrates seems to appeal to examples before reaching a definition, but he also says that one cannot know what examples are genuine before reaching a definition.

### §3. *The true belief theory*

Some scholars have proposed that the puzzle will be solved if we take into consideration the distinction between knowledge and true belief: Socrates' procedure for definition starts by collecting true examples which are selected on account of true belief, not on account of knowledge (let us call this 'the true belief theory').<sup>17</sup> According to the famous passage in the *Meno* (98a1-4), knowledge is true belief that is tied down by an account of the reason. Thus, so long as we have not acquired knowledge, we cannot *give reasons* why  $x$  is  $F$ , but we can still judge correctly that  $x$  is  $F$ . To put it somewhat differently, the

---

which clearly interests Socrates (*Euthphr.*7b6-d8; cf. *Phdr.*263a2-c12.).

<sup>16</sup> However, I shall later try to find a way of making (PD) weaker.

<sup>17</sup> This interpretation is supported by Irwin (1977a, 40-41), Burnyeat (1977, 386-87), Santas (1979, 116; 120-21), Woodruff (1982, 140), Prior (1998), Wolfsdorf (2003, 308-10), Forster (2006, 34 n.82). (As a matter of fact, although Burnyeat (1977) is typically grouped into these interpreters, his view might be slightly different. See n. 24 below.)

definition of *F* is not necessary for collecting some true examples; it is necessary for *justifying* the claim that these examples are true ones. It is true, these interpreters continue, that the distinction between knowledge and true belief has not been fully developed until the *Meno*, a dialogue that is usually considered to have been composed just before the middle dialogues, but there is no reason to suppose that this distinction has completely escaped Socrates' attention.<sup>18</sup> Socrates' position, then, does not involve any incoherence: according to him, one cannot *know* which examples are true before reaching a definition because of his commitment to **(PD)**, but one can *form a true belief* about examples and, therefore, can collect true examples on account of his true belief even before reaching a definition.

However, it is difficult to understand how true belief fits into Socrates' procedure for definition. Three problems can be pointed out. First, the true belief theory seems incompatible with Socrates' explicit statement that he wants a definition in order to *judge correctly* whether a certain action is a case of *F*. Consider what has motivated Socrates' search for the definition of the pious in the *Euthyphro*: it is, at least in part,<sup>19</sup> a wish to *judge correctly* whether Euthyphro's action, i.e. his prosecuting his own father for the murder of his hired worker who himself had committed murder, is an example of pious act or

---

<sup>18</sup> See Irwin (1977a, 294 n.5), Forster (2007, 6-13). By contrast, Beversluis (1987 [1992, 115]) argues that, even though the incipient awareness of the distinction between knowledge and true belief is discerned in *Cri.44c6-47d5* and *Grg.454b3-e9*, the relevant terms 'are not employed in the technical epistemic senses which they acquire in the *Meno* and post-*Meno* dialogues and which are presupposed by TB [i.e. the true belief theory]'.  
<sup>19</sup> Of course, Socrates' more immediate motivation for asking Euthyphro for the definition of piety would be a wish to examine Euthyphro in accordance with what Socrates believed to be the order of god. Cf. Benson (1990, 48-57), Forster (2006, 10-22).



not (see 9a1-b4). In the following passage Socrates expresses his wish in more general terms:<sup>20</sup>

(P5) SOCRATES: Tell me then what this form itself is, so that I may look upon it, and using it as a model, say that any action of yours or another's that is of that kind is pious, and if it is not that it is not.

(6e4-7)

But, according to the true belief theory, the capacity for judging examples correctly must be a prerequisite of the search for a definition, and cannot be its purpose. This interpretation, then, seems incapable of explaining the fact that Socrates makes the acquisition of the capacity for judging examples correctly a purpose of his search for a definition. Secondly, it is unclear how true belief is acquired. (Remember that, on the supposition that Socrates and his interlocutors collect true examples as data for a definition, we have to suppose that they have already acquired true belief before any attempt of definition.) True belief might be acquired by divine inspiration, as suggested in the *Meno* (99b11-d9),<sup>21</sup> or perhaps by chance. But true belief acquired in such ways seems hardly helpful, for we will be unable to distinguish the state in which we have true belief from the one in which we do not, and accordingly we shall be uncertain as to whether we are choosing true examples or not. Of course, if someone who has already acquired knowledge of *F* attends the conversation,

---

<sup>20</sup> Cf. also *Hi.Ma.286c3-e4*.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Forster (2007).

and gives Socrates and his interlocutor examples of *F* without revealing the definition of *F*, they will be able to acquire true belief about examples. But, needless to say, this is not what happens in Socratic dialogues. Finally, the true belief theory would implausibly represent Socrates as setting great importance on knowledge as distinguished from true belief. In the passage of the *Hippias Major* that has been quoted above as (P4), Socrates' imaginary second-self speaks to him: 'How will you *know* whose speech—or any other action—is finely presented or not, when you are ignorant of the fine? And when you're in a state like that, do you think it's any better for you to live than die?' (304d8-e3). According to the true belief theory, the first sentence only means that, if we do not know the fine, then we will not be able to explain why *x* is an example of the fine, and this will not prevent us from *forming a true belief* about examples in the sense of judging correctly that *x* is an example of *F*. But, if that is the case, the situation that is so negatively described in the second sentence includes the one in which we have only true belief without knowledge.<sup>22</sup> Such a dismissive attitude towards true belief, however, sounds not only implausible, but in fact incompatible with Socrates' evaluation of true belief in the *Meno*: 'Correct opinion is then neither inferior to knowledge nor less useful in directing actions, nor is the man who has it less so than he who has knowledge.' (98c1-3)<sup>23</sup> In short, if true belief, or the capacity for judging examples correctly, has place at all in Socrates' procedure for definition, then it will be so effective as to make one of the chief purposes of the search for a definition redundant, it will be

---

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Vlastos (1990 [1994, 73]).

<sup>23</sup> I do not think that Socrates is simply ironical when he says this.

acquired only in a mysterious way, and it will be strangely condemned by Socrates in spite of its usefulness. But these consequences seem unacceptable.

One might propose that belief, rather than true belief, is sufficient for collecting those examples on the basis of which we abstract or generalise a definition.<sup>24</sup> An obvious problem for this proposal is that, if we collect some false examples of *F* together with true ones, then we will not be able to find the *F* we are looking for. But one could argue that this problem is avoidable by supposing that it is not *true* examples that Socrates is collecting as data for a definition. Two interpretations along these lines might readily come to mind. First, one might contend that Socrates is appealing to common sense. To be sure, common sense is not sufficient for distinguishing true examples from false ones, but it may be useful for judging whether some examples are *controversial* or *uncontroversial*. Examples are uncontroversial when they are considered to be true by many people, and controversial when they are only by few. Thus, Laches' example of courageous action may be an uncontroversial example, but Euthyphro's prosecution of his own father, which is considered impious by his father and his other relatives (see *Euthphr.* 4d5-6), is a controversial example. According to this interpretation, then, Socrates aims at discovering the characteristic that is common to uncontroversial examples, thereby relying on common sense. Second, it might be argued that Socrates' use of example is purely *hypothetical*. Socrates accepts examples only provisionally and might dismiss some of them in the course of discussion. Socrates will revise his list of examples when it has turned out that the distinctive characteristic that is

---

<sup>24</sup> Burnyeat (1977) may hold this view. Cf. n. 17 above.

common to these examples appears something different from what he has been looking for, or when simply the distinctive characteristic has turned out extremely difficult to find. In this case, Socrates is collecting not true examples, but examples that are *temporarily* supposed to be true.

However, it seems fairly clear that neither of these interpretations offers a plausible description of Socrates' procedure for definition because there is no textual evidence that would support them. Socrates nowhere appeals to common sense to collect examples. Quite to the contrary, he famously detaches himself from commonsensical opinions.<sup>25</sup> Also, Socrates never revises the list of examples he has previously presented; indeed he shows no sign of noticing the possibility that there was something wrong with the examples given at the beginning of the discussion even when the discussion ends up in *aporia*. At any rate, all these interpretations are, in my view, only proposed, speculatively, in order to find a way out of the dilemma we are caught in, without much attention to how Socrates is described when he is collecting examples in the text. In what follows, I would like to observe closely what kind of examples Socrates is in fact collecting and, on the basis of this observation, propose another interpretation.

#### §4. *My interpretation*

First of all, I would like to point out that, when scholars talk about 'examples', they seem to have in mind various kinds of examples without making any distinction among them. Thus, Laches' proposal for a definition of

---

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Benson (1990, 31-33).

courage, i.e. remaining at one's post and defending oneself against the enemy without running away, is regarded as an 'example' of courageous action, and Socrates' enumeration of those who show courage in many different situations in (P2), e.g. those who show courage in warfare, those who show courage in illness and poverty, is labelled as an enumeration of 'examples'. But these two kinds of 'examples' seem quite different in nature: the former is *a particular type of action*, one about which it is not immediately clear whether it is really courageous or not, but the latter is *courage as instantiated in people who are dealing with various situations*. Then again, 'examples' that passage (P4) from the *Hippias Major* most likely prevents us from using as data for a definition are *individual speeches and actions* that appear fine to an observer, but might not really be fine. Further, in the dialogue named after him, Meno proposes 'examples' of virtue in two different ways. On the one hand, he gives 'examples' in the following way:

(P6) 'First, if you want the virtue of a man, it is easy to say that a man's virtue consists of being able to manage public affairs and in so doing to benefit his friends and harm his enemies and to be careful that no harm comes to himself; if you want the virtue of a woman, it is not difficult to describe: she must manage the home well, preserve its possessions, and be submissive to her husband; the virtue of a child, whether male or female, is different again, and so is that of an elderly man, if you want that, or if you want that of a free man or a slave' (71e1-72a1).

Meno's intention is clear enough: he first distinguishes *virtue as instantiated in different situations* in accordance with sex, age, and status, and adds *a few particular types of action* to each of them. On the other hand, in the course of discussion, he also comes across different 'examples' of virtue: 'I think courage is a virtue, and moderation, wisdom, and munificence, and very many others' (74a4-6). These are later referred as *parts of virtue* (cf. 79a9-e6).

Now, I would like to propose that we should make distinctions within the notion of the 'example': (1a) *F* as instantiated in a certain situation, action or thing, (1b) a part (or a kind) of *F*, (2) a particular type of action or thing, (3) an individual action or thing. The significance of this distinction becomes immediately clear if we substitute the variable (*x*) in **(PD)** with an example of each of them in turn. Suppose the following are all examples of virtue: (1a) the virtue of a man, (1b) courage, (2) being able to manage public affairs, (3) Pericles, who is regarded as virtuous by many people.

**(PD-1a)** If one fails to know the definition of virtue, then one fails to know that the virtue of a man is a virtue.

**(PD-1b)** If one fails to know the definition of virtue, then one fails to know that courage is a virtue.

**(PD-2)** If one fails to know the definition of virtue, then one fails to know that being able to manage public affairs is a virtuous act.

**(PD-3)** If one fails to know the definition of virtue, then one fails to know that Pericles is virtuous.

A glance will show that **(PD-1a)** is absurd. Everyone knows that the virtue of a man is a virtue, for this is simply an analytical statement. It is, then, not the case that **(PD)** is valid for any kind of examples; the 'examples' in the sense of (1a) are exceptions. We should not therefore be bewildered even if we find that a Socrates who is committed to **(PD)** collects this kind of example as data for a definition. Indeed, we shall observe soon, when we examine Plato's text closely, that Socrates' procedure for definition is mostly based on this kind of example. Further, I would like to suggest that Socrates does not think that **(PD-1b)** is valid either. Although it is not absurd like **(PD-1a)**, at least it seems plausible to suppose that everyone who has minimal understanding of what courage is knows that it is a virtue.<sup>26</sup> Thus I consider that **(PD)** is not valid for the examples in the sense of (1b) either. By contrast, Socrates will consider **(PD-2)** and **(PD-3)** valid because of his commitment to **(PD)**. In short, I suggest that (1a) and (1b) are obviously true examples of *F*, which are available as data for a

---

<sup>26</sup> I am of course aware of the fact that, in the passage that closes Book I of the *Republic*, Socrates seems to be suggesting the exact opposite of my proposal: 'when I don't know what justice is, I'll hardly know whether it is a kind of virtue or not, or whether a person who has it is happy or unhappy'. (354c1-3) But I think that, when the context is taken into consideration, this passage will not create difficulties to my proposal. In the *Republic*, to Socrates' astonishment, Thrasymachus claims that justice is not a virtue. Socrates sums up his claim as follows: 'But now, obviously, you'll say that injustice is fine and strong and apply to it all the attributes we used to apply to justice, since you dare to include it with virtue and wisdom' (348e9-349a3), and then develops arguments against Thrasymachus' claim to the effect that justice is goodness (or a virtue) and wisdom (349b1-c11), that justice is strong (349c12-352d1), and that justice makes one happy (352d1-354a11). In this context, what is at stake is not just the classification of justice as a virtue (as is the case with passages in which **(PD)** is at stake), but whether justice is a virtue in the sense presupposed by the interlocutors or not. This is clear from the fact that Socrates uses 'virtue' and 'goodness' interchangeably in his first argument; compare esp. 350c10-11 with 350d4-5. Thrasymachus denies that justice is a virtue on account of the attributes commonly associated with a virtue, and the passage in question (354c1-3) echoes this understanding of virtue. What is at issue in this passage is therefore analogous to the question as to whether virtue is teachable or not; it is not **(PD)** but **(PD\*)** that is at issue here, and this is not relevant to the positive use of examples for definition.

definition, and (PD) is not valid in the case of these two kinds of examples. Hereafter I would like to call them 'instances' as distinct from 'examples' which I will treat as a more vague expression and as referring to the examples in any of the four senses given above.

In what follows I would like to consider passages in which Socrates or his interlocutor mentions examples of *F* before proposing the definition of *F*. First I shall examine the examples in the sense of (1a) before turning to the examples in the other senses.

#### §4.1. *F* as instantiated in a certain situation, action, or thing

First, let us consider two of the three passages from the *Laches* that we have seen quoted as the evidence that Socrates makes use of examples in order to reach a definition, i.e. (P2) and (P3). In (P2), on the one hand, after it has turned out that Laches had in mind only the case of a hoplite when he gave his definition of courage (191b5-7), Socrates expands his perspective by pointing out that it is not only a hoplite or a horseman or even every sort of warrior that show courage, but also those who are dealing with different situations, such as dangers at sea, illness, poverty, public affairs, pain and fear, and desire and pleasure.<sup>27</sup> And he wants to know the same courage that people show in all these different situations. In other words, he wants to know *the same courage that is instantiated in various situations*. In (P3), on the other hand, before proposing

---

<sup>27</sup> Note that these people are organized in accordance with the genus-and-species relationship. The most general groups are those who show courage in the face of desire and pleasure, and those who show courage in the face of pain and fear. To the latter belong as species those who show courage in public affairs, illness, poverty, dangers at sea, or warfare. To the last of them, again, belong as species a courageous hoplite, horseman, and every sort of warrior who is courageous.



the definition of speed, he enumerates different actions in which we recognise speed, i.e. running, playing the lyre, speaking, learning, movements of the arms or legs or tongue or voice or thought. And he asks himself what it is that he calls speed in all these cases. To put it differently again, he wants to know *the same speed that is instantiated in all these actions*. The examples given in (P2) and (P3) thus belong to (1a), and therefore Socrates can validly use them as instances while being committed to **(PD)**.

Note that Socrates' point in giving examples in (P2) and (P3) is not to offer several examples of courageous people or quick actions, but to enumerate the wide variety of people or actions in which courage or speed appears. In his request for the definition of *F*, Socrates is asking about the *F* that is universal, i.e. the same thing in every case. Indeed, if we do not take into consideration the wide variety of situations, actions or things in which *F* appears, then we might make a mistake by giving a definition that is only related to unduly restricted cases. Laches has committed exactly this kind of mistake in his first attempt at defining courage. Similarly, one might propose 'the capacity for moving a long distance in a short time' as the definition of speed, thinking only of the speed of running and neglecting the speed that is related to learning or the movement of thought. It is in order to prevent this kind of mistake that Socrates turns his interlocutor's attention to different situations, actions, or things in which *F* appears.

A similar procedure will be found in Socrates' review of various situations, actions, or things considered *in so far as these are (or will become) F*, and I suggest that these too should be regarded as examples in the sense of (1a). Since these

examples are considered only in so far as they are (or will become) *F*, we have to suppose that *F* is always instantiated (or will be instantiated) in them. Clearly, there is no point in saying that we do not know if these examples are *F* or not; (PD) is not valid for these examples either. There are passages that refer to the examples in this sense in the *Hippias Major* and the *Charmides*. Although scholars seem to have neglected these passages when they discuss the role of examples in Socrates' procedure for definition, these passages will turn out to constitute strong evidence that Socrates makes use of 'instances' before proposing a definition.

In the *Hippias Major*, Socrates, after having refuted Hippias' first definition of the fine, i.e. the fine is a fine girl, turns his interlocutor's attention to different things and actions that *will become* fine if the fine itself is added to them.

- (P7) SOCRATES: Aren't you capable of remembering that I asked for the fine itself? For what when added to anything—whether to a stone or a plank or a man or a god or any action or any lesson—*anything* gets to be fine? (292c9-d3)

In this passage, Socrates first reminds Hippias of the fact that his question was about the fine *itself*, and then explicates—thereby referring to the things and actions mentioned in the parenthesis—what the fine itself is: *the same fine that is instantiable in all these things and actions*. Hippias then undertakes another attempt at defining the fine, and so clearly they make use of examples in the sense of (1a) before proposing a definition.

In the second half of the same dialogue, Socrates himself proposes

definitions of the fine instead of Hippias who has already admitted that there are no more definitions readily available to him. Except for the case of his first proposal (i.e. the fine is appropriateness), whenever Socrates proposes definitions of the fine he never fails to refer to things and actions *considered in so far as these are fine*. (P8), (P9) and (P10) are the passages in which Socrates offers his second, third and fourth proposals respectively:

(P8) SOCRATES: We say eyes are fine not when we think they are in such a state they're unable to see, but whenever they are able, and are useful for seeing. [...] And that's how we call the whole body fine, sometimes for running, sometimes for wrestling. And the same goes for all animals—a fine horse, rooster, or quail—and all utensils and means of transport on land and sea, boats and warships, and the tools of every skill, music and all the others; and, if you want, activities and laws—virtually all these are called fine in the same way. In each case we look at the nature it's got, its manufacture, its condition; then we call what is useful "fine" in respect of the way it is useful, what it is useful for, and when it is useful; but anything useless in all those respects we call "foul". (295c4-d2)

(P9) SOCRATES: Then that's the way fine bodies and fine customs and wisdom and everything we mentioned a moment ago are fine—because they're beneficial. (296e2-4)

(P10) SOCRATES: Men, when they're fine anyway—and everything decorative,

pictures and sculptures—these all delight us when we see them, if they're fine. Fine sounds and music altogether, and speeches and storytelling have the same effect. So if we answered that tough man, "Your honor, the fine is what is pleasant through hearing and sight", don't you think we'd curb his toughness?

HIPPIAS: This time, Socrates, I think what the fine is has been well said.

SOCRATES: What? shall we say that fine activities and laws are fine by being pleasant through hearing and sight? Or that they have some other form? [...]

In the case of laws and activities, those could easily be seen not to be outside the perception we have through hearing and sight. But let's stay with this account, that what is pleasing through them is fine, and not bring that about the laws into the centre. (298a1-8)

Socrates examines 'the same way' (τῷ αὐτῷ τρόπῳ 295d6) in which, or 'the cause' (ὅτι 296e4) by which, things and actions are fine 'in so far as they are fine' (ἃ ἄν καλὰ ᾖ 298a3). It is clear that in these passages various things and actions are mentioned as data for a definition. In (P8) Socrates considers that these are fine when they are able and useful, and then proposes a definition: 'the fine is ability and usefulness'. In (P9) Socrates thinks that these are fine when they are beneficial, and thus proposes that 'the fine is beneficialness'. Again, in (P10), Socrates thinks that most of the things in question are pleasant through hearing and sight, although he shows some reservation in the case of laws and activities. In all these passages Socrates first collects examples in the sense of (1a) and then examines them in order to find the distinctive characteristic that is common to

them all.

In the *Charmides*, clever Charmides, when asked the definition of temperance, appears not to require Socrates' instruction that what is asked is the same thing in different things and actions. The fact that he has understood this much is shown by his reference to different actions in his proposal of a definition:

(P11) SOCRATES: Finally, however, he [Charmides] said that in his opinion temperance is doing everything in an orderly and quiet way—things like walking in the streets, and talking, and doing everything else in a similar fashion. (159b2-4; cf. 160c6-7)

Charmides seems to have formulated his proposal after having considered various actions, e.g. walking in the streets and talking, *insofar as these are done with temperance*. It is clear, then, that he makes use of examples in the sense of (1a) before proposing a definition.<sup>28</sup>

In short, we have good evidence that Socrates (and his interlocutor) appeals to examples in the sense of (1a) before proposing a definition. The examples in this sense are obviously true examples of *F*, and therefore there will be no inconsistency in making use of these examples as data for a definition while being committed to **(PD)**.

---

<sup>28</sup> Cf. also Nicias' proposal in the *Laches* 194e11-195a1: 'What I say, Laches, is that it is the knowledge of the fearful and the hopeful *in war and in every other situation*.'

#### §4.2. Parts (or kinds) of *F*

Now let us turn to the consideration of examples in the sense of (1b): parts (or kinds) of *F*. There is only one place in the early dialogues in which Socrates and his interlocutor review parts (or kinds) of *F* before proposing a definition: in the *Meno*, after his attempt at defining virtue by offering various descriptions sorted out by sex, age, and status, which I have quoted as (P6) above, is rejected by Socrates because it is a unique definition of virtue that is looked for, Meno comes across parts of virtue:

(P12) MENO: So I too say that not only justice is a virtue but there are many other virtues.

SOCRATES: What are they? [...]

MENO: I think courage is a virtue, and moderation, wisdom, and munificence, and very many others.

SOCRATES: We are having the same trouble again, Meno, though in another way; we have found many virtues while looking for one, but we cannot find the one which covers all the others (διὰ πάντων τούτων).

MENO: I cannot yet find, Socrates, what you are looking for, one virtue for them all (κατὰ πάντων), as in the other cases.

(73e7-74a10)

It is not clear from this passage alone whether Socrates considers parts of virtue to be available as data for a definition or not. But the fact that he *does* will be strongly suggested if we take into consideration the cases of shape and colour,

which are put forward by Socrates as parallel cases. Concerning shape and its kinds, Socrates performs the following imaginary dialogue in order to elucidate what it is that he is looking for:

(P13) SOCRATES: Then if he [an imaginary questioner] pursued the argument as I did and said: "We always arrive at the many; do not talk to me in that way, but since you call all these many by one name, and say that no one of them is not a shape even though they are opposites, tell me *what this is which applies as much to the round as to the straight* and which you call shape, as you say the round is as much a shape as the straight." [...] If then you answered the man who was questioning about shape or colour: "I do not understand what you want, my man, nor what you mean," he would probably wonder and say: "you do not understand that I am seeking *that which is the same in all these cases?*" Would you still have nothing to say, Meno, if one asked you: "*What is this which applies to the round and the straight and the other things which you call shapes and which is the same in them all?*"

(74d4-75a8)

Socrates here presupposes that the round and the straight, parts (or kinds) of shape, are shapes, and says what he is seeking is the same thing that applies to them all. This clearly means that parts (or kinds) of shape are available as data for a definition. And since this is a paradigmatic case for the search for virtue (cf. *Men.* 77a9-10), the definition of virtue is also expected to be attainable in the same way: by collecting parts (or kinds) of virtue first and then examining them

in order to find the common characteristic that applies to them all.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, there seems to be no problem in generalising the object of definition in this procedure, and so I would like to conclude that Socrates considers that parts (or kinds) of *F* are available as data for a definition. (And this is unproblematic because, as I have already suggested, it seems plausible to suppose that anyone who has a minimal understanding of what *x* is knows that *x* is a part (or a kind) of *F*, as is the case with courage and virtue, or the round and shape.<sup>30</sup>)

#### §4.3. Particular types of actions or things

Next, let us consider whether Socrates makes positive use of examples in the

---

<sup>29</sup> In this connection it is significant to note the distinction between the following two propositions:

- (a) We can know that courage is a virtue before the acquisition of the definition of virtue.
- (b) We can know what courage, a part of virtue, is before the acquisition of the definition of virtue.

Socrates is committed to (a), as I have argued, but denies (b) in the *Meno* 79c7-d5 on account of what I call 'the principle of the priority of the definition of the whole' (I shall discuss this principle in Chapter 2). This distinction seems to have escaped Santas' attention, for he translates the *Meno* 79c8-9 (ἀλλ' οἶει τινὰ εἰδέναι μῶριον ἀρετῆς ὅτι ἐστίν, αὐτὴν μὴ εἰδότα;) both in the way in which the question is related to (a) rather than (b) ('Do you suppose that anyone can know that something is an element (part) of virtue when he does not know virtue?' (1979, 63)) and in the way that is more naturally connected with (b) rather than (a) ('Do you suppose that anyone can know a part of virtue when he does not know virtue itself?' (1979, 130)). I suggest that the sentence should be translated in a way that is unambiguously connected with (b), for instance: 'Do you suppose that anyone can know *what a part of virtue is* when he does not know virtue?'

<sup>30</sup> It should be noted in this regard that a widely-accepted interpretation of the method of collection (what I shall call 'the traditional interpretation') seems to reject this supposition concerning Plato in his later dialogues. According to this view, Plato in his later dialogues invented the method of collection as a means to identify the genus of *x*. If this is the case, then we will need the method of collection in order to know that *F* is the genus of *x*, or that *x* is a species of *F*, and certainly a minimal understanding of what *x* is will not be sufficient for knowing that *x* is a part (or a kind) of *F*. As a consequence, anyone who supports this view will have to claim either that Plato later rejected Socrates' supposition that a part (or a kind) of *F* is an obviously true example of *F*, or that my interpretation given here is wrong; even Socrates does not support this supposition. However, I shall argue in Chapter 4 that the traditional interpretation of the method of collection is not correct, and that the identification of the genus of *x* is just as trivial for Plato in his later dialogues as for Socrates.



sense of (2): particular types of actions or things. Laches' first proposal of the definition of courage, i.e. remaining at one's post and defending oneself without running away, belongs to this category, and other examples in the sense of (2) will be found in the *Euthyphro* and *Meno* among the definitional dialogues. As we have seen, the example-prioritiser claim, citing (P1) [La. 191a1-5] quoted above as evidence, that Laches' first proposal is accepted by Socrates as an example that is available as data for a definition. If this is the case, then it will follow that Socrates appeals to examples about which it is not immediately clear whether these are examples of *F* or not before reaching the definition of *F*. However, I shall argue in what follows, starting by examining passages from the *Euthyphro*, that this is not the case; Socrates never makes use of the examples in the sense of (2) as data for a definition.

When asked about 'What is the pious?', Euthyphro first proposes 'prosecuting wrongdoers about a religious crime' (which is intended to cover his prosecution against his own father) as the definition of the pious,<sup>31</sup> but he subsequently admits that the action described in his proposal is only one of the many pious actions he can think of. This proposal, then, can be regarded as one of the examples in the sense of (2). Now, the question is whether Socrates makes use of this example in order to reach a definition or not. Consider the following passage:

---

<sup>31</sup> Nehamas's careful treatment of Socrates' interlocutors' misunderstanding of 'What is *F*?' question (1975a [1999, 159-75]) has persuasively shown that the mistake Euthyphro is said to have committed in (P14) is not the confusion between a particular and a universal as assumed by Burnet. But he does not seem to be justified when he infers from this that such proposals as Euthyphro is offering here cannot be regarded as an example. For there seems to be no good reason why an example should not be universal.

(P14) SOCRATES: For now, try to tell me more clearly what I was asking just now, for, my friend, you did not teach me adequately when I asked you what the pious was, but you told me that what you are doing now, in prosecuting your father for murder, is pious.

EUTHYPHRO: And I told the truth, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Perhaps (ἴσως). You agree, however, that there are many other pious actions.

EUTHYPHRO: There are.

SOCRATES: Bear in mind then that I did not bid you teach (διδάξαι) me one or two of the many pious actions but that form itself that makes all pious actions pious.

(6c9-d11)

Socrates only concedes here that this type of action *might be* pious. Certainly, he thinks Euthyphro's attempt can be seen as 'teaching' (διδάξαι) one of the many pious actions, but he does not say that Euthyphro has taught him *correctly* one of the many pious actions.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, Socrates makes clear in the passage that immediately follows (P14), which has been quoted as (P5) above, that he first needs the definition of the pious in order to judge whether Euthyphro's action

---

<sup>32</sup> Nehamas (1975a [1999, 163]) aptly suggests that 'sacrificing before a journey' is another example of many pious actions. But I do not agree with him when he says that 'all sacrifices before journeys' are 'obviously pious things'. Consider, for example, the story of Iphigeneia; Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter before his departure for Troy appears too appalling to be an obviously pious act. Also, we might perform sacrifice before journey simply as a remnant of some obsolete religious belief without believing in the existence of gods. It is at least not immediately clear whether this kind of sacrifice is really pious or not.

is pious or not. It is then fairly clear that he does not regard Euthyphro's example as a datum for a definition.

In fact, apart from not being an obviously genuine example of pious actions, Euthyphro's action seems to constitute a counter-example to his own example; it shows 'prosecuting wrongdoers about a religious crime'—which would be a plausible example of pious actions—is not always a pious act. Thus, readers might be struck by the lenient manner in which Socrates treats Euthyphro's example: he only says that 'perhaps' Euthyphro told the truth, and does not voice any real doubt about Euthyphro's dogmatic assertion that his prosecution against his own father is pious. But there is an obvious reason for Socrates' apparently lenient manner: Socrates' disavowal and Euthyphro's avowal of knowledge of the pious. Somewhat earlier in the dialogue (4e4-5a4), Socrates asks if Euthyphro has so precise knowledge about the divine and pious things that he need not be afraid of performing an impious act in prosecuting his own father, and Euthyphro answers that he has, which prompts Socrates to say that he should become Euthyphro's student. Since Socrates is committed to **(PD)**, he has every reason to suppose that Euthyphro is appealing to the definition of the pious in his judgment that his action is pious. But, since Socrates himself does not know the definition of the pious, he has no right to object to an example that is given as a pious act by a person who claims knowledge—at least until he shows that this person is in fact ignorant. That is why he simply replies to Euthyphro: 'Perhaps'.

I suggest that a similar thought is working in (P1) when Socrates agrees with Laches that a man who fights the enemy while remaining at his post is

courageous: since Socrates does not know the definition of courage, he has no right to dispute the assertion that such a man is courageous. There are also three other reasons for holding the view that Socrates does not regard Laches' first proposal as a true example of courageous actions. First, Socrates' argument that immediately follows (P1) makes it less plausible that Laches' example is true. Socrates there secures agreement from Laches that 'remaining at one's post' is not necessary for a courageous act even for hoplites: the Spartan hoplites who fought the Persians at Plataea by first running away and then, after the ranks of their enemies were broken, turning back are also courageous (191b8-c6). Laches' example was plausible presumably because it excluded a man who runs away from the battle as a coward. But it seems that, as the situation has turned out more complex, his example also loses its appearance of plausibility to some extent. Second, it will be easy to think of a counter-example if we consider the later development of the dialogue. Later Nicias proposes 'knowledge of the fearful and the hopeful' as the definition of courage (194e11-195a1), and distinguishes courage from rashness or madness (197a6-c1). If the distinction is accepted, then it will be easy to point out that a man who fights the enemy while remaining at his post *because of madness* is not courageous. Third, Laches' example is an isolated case; Socrates does not enumerate other examples in the sense of (2). As I have argued, the various examples of courageous people Socrates offers immediately afterwards in (P2) are examples in the sense of (1a), and these two types of examples are quite different in nature. Therefore, when Socrates asks Laches to state 'what is the courage that is the same in all these cases' in (P2), he does not mean to include

Laches' example; his example is not among the data used for reaching the definition.

In the *Meno*, as we have seen in (P6) quoted above, Meno's first proposal of the definition of virtue is a combination of examples in the sense of (1a) and (2): he classifies virtue as instantiated in a man, a woman, a child, an elderly man, a free man and a slave, and adds particular types of action to each of them (although in reality he describes only the virtue of a man and a woman). Now, consonant with my interpretation, I would like to suggest that Socrates, in his enquiry into the definition of virtue, examines only different situations in which virtue appears, such as a man and a woman, and does not take into consideration the particular types of action described by Meno. In order to defend this position, however, it will be necessary to examine the passage in which Socrates refers to these descriptions in the course of the argument that is intended to persuade Meno that virtue is the same in all these different situations (73a6-c5). Concerning this passage, one might argue that Socrates uses the particular types of action described by Meno as an acceptable premise of the argument, which will imply that Socrates problematically makes use of examples in the sense of (2) while being committed to **(PD)**. By contrast, I shall suggest that this argument does not rely on the particular types of action given by Meno; on the contrary, it is intended to persuade Meno that these particular types of action are irrelevant for people's becoming virtuous.

The argument in question is the following:<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> For the analysis of this argument, cf. Robinson (1954, 56-57), Bluck (1964, 231), Allen (1970, 118-20), White (1976, 39-40), Scott (2006, 26-30).

(S1) The virtue of a man consists in managing a city well (εὖ), and that of a woman in managing a household well.

(S2) It is not possible to manage a city, a household, or anything else well, while not managing it temperately and justly (σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως).

(S3) Whenever a man or a woman manages justly and temperately, he or she does so with justice and temperance (δικαιοσύνη καὶ σωφροσύνη).

(S4) Both a man and a woman need the same things, justice and temperance, if they are going to be good (ἀγαθοί).

(S5) If a child or an elderly man are intemperate and unjust (ἀκόλαστοι ὄντες καὶ ἄδικοι), they cannot possibly be good.

(S6) If a child or an elderly man are temperate and just, they will be good.

(S7) All human beings become good by acquiring the same things.

(S8) All human beings are good in the same way.

(S9) The same virtue belongs to all human beings.

It is usually supposed that Socrates here offers a systematic argument that shows that virtue is the same for all human beings. If this view is correct, then it will follow that Socrates regards (S1) as an acceptable premise of the argument; he considers Meno's descriptions are correct as the virtue of a man and that of a woman. However, as has been pointed out by many scholars, the argument

seems faulty as it stands. Among other things, (S7) does not seem to follow from (S4) and (S6), for (S4) treats the acquisition of temperance and justice as a *necessary* condition for being good, but (S6) and (S7) treats this as a *sufficient* condition for being good.<sup>34</sup> Given (S1), there seems to be no good reason for claiming that a man and a woman are good *in the same way*, for they are good in so far as they are engaged *in the different activities* described by Meno. According to this view, then, 'Plato's argument will not establish what he wishes it to'.<sup>35</sup> In short, this is a bad argument.

But such an interpretation seems, in my view, too uncharitable towards Plato's logical insight, and accordingly I shall offer a different interpretation. I suggest that Socrates' wish is not to offer a systematic argument based on acceptable premises, but simply to persuade Meno that there is a factor in becoming virtuous that is sufficiently significant to render being engaged in a particular type of activity less relevant or totally irrelevant, and that this factor is common to all human beings. A strict logical validity then will not be required here. (S1) – (S4) are steps for the introduction of this factor, i.e. the acquisition of temperance and justice. It is true that Socrates does not directly attack (S1) at any step, but it seems reasonable to suppose that, by the time he and his interlocutor reach (S6), which suggests that a child and an elderly man become good by the acquisition of temperance and justice *irrespective of the activities they are engaged in*, Meno has realised that the same condition can apply

---

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Scott (2006, 26-30). I follow Scott in regarding (S6) and (S7) as treating sufficient conditions. By contrast, White (1976, 40) considers (S4), (S6) and (S7) are all related to necessary conditions: 'the point of the argument is that because for any person justice and self-control are necessary conditions of virtue, anyone who is virtuous must be so "in the same way" as anyone else.'

<sup>35</sup> White (1976, 40).

to a man and a woman too.<sup>36</sup> That is why, I suggest, Meno does not object to Socrates even when he puts forward (S7), which is *not* a logical consequence of (S4) and (S6). To put it differently, Meno accepts (S7) simply because he does not think temperance and justice, which have replaced virtue, are different in accordance with sex or age. If my analysis is correct, then it will follow that Socrates does not accept (S1); he does not rely on the particular types of actions described by Meno, the example in the sense of (2), in this argument.

By contrast, Socrates' positive use of the various situations in which virtue appears, which have been taken out of the examples mentioned by Meno, is quite obvious. Immediately after the argument we have just examined, Socrates restates the question as to what is the same virtue that is related to all those situations, and then Meno answers: 'What else but to be able to rule over people, if you are seeking one description to fit them all.' (73c9-d1) But Socrates quickly points out that his description does not fit a child or a slave. This exchange shows that Meno has to be prudent enough to take into consideration all the situations in which virtue appears before proposing a definition. This procedure exactly matches up with Socrates' procedure for definition we have investigated so far.

Let us sum up. I have argued that Socrates never appeals to examples in the sense of (2), particular types of actions, proposed by his interlocutors in the *Euthyphro*, *Laches*, and *Meno* as data for a definition. It is true that Socrates never

---

<sup>36</sup> By contrast, Scott (2006, 26), who finds here a systematic argument for 'applying the unitarian assumption to virtue', writes: 'It might be that justice and temperance form a common core but, in those other than children and the elderly, other qualities are also needed to suffice for virtue'. But I do not think that it is reasonable to suppose that children and the elderly make exception in terms of the acquisition of virtue.



undertakes to show that these examples are false, but it is because he thinks he needs the definition of *F* in order to judge that a particular type of action is *F* or not because of his commitment to **(PD)**.

#### §4. 4. *Individual actions or things*

Finally, I would like to mention briefly examples in the sense of (3): individual actions or things. It is fairly clear, I think, that Socrates does not make use of examples in this sense as data for a definition. In fact, Socrates and his interlocutors nowhere mention them before proposing a definition except when Euthyphro mentions his own individual action in connection with an example in the sense of (2), which has already been discussed.<sup>37</sup> As is clear from the passage of the *Hippias Major* quoted above as (P4) [304d5-e2], Socrates assumes that one cannot know whether an individual case is *F* or not before the acquisition of the definition of *F*. Indeed, he himself has never violated this assumption.

#### §5. *Conclusion*

I have argued that the puzzle of Socrates' procedure for definition that has haunted scholars so long, i.e. that Socrates seems to appeal to examples before reaching a definition, but he also says that one cannot know which is a genuine example before reaching a definition, will be dispelled if we make distinctions

---

<sup>37</sup> Note in this connection that the Scythians, Aeneas, and the Spartans at Plataea mentioned by Socrates in the *Laches* (191a8-c6) are not introduced as examples of courageous people. Socrates here only wishes to show that these people *can never be courageous* if Laches' first proposal is correct. It is fairly clear, I think, that Socrates does not regard, for example, every Scythian as courageous.

within the notion of 'examples'. The close examination of the text has shown that Socrates only appeals to either (1a)  $F$  as instantiated in a certain action or thing, or (1b) parts (or kinds) of  $F$ —obviously true examples, or 'instances', about which it is either absurd or implausible to hold **(PD)**, before reaching a definition. Indeed, I shall propose to weaken **(PD)** in the following way, so that Socrates' strategic coherence becomes clear:

**(PDweak)** If one fails to know the definition of  $F$ , then one fails to know, for any  $x$  that is not an instance of  $F$ , that  $x$  is an  $F$ .

It is these instances that Socrates collects and examines in order to generalise or abstract the distinctive character that is common to them all.

## Chapter 2: The Priority of the definition of the whole

### §1. Introduction

In Chapter 1, I have argued that Socrates' procedure for the definition of  $F$  essentially consists in generalization or abstraction based on the 'instances' of  $F$  (i.e.  $F$  as instantiated in a certain situation, action, or thing, and parts (or kinds) of  $F$ ), thereby weakening one aspect of the principle of the priority of definition, which has often been attributed to Socrates, that is,

**(PD)** If one fails to know the definition of  $F$ , then one fails to know, for any  $x$ , that  $x$  is an  $F$ ,

into the following principle:

**(PDweak)** If one fails to know the definition of  $F$ , then one fails to know, for any  $x$  that is not an instance of  $F$  (but may nevertheless be an example of  $F$ ), that  $x$  is an  $F$ .

However, one might point out that this interpretation is incongruous with a widely-shared view on the reasons why Theaetetus' first attempt at defining knowledge is rejected in the dialogue named after him. In this post-*Republic* dialogue, when asked about the definition of knowledge, Theaetetus gives his

first answer by enumerating various *parts or kinds of knowledge*, but this answer is instantly rejected by Socrates, who then concisely sets out a few reasons why it is not appropriate (146c7-147c6). Concerning this passage, scholars have proposed that Socrates is appealing to **(PD)**; Socrates rejects Theaetetus' examples even as data for a definition because he thinks they are still unable to judge which examples count as correct ones. **(PDweak)**, on the other hand, does not allow us to explain this passage in the same way, for Theaetetus' examples are *instances* of knowledge, and must therefore be available as data to find out the definition.

In what follows, I shall argue that in the *Theaetetus* Socrates is appealing to a different principle—what I call the principle of the priority of the definition of the whole (over the definitions of parts):

**(PDWP)** If one fails to know the definition of *F*, then one fails to know the definition of any part (or any kind) of *F*.

**(PDWP)** is a principle that is independent of **(PD)**, and should not be assimilated to it. The *Theaetetus* is not the only dialogue in which Socrates appeals to this principle; he seems to be appealing to it also in the *Meno*, at 78c8-79e1 (quoted as (P18) below). He therefore holds two principles, **(PDweak)** and **(PDWP)**, instead of a single principle, **(PD)**, which has been thought, wrongly in my view, to cover the features that are related to the former two principles.

Socrates' procedure for definition thus reexamined will turn out to have the

following two features. First, Socrates collects the instances of *F* in order to examine the distinctive characteristic that is common to them all and reach the definition of *F*. Second, he first defines the whole of *F* before turning to the definition of each part of *F*. We shall see in Chapters 4 – 6 that these two features in fact anticipate the procedure for definition by means of the method of collection and division in such a way as is suggested in the introduction of the present thesis.

§2. *The text: Theaetetus 146c7-147c6*

In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates shows himself once again to be an enquirer into the ‘What is *F*?’ question. ‘Knowledge’ (ἐπιστήμη) is his concern on this occasion; he asks Theaetetus, the most intelligent student of a great mathematician, Theodorus, to tell him what knowledge is. Theaetetus then gives his first answer—in a manner that is reminiscent of the passages we have examined in Chapter 1 (especially (P12) [*Men.* 73e7-74a10])—by enumerating various branches (or parts, cf. *Sph.* 257c7-d3) of knowledge:

(P15) THEAETETUS: Then I think that the things Theodorus teaches are knowledge (ἐπιστήμαι)—I mean geometry and the subjects you enumerated just now [i.e. astronomy, arithmetic, and music]. Then again there are the crafts (αἱ τῶν ἄλλων δημιουργῶν τέχναι) such as cobbling, whether you take them together or separately. They must be knowledge, surely. (146c7-d3)

But this answer immediately meets with objections from Socrates. He offers two

arguments. First, he argues that Theaetetus' answer does not match up with the question.

(O1) (O1-1) Theaetetus is speaking of 'knowledge of making shoes' when he mentions 'cobbling'. (146d7-10)

(O1-2) He is speaking of 'knowledge of making wooden furniture' when he mentions 'carpentry'. (146e1-3)

(O1-3) He is only determining what each branch of knowledge is related to. (146e4-6)

(O1-4) He has given an answer to a question (i.e. 'What kinds of things is knowledge related to?' or 'How many branches of knowledge are there?') different from 'What is knowledge itself?' (146e7-11)

Second, Socrates offers an argument from analogy. He describes an imaginary, analogical case in which someone asks them what clay is, and they answer 'potters' clay', 'stovemakers' clay', and 'brickmakers' clay'. He says that this kind of answer is ridiculous, and goes on to show why it is so. This argument will be further divided into two movements. The first concerns each item enumerated in the answer.

(O2) (O2-1) A questioner who does not know what clay is will not *understand* (συνιέναι) the word 'clay'. (147b2-4)

(O2-2) This questioner will not *understand* 'dollmaker's clay' (or any other phrase that is created by the addition of the name of a craftsman)

either. (147a7-b2)

(O2-3) Similarly, a questioner who does not know what knowledge is will not *understand* 'knowledge of making shoes'. (147b5-7)

(O2-4) This questioner will not *understand* 'cobbling' (or any other name of a craft) either. (147b8-10)

(O2-5) Therefore, it is ridiculous to give the name of a craft (= knowledge of something) when the question is about what knowledge is. (147b11-c2)

The second movement, on the other hand, concerns the form of the answer, i.e. enumeration.

(O3) The answer is ridiculous because the answerer would have to enumerate an unlimited number of items when it is possible to give a concise answer such as: 'clay is earth mixed with water'. (147c3-6)

### §3. *An analysis of the text*

Many scholars believe that in this passage Socrates not only argues that Theaetetus' enumeration of various branches of knowledge is a wrong sort of answer, but also refuses to count them even as examples on the basis of which a definition might be reached.<sup>38</sup> It is obvious that argument (O1) is intended to

---

<sup>38</sup> It seems to have become a common custom to quote Wittgenstein's criticism (1958, 20) in this connection: 'When Socrates asks the question, "What is knowledge?", he does not regard it even as a *preliminary* answer to enumerate cases of knowledge' (his emphasis). Similarly, McDowell (1973, 114): 'It would be in the spirit of (1) [= (O2-1)-(O2-5)] that we could not be sure of the correctness of the list unless we already knew what knowledge was'; Bostock (1988, 34), *criticizing Plato*: 'And to come

show that Theaetetus' answer does not correspond to Socrates' question but to certain different questions. The issue is then what the point of argument (O2) is. The answer often given is that it is a further attack against the examples given by Theaetetus: deprived of the definition of knowledge, they are in no position to understand its examples, or in other words, they cannot use the proposed examples as reliable data for the definition of knowledge. In short, these scholars connect argument (O2) with (PD).

However, these scholars suggest at the same time that Socrates' argument under this interpretation is not successful. There are three types of objection against this argument. First, it is argued that Socrates' assumption in (O2-1) that anyone who does not know the definition of *F* will not *understand* the word '*F*' is implausible.<sup>39</sup> If this assumption is true, then Socrates' interlocutors who are unable to offer the correct definition of *F* will not *understand* Socrates' question 'What is *F*?', which contains '*F*', in the first place. Further, our everyday experience refutes such an assumption: we can *understand* the words, say, 'potato' and 'aubergine', and identify the vegetables these words refer to without being able to give their definitions, which will inform us that both of

---

back to the question of what knowledge is, there is in principle no reason why one should not rely upon the learner's ordinary and lower-level understanding of geometry and cobbling when using these as examples to impart a lower-level understanding of what knowledge is. Plato is no doubt right to say that a higher-level understanding of what knowledge is cannot be imparted in this way, but that is because—as he conceives of a higher-level understanding—it cannot be imparted by examples anyway. It is *not* because the examples cannot be understood until we have first understood what they are examples of'; Burnyeat (1990, 4): 'Yet in reply Socrates insists (146d-147c) not only that a plurality of examples is something quite different from the unitary definition he requested, but also, more strongly, that they are in no position to know any examples of knowledge until they know what knowledge itself is.' By the same token, Chappell (2004, 36) calls (O2-1)-(O2-5) the 'uninformativeness argument' on the ground that it is intended to show 'that examples are not sufficient for definition because they are uninformative'. Cf. also Benson (2000, 218-19).

<sup>39</sup> See McDowell (1973, 114).



them belong to the Solanaceae family, and so are close cousins. However, this objection seems too uncharitable, for Socrates probably has in mind a higher-level understanding, the one that is required to understand 'F' philosophically.<sup>40</sup> The two other types of objection assume that Socrates means 'understanding' in this sense. The second objection is that it is unlikely that a philosophical understanding is necessary for choosing examples; there seem to be no reasons that we should not make use of our lower-level understanding of 'cobbling' or 'carpentry' in order to reach the definition of knowledge.<sup>41</sup> By contrast, one might concede that we may need a philosophical understanding in order to choose *correct* examples, but still argue (this is the third objection) that argument (O2) involves a fallacious step, i.e. (O2-4), in which Socrates replaces 'knowledge of making shoes' with 'cobbling'.<sup>42</sup> This replacement will be warranted only if we are sure that 'cobbling' is 'knowledge of making shoes', i.e. a *correct* example of knowledge; in other words, only if we have the philosophical understanding of knowledge. Socrates then has no right to paraphrase 'cobbling' into 'knowledge of making shoes' since he denies himself

---

<sup>40</sup> The distinction between a lower- and higher-level of understanding is discussed by e.g. McDowell (1973, 114), Burnyeat (1977, 387-88), Bostock (1990, 32-34), Sedley (2004, 24-25).

<sup>41</sup> See Bostock (1990, 32-34).

<sup>42</sup> Burnyeat (1977, 389-90) argues that Plato made this mistake because he overlooked the fallacy involved in the substitution into an opaque context. In effect, according to him, Plato made the following inference:

Socrates does not understand 'knowledge of making shoes'.  
 'Cobbling' means knowledge of making shoes.  
 Therefore, Socrates does not understand 'cobbling'.

But, he continues, this is not valid. Cf. also Sedley (1993, 135-40), Brown (1994, 239-42). However, I think Sedley (2004, 22-23) is right when he says: 'we are not compelled to read Socrates as accusing Theaetetus of having said, or meant, something that he neither said or meant. We can, more charitably, read the argument as resting on the assumption that definition is transitive.' Still, the problem I describe in what immediately follows will remain.

this understanding.

But these objections only show, in my view, that the interpretation from which they derive is wrong, since, as a matter of fact, Socrates nowhere states that they are in no position to make use of examples. On the contrary, the section that immediately follows these arguments shows that examples are useful as data for a definition. Theaetetus there, having realised that the question Socrates is asking is similar to the one that occurred to his companion and himself while engaging in a geometry lesson, reports how he reached his first mathematical achievement, i.e. the definition of 'power' (δύναμις). A glance at the beginning of this report will show that Theaetetus is drawing on the examples of 'power' given by Theodorus before reaching the definition.

(P16) THEAETETUS: Theodorus here was demonstrating to us with the aid of diagrams a point about powers (περὶ δυνάμεων). He was showing us that the power of 3 square feet and the power of 5 square feet are not commensurable in length with the power of 1 square foot; and he went on in this way, taking each case in turn till he came to the power of 17 square feet; there for some reason he stopped. So the idea occurred to us that, since the powers were turning out to be unlimited in number, we might try to collect the powers in question under one term (συλλαβεῖν εἰς ἓν), which would apply to them all (ὅτι πάσας ταύτας προσαγορεύσομεν τὰς δυνάμεις). (147d4-e1)

Theodorus here first took up a square (or a power) with an area of 3 square feet and one with an area of 5 square feet, and proved somehow that the lengths of

their sides (i.e.  $\sqrt{3}$  feet and  $\sqrt{5}$  feet respectively) are incommensurable with that of a square with an area of 1 square foot. He continued the same sort of procedure for squares with areas of 6 to 17 square feet successively<sup>43</sup> before stopping (of course, squares with areas of 9 and 16 square feet, each of which has a side whose length is commensurable with that of the side of a square with an area of 1 square foot, are excluded from this process). Since it was obvious from Theodorus' procedure that there exists an unlimited number of this particular type of square (or power),<sup>44</sup> Theaetetus and his companion undertook *to collect the examples* (those which would have been given by the application of the same sort of procedure to the squares with areas of more than 18 square feet, as well as those which had already been given by Theodorus) and to give a definition that would show the distinctive characteristic that applies to all these examples (or 'instances'—these are *parts of power*). It is then beyond doubt that Theaetetus and his companion make use of examples as data

---

<sup>43</sup> As is apparent from the context, it is only the squares whose area can be given by the natural numbers that are relevant here.

<sup>44</sup> As has often been noted by scholars, Theaetetus' usage of 'power' (δύναμις) is very awkward in his report. At 147d4 he introduces this word to refer to the square in general, but at 147d9 he narrows down the objects that are referred to by this word to a particular type of square which has a side whose length is incommensurable with that of the side of a square with an area of 1 square foot. On top of this, at 148b1 and b8 he uses this word (δύναμις) as *the name of the sides* of this particular type of square without referring to this particular type of square (the same awkwardness will be found in the case of 'length' (μήκος): Theaetetus not only refers by this word to the length of the sides of the square in general, but also uses it as the name of the sides of a particular type of square which has a side whose length is commensurable with that of the side of a square with an area of 1 square foot). But this complexity should not mislead us into thinking that Theaetetus has no more in mind the examples given by Theodorus or, as Bostock (1988, 35) assumes, that 'Theaetetus could hardly tell, *before* he had defined 'power', whether some number was a power or not.' Theaetetus accepted the examples of 'power' given by Theodorus and just defined it in terms of the sides rather than in terms of the whole square. As Burnyeat (1978, 502) observes: '[...] no change of *mathematical* substance is involved when the definition is eventually given in terms of lines. Whether incommensurability is taken as a property that certain squares have in respect of their sides or as a property of the sides themselves is just a matter of which way one chooses to express the same facts.' Cf. also Høyrup (1990, 204-6).

for a definition in their attempt at defining the powers. And that this is not just a peculiar feature of the procedure of a mathematical definition is evident from Socrates' request for the analogous approach to the definition of knowledge made soon after Theaetetus finished the report of his achievement.

(P17) SOCRATES: You gave us a good lead just now. Try to imitate your answer about the powers. There you brought together the many powers within a single form (ταύτας πολλὰς οὐσας ἐνὶ εἴδει περιέλαβες); now I want you in the same way to give one single account of the many branches of knowledge (οὕτω καὶ τὰς πολλὰς ἐπιστήμας ἐνὶ λόγῳ προσειπεῖν). (148d4-7)

Socrates thus makes it crystal clear that the instances of knowledge enumerated by Theaetetus in passage (P15) [146c7-d3] should be treated in the same way as the examples of power given by Theodorus: one should collect them in order to find the definition of knowledge. I therefore conclude that there is no truth in the claim that Socrates, by appealing to **(PD)**, refuses to count Theaetetus' instances even as examples on the basis of which a definition might be reached.

We then need a different answer to our question: what is the point of argument (O2)? My answer is that Socrates argues here that we do not know what a part of  $F$  is unless we know what  $F$  is. In other words, Socrates claims that we have to first find out the definition of the whole before turning to the definition of parts since the latter contain the name of the whole as part of their definition. In fact, some scholars have noticed that this is exactly what Socrates

wants to point out in argument (O2),<sup>45</sup> but, so far as I know, no one has ever clarified the fact that the principle Socrates is implicitly appealing to in this argument is different from (PD) and does not prevent us from using instances as data for a definition.<sup>46</sup> In order to establish this fact, I shall examine this argument more closely.

First of all, it is crucial to understand the reason why Socrates brings up argument (O2). I suggest that the key lies in the observation that (O2) is concerned with *items taken singly*.<sup>47</sup> Singular expressions used throughout argument (O2) such as ‘any other craft’ (τινα ἄλλην τέχνην 147b9), ‘the name of one of the crafts’ (τέχνης τινὸς ὄνομα 147b12), and ‘something that knowledge is of’ (τινὸς ... ἐπιστήμην 147b12-c1) clearly show that Socrates is talking about the case in which an answerer gives only one instance such as ‘dollmaker’s clay’ or ‘cobbling’. Of course, it is not the case that Theaetetus has mentioned just one branch of knowledge as an answer to the question about knowledge, or that Socrates supposes that they have given just one instance of clay as an answer to the question about clay. But it is reasonable to suppose that, when someone

---

<sup>45</sup> E.g. Burnyeat (1977, 388-89), Brown (1994, 232-34), Sedley (2004, 24-27).

<sup>46</sup> So, for example, Burnyeat (1977, 388) writes, referring to (P18): ‘To argue thus is to assert (A) [= (PD)] for those examples of virtue which are kinds rather than instances of the concept.’ Similarly, Sedley (2004, 25) states that Socrates is implicitly appealing to the ‘more modest version’ of the principle of the priority of definition in this argument.

<sup>47</sup> By contrast, (O1) is not concerned with the case in which an answerer gives only one instance. I therefore disagree with Sedley (2004, 23-24), who thinks that (O1) or (O2) can be brought in depending on whether in the reformulation as ‘Knowledge is knowledge of making shoes (etc.)’ the second occurrence of ‘knowledge’ is considered to be redundant or not. Sedley’s classification matches up well with (O1-3) and Socrates’ suggestion that this is an answer to the question ‘What kinds of things is knowledge related to?’ in (O1-4), but does not correspond to the other question ‘How many branches of knowledge are there?’ On the other hand, the author of the ancient commentary of Plato’s *Theaetetus* quoted by Sedley (1993, 133-34) seems to have correctly discerned the distinction: ‘Theaetetus has enumerated many [...] and has gone wrong both in not representing the essence of knowledge, and in enumerating many. *But he would have been wrong even if he had listed one [...].*’

gives instances of  $F$  as an answer to the question about what  $F$  is, he is not thinking that many instances, *only when taken together*, give a philosophical understanding of what  $F$  is, but rather he is thinking that each instance will give a certain philosophical understanding of what  $F$  is (though it will be not as philosophical as that which is given when they are taken together).<sup>48</sup> To put it somewhat differently, Socrates is not directly criticizing answers by enumeration here, but rather he is criticizing a thought that he suspects to lie behind these answers. That is why Socrates says: '[It is] absurd [of us], to begin with, *I suppose, to imagine* ( $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}$  που οἰόμενοι) that the person who asked the question would understand anything from our answer when we say ['dollmaker's clay'].' (147a7-8) It is then of some significance to show that the name of each instance will not give any philosophical understanding of what  $F$  is. It is in order to show this, I suggest, that Socrates puts forward argument (O2).

Let us recall here the distinction between a higher- and lower-level of understanding in order to see how the suggestion given above would help us understand argument (O2). A higher-level understanding of  $F$  is that which enables anyone who possesses it to reach the definition of  $F$  and to answer the 'What is  $F$ ?' question correctly, and any understanding that is not sufficient for this purpose will be classified as a lower-level understanding of  $F$ . The focus of the 'What is  $F$ ?' question is a higher-level understanding of  $F$ . But we may have a higher- or lower-level understanding in respect of instances of  $F$  as well. Now

---

<sup>48</sup> Recall that Theaetetus says in (P15) rather emphatically that the branches of knowledge he enumerated are knowledge '*whether you take them together or separately*'.

one might give many instances of  $F$  as a *preliminary* answer to the 'What is  $F$ ?' question, thinking that a lower-level understanding of many instances of  $F$  will lead us to a higher-level understanding of  $F$ .<sup>49</sup> Socrates does not deny this (argument (O2) is not concerned with this case). On the contrary, he would agree to this proposal and encourage us to examine many instances of  $F$ . By contrast, one might give many instances of  $F$ , thinking that what an instance of  $F$  is is easier to understand than what  $F$  itself is, and that a higher-level understanding of this single instance of  $F$  will lead us to a higher-level understanding of  $F$ . For example, one might think that what cobbling is is easier to understand than what knowledge is, and that the definition of the former somehow clarifies the latter. Socrates denies this. It is in order to attack this kind of thought that he puts forward argument (O2).

Understood this way, Socrates' argument will be very simple and, I think, plausible. He only claims that we do not have a higher-level understanding of a part of  $F$  unless we have a higher-level understanding of  $F$  itself, because the name or definition of the former contains the name of the latter. Since 'dollmaker's clay' contains 'clay', and the definition of cobbling, i.e. 'knowledge of making shoes', contains 'knowledge', one has to know first what clay is (or what knowledge is) in order to know what dollmaker's clay is (or what cobbling is). This, I suggest, is the point of argument (O2). Socrates' claim therefore is perfectly compatible with the effort to attain the definition of  $F$  by

---

<sup>49</sup> It is exactly this kind of procedure that Wittgenstein and Bostock, I think, believed unjustly to be denied by Plato; see n.38 above. Since Plato does not deny this, I do not think their views are correct. It is, however, possible that Wittgenstein is criticising Plato not on this basis, but rather because Socrates does not accept many instances of  $F$  as a *definition by example*. If so, he will be acquitted of the charge that he misunderstood the passage in question; Plato certainly would not accept any definition by example.

way of many instances of *F*.

#### §4. *The Meno and the principle of the priority of the definition of the whole*

Now that Socrates' claim in argument (O2), i.e. that we do not know what a part of *F* is if we do not know what *F* is, has been neatly separated from (PD), I would like to discuss his claim in a little more detail. First, let us make sure that his claim as expressed there has more or less the status of a principle in Socrates' procedure, and is not just an *ad hoc* device in argument (O2). This will be ascertained from the fact that (as has been noted by some scholars)<sup>50</sup> the *Theaetetus* is not the only dialogue in which Socrates appeals to this claim; he does so also in the *Meno*.

At *Meno* 77b2-5, after Socrates has illustrated the sort of definition he is asking, i.e. the single definition of virtue that applies to any part of virtue, through the analogical cases of shape and colour, Meno proposes 'the desire for good things [later it is agreed that these are health, wealth, and fame] and the power of acquiring them' as the definition of virtue. Socrates first prunes off the first half of Meno's proposal as unnecessary on the ground that everyone desires good things, and then secures an agreement from Meno that to be considered virtue the acquisition of good things has to be accompanied by justice, piety, or temperance. This agreement, Socrates claims, renders his proposal substantially the same as 'any action performed with a part of virtue', and he dismisses it since it presupposes the knowledge of virtue. Then this exchange follows:

---

<sup>50</sup> E.g. Burnyeat (1977, 388), Brown (1994, 232-34), Sedley (2004, 25).



(P18) SOCRATES: *Do you think one knows what a part of virtue is if one does not know*

*virtue itself* (οἶει τινὰ εἰδέναι μέρος ἄρετῆς ὅτι ἐστίν, αὐτὴν μὴ εἰδότα)?

MENO: I do not think so.

SOCRATES: If you remember, when I was answering you about shape, we rejected the kind of answer that tried to answer in terms still being the subject of inquiry and not yet agreed upon.

MENO: And we were right to reject them.

SOCRATES: Then surely, my good sir, you must not think, while the nature of virtue as a whole is still under inquiry, that by answering in terms of the parts of virtue you can make its nature clear to anyone *or make anything else clear by speaking in this way* (δηλώσειν ... ἄλλο ὅτιοῦν τούτῳ τῷ αὐτῷ τρόπῳ λέγων).

(79c8-79e1)

Socrates suggests here, in a manner very similar to argument (O2), that one does not know what a part of virtue is if one does not know what virtue itself is. This suggestion of course does not prevent us from making use of parts of virtue as data for a definition;<sup>51</sup> indeed we have seen in Chapter 1 (§4.2.) that Socrates encourages his interlocutor to search for the definition of virtue that applies to any part of virtue (naturally we have to collect parts of virtue first in

---

<sup>51</sup> Pace Brown (1994, 233), who writes on this passage: 'The argumentation is equally objectionable to that at *Tht.* 147b. Again there is an invalid substitution in an intentional context; again a resource for gaining understanding of a term is unfairly disqualified.'

order to see if a proposed definition of virtue applies to them or not). It only prevents us from understanding the definition of any part of virtue philosophically prior to the definition of virtue itself. But there are also differences between the passages in the *Meno* and *Theaetetus*. First, Socrates does not further explain in the *Meno* the reason why we cannot know what a part of virtue is before knowing what virtue itself is,<sup>52</sup> although it seems natural to assume that the reason is the same: the definition of any part of virtue will contain the word 'virtue', and we need to understand 'virtue' philosophically before understanding 'the virtue of such-and-such' philosophically. Meno's proposal then will be equivalent to 'any action performed with the virtue of such-and-such', and he will be answering 'in terms still being the subject of inquiry' (79d3). Second, unlike in argument (O2), Socrates explicitly generalises his suggestion here, so that we can assuredly attribute to him the principle of the priority of the definition of the whole over the definitions of parts.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Sedley (2004, 25) emphasises this point.

<sup>53</sup> Of course, taking into consideration the commonly assumed chronological order of Plato's dialogues, it may not be wise to attribute this principle to the historical Socrates or Socrates described in the early dialogues. To begin with, if he is committed to this principle, it will follow that he knows that all the efforts he makes in some of the early dialogues (i.e. the *Euthyphro*, *Charmides*, *Laches*, and (for some scholars) *Republic I*) are simply beside the point. Moreover, he himself violates this principle in the *Laches*: 'Let us not, O best of men, begin straightaway with an investigation of the whole of virtue—that would perhaps be too great a task—but let us first see if we have a sufficient knowledge of a part. Then it is likely that the investigation will be easier for us.' (190c8-d1) However, perhaps these points do not show that Socrates *does not* hold this principle either. First, let us recall that the main purpose of these dialogues lies just in the examination of Socrates' interlocutors' claim that they know a part of virtue. Socrates might be expecting that his interlocutors will define a part of virtue in terms of virtue as a whole and then explain what virtue is. (The notorious problem of the unity of virtue might point to this kind of explanation.) As to the *Laches*, the fact that Nicias' definition of courage is rejected on the ground that it is concerned with the virtue as a whole, and not just a part of it, might point to Plato's implicit message that there was in fact a problem in Socrates' strategy in taking up a part of virtue first. On balance, I think that this principle is coloured with more Platonic tint than Socratic one, but it gradually comes to surface through various attempts at defining parts of virtue in the early dialogues.

**(PDWP)** If one fails to know the definition of  $F$ , then one fails to know the definition of any part (or any kind) of  $F$ .

I hope to have made sufficiently clear by now that Socrates' procedure for definition principally consists in generalization or abstraction based on instances, and that he does not hold a **(PD)** that is incompatible with his own procedure. He is instead committed to two principles elucidated thus far: **(PDweak)** and **(PDWP)**. **(PDweak)** prevents us from basing our search for the definition of  $F$  on examples that might turn out to be true or false. **(PDWP)**, on the other hand, prevents us from defining a part of  $F$  before defining  $F$  itself. These two principles are perfectly compatible with the procedure for reaching definition Socrates endorses in Plato's dialogues.

§5. *Sophist* 239c9-240a8

Thus far I have examined the positive use of instances that is made by a Socrates who may be roughly identified with Socrates described in Plato's early dialogues. Here, before closing this chapter, I would like to briefly analyse one more scene from the *Sophist* (239c9-240a8) that provides striking parallel to the scenes of Meno's or Theaetetus' answer by enumeration. The *Sophist* is one of the late dialogues, and scholars often claim that in these dialogues Plato has replaced the Socratic method with his own that is radically different from its predecessor. No matter what interpretation we hold on this new method, we shall have at least a glimpse of continuity between the Socratic and Platonic

method in the short passage we are going to examine.

In this dialogue, which was written as the sequel of the *Theaetetus*, the Eleatic Stranger replaces Socrates as the leading speaker, and undertakes the definition of sophist with Theaetetus as his interlocutor. After several initial attempts end up unsatisfactorily, he comes up with the proposal that the science of sophistry belongs to 'the science of image-making' (εἰδωλοποιικήν τέχνην 235b8-9). However, as he divides the science of image-making into that of 'likeness-making' (εἰκαστικήν 236b2) and 'appearance-making' (φανταστικήν 236c4), he draws Theaetetus' attention to the fact that they are facing difficulties involved in the concept of 'not-being' (τὸ μὴ ὄν). After the contradictory nature of this concept is elucidated, he envisages an imaginary situation in which a sophist asks them a question 'What is an image?' in order to bring home to Theaetetus how the attempt at defining sophistry in terms of image-making involves this problematic concept. Theaetetus answers this question again by enumerating instances:

(P19) THEAETETUS: Obviously we'll say we mean images in water and mirrors, and also images that are drawn and stamped and everything else like that.  
(239d7-9)

And again his answer by enumeration is instantly rejected, but this time in quite a different way: the Stranger says that the sophist will scoff at this answer, shutting his eyes or pretending that he does not have any eyes at all, because it is given in terms of perceptible things. (We shall consider soon why the reason

for the rejection is different here from the one in the *Theaetetus*.) He then says that the sophist will ask them to answer in terms of words.

(P20) STRANGER: He'll ask about what runs through all those things (διὰ πάντων τούτων) which you call many, but which you thought you should call by the one name, image, to cover them all, as if they were all one thing (ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ὡς ἓν ὄν). (240a4-6)

Theaetetus thus gives one single definition of image: 'something that's similar to a true thing and is another thing that's like it' (240a8). But this answer shows that an image is entangled with the concept of not-being since it is only an image and not really that which is.

This passage not only confirms my interpretation of Socrates' procedure for definition, but also shows that Plato maintains this procedure in his late dialogues too. Theaetetus here enumerates images as instantiated in various things, the examples in the sense of (1a) we have classified in Chapter 1. The Eleatic Stranger then says that the sophist will not be satisfied with those instances, and will ask for the characteristic that is common to them all. This request, of course, implies that instances are useful as data for a definition, on the basis of which the common characteristic is generalised or abstracted. Theaetetus thus finds this characteristic on the basis of his own instances and offers the definition of an image by describing it. The structure seems exactly identical with Socrates' procedure for definition. And this fact is all the more significant because we find this passage in a late dialogue. Even though the

Eleatic Stranger replaces Socrates as the leading speaker of the dialogue, it does not mean that the Socratic method has disappeared into thin air. On the contrary, while being succeeded by this newcomer, his method is still alive. Small wonder then even if it should turn out, on close examination, that there appears much more continuity between the Socratic and Platonic method than scholars have usually believed.

However, before concluding thus, we have to consider the implication of the unfamiliar reason for rejecting Theaetetus' answer by enumeration. In relation to this, Burnyeat writes: 'The irony is appropriate because the new methods of definition and inquiry which Plato elaborates in his last works imply a relaxation of Socratic principles and a rather less disparaging attitude to examples.'<sup>54</sup> Burnyeat mentions 'the irony' presumably because he thinks that the rather comical description of the sophist's behaviour is intended to highlight the formidable nature of sophists in contrast to philosophers who (at least in Plato's late dialogues) accept examples as a sufficient answer.<sup>55</sup> But is that really so? I think not. Instead, I suggest that the contrast is between sophists who deftly hide behind perplexing puzzles and philosophers who pursue them, thereby unearthing philosophical problems, on the one hand, and ordinary people in an unreflective state, on the other. Recall here a famous distinction Socrates and Plato make among things: there are things about which there is general agreement as to what they are, and ones about which there is no

---

<sup>54</sup> Burnyeat (1977, 390).

<sup>55</sup> Burnyeat cannot mean that a philosopher accepts them just as examples, for, as I have mentioned in the previous paragraph, it is clear enough from (P20) that even the sophist accepts them as examples.

agreement at all (cf. *Phdr.* 263a2-c1, *Euthphr.* 7b6-d8, *Plt.* 285d9-286b1). An image belongs to the former; there is no controversy among ordinary people as to what an image is; normally, to point to some images in mirrors or water is sufficient for a grasp of what it is.<sup>56</sup> Sophists, however, convert this uncontroversial thing into a controversial one by shutting their eyes or pretending that they do not know mirrors or water. Certainly, there is no denying that the description of the way in which they reject instances as an answer to the question is ironical. But this irony belongs to the general tone of the dialogue, which is full of ironical descriptions of sophists, and is nothing to do with a dismissive attitude towards examples, for the problem uncovered by the rejection of instances of an image is a real philosophical problem which is treated intensively later in the dialogue, and therefore such an attitude must be shared by philosophers as well. Besides, philosophers described by Plato often do not trust their perceptions (cf. e.g. *Phd.* 66b1-67b6, *R.* 475d1-476d6, 511b2-c2) and look ridiculous to many people (cf. e.g. *R.* 516e7-517a7, *Tht.* 173c7-175b7, *Sph.* 216c4-d2). I therefore conclude that the unfamiliar reason for rejecting Theaetetus' answer by enumeration does not damage my interpretation; it is only devised to convert a normally uncontroversial thing into something philosophically controversial.

---

<sup>56</sup> The 'clay' in the *Theaetetus* also belongs to the former, but Socrates treats it as if it belonged to the latter in order to give an analogical case of the definition of the thing under consideration. This is also the case with the 'speed' in the *Laches*, and the 'shape' and 'colour' in the *Meno*.

## Chapter 3: Socratic forms and Platonic Forms

### §1. Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to put forward an interpretation that will make it possible to integrate Plato's earlier and later dialectics in terms of their objects on the basis of the examination of the aspects of Socratic forms and Platonic Forms that are connected with methodological procedures. The analysis of the objects of dialectic becomes particularly vital for an interpretation of Plato's method, since it has often been believed that a striking contrast between Plato's earlier and later methods precisely lies in the difference between their objects: Socrates' procedure for definition deals with Socratic forms, while Plato's method of collection and division deals with Platonic Forms. In my opinion, such a belief is often imprinted on our mind through the secondary literature (starting from Aristotle's account)<sup>57</sup>, and prompts us to turn a blind eye to what actually goes on in the text. Consider the following two cases: in the *Hippias Major* (299d8-300b5), inquiring after the form of the fine, Socrates asks what it is that both pleasure through sight and pleasure through hearing have in common, by which both of them are fine, and in the *Sophist* (219a10-c1), the Eleatic Stranger says that the sciences of farming, caring for living things and equipment, and imitation have the common

---

<sup>57</sup> See *Metaphysics* A 6, 987<sup>a</sup>29-<sup>b</sup>8; M 4, 1078<sup>b</sup>12-32; M 9, 1086<sup>a</sup>31-<sup>b</sup>11. For a useful analysis of these passages, see Fine (1984 [2003, 264-273]).



capacity, i.e. 'to bring anything into being that wasn't in being before', by which all of them are grouped under the science of production. The structural correlation of these two cases is obvious.<sup>58</sup> But, then, why should we suppose that Socrates deals with the Socratic form of the fine, while the Eleatic Stranger deals with the Platonic Form of the Science-of-Production? Because, one might answer, lots of things have happened between the *Hippias Major* and the *Sophist*. I myself will argue in this chapter that nothing happened in between that would require the metamorphosis of the science of production into the Science-of-Production.

This chapter can be read as offering an approach alternative to, and perhaps radically different from, what I shall call the standard approach to Plato's central doctrines of metaphysics. In my version, Socratic forms survive. Plato simply added Platonic Forms as the ultimate goal of our search for knowledge to the Socratic framework. In both of the passages from the *Hippias Major* and the *Sophist* mentioned above, Plato deals with Socratic forms. In the standard version, by contrast, Plato replaced immanent Socratic forms with his own transcendent Platonic Forms and so-called immanent characters (or Form-copies), and later reconsidered the simplicity of Platonic Forms and started to investigate the interrelation of Platonic Forms with each other.<sup>59</sup> Thus,

---

<sup>58</sup> I.e. in both passages, the following three items are at issue: instances (pleasure through sight and hearing; the sciences of farming, caring for living things, etc.); a common characteristic (what the pleasures have in common; the common capacity); and the name of the common characteristic ('beauty'; 'the science of production'). The instances of *F* have a common characteristic by which they are labelled as '*F*'.

<sup>59</sup> For a recent, minutely discussed defense for this view, see Silverman (2002). In §4.2. of this chapter, I shall examine the view that Plato deals with Platonic Forms and immanent characters in the *Phaedo*. For the view that Plato changed his mind about the simplicity of Platonic Forms in the late dialogues, see e.g. Anscombe (1966), Moravcsik (1973a, 160; 1973b, 326), Benitez (1989, 58), De Chiara-Quenzer (1993, 51), Frede (1997, 336-37).

in the passages in question, only the structure is parallel; the objects are different. Plato deals with immanent Socratic forms in the *Hippias Major*, but with the interrelation of transcendent Platonic Forms in the *Sophist*.

My overall strategy is to set a line of demarcation between Socratic forms and Platonic Forms by clarifying their respective ontological and epistemological status. I shall start my discussion with an examination of the ontological status of Socratic forms in section 2, which consists of two sub-sections. In the first sub-section (§2.1), I shall argue that the so-called immanentist view, according to which Socratic forms are always located in concrete particulars, is too narrow; particulars do not constitute an essential factor in Socrates' procedure for definition. Instead, I shall propose that Socratic forms are always considered in connection with various things, actions, situations, or their parts, whether particulars or universals (or, in short, I shall argue that Socratic forms are context-restricted). In the second sub-section (§2.2), I shall describe a distinctive way of analysing our world that will result from Socrates' view that forms are perfectly present in each context. One of the inevitable consequences of Socrates' position is that each Socratic form is both one and many: it is one in that it is liable to one and the same definition, and it is many in that it appears perfectly in many contexts. Next, in section 3, I shall turn to the epistemological status of Socratic forms. I shall argue that Socratic forms can be sufficiently grasped by definitions, i.e. simple propositions. Thus, having established that each Socratic form is context-restricted, both one and many, and the subject of definition (or knowledge by definition), I shall suggest in section 4 that each Platonic Form is context-independent, simply one, and the

subject of knowledge (or expertise). Section 4 consists of two sub-sections. In the first sub-section (§4.1), I shall examine the so-called ascent passage in the *Symposium* (209e5-212a7), and shall suggest that Socratic forms correspond to beauty in bodies, activities and laws, and sciences, which appears prior to the final goal of the mysteries, i.e. Beauty itself, with the result that Plato has both Socratic forms and Platonic Forms in mind in the middle dialogues. In the second sub-section (§4.2), I shall argue that in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* 'the *F* itself' or 'the εἶδος or ἰδέα of *F*', the expressions that have often been regarded as the technical terms for Platonic Forms, in fact ambiguously designate both Socratic forms and Platonic Forms. Let us then start our discussion with Socratic forms.

## §2. Socratic forms and contexts

The subject of Socrates' 'What is *F*?' question is the *form* (εἶδος or ἰδέα) of *F*. Socrates makes this clear when his interlocutor gives the sort of answer that Socrates did not intend to ask for. When his interlocutor gives an example which is related to an unduly limited case of *F* out of various *F* phenomena, or a list of examples of this kind, Socrates usually rejects the answer on the ground that what he is asking for is something quite different, thereby implying that his interlocutor has simply misunderstood the question. He then tends to clarify the meaning of his question by explaining that what he wants his interlocutor to teach him is the form of *F* (see *Euthphr.* 6d10-e7; *Men.* 72c6-d1. Cf. *Hi.Ma.* 289c9-d5). Let us call forms that can stand as subjects of Socrates' 'What is *F*?'

question 'Socratic forms'.<sup>60</sup>

Although what Socrates means by 'form' is not immediately clear, a closer look at various passages in early dialogues seems to indicate that the Socratic form of *F* has the following three features: (a) it is one and the same in many items, (b) it is that by which all *F* things are *F*, and (c) it is (always and for everyone) *F*.<sup>61</sup> For example, in the *Meno*, Socrates tries to persuade Meno that, although the instances of virtue given by Meno are many and various, (a) these instances have one and the same form of virtue, and that (b) it is because of this form of virtue that they are virtues (72c6-8). And in the *Hippias Major*, Socrates, as a preliminary to the question as to what the fine is, elicits assent from Hippias that (b) all the fine things are fine by the fine (287c8-d2), and says somewhat later in the dialogue that (c) what he is seeking for is that which is always and for everyone fine (292e1-2).

In what follows I will bring feature (a) into focus, asking in what sense or in what way a Socratic form is one and the same in many items. It is true that the two latter features, i.e. (b) and (c), have recently received much more attention than (a) from scholars. In relation to feature (b), the form is often characterized as the logical cause or the aetiological principle of something: the form of *F* causes *F* things to be *F* or explains why *F* things are *F*. And in relation to (c), the form is thought by scholars to self-predicate: the form of *F* is itself *F*. I shall

---

<sup>60</sup> Note that Socratic forms include the items that Socrates makes subjects of 'What is *F*?' questions just in order to illustrate the sort of answer he is asking for, e.g. speed, figures, colour, and clay, as well as the items whose definitions are the real objects of his search, e.g. virtue, beauty, and knowledge.

<sup>61</sup> For the general characterization of Socratic forms (or the general conditions that the definition of a Socratic form has to satisfy), see e.g. Santas (1979, 72-96), Teloh (1981, 18-46), Woodruff (1982, 149-160), Fine (1993, 49-54). My characterization is roughly in agreement with theirs.

come back briefly to each of these two features later when it becomes relevant to my discussion. They have, however, been especially discussed in connection with Plato's mature theory of Forms developed in the middle dialogues. In order to investigate how the object of the Socratic method should be understood, I myself suggest that it is more significant to clarify feature (a) than (b) or (c), since feature (a) seems to be the peculiar feature of Socratic forms. I shall therefore concentrate on feature (a) hereafter; first in §2.1 I shall consider a popular view that Socratic forms are immanent in particulars, and second in §2.2 I shall try to clarify feature (a) by contrasting two different approaches to it, i.e. (what I shall call) the 'approximationist' and the 'contextualist' approach.

### §2.1. Immanence

Concerning the issue of the relation between a Socratic form and many items, scholars have often proposed that *a Socratic form is immanent in many particular things* on the ground that, in order to describe this relation, Socrates uses such expressions as: things 'have' *F*, or *F* is 'present to' things, or *F* is 'in' things (I shall consider these expressions immediately below).<sup>62</sup> According to this

---

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Mabbott (1926, 77): 'If Socrates did originate the Theory of Forms, his forms must have been immanent, for immanence is essential to the Socratic methods'; Grube (1935, 9): 'It follows that all these expressions [that seem to imply the theory of Ideas], whatever hidden meaning, if any, they may hold for Socrates, are taken by the other speaker as describing no more than the common characteristics of particular things to which the same predicate is applied, these common qualities being considered *not as transcendentally existing but as immanent in the particulars*'; Ross (1953, 21): 'Apart from this one passage [in the *Symposium*], this whole group of early dialogues treats the Ideas as being immanent in particular things'; Rowe (1984, 55): '[Socrates] will have begun [...] by tending to analyse the beauty of a particular thing in terms of the possession by the thing, or the presence in the thing, of the form of beauty (beauty, beautiful), where the form of beauty comes to be seen as an element in the thing, or a part of it'; Malcolm (1991, 36-37): 'Certain scholars undertake to shroud the idea of an immanent universal in impenetrable mystery. But all that is meant thereby is a common characteristic existing in the particulars as given by *Euthyphro* 5d [...] and

immanentist view, the many items are concrete particulars that exist in space and time, and so the 'in' in the phrase '*F* is in things' may be understood as specifying the spatio-temporal location of *F*; Socrates is searching for a Socratic form as *located in* many concrete particular things that exist in space and time. For instance, the Socratic form of courage is one and the same while being located in many courageous people such as Achilles, Laches, etc. Also, in this account, it seems natural to suppose that a Socratic form constitutes a property or an attribute of these particular things.<sup>63</sup> If the Socratic form of courage is located in Achilles, it constitutes the property or the attribute of courage Achilles has in himself.

The immanentists call on a wide range of textual evidence to support their view. They quote various Greek expressions used for the relation between a Socratic form and the many items as suggesting the immanentist interpretation. (Note that, although most of these expressions in fact mention not the form of *F* but only *F*, this fact does not devalue them as evidence for the immanentist view, since *F* as a subject of Socrates' 'What is *F*?' question is always identical with the Socratic form of *F*.) Now, I would like to divide these expressions into the following three groups: (1) the 'have' locution, (2) the '(come to) be present

---

*Laches* 191e'; Fine (1993, 52): 'But to say that forms are in things is only to say that various sensibles have them, i.e. have the relevant properties.' Other scholars who seem to agree with this view include Irwin (1977a, 318 n.24), Teloh (1981, 14), and Vlastos (1991, 58; 74). By contrast, Woodruff (1982, 166) and Dancy (2004, 186-206) argue that Socrates is not committed to any specific view about the relation between a Socratic form and relevant many items on the ground that the expressions that might be quoted as evidence for immanence are ordinary, theoretically unloaded, locutions.<sup>63</sup> See Vlastos (1991, 74): 'to speak of an attribute as being "in" something is current usage for saying that it is instantiated there; this would be ordinary Greek for saying that the thing *has* the property associated with the Form. [...] [Socrates] takes it for granted that if temperance or piety or beauty exist they exist *in* something in the world of time'. See also Fine's view quoted in the previous note.

to' locution, and (3) the 'in' locution. Let us consider them in turn. First, (1) the 'have' locution comprises different expressions: things can 'have' (ἔχειν) or 'come to acquire' (κτηθῆσθαι) or 'have acquired' (κεκτηθῆσθαι) a Socratic form. For instance, in the *Euthyphro*, Socrates uses this locution in the following question:

(P21) SOCRATES: Everything that is to be impious *has* some one form (ἔχον μίαν τινὰ ἰδέαν) with respect to its impiety, doesn't it?<sup>64</sup> (5d3-5)

Similarly, in the *Laches*:

(P22) SOCRATES: So all these men are courageous, but some *have acquired* (κέκτηνται) courage in pleasure, some in pains, some in desires, and some in fears. (191e4-6)

This 'have' locution can also be found at *Chrm.* 169d9-e8, 171d8, 175e6-176a7; *La.* 189e3-190c2, 192a4; *Hi.Ma.* 298b2-4, 299d8-300b2; *Cra.* 389b8-10; *Men.* 72c6-d1.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> This is my own translation. Grube's translation in Cooper (1997) is less literal: 'everything that is to be impious presents us with one form or appearance in so far as it is impious?'

<sup>65</sup> With one exception, I have restricted the passages I quote as containing one of the three types of locution to those that appear in the dialogues in which Socrates asks a 'What is F?' question. It is true that Socrates or his interlocutor sometimes use parallel expressions for the relation between F and relevant many items in other dialogues as well (e.g. *Ly.* 217b4ff.; *Euthd.* 301a4), and indeed these passages have been quoted as suggesting the immanentist view (cf. Ross (1953, 228-30), Fujisawa (1974, 42)), but it is not clear, I think, whether or not Socrates, by using these expressions, has the Socratic form of F in mind. Dancy (2004, 192-206), for example, argues that he does not. The single exception is the *Cratylus* (389b8-10), in which Socrates directly mentions the form of F: 'Hence whenever he has to make a shuttle for weaving garments of any sort, whether light or heavy, linen or woolen, mustn't it *possess the form* of a shuttle (τὸ τῆς κερκίδος ἔχειν εἶδος)?' With this restriction in mind, I intend my quotations to be exhaustive as far as possible. It should be also noted that I have included the passages that mention the relation between *a thing that is proposed as an answer to the 'What is F?' question* and relevant many items, for such a thing is temporarily treated as the form of

Next, (2) the '(come to) be present to' locution comprises a Socratic form's being, or coming to be, 'present to' (παρεῖναι, ἐπεῖναι, παραγίγνεσθαι) many things; it may also 'be in' (ἐνεῖναι), or 'come to be in' (ἐγγίγνεσθαι), or 'be added to' (προσεῖναι, προσγίγνεσθαι), many things. Consider the following two examples:

(P23) SOCRATES: Now it is clear that if temperance *is present in* (πάρεστιν) you, you have some opinion about it. (*Chrm.* 158e7-159a1)

(P24) SOCRATES: Do you still think that the fine itself by which everything else is beautified and is seen to be fine when that form *is added to* it (προσγένηται ἐκεῖνο τὸ εἶδος)—that that is a girl or a horse or a lyre? (*Hi.Ma.* 289d2-5)

The other occurrences of the '(come to) be present to' locution are: *Chrm.* 157a5-b1, 158b5, 159a1-10, 175e2; *La.* 189e3-190c2, 190d7-e3; *Hi.Ma.* 292d1, 293d6-294c6, 300a10; *Men.* 70a3, 71a4, 86d1, 99e3-100c2. Finally, (3) the 'in' locution indicates that a Socratic form is 'in' (ἐν) many things. In the *Euthyphro*, just before (P21), we find Socrates using this locution:

(P25) SOCRATES: [O]r is the pious not the same and alike *in* (ἐν) every action?  
(5d1-2)

---

*F*, and as such it is supposed to stand in the same ontological relation to those items as the form of *F* does. For instance, I have included *Chrm.* 169d9-e8, where Socrates and his interlocutors agree that a person will know himself if he *has* self-knowledge, in the examples of (1) the 'have' locution. In this passage, I think, self-knowledge is given the same ontological status as the form of temperance, i.e. the subject of the 'What is *F*?' question in the *Charmides*.



The 'in' locution also appears at *La.* 191c7-192b8 and *Men.* 72d8-73a3. From the survey of these passages, I think, we might get the strong impression that the immanentist view must be correct; Socrates seems always to be interested in the relation between the form of *F* and concrete particulars, and he seems always to be saying that (1) the particulars *have* the form of *F*, or (2) the form of *F* is *present to* the particulars, or (3) the form of *F* is *in* the particulars, especially as testified by (P21) – (P25). However, this impression is, I suggest, mistaken.

But before arguing why it is so, I would like to make clear the point on which I disagree with the immanentist view: I do not deny that it is the relation between a Socratic form and concrete particulars that Socrates refers to in (P21) – (P25); what I do deny is that Socrates, in using (1) the 'have', (2) the '(come to) be present to', and (3) the 'in' locution, is *exclusively* and *always* interested in the relation between a Socratic form and concrete particulars. To put it somewhat differently, I would like to challenge a view that the distinction between a Socratic form and concrete particulars constitutes the basic framework of the Socratic method. It is clear, I think, that the immanentist interpretation strongly suggests such a view, and this view, if connected with the interpretation I defended in Chapters 1 and 2 that Socrates' procedure for definition is the method of abstraction or generalization from instances, might incline us to agree with Cornford when he writes: 'The Socratic method contemplates a single form (such as the beautiful itself) and many individual things which partake of that form. Only one form is in view, and the definition is to be gained by a survey of individual instances.'<sup>66</sup> Remember, however, that in Chapter 1 I

---

<sup>66</sup> Cornford (1957, 185), slightly adapted.

have introduced two types of instances, i.e. (1a) the *F* as instantiated in various things, actions, and situations, and (1b) parts of *F*. Certainly, on the surface of it, it might seem plausible to suppose that (1a) is equivalent to the *F* as instantiated in *particulars*, and that the distinction between the *F* and the particulars lies at the heart of the method when this type of instances are at issue. But when Socrates is dealing with (1b), no such distinction seems to be in view. It is evident that parts of *F* are not concrete particulars, and that *F* is not located in parts of *F*. For example, courage is not a concrete particular any more than virtue is, and virtue is not located in courage, justice, wisdom, and so on, not at any rate in the same way as virtue is located in Achilles, Laches, and so on (i.e. spatio-temporally). But Socrates does not seem to distinguish two relationships, i.e. between the *F* and (1a) and between the *F* and (1b), as can be ascertained from the following passage:

(P26) SOCRATES: [An imaginary speaker] would probably wonder and say: “you do not understand that I am seeking that which is the same in (ἐπί) all these cases?” Would you still have nothing to say, Meno, if one asked you: “What is this which applies to (ἐπί) the round and the straight and the other things which you call shapes and which is the same in (ἐπί) them all?” (*Men.* 75a3-8)<sup>67</sup>

In this passage, Socrates uses a locution for the relation between the Socratic form of *F* and parts of *F* that very much resembles (3) the ‘in’ locution. Of

---

<sup>67</sup> I have quoted this passage as a part of (P13) [*Men.* 74d4-75a8] in Chapter 1.

course, the immanentists can lay emphasis on the fact that it is 'on' or 'over' (ἐπί) instead of 'in' (ἐν) that Socrates uses in order to describe the relation at issue, and reply that Socrates consciously uses this preposition because shape is not *immanent in* the round, the straight and so on. But I myself refuse, for reasons I shall shortly give, to put such emphasis on the choice of a preposition.<sup>68</sup> It does not make any difference for Socrates, as we shall see, whether many instances are particulars or universals, and accordingly the two types of instances are treated by him in exactly the same way.

With this in mind, let us come back to the reason why the immanentist view is not correct. My strategy is simple; I shall show that some of the passages that have been quoted by the immanentists as evidence for their view in fact do not support it. I shall first argue that a few examples of (1) the 'have' locution and (2) the '(come to) be present to' locution are used for the relation between a Socratic form and *universals*, and then move on to discuss (3) the 'in' locution, which will turn out to give no support at all to the immanentist interpretation.

Let us then start with the consideration of examples of (1) the 'have' locution and (2) the '(come to) be present to' locution. First, I shall consider a passage close to the beginning of the *Meno*. On being asked 'What is virtue?' by Socrates, Meno first enumerates virtues sorted out in accordance with sex, age, and status with a couple of particular types of action attached to each of them in the

---

<sup>68</sup> It will be useful to consider the following passage in the *Laws* here: 'So it looks as if we have to compel the guardians of our divine foundation to get an exact idea of the common element *through* (διό) all the four virtues—that factor which, though single, is to be found *in* (ἐν) courage, temperance, justice and *in* (ἐν) wisdom, and thus in our view deserves the general title "virtue".' (965c9-d3) I think that even in the *Laws*, which has been usually considered to be Plato's last work, Plato is talking about Socratic forms. But I will not press the point here.

following way: the virtue of a man is such and such actions, and the virtue of a woman is such and such actions (quoted as (P6) [71e1-72a1] in Chapter 1). But it is not this kind of answer that Socrates was asking for. In order to bring home to Meno his real intention in asking 'What is virtue?', Socrates describes an analogical imaginary situation in which his interlocutor enumerated 'many and various' (πολλὰς καὶ παντοδαπὰς 72b2) bees as an answer to the question 'What is a bee?' In this situation, he says, it is the essence of a bee in respect of which bees do not differ from one another that is being asked about. He then continues:

(P27) SOCRATES: The same is true in the case of the virtues. Even if they are many and various (πολλὰ καὶ παντοδαπαί), all of them *have* (ἔχουσιν) one and the same form which makes them virtues, and it is right to look to this when one is asked to make clear what virtue is. (72c6-d1)

Obviously, in this passage it is virtues and not individual persons that are said to *have* the form of virtue. It is also clear from the context that the virtues are not particulars, e.g. this virtue of Socrates, but universals, e.g. masculine virtue,<sup>69</sup> for Socrates here refers to the virtues classified by Meno, and is trying to persuade him that virtue does not differ whether it is in a man, in a woman,

---

<sup>69</sup> It is true that, in the analogical imaginary situation, the 'bees' that are said to be many and various at 72b2-4 are likely to be particular bees rather than kinds of bee. But this should not mislead us into supposing that Meno also had particulars in mind when he enumerated the virtues. The point is well argued by Nehamas (1975a [1999, 166]): 'And because bees are particular objects, it may have been thought that what Meno offered were also particular objects. But, of course, this is an analogy, and this inference is illegitimate. The virtues are likened to the bees in respect of being "many and of every sort" (72b2-5), not in respect of being particulars.'

in a child, or in an elderly person (see 73a1-3). Socrates therefore claims in (P27) that the virtue of a man, the virtue of a woman, etc. *have* the form of virtue, using (1) the ‘have’ locution to describe the relation between a Socratic form and universals. The ‘have’ locution, then, does not support the immanentist view here, since the form of virtue is certainly neither spatially nor temporally located in the virtue of a man, or the virtue of a woman.

Second, consider passages close to the end of the *Hippias Major*, where Socrates himself proposes ‘the pleasant (or pleasure)<sup>70</sup> through sight and hearing’ as the definition of the fine in view of a survey of various instances of the fine at 298a1-8 (quoted as (P10) in Chapter 1). In order to examine his own proposal, he first makes it explicit that this proposal in effect distinguishes a part of pleasure from the whole, restating it in this way: ‘This is what we say is fine, the part (τὸ μέρος) of the pleasant that comes by sight and hearing (ἐπὶ τῇ ὄψει τε καὶ ἀκοῇ γιγνόμενον).’ (299b3-4) In other words, he reformulates his proposal in accordance with the genus-and-species relation: beauty is both of the two species of pleasure, the one occurring through sight and the one occurring through hearing. Socrates then introduces an assumption that, if there are two instances of *F*, then they must have one thing in common, the *F*, that makes both of them and each of them *F*.<sup>71</sup> The two species of pleasure, Socrates claims, will have to have such a common characteristic if they are both and each

---

<sup>70</sup> In his reference to abstract concepts, Socrates sometimes uses the substantivized adjective and the abstract noun interchangeably. This is the case with the *Hippias Major*, in which he uses ‘the pleasant’ (τὸ ἡδύ 298a6-299d3, 302e3-303d10) and ‘pleasure’ (ἡδονή 299d3-300b5, 302b6-302e2) interchangeably. See esp. 299d2-6, and compare 299b2-4 with 299d8-e2.

<sup>71</sup> This assumption is a variation of feature (a) that a Socratic form is one and the same in many items, with particular emphasis on ‘both’ and ‘each’.

fine. And obviously the common characteristic is not 'being pleasure', since 'being pleasure' applies to other kinds of pleasure too that are not fine, e.g. pleasure of eating. Thus he says:

(P28) SOCRATES: 'So,' [an imaginary speaker] will say. 'You selected those pleasures from the other pleasures because of something different from their being pleasures. You observed on the pair of them that they *have* something that differentiates them from the others (ὅτι ἔχουσί τι διάφορον τῶν ἄλλων), and you say they are fine by looking at that.' (299d8-e2)

Socrates also dismisses the possibility that the common characteristic is either 'occurring through sight' or 'occurring through hearing' because neither of them makes both of the two species of pleasure fine. He then continues:

(P29) SOCRATES: "But both are fine, as you say." We do say that.

HIPPIAS: We do.

SOCRATES: Then they *have* (ἔχουσιν) something that itself makes them to be fine, that common thing that *is present to* (ἔπεστι) both of them in common and to each privately. (300a9-b1)

After this exchange, Socrates moves on to propose that the common characteristic is not 'occurring through sight and hearing' either, since it does not apply to each of the two kinds of pleasure,<sup>72</sup> and finally gives up his own

---

<sup>72</sup> This part of the argument (300b6-302b6) is rather long and complicated because of

proposal.<sup>73</sup> Now, it should be observed that in (P28) and (P29) Socrates uses (1) the 'have' locution and (2) the '(come to) be present to' locution for the relation between the two kinds of pleasure and the common characteristic, i.e. the relation between *universals* and a Socratic form. It is clear that Socrates is not interested in particular pleasures here, for his focus is on the genus-and-species relation of pleasure. Again, it is clear that he has the Socratic form of the fine in mind when he mentions the common characteristic, for he says that this common characteristic makes these pleasures fine. In these passages, then, the 'have' locution and the '(come to) be present to' locution do not support the immanentist view.

Thus I hope to have shown that there are some clear examples of (1) the 'have' locution and (2) the '(come to) be present to' locution that are used for the relation between a Socratic form and universals and so do not support the immanentist view. These examples are admittedly only a few, but they are sufficient to show that these locutions do not imply, by themselves, that the *F* is

---

an excursus in which Socrates argues that there are characteristics, such as being two-in-number and even-numbered, that apply, in relation to any two things, to both of them but not each of them, or *vice versa*, against Hippias' position that there are no such characteristics. In the end, however, Socrates concludes that the fine is not such a characteristic, and so the definition of the fine has to apply to each of the two kinds of pleasure as well as both of them.

<sup>73</sup> It may not be precisely right to say that Socrates has given up the proposal that the fine is pleasure through sight and hearing at this point, since he seems to suppose that his next proposal, i.e. that the fine is 'beneficial pleasure' (ἡδονὴν ὠφέλιμον 303e9), is not an independent proposal (*pace* Woodruff (1982, 87): 'the last fresh start') but a *consequence* of that proposal. This can be seen from Socrates' words at 298c5-7 expressed in relation to the proposal that the fine is pleasure through sight and hearing: 'We could well be thinking we're in the clear again, when we've gotten stuck on the same point about the fine as we did a moment ago.' I take these words to mean that the proposal at issue involves the same problem as the previous proposal, i.e. that the fine is the beneficial. If I am correct, then Socrates is showing at 298c9-303d10 how the proposal that the fine is pleasure through sight and hearing can be reduced to the proposal that the fine is beneficial pleasure. In this case, it is at 303e11-304a3 that Socrates finally gives up his proposal.

spatially and temporally located only in many particulars. Socrates says that the virtue of a man, virtue of a woman, etc. *have* the form of virtue, that the two kinds of pleasure *have* the form of the fine, and that the form of the fine *is present to* the two kinds of pleasure. Although we do not find any passages in which these locutions are applied to the relation between *F* and parts of *F*, there seems to be no reason to reject the possibility of such an application. I therefore suggest that Socrates did not find the following expressions objectionable: courage, justice, etc. *have* the form of virtue, or that the form of virtue *is present to* courage, justice, etc.

Next, I would like to turn to (3) the 'in' locution, by clearing up a widespread confusion about a passage in the *Laches* which has often been quoted, along with (P25) [*Euthpr.* 5d1-2], as testifying to the immanentist view.<sup>74</sup> The passage in question runs like this:

(P30) SOCRATES: So try again to state first what is the courage that is the same *in* all these cases (ἐν πᾶσι τούτοις). (191e10-11)

Many scholars have understood this passage as indicating that the form of courage is immanent in individuals such as Achilles or Laches. But it can be easily seen from a slightly wider context that this interpretation is not correct. Consider first the passage that immediately precedes (P30):

---

<sup>74</sup> This passage is quoted as evidence for the immanentist view by e.g. Ross (1953, 228), Fujisawa (1974, 42), Rist (1975, 344 n.9), Teloh (1981, 20), Malcolm (1991, 37), Vlastos (1991, 74 n.135).



(P31) SOCRATES: So all these men are brave, but some possess courage *in* (ἐν) pleasures, some *in* (ἐν) pains, some *in* (ἐν) desires, and some *in* (ἐν) fears.

And others, I think, show cowardice *in* (ἐν) the same respects.

LACHES: Yes, they do.

SOCRATES: Then what are courage and cowardice? This is what I wanted to find out. [(P30)] So try again to state first what is the courage that is the same *in* all these cases (ἐν πᾶσι τούτοις).

(191e4-11)

In this passage, Socrates, consistently using the preposition 'in' (ἐν) in the sense of 'in relation to', mentions various situations or conditions *in relation to* which people possess courage before asking Laches to make a fresh attempt at defining courage. It is then natural to suppose that in (P30) too Socrates uses the 'in' in the same sense; he is asking what is the courage that is the same *in relation to* all the situations or conditions he enumerated in (P31). One might still object, however, that, even though the 'in' of 'in pleasures, pains, etc.' means 'in relation to', we do not need to understand the 'in' of 'in all these cases' in the same way. It is equally natural to take Socrates as enumerating *people* who stand in relation to various situations rather than to take him as directly enumerating these various situations, and as such (P30) may be understood as the request for the definition of the same courage that is *immanent in* these people (who possess courage *in relation to* various situations and conditions). This objection may stand so far as (P31) is concerned, but the following passage will decide the issue beyond question:

(P32) SOCRATES: What power is it which, because it is the same *in* (ἐν) pleasure and *in* (ἐν) pain and *in* (ἐν) all the other cases in which we were just saying it occurred, is therefore called courage? (192b5-8)

Here Socrates clearly says that courage is the same in pleasure, pain, and other conditions. Needless to say, he does not mean by these words that courage is *immanent in* pleasure, pain, and so on; he does not mean that pleasure or pain is courageous. What he means is only that courage is the same *in relation to* pleasure, pain, and all the other situations. And it is obvious that (P30) is intended to describe the same matters. I therefore conclude that (P30) does not support the immanentist view.

This result is crucial for the proper assessment of (3) the 'in' locution, for it seems to suggest the following two points. The first point is that there are no passages in which Socrates uses the 'in' locution that offer good evidence for the immanentist view. The two passages that have often been quoted as the most promising candidates for such evidence are (P25) [*Euthphr.* 5d1-2] and (P30).<sup>75</sup> But now that the 'in' in (P30) has turned out to mean 'in relation to', there seems to be little reason to suppose the 'in' in (P25) has such a strong implication as immanence; Socrates probably means there that the pious is the

---

<sup>75</sup> I have also quoted *Men.* 72d8-73a3 as an example of (3) the 'in' locution. This passage has less often been quoted than (P25) and (P30), and it is easy, I think, to observe that this passage does not corroborate the immanentist view. Socrates suggests there that virtue is the same whether it is *in* a man or *in* a woman or *in* a child or *in* an elderly person just as health or strength is the same whether it is *in* a man or *in* a woman. The 'man', 'woman', etc. mentioned here are clearly not particulars, but universals as identified by Meno's classification of people in accordance with sex, age, and status.

same and alike *in relation to* every (particular or type of) action, rather than that the pious is the same and alike while *being immanent in* every particular action. Socrates' words are admittedly very concise, and it seems impossible to settle decisively which reading is correct. But, if so, (P25) does not offer evidence for the immanentist view without begging the question, i.e. without the assumption that the 'in' in (P25) means 'being immanent in'.

The second point is that there is no good reason to single out the preposition ἐν as suggesting immanence from many prepositions that appear in similar contexts. In particular, there is no good reason to suppose that Socrates makes a distinction between the ἐπί that is used for the relation between a Socratic form and its parts in (P26) [*Men.* 75a3-8], on the one hand, and the ἐν which has been proven to mean, at least sometimes, 'in relation to', on the other. Of course, it might be tempting to suppose that the ἐν always but the ἐπί never implied immanence; and it is certainly absurd to say that, for example, shape is spatially and temporally *located in* the straight, the round, and so on. By suggesting that there is no distinction between the ἐπί and the ἐν, I am not suggesting this absurdity. The ἐν in (P30) means 'in relation to', and so does the ἐπί in (P26): Socrates says that shape is the same *in relation to* the straight, the round, and so on. Similarly, Socrates seems to use other prepositions that only mean 'in relation to' interchangeably with the ἐν. For example, at 192a1-b3 in the *Laches* (quoted as (P3) in Chapter 1), Socrates poses the question as to what is the speed that is the same 'in (ἐν) all these cases' i.e. 'in (ἐν) running and in (ἐν) playing the lyre, etc.', and then answers himself that it is the power of accomplishing many things in a short time 'whether *in relation to* (περὶ) speech

or *in relation to* (περί) running or *in relation to* (περί) all the other cases'. The following is the list of such prepositions used in similar contexts and the locations in which each preposition is found in dialogues (I shall indicate by (+ ...)) whether the noun that follows a preposition is a thing or an action or a situation or a part).

- διὰ [only with πάντων] (+ situations) *La.* 192c1; (+ parts) *Men.* 74a9.
- ἐν (+ things) *Men.* 72d8-73a3, *Sph.* 239d7, e5;<sup>76</sup> (+ actions) *La.* 192a1-10, *Euthphr.* 5d1; (+ situations) *La.* 191c7-e11, 192b5-8.
- ἐπί (+ parts) *Men.* 75a4-8.
- περί (+ things and actions) *La.* 192b2-3.
- πρός (+ situations) *La.* 191d5-7.
- κατά [only with πάντων] (+ things) *Men.* 73d1; (+ parts) *Men.* 74b1.

On the basis of this list, I suggest that, although Socrates assumes a certain relationship between a Socratic form and many items, (3) the 'in' locution is not used to specify more exactly how this relationship should be understood. It is true that ἐν is the most commonly used preposition, but it always means 'in relation to' when it is combined with situations. Most importantly, Socrates often in similar contexts chooses other prepositions that do not suggest

---

<sup>76</sup> I have added these places from the *Sophist*, since Plato keeps the Socratic method there as I have argued in Ch. 2 §4. On the other hand, I have excluded διὰ πάντων at 240a4 and ἐπὶ πᾶσιν at 240a5 that appear immediately after these places on the ground that the Eleatic Stranger there discusses the relation between *one name* and many instances.

anything specific about the nature of the relation.<sup>77</sup> Only with a few cases of ἐν is there any room for arguing that Socrates endorses the immanentist view. I myself do not find any convincing reason for supposing that he sometimes implies a more specific relation than 'in relation to' by saying that a Socratic form is the same 'in' (ἐν) many things or actions.

Let us sum up. Many scholars have proposed to interpret the relation between a Socratic form and many items in terms of immanence of the form in particular things on the ground that Socrates uses (1) the 'have', (2) the '(come to) be present to', and (3) the 'in' locutions. Against this line of interpretation, I have argued that Socrates is not committed to such a view; he sometimes uses (1) and (2) for the relation between a Socratic form and *universals*, and he seems only to mean by (3) that a Socratic form is the same *in relation to* many items, whether they are things, actions, situations, or parts. In fact, Socrates is not specifically interested in particular things in which a Socratic form might come to be immanent; the distinction between a Socratic form and many particulars does not constitute the basic framework of the Socratic method. This interpretation allows us to treat the two types of instances on the basis of which the definition of *F* is generalised or abstracted, i.e. (1a) *F* as instantiated in things, actions, situations, and (1b) parts of *F*, in exactly the same way. In order to convey the implication of my argument, I would like to describe the Socratic method as the search for a Socratic form that is one and the same in various *contexts*.

---

<sup>77</sup> In the passages I have quoted, διὰ πάντων means '(checking) through all these cases', and ἐπί, περί, πρός, and κατά can all be translated as 'in relation to'.

## §2.2. *The approximationist and the contextualist approach to Socratic forms*

Next, I would like to consider another aspect of feature (a) (i.e. that a Socratic form is one and the same in many items), namely the way a Socratic form is instantiated in many contexts. Specifically, I suggest that a Socratic form is always present *perfectly* in each context, or, to put it differently, that each of many *F*s that are instantiated in various contexts is the Socratic form of *F*. Thus, for example, when Helen and Andromache are beautiful (these individuals are, on my account, contexts in which beauty may appear), the Socratic form of beauty is present perfectly in both of them, and the beauty in Helen and the beauty in Andromache are both the Socratic form of beauty. As a matter of fact, this suggestion itself is, I think, nothing original or surprising, for it seems also to be a natural consequence of the immanentist view, and in this sense it is shared by many scholars.<sup>78</sup> However, the implications of the interpretation I am suggesting has not been fully discussed so far, and, as we shall see, they certainly involve some counterintuitive aspects. I shall therefore develop my interpretation in what follows.

In order to understand important aspects of the interpretation in question, I suggest that it is instructive to introduce a different, but I think mistaken interpretation of the way a Socratic form is instantiated in many contexts, i.e.

---

<sup>78</sup> I am not aware of any views that clearly oppose this interpretation. It is true that a few scholars might be considered to be dissenters, notably Allen, an influential separationist, who writes in his (1970, 147): ‘The truth of the matter is that in a strong sense of term Forms are as “separate” from their instances in the early dialogues as they are later on. For they are not identical with their instances, and ontologically prior to their instances. That is, they exist “apart”.’ However, it is not clear whether or not, in referring to ‘instances’, Allen means, in conformity with our usage, the *F* as instantiated in things or actions (e.g. the beauty in Helen or Andromache). I take him only to mean that the Socratic form of *F* is ‘not identical with’, and is ‘ontologically prior to’, *F* things (e.g. Helen or Andromache). This might be a correct interpretation of Socrates’ view, but, taken by itself, is irrelevant to the issue at hand.

what is called the approximationist interpretation or view.<sup>79</sup> According to the approximationist view, a Socratic form is instantiated *imperfectly* in each context; there are many *F*s that are instantiated in different contexts and these are necessarily inferior to the Socratic form of *F* in the very respect of their being *F*. These many *F*s only *approximate to* the Socratic form of *F*. For example, the Socratic form of beauty is instantiated imperfectly, i.e. only to a certain degree, in Helen or Andromache, and the beauty in Helen, or the beauty in Andromache, only approximates to, and so is different from, the Socratic form of beauty. I have to add hastily here that, although this view is often held unreflectively towards Plato's theory of forms/Forms in general (i.e. both Socratic forms in the early dialogues and Platonic Forms in the middle dialogues),<sup>80</sup> it is clearly indefensible in relation to Socratic forms; I have introduced this view just in order to illustrate my interpretation as put forward in the previous paragraph. As I have argued in the previous sub-section, Socrates is trying to define the *F* that appears in relation to things, actions, and situations, or the *F* that is instantiated in the parts of *F*, and not the *F* that might exist independently of any of these contexts.

I suggest that it is crucial for a proper understanding of the Socratic method to observe the following difference between these two views. The approximationist view makes it possible to distinguish each instance of *F* by the degree to which it approximates to the Socratic form of *F*. The beauty in Helen

---

<sup>79</sup> The 'approximationist' interpretation or view is so named by Nehamas in his (1975b [1999, 141]).

<sup>80</sup> Nehamas argues against the approximationist interpretation in relation to the middle dialogues in (1975b [1999, 138-158]); cf. also Silverman (2002, 88-89).

and the beauty in Andromache are distinguishable in virtue of their respective degrees of approximation. By contrast, under my interpretation, there is no such thing as this 'approximation'; each  $F$  that is instantiated in its own particular context is itself the Socratic form of  $F$ , and is distinguishable only with reference to the context in which it appears. The beauty in Helen and the beauty in Andromache are distinguishable in virtue of the fact that the former appears in Helen and the latter appears in Andromache. Since this interpretation distinguishes each  $F$  not by the degree of its instantiation but by the context of its instantiation, I shall hereafter call this the contextualist view.

An important consequence of the contextualist view is that a Socratic form will turn out to be *both one and many at the same time*. On the one hand, the Socratic form of  $F$  is one because one and the same definition of  $F$  applies to every Socratic form of  $F$  that appears in its particular context; many  $F$ s are unified by a single definition that applies to them all. Thus, for example, the same definition of beauty applies to the (Socratic form of) beauty in Helen and the beauty in Andromache, and in this sense the Socratic form of beauty should be considered as one. On the other hand, the Socratic form of  $F$  is many because each Socratic form of  $F$  is individuated by the context in which it appears. As suggested above, the beauty in Helen and the beauty in Andromache are distinguishable in virtue of the fact that the former appears in Helen and the latter in Andromache. In this sense, then, the Socratic form of beauty should be considered as two in relation to Helen and Andromache. It is particularly important to keep in mind this latter aspect (i.e. that a Socratic form is many), for scholars sometimes overlook it by overemphasising the former aspect (i.e.



that a Socratic form is one), which leaves them in danger of conflating the approximationist and the contextualist views.<sup>81</sup> According to the approximationist approach, the Socratic form of *F* is just one, and not many; the many instantiations of *F* in the various contexts are only approximations. But according to the contextualist approach, these many *F*s are themselves the Socratic form of *F*, and so the Socratic form of *F* is many as well as one.

Now let us examine the contextualist view in more detail by considering its application to the Socratic method. Here again I shall appeal to my (by now familiar) distinction within examples: under Socrates' procedure for definition, some items are treated as 'instances', obviously true examples of *F*, but other items are treated as examples which might but also might not turn out to be *F*. (Recall that, as I have discussed in Chapter 1, in some cases at least,<sup>82</sup> Socrates tries to reach the definition of *F* through the examination of instances of *F* in order to judge whether other items are *F* or not by the application of the definition of *F*.) In accordance with this distinction, first I shall observe that the contextualist approach clearly applies to instances of *F*, and then I shall consider how this approach can be adopted in relation to those other items about which it is uncertain whether they are *F* or not.

That the contextualist approach is in use in the examination of instances as the first step of Socrates' procedure for definition is, in my view, fairly obvious. First, in the case of *F* as instantiated in things, actions, and situations, consider

---

<sup>81</sup> For example, Woodruff (1982, 171-172) writes: 'The fine is one in contrast to many fine things.' In the same vein, I think, Woodruff (1978, 101) says: 'That Socrates' forms are not numerically identical with their instances no one would deny.'

<sup>82</sup> In other cases, Socrates tries to reach the definition of *F* in order to judge whether or not *F* has another characteristic *G* (e.g. whether or not virtue is teachable).

once more the following passage from the *Laches*:

(P2) SOCRATES: So as I said just now, my poor questioning is to blame for your poor answer, because I wanted to learn from you not only what constitutes courage for a hoplite but for a horseman as well and for every sort of warrior. And I wanted to include not only those who are courageous in warfare but also those who are courageous in dangers at sea, and the ones who show courage in illness and poverty and affairs of state; and then again I wanted to include not only those who are courageous in the face of pain and fear but also those who are clever at fighting desire and pleasure, whether by standing their ground or running away. [...] So try again to state first *what is the courage that is the same in all these cases*. (191c7-e11)

Socrates says that the subject of definition, i.e. the form of courage, is the same in relation to all the situations enumerated here. Accordingly, in conformity with the contextualist view, courage is itself (perfectly) present whether in relation to warfare or poverty, and courage in warfare and courage in poverty are the same form of courage. In general, the instances of courage are identical with one another in that they are liable to the same definition, but are distinguished from one another on the basis of the situations in which they manifest themselves. Thus the Socratic form of courage is both one and many. By contrast—it may be useful to note—the approximationist approach will not work out at all in relation to (P2). Socrates is not looking for the form of courage that is different from all the instances, which are, under the approximationist

view, inevitably mere approximations. Second, in the case of parts of *F*, I refer to (P26) [*Men.* 75a3-8] again, in which an imaginary speaker is looking for the definition of shape *that is the same in relation to* the round, the straight, and the like. Here again, the contextualist approach applies: the Socratic form of shape manifests itself perfectly as the round or as the straight, and the shape that manifests itself as the round and the shape that manifests itself as the straight are the same Socratic form of shape.

However, in relation to (individual or universal) examples that might be *F* but might not be *F*, the situation is less clear because we have little textual evidence. Now, a natural way of determining this would be that one should judge that an example in question is *F* if the definition of *F* is successfully applied, and not *F* if it is not. This much seems to be confirmed in the following (already quoted) passage from the *Euthyphro*.

(P5) SOCRATES: Tell me then what this form itself is, so that I may look upon it, and using it as a model, say that any action of yours or another's that is of that kind is pious, and if it is not that it is not.

(6e4-7)

However, it sounds absurd that we should always have to decide whether something is *F* or not *F* at all. Perhaps one may concede that Socrates' not running away from prison in Athens while awaiting his execution is simply just, and that Thersites, a famously ugly soldier in the *Iliad*, is not beautiful at all. But it seems certainly absurd that we always have to say either that Simmias is big

or that he is not big at all, or either that Andromache is beautiful or that she is not beautiful at all. In this connection, both approximationists and contextualists have their own ways of avoiding such absurdity: according to the approximationists, if one knows the definition of *F*, one can judge that something is *F to such and such a degree*, while according to the contextualists one can judge that something is *F in such and such a context*.

It is particularly instructive to compare these two approaches here, for the approximationist view might look more natural than the contextualist view. The contextualists maintain that being *F* is a matter of all or nothing; things or actions either have or fail to have the form of *F*. For example, in contexts in which the definition of beauty applies to Andromache, she has the form of beauty, i.e. is perfectly beautiful, but in contexts in which the definition does not apply to her, she simply fails to have the form of beauty, i.e. is not beautiful at all. Let us suppose that Helen and Andromache are both very famous for their beauty, but Helen, a daughter of Zeus, is more beautiful than Andromache. In this situation, Andromache has the form of beauty, i.e. is perfectly beautiful, in the context in which she is compared with an ordinary woman, but fails to have the form of beauty, i.e. is not beautiful at all, in the context in which she is compared with Helen.<sup>83</sup> Certainly, this may appear counterintuitive, and it may be tempting to say that, even when she is compared to Helen, Andromache is still beautiful. This is the sort of view that will be held by the approximationists:

---

<sup>83</sup> Note that, on my account, Helen herself is a constituent of contexts in which beauty may appear. I do not analyse 'beauty appears in Helen, when she is compared with Andromache' in a way in which Helen is a subject and 'when she is compared with Andromache' is a context the subject is in. Beauty is a subject, and Helen belongs to a context. When I speak of the context in which Helen is compared with Andromache, I am simply *specifying* details of a context.

both Helen and Andromache instantiate the form of beauty to a much higher degree (say, at 85% and 83% respectively) than an ordinarily beautiful woman (who instantiates it, say, at 60%), but Helen instantiates it to a slightly higher degree than Andromache does, and so Helen is more beautiful than Andromache.

However, this outcome does not show that the contextualist approach is inherently problematic; it only points to the fact that this approach involves some distinctive ways of viewing or analysing our world.<sup>84</sup> In general, Socrates considers that, concerning any item,  $x$ ,  $x$  is either perfectly  $F$  or not  $F$  at all, or  $x$  either has or fails to have the form of  $F$ , depending on the context in which  $x$  is put into. However counterintuitive it may sound, Andromache simply ceases to be beautiful, in spite of her well known beauty, when she is compared with Helen. It should also be noticed that this approach implies the following two points. First, in the application of the Socratic method, there is no point in distinguishing a comparative concept, e.g. 'more beautiful', from a simple concept, e.g. 'beautiful'. Indeed, under the contextualist approach, both ' $x$  is  $F$ ' and ' $x$  is more  $F$ ' are to be analysed as ' $x$  is  $F$  in such and such a context' or ' $x$  has the form of  $F$  in such and such a context'.<sup>85</sup> Second, it is not the case that  $x$  is

---

<sup>84</sup> I suggest that this approach, which is only assumed by Socrates, is taken over by Plato and explicitly made use of in the preliminary to the final argument in the *Phaedo* (100b1-103a3, esp. 102b8-c5). Note, however, that I am not saying that, as Nehamas (1975b [1999, 138-158]) and Silverman (2002, 88-89) may claim, Plato maintains the contextualist approach *in relation to Platonic Forms*. I am only saying that Plato maintains this approach *in relation to Socratic forms*. (I shall argue in §4 in this chapter that Plato maintains both Socratic forms and Platonic Forms in the middle and late dialogues.)

<sup>85</sup> This point resonates with a passage in the *Phaedo*, in relation to which Gallop (1975) correctly points out: 'Note that at 100e5 the Form Largeness is given as the reason not only for large things being large, but also for larger things being larger. Separate Forms are not posited for comparative adjectives. It is the Form  $F$  that accounts for things' being "more  $F$ ", just as it does for their being simply " $F$ ". [...] In general, " $F$ " and

*F by itself*. Andromache is not beautiful by herself; she owes her beauty to the form of beauty in her and she acquires this form only in certain contexts. If she is separated from all these contexts, Andromache will not be said to be beautiful. Similarly, Thersites is not ugly by himself; there are some rare contexts in which even he may be considered beautiful. By contrast, Socrates' not running away from prison in Athens may be simply said to be just, but this is because the context in which his action is taken is fully articulated. A particular *type* of action, e.g. not running away from prison while awaiting execution, is not just by itself. This action, when put in the context in which Socrates takes it, becomes just. In this case, I suggest that '*x is F*' should be analysed as '*x in such and such a context is F*'.

Thus far I have discussed the issues about Socratic forms that would be roughly considered to be ontological. In the next section, I shall turn to the epistemological status of Socratic forms.

### §3. *The Socratic model of knowledge and its limit*

The Socratic method, in so far as it is understood as the procedure for acquiring the definition of *F*, the procedure that I think will be by now adequately reconstructed on the basis of the interpretation I have suggested,<sup>86</sup> seems to have certain limits as the method for acquiring *knowledge* of *F*. A glance at the several examples of definition Socrates offers to illustrate the sort of answer he asks for by his 'What is *F*?' question will suffice to show this.

---

"more *F*" are subjects of the same conceptual inquiry' (184).

<sup>86</sup> I shall offer a schema of the Socratic method as I reconstruct it later in this section.

Socrates defines a shape as ‘the limit of a solid’ in the *Meno* (76a4-7) and clay as ‘earth mixed with water’ in the *Theaetetus* (147c4-6). These definitions may be said to give us certain knowledge about a shape and clay, but it is just a bit of information; they will not help us much when we deal practically with a shape or clay, let alone make us a geometrician or a potter. In general, the proposals that are examined in the early definitional dialogues are simple propositions of the form ‘*F* is such and such’ (e.g. ‘The pious is what is loved by gods’ (*Euthphr.* 6e11-7a1); ‘The fine is the pleasant through hearing and sight’ (*Hi.Ma.* 297e5-298a1)),<sup>87</sup> and it seems unreasonable to claim that such propositions, when they are given correctly,<sup>88</sup> will make us *experts* in the pious, the fine, or whatever—experts in the sense in which we say that a shoemaker, a carpenter, a musician, a doctor, and those others whom Socrates is fond of mentioning in his discussion,<sup>89</sup> are experts. But it is exactly these experts that Socrates usually refers to as cases of knowers. Socrates’ procedure for the definition of *F*, then, seems to take us only halfway towards the knowledge of *F*.

However, it is not the case that, in pursuit of the correct answer to the ‘What is *F*?’ question, Socrates is *uninterested* in the knowledge of *F*. On the contrary, his paramount concern is often to examine his interlocutors’ claim to the knowledge of *F* (cf. *Ap.* 20c4-24b2). Thus, Euthyphro, Laches, Hippias, Meno,

<sup>87</sup> A useful, exhaustive list of the definitions in the early dialogues is given in Santas (1979, 98-101).

<sup>88</sup> There are scholars who think that some of the proposals in the early dialogues in fact define a subject correctly; these are dismissed only because their proponents have turned out to be unable to defend them sufficiently in the conversation with Socrates. The most popular candidate for such a proposal seems to be Nicias’ definition of courage, ‘Courage is knowledge of what is to be feared and dared’ (*La.* 194e11-195a1). See Benson (2000, 144; 144 n.6-8).

<sup>89</sup> Cf. e.g. *Euthphr.* 13d5-14a10; *Chrm.* 165c4-166d7, 173a7-174b10; *La.* 197e10-199e12; *Euthd.* 288d5-292e7; *R.* 332c5-334b6, 340c6-342e11.

and Thrasymachus claim that they *know* what *F* is,<sup>90</sup> and Socrates undertakes to examine their answers in order to decide whether their claims are legitimate or not. In the light of this context, it seems natural to suppose that Socrates will accept a correct definition of *F* as evidence for his interlocutors' having knowledge of *F*. (Of course, it is also possible to suppose that for Socrates the correct definition of *F* is just a necessary condition for having the knowledge of *F*. I will soon consider this possibility.) But if this is the case, that is, if Socrates supposes that the knowledge of *F* which is claimed by his interlocutors essentially consists in possessing the definition of *F*, there will be a certain inconsistency in the way Socrates treats the relation between the knowledge of *F* and the definition of *F*, since apparently he also thinks of knowledge in terms of expert knowledge. Here is a question, then: 'How should we understand the relation between the knowledge of *F* and the definition of *F*?'

I suggest that in this connection<sup>91</sup> Socrates has two different concepts of knowledge, which he treats separately: (a) knowledge that consists in possessing the definition, or more concisely, knowledge by definition, and (b) knowledge that consists in being an expert, or simply, expertise. When Socrates'

---

<sup>90</sup> See e.g. *Euthphr.* 4e4-5a2; *La.* 190c4-5; *Hi.Ma.*286c3-287a1; *Men.* 71b9-d8; *R.* 337d1-338a3.

<sup>91</sup> Note that the distinction between concepts of knowledge I am proposing here is different from the distinctions that have been proposed by scholars (e.g. Vlastos 1985 [1994], Woodruff 1990 [Benson 1992], Brickhouse and Smith 1994) in connection with the question of Socrates' avowal and disavowal of knowledge, namely the question as to how the tension should be solved between Socrates' claim that he *knows*, e.g., that it is bad and shameful to do wrong and to disobey one's superior (see *Ap.* 29b6-7), on the one hand, and his profession of general ignorance, on the other. The knowledge Socrates is considered to be claiming in the passages relevant to the question of his avowal and disavowal of knowledge is neither (a) knowledge by definition nor (b) expertise. Nevertheless, I suggest that in some cases, e.g. speed, shape, colour, clay, (a) knowledge by definition belongs to knowledge Socrates avows, and in other cases, e.g. virtue, beauty, it belongs to knowledge Socrates disavows. Needless to say, Socrates never claims that he has any kind of (b) expertise.



interlocutors claim the knowledge of *F*, and when Socrates undertakes to examine their professed knowledge, it is (a) knowledge by definition that is at stake. Indeed, Socrates' procedure for definition should be regarded as a method for acquiring (a) knowledge by definition. In this sense, then, it is right to say that Socrates *knows* those things about which he can give definitions; he knows what a shape is, what clay is, etc.<sup>92</sup> In contrast to (a) knowledge by definition, which is of direct concern to the Socratic method, (b) expertise is only of indirect concern; Socrates mentions various types of expertise as examples of knowledge to which virtue and parts of virtue, the main subjects of the definitional dialogues, are often compared.<sup>93</sup> In fact, it is not clear, in my view, how Socrates thinks we can attain to (b) expertise; it is not clear, in other words, what kind of method there is that will lead us to (b) expertise, and in what way the Socratic method will contribute, if it can contribute at all, to the acquisition of (b) expertise. I myself suggest that Socrates, or Plato in writing the early dialogues, left these points unsettled, and that, as we shall see in Chapter 4, in the *Phaedrus* Plato proposed the method of collection and division for the first time as a method for acquiring about something both (a) knowledge by definition and (b) expertise.

In order to avoid such ambiguity in Socrates' usage of 'knowledge', one might propose that having the definition of *F* is *a necessary condition* for the

---

<sup>92</sup> Similarly, in the *Phaedo* (74b2-3), where Socrates and Simmias agree that they *know* what the equal is, it is in my view (a) knowledge by definition that is at issue.

<sup>93</sup> Thus, I suggest that the sentence 'one *knows* that virtue is *knowledge* of good and bad' (let us suppose that the correct definition of virtue is knowledge of good and bad) should be analysed as 'one possesses (a) knowledge by definition that virtue is (b) expertise in good and bad.'

knowledge of *F*.<sup>94</sup> By this proposal one can secure consistency; 'knowledge' always means expertise. Just as a simple proposition that defines health could be the most basic information about medicine at best and is a far cry from making any of us a doctor, the definition of *F* Socrates is trying to find does not by itself bring us far towards the knowledge of *F*. Still, the definition of *F* has this much importance: if someone cannot give the correct definition of *F*, it shows without any room for doubt that he is not an expert in *F*.<sup>95</sup> That is why Socrates begins by asking his interlocutor to tell him the definition of *F*; he only means to determine whether or not they satisfy this necessary condition for a knower of *F*.

But the proposal in question does not seem to match up with what actually happens in the exchanges in which Socrates asks his interlocutors to offer the definition of *F*. According to the proposal, Socrates' interlocutors who claim the knowledge of *F* are evidently claiming more than that they can say correctly what *F* is; they are claiming that they are experts of some kind. In proposing a definition, then, they are not showing what they claim to know, but only a preliminary to it. But consider the following passages:

(P33) SOCRATES: So tell me now, by Zeus, what you just now maintained you clearly knew: what kind of thing do you say that piety and impiety are, both

---

<sup>94</sup> For this line of interpretation see e.g. Irwin (1995, 27-28) and Benson (2000, 154-55).

<sup>95</sup> One might object here that it is implausible to suppose that, for example, every shoemaker can give the correct definition of shoes. But I suggest that in this case, and in any other cases in which the subject of knowledge belongs to things about which there is general agreement as to what it is, Socrates and Plato think that definition is not necessary. The definition of *F* is required exactly in case there is disagreement as to what *F* is. Cf. *Phdr.* 263a2-c1; *Euthphr.* 7b6-d8; *Plt.* 285d9-286b1.

as regards murder and other things.

(*Euthphr.* 5c8-d1)

(P34) SOCRATES: We say, then, Laches, that we know what it [sc. virtue] is.

LACHES: Yes, we do say so.

SOCRATES: And what we know, we must, I suppose, be able to state?

LACHES: Of course.

(*La.*190c4-7)

(P35) SOCRATES: I do not altogether remember, Meno, so that I cannot tell you now what I thought then. Perhaps he does know [sc. what virtue is]; you know what he used to say, so you remind me of what he said. You tell me yourself, if you are willing, for surely you share his views.

(*Men.* 71c8-d2)

(P36) SOCRATES: How can someone give an answer, I said, when he doesn't know it and doesn't claim to know it [...]? It's much more appropriate for you to answer, since you say you know and can tell us.

(*R.* 337e4-338a1)

It is particularly obvious in (P34), but reasonably clear in the other passages as well, that Socrates, having secured agreement from his interlocutors that they know what *F* is, asks them to state *what they say they know*. In response to this request, Socrates' interlocutors eventually offer a simple proposition. Note that

Socrates is always ready to reject their answers if he thinks they misunderstand his request, as can be seen in the cases of Euthyphro, Laches and Meno (see *Euthphr.* 6c9-e10; *La.* 190e7-9; *Men.* 72a6-d3). The fact that he accepts a simple proposition as a legitimate answer, then, seems to suggest that Socrates and his interlocutors agree that that is what is known. Thus, it is clear that Socrates and his interlocutors consider in these passages that 'knowledge' is not equivalent to expertise but to knowledge by definition.

Another consideration that might make one inclined to take the view in question (i.e. that having the definition of *F* is a necessary condition for knowledge of *F*) is that Socrates sometimes requests his interlocutors to teach or show him *the form of F* (see *Euthphr.* 6e4-7 and *Men.* 72c6-d1, which I shall discuss below). Some scholars understand this as indicating that the object of Socrates' search is not just the definition of *F* but something else, which is considered by them to be something harder to attain than the definition of *F*.<sup>96</sup> If their view is correct, then it will follow that Socrates at least sometimes asks his interlocutors to do more than just to offer the definition of *F*. Probably, then, on this view Socrates' words in (P33) – (P36) are not precise; the knowledge of *F* should not be equated with possessing the definition of *F* but with seeing or grasping the form of *F*. It is exactly this seeing or grasping a form, according to these scholars, that is equivalent to knowledge or expertise.

However, the assumption that the form of *F* is more difficult to attain than

---

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Benson (2000, 146): 'Whatever relationship between this passage [sc. *Euthphr.* 6e4-7] and the theory of Forms of the middle dialogues, Socrates here appears to equate knowledge of what *F*-ness is, what I have been calling definitional knowledge of *F*-ness, with knowledge of the form (*ιδέα*), not—or at least not necessarily—with knowledge of definition.'

the definition of  $F$  is in my view simply mistaken. Two points are relevant here. First, if my interpretation of Socrates' procedure for definition is correct, the order of discovery should rather be: the form of  $F$  first, and the definition of  $F$  second. Now let us briefly review the Socratic method, which under my reconstruction consists of the following three steps:

(S1) Enumeration and examination of instances of  $F$ .

(S2) Identification of the common characteristic (i.e. the form of  $F$ ) and acquisition of the definition of  $F$ .

(S3) Applications of the definition of  $F$ .

(S3-1) A judgment as to whether or not  $x$  is  $F$  in such and such a context (e.g. Andromache is beautiful in the context in which she is compared with an ordinarily beautiful woman), or as to whether or not  $x$  in such and such a context is  $F$  (e.g. not running away from prison while awaiting execution in the context in which Socrates finds himself is just).

(S3-2) A judgment as to whether or not  $F$  is  $G$  (e.g. virtue is teachable).

Socrates' procedure for definition, i.e. (S1) and (S2), is essentially the method of generalization or abstraction (from instances in my sense). The kernel of this procedure consists in a part of (S2), that is, the identification of the distinctive characteristic that is common to the instances enumerated and examined in (S1). In the *Meno*, Socrates calls this part of (S2) 'looking to the form' and clearly regards it as the process that precedes stating the definition. The passage in

question is (P27), in which Socrates says: 'it is right *to look to this* [sc. the form of virtue] when one is asked to make clear what virtue is' (εἰς ὃ καλῶς που ἔχει ἀποβλέψαντα τὸν ἀποκρινόμενον τῷ ἐρωτήσαντι ἐκεῖνο δηλῶσαι, ὃ τυγχάνει οὔσα ἀρετή 72c8-d1). In the case of the *Euthyphro*, another dialogue in which Socrates mentions 'looking to a form', one may need to be careful, for at first sight one might be tempted to think that the order of discovery is the reverse of the one we have just seen in (P27).<sup>97</sup> The following is the (already quoted) passage in question:

(P5) SOCRATES: Tell me then what this form itself is, so that *I may look upon it* (εἰς ἐκείνην ἀποβλέπων), and using it as a model, say that any action of yours or another's that is of that kind is pious, and if it is not that it is not.  
(6e4-7)

It is true that in this passage Socrates says that the looking to the form of the pious comes *after* the 'telling what the form itself is', i.e. giving the definition of the pious. It might look, then, as if he contradicts my supposition that the looking to a form precedes the acquisition of definition, thereby implying that the looking to a form belongs to (S3) rather than (S2). However, this contradiction is more apparent than real, for what is at issue in (P5) is not

---

<sup>97</sup> See White (1976, 20-22), who finds 'not a trivial' problem involved in Plato's method in this regard: 'the suggestion [in (P5)] is that somehow it is with the help of the definition that one looks to the Form, rather than the other way around, as the *Meno* passage [i.e. (P27)] indicates. [...] [I]t is easy to see that the two portrayals of the situation threaten to lead us up a circular path, on which we are required both to look to the Form in order to determine the correctness of any putative definition and also to find the definition first, in order to look to the Form.'

discovery, but teaching and learning of a form. Learners, including Socrates, are not trying to look to the form of  $F$  or to acquire the definition of  $F$  by themselves; they are waiting for their teachers' instruction. Since the teachers cannot show the form of  $F$  itself, they guide the learners to look to it through providing the definition of  $F$ . Thus in (P5) teachers' giving the definition precedes learners' looking to the form. By contrast, as indicated in (P27), anyone who intends to find the definition of  $F$  by himself must look to the form of  $F$  before giving the definition. In the course of Socrates' procedure for definition, therefore, it is not the case that the form of  $F$  is more difficult to attain than the definition of  $F$ .

Second, it is wrong to think—as one might be tempted to think under the influence of a certain tradition of Platonism—that the definiendum is *not* the form of  $F$  that is restricted by contexts but the *Form* of  $F$  that exists separately from any contexts (or the Platonic Form of  $F$ ; more on this in §4) on the ground that the definition of  $F$  does not refer to 'contexts'. For example, the definition of speed given by Socrates in the *Laches* (192a1-b3), i.e. 'the power to accomplish a lot of things in a short time', does not contain any reference to 'contexts', in view of which one might be tempted to think that this definition is not related to the speed of, e.g., Theaetetus' learning but to the Speed itself that exists separately from any contexts. To put it differently, according to this view, we are somehow concerned with the context-independent subject at the end of the procedure for definition, having broken away from the context-restricted instances with which we have started the procedure. If this line of thought were sound, then there would certainly be every reason to distinguish having the

definition of *F* from knowledge of the Form of *F*, especially when one takes into account Plato's description of the extreme difficulty involved in acquiring knowledge of Forms (see e.g. *Smp.* 209e5-212a7, *Phd.* 66b1-68b7, *R.* 531c9-535a2). However, this line of thought is not sound; it overlooks the fact that the context-restrictedness also constitutes an aspect of the common characteristic. In general, if we enumerate many *F*s as instantiated in various contexts (i.e. *F* as instantiated in *c1*, *F* as instantiated in *c2*, *F* as instantiated in *c3*, etc.), what is common among these instances is not just '*F*' but '*F* as instantiated in (...)'. Since Socrates' procedure for definition is the method of generalization or abstraction, those who adopt this procedure cannot remove this 'as instantiated in (...) or the context-restrictedness from the definition of *F*, even though such definitions do not normally refer explicitly to such a feature.<sup>98</sup> In other words, by the very nature of the method, the Form of *F* that may exist independently of any contexts do not come into view for those who adopt Socrates' procedure for definition.

Thus the appeal to 'seeing or grasping the form of *F*' fails. The form of *F* is an entity that is not independent of contexts but restricted by them, and the identification of the form of *F* precedes the acquisition of the definition of *F*. If showing or teaching the form of *F* is a case of knowledge, it is equivalent to (a) knowledge by definition and not (b) expertise. I therefore conclude that Socrates treats these two concepts, i.e. (a) knowledge by definition and (b)

---

<sup>98</sup> In fact, Socrates' definition of speed is one of the few examples that remind us of the context-restrictedness of forms. See *La.* 192a10-b3: 'I would answer him what I call speed is the power to accomplish a lot of things in a short time, *whether in speech or in running or all the other cases.*' Cf. also Nicias' definition of courage in *La.* 194e11-195a1: 'What I say, Laches, is that it [sc. courage] is the knowledge of the fearful and the hopeful *in war and in every other situation.*'



expertise, separately. Indeed, what he is mainly concerned with in the definitional dialogues is the examination of his interlocutors' (a) knowledge by definition and his own acquisition of (a) knowledge by definition.

#### §4. Platonic Forms

Now let us turn to the entities that are introduced by Plato in the middle dialogues and are typically described by formulae such as 'itself by itself' (αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό)<sup>99</sup> or 'always the same in every respect' (κατὰ ταῦτὰ ἀεὶ ὡσαύτως)<sup>100</sup>, the entities which play a fundamental role in Plato's mature philosophy and whose emergence has been considered as an epoch-making event in the history of philosophy. It is conventional among scholars to use the words 'Forms' or (noncapitalised) 'forms' to designate the entities in question. I shall always use the capitalised 'Forms' or, more fully, 'Platonic Forms' in the belief that it is significant for the correct understanding of Plato's method to distinguish carefully these entities from Socratic forms. Plato characterises the Platonic Forms in various ways, calling attention to different features in different contexts,<sup>101</sup> but, in accordance with my treatment of Socratic forms, I shall bring into focus only those aspects of Platonic Forms which are relevant to methodological procedures. I have argued so far in this chapter about Socratic forms that:

---

<sup>99</sup> See e.g. *Smp.* 211b1; *Phd.* 66a2, 78d6, 100b6; *Prm.* 128e6, 130b8, 133a9, c4.

<sup>100</sup> See e.g. *Phd.* 78d6, 80b2; *R.* 479a2, e6-7, 484b5, 500c3; *Phlb.* 59c4; *Ti.* 28a2.

<sup>101</sup> For comparatively recent attempts at describing the general characterization of Platonic Forms, see e.g. Vlastos (1991, 66-76), Fine (1993, 54-65), Kahn (1996, 340-70). The characterization I shall give in the argument that follows is, however, significantly different from theirs.

(SF1) The Socratic form of *F* is always in contexts, or is context-restricted.<sup>102</sup>

(§2.1)

(SF2) The Socratic form of *F* is both one and many; it is one in that every Socratic form of *F* is liable to one and the same definition, and it is many in that every Socratic form of *F* is individuated by its own particular context. (§2.2)

(SF3) If one possesses the definition of *F* (= knowledge by definition), then one can show or teach the Socratic form of *F*. (§3)

In contrast to these characteristics of Socratic forms, I shall now suggest that:

(PF1) The Platonic Form of *F* is never in contexts; it is context-independent.

(PF2) The Platonic Form of *F* is simply one; it is 'uniform' (μονοειδές) and 'pure' (εἰλικρινές, καθαρόν, and ἄμεικτον).<sup>103</sup>

(PF3) One has to be an expert in *F* in order to show or teach the Platonic Form of *F*.

In this section, I would like to explicate (PF1) mainly by discussing passages from the *Symposium*, the dialogue that may be read as an introduction to the doctrine of Platonic Forms.<sup>104</sup> (PF2) and (PF3) should be understood in connection with (PF1). I shall not discuss (PF2) here, regarding it as an

---

<sup>102</sup> In other words, Socratic forms depend for their existence on the contexts in which they appear.

<sup>103</sup> For μονοειδές, see e.g. *Smp.* 211b1, e4; *Phd.* 78d5, 80b2. For εἰλικρινές, καθαρόν, and ἄμεικτον, see e.g. *Smp.* 211e1; *Phd.* 66a3; *Phlb.* 59c4.

<sup>104</sup> It is not certain whether Plato composed the *Phaedo* or the *Symposium* first, but I agree with Kahn (1996, 339-40) that 'from the dramatic and rhetorical point of view, the *Symposium* is certainly designed to be read first' and that 'Plato has planned the *Symposium* as the general reader's introduction to the doctrine of Forms'.

inevitable consequence of (PF1), but I shall point to a way in which (PF1) is connected with (PF3) by adding a brief, perhaps speculative, sketch of Platonic Forms. With these contrasting features in mind, I would like to propose that *Plato in the middle and the late dialogues has both Socratic forms and Platonic Forms in view*. So far as I know, no one has ever advanced such a proposal, but the proposal is not so outrageous as one might at first sight think. In fact, as we shall see, many scholars have suggested that Plato, having eliminated immanent Socratic forms, introduced two items: transcendent Platonic Forms and immanent characters. It is at least more economical than this suggestion to suppose that Plato simply added Platonic Forms to the Socratic framework.

#### *§4.1. The ascent passage in the Symposium and the context-independence of Platonic Forms*

In relation to (PF1), the most illuminating piece of evidence is what is often called the 'ascent' passage in the *Symposium* (209e5-212a7). The passage marks the grand climax of Socrates' speech, which is delivered last in the series of speeches dedicated to Eros (the god, or according to Socrates the δαίμων, of love) by attendants at a celebration party for Agathon's victory in a tragic competition. In this passage, the priestess Diotima, quite clearly a fictional character introduced by Socrates, reveals the final mysteries of love: a lover will achieve happiness by giving birth to true virtue and becoming as immortal as a human being can be. In order to do so, he or she, in their engagement with various beautiful things, must be guided by a 'leader' (ὁ ἡγούμενος 210a7) and follow the correct steps which culminate in the contemplation of Beauty itself.

Here are brief descriptions of the correct steps one must follow, in order:<sup>105</sup>

(B1) A lover loves one beautiful body. (210a6-8)

(B2) He then realises that beauty is one and the same in relation to<sup>106</sup> all bodies, and becomes a lover of all beautiful bodies. (210a8-b6)

(B3) He then contemplates beauty in relation to activities and laws, and sees that it is all mutually related. (210b6-c6)

(B4) He then looks to beauty of sciences. (210c6-7)

(B5) Finally, he catches sight of Beauty itself (or the science of Beauty itself). (210d6-211b5)

In the course of the explanation of (B5), Diotima offers a detailed depiction of the Form of Beauty.<sup>107</sup> In fact, this is the most detailed continuous description of a Platonic Form in Plato's whole corpus.<sup>108</sup>

(P37) First, [a] Beauty always is, and neither comes into being nor perishes, neither increases nor diminishes; secondly, [b] it is not beautiful in this respect but

---

<sup>105</sup> In schematizing the correct steps, I have omitted an aspect of the mysteries that is important for understanding the ascent passage but not relevant for my current purpose, that is, 'giving birth' as a result of the interaction between lover and beloved (see 210a7-8, c1-3, d3-6, 212a3-5). In general, the giving birth may be regarded as a way of participating in immortality by leaving a 'child' behind, but in the process of ascent, i.e. (B1) – (B4), it also creates the momentum for the attainment of a higher step.

<sup>106</sup> Note that Socrates uses various prepositions to describe the relation between beauty and things/ actions in which the beauty is instantiated: ἐπί (210b1-3), ἐν (210b6, 7, c3, 211a8-b1), περί (210c5), παρά (210d1). Here again, one should be cautious of talking about 'immanence' of beauty in things.

<sup>107</sup> However, in connection with the argument that follows, it is important to note that Plato himself never uses the word 'Form' (εἶδος or ἰδέα) to designate the Form of Beauty in the *Symposium*.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Silverman (2002, 324 n.39).

ugly in that, nor beautiful at one moment but not at another, nor beautiful in relation to this but ugly in relation to that, nor beautiful here but ugly there, because some people find it beautiful while others find it ugly; [c-1] nor again will Beauty appear to him the sort of thing a face is, or hands, or anything else in which a body shares, or a speech, or a piece of knowledge, [c-2] nor as being somewhere in some other thing, such as in a living creature, or in the earth, or in the heavens, or in anything else—[d] but rather as being always itself by itself, in its own company, uniform (αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ μεθ' αὐτοῦ μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν) [...]. (210e6-211b1)

After (P37), Diotima, summarizing steps (B1) – (B5), announces that the lover who catches sight of Beauty itself or 'knows what Beauty is itself' (γνώσκει αὐτὸ ... ὃ ἔστι καλόν 211c8-d1) has almost reached the goal of the mysteries. She says that life is worth living for a human being in the contemplation of Beauty itself above all; the lover will give birth to true virtues and be loved by god, and he will, if anyone can, achieve immortality.

Now I suggest that in the ascent passage Plato distinguishes the Form of Beauty from *both* beautiful things *and* beauty as instantiated in things or actions. First of all, that both beautiful things and beauty as instantiated in things or actions come into play from the very early stage of the ascent can be seen clearly in the first two steps, i.e. (B1) and (B2). In (B1) the lover loves one beautiful body, but in (B2) he loves all beautiful bodies because he thinks beauty as instantiated in all bodies is one and the same. It is true that Diotima does not make it clear whether it is a beautiful body or beauty in a body that are

of immediate concern for the lover.<sup>109</sup> But there is not slightest confusion between these two items; it is the characteristic of beauty, as distinct from beautiful bodies, that can be one and the same in all bodies. Note that the movement from (B1) to (B2) is not just the one from one body to many bodies. Indeed, Diotima declares: 'it's *quite foolish* not to regard the beauty in all bodies as one and the same.' (209b2-3) Thus, for example, when one loves many beautiful girls and many beautiful pots without thereby seeing the common characteristic shared by them all (cf. *Hi.Ma.* 288c9-d3), one is as foolish as the lover who still remains at step (B1). A certain philosophical reflection on the nature of beauty, that is, an understanding that beautiful bodies are beautiful because of the common characteristic of beauty and not because of some accidental features (e.g. a hairstyle, a shiny surface), is necessary for the lover to move on to the next step. It seems then plausible to suppose that, when Diotima talks contemptuously of those who admire a single beautiful body or activity,<sup>110</sup> her words are also directed at those who love many beautiful bodies without seeing the common characteristic shared by them (e.g. the sight-lovers in the

<sup>109</sup> (B1) and (B2) might lead us to suppose that what the lover *loves* is not beauty in bodies (which is something abstract) but beautiful bodies (see 'he must fall in love with *a single body*' (210a7); 'he must become a lover of *all beautiful bodies*' (210b4-5)). This supposition, however, is at odds with Diotima's later words: 'no longer slavishly attached to (ἀγαπῶν) *the beauty* belonging to a single thing—a young boy, some individual human being, or one activity' (210d1-3). It is not the case, then, that Diotima distinguishes a beautiful body from beauty in a body as what the lover *loves* from what the lover *contemplates*. (However, she certainly has a *tendency* to use operative verbs in relation to beautiful things (see ἵεναι 210a5, ἐρᾶν 210a7; ἀγαγεῖν 210c7; ἐπανιέναι 211c2) and cognitive verbs in relation to beauty as instantiated in things (see ἠγγεῖσθαι 210b3, 7, c6; θεάσασθαι 210c3; βλέπων 210c7).) Incidentally, I have tried to avoid speaking of *the object* of love, which, strictly speaking, seems to be the good and not the beautiful of any kind (cf. White (1989) and Rowe (1998, 184 on 206e2-3)).

<sup>110</sup> See: 'He must [...] relax this passionate love for one body, *despising it and considering it a slight thing*' (210b5-6); 'No longer *slavishly* attached to the beauty belonging to a single thing—a young boy, some individual human being, or one activity—[the lover] may cease to be *worthless and petty*, as his *servitude* made him.' (210d1-3)

*Republic* (476b4-7)). On the basis of such observations, I conclude that Plato has a clear distinction in mind between beautiful things and beauty in things.

Next, it is evident, I think, from (P37) that Plato characterises the Form of Beauty by way of contrast with both beautiful things and beauty in things, the two kinds of items that have been introduced during the ascent. To be specific, what is contrasted with the Form of Beauty are: in [a] both beautiful things and beauty in things, in [b] and [c-1] beautiful things, and in [c-2] beauty in things. I shall explain this point by point. First, in [a] Plato contrasts the permanence and the changelessness of the Form with the changeability and the perishability of beautiful things and beauty in things. There is, I assume, little need for an explanation as to why beautiful things, like a girl and a pot, are changeable; a girl, for example, may grow tall and a pot may be broken.<sup>111</sup> But why beauty in things is subject to change may require a few remarks. I propose that beauty in things changes simultaneously with those changes which affect things in respect of their being beautiful. For example, when Andromache is compared with an ordinary girl, she obtains beauty, which means that the beauty *comes to be* in her. On the other hand, when she is compared with Helen, she loses her beauty, which means that the beauty in her *perishes* (or *retreats*).<sup>112</sup> Thus, the

---

<sup>111</sup> However, it is not clear what kind of change Plato thinks things are subject to. It has been proposed by Irwin (1977b), and widely accepted, that Plato has two types of change in mind, i.e. self-change and aspect-change. Self-change is a change that things suffer through their own local movement and qualitative alteration (e.g. Socrates is young in 455 B.C., but is old in 399 B.C.), while aspect-change is a change that things suffer by being considered relationally (e.g. Simmias is tall in comparison with Socrates, but is small in comparison with Phaedo).

<sup>112</sup> Here, of course, I have in mind some passages from the final argument for the immortality of soul in the *Phaedo* (100b1-107b10): e.g. 'the tallness in us will never admit the short or be overcome, but one of two things happens: either it *flees* and *retreats* whenever its opposite, the short, approaches, or it is *destroyed* by its approach.' (102d7-e2) For the interpretation of the passage, see Devereux (1994, 66-69). Increasing and diminishing, I think, only apply to beautiful things, and not to beauty in things.

beauty in things is also subject to change, though it is admittedly in a different way from the way in which beautiful things are subject to change. Second, in [b] Plato contrasts the non-relativity of the Form with the relativity of beautiful things. Here it is only beautiful things that are at issue; things which are beautiful in one respect (or at one moment, or in one relation, or in one part) will turn out to be ugly in another respect (or at another moment, etc.). By contrast, beauty in things does not suffer such a relativity; beauty, e.g. in a living creature, can never in itself be ugly in any respect (or in any moment, etc.), for that would simply be a contradiction. Finally, in [c-1] and [c-2] Plato denies that the Form of Beauty appears as beautiful *things* and beauty *in things*, respectively. I take the point here to be a straightforward distinction between the Form of Beauty, on the one hand, and beautiful things and beauty in things, on the other hand, in contrast to [a] and [b] in which Diotima was talking about *features* of beautiful things and/or beauty in things. If I am right, then Plato makes it plain in this passage that the Form of Beauty is not only different from beautiful bodies, or beautiful activities and laws, or beautiful sciences, but also that it is nothing like beauty in bodies, or activities and laws, or sciences; in effect, it is not instantiated in things or actions at all.<sup>113</sup>

Features Diotima attributes to beauty in things, especially that beauty in all

---

<sup>113</sup> Fine (1992, 82) understands Plato's point here in this way: 'The form of beauty has a particular nature, which can be specified without reference to the particular things, and kinds of things, that instantiate it; the definition of the form of beauty doesn't mention the sorts of things the form exists in. To say that the form of beauty can be defined without mentioning its participants is not to say that it can exist without being instantiated.' However, apart from a general worry as to why definition should be at issue here, in principle the definition of *F* can refer to those things which instantiate *F* (as is the case with Nicias' definition of courage: courage is knowledge of the fearful and the hopeful *in war and in every other situation*). Why should Plato emphasise a very trivial point, namely that the definition of *F* can do without reference to those things which instantiate *F*, at this climactic moment?



bodies is one and the same, strongly remind us of the features of Socratic forms I have discussed so far. I suggest, indeed, that the beauty in things referred to here is nothing other than the Socratic form of beauty. But perhaps it might be too rushed to conclude this; there seem to be at least two problems that are immediately noticeable. First, Diotima does not explicitly mention one and the same beauty that is common to all instances. Certainly, she mentions one and the same beauty in all bodies, and the one in activities and laws. But instead of coming up with one and the same beauty *in all instances* (which would be unequivocally identified with the Socratic form of beauty), she introduces the Form of Beauty. This movement might be taken to suggest that Plato has somehow replaced Socratic forms with Platonic Forms in his ontological scheme. Second, one might claim that Diotima explicitly denies that there is one and the same beauty in all instances. She says that the lover 'must consider beauty in souls more valuable than beauty in the body' (210b6-7), which, according to this view, implies that beauty is *not* one and the same in all instances. I shall deal with these two problems first, before turning to what I call (PF1), i.e. the proposal that Platonic Forms are, unlike Socratic forms, context-independent.

In relation to the first problem, I suggest that the reason why Socrates does not explicitly mention one and the same beauty that is common to all instances is simply that the procedure for definition is not at issue here. It has often been suggested that a certain variant of Socrates' procedure for definition is being hinted at here; the lover acquires knowledge of the Form of Beauty by applying the method of generalization and abstraction from beautiful particulars in (B1) –

(B5).<sup>114</sup> The lover, under this interpretation, first generalises and abstracts beauties in bodies, in activities and laws, and in sciences on the basis of particular beautiful bodies, activities and laws, and sciences, respectively, and then generalises and abstracts Beauty itself which all beautiful particulars ‘participate in’ (μετέχοντα 211b2). But such an interpretation is untenable for the following two reasons. First, the Form of Beauty cannot be attained by the method of generalization and abstraction from beautiful particulars or beauties in things, since, as has been suggested, the Form of Beauty is not instantiated in them; it does not in itself constitute any element of beautiful particulars. The ‘participation’ does not imply the presence of the Form of Beauty in things, but only suggests that there is *some* sort of relationship between them.<sup>115</sup> Second, particulars do not seem to provide a valid starting point for the method in question if we accept the principle of the priority of definition (or **(PD)** or **(PDweak)**, see Chapter 1). It is impossible, that is to say, for the lover to know whether a particular body, activity, and the like is beautiful or not before knowing the definition of beauty. It is in this connection that the fact that there is a leader who correctly leads the lover turns out to be crucial. I suggest that

---

<sup>114</sup> See Sheffield (2006, 127): ‘It is commonly held that the DHM [sc. the desiring agent who occupies the higher mysteries] comes to have knowledge of the form by “generalization and abstraction” from the beautiful particulars he encounters.’ Cf. also Moravcsik (1971, 290-3) and Price (1997, 39-40).

<sup>115</sup> See Rowe (1998, 199 on 211b2-5). I agree with Fine (1984 [2003, 277]) that it is an overstatement when Fujisawa (1974, 32) writes: “τὸ Α μετέχει τοῦ Β” does not imply the presence of B *itself* in A or rather would deny such a presence’, but she is too hasty to dismiss the importance of participation language by saying that ‘it can be used quite neutrally’. It is significant, I think, to note that in the *Symposium* Diotima mentions the ‘participation’ of things in the Form *immediately after* she has denied the presence of the Form in things. Ross (1953, 225-33) is certainly wrong when he ‘counted participation language as evidence of *immanence*’ (quotation from Fine, *ibid.*). Cf. also Devereux (1994, 65 n.5). As to the *Phaedo* 100c-d, where participation seems to be given as an alternative to presence, I am going to deal with it later.

the leader, a mystagogue of the mysteries of love,<sup>116</sup> knows the definition of beauty, which is a simple proposition, and so can lead the lover to particulars in which beauty is instantiated. The lover, then, is not applying the method of generalization or abstraction in order to acquire the definition of beauty, but *is systematically increasing the scope of the application of the definition of beauty*, after having received the definition from the leader.<sup>117</sup> At this point, one might object that, if the lover were provided with the definition of beauty that is applicable to any beautiful things or actions, he would not need to linger on beautiful bodies; he could directly turn towards ‘the great sea of beauty’ (τὸ πρὸν πέλαγος ... τοῦ καλοῦ 210d4). However, it is not, I think, hard to imagine a case in which one cannot understand how a definition is applicable: for example, a schoolboy who dislikes his study may not be able to understand how learning can be pleasant, even after having learned the definition of pleasure.<sup>118</sup> The mere possession of a definition, then, does not entail knowledge of its application. And at any rate, the point of the ascent in steps (B1) – (B4) does not seem to be just reaching ‘the great sea of beauty’ but reaching it *in a certain*

---

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Rowe (1998, 194 on 210a6-7): ‘if we follow out the metaphor of the Mysteries, “the one leading him” will be a μυσταγωγός, someone who guides the new initiates. [...] [I]n the present context the “mystagogue” will be someone already initiated in, i.e. experienced in, ‘loving correctly’, but also [...] in philosophy.’

<sup>117</sup> I am suggesting that the ascent is not an application of Socrates’ procedure for the definition of beauty, but rather an application of (what I shall call) the internal analysis of beauty (although it is admittedly an irregular version of it; for example, in the ascent a lover is involved with both theoretical and practical understanding of beauty at the same time, while in the internal analysis of soul and speech described in the *Phaedrus* theoretical understanding precedes practical understanding). I shall discuss internal analysis in Chapter 4.

<sup>118</sup> It may be difficult to imagine a situation in which the lover, already possessing the definition of beauty, applies it only to one body. But it is not impossible; in order to understand that the definition is applicable to all bodies, one has to start by applying it to one body. At any rate, Diotima is quite dismissive towards such a situation (‘quite foolish’ 209b2).

*specific way*, about which the definition would not say anything. Thus, I suggest that the passage can and should be read as the procedure for applying the definition of beauty, and not as the procedure for acquiring the definition. Both the definition of beauty and its referent, i.e. one and the same beauty in all instances, are presupposed from the beginning. Small wonder, then, that Diotima does not explicitly mention one and the same beauty in all instances in the course of the ascent; she does not need to.

The second problem with the identification of beauty in things with the Socratic form of beauty is related to Diotima's words that the lover 'must consider beauty in souls more valuable than beauty in the body' (210b6-7). One might think that her words imply the denial of the statement that there is one and the same beauty in all instances, or even indicate that beauty in souls approximates to the Form of Beauty more than beauty in bodies. However, it is wrong to think so, for the statement that beauty is one and the same in all instances is compatible with the statement that beauty in bodies is different from (and more valuable than) beauty in souls. Recall (SF2), i.e. that the Socratic form of *F* is one and many at the same time: it is one in that every Socratic form of *F* is liable to one and the same definition, and it is many in that every Socratic form of *F* is individuated by its own particular context. (SF2) implies that beauty in bodies is the same as beauty in souls in one sense, but is different from it in another sense. Besides, if Diotima's words were to imply the denial of one and the same beauty in all instances, it would follow that in the early definitional dialogues Socrates, in mentioning one and the same *F* in all instances, believed that *F* in a thing is always just as valuable as *F* in another

thing. It is, however, very unlikely that, when Socrates asks what is the speed that is the same in running, in playing the lyre, in speaking, in learning and so on in the *Laches* (192a1-b4), he assumes that quickness in learning is just as valuable as quickness in playing the lyre. It seems then clear enough that Diotima's words do not pose any obstacles to the identification of the beauty in things with the Socratic form of beauty.

Thus, there seems to be no inconsistency involved in identifying the beauty in things in the ascent passage with the Socratic form of beauty. Of course, Diotima never uses the term 'form' (εἶδος or ἰδέα) in referring to the beauty in things. But this should come as no surprise, for she never uses this term in referring to the Form of Beauty either. Remember also that Socrates himself only occasionally uses 'form' when he refers to the subject of definition in the early definitional dialogues; he does not use it even once in the *Laches* and the *Charmides*. In view of the fact that both the beauty in things and the Socratic form of beauty are the common characteristic of all beautiful instances, I conclude that these are put forward by Plato as equivalent to each other.

Bearing this analysis of the ascent passage in mind, I now would like to propose:

(PF1) The Platonic Form of *F* is never in contexts; it is context-independent.

The basic idea is that, by distinguishing the Form of Beauty from beauty in bodies, activities and laws, and sciences, Plato is suggesting that the Platonic Form of *F* is not a characteristic or an element of instances of *F*, which inevitably

involve certain contexts, but rather it is independent of such contexts.<sup>119</sup> As I have argued, the Socratic form of *F* is the common characteristic of instances of *F*. For example, Socrates indicates in the *Meno* that the Socratic form of virtue is what is one and the same in relation to various virtues, such as the virtue of a man, the virtue of a woman (72c6-d1), or that it is what is one and the same in relation to various parts of virtue, such as courage, temperance, and wisdom (74a7-b1). I have also argued that both of these two kinds of instances are equivalent to the form of virtue as it manifests itself in various contexts. The Socratic form of virtue, then, is inevitably restricted by contexts. By contrast, the Platonic Form of Virtue, I suggest, does not have such a relationship with instances of virtue that would imply that the Form is only a characteristic or element of the instances. To put it differently, there is no such thing as the Virtue of a man, or courage as a part of Virtue; the Platonic Form of Virtue is never in those contexts in which the Socratic form of virtue manifests itself. Thus, I suggest that the Socratic form of *F* is context-restricted, but the Platonic Form of *F* is context-independent.

Now, in connection with the context-independence of Platonic Forms, the

---

<sup>119</sup> One might object here that Diotima is not concerned with contexts but with places or locations, as is clear from her words at [c-2] in (P37). The position that Plato is committed to, in this view, must be weaker than the one described in (PF1), namely:

(PF1weak) The Platonic Form of *F* is not immanent, or spatio-temporally located, in particulars.

However, (PF1weak) is in my view too weak to describe Plato's position in the ascent passage. (PF1weak) is compatible with statements that (the Form of) Beauty is instantiated in science, since science is not a spatio-temporal entity, or that (the Form of) Beauty is instantiated in the (not particular but universal) body. But this will, I think, demolish Plato's strategy for drawing a line between the Platonic Form of Beauty and beauty in things. It is true that at [c-2] Diotima speaks about places or locations, but it is probably because this is the most effective way to bring home the point that the Form of Beauty does not exist in our world.

following two questions may naturally arise. First, what is the use of these context-independent entities? Second, if Platonic Forms are not instantiated at all, how can one get to know them? In order to find a proper answer to these questions, we must wait for the chapters that are to follow (Chapters 4 and 6), but I would like to anticipate it briefly here, although at this stage I can offer little more than a speculative sketch. Very briefly, then, my answer to the first question is: the Platonic Form of  $F$  is required as the determinant of the truth-value of any general statement whose subject is an instance of  $F$ ; to the second question my answer is: *in theory* one can get to know the Platonic Form of  $F$  by understanding every non-accidental feature of instances of  $F$ . In what follows, I shall explain these two points in somewhat more detail.

To put the first point differently, the role of the Platonic Form of  $F$  is to underlie the realization of any non-accidental feature of instances of  $F$ . For example, the Platonic Form of Virtue underlies the fact that any instance of virtue is good, or is beautiful. It is important to note, however, that many non-accidental features are shared only by some of the instances of  $F$ . For example, all instances of madness are mental states, while not all instances of madness are beneficial; those which belong to divine madness are beneficial, but those which belong to human madness are bad (cf. *Phdr.* 265e1-266b1). But both of the statements, i.e. 'all instances of madness are mental states' and 'such and such instances of madness are beneficial (or such and such instances of madness are bad)', are true on account of the Platonic Form of Madness. In general, then, that  $F$  is  $G$  (e.g. virtue is teachable), or that  $F$  in  $a$  is  $H$  (e.g. beauty in souls is more valuable than beauty in bodies), or that  $F$  in  $b$  is  $I$  (e.g. beauty in

activities is mutually related to beauty in laws) etc., are true or false on account of the Platonic Form of *F*. I have mentioned that the Platonic Form of *F* underlies the realization of any *non-accidental feature* of instances of *F*, or that it is the determinant of the truth-value of any *general statement* whose subject is an instance of *F*, in order to rule out accidental cases; for example, that an instance of beauty is had by Socrates (at a certain period of time),<sup>120</sup> or that an instance of shuttle existed in 753 B.C. The Platonic Form of *F* does not determine the truth-value of the statements about these accidental cases, since they become true or false depending on the course of becoming processes in our world.

Provided Platonic Forms play such a role as I have described, one might wonder what kind of things these context-independent entities are like. Following Plato, who, in illustrating Platonic Forms, often appeals to similes or metaphorical language, I would like to offer my own analogy here. Imagine, then, that you are in a colossal library which has incredibly many shelves all filled up with thick volumes, which, identically bound, appear all alike, but each of them has a title slightly different from the others. Every title starts with 'The Book of the Truth about', and then continues with the name of a particular subject and the number of volume, which mark off one volume from the others; for example: *The Book of the Truth about Beauty* vol. LIX. In the whole collection of the Books of the Truth about Beauty, every actual and possible true statement concerning the essential features of instances of beauty is written down (e.g.

---

<sup>120</sup> I am of course not saying that the Platonic Form of Beauty has nothing to do with Socrates' beauty (when he is beautiful, he participates in the Form of Beauty); all I am saying is that the Platonic Form of Beauty does not determine whether Socrates is beautiful or not.



'the beauty in the rivers or mountains is most appreciated by those who have such and such a soul, and invigorates their soul in such and such a way...'). The case is similar for all the other collections, including the collection of the Books of the Truth about Health, Number, Life, etc. As a matter of fact, these books do not themselves stand for Platonic Forms, but they are decoded or verbalised correspondents to Platonic Forms; these books play for Platonic Forms a role analogical to the one that definitions play for Socratic forms. Platonic Forms themselves are not linguistic entities, but, as it were, components of the structure of the universe, on account of which the contents of the Books of the Truth are really true, and everything that happens in our world never falsifies even a single sentence in the Books of the Truth. The Books of the Truth are after all just books; they do not have a power to make things happen as their contents tell, but each of them reveals the scope in which each Platonic Form has a power to regulate our world. Just like the Socratic form of *F* is shown by the definition of *F*, the Platonic Form of *F* is something that is revealed by the Books of the Truth about *F*.

This brings us back to my second question: if the Platonic Form of *F* is not instantiated at all, how can one get to know it? I have already suggested my own answer in my analogy: by understanding all the contents of the Books of the Truth about *F*. Plato, however, seems to have less strict conditions in mind; according to him, at the point at which one has systematically and sufficiently analysed instances of *F*, one suddenly intuits or catches sight of the Platonic Form of *F*.<sup>121</sup> In the case of beauty described in the *Symposium*, for example, one

---

<sup>121</sup> Cf. *Epist.* VII (341c5-d2): 'For this knowledge is not something that can be put into

will get to know 'what Beauty is itself' (211c8-d1) if one has systematically investigated instances of beauty in accordance with contexts such as bodies, activities and laws, and sciences. This process is, of course, not just to group instances of beauty into the three categories; one also has to know whether or not these three categories are exclusive, in what way one category is different from another, why beauty in activities and beauty in laws constitute one group, and the like; or to put it concisely, one has to know various essential features of instances of beauty. Having sufficiently surveyed and analysed instances of beauty, one 'suddenly' (ἐξαίφνης 210e3) takes a leap from the context-restricted instances of beauty into the context-independent horizon; one intuits the Form of Beauty, on account of which every essential feature of instances of beauty is as it is. This is, I suggest, how we get to know the Form of Beauty, and this is also how we become experts in beauty. An expert in beauty must know not only the definition of beauty, which is a simple proposition, but also must know various essential features of instances of beauty. Here is, then, a junction at which (PF1) is connected with what I call (PF3), i.e. that one has to be an expert in *F* in order to show or teach the Platonic Form of *F*. Note, however, that Plato seems to suppose that even his less strict conditions for knowing the Platonic Form of *F* can be fulfilled only *in theory*, that is why Socrates says in the *Phaedo*: 'It seems likely that we shall, only then, when we are dead, attain that which we desire and of which we claim to be lovers, namely, wisdom, [...] not while we

---

words like other sorts of knowledge (μαθήματα); but after long-continued intercourse between teacher and pupil, in joint pursuit of the subject, suddenly (ἐξαίφνης), like light flashing forth when a fire is kindled, it is born in the soul and straightway nourishes itself.' For a similar line of the interpretation of the so-called method of hypothesis, see Robinson (1953, 169-79).

live; for it is impossible to attain any pure knowledge with the body, then one of two things is true: either we can never attain knowledge or we can do so after death.' (66e1-6)

#### §4.2. Socratic forms and Platonic Forms in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*

Finally, in this sub-section, I would like to argue that the interpretation suggested above is not only compatible with the metaphysical passages in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, but also sheds new light on them. A full investigation of these extensively discussed dialogues is, however, beyond the scope of my present work. Here I shall limit myself to bringing two central passages into focus: first, the final argument for the immortality of soul in the *Phaedo* (100b1-107b10), and second, the argument for the separation of true philosophers from mere sight-lovers in the *Republic* (475d1-480a13).

The final argument in the *Phaedo* (100b1-107b10) is a perennial subject of discussion in relation to the ontological status of forms/Forms. What is at issue is the following question: does Plato, in mentioning largeness and smallness in Simmias (102b5-6), suggest (A) that Platonic Forms can be immanent in things, or (B) that there is a third kind of entities, i.e. the so-called immanent characters, in addition to Platonic Forms, which Socrates has been dealing with before the introduction of the immanent characters, and particulars?<sup>122</sup> Whichever alternative one may choose, one seems to face problems. For those who choose

---

<sup>122</sup> Scholars who support (A) include O'Brien (1967, 210-13), Stough (1976, 22-28), Fine (1986 [2003, 303-9]), Bostock (1986, 179-84), Dancy (2004, 186), and scholars who support (B) include Cornford (1939, 78-79), Vlastos (1969 [1981, 83-86]), Fujisawa (1974, 31), Gallop (1975, 195-56), Devereux (1994, 64-77), Silverman (2002, 95-103).

(A), two problems seem to be easily pointed out: first, this position makes the characterization of Platonic Forms in the *Phaedo* incoherent with the characterization in the *Symposium* ([c-2] in (P37)) and in the *Timaeus* (see 52a2-3: '[a Platonic Form] neither receives into itself anything else from anywhere else, nor itself enters into anything else anywhere'); second, Plato 'seems to imply that things like largeness in us are perishable'<sup>123</sup>, but Platonic Forms are, needless to say, imperishable. On the other hand, those who choose (B) seem to encounter the following three problems: first, Socrates seems to accept expressions like the 'presence' (παρουσία) or the 'association' (κοινωνία) of Platonic Forms (see 100d3-7), which strongly suggests that Forms can be immanent; second, Socrates seems to be inconsistent in his treatment of causes, for he makes an assumption that Platonic Forms are the only causes, but later he speaks as if immanent characters were also causes;<sup>124</sup> third, Plato uses εἶδος or ἰδέα, typical designators for forms/Forms, to refer to things like largeness in Simmias, which suggests largeness in Simmias is a form/Form.<sup>125</sup>

In relation to this issue, I suggest that Plato's uses of 'the *F* itself' (αὐτὸ *F*) and 'the εἶδος or ἰδέα of *F*' (I assume that Plato uses εἶδος and ἰδέα

<sup>123</sup> Devereux (1994, 67). Devereux's argument for showing that this problem strongly weighs against position (A) is very clear and convincing.

<sup>124</sup> Compare 'everything that is larger is made larger by nothing else than by Largeness' (101a2-3) with 'it is not, surely, the nature of Simmias to be larger than Socrates because he is Simmias but because of the largeness he happens to have?' (102c1-3). I think this second problem for position (B) is obvious, but, so far as I know, no one has even mentioned it.

<sup>125</sup> Devereux (1994, 71) tries to solve this third problem by appealing to the distinction between the usages of εἶδος and ἰδέα: 'So the suggestion should be that εἶδος is used for the most part for separate Forms but sometimes for both Forms and immanent characters, while ἰδέα is used exclusively for immanent characters.' (1994, 71 n.16) I do not think this suggestion is convincing especially in view of the fact that Plato uses ἰδέα *exclusively* in order to refer to the Form of the Good in the *Republic* (ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα 505a2, 508e2, 517b8, 526e2, 534b9).

interchangeably) are deliberately ambiguous; they can designate both the Socratic form and the Platonic Form of *F*, and whether they designate both of them or only one of them depends on the context in which they are used.<sup>126</sup> Certainly, it is almost unanimously agreed by scholars that the expressions in question are standard terms for Platonic Forms, but this agreement in my view has its source in the (I think ungrounded) supposition that Plato has replaced Socratic forms with Platonic Forms. If Plato has, as I have suggested, both Socratic forms and Platonic Forms in view in the middle dialogues, it is not unreasonable to expect the expressions in question to be used for Socratic forms as well as Platonic Forms, since Plato used them (though only occasionally) to designate Socratic forms in the early definitional dialogues.<sup>127</sup> Of course, this will be true only if there are situations in which it is meaningful or useful for Plato to designate both forms and Forms by the same expressions. And I think there are; these expressions are indeed useful to demarcate the philosopher's realm from the many people's unreflective experience where only many *F* things are recognized. I suggest, then, first, that both the Socratic form and the

---

<sup>126</sup> Morrison (1977, 213-219) also suggests a certain distinction within the notion of εἶδος or ἰδέα, but his distinction is significantly different from mine in that it appeals to different *ways* the same entity is thought of, rather than different *entities* these words refer to. His distinction is the following: '(1) a common characteristic visible in a number of particulars', and '(2) a common characteristic abstracted from a number of particulars and regarded as unique and separate in some way'. Thus, he says (212-214) that, in the *Euthyphro*, μίαν τινὰ ἰδέαν at 5d4 means the form of the pious in the sense of (1) while αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος at 6d10-11 means the form in the sense of (2), although both of them refer to the same subject of Socrates' inquiry. To my mind, Morrison's distinction is no real distinction, since it seems to be just a different way of presenting the contention given by scholars who support (A), i.e. that Forms can be immanent in things. Nonetheless, I am very sympathetic with him when he writes: 'It is [...] likely to be misleading to talk about a "Theory of Ideas", as if εἶδος or ἰδέα had a single precise philosophical connotation in themselves.'

<sup>127</sup> Socrates uses 'the *F* itself' (αὐτὸ *F*) in, e.g., *Hi.Ma.* 288a9, 289c3, 292c9 (Ross (1953, 17) proposes that *Prt.* 360e8 may be an earlier example; cf. also Vlastos (1969 [1981, 84 n. 26])). For εἶδος see, e.g., *Euthphr.* 6d10-11; *Hi.Ma.* 289d4, 298b4; *Men.* 72c7, d8, e5; for ἰδέα see, e.g., *Euthphr.* 5d4, 6e1, 4.

Platonic Form of *F* are called 'the *F* itself', because they are the real bearers of the name ('*F*') in contrast to many *F* things which have only eponym, or are *F* only derivatively;<sup>128</sup> second, that both the Socratic form and the Platonic Form of *F* are called 'the εἶδος or ἰδέα of *F*', because they have unity which the many *F* things do not have.

With the ambiguity of the expressions in mind, let us turn back to the final argument in the *Phaedo*. Among the problems raised about the interpretation of things like largeness in Simmias, the problems for those who support (A), i.e. that Platonic Forms can be immanent in things, are matters of the fundamental philosophical theories and so in my view insoluble, while the problems for those who support (B), i.e. that there are immanent characters, are mostly related to terminological issues and so seem to be remediable with some revision. Let us replace, then, 'immanent characters' with our familiar Socratic forms. We also should suppose that both forms and Forms are at issue from the beginning of the argument, but this may need some explanation. The argument starts with Socrates' securing agreement from Cebes in hypothesising that there is something itself by itself, i.e. a Platonic Form, such as the Beautiful, the Good, the Largeness, and so on (100b1-c2). After this agreement, Socrates proposes the following famous proposition:

(P38) If there is anything beautiful besides the beautiful itself (αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν), it is beautiful for no other reason than that it *participates in* (μετέχει) that beautiful

---

<sup>128</sup> For the importance of the distinction between 'name' and 'eponym' in Plato's ontological scheme, see Allen (1960 [1965, 45-47]), Silverman (2002, 87; 96).

(ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ). (100c3-6)

In this passage, it seems unquestionable that ‘the beautiful itself’ refers to the Platonic Form of the Beautiful. Nevertheless, the replacement of ‘the beautiful itself’ with ‘the Beautiful itself’ is seriously misleading, for whether or not ‘the beautiful itself’ is a Platonic Form is not Socrates’ point. Instead, his point here is a variation of the contrast I have suggested between the philosopher’s realm and the many people’s unreflective experience, namely that all beautiful things are beautiful, not because of a bright colour or shape or the like, as many people might think, but because of *the beautiful itself* (see 100c10-e3). Under this sort of structure, as has been indicated, ‘the beautiful itself’ can ambiguously designate the Socratic form of the beautiful and the Platonic Form of the Beautiful.<sup>129</sup> Now let us substitute ‘participates in’ in (P38) with the relationship that implies presence, as is indicated by Socrates himself immediately afterwards (see 100d4-6). The outcome will be the following proposition:

(P38\*) If there is anything beautiful besides the beautiful itself (αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν), it is beautiful for no other reason than that that beautiful *is present to (or is associated with)* it.

---

<sup>129</sup> The ambiguity of ‘the *F* itself’ (αὐτὸ *F*) is later confirmed in the following passage: ‘what was said then is that an opposite thing came from an opposite thing; now we say that *the opposite itself* (αὐτὸ τὸ ἐναντίον) could never become opposite to itself, neither that in us (τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν) nor that in nature (τὸ ἐν τῇ φύσει).’ (*Phd.* 103b2-5) Observe that in this passage too, it is the contrast between many *F* things, which appear in many people’s unreflective experience, on the one hand, and both the Socratic form and the Platonic Form of *F*, on the other hand, that is at issue.

In this version, I suggest, 'the beautiful itself' refers to the Socratic form of the beautiful. However, this does not alter the fact that Socrates accepts the substitution of the expressions in question in (P38), for (P38) itself does not specify the referent of 'the beautiful itself'. Of course, this will be true only if Socrates holds (P38\*) in relation to the Socratic form of the beautiful. But it seems clear that he does, since (P38\*) under my interpretation is simply one side of the coin whose other face is (P38);  $x$  has the Socratic form of  $F$  if and only if  $x$  participates in the Platonic Form of  $F$ . Understood this way, I suggest, we can reasonably suppose that both Socratic forms and Platonic Forms are at issue from the beginning of the final argument of the *Phaedo*.

Now it is easy to see how the problems posed for those who choose (B) will be solved by my new position that has emerged as the result of the revision of (B). Let us call it (C): largeness in Simmias belongs to a third kind of entities, i.e. Socratic forms, in addition to Platonic Forms and particulars, and both Socratic forms and Platonic Forms have been regarded as the cause for  $F$  things to be  $F$  before Socrates explicitly mentions largeness in Simmias at 102b5-6. The first problem for those who support (B), i.e. that Socrates seems to accept the 'presence' or the 'association' of Platonic Forms, and the second problem, i.e. that Socrates seems to be inconsistent in his treatment of causes, both stem from the supposition that is included in (B) itself, namely that Socrates has been dealing with only Platonic Forms before mentioning largeness in Simmias. According to (C), Socrates only says that he accepts the 'presence' or the 'association' of the  $F$  itself, which means the Socratic form of  $F$  in this context, and there is no inconsistency in his treatment of causes, for he has posited both



Socratic forms and Platonic Forms as causes, although he hardly uses Platonic Forms as causes in the argument. The third problem for (B), i.e. that εἶδος or ἰδέα are not natural designators for immanent characters, is clearly not a problem for (C) at all, for these terms are natural designators for Socratic *forms*.

Next, let us turn to the metaphysical books of the *Republic*, which also seem to be compatible with the assumption that Plato, in using ‘the *F* itself’ or εἶδος or ἰδέα, has both Socratic forms and Platonic Forms in mind. In Book V, Socrates introduces the so-called theory of forms/Forms, in order to define true philosophers who should become the rulers of Callipolis, Plato’s ideal city. His first task is to exclude from the candidates as philosopher-kings mere sight-lovers, who appear to resemble true philosophers in their eagerness for learning. Socrates starts the argument by introducing ‘forms’ in the following way:

(P39) Since the beautiful is the opposite of the ugly, they are two.

Of course.

And since they are two, each is one?

I grant that also.

And the same account is true of the just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and *all the forms* (τῶν εἰδῶν). Each of them is itself one, but because they manifest themselves everywhere in association with (τῇ κοινωνίᾳ) actions, bodies, and one another, each of them appears to be many.

(476a1-8)

The 'forms' serve as the touchstone by which one can distinguish true philosophers from mere sight-lovers; true philosophers are 'able to advance towards the beautiful itself [= the 'form' of the beautiful] and see it by itself' (ἐπ' αὐτὸ τὸ καλὸν δυνατοὶ ἰέναι τε καὶ ὁρᾶν καθ' αὐτό 476b9), while sight-lovers, who are solely interested in many beautiful things, do not admit the existence of such an entity. It has often been supposed that by mentioning 'forms' in (P39) Plato introduces Platonic Forms.<sup>130</sup> But this is, I think, impossible. Recall (P37), in which Diotima says that the Platonic Form of Beauty '*will not appear as being somewhere in some other thing (φαντασθήσεται ... οὐδέ που ὄν ἐν ἑτέρῳ τι), [...] but rather as being always itself by itself, in its own company, uniform*'. But in (P39) Socrates says that the 'forms' *manifest themselves everywhere (πανταχοῦ φανταζόμενα)* so that each of them appears to be many. If the 'forms' in (P39) designate Platonic Forms, the two descriptions about the same entities will be hopelessly incompatible. This is the point, I submit, at which my suggestion gives a way out of the difficulty. The 'forms' ambiguously cover both Socratic forms and Platonic Forms. When Socrates says that the 'forms' appear to be many, the referents are Socratic forms, but when he says that true philosophers can see the 'form' of the beautiful by itself, he means that they can see the Platonic Form of the Beautiful. The reason for the ambiguity is again the same as before, namely that the contrast between the philosophers and the many is the main concern for Plato in this argument. In other words, this argument is

---

<sup>130</sup> Cf. e.g. Burnyeat (2000, 36 n.51): 'The Theory of Forms makes its first appearance in the *Republic* [...] at 475e-476d. Socrates starts by saying it would not be easy to explain to someone other than Glaucon. That marks the context as more metaphysical than the earlier ones. In such a context, a phrase like "the beautiful itself" does indicate a transcendent Platonic Form.'

not intended to characterise the advanced philosophers who have already caught sight of Platonic Forms by contrasting them with less advanced philosophers and others; indeed, even Socrates' interlocutors in the early definitional dialogues, who know nothing about Platonic Forms, will admit the Socratic form of *F* is itself one, but appears to be many in association with actions, bodies, and other forms. It seems then reasonable to suppose that in the *Republic* too Plato has both Socratic forms and Platonic Forms in mind.

One might object here that later in the course of the argument (479a1-2) Socrates associates the 'form' in question with one of the characteristic formulae of Platonic Forms, i.e. 'always the same in every respect'. A careful reading, however, will show that my interpretation is not inconsistent with the passage in question:

(P40) I want to address a question to our friend [sc. a sight-lover] who doesn't believe in the beautiful itself (αὐτὸ ... καλόν) or a certain form of the beautiful itself that remains always the same in all respects (ιδέαν τινὰ αὐτοῦ κάλλους μηδεμίαν ἡγεῖται ἀεὶ κατὰ ταῦτὰ ὡσαύτως ἔχουσαν) but who does believe in the many beautiful things.

(478e7-479a3)

Note that Socrates does not simply say that the 'form' of the beautiful is always the same in every respect, but that only 'a certain form' of the beautiful is so. I suggest that the reason for Socrates' phrasing is precisely that the word 'form' is

itself ambiguous.<sup>131</sup> The implication of (P40) is in effect that the sight-lovers do not believe in the beautiful itself, or *a fortiori* the Platonic Form of the Beautiful.

Another, and perhaps more compelling, objection is related to the contrast between *being* (οὐσία) and *becoming* (γένεσις). In the *Republic*, Plato treats the *F* itself or εἶδος or ἰδέα as being, and many *F* things as becoming.<sup>132</sup> One might be tempted to think, then, that this simple classification already implies that the *F* itself or εἶδος or ἰδέα always are, and neither come into being nor perish, or, in a word, that they are Platonic Forms. To put it differently, one might object that the characterization I have given to Socratic forms in relation to (P37), i.e. that Socratic forms come to be and perish in a certain way, is not applicable to the *F* itself or εἶδος or ἰδέα in the *Republic*. My answer to this objection is that the 'being' in this context primarily means *being F*, and so the Socratic form of *F* can be considered to be a member of this category, since it *is always F* whenever it is instantiated. The 'being', in my view, does not have such a strong connotation as 'being always the same *in every respect*'. This may be ascertained by observing

---

<sup>131</sup> Adam (1969 vol.I, 342) seems to think that 'a certain' is used to signal an unfamiliar notion when he writes: 'ἰδέα has not yet been used in the *Republic* of the Idea; hence τινά'. I do not think that this is a plausible explanation. Glaucon, Socrates' interlocutor in this part of the *Republic*, is described as being quite familiar with the so-called theory of forms/Forms (see e.g. 507a7-9), and so the ἰδέα is certainly not a notion that is unfamiliar to him, if this word is indeed the technical term for a Platonic Form. Note that the situation is quite different from the one in the *Euthyphro*, in relation to which it is certainly true that Socrates mentions 'some one form' (μίαν τινὰ ἰδέαν 5d4) in order to introduce a notion that is unfamiliar to his interlocutor.

<sup>132</sup> Under my supposition that the *F* itself (or the 'form' of *F*) is ambiguous between the Socratic form and the Platonic Form of *F*, it is both Socratic forms and Platonic Forms that are identified with *being*. Very briefly, this will be ascertained from the following observation. At the beginning of the simile of Sun (507a7-b10), Socrates reintroduces the distinction between the *F* itself (or the 'form' of *F*) and many *F* things, and then identifies the former with the object of intellect (νοῦς) and the latter with the object of sight, which later at 534a1-2 turns out to be equivalent to the object of opinion (δόξα). He then says: 'Opinion (δόξα) is concerned with *becoming*, intellect (νόησις) with *being*.' (534a2-3) Thus, Plato seems to characterise the *F* itself (or the 'form' of *F*) as being and the many *F* things as becoming.

how the classification is introduced. The first reference to the distinction between being and becoming is found at the beginning of Book VI:

(P41) Let's agree that philosophic natures always love the sort of learning that makes clear to them some feature of *the being that always is* (τῆς οὐσίας τῆς ἀεὶ οὐσῆς) *and does not wander around because of coming to be and decaying* (μὴ πλανωμένης ὑπὸ γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς).

(485a10-b3)

This passage refers back to the argument for the separation of true philosophers from mere sight-lovers (475d1-480a13), in which the distinction is drawn between the *F* itself and many *F* things: the *F* itself purely *is F*,<sup>133</sup> and is the object of knowledge, while each of many *F* things is *the wandering intermediate* (τὸ μεταξὺ πλανητόν 479d8) because it is *F* and not-*F* (at different moments, in different relations, etc.), and is the object of opinion. (P41), then, should be understood in this light; the contrast of being and becoming amounts to the one between *being F* and *coming-to-be F* (or *ceasing-to-be F*). Further, the passage that contains the second reference to the contrast between being and becoming in the Sun analogy seems to support this interpretation, for in this passage too Socrates seems to connect the contrast with the argument about sight-lovers. The passage is worth considering in order to understand Plato's basic distinction, for it is soon after this passage, which is found much later than

---

<sup>133</sup> Here I am following the standard interpretation of the argument, cf. e.g. Annas (1981, 195-203).

(P41), that Socrates frequently refers to the distinction between being and becoming.<sup>134</sup>

(P42) When [the soul] focuses on something illuminated by truth and *what is* (τὸ ὄν), it understands, knows, and apparently possesses understanding, but when it focuses on what is mixed with obscurity, on *what comes to be and passes away* (τὸ γιγνόμενόν τε καὶ ἀπολλύμενον), it opines and is dimmed, changes its opinions this way and that, and seems bereft of understanding.

(508d3-8)

Socrates says here that something (*F*), when connected with ‘what is’, provides knowledge, but when understood as ‘what comes to be and passes away’ it provides mere opinion. That the contrast in this passage corresponds to the one we have seen in the argument about sight-lovers and in (P41) is plain enough. I suggest, then, that (P42) indicates that the object of knowledge is *what is F*, and the object of opinion is *what comes to be (or ceases to be) F*. It seems clear by now that Plato’s classification of the *F* itself or εἶδος or ἰδέα under being in the dichotomy between being and becoming in the *Republic* does not imply that they are Platonic Forms. The Socratic form of beauty, for example, may come into Helen or perish in her, but it is always beautiful as long as it exists, and never comes to be (or ceases to be) beautiful. It stands to reason, then, that the Socratic form of beauty belongs to being in contrast to becoming.

There are many issues I have left untouched, but I hope to have shown that

---

<sup>134</sup> See e.g. 518c8, 521d5, 525b3, c5, 526e7, 527b4-5, 533a10-c6, 534a2-4.

a good case can be made for the assumption that Plato has both Socratic forms and Platonic Forms in view in the middle dialogues. The Socratic form of *F* is a context-dependent entity, both one and many, and the subject of definition (or knowledge by definition), while the Platonic Form of *F* is a context-independent entity, simply one, and the object of knowledge (or expertise). From the next chapter on, I shall discuss Plato's later dialectic, and argue that Plato contrived collection and division as the method for reaching expert knowledge of *F* through the investigation of instances of the Socratic form of *F*. In the *Republic*, it is adumbrated as the method that makes use 'only of forms themselves, moving on from forms to forms, and ending in forms.' (511c2) Although Socrates here again uses 'forms' ambiguously, I suggest that only the last 'forms', the goal of the method, means Platonic Forms.

## Chapter 4: Dialectic in the *Phaedrus*

### §1. Introduction and the outline of the *Phaedrus*

The importance of the *Phaedrus* for the understanding of the method of collection and division cannot be overemphasised. It is chronologically the first dialogue that refers to this method, and so, if it is a sound assumption that the author explains his ideas attentively when he first introduces them, it is the dialogue in which a careful description of the method might be expected. It is also the only dialogue that refers to this method explicitly as the 'divisions and collections' (τῶν διαιρέσεων καὶ συναγωγῶν 266b3-4). Moreover, whereas all the other dialogues in which this method is mentioned or employed belong to the group of Plato's 'enigmatic' late dialogues—the dialogues that are notoriously even harder to interpret—the *Phaedrus* is customarily classified as one of the middle dialogues, in which Plato still keeps his clear writing style. All this shows that the dialogue should be an excellent starting point for the investigation into the method of collection and division.

However, I believe that the passages in the *Phaedrus* relevant for the understanding of this method have not been properly understood. Specifically, I think that the following interpretation of the method of collection, which is now virtually a matter of consensus among scholars, is simply mistaken. This interpretation is as follows: the main function of collection consists in the determination of the genus of the object under consideration prior to the



application of the method of division. Indeed, this interpretation seems to me to have been one of the principal sources of misunderstandings of Plato's later dialectic in general. Scholars derive this interpretation from some passages in the *Phaedrus*, but, in doing so, they often fail to pay enough attention to the surrounding context.<sup>135</sup> As a matter of fact, collection and division are actually features of the speeches Socrates delivers in the early part of the dialogue, and so it is essential for the proper understanding of the method in question to observe closely the connection between this method and Socrates' speeches. As it will turn out, however, this connection is highly complicated. A good starting point, then, will be a proper grasp of the whole design of the *Phaedrus*. Accordingly, I shall first offer an outline of the *Phaedrus* as I understand it, in order to try to clarify the way Socrates' speeches are related to the method of collection and division.

\*

\*

\*

The very basic framework of the *Phaedrus* is as follows. The dialogue is made up of two parts.<sup>136</sup> The first part (227a1-257b6) contains three speeches on love. The first speech read out by Phaedrus from a book written by Lysias makes the recommendation that a beautiful young boy should grant sexual favours to a man who does not love him rather than the one who loves him. The second and the third speeches are delivered impromptu by Socrates, who, sharing Lysias' opinion at first for the sake of rhetorical comparison,

---

<sup>135</sup> Santa-Cruz (1992) and Dixsaut (2001) have rightly called attention to this point.

<sup>136</sup> A dominant topic in recent discussion on the dialogue is the question how these two parts are related to each other, in such a way that the *Phaedrus*, a dialogue so acutely conscious of the significance of the unity of narrative, can be said to have its own unity. Cf. e.g. Rowe (1986b; 1989), Griswold (1986), Ferrari (1987), Heath (1989a; 1989b), Werner (2007).

disapproves of lovers in favour of non-lovers, but immediately after the 'revelation' that such criticism is blasphemous, retracts his first speech and praises the blessings of the god of love, Eros, instead. The second part (257b7-279c8) is mainly concerned with the examination and evaluation of speech writing. There are two main topics in this part: first, what the true science of rhetoric is like (259e1-274b5) and, second, how we should evaluate the act of writing (274b6-277a5). With this basic framework in mind, let us follow the development of the dialogue more closely.

At the beginning of the dialogue, Phaedrus reads out Lysias' speech, which proposes that a beautiful young boy should grant sexual favours to a man who does not love him rather than the one who loves him. Expressing admiration for this piece, Phaedrus says that he would not believe that anyone could write on the same topic a speech that is not only different from Lysias' but also longer and more significant. But Socrates does not agree with him, for he has a feeling that he himself could give a speech different from and no worse than Lysias'. At the urgent request of Phaedrus, Socrates delivers his first speech in which he blames a man-in-love in unison with Lysias.

Socrates' first speech takes the form of indirect narrative; he sets the scene in which an imaginary speaker, who is in love with a beautiful boy but disguises himself as a non-lover, tries to convince this boy (so as to win his favour) that love is always harmful to the one who is loved. This speech is conspicuously decked out with methodological remarks (237b7-d3 and 238d8-e2), according to which one should begin a speech with an agreed 'definition' (ὄρον 237d1) of its subject, and arrange the rest of the speech by observing this definition. Without

the definition of the subject of an inquiry, the imaginary speaker says, people will end up being unable to agree with either themselves or each other. Thus, he offers the definition of love as the result of a systematic consideration at the beginning of the speech, a part which is visibly separated from the rest by a brief intermission at 238c5-d7 (this search for the definition of love is later re-described as the division of human madness at 266a3-6). The definition in question is: 'the irrational desire which has gained control over judgement which urges a man towards the right, borne towards pleasure in beauty, and which is forcefully reinforced by the desires related to it in its pursuit of bodily beauty, overcoming them in its course' (238b7-c3). The rest of the speech reflects upon this definition and has a transparent structure because of this.<sup>137</sup>

It is uncertain at this stage how we should estimate the worth and the status of Socrates' first speech. Certainly, the methodological remarks about definition remind us of Socrates' views in the early dialogues. But Socrates argues that both Lysias' speech and his own are grave offences against gods, for they blamed Love, a son of Aphrodite and a god himself. He therefore concludes that these speeches are not true (242e4-243a2; see also 244a3-5). Moreover, Socrates is consistently unwilling to commit himself to his first speech.<sup>138</sup> Before

---

<sup>137</sup> This part of the speech further divides into four parts: (1) Love is harmful to soul, body, and the property of the one who is loved (238e2-240a9); (2) Love is not only harmful, but also unpleasant (240a10-e7); (3) Love is untrustworthy in respect of future (240e8-241c1); (4) the recapitulation and conclusion of the speech (241c1-d1). The harmfulness of love in (1) is directly deduced from the definition (238e2-239a2), and the untrustworthiness of love in (3) is explained on the basis of the bipartite theory of soul mentioned during the process of the definition of love. Though the unpleasantness of love in (2) is mostly related to the age-gap between the lover and the one who is loved, its relation to the definition being at the best unclear, I suggest that the unity of the narrative is nonetheless created through its return to the definition in (3).

<sup>138</sup> His unwillingness to accept the authorship of his first speech can also be seen from his actions: he gives his first speech with his head covered (237a4) while he delivers his second speech with his head bare (243b6).

beginning the speech, Socrates denies that the speech is his own creation on the grounds of his ignorance, and claims that he heard it from Sappho, Anacreon, or some prose-writer (235c3-8). During the speech, he attributes his own fluency to the influence of the gods of the place, the Nymphs (238d1, 241a4; also mentioned with Pan at 263d5-6). After his remarks on the blasphemy involved, he teasingly attributes this speech to Phaedrus (243e9-244a2). It seems, then, that Socrates considers his first speech utterly worthless and dismisses it quickly when he sees the necessity for its recantation. But later, in the second part of the dialogue, it will turn out that this is not exactly the case.

Socrates retracts his sacrilegious speech and praises the bliss of Love in his second speech, which he calls the 'palinode', and which he temporarily attributes to Stesichorus because of the similarity of the situation in which the recantation is required (244a2-3; cf. 243a2-b7). Socrates first points out what was wrong with his first speech: it wrongly presupposed that all madness was bad. In fact, there are kinds of madness that are the source of goodness for human beings, that is, prophetic, teletic, and poetic madness (244a6-245a8). Likewise, love is a divine madness—a fourth kind, one that is the greatest of goods (cf. 249d4-5). Socrates' second speech soars up into the poetical heights, bulging in the process with various elements of Platonic philosophy, such as a proof of the immortality of soul, the tripartite theory of soul, the 'theory of Platonic Forms', the reincarnation of soul, the theory of recollection. The palinode informs us that divine love is inspired by the recollection of the Form of Beauty, and that it leads us to a blissful afterlife, potentially shortening the time of our exile from the heavens (or at least until the next divine feast).

Phaedrus is greatly impressed by Socrates' second speech, and now admits that Lysias might appear wretched in comparison with Socrates, even if Lysias is willing to compete with him. But then Phaedrus says that he doubts Lysias' willingness, since a certain politician criticised Lysias for his being a 'writer'; Lysias will refrain from writing because he does not want to lose face. To this Socrates replies that Phaedrus' idea is ridiculous, for politicians are always desperate to compose a speech that will survive them and earn them undying fame, as is clear from such examples as Lycurgus, Solon, or Darius. It is clear to everyone, he says, that writing speeches is not itself a shameful act, although there are acceptable and unacceptable ways of speaking and writing. Socrates then proposes to examine what these ways are. (Later it will turn out that in Socrates' view the act of writing becomes shameful when the speaker lacks either (1) the science of rhetoric or (2) the appropriate evaluation of the act of writing.<sup>139</sup> He discusses the science of rhetoric in 259e1-274b5 and the appropriate evaluation of writing in 274b6-277a5.)

After a brief digression with the story about cicadas as divine messengers (258e6-259d9), Socrates suggests that it is necessary for anyone who wants to write well to know the truth of what he is going to talk about (259e4-6). But Phaedrus is not so certain about this, for he has heard that what a rhetorician needs to learn is not what really is just or good but what appears to be just or good to the audience (259e7-260a4). His reaction induces Socrates to offer some examples of the terrible situations that might be brought about through an act of persuasion based on the belief of the audience: if the audience should

---

<sup>139</sup> See the summary at 277a6-278b6.

mistake a horse for a donkey or the good for the bad (the two cases are contrasted: the one is merely ridiculous, the other is catastrophic), a rhetorician would have to recommend a donkey instead of a horse or what is bad instead of what is good (260a5-d2). In order to avoid such terrible situations, then, a rhetorician needs to know the truth about the subject of a speech. At this point, however, Socrates brings up an imaginary claim made by a personified, self-professed 'science of speeches', that is, to know the truth is necessary, but not sufficient, for anyone to be a rhetorician; he also has to learn the science of speeches that is independent of the truth (260d3-9). Phaedrus thinks her claim is just, but Socrates has reasons to doubt it: there are arguments that assert this 'science of speeches' is nothing more than an unscientific knack, as well as the Spartans' testimony that there is no science of speaking that is independent of the truth (260e1-7). Thus they set out on an examination of those arguments.

For the argument I shall later develop, I would like to stop here and propose to understand the nature of the dispute between the self-professed 'science of speeches' and Socrates in the following way. The 'science of speeches' concedes that a rhetorician needs to know the truth about the subject of a speech, as is demonstrated by the examples of horse and donkey or what is good and bad, but she still claims that he also has to learn how to compose a persuasive speech, how to perform persuasively in front of his audience, and the like, which are in her opinion independent of the truth. Socrates, by contrast, suggests that even these issues are dependent on the truth. In order to show this, Socrates again discusses the truth of the subject of a speech, but this time he argues that knowledge of the subject acquired through the method of collection and

division is essential for any acts of persuasion in terms of the *content* of a speech (261a7-266c1). And then, after he has dismissed the currently popular skills of speech writing (which seem to be the main part of what the 'science of speeches' claimed to be truth-independent) as a mere preliminary (266c1-269c5), he goes on to argue that knowledge of the soul acquired through the method of collection and division (and knowledge about what kind of soul is affected by what kind of speeches, etc.) is essential for the genuine science of rhetoric in terms of its *performance* (269c6-272b6). The true science of rhetoric is, therefore, entirely dependent on the truth, and so what the 'science of speeches' claimed is not true.

But let us come back to the starting point of the refutation of the self-professed 'science of speeches', where Socrates defines the science of rhetoric as 'a kind of leading of the soul by means of things said, not only in law-courts and all other kinds of public gatherings, but in private ones too' (261a7-9). At first, Phaedrus accepts only the science of rhetoric practised in lawsuits and public addresses, and so Socrates points out that at the heart of every kind of rhetorical practice there is one and the same skill working, i.e. the science (or pseudoscience) of antilogic, and this skill is practised not only by the opposing parties in law-courts or public gatherings, but also by Zeno in private conversation. The function of antilogic is to make the same thing appear to the same people at one time *F*, at another the opposite of *F* by exploiting the similarity that exists between the thing in question and others (261c4-262b4). Since this is possible only for those who know what each thing really is, Socrates concludes, anyone who follows the appearance instead of the truth of

the subject of a speech will be ridiculously unscientific (262b5-c4).

The argument above should be sufficient to show that the truth is essential for rhetoric in terms of the *content* of a speech, but it is quite abstract as it stands, and requires examples. It is at this point that Socrates refers back to the speeches delivered earlier in the dialogue in order to find the examples of scientific and unscientific features (262c5-7). Further, he says that these speeches seem to 'have in them an example of how someone who knows the truth can mislead his audience by making play in what he says' (262c10-d2), although he does not forget to add that, if it is found in his speech, the gods of the place (i.e. the Nymphs and Pan) are responsible for it, and he himself does not share the science of speaking. The purpose of the examination of the speeches on love is thus twofold: one purpose is to show the scientific features that can be found in them, and the other is to show how the speaker was able to mislead the audience. This examination starts with Socrates' remark that there are things about which we are in agreement (e.g. iron, silver) and ones about which we are at odds with each other (e.g. just, good). The science of rhetoric has a greater power when it deals with the latter kinds of thing as its subject, and 'love', the subject of Lysias' and Socrates' speeches, is one of them (263a2-c12). After this, Socrates says that his first speech defined what love is at the beginning, but Lysias conspicuously neglected to define.<sup>140</sup> The Nymphs and Pan, to whom Socrates attributes his first speech, are therefore 'more scientific' (263d5) than

---

<sup>140</sup> Though Socrates does not make clear whether it is his first or second speech or both that gave the definition of love at the beginning, it is evident that he means only his first speech. For one thing, the definition of divine love is not explicitly given at any point in his second speech (and in any case the first reference to divine love is given near the middle of the speech). For another, possession by the Nymphs was mentioned in the course of the first speech (238d1, 241e4).



Lysias, whose speech was lacking structure because of this negligence (263d1-e3). In addition, he mentions that his second speech made use of the procedure of division (264e4-265c4). These two procedures, definition and division, are apparently intended to be the scientific feature he has been looking for. Then he poses the following question: How was his speech able to pass over from censure to praise? (265c5-6). He does not, however, give an explicit answer to this question. Instead, he introduces the method of collection and division in one of the two crucial passages for our interpretation of the method (let us call it passage **(A)**). I shall discuss this passage and its surrounding context roughly described in the present paragraph later in great detail. At any rate, **(A)** concludes the section in which Socrates talks about the *content* of a speech.

Phaedrus then says that they have not yet hit upon the science of rhetoric. His words surprise Socrates, who answers: 'What do you mean? Could there be anything fine, anywhere, which is divorced from these things and is nonetheless grasped in a scientific way?' (266d1-2) Phaedrus here seems to echo the self-professed 'science of speaking'; he seems to be trying to say that they have not yet discussed the *performance* of a speech, in terms of the currently popular rhetorical skills that are to be enumerated and downgraded as a mere preliminary by Socrates soon afterwards (266d2-269c5). By contrast, in answering with the words quoted above, Socrates seems to be suggesting that even the performance of a speech is to be based on the method of collection and division. This becomes clear when he introduces what he calls the Hippocratic method (269d6-272b6). The *performance* of rhetoric depends on knowledge of the

nature of soul, and it is the method of collection and division that provides this knowledge. The method of collection and division, or the truth attained by this method, is therefore essential for the science of rhetoric in terms of *both* contents *and* performance. Socrates summarises the discussion on the science of rhetoric given thus far in the form of a dialogue with Tisias (272b7-274b5).

Next, Socrates moves on to discuss the appropriate evaluation of the act of writing. First, he narrates the story of Theuth and talks about the weakness of written words (274b6-275e6). Just as Ammon, king of all Egypt, warned when Theuth first invented them, written words can be no more than 'a reminder to the man who knows the subjects to which the things written relate' (275c8-d2). One will be mistaken if one thinks that written words are something clear or certain. Even if someone asks them something in order to learn, written words will just give the same sign to him on every occasion, and will not answer his question. On top of this, written words will pass into the hands of everyone, whether he knows the subject or not, and will need their author's protection to avoid unjust abuse. But, Socrates says, there is a different kind of words, words accompanied by knowledge, which can be imprinted directly in the soul by the science of dialectic (276a1-277a5).

Socrates then gives a summary of the discussion on the way speaking or writing is acceptable (and the way it is unacceptable). First—and this is another crucial passage for our investigation, which I shall name passage **(B)**—Socrates sums up the discussion on the science of rhetoric that can be acquired by employing the method of collection and division in respect of *both* contents *and* performance (277a6-c7). Second, he summarises the conclusion of the

appropriate evaluation of the act of writing: an author must be aware of the limits of written words, and must regard words 'genuinely written in the soul' (278a3) as superior to them (277d1-278b6). After some remarks about the messages Socrates and Phaedrus should deliver to Isocrates and Lysias, the dialogue ends with a final prayer (278b7-279c8).

\*

\*

\*

In what follows, I would like to suggest that the context shows that there is no ground for the widely-shared interpretation of the method of collection as the (seemingly trivial) procedure of the specification of the genus of the object under consideration prior to the application of the method of division. Instead, I shall suggest that collection is Socrates' procedure for definition, i.e. the procedure of finding the distinctive characteristic that is common to many and various instances, and this is the procedure that requires our synoptic power and is often difficult to employ. I would also like to argue that there are two types of application of the method of collection and division in the dialogue: definition and what I call 'internal analysis'. The purpose of definition is to distinguish the object under consideration from all the other things, so that we can agree both with ourselves and with each other what the object in question is. The purpose of internal analysis is, by contrast, to analyse the object under consideration scientifically by determining the function of every instance of it, so that we can be experts in the domain in question. Division has only limited importance as an auxiliary device when it comes to the procedure for definition, but comes to the fore when internal analysis is at issue. Since definition (or collection) is among the central concerns of Plato's early and middle dialogues,

it is division and internal analysis that freshly come into focus in the *Phaedrus* and is truly Platonic in contrast to the Socratic method.

The order of my discussion will be the following. In section 2 I shall present the crucial passages for the ensuing discussion. In section 3 I shall describe the traditional interpretation which identifies collection with the detection of the genus of the object under consideration. In section 4 I shall argue that the context does not support the traditional interpretation; rather, it points to a new interpretation which identifies collection with definition. In section 5 I shall introduce internal analysis mainly in response to an objection from the side of the traditional interpretation. Section 6 is the conclusion of our discussion.

## *§2. The crucial passages and some preliminary observations*

As is indicated in the outline of the *Phaedrus* above, the crucial passages for the interpretation of Plato's method of collection and division are **(A)** 265c8-266c1 and **(B)** 277b2-c6. Both passages belong to the second part of the dialogue, and are concerned with the science of rhetoric; **(A)** is found in the middle of the discussion on the science of rhetoric, while **(B)** is placed close to the end of the dialogue, summarising the discussion on the science of rhetoric after the appropriate evaluation of the act of writing has been discussed.

### **(A)** 265c8-266c1

SOCRATES: To me it seems that the rest really was playfully done, by way of amusement; but by chance these certain two forms (δυσὸν εἰδοῖν) having been introduced, it would be gratifying if one could grasp their significance in a scientific

way.

PHAEDRUS: What were these?

SOCRATES: First, there is perceiving together and bringing into one form items that are scattered in many places, in order that one can define each thing and make clear whatever it is that one wishes to instruct one's audience about on any occasion (εἰς μίαν τε ἰδέαν συνορῶντα ἄγειν τὰ πολλαχῆ διεσπαρμένα, ἵνα ἕκαστον ὀριζόμενος δῆλον ποιῆ περὶ οὗ ἂν αἰεὶ διδάσκειν ἐθέλη). **Just so with (ὥσπερ)** the things said just now about love, about what it is when defined (ὃ ἔστιν ὀρισθέν): whether it was right or wrong, the speech was able to say what was at any rate clear and self-consistent because of that.

PHAEDRUS: And what is the second form (εἶδος) you refer to, Socrates?

SOCRATES: Being able to divide again, form by form, according to its natural joints (τὸ πάλιν κατ' εἶδη δύνασθαι διατέμνειν κατ' ἄρθρα ἢ πέφυκεν), and not try to break any part (μέρος) into pieces, like an inexpert butcher; **as (ὥσπερ)** just now the two speeches took the unreasoning aspect of the mind as one form (εἶδος) together, and just as a single body naturally has its parts in pairs, with both members of each pair having the same name, and labelled respectively left and right, so too the two speeches regarded derangement as naturally a single form in us (ἐν ἐν ἡμῖν πεφυκὸς εἶδος), and the one cut off the part (μέρος) on the left-hand side, then cutting it again, and not giving up until it had found among the parts a love which is, as we say, 'left-handed', and abused it with full justice, while the other speech led us to the parts of madness on the right-hand side, and discovering and exhibiting a love which shares the same name as the other, but is divine, it praised it as cause of our greatest goods.

PHAEDRUS: Very true.

SOCRATES: Now I am myself, Phaedrus, a lover of these divisions and collections (τῶν διαιρέσεων καὶ συναγωγῶν), so that I may be able both to speak and to think; and if I think anyone else has the natural capacity to look to one and to many, I pursue him 'in his footsteps, behind him, as if he were a god'. And furthermore, those who can do this—whether I give them the right name or not, god knows, but at any rate up till now I have called them experts in dialectic (διαλεκτικούς).

**(B)** 277b2-c6

SOCRATES: Well then, what is scientific and what is unscientific seems to me to have been demonstrated in fair measure.

PHAEDRUS: I thought so; but remind me again how.

SOCRATES: Until a man knows the truth about each of the things about which he speaks or writes, and becomes capable of defining the whole by itself (κατ' αὐτό τε πᾶν ὀρίξεσθαι δυνατὸς γένηται), and having defined it, knows how to cut it up again according to its forms until it can no longer be cut (ὀρισάμενός τε πάλιν κατ' εἶδη μέχρη τοῦ ἀτιμήτου τέμνειν ἐπισηθῆ); and until he has reached an understanding of the nature of soul along the same lines (κατὰ ταῦτά), discovering the form (εἶδος) which fits each nature, and so arranges and orders his speech, offering a complex soul complex speeches containing all the modes, and simple speeches to a simple soul—not before then will he be capable of pursuing the making of speeches as a whole (τὸ λόγων γένος) in a scientific way, to the degree that its nature allows, whether for the purposes of teaching or persuading, as the whole of our previous argument has indicated.

First of all, I would like to make some preliminary observations on the passages quoted above for the sake of the argument that follows. In **(A)** the following two procedures are introduced:

- (A1)** The procedure of perceiving together and bringing into one form items that are scattered in many places in order that one can define X (the subject of instruction)<sup>141</sup> and make it clear. (265d3-5)
- (A2)** The procedure of cutting things up, form by form, according to their natural joints. (265e1-2)

Immediately afterwards, these procedures are collectively referred as 'divisions and collections' (266b3-4); descriptions such as 'bringing into one' or 'cutting up' clearly indicate that 'collection' and 'division' refer to **(A1)** and **(A2)** respectively.<sup>142</sup> The primary task of the present chapter is, then, to clarify these

---

<sup>141</sup> I have replaced both 'each thing' and 'whatever it is that one wishes to instruct one's audience about on any occasion' with X (the subject of instruction). That these two do not refer to different objects is clear from the illustration provided, in which the object of definition and that of instruction are one and the same thing, i.e. 'love'.

<sup>142</sup> One might object here that it is not correct to call **(A2)** 'division' as such on the ground that was first pointed out by Hackforth (1972, 142-43) and has been accepted by many scholars since: dividing things in accordance with forms implies collecting them into those very forms; for example, when we divide divine madness into four different kinds, i.e. Apollo's prophetic madness, Dionysus' mystic madness, the Muses' poetic madness, and Aphrodite's and Eros' love-related madness (see 262b2-c3), we simultaneously collect each of them out of the multifarious phenomena of divine madness (cf. e.g. Dixsaut (2001, 111-30), who would call **(A1)** 'rassembler' and **(A2)** 'diviser et rassembler'). Now, I fully agree that division always works in tandem with collection (indeed, I believe my interpretation of collection explains this cooperation of division and collection more smoothly than the widely-shared 'traditional interpretation' I shall discuss in the next section). However, even though the actual operation of **(A2)** involves collection as well as division, the description in **(A2)** is only concerned with one *aspect* of this actual procedure, and in this sense it is justifiable to call it 'division'. Accordingly, I shall call **(A1)** and **(A2)** 'collection' and 'division' respectively without being committed to the view that each procedure is always used independently. I shall briefly come back to the cooperation of collection and division in the concluding remarks of this chapter, but put off close examination of the subject until next chapter in order to avoid unnecessary complication.

two procedures in **(A)**.

Of course, the illustrations attached to the description of collection and division (marked by two **ὥσπερ**'s indicated in bold) claim first consideration. The problem is that these illustrations, taken from Socrates' speeches delivered in the first part of the dialogue, are by no means a straightforward explication of the method. First, the illustration of **(A1)** gives us very little information: it simply refers us back to 'the things said just now about love, about what it is when defined' (265d5-6), and does not tell us what is meant by 'one form' or 'items that are scattered in many places'. It contains, however, one very important indication: Socrates' speech was able to say what is clear and self-consistent because of this procedure. *It seems at least clear that, whatever collection consists in, Socrates thinks that the clarity and self-consistency of his speech are the outcome of collection.* Second, the illustration of **(A2)** seems to provide us with information that is not naturally expected from the description of a cutting process. It noticeably refers to the postulation of the form of madness prior to the cutting process twice at 265e4 and 266a2-3, and also to the abuse and praise of the things that have emerged as the result of division. Neither of the illustrations attached to the procedures, then, taken by itself, provides us with clear directions as to how we should understand the procedures illustrated. This apparent unclarity, however, can be explained, or so I shall argue later, if we understand **(A)** in its proper context.

**(B)** is also important for the interpretation of the method of collection and division, since, on the face of it, the same procedures as those in **(A)** seem to be mentioned, if in a slightly different way. Indeed, as we shall see in a moment,



some scholars find crucial evidence for their interpretation of the method in this passage. In **(B)** the following two procedures are mentioned in connection with the *content* of a speech.

**(B1)** The procedure of defining the whole by itself. (277b6)

**(B2)** The procedure, subsequent to the definition, of cutting it up according to its forms until it can no longer be cut. (277b7-8)

The mastery of these procedures is one of the requirements of the science of rhetoric. The other requirements include the understanding of the nature of the soul (obtained in the same way as these procedures) and of the causes of conviction and non-conviction in the application of a certain kind of speech to a certain kind of soul.

### §3. *The traditional interpretation*

Interestingly, even though there is much disagreement about the details, many scholars share a basic intuition about the method of collection and division. I would like to call this 'the traditional interpretation'. According to this interpretation, **(A1)** is essentially the procedure of discovering the genus of the subject under consideration, and is applied prior to **(A2)**, which is, in turn, the procedure of dividing the genus we have discovered through **(A1)** into its species and sub-species until we reach the subject with which we have originally started and provide its definition.<sup>143</sup> In the interest of brevity, I would

---

<sup>143</sup> This interpretation is supported by e.g. Thompson (1868, 107), Cornford (1957, 170), 176

like to symbolise 'the subject of teaching' (or the definiendum) as  $X$  and 'the genus of  $X$ ' as  $Y$  hereafter. The traditional interpretation may then be summarised as: **(A1)** is the procedure of discovering  $Y$  by collecting  $X$  together with other (sub-)species of  $Y$ , and **(A2)** is the procedure of dividing  $Y$  into its species and sub-species until  $X$  is reached and the definition of  $X$  is provided.

But here is an immediate stumbling block to the traditional interpretation, and the supporters of this interpretation divide into two groups according to how they avoid this problem. The problem is that the definition is clearly mentioned as a purpose of **(A1)** and not of the whole procedure. If the purpose of collection is only to discover  $Y$ , and if the definition is given only after both collection and division, why does Socrates mention it at this stage? Those who belong to the first group answer that the definition is mentioned as a *remote* purpose of collection.<sup>144</sup> They admit that just to determine  $Y$  is not sufficient for providing a definition, but this does not prevent us from saying that definition is a purpose of collection, since we undertake **(A1)** with a view to attain a definition. On the other hand, those who belong to the second group suggests that the 'definition' in **(A1)** means the determination of  $Y$ ; it does not mean the definition that may be obtained at the end of the whole procedure. Guthrie is one of those who propose such a view, writing: 'Its original meaning of "setting a boundary" is still alive and what the dialectician does is to erect a fence, as it

---

Ross (1953, 81-82), Hackforth (1952, 132 n.4), Moravcsik (1973a, 166-67), Guthrie (1975, 427-31), White (1976, 120), Rowe (1986a, 299), Griswold (1986, 175), Nehamas and Woodruff (1995, xxxii), Frede (2004, 148), Dorter (2006, 260), Delcomminette (2006, 102).

<sup>144</sup> The members of the first group, which is the less popular of the two groups, include Cornford and Rowe. Cf. Cornford (1957, 184-87); Rowe (1986a, 200): 'This does not mean that collection itself provides the definition (one can hardly claim to have defined something merely by discovering its genus), but that is a necessary *preliminary* to it' (his italics).

were, enclosing an area within which the quarry will be found, though it is not alone in it.<sup>145</sup> (In order to avoid confusion, let us call the definition in this special sense 'definition<sub>(s)</sub>'.) In contrast to the first group, the second group will regard the definition<sub>(s)</sub> as the *immediate* purpose of collection.

It should be noticed here that any supporter of the traditional interpretation, whether he or she belongs to the first or the second groups, would have to regard the clarity and self-consistency mentioned in the illustration attached to **(A1)** as *the outcome of the determination of Y*. Under this interpretation, these cannot be the outcome of the definition of X that may be acquired at the end of both collection and division. For, *under the traditional interpretation*, if Socrates' illustration were to be an illustration of the definition of X, it would be simply out of place, and collection would be left unillustrated.<sup>146</sup> As I shall argue later, this is one of the fundamental weaknesses of the traditional interpretation. In fact, though Socrates mentions the positive outcome of definition many times, he does not say a word about the benefit that is derived from the determination of Y.

---

<sup>145</sup> Guthrie (1975, 428 n.1). Apart from him, Hackforth, de Vries, Griswold, and Nehamas and Woodruff belong to the second group. Cf. Hackforth (1952, 132 n.5): 'By "definition" here we should understand no more than the determination of the genus of ἔρωσ; de Vries (1969, 216): 'In fact, the only definition of love, given so far, was its subsumption under μανία; Griswold (1986, 180): 'This definition precedes the divisions in that it supplies the teacher with a way of focusing and giving preliminary direction to the divisions'; Nehamas and Woodruff (1995, xxxii).

<sup>146</sup> Certainly, it is not impossible for someone who belongs to the first group of the traditional interpreters to avoid this consequence, by claiming that Socrates has simply turned his attention to definition after he has introduced it as a remote purpose of collection (in this case, only one line, 265d3, plus one word, διεσπαρμένα, would be related to collection, and 265d4-7 to definition). But this claim seems to me too implausible to be a serious option, especially when the wider context is taken into consideration. The investigation of scientific features of Lysias' and Socrates' speeches starts at 262c5 and ends with **(A)**. If the claim above is correct, then why does he give collection, one of the important scientific features, only one line out of about 4 Stephanus pages?

Though the traditional interpretation mostly relies on **(A)** for the understanding of the procedures in question, those who belong to the second group also refer to passage **(B)** in order to justify their view.<sup>147</sup> Unfortunately, however, they have hardly ever discussed in detail how this passage will corroborate their view. In order not to lessen the plausibility of the traditional interpretation unjustly, therefore, I myself shall offer the sort of argument that I believe is presupposed by those scholars who belong to the second group. This argument is strongly motivated by the observation that **(B1)** and **(B2)** as described in passage **(B)** refer back to **(A1)** and **(A2)** respectively. It seems clear, so the argument goes, that these are the same procedures. First, **(B1)** and **(B2)** are related to the *content* of a speech (in contrast to the *performance*), which was the topic of the discussion when **(A1)** and **(A2)** are introduced. Second, both **(A1)** and **(B1)** are associated with definition, and both **(A2)** and **(B2)** are the procedure of cutting things up in accordance with forms. The correspondence looks perfect, and so obviously **(B1)** and **(B2)** are intended by Plato to be the restatement of **(A1)** and **(A2)**. But if this is the case, a few conclusions will inevitably be drawn. First, since it is explicitly stated that **(B1)** precedes **(B2)**, **(A1)** must precede **(A2)** too. Second, the function of **(A1)** will be specified as the determination of  $\gamma$ . Socrates says in **(A)** that he first ‘took the unreasoning aspect of the mind as one form together’ (266a2-3) before he set out to divide it. Though this description is a part of the illustration attached to division, strictly speaking, the taking of the one form does not belong to division, but precedes it as a preliminary. But it has already been demonstrated that collection precedes

---

<sup>147</sup> E.g. Ross (1953, 81 n.3), Guthrie (1975, 428), and Griswold (1986, 175).

division. It seems reasonable to suppose, then, that this is the function of collection, i.e. the determination of  $Y$  (in this case, the genus of love). Finally, it will follow that the 'definition' in **(A1)** means no more than the determination of  $Y$ . As is already shown, **(A1)** and **(B1)** are the same procedure, but **(B1)** is clearly the procedure of definition<sub>(s)</sub>, and so therefore is **(A1)**. Socrates, then, would refer to **(A1)**, the determination of  $Y$ , as 'definition<sub>(s)</sub>'. The words 'defining' (ὀρίζομενος 265d4) and 'having been defined' (ὀρισθέν 265d6) in **(A)** therefore should not be associated with definition here, but only with definition<sub>(s)</sub>, i.e. the determination of  $Y$ . In a nutshell, if the two procedures found in **(A)** and **(B)** are identical, as this argument claims, then the view of the second group of the traditional interpreters is simply a matter of logical consequence.

Now let us sum up the traditional interpretation. The basic proposals that characterise this interpretation consist in the following two propositions.

**(C1)** **(A1)** precedes **(A2)**.

**(C2)** Collection is the procedure of discovering  $Y$ .

But, depending on how they understand the meaning of the 'definition', the supporters of the traditional interpretation divide into two groups. Those who belong to the first group suppose that the 'definition' means definition, i.e. the description of the distinctive characteristic of the object under consideration, which is the outcome of both collection and division, and so propose that:

(C3) Definition is gained after both collection, in the sense given in (C2), and division.

By contrast, those who belong to the second group argue that the 'definition' means no more than the determination of  $Y$ , and propose that:

(C4) Definition<sub>(s)</sub> is the same as collection in the sense given in (C2).

The proposals of the first group, i.e. (C1), (C2), and (C3), are simply derived from passage (A), and no further pieces of evidence are found in the *Phaedrus*. The proposals of the second group, i.e. (C1), (C2), and (C4), by contrast, might be put forward as some logical consequences of the hypothesis that the two procedures found in (A) and (B) are identical. This is the outline of the traditional interpretation that is still now widely accepted. But in what follows I shall argue that none of (C1) – (C4) offers a correct understanding of the method of collection and division.

#### §4. *The role of definition in the Phaedrus*

In order to see whether or not the traditional interpretation is tenable, I would like to examine the role of definition in the *Phaedrus*. There are two passages that I think will shed light on the function of definition in the dialogue.<sup>148</sup> The first is an imaginary speaker's attempt to define love provided

---

<sup>148</sup> In the *Phaedrus*, 'definition' (ὄρος) or 'to define' (ὀρίζω) is used seven times: 237d1, 238d9, 239d4, 263d2, 265d4, 6, 269b6. The usage at 239d4 is irrelevant, since it is concerned with 'one summary point' rather than a definition. The other occurrences all

at the beginning of Socrates' first speech (237b7-238c4), and the second is Socrates' remarks about the importance of definition especially in relation to the structure of speeches (263c7-264e3). I shall investigate the latter passage—which is placed very close to passage (A)—with the surrounding context.

#### §4.1. *The role of definition in Socrates' first speech*

Let us then consider Socrates' first speech. At the outset of the speech, an imaginary speaker observes that most people are unaware of their ignorance about 'what each thing [i.e. the subject of a speech] really is' (τὴν οὐσίαν ἐκάστου 237c3) and, as a speech develops, end up floundering in a situation in which 'they agree neither with themselves nor with each other' (οὔτε ... ἑαυτοῖς οὔτε ἀλλήλοις ὁμολογοῦσιν 237c5). It is thus necessary for anyone who wishes to avoid this confusion to 'establish an agreed *definition* of love' (ὁμολογία θέμενοι ὄρον 237d1) about 'what sort of thing it is and what power it possesses' (οἷόν τ' ἔστι καὶ ἣν ἔχει δύναμιν 237c8-d1) at the beginning of his speech. After these methodological remarks, the imaginary speaker points out 'that love is some sort of desire is clear to everyone' (237d3-4). But having desire is not a sufficient criterion for being a lover, since a non-lover too desires beauty. He thus puts forward the idea that there are two forms of soul in each of us, the one being 'an inborn desire for pleasures' (237d7-8) and the other 'an acquired judgement which aims at the best' (237d8-9). The state in which the former

---

belong to the passages I shall discuss below apart from the one at 269b6. This passage is also important: 'one should not get angry, but be forgiving, if some people who are ignorant of dialectic prove unable to give a definition of what rhetoric is, and as a result of being in this state think that they have discovered rhetoric when they have learned the necessary preliminaries to the science'.

controls the latter is called by the name of excess, which in turn divides into many forms in accordance with a different object of desire. Love is one of them, its object being bodily beauty. The full description of love is therefore the following: 'the irrational desire which has gained control over judgement which urges a man towards the right, borne towards pleasure in beauty, and which is forcefully reinforced by the desires related to it in its pursuit of bodily beauty, overcoming them in its course' (238b7-c3). After a brief interruption by Socrates (238c5-d7), the imaginary speaker confirms that they 'have stated and *defined*' (εἴρηται τε καὶ ὠρίσται 238d9) what love is.

Now I think it is fairly clear that the definition of love in Socrates' first speech is not the determination of the genus of love, i.e. 'love is some sort of desire', as the second group of traditional interpreters will by implication be claiming. One might think that the determination of the genus would certainly inform us 'what sort of thing it is' (237c8).<sup>149</sup> However, it is unlikely that it would help us agree as to 'what power [N.B. not *what sort of* power] it possesses' (237c8-d1). More decisively, the imaginary speaker says 'that love is some sort of desire is clear to *everyone*' (237d3-4). If the definition in question were to be clear to everyone, surely finding fault with most people about their ignorance would be pointless. In short, the definition at issue here must be something that is at least more informative and less obvious. The detailed description of love given at 238b7-c3 satisfies these conditions, and there seems

---

<sup>149</sup> However, I think οἷον τ' ἔστι here means 'what it is' rather than 'what it is like'. The two things are contrasted at 246a4-6: 'To say what kind of thing [the form of soul] is (οἷον μὲν ἔστι) would require a long exposition, and one calling for utterly superhuman powers; to say what it resembles (ὅψ δὲ εἰκλεν) requires a shorter one, and one within human capacities.'



to be no other candidate in the passage under consideration. This description therefore must be the definition of love, and it is the description of the distinctive characteristic of (human) love.

This does not indicate, however, that Socrates' first speech is harmonious with the view of the first group of traditional interpreters. The first group is justified only in their claim that definition is provided after the process of division. This claim is certainly right; the imaginary speaker's progression towards the definition of love could be best described as the process of dividing or discriminating various kinds of desire, and Socrates himself confirms this later in the illustration of division when he says that, by applying the method of division, he discovered human love and justly abused it (see 266a3-6).<sup>150</sup> However, in terms of what brings about self-consistency, the traditional interpretation, whether represented by the first or the second group, is at loggerheads with the passage under consideration. As already noted, the

---

<sup>150</sup> Dixsaut, one of the few non-traditionalists, has a different view: 'Pour définir erôs Socrate a donc tenu ensemble son genre (*l'epithumia*), le type de force déraisonnable (*alogos*) qui est le sien et qui entraîne en nous la démesure (*hubris*) ainsi que le type de force qu'il cherche à vaincre (*la sôphrosunè*), et pour finir son objet: le plaisir que procure la beauté corporelle. Ce sont ces éléments dispersés qu'il a su voir ensemble et rassembler en une *idea* unique, et c'est ce rassemblement qui lui permet de la définir' (2001, 118). She then suggests that this collection (=A1) has only a rhetorical function, providing the speaker with clarity and coherence, which are derived from the *form* of a speech, and are independent of the veracity of the *content*, and that this rhetorical collection is distinct from the collection of the dialectic proper which operates together with division (=A2). However, I do not think that Plato accepts that the clarity and coherence are independent of the content; there are plenty of examples in the early dialogues in which Socrates' interlocutor is compelled to confess his inconsistency precisely because he gave a wrong definition (cf. Griswold 1986, 59-60). It is true that Socrates is not sure whether the definition provided in his first speech was right or wrong (see 265d6), but the reason is that it was 'right, as a definition of love of one kind (...), wrong, in so far as it pretended to be a definition of love in general' (Rowe (1986a, 201)). Moreover, the implication of Socrates' refutation of the self-professed 'science of speeches' seems to be that there is no rhetorical function that is independent of the truth (Dixsaut's rhetorical collection smacks of the popular rhetorical skills Socrates disapproves of at 266c1-267d9). From these considerations, I conclude that Plato does not make a distinction among collections in the way Dixsaut suggests.

illustration of collection indicates that Socrates' speech was clear and self-consistent because of collection. For the traditional interpretation, 'because of collection' means 'because of the determination of Y' (see (C2) above). The imaginary speaker, by contrast, clearly regards the self-consistency as *the outcome of definition*, for he says definition helps them avoid the situation in which they agree neither *with themselves* nor with each other. Indeed, he never suggests that the determination of the genus of love, 'love is some sort of desire', can be helpful in this respect. Socrates' speech is self-consistent because of the definition of love and not because of the determination of the genus of love. I therefore conclude that Socrates' first speech does not support either the first or the second group among the traditional interpreters.

In fact, the argument above seems to point to an interpretation that is quite different from the traditional interpretation. The kernel of this new interpretation is the idea that collection is the same as the procedure for definition.<sup>151</sup> The imaginary speaker suggests that the self-consistency is *the outcome of definition*, and the illustration of division refers to the self-consistency of Socrates' speech as *the outcome of collection*. If this reference in the illustration of division refers back to the imaginary speaker's suggestion, as I think it does, then Plato must have the same procedure in mind in his reference to both

---

<sup>151</sup> Incidentally, that this is also the view of Hermias (Couvreur (1971, 233-35)), an ancient commentator of the *Phaedrus*, is clearly seen from the fact that he refers to the method of collection and division as 'definition and division' (ἡ ὀριστική καὶ διααιρετική). See also his comments on εἰς μίαν ἰδέαν at 265d: 'this means defining things that have been divided, for definitions are concerned with forms' (τουτέστιν ὀρίσασθαι τὰ διααιρεθέντα· οἱ γὰρ ὀρισμοὶ τῶν εἰδῶν εἰσιν) and on τὸ πάλιν κατ' εἶδη at 265e: 'having called the one form definitional, namely that one must collect many things into one and define [...]' (τὸ ἐν εἶδος εἰπὼν τὸ ὀριστικὸν, ὅτι δεῖ τὰ πολλὰ εἰς ἓν συναγεῖν καὶ ὀρίζεσθαι ...) (my translations).

collection and definition. Of course, if this is the case, 'definition' means the *procedure* for definition (as implied by the description of collection) rather than the *product* of definition (as suggested by 'having established a definition' (θέμενοι ὄρον 237d1) in the speech). But I do not think that this will cause any serious conflict between Socrates' first speech and the illustration of division. The fact is that the imaginary speaker is far from saying that a ready-made definition will contribute to a good speech. What he says is that *an agreement or consideration* shared between a speaker and his audience is the requisite of a good speech (cf. 237c3-d3). It is thus the comprehension of the process of a definition that produces self-consistency. In this sense, then, the self-consistency is the outcome of *the procedure for definition*.

On the basis of this idea, I would like to propose my interpretation of the method of collection and division. First, I suggest that *collection is equivalent to Socrates' procedure for the definition of X*. Collection is described as the procedure of perceiving together and bringing into one form items that are scattered in many places in order to define *X* and make it clear (=A1). And I have just argued that collection should be understood as the procedure for definition. Now this procedure will, I think, sound very familiar from the preceding chapters: it is strongly reminiscent of Socrates' procedure for definition, namely the procedure of examining many instances of *F* in order to find the common characteristic (*F*), or the Socratic form of *F*, and to give the definition of *F*. Such an association is, I suggest, exactly the one Plato wanted to evoke when he described A1. In effect, in the *Phaedrus*, he has simply named Socrates' procedure for definition 'collection', thereby contrasting it with its emerging

counterpart, i.e. division. If I am right, then it seems clear what 'one form' and 'items that are scattered in many places' amount to; they respectively correspond to the Socratic form of *X* and instances of *X*. Second, I suggest that *division is the procedure that is applied in the course of collection.*<sup>152</sup> In other words, one posits *Y*, and then divides it into its species, and again divides these species of *Y* into the subspecies of *Y*, etc. *during the procedure of the collection of X*. This seems inevitably to follow from the identification of collection with the procedure for definition, for surely one has already been engaged in the procedure for definition when one posits *Y* and divides it into its species.

Let us consider then how my interpretation explains Socrates' first speech. Under my interpretation, the collection, or the procedure for the definition, formally starts by enumerating many instances of human love. I am of course aware of the fact that there is no such thing mentioned in Socrates' first speech. But the absence of the enumeration of instances here, I suggest, does not indicate that the imaginary speaker has failed to take a proper step, but only that he has tacitly assumed it. In undertaking the definition of love, the speaker always keeps in mind various instances of human love he encountered or experienced in his life, and these instances provide materials for the examination that follows. Next, the speaker gradually specifies the nature of human love by examining the instances: human love is a kind of desire, it is a kind of excessive desire, etc. This examination which constitutes the collection

---

<sup>152</sup> Strictly speaking, division is applied not just in the course of, but also at the end of, collection, because the final step of division, which yields the definition of *X*, coincides with the end of the collection of *X*. I shall analyse the mechanism of single steps of division in the next chapter.

of human love is, when seen from a different angle, the postulation of the genus of human love, i.e. desire, and the division of desire into its species and subspecies. Finally, through the examination of the instances of human love, or the procedure of division, the speaker discovers the distinctive characteristic that is common to all the instances of human love, and provides its definition, which means the end of the collection of human love. He then develops his speech with this definition in mind so that he can secure self-consistency. Thus, Socrates' first speech is self-consistent because of the collection, or the procedure for definition, of human love.

To sum up, I propose to replace the propositions put forward by the traditional interpretation, i.e. (C1) – (C4), with the following ones.

(C1\*) (A2) (the procedure of division of Y) is applied in the course of (A1) (the procedure of collection of X).

(C2\*) Collection is the procedure of examining many instances of X in order to find the distinctive characteristic that is common to them and to provide the definition of X.

(C3\*) Definition is the same as collection in the sense given in (C2\*).

These propositions provide a new interpretation of the method of collection and division in the *Phaedrus*.

#### §4.2. The discussion on the content of a speech (261a7-266c1)

My argument in the previous subsection is mainly based on the assumption

that the illustration attached to (A1) refers back to Socrates' first speech. But these two passages are widely separated by Socrates' second speech and the early part of the discussion on speech writing. In view of this, one might wonder if it is really safe to assume a close connection between these two passages, as I have done. One might also wonder, if division is a procedure that is applied only in the course of collection, as I have proposed, why the illustration of division in 265e3-266b1 is so lengthy—indeed, much longer than that of collection. To answer these questions, I would like to examine the part of Socrates' discussion on the science of rhetoric that is concerned with the *content*, in contrast to the *performance*, of a speech (261a7-266c1). In what follows, I shall first clarify the development of this complicated discussion, and suggest that the illustration of division is lengthy because it is put forward as an answer to the question as to how Socrates' first speech was able to mislead the audience. I shall then focus on one part of this discussion, the part that deals with the role of definition (263d1-e2), and argue that this passage also corroborates my interpretation of the method of collection and division.

The discussion in question is motivated by Socrates' wish clearly to show the necessity of the truth for speech writing. His target is a personified, self-appointed 'science of speaking', who claims that the science of speaking is somehow independent of the truth (260d3-e1). In order to refute her, Socrates first discusses this issue in connection with the *content* of a speech. He begins the discussion by defining the science of rhetoric: it is 'a kind of leading of the soul by means of things said' (ψυχαγωγία τις διὰ λόγων 261a8). The science of rhetoric is employed not only in lawsuits and public speeches, with which

Phaedrus associates rhetoric, but also in private conversations, since a speaker's operation in all these situations can be described in the same way, that is:

(D1) The speaker makes the same thing appear to the same people at one time *F* (e.g. just, good, like), at another the opposite of *F* (e.g. unjust, bad, unlike). (see 261c4-e2)

This is a feat of the science (or mock-science)<sup>153</sup> of antilogic that underlies every act of speaking irrespective of what situation a speaker is placed in.<sup>154</sup> Socrates then suggests that (D1) is successfully brought off through a special kind of manipulation:

---

<sup>153</sup> Socrates prudently suspends his judgement on whether antilogic is a science or not, by saying 'this one science—if indeed it is one' (261e2).

<sup>154</sup> Note that in this passage Socrates does not prove that *rhetoric* is one and the same in all the situations enumerated, but only that *antilogic* is so. Phaedrus seems to be aware of this, in view of his words later, after the discussion on the content of a speech: 'the rhetorical kind seems to me still to elude us.' (266b8-9) In principle, Phaedrus at this stage could have replied to Socrates that rhetoric is the part of antilogic that is related to lawsuits and public addresses. But he does not do so, presumably because he expects that Socrates will eventually explain the relation between antilogic and rhetoric. However, the relation in question does not seem to be discussed anywhere in the dialogue. So the question seems to remain for us: what is the relation between antilogic and rhetoric? One might suggest that the difference lies in the intention of a speaker: an antilogical speaker tries to deceive the audience, but a rhetorical speaker tries to lead them to the truth. Such an intention of a rhetorical speaker seems to be suggested by, e.g., the following passage: 'In [the science of rhetoric] it is necessary to determine [...] the nature of soul, if you are to proceed scientifically, and not merely by knack and experience, [...] to pass on to the other whatever virtuous conviction you wish (πειθὴ ἢν ἂν βούληται καὶ ἀρετὴν παραδώσειν) by applying words and practices in conformance with law and custom'. (270b4-9) The problem with this suggestion is, however, that Socrates does not directly deal with the intention of a speaker anywhere in the dialogue. Now I suggest that there is a characteristic more obvious than the intention of a speaker that distinguishes antilogic from rhetoric. The context shows that antilogic is concerned only with the content of a speech, but rhetoric is concerned with *both* the content *and* performance of a speech. In other words, an antilogical speaker does not care who the audience is, but a rhetorical speaker does care who he or she is. Antilogic is then just one of the requirements of the science of rhetoric (another requirement would be psychology). My suggestion is compatible with the suggestion above that sees the difference between antilogic and rhetoric in the intention of a speaker if one supposes that the intention of a speaker is one of the elements of performance.

(D2) The speaker brings people round little by little through the resemblances, leading them away from *F* to the opposite of *F*. (see 261e6-262b9)

Since (D2) is possible only for those who know what each thing really is, Socrates concludes, anyone who follows the appearance of things in speeches without knowing the truth will be ridiculously unscientific (262b5-c4). In short, he is suggesting here that knowledge of the subject of a speech is necessary for a scientific rhetorician, since it is this knowledge that enables him to achieve (D1) through (D2).

At this point, however, Socrates and Phaedrus agree that the argument given above is somewhat abstract and would require examples. Thus, Socrates suggests that they should take up the speeches on love delivered in the first part of the *Phaedrus*.

(P43) SOCRATES: So do you want to take the speech of Lysias which you are carrying with you, and the ones I made, and see in them something of the features which we say are scientific and unscientific?

PHAEDRUS: More than anything; as things are, our discussion is somewhat bare, because we do not have sufficient examples.

SOCRATES: What is more, by some chance—so it seems—the two speeches which were given do have in them an example of how someone who knows



the truth can mislead his audience by making play in what he says.<sup>155</sup>

(262c5-d2)

It should be noticed that *the purpose of the examination of the speeches on love is twofold*. First, Socrates wants to see if some scientific features can be found in them (as we shall see soon, Socrates' speeches will turn out to have two scientific features: definition and division). But this is not the only purpose. The second purpose is to find an example of the antilogical speaker who misleads the audience. Indeed, Socrates' two speeches as a pair can be taken as an instance of **(D1)**, since he said about love 'both that it is harmful to beloved and lover [= *F*], and then on the other hand that it is really the greatest of goods [= the opposite of *F*]' (263c10-12; cf. 265a2-3, 265c5-6). Socrates is, then, trying to uncover the manoeuvre by which he brought about the misleading effect in Phaedrus' mind. Though scholars seem rarely to have called attention to this point, the context strongly suggests that Socrates is now looking for an example of **(D2)**, through which he was able to perform a case of **(D1)**, as well as scientific features that may be found in his speeches. As we shall see, this complexity of the context explains why the illustration of division is as long as it is.

At the beginning of the examination, Socrates remarks that there are things

---

<sup>155</sup> There is some disagreement as to what 'two speeches' (τὸ λόγῳ) at 262d1 refers to. Hackforth (1952, 125 n.1) and de Vries (1969, 206), for example, propose that the word refers to Lysias' speech and Socrates' two speeches taken as one. By contrast, Rowe (1986a, 197) argues, rightly I think, that the word exclusively refers to Socrates' two speeches on the ground that (1) 'at this point it would be extremely odd for three to be referred to, without warning, as two' (cf. also his note on 265c6), and that (2) 'Socrates does not regard [Lysias] as "a man who knows"' as 'the ensuing critique of Lysias' speech clearly shows'.

about which we are in agreement as to what they are (e.g. iron, silver), but there are also things about which we are at odds with each other (e.g. just, good). When the science of rhetoric deals with the latter, it has a great power, and love belongs to this kind of things (263a2-c12). Next, Socrates points out that, though his (first) speech defined what love is at the beginning, Lysias entirely neglected to define, and that his speech lacked the structure because of this negligence (263d1-e3). And then Socrates calls attention to the fact that his speech made use of the procedure of division (264e4-265c4). It seems fairly clear that these two procedures, definition and division, are mentioned here as the scientific features Socrates has been looking for. But he does not explicitly say so; instead he speaks to Phaedrus as follows.

(P44) SOCRATES: Well then, let us take up this point right away: how (ὡς) the speech was able to pass over from censure to praise.

PHAEDRUS: What aspect of that are you referring to, precisely?

(265c5-7)

Socrates here poses a question as to *how* his speeches made the same love appear both good and bad, so that he first blamed and then praised it. The point of this question seems to be the same as the point of that question Socrates posed in (P43): '*how* (ὡς) someone who knows the truth can mislead his audience by making play in what he says'. Both questions are concerned with the manoeuvre by which Socrates has misled his audience. It seems then reasonable to suppose that in (P44) Socrates is simply repeating the question as

to what an example of (D2) is like.

(P44) seamlessly continues to (A), which ends the discussion on the content of a speech. Clearly, then, the answer to the question about the example of (D2) will be found in (A).<sup>156</sup> However, at least at first glance, it is difficult to see what his answer to this question is.<sup>157</sup> One might even suspect that Plato has simply forgotten the question he has just posed because of his enthusiasm for introducing the method of collection and division. But this cannot be true. My suggestion is, then, that the context requires us to construe passage (A) in such a way in which it gives an example of (D2). Let us distinguish the three elements contained in (D2).

(D2) The speaker brings people round (1) little by little (2) through the resemblances, (3) leading them away from F to the opposite of F. (see 261e6-262b9)

A close examination of (A) will show that Socrates hints at these three elements in describing and illustrating division. (1) First, division is a step-by-step process. Socrates' first speech did not leap from madness to human love, but it 'cut off the part on the left-hand side, *then cutting it again*' (266a3-4). The cutting was repeated until human love was discovered. (2) Second, the suggestion that

---

<sup>156</sup> Cf. Rowe (1986a, 200): 'But the purpose of the section [= (A)] is not after all just to introduce a particular kind of dialectical procedure (cf. 266c1); it is also to explain how Socrates was able to "pass over" from censuring love to praising it (265c5-6).'

<sup>157</sup> Griswold (1986, 279 n. 25) says that 'the schema [of the division of madness] does not inform us as to how the first speech misled its audience or in what sense it was composed by one knowing the truth'. He seems to be pessimistic about the possibility that Socrates offers an answer to the question he has just posed. Cf. also p. 179, *ibid.*

one should cut things up 'in accordance to its natural joints' (265e1-2) seems to indicate that one is concerned with the similarity and dissimilarity naturally existing among things. In other words, the method of division operates by finding a certain dissimilarity in things that are similar to each other.<sup>158</sup> For example, if madness can be divided into excessive desire and divine madness, excessive desire and divine madness are similar to each other in one respect (i.e. that both are madness), but are dissimilar to each other in another respect (i.e. that the one has merely a psychological cause, but the other has a divine cause). This point is later confirmed in Socrates' address to Tisias in 273d2-e4, where he establishes an essential link between knowledge of the resemblances and the procedure of division. (3) Finally, Socrates' suggestion that the second speech 'led us to the parts of madness on the right-hand side' (ὁ δ' εἰς τὰ ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μανίας ἀγαγὼν ἡμᾶς 266a6) seems to imply that it led us away from human love to divine love. The same is true with his first speech; it led us away from the greatest of goods to something that was harmful. As already mentioned, the illustration attached to division does not just refer to the cutting process itself, but also to the blame of harmful love and the praise of beneficial love. This seems to be a clear sign that Socrates offers this illustration in order to explain something more than the dividing process. I therefore suggest that the description and illustration of division has a double role: Socrates is presenting the procedure of division as a counterpart of collection, and at the same time answering the question he has just posed at 265c5-7, i.e. what an example of (D2) might be like.

---

<sup>158</sup> This point is elaborated in the *Politicus* (261a2-5, 285a8-b6).

Thus we have found Socrates' answer to the question as to how Socrates was able to mislead his audience. But what about the other purpose of the examination of the speeches on love? What are their scientific features? As indicated above, it seems clear that definition and division, which are respectively discussed at 263d1-264e3 and at 264e4-265c4 in the course of the examination of the speeches on love, are the features in question. In fact, in talking about definition, Socrates says that the Nymphs and Pan, to whom he attributes his first speech, are 'more scientific' (τεχνικωτέρας 263d5) in speech writing because they provided the definition of love and so created the structure of the speech. However, immediately afterwards, Socrates introduces the method of collection and division, which should be acquired 'in a scientific way' (τέχνη 265d1), without letting us know how this method is related to definition and division as just discussed. It seems clear that collection and division too are scientific features that are made use of in Socrates' speeches. One might wonder, then, whether there are two scientific features (i.e. definition or collection, and division), or three (i.e. definition, collection, and division). I suggest that there are only two: when he puts forward the method of collection and division in (A), Socrates is describing definition and division *in general terms*, providing the definition of these two forms (εἰδοῖν 265c9).

But before concluding thus, I would like to examine more closely the passage in which Socrates discusses definition. It runs as follows:

(P45) SOCRATES: But tell me this too—for of course because of my inspired condition then, I don't quite remember—whether I defined (ὠροσάμην) love

when beginning my speech.

PHAEDRUS: Yes indeed you did, most emphatically.

SOCRATES: Hey now! How much more scientific you're saying the Nymphs, daughters of Achelous, and Pan, son of Hermes, are than Lysias son of Cephalus in the business of speaking. Or am I wrong? Did Lysias too compel us when beginning his speech on love to take love as some one definite thing, which he himself had in mind (ἐν τι τῶν ὄντων ὃ αὐτὸς ἐβουλήθη), and did he then bring the whole speech which followed to its conclusion by ordering it in relation to that?

(263d1-e2)

It seems clear that in this passage Socrates refers back to his first speech. For one thing, he offered the definition of love at the beginning of his first speech, and, for another, in the brief interlude immediately after the definition was provided, he expressed his anxiety about becoming possessed by the Nymphs (238c9-238d2; cf. 241e3-5). Unlike Socrates' first speech, (P45) is placed very close to **(A)**, and so it is not reasonable to suppose that Plato gives different roles to definition in (P45) and **(A)**. Clearly, then, if Socrates characterises 'definition' in (P45) in the same way as he did in his first speech, we can safely conclude that my interpretation of collection and division (which is harmonious with Socrates' first speech) is preferable to the traditional interpretation (which is not).

First, let us consider the function of 'definition'. 'Definition' is described in (P45) as something by means of which a speaker compels his audience to think

of *X* as some one definite thing which he himself has in mind. Two factors should be distinguished: first, a definition singles out one definite thing, and second, it compels the audience to think of the same thing as a speaker has in mind. The first factor indicates the same point as we have seen in Socrates' first speech: 'definition' means the description of the distinctive characteristic of *X*, and not definition<sub>(S)</sub>, i.e. the determination of *Y*, as will be implied by the view of the second group of traditional interpreters. The second factor, on the other hand, shows a new point about definition: the speaker need not exhibit every piece of relevant information when he defines *X*, for the purpose of definition is not to teach the truth of *X*, but just to compel the audience to think of the same thing as he has in mind. Indeed, so far as a manipulation like **(D2)** is concerned, it is essential for a speaker to keep some information hidden in his mind while clarifying *X*.<sup>159</sup> To put it differently, deception is possible only when there is a gap between the understanding of a speaker and that of the audience. Without knowing the truth of *X*, a speaker would not be able to lead his audience by division in the direction he wants, while the audience who knows the truth of *X* could recognise every attempt by the speaker to step slightly sideways. Phaedrus was impressed and persuaded by Socrates' first speech precisely because he was compelled to identify love with human, disgraceful, love, without knowing the truth about love, e.g., that there exists divine love too.

---

<sup>159</sup> I think Heath (1989a, 155) overlooks this point when he writes: 'But Socrates does not really think of rhetoric (...) as an art of deception. This becomes clear when he goes on to deduce from the requirement of knowledge a requirement of definition (263a-d). For clearly, if one were trying to deceive someone about a disputed concept like "love" it would not necessarily be to one's advantage to begin by trying to clarify that concept.' On the contrary, Socrates in this passage is talking about how rhetoric can successfully practise deception by making use of definition.

(P45) and the ensuing discussion on the structure of speeches also support my view that collection and definition are one and the same procedure. Socrates argues here that Lysias' speech lacked structure because he did not provide a definition at the beginning of his speech. Surely, the implication is that the structure is the outcome of *definition*. Though Socrates' famous comparison of a speech with a living creature at 264c3-5 (cf. also 263e1-2) is sometimes discussed separately from the context, we must keep this in mind: what Socrates suggests by this comparison is not that the balance of each part, the order of exposition, or the like, are significant for composition, but that the definition of X is so; if one observes the definition of X carefully, the structure of a speech will naturally follow. When we also take into account Socrates' first speech, in which the imaginary speaker suggests that definition brings about self-consistency (237c5), the emphasis in the dialogue on the outcome of definition is obvious. By contrast, nowhere in the dialogue does Socrates ever mention the outcome of the determination of Y, the genus of X. The clarity and self-consistency that arise as the outcome of *collection* mentioned in the illustration of (A1) are therefore these outcomes of *definition*. Collection and the procedure for definition are, then, one and the same, providing consistency, structure, and clarity within a speech.

##### §5. *Definition and internal analysis*

I have so far concentrated on examining the role of definition in the early and middle part of the *Phaedrus*, and have left passage (B) untouched (this passage occurs close to the end of the dialogue). Clearly, (B) is also significant



for our investigation, since the second group of traditional interpreters claim to have found strong support for their view there. In the present section, I would like to address myself to this passage. Let us first recall the two procedures mentioned in **(B)**:

**(B1)** The procedure of defining the whole by itself. (277b6)

**(B2)** The procedure, subsequent to the definition, of cutting it up according to its forms until it can no longer be cut. (277b7-8)

It is perfectly clear in **(B)** that definition precedes division. But this is a flat contradiction of my proposal that division is operating in the course of the procedure for definition. One might conclude, then, that my interpretation is after all untenable.

My first move to meet this objection is to point out that we do not have to suppose an exact correspondence between the two passages. Certainly, it is impossible to deny that both **(A1)** and **(B1)** are collection or 'definition', and both **(A2)** and **(B2)** are division. But, in my view, the two procedures are not applied in the same way or for the same purpose in the two passages; the purpose of **(A1)** and **(A2)** is to provide a definition through the method of collection and division, but the purpose of **(B1)** and **(B2)** is something different. Understood this way, we can avoid the conclusion that 'definition' in **(B1)** has a special meaning, i.e. definition<sub>(s)</sub>. But, if this is the case, then what **(B)** is concerned with must be explained. Accordingly, I propose to put a possible objection to my interpretation in the following way: why does **(B)** instruct us to

divide X after we have obtained the definition of X and have secured an agreement as to what X is? My answer is, because it is an understanding of X more advanced than the mere definition of X that is at stake in **(B)**.

In fact, Plato seems to suppose that there are two different levels of understanding of the 'essence' (οὐσία) of things: the one is *knowledge by definition*, the other *expertise* (see Ch.3 §3). What the imaginary speaker sought in Socrates' first speech is the *definition* of 'essence' (τὴν οὐσίαν 237c3); at the beginning of a speech, he suggested, a speaker must secure agreement from his audience about 'what sort of thing [the subject of a speech] is and what power (δύναμιν) it possesses' (237c8-d1). On the other hand, in the course of the discussion on the *performance* of a speech, which starts immediately after passage **(A)**, Socrates refers to a higher-level understanding of essence.

(P46) SOCRATES: Well then, on the subject of nature (περὶ φύσεως), see what Hippocrates and the true account say about it. Shouldn't one reflect about the nature of anything (περὶ ὅτουοῦν φύσεως) like this: first, is the thing *about which we will want to be experts ourselves and be capable of making others expert* (οὗ περὶ βουλησόμεθα εἶναι αὐτοὶ τεχνικοὶ καὶ ἄλλον δυνατοὶ ποιεῖν) simple or complex? Next, if it is simple, we should consider, shouldn't we, what natural capacity (τὴν δύναμιν) it has for acting and on what, or what capacity it has for being acted upon, and by what; and if it has more forms (εἴδη) than one, we should count these, and see in the case of each, as in the case where it had only one, with which of them it is its nature to do what, or with which to have what done to it by what?

PHAEDRUS: Probably, Socrates.

SOCRATES: At any rate proceeding without doing these things would be just like a blind man's progress. But on no account must we represent the man who pursues anything scientifically (τόν γε τέχνη μετιόντα ότιούν) as like someone blind, or deaf; rather it is clear that if anyone teaches anyone rhetoric in a scientific way (τό τις τέχνη λόγους διδῶ), *he will reveal precisely the essential nature of that thing* (τήν ούσίαν δείξει άκριβῶς τής φύσεως τούτου) to which his pupil will apply his speeches; and that, I think, is soul.

(270c9-e5)

In this passage Socrates introduces what I take to be proposed as a new method for scientific investigation. This method consists of the following two steps: first, one should consider whether the object with which one is concerned is simple or complex, and, second, one should examine the power or capacity of the simple object (if it is simple) or of every form of the complex object (if it is complex).<sup>160</sup> First, in the case of a simple object, the scientific investigation just reveals 'what power it possesses', and the outcome coincides with that of the

---

<sup>160</sup> One might think there to be three steps distinguished in (P46): (1) consideration as to whether *X* is simple or complex, (2) enumeration of the number of the forms of *X*, and (3) examination of the capacity of each form of *X*. However, I think (2) and (3) are just different *aspects* of one and the same procedure. Under the scientific investigation at issue, one cannot know how many forms of *X* there are before examining the capacity of each form of *X*, since one distinguishes a form of *X* from another form of *X* on the basis of the different capacities they have. It is true that in (P46) Socrates seems to be suggesting that (2) should be carried out *before* (3) (see especially ταῦτα ἀριθμησάμενον 270d5-6 (*lit.* 'having counted them')), but I think he is just imprecise here (or maybe he has in mind particularly the order of teaching rather than that of investigation). Note also what may be similar imprecision at 271a7-8, where, after re-describing step (1), he adds: 'this is what we say is to reveal the nature of something'. He clearly has in mind here the whole procedure (i.e. steps (1)-(3)), and not just step (1).

procedure for definition (see 237c8-d1). One might think that the scientific investigation requires more from us than just to specify the power or capacity, on the ground that in (P46) Socrates also mentions other things that are related to the object under consideration (see 'on what' (πρὸς τί 270d4) and 'by what' (ὑπὸ τοῦ 270d5)). But this is because we can specify 'powers' only in the framework of action and reaction in relation to other objects. In a well known passage in the *Republic* (477c1-d7), Socrates says that power can be specified only by reference to what it is set over and what it does, since it is devoid of colour, shape, and so on—the features that would help us distinguish the object under consideration from other things. I am not, however, suggesting that the two procedures are one and the same in relation to a simple object, for there is an important difference between them: the scientific investigation contains a prior consideration as to whether the object is simple or not, but the procedure for definition does not. Next, in the case of a complex object, the procedure becomes much more complicated. It is one single object that is at issue in this case too, but Socrates advises us to count the forms involved in the object, and examine the power of each of the forms (or define each of them). Obviously, 'to count the forms of X' (cf. 270d5-6) is just another way of saying 'to cut X in accordance with forms' (cf. 265e1). The procedure is therefore a new application of the method of division, which brings to light the essence of the single object by examining the power of *its forms or parts*.<sup>161</sup> The investigation of a simple

---

<sup>161</sup> In fact, as I have suggested in my outline of the dialogue in §1, it is the context that is crucial for observing that Socrates regards this new method as a new application of the method of division (or division and collection; for my view on the cooperation of these two methods, see n.142).

object may be regarded as a very special case of this procedure (because it is unlikely that any science can be established or taught by specifying one single power). The focus of the new method for scientific investigation is, then, on the internal structure of the single object, and so I would like to propose to call this method *internal analysis*.

Now let us consider more closely how internal analysis as applied to a complex object brings about an understanding of *X* more advanced than that provided by the procedure for definition. There are two points particularly relevant here. First, internal analysis of *X* provides much more information (in terms of quantity) than the definition of *X*, which is just a simple proposition. For example, Socrates proposes ‘that which is moved by itself’ (τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ κινουμένου 245e3) as ‘the essence and the *definition* of soul’ (ψυχῆς οὐσίαν τε καὶ λόγον 245e3). One can learn such a definition very quickly, but it shows the nature or power of soul only as distinguished from other things.<sup>162</sup> On the other hand, Socrates sketches the result of the internal analysis of soul in the following way: ‘The number [of the forms of soul] is so and so, and they are of such and such kinds, which is why some people are like this, and others like that’ (271d2-3). I think he has in mind some kind of table of personality traits (‘a simple soul’ and ‘a complex soul’ are given in **(B)** as examples). If so, the

---

<sup>162</sup> I suggest that ‘that which moves itself’ reveals just *one aspect* of the essence of soul. Certainly, it is natural to understand the phrase ‘the essence and the definition of soul’ (245e3) as indicating that the definition reveals the essence in question without residue. But if so, there will be two kinds of essence for each thing: one, the essence that is revealed by definition, the other the essence that is revealed by internal analysis. However, I do not think Plato would accept the idea that each thing has two essences. I therefore suggest that there are two ways of approaching one and the same essence. In (P46) Socrates suggests that internal analysis shows the essence of things *precisely* (ἀκριβῶς), the implication of which I think will be that definition is not sufficient for showing the essence of things *precisely*.

internal analysis of soul seems to provide the descriptions of various personality traits, such as honesty, credulity, laziness, suspiciousness, together with the explanations of how these personality traits appear in various behaviours. In short, in contrast to one sentence or phrase the procedure for the definition of soul provides, the internal analysis of soul provides, as it were, a textbook of personality psychology.

Second, by investigating many forms of X in their interaction with other things, internal analysis creates an interconnected structure in a domain of science. Again, the example of the science of rhetoric is instructive here. After he has described the two steps of the internal analysis of soul (i.e. the consideration as to whether soul is simple or complex, and the specification of the power of each form of soul), Socrates adds one more step for teaching the science of rhetoric:

(P47) SOCRATES: And then, thirdly, having classified the kinds of speeches and of soul, and the ways in which these are affected (τὰ τούτων παθήματα), he [sc. someone who seriously teaches the science of rhetoric] will go through all the causes (δίεισι πάσας αἰτίας), fitting each to each (προσαρμότων ἕκαστον ἕκάστῳ) and explaining what sort of soul's being subjected to what sorts of speeches necessarily results in one being convinced and another not, giving the cause in each case (διδάσκων οἷα οὔσα ὑφ' οἷων λόγων δι' ἣν αἰτίαν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἢ μὲν πείθεται, ἢ δὲ ἀπειθεῖ).

(271b1-5)

This third step could be further divided into two sub-steps: first, one should combine a certain kind of soul with a certain kind of speech and consider whether or not this or that soul will be convinced by this or that speech, and, second, one should explain the causes of conviction and non-conviction in each case (cf. also 271d5-7). Now one might propose that this third step is not a part of internal analysis, but is a separate investigation based on the result of internal analysis. But I suggest that at least the first sub-step described in (P47) largely belongs to the work of internal analysis. Socrates makes it clear that by the time one reaches the third step, one has already classified 'the ways in which these are affected'. Since he was talking about both action and reaction in the second step (see 271a10-11), it seems reasonable to suppose that Socrates means here that one has already classified *the ways speeches affect and souls are affected* through internal analysis. The recognition of which combination is possible or impossible, or effective or ineffective, then, at least to large extent belongs to the work of internal analysis. In other words, if someone comes up with a combination that shows a certain kind of speech or soul acting or being acted upon in a way he could not predict from the result of the internal analysis of speeches and soul, it only proves that his analysis was insufficient. It is true that the second sub-step, i.e. providing the causes of the effect of speeches on soul under a certain combination, seems to be beyond the scope of internal analysis. But, since understanding the nature of the connections of a certain kind of speech with a certain kind of soul mostly belongs to it, internal analysis points to the way of creating or understanding an interconnected structure in a domain of science.

Having thus clarified the method Socrates introduces after passage (A), I would like to return to the main question of this section: why, in passage (B), does Socrates instruct us to divide X after we have obtained its definition and have secured an agreement? The answer is, I suggest, that he has both the procedure for definition and internal analysis in mind here; he instructs us first to define X as a whole (= (B1)), and then to analyse it internally to increase our understanding of X (= (B2)). This interpretation is supported by Socrates' remarks that immediately follow the description of (B1) and (B2): '[one will not be capable of pursuing the science of rhetoric] until one has reached an understanding of the nature of soul *along the same lines* (κατὰ ταῦτά)' (277b8). It is evident that the procedure at issue here is not the procedure for the definition but the internal analysis of soul. It is true that, in the course of the discussion on the science of rhetoric (261a7-274b5), Socrates discussed the necessity of definition only in connection with *contents* of a speech, and the necessity of internal analysis only in connection with *performance* of a speech. He never combined them together as parts of a single investigation. But they are after all combinable. It seems reasonable to suppose that an advanced understanding of the subject of a speech is useful for a true rhetorician, and that he needs to understand the definition of soul before undertaking its internal analysis. It seems then natural that, in the passage that summarises the science of rhetoric in terms of *both* the contents *and* the performance of a speech, Socrates should first put forward the two methods together, and then say that we have to investigate the subject of a speech and the nature of soul in the same way.

I may note in passing that my interpretation has two advantages over the



second group of traditional interpreters. First, I can offer a more natural reading of the Greek text. According to the traditional interpretation, **(B1)** is the definition<sub>(s)</sub> of *X* (i.e. the subject of a speech) and **(B2)** is the division of *Y* (i.e. the genus of *X*), and so different grammatical objects are assumed in **(B1)** and **(B2)**. Now, since Socrates omits the grammatical object of 'to cut up' (τέμνειν 277b7) in **(B2)**, we have to supply it from the immediate context. But it is not natural to supply *Y* as the grammatical object in question, for there is no mention of the genus of the subject of a speech at all in this passage. By contrast, my interpretation supposes that both **(B1)** and **(B2)** are concerned with *X*, and I can supply the object of **(B2)** from that of **(B1)**, i.e. 'the whole' (πᾶν 227b6). This is clearly a more natural reading of the Greek text. The second advantage is that I can explain the reason why Socrates instructs us to continue to divide an object until 'it can no longer be cut' (277b7). If we are engaged in the internal analysis of the object in question, we must count all the forms of *X*. We therefore have to continue the dividing process until we discover all of them. By contrast, this instruction seems to be inexplicable for the second group of traditional interpreters, since they suppose that the dividing process should end when *X* is reached again and the definition of *X* is provided, which might not be a stage at which no further cut is possible.

#### §6. Concluding remarks

Thus I hope to have shown that my interpretation of the method of collection and division is harmonious with the relevant passages throughout the *Phaedrus*. As for collection (i.e. the procedure of perceiving together and

bringing into one form items that are scattered in many places in order that one can define *X* and make it clear), I have argued that this procedure is the same as Socrates' procedure for definition; in the description of collection 'one form' and 'items that are scattered in many places' respectively stand for the Socratic form of *X* and instances of *X*. If I am right, then collection is applicable independently of division, just as we have seen, for example, in the examples of definition in the early dialogues (the definitions of speed, shape, and colour; see Ch. 1). However—I would like to make this clear here—division, in contrast to collection, always works in tandem with collection. Division is basically the procedure of dividing one Socratic form into many Socratic forms, but *this dividing is at the same time collecting or defining these many Socratic forms*. In the next chapter, I shall clarify this point in the course of a close examination of the mechanism of each step of division.

I have also argued that there are two ways of applying the method of collection and division: the one is the procedure for definition, the other internal analysis. The former provides us with knowledge by definition, but the latter brings us towards expertise in a certain domain. Both are ways of understanding of the essence of *X*, but only internal analysis reveals the essence 'precisely' (ἀκριβῶς 270e3). When the procedure for the definition of *X* is at issue, the whole procedure is equal to the collection of *X*, and the collection and division of *Y* (and species of *Y*, etc.) are applied, if they are applied, as a complementary procedure in the course of the collection of *X*. On the other hand, when the internal analysis of *X* is at issue, the collection of *X* is just a starting point, and the division of *X* (and species of *X*, etc.), which corresponds

to the collection of species of *X* (and subspecies of *X*, etc.), is the central procedure. Since Socrates (or Plato in his early dialogues) is concerned with definition or collection, it is division and internal analysis that freshly come into focus in the *Phaedrus*. Indeed, we may be able to call internal analysis the Platonic method, the method that makes it possible for us to become experts, in contrast to the Socratic method, which provides us merely with knowledge by definition.

## Chapter 5: Dialectic in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus*

### §1. Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to examine the mechanism of the procedure for definition through collection and division at work in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus*. Specifically, I shall try to clarify the elements involved in each step of division, and would like to suggest that the 'form' (εἶδος or ἰδέα) or the 'kind' (γένος) prevalent throughout the two dialogues as the objects of division are Socratic forms, and that the procedure of collection working there is equivalent to Socrates' procedure for definition. I shall not discuss the notorious passage in the *Sophist* (253d1-e2) in which many scholars claimed to have found a prescription of the method of collection and division, in the belief that, as Gómez-Lobo argued in his influential paper, the passage in question is concerned with the ontological *preconditions* for the method, and not with the method itself.<sup>163</sup> Nor shall I discuss the passage on the 'model' or 'example' (παράδειγμα) in the *Politicus* (277d1-278e12), for, although some scholars believe otherwise,<sup>164</sup> I myself do not think that this passage is directly relevant

---

<sup>163</sup> Gómez-Lobo (1977) suggests, in essence, that 253d5-8 is describing the connection between the form of *being* and many other forms, while 253d8-e1 is describing the connection between the form of the *different* and many other forms. For the procedure for the definition of *F* to function at all, the form of *F* must *be* (be *F* or exist) and must be *different* from all the other forms. The connection of the form of *F* with the forms of being and the different is, therefore, the *precondition* for the procedure for the definition of *F*.

<sup>164</sup> Lane (1998, 13-97) argues that the method used in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus* should be understood as the method of 'example and division', thereby 'challeng[ing] the widespread assumption that the method they use is the "collection and division"' (14). In the same vein, Sayre (2006, esp. 73-91) suggests that 'the role played by

for our understanding of the method of collection and division. The use of examples may sometimes turn out to be significant in the course of the investigations through the method of collection and division, but it is not intrinsic in these investigations.

## §2. *An analysis of the procedure for definition through collection and division*

The main purpose of the *Sophist* and the *Politicus*, from the point of view of my own immediate concern, is the acquisition of the definitions of subject-matters by agreement, the purpose that is familiar to us from the early definitional dialogues. In fact, some of the fundamental principles involved seem to be common to both the early and the late definitional dialogues. First, the definitions sought are those that *sufficiently* (ἰκανῶς) reveal the nature of the subject-matter, or what the subject-matter is: compare e.g. *Sph.* 221b2, 221c4; *Plt.* 267c8, 277c7-8, 279a8, 280b1, 281c8, 282d1, 284d3, 292c3 with *Euthphr.* 6d2; *Men.* 75b11; *Hi.Ma.* 286d8.<sup>165</sup> Second, whether a given definition is sufficient or not is

---

collection in the earlier dialogue is taken over in the later by the use of paradigms' (74). Against interpretations along these lines, my discussion in this and the next chapter will show that collection, or Socrates' procedure for definition, remains at the heart of Plato's methodology. It may also be worthwhile to note that Lane's contention seems mainly to be based on obvious mistakes. First, in p.29, she mysteriously writes 'Acq.-Coerc.-Fighting-Controversy-Argumentation-Disputation' as 'Kind(s) shared with angling' in relation to the 7th definition of sophistry, when in fact the seventh definition of sophistry shares no kinds at all with angling (angling, according to her, functions as the example of sophistry by being akin to it). Second, she writes: 'The shepherd is never announced as an "example" ... and so in contrast with the *Sophist*, where clear-cut and explicit adoption of an "example" enabled the division to proceed successfully, in the *Statesman* a tacit adoption of something like an example but never clearly recognised, announced or defined leads ultimately to failure and frustration' (40). But at 275b4-5 the Eleatic Stranger explicitly refers to 'the example (παράδειγμα) of shepherds and cowherds'.

<sup>165</sup> It is significant to note that the *Politicus* seems to indicate that what is contrasted with a 'sufficient' (ἰκανός) definition is not a 'complete' (τέλειος) definition, but something beyond definition. The Stranger and young Socrates do speak of *completeness* in relation to definition (see 267d1, 275a9, 277a1, 280e7, 281d2), but, as is clear from 267c8-d2 and 281c7-d3, the Stranger seems to regard a sufficient and a

decided by mutual agreement between interlocutors: compare *Phdr.* 237c2-d3; *Sph.* 218c4-5; *Plt.* 260b6-12, 277a3-4 with *Men.* 75b8-76e7. This second principle is not conspicuous in the early definitional dialogues for the obvious reason that a co-operative search for the definition of *F* is not at issue there; Socrates always pretends to learn the nature of *F* from his interlocutor who claims to know what *F* is. But the importance of a mutual agreement for definition is abundantly clear in the *Meno* passage.

However, the method used for finding the definitions of sophistry and statesmanship in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus* appears to be very different from Socrates' procedure for definition in the early dialogues. Roughly speaking, in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus* interlocutors start with the specification of the whole (or the genus) of which the definiendum is a part (or a species),<sup>166</sup> and then divide this whole (or the genus) step by step until they reach the definiendum and provide the definition. In the early definitional dialogues, by contrast, interlocutors simply examine many instances of the definiendum in order to provide the definition by specifying the characteristic common to them

---

complete definition as equivalent to each other. On the other hand, in 284d1-9 'what is being shown well and adequately in proportion to our present concerns' (ὅτι δὲ πρὸς τὰ νῦν καλῶς καὶ ἰκανῶς δείκνυται), which I take as the definition of statesmanship, is contrasted with 'the demonstration in relation to the precise truth itself' (τὴν περὶ αὐτὸ τὰκριβὲς ἀπόδειξιν). The exact meaning of the latter phrase is unclear and controversial, but at least it seems reasonable to suppose that 'the precise truth' refers not to a precisely true definition (in contrast to a sufficient definition), but to something more fundamental than definition.

<sup>166</sup> Although in what follows I shall use Aristotelian terms 'genus', 'species', and 'differentia' in order to analyse the process of division, it is important to keep in mind that the Platonic procedure for definition does not strictly advance in accordance with the genus-and-species relation. For example, in the *Politicus* (264e12-266e11) the Stranger offers alternative routes to statesmanship by dividing objects of caring and rearing in two different ways. In the longer route, the distinction between feathered and featherless precedes the distinction between four footed and two footed, but in the shorter route, the reverse seems to be true (although there is some unclarity involved in the text; cf. Campbell (1867, 34)). This would not be the case if the Stranger were strictly following the genus-and-species relation.

all; the whole of which the definiendum is a part hardly draws their attention there.<sup>167</sup> An obvious and immediate reason for the difference between these two methods is related to the status of the target: in the early definitional dialogues this is always something that is either itself a whole (e.g. beauty, virtue) or a major part of a whole (e.g. justice, courage), while in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus* it is something that is only a small part of a whole. (The main reason for this switch, I suggest, lies in Plato's intention to describe the rules of collection and division in the course of performing a task familiar to us from the early dialogues, in order to prepare us for the more difficult task of internal analysis.) Nevertheless, the apparent difference between the two methods should not obscure the common elements. I have argued in Chapter 4 that the method of collection—as I understand collection—is equivalent to Socrates' procedure for definition. A close observation of the operation of collection and division in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus* will confirm this point.

Let us then consider the actual procedures for definition through collection and division. The Eleatic Stranger offers Theaetetus an 'example' (παράδειγμα 218d9) of the procedure, i.e. the definition of angling, at the beginning of the *Sophist* (219a4-221c5). This example conveniently allows us to see the basic operation of the method. The definition of angling starts with an agreement that angling belongs to 'science' (τέχνη), and then the Stranger divides science as a whole step by step until he reaches angling; he first divides science as a whole

---

<sup>167</sup> On a few occasions, in an attempt to define *F* in the early dialogues, Socrates does mention the whole of which *F* is a part. A notable example is an attempt to define the pious as a part of justice in the *Euthyphro* (11e2-14a10). In the *Laches*, Socrates touches on the relation between the definition of virtue as a whole and that of courage close to the end of the dialogue (197e10-199e12). But even in these places, neither the whole of which *F* is a part nor the part-and-whole relation undergoes close examination.

into the productive and the acquisitive, and after securing an agreement that angling belongs to the latter, he further divides the acquisitive science into the one by exchange and the one by taking possession, and so on. If we focus on the distinguishing marks in accordance with which a genus is divided into its species,<sup>168</sup> the whole process of division for the definition of angling may be schematised in the following way.<sup>169</sup>

### Science

- (1) Productive / **Acquisitive** (= *Acquisitive science*)
- (2) By exchange / **By taking possession** (= *Possession-taking*)
- (3) Openly / **Secretly** (= *Hunting*)
- (4) Of lifeless things / **Of living things** (= *Animal-hunting*)
- (5) Of land animals / **Of water animals** (= *Aquatic-hunting*)
- (6) Of water birds / **Of fishes** (= *Fishing*)
- (7) By enclosure / **By striking** (= *Strike-hunting*)
- (8) By firelight / **By daylight** (= *Hooking*)

---

<sup>168</sup> I shall later clarify the distinction between the distinguishing mark and the name of the thing that results from a particular step of division. The tables of the process of division for the definition of angling given by scholars are often not sensitive to this distinction. For example, Bluck (1975, 55), who mostly organizes his table in terms of distinguishing marks, gives 'By contest / **By hunting**' at step (3) in my scheme below, but 'hunting' (θηρευτική) is the name of a science, not a distinguishing mark. Sayre (2006, 57) does not seem to make any distinction in this regard, so that he makes an unbalanced distinction, e.g. 'inanimate objects / animal hunting (ζωοθηρευτική)' for step (4) in my scheme.

<sup>169</sup> As has been pointed out by some scholars (see esp. Koike (1982, 345-47); cf. also Cornford (1957, 172)), the overall strategy here seems to be the specification of angling with the descriptive framework of '(A) such and such an action (B) towards such and such an object (or a goal) (C) with such and such a means'. In my scheme, steps (1) – (3) correspond to (A), steps (4) – (6) correspond to (B), and steps (7) – (9) correspond to (C). This is an important observation which contributes to our understanding of the procedure for division as applied to other kinds of expertise than are mentioned in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus*, even though such correspondence is not an *essential* feature of the procedure; it is recognizable only in some examples of division in the dialogues.



(9) Downwards/**Upwards**

with spears **with hooks**

(= *Angling*)

This series of divisions leads the interlocutors to their immediate goal at step (9). The Stranger then declares that they have sufficiently grasped the definition of angling by agreement, and restates it by connecting the names of the sciences that include angling (indicated in italics in the scheme above). By adopting a similar procedure, they also define sophistry, weaving, and statesmanship in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus*.

First, I would like to clarify what kind of elements are involved in each step of division. Certainly, the process of division is mostly very succinct and unclear. For example, step (3) is given as follows:

(P48) STRANGER: Well then, shouldn't we cut possession-taking in two?

THEAETETUS: How?

STRANGER: The kind that's done openly we label combat, and the kind that's secret we call hunting.

THEAETETUS: Yes.

(219d10-e3)

However, since, as is suggested, definition is essentially a matter of agreement, what is involved in the process of division tends to become apparent *when Theaetetus or young Socrates do not understand how the Eleatic Stranger divides a*

*thing at issue*. A good example is found in relation to step (7).

(P49) STRANGER: Well then, this kind of hunting [i.e. fishing] might be divided into two main parts (μέρη δύο).

THEAETETUS: What are they?

STRANGER: **(A1)** One of them does its hunting with stationary nets and the other one does it by striking.

THEAETETUS: What do you mean? How are you dividing them?

STRANGER: The first one is—well, **(A2)** whatever involves surrounding something and enclosing it to prevent it from escaping, it's reasonable to call it enclosure.

THEAETETUS: Of course.

STRANGER: Shouldn't **(A3)** baskets, nets, slipknots, creels, and so forth be called enclosures?

THEAETETUS: Yes.

STRANGER: So we'll call this part of hunting **(A4)** enclosure-hunting or something like that.

THEAETETUS: Yes.

(220b9-c9)

In this passage the Eleatic Stranger gives the following four items in order to bring home to Theaetetus how he divides the thing at issue: **(A1)** the genus and the distinguishing mark (or *differentia*), **(A2)** an explanation of the distinguishing mark, **(A3)** instances of the distinguishing mark, and **(A4)** the

name of the thing that results from this particular step of division. This is not the only place in which the Stranger mentions these four elements; at *Sph.* 223e1-b3, in an attempt to define the sophist as a wholesaler, he offers the same kinds of items: **(A1)** wholesaling of things for the soul (as distinguished from wholesaling of things for the body), **(A2)** 'things that are transported and sold either for amusement or for some serious pursuit' (224a4-5), **(A3)** music, paintings, and knowledge, and **(A4)** soul-wholesaling. Note that in this place he offers these items only in connection with things for the soul, omitting **(A2)** – **(A4)** in relation to things for the body, since Theaetetus understands what is meant by the latter (see 223e5-6). *Sph.* 265b4-266d8 and *Plt.* 287b4-289c3 are other examples of this line of exposition of the elements involved in a particular step of division.<sup>170</sup> On the other hand, there are passages in which the Stranger clarifies a particular step of division by offering items slightly different from **(A1)** – **(A4)**; in these passages he directly offers instances of the thing that emerges from the step of division under consideration rather than instances of the distinguishing mark of the thing in question. Consider, for example, the Stranger's enumeration of instances in the following passage:

(P50) STRANGER: Then let's say that the hunting of tame animals is twofold.

<sup>170</sup> In *Sph.* 265b4-266d8, the Stranger divides the science of production into four species in accordance with whether it belongs to gods or to human beings, and whether it is related to real things or to images, thereby putting forward instances of these real things and images. In *Plt.* 287b4-289c3, he divides contributory causes in the city into seven species in accordance with the things they provide: the 'first-born' (πρωτογενές), tool, vessel, vehicle, defence, plaything, and nourishment. This passage is remarkable not only for the large number of instances given of these things and the detailed explanatory comments provided, but also for young Socrates' repeated question, 'What do you mean?' (see 287e3, 7, 288a7, d6).

THEAETETUS: How?

STRANGER: **(B1)** Let's take piracy, enslavement, tyranny, along with everything that has to do with war, and let's define them all together as one, **(B2)** hunting by force (ἐν πάντα, βίαιον θήραν ὀρισάμενοι).

THEAETETUS: Fine.

STRANGER: **(B3)** And we'll also take legal oratory, political oratory, and conversation all together in one whole (ἐν αὖ τὸ σύνολον), and call them all one single sort of expertise, **(B4)** expertise in persuasion.

(*Sph.* 222c5-d1)

It seems clear that the distinguishing marks at issue here are by force and by persuasion, but the Stranger does not mention instances of them in (P50). Instead, he enumerates instances of what is named or defined by 'hunting by force' and 'hunting by persuasion'; **(B1)** and **(B3)** are respectively instances of what is named or defined by **(B2)** and **(B4)**. Similarly, he clarifies the elements involved in a particular step of division along these lines in, e.g., the following passages: *Sph.* 227d13-229a11, 229d8-230d4, 235c9-236c8; *Plt.* 260c6-e3, 281d5-283a9.<sup>171</sup> Thus, strictly speaking, there are two modes in which, facing his interlocutor's puzzlement, the Stranger clarifies the step of division under

---

<sup>171</sup> In *Sph.* 227d13-229a11, in explaining disease of the soul, the Stranger offers some states of conflict in the soul (which Theaetetus paraphrases as cowardice, debauchment, and injustice) as its instances. In *Sph.* 229d8-230d4, he offers a detailed explanation of admonition and the Socratic elenchus as parts of education. Again, in *Sph.* 235c9-236c8, he offers the activities of 'the ones who sculpt or draw very large works' as instances of appearance-making. *Plt.* 260c6-e3 gives 'the interpreter, the person who gives the time to the rowers, the seer, the herald, etc.' as instances of the science that is separated off from the self-directive. *Plt.* 281d5-283a9 is full of instances of sciences which are concerned with wool-clothes and are eventually separated off from weaving.

consideration: the first focuses on the distinguishing mark, and the second on the thing itself that emerges as the result of this step of division. But apparently the first mode is easily reducible to the second mode.<sup>172</sup> For example, if we add 'hunting with' to each instance of the distinguishing mark given in (P49), then the outcome ('hunting with a basket', 'hunting with a net', etc.) would be instances of the thing itself that results from the step of division under consideration, i.e. enclosure-hunting, rather than those of the distinguishing mark. I therefore shall treat the second mode as the exemplary case for the full elucidation of the elements involved in each step of division. With this in mind, I suggest that each step of division contains, at least tacitly, the following five elements:

**(C1)** the part (or the form or the kind) that results from a particular step of division

**(C2)** instances of the part in question (cf. **(A3)**, **(B1)**, **(B3)**)

**(C3)** the genus and the distinguishing mark of the part in question (cf. **(A1)**, **(B2)**)

**(C4)** a full explanation of the part in question (cf. **(A2)**)

**(C5)** the name of the part in question (cf. **(A4)**, **(B4)**)

---

<sup>172</sup> As a matter of fact, in some passages the distinction between the first and the second modes cannot be drawn clearly. Such is the case with the very first step of division of sciences as a whole in *Sph.* 219a8-c9 (cf. also *Plt.* 258d4-e5), in which the parts that appear as the result of this step of division are the productive and the acquisitive science, while their distinguishing marks are the productive and the acquisitive. In *Sph.* 226e8-227a5, on the other hand, the Stranger uses both modes at the same time, in providing instances of cleansing of bodies (e.g. gymnastics, medicine, bathing) and those of the distinguishing mark (e.g. living bodies, non-living bodies).

We are now in a position to see that even a concise description of a step of division in (P48) refers to the following three elements: **(C1)** the two parts that are being defined or named, **(C3)** possession-taking as the genus, and the openly/secretly distinction as the distinguishing marks, and **(C5)** combat and hunting as the names of the parts in question. This description omits **(C2)** and **(C4)** because these elements are obvious to the interlocutors in relation to the step of division under consideration.

Next, let us examine these five items more closely, starting with **(C1)**: the 'part' (μέρος) or the 'form' (εἶδος, ἰδέα) or the 'kind' (γένος). Here are two preliminary points. First, as is clear from, e.g., the Stranger's following words: 'let's try again to take the kind we've posited and cut it in two (σχίζοντες διχῆ τὸ προτεθὲν γένος)' (*Sph.* 264d12-e1), the part or the form or the kind are not just the outcomes of a particular step of division; they are also the objects of a further step of division (apart from 'indivisible' ones; cf. *Phdr.* 277b7; *Sph.* 229d5).<sup>173</sup> Second, these four terms, which are pervasive throughout the process of division in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus*, are mostly treated as equivalent to each other, but in the *Politicus* (262a3-e6) the Stranger makes it clear that a part of something does not necessarily correspond to a form, and that the part into which the method directs us to divide a thing at hand must be a part that simultaneously constitutes a form or a kind. In other words, the part that matters in the process of division just is the form or the kind as a part of something else.

---

<sup>173</sup> For other examples in which the Stranger speaks of dividing a form/kind/part, see *Sph.* 267a1; *Plt.* 261a3-4, b10-11, c4-5, 262c10-d1, 282d11-e2, 282e1.

What then are these forms or kinds that are the objects and the outcomes of division? This is a fundamental question that has often been pressed by those scholars who are interested in the method of collection and division.<sup>174</sup> The question is sometimes posed as: is the form/kind in question a single entity, or a plurality of things?<sup>175</sup> The term ‘form’ (εἶδος, ἰδέα) and the metaphysical argument about the ‘most important kinds’ (μέγιστα γένη) in the central part of the *Sophist* (254b8-259d8) have led some scholars into believing that the form/kind stands for a single entity, i.e. a Platonic Form.<sup>176</sup> However, it is hard to imagine that the Stranger and his interlocutors are somehow cutting a Platonic Form into a plurality of its parts, especially because Platonic Forms do not even exist in our world.<sup>177</sup> Other scholars suggest that the form/kind is systematically ambiguous between a Form and a collection of particulars; when

<sup>174</sup> See e.g. Cornford (1957, 269), Moravcsik (1973a, 162-3), Cohen (1973, 181), White (1976, 128-29 n.17), Wedin (1990, 208-9), Rowe (1995, 4), Frede (2004, 147-8), Sayre (2006, 209-14).

<sup>175</sup> See esp. Moravcsik (1973a, 161-63): ‘First, we might ask: what is being named, a plurality of arts or a single entity? [...] Again, as above, the question can be raised whether the divisions involve the cutting of a plurality into pluralities, or of one entity into a set of singular entities.’

<sup>176</sup> See e.g. Cornford (1957, 184-87; 262-73), Skemp (1952, 66-85), Moravcsik (1973a; 1973b).

<sup>177</sup> Of course, this issue mostly depends on how one understands Platonic Forms. Cornford and Moravcsik propose that Platonic Forms are being cut on the basis of their own characterization of the Platonic Forms: see Cornford (1957, 265): ‘The meanings of common names and verbs are the Forms’; Moravcsik (1973b, 339): ‘The assumption is that all Forms are intensions’. I reject their proposal on the basis of my own characterization of Platonic Forms developed in Ch.3 §4: the Platonic Form of *F* is, as it were, the arbiter or regulator of the truth-value of any proposition concerning an essential feature of instances of *F*. For a different line of objection to this proposal, see Rowe (1995, 5): ‘But if *this*, quasi-religious aspect is supposed still to be part of the conception of ‘forms’ attributed to the *Statesman*, it must be a serious question why over and over again young Socrates is asked to think about familiar types of things, and to respond on the basis of his experience of them.’ Skemp’s stance on this matter is unclear. While he expresses his ‘general agreement with Cornford’ at p.73 n.1 in his (1952), he occasionally appears to collapse into speaking of dividing the reflection of Forms, rather than Forms themselves; see e.g. at p.72, *ibid.*: ‘The essential point for Plato is that the act of division must be made at a natural “joint” in the body of Reality—it must faithfully reflect a real distinction in the world of Forms.’

Plato speaks of dividing a Form, he just means dividing the particulars that participate in the Form in question, rather than dividing the Form itself.<sup>178</sup> My objection to this suggestion is that it is unlikely that the term 'form' covers the very things, i.e. many *F* things (which would be the participants of the Form of *F*), from which Plato originally wanted to distinguish the essence or the cause (*F*) by using this philosophically-loaded term. I myself think that the two alternatives above are wrongly posed. The unity and the plurality do not stand for different entities; they are, I suggest, two aspects of the same entity, the Socratic form.

If, as I have argued in Chapter 3, Plato has both Platonic Forms and Socratic forms in view in the middle and the late dialogues, there is a good reason for identifying the form/kind in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus* with the Socratic form: the features Plato attributes to the form/kind in question closely correspond to those of the Socratic form.<sup>179</sup> First, (a) the form/kind in question is one and the

---

<sup>178</sup> This is a paraphrase of the suggestion given by Cohen (1973, 184) in proposing what he labels the 'superclean' model of the logical structure of division. He also writes: 'To push it through all the way one would have to hold, I think, that Plato uses εἶδος in a systematically ambiguous way, sometimes meaning Form, sometimes meaning extension of a Form' (*ibid.*). His superclean model seems to have received the most favourable view among five models proposed in the course of the exchange between Moravcsik and Cohen; see Rowe (1995, 6 n.18) and Sayre (2006, 213 n.13). It is significant to note that Cohen's suggestion has a close parallel in the development of the intense discussion on what is called the communion of forms in the *Sophist* (254b8-257a12). According to some scholars, e.g. Robinson (1953, 260-64), Vlastos (1981, 270-308), Bostock (1984, 104-10), in some propositions which describe a certain combination of forms a Form and its participants are ambiguously referred to; for example, 'Motion is resting', is ambiguous between 'the Kind, Motion, is resting' and 'the particulars that participate in Motion are resting'.

<sup>179</sup> For the features of the Socratic form, see Ch.3 §2. (a), (b), (c) here respectively correspond to (a), (b), (c) there. I have excluded from consideration the occurrences of the term 'form' (εἶδος) used for describing the position of the friends of Forms in the *Sophist* (see 246b8, c9, 248a4, 249d1, 252a7). The context requires that in this connection the Stranger is talking about the 'form' in a special sense, i.e. the Platonic Form, and it is just far-fetched to propose, on the basis of this special usage, that the 'form' in the *Sophist* generally refers to the Platonic Form.



same in many items. This can be seen partly from the fact that the Stranger occasionally speaks of the form/kind being in (or in relation to) something; for example, he says, 'all these *kinds* occur in our souls both as false and as true' (ταῦτα τὰ γένη ψευδῆ τε καὶ ἀληθῆ πάνθ' ἡμῶν ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἐγγίγνεται *Sph.* 263d7-8; see also *Sph.* 228a11; *Plt.* 307a1-2). But more direct evidence is that the form/kind in question is the common characteristic of many instances. Thus, for example, the form of productive science is specified in terms of the function that is commonly had by certain sciences, i.e. farming, caring for living bodies or equipment, imitation, and so on (see *Sph.* 219a10-b13 = step (1) in the scheme of the definition of angling above).<sup>180</sup> Second, (b) the form/kind is that by which all *F* things are *F*, as is described in the central part of the *Sophist* (see e.g. 255e4-6: 'each of them [the most important kinds] is different from the others, not because of its own nature but because of sharing in the form of the different'). Third, (c) the form/kind in question is itself *F* (see *Sph.* 258b11-c4: 'the large was large, the beautiful was beautiful, etc.'). Of course, Plato's terminology supports this identification: the 'form' (εἶδος or ἰδέα) is the very term used for referring to Socratic forms (and/or Platonic Forms) in the early and the middle dialogues.<sup>181</sup> Now, among the features mentioned above, (b) and (c) are applicable to Platonic Forms as well as Socratic forms, but (a)

<sup>180</sup> Cf. Moravcsik (1973b, 328): 'Here [219a10ff.] the main point is that there is a common function (δύναμις) that the arts in question have. This common function is then named and characterized.'

<sup>181</sup> See Chapter 3, n. 127. Plato never uses the term 'kind' (γένος) in the passages in which he explicitly refers to Socratic forms (and/or Platonic Forms) in the early and the middle dialogues. But it is not unreasonable to suppose that Socrates might have described his attempt to define one particular subject-matter (e.g. courage, the beautiful) as the discussion on one particular *kind*. Cf. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.5.12: 'The very word "discussion" (διαλέγεσθαι), according to him [Socrates], owes its name to the practice of meeting together for common deliberation, sorting, discussing things after their *kind* (κατὰ γένη διαλέγοντας)' (Marchant's translation).

decides for Socratic forms as the referent of the form/kind in question. I propose, then, that the form/kind in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus* is the Socratic form.

With this in mind, I would like to clarify the controversial point of how we should construe 'dividing a form' or 'a part of a form'. First, let us recall one feature of the Socratic form I have discussed in detail in Chapter 3, namely:

(SF2) The Socratic form of *F* is both one and many; it is one by being liable to one and the same definition, and it is many by being instantiated in many contexts.

The Socratic form has both single and plural aspects, its plural aspect being equivalent to the full set of its instances. It seems evident, then, that, when the Stranger speaks of 'dividing a form' or 'a part of a form', he always means, respectively, 'dividing *the plural aspect of a form*' or 'a part of *the plural aspect of a form*'.

However, this issue would require some more comments, for there is a passage in the *Sophist* where the Stranger seems to be speaking of a part of *the single aspect of a form*. The passage is worth careful consideration for the elucidation of the whole-and-parts relation of forms:

(P51) STRANGER: The nature of the different appears to be chopped up, just like expertise (ἐπιστήμη).

THEAETETUS: Why?

STRANGER: Expertise is a single thing, too, I suppose. But each part of it that comes to be in relation to something (τὸ δ' ἐπὶ τῷ γιγνόμενον μέρος αὐτῆς ἕκαστον) is marked off and has a name peculiar to itself. That's why there are said to be many sciences and many expertises (διὸ πολλὰ τέχνηαι τ' εἰσὶ λεγόμεναι καὶ ἐπιστῆμαι).

(257c7-d2)

Here the Stranger is suggesting that the kind (γένος 257e2) of the different is divisible into its parts just as expertise or science is (ἐπιστήμη and τέχνη are obviously synonyms here).<sup>182</sup> Science is a single thing, but each part of this single science 'that comes to be in relation to something', i.e. that is related to its own specific domain of objects,<sup>183</sup> gains its own peculiar name, so that there are many sciences. We may think of the following examples of parts of science.

parts of science	peculiar names
science <sub>a</sub> (in relation to musical sounds)	music
science <sub>b</sub> (in relation to health)	medicine
science <sub>c</sub> (in relation to numbers)	arithmetic
...	...

Now, obviously science<sub>a</sub> is a part of *many sciences* taken together, i.e. science<sub>a</sub>,

<sup>182</sup> For a detailed analysis of how the analogy of science works for the elucidation of the nature of the different, see Lee (1972, 269-76).

<sup>183</sup> The evidence that the preposition ἐπὶ is used for connecting a science with its objects is plentiful: e.g. *Sph.* 229b9, 236b1; *Plt.* 261b13-c1, 264a6, d6, 265c7-8, 267c1, 275c10, 283a7, 292b12-c1; *Phlb.* 57b5.

science<sub>b</sub>, science<sub>c</sub>, etc., or in my terminology, science<sub>a</sub> is a part of *the plural aspect* of the form of science. However, this is not what the Stranger is suggesting here; instead, he is suggesting that science<sub>a</sub> is a part of *the single science*, or in my terminology, that science<sub>a</sub> is a part of *the single aspect* of the form of science. This seems to imply that the single science, or the single aspect of the form of science, is divisible into parts. This implication is surprising, for the singularity of the science at issue seems to be incompatible with its divisibility. Contrary to this implication, one would be tempted to say that, since the single science is the characteristic common to science<sub>a</sub>, science<sub>b</sub>, science<sub>c</sub>, etc., we get to science<sub>a</sub> not by dividing this common characteristic, but by specifying what the common characteristic in question is related to. In other words, the relation between the single science and science<sub>a</sub> seems to be different from the whole-and-part relation, at least the whole-and-part relation we normally think of. The Stranger's identification of science<sub>a</sub> as a part of the single science, therefore, would require explanation.

To my mind, there is only one plausible explanation available: in (P51) the Stranger is only *loosely* or *derivatively* speaking of science<sub>a</sub> as a part of the single aspect of the form of science, since this science<sub>a</sub> is after all a part of (the plural aspect of) the same form. One might suppose that, in speaking of science<sub>a</sub> as a part of the single science, the Stranger has a special whole-and-part relation in mind.<sup>184</sup> But this is unlikely because Plato never explains what this special

---

<sup>184</sup> The models of intensional mereology proposed by Moravcsik (1973a, 174-77; 1973b, 339-45) offer such a special whole-and-part relation. His proposal may have some force on his own assumptions that the form/kind in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus* is the Platonic Form and that the Platonic Form is intension, but in my interpretative framework it scarcely has any plausibility.

whole-and-part relation amounts to, which would have been indispensable in view of the fact that science<sub>a</sub> would rather confusingly stand both as a normal part of many sciences and as a special part of the single science at the same time. I therefore shall propose that we should adopt an intuitively clear model of division, the model in which, *precisely speaking*, what is being divided is always the plural aspect of the form/kind (or the full set of its instances). For example, in (P50), in dividing the form of the hunting of tame animals into two, the Stranger is in fact dividing many instances of this hunting (i.e. piracy, enslavement, tyranny, legal oratory, political oratory, conversation, etc.) into two groups.

Now that the controversial status of (C1), i.e. the form (or the kind or the part) that results from a particular step of division, has been clarified, let us turn to the rest of the elements involved in each step of division. A brief review will suffice for understanding the roles of (C2) – (C5). In essence, (C2) – (C5) all specify (C1) in one way or another. (C2), i.e. instances of the form under consideration, clarifies *the plural aspect of this form* by enumerating the many things that appear as the result of this form's being instantiated in many contexts. On the other hand, (C3), i.e. the genus and the distinguishing mark, clarifies *the single aspect of it* by specifying the characteristic that distinguishes the instances of the form in question from the instances of its genus. But sometimes (C3) does not clarify this single aspect sufficiently for his interlocutors to understand it, and in such a case the Stranger offers (C4), i.e. a full explanation of the form in question, for further clarification of the single aspect of this form. (C3) by itself or (C3) clarified by (C4) may be considered to

be the definition of the form in question. (C5), i.e. the name of the form, is given mostly for the ease of reference to the form in question. It is important to note that (C5) is the only element that is dispensable in the course of the procedure of division. If some among (C2) – (C4) are omitted, this is because these elements are obvious to the interlocutors; being *unable* to give even one of them means the failure of the specification of the form in question, or the failure of division. By contrast, the absence of (C5) does not by itself disrupt the procedure. Indeed, the Stranger occasionally makes it clear that he does not have a name of the form under consideration.<sup>185</sup> This contrast stems from the fact that (C2) – (C4) specify what the form at issue is, while (C5) only roughly indicates which form the interlocutors are talking about.

On the basis of this characterization of the elements involved in each step of division, I shall propose the following model of a step of division as presupposed by Plato in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus*. First of all, there is a precondition for any step of division: before an attempt to divide the genus-form of *F* into its species-forms, interlocutors must know both the single and the plural aspects of the genus-form of *F*, or in other words, they must know the definition of *F*, and must be able to enumerate many instances of *F*. Let us suppose that this condition is satisfied. The interlocutors then tackle the cardinal task of division, that is, an examination of the many instances of *F* in terms of their kinship, or their similarity and dissimilarity (cf. *Plt.* 261a3,

---

<sup>185</sup> The Stranger omits (C5) for various reasons: first, that the thing in question is not worth naming (*Sph.* 220a1-4, 225c2-4; *Plt.* 260e7-9); second, that he does not have an ordinary name for it (*Sph.* 226d5); third, that the form in question should be left for somebody else to name (*Sph.* 267a11-b2); fourth, that the name of the form in question would be too complicated to make it necessary to bother with it (*Plt.* 265c2-d2).

285a8-b6). The goal of this task is to discover distinguishing characteristics in accordance with which these instances of *F* are divided into two groups, each of which has its own intrinsic unity.<sup>186</sup> (When it is not possible to divide them into two, they must find distinguishing characteristics that divide them into three, or the smallest possible number of, groups; cf. *Plt.* 287c3-5). This procedure should be seen both as division and as collection: it is division because it *divides* instances of *F* into two groups of instances, i.e. instances of *G* and those of *H* (provided that instances of *F* are divisible into *two*), but it is also collection because it *collects* instances of *G* and those of *H* into two unities by offering the definition of *G* and that of *H* (these definitions are verbalization of the distinguishing characteristics coupled with the genus). By this procedure, the interlocutors specify both the single and the plural aspects of each of two forms, i.e. the form of *G* and that of *H*, and come to know them. Note that the procedure of collection involved in each step of division, i.e. examining instances of *F* (which are equal to the sum of instances of *G* and instances of *H*) in order to find the distinguishing characteristics and provide the definitions of *G* and *H*, corresponds to Socrates' procedure for definition.

Finally, let us turn our attention from a single step of division to a whole series of divisions, and consider the procedure for definition through collection and division as a whole, for example, the whole procedure for the definition of

---

<sup>186</sup> In the *Politicus* (262a3-e6) the Stranger dismisses attempts of division that involve a pseudo-unity, for example, the separation of the Greek race from what is called barbarians 'which are unlimited in number, which don't mix with one another, and don't share the same language' (262d3-4). For analyses of this passage, see Moravcsik (1973a, 163-64) and Koike (1982, 348-49; esp. 349: 'In short, the separation of the Greeks from barbarians is not even a division, but is a mere postulation of the Greeks against some empty volume unsupported by our synthetic intuition'(translated from Japanese)).

angling schematised above, or the analogous procedure for the definition of sophistry in the *Sophist*. I have suggested in Chapter 4 that, although the procedure in question contains both collections and divisions of various things in the process, it should be considered, *taken as a whole procedure*, to be the collection of the subject-matter. Thus, for example, the whole procedure for the definition of angling, which contains collections and divisions of various sciences (e.g. acquisitive science, possession-taking, hunting) along the way, should be considered, taken as a whole, to be the collection of instances of angling under a single definition. It follows from this that the real starting point of the definition of angling is not an agreement that angling belongs to science, as is suggested in the text, but the examination of instances of angling, for example, sea angling, shore angling, and river angling. These instances are not mentioned in the text for the same reason as the Stranger omits (C2) and (C4) in (P48): instances of the thing at hand appear to be obvious to the interlocutors.

At this point, one might object that my suggestion above is implausible because there is no example, in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus*, of the whole procedure for definition that starts with the examination of instances. However, I think that there is one such example. The example I have in mind is placed at the beginning of the seventh, final and authentic, definition of sophistry. Here at 232b1-234e4 in the *Sophist*, the Stranger enumerates various subjects with which sophistry is concerned; (1) gods (232c1-2), (2) visible things on earth and in the sky (232c4-5), (3) coming-to-be and being (232c8), (4) laws and all political issues (232d1-2), and (5) the subject-matters of particular sciences (232d5-e2). He then concludes that sophistry is concerned with everything, and, on the basis of



this observation, loosely specifies it as a part of imitation. Now, my suggestion is that sophistry in relation to gods, sophistry in relation to visible things on earth and in the sky, etc., are instances of sophistry, which are enumerated and examined so as to provide data for the definition of sophistry. As is clear from Theaetetus' reference to Protagoras' book on wrestling as an example of (5) at 232d9, (1) – (5) are not subjects of a single performance of speech. And it seems implausible to suppose that all these subjects are a matter of concern to a single sophist.<sup>187</sup> Rather, we perceive sophistry in relation to one of these subjects in various people and on various occasions. For example, if we hear Euthyphro, who is not obviously a sophist, speak about piety as if he knows it very well after his discussion with Socrates in the eponymous dialogue, we will see an instance of sophistry (the insincere and unknowing sort of appearance-making) be present in him. I suggest, then, that sophistries in relation to (1) – (5) are instances of sophistry, and that the seventh definition of sophistry starts with the examination of instances of sophistry. It is true that there are no other obvious examples of the examination of instances of a subject-matter of definition in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus*. But the other six definitions of sophistry are not successful definitions, whose failure might be explained precisely on account of the absence of the examination of instances.<sup>188</sup> Angling

---

<sup>187</sup> It is clear that the Stranger concludes that sophistry is concerned with everything on the basis of the observations of (1) – (5), and that, in concluding this, he does not have in mind someone like Euthydemus who claims to know everything by exploiting fallacious arguments.

<sup>188</sup> I suggest that the first six definitions are uninformative in relation to sophistry because they do not mention the essential feature of sophistry, i.e. its lack of knowledge of the things it is concerned with. The definitions of sophistry as a wholesaler and a retailer of learning about the soul (*Sph.* 223c1-e5) may be compared with the definitions of courage as fighting against enemy while staying and while running in the *Laches* (190e4-c6). I strongly disagree with Cornford (1957, 187) and Bluck (1975, 44) when they propose that the seventh definition *collects* the common

and weaving, on the other hand, are explicitly introduced as easy-to-understand cases (see *Sph.* 218d2-6; *Plt.* 279a7-b6), and so do not seem to require an explicit enumeration of instances. The definition of statesmanship does not accord with my suggestion, but, in conformity with my account of the early dialogues and the *Phaedrus*, I would like to suggest that the seventh definition of sophistry, and not the definition of statesmanship, is the exemplary case, and that the procedure for definition through collection and division formally starts with the enumeration of instances of the subject-matter, and ends with the acquisition of its definition.

## Chapter 6: Dialectic in the *Philebus*

### §1. Introduction

On my overall interpretation, after having demonstrated the function of the method of collection and division in its application to definition in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus*, Plato now turns to the clarification of the other application, i.e. internal analysis, through the investigation of the nature of pleasure and knowledge in the *Philebus*. The order of the exposition of the two applications is certainly of some significance. Definition is a simpler task than internal analysis, and so it is more convenient for Plato to offer various points we should note in the application of the method of collection and division in the course of the procedure for a definition than in an application of internal analysis. With the points explained in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus* in mind, we are now, in the *Philebus*, embarking on the investigation of what lies beyond Socrates' horizon of definition. Before undertaking the actual examination of pleasure and knowledge, Plato offers us once more a general description of the method, at the beginning of the dialogue, in order to remind us of the method we should adopt for a successful investigation of the nature of things.

However, this general picture of mine requires an extensive argument, for the methodological passage of the *Philebus* is extremely controversial, and, so far as I know, no scholar has ever defended the view I have just described. The main source of this fierce dispute lies in the opacity of the interconnection of the

segments that comprise the methodological passage. I shall therefore start my discussion by carefully analysing the context in section 2. I shall then, in section 3, discuss the passage given at 15b1-8 that has posed the major obstacle for our understanding of the methodological passage as a whole. This is the passage which scholars often say raises the ‘serious one and many problems’, but which I propose to call ‘apparent objections against Platonic Forms’. After having cleared away this obstacle, I shall turn, in section 4, to the dialectical method itself that is described at 16c10-e2, in the hope that it will become clear that this method is the same as the procedure for internal analysis described in the *Phaedrus*. I shall then, in section 5, conclude this chapter by briefly discussing two issues that have remained unexamined.

## §2. *The context*

The original question that has initiated the discussion in the dialogue is ‘What is the best of all human possessions?’ (τί τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων κτημάτων ἄριστον 19c6). Philebus and Socrates each have their own proposals,<sup>189</sup> although they are in agreement up to a point, i.e. that it will be a certain state or disposition of the soul (see 11d4-6). Philebus proposes that pleasure, amusement, enjoyment, and the like are the good.<sup>190</sup> But he refuses to defend his own proposals, so that Protarchus, a follower of Philebus’ hedonistic view, undertakes the task and plays the role of Socrates’ interlocutor throughout the

---

<sup>189</sup> The passages that inform us of Socrates’ and Philebus’ respective positions are somewhat dispersed across the dialogue: 11b4-c3, 19c4-e5, 60a7-b5, 66d7-e5.

<sup>190</sup> More precisely, as will turn out at 60a7-b5, Philebus has made the following two contentions: (1) pleasure is the goal for all living beings, and all living beings must strive for it; (2) pleasure is the good for all living beings; it is right to regard the two names, i.e. ‘good’ and ‘pleasant’, as belonging to one and the same thing or nature.

dialogue. Socrates' proposal, on the other hand, is that pleasure and its kindred states are not the good, but that intellect, knowledge, understanding, science, memory, correct judgement, and the like are at least better than Philebus' candidates for the good (or participate in the nature of the good more than Philebus' candidates for the good do).

In order to settle the issue at hand, Socrates proposes to examine the nature of pleasure. At the very beginning, he says: 'As to pleasure, I know that it is complex and, just as I said, we must make it our starting point and consider carefully what sort of nature it has (ἤντινα φύσιν ἔχει). If one simply goes by the name it is one single thing, but in fact it comes in many forms (μορφάς) that are in some way even quite unlike each other.' (12c4-8) His words resonate with the first step of the method for internal analysis described in the *Phaedrus*: 'Shouldn't one reflect about the nature of anything (περὶ ὅτουοῦν φύσεως) like this: first, is the thing about which we will want to be experts (τεχνικοί) ourselves and be capable of making others expert simple or complex?' (270c10-d3) This is clearly no coincidence; rather, it is a tangible sign that the investigation of the nature of pleasure in the *Philebus* is going to be carried out through the method for internal analysis, thereby providing a working example of the method in question.

However, Socrates' scheme for the examination of pleasure is immediately hampered by Protarchus, who quite persistently refuses to share Socrates' 'knowledge' (12c4) that pleasure is complex, before he is finally persuaded to accept it with the proviso that Socrates' candidates for the good are treated in the same way. Let us call this exchange between Socrates and Protarchus at

12c8-14b8 'the opening skirmish'.<sup>191</sup> I shall carefully examine this passage, for I think it is important to discern what is at issue here in order to understand the controversial methodological passage that follows the opening skirmish (14c1-18d2) in its proper context.

The opening skirmish runs like this. Immediately after his declaration that pleasure is complex (12c4-8, quoted above), Socrates gives the following examples as evidence for his claim that pleasure 'comes in many forms (μορφάς) that are in some way even quite unlike each other' (12c7-8):

(P52) SOCRATES: We say that a debauched person gets pleasure (ἡδεσθαι), as well as that a temperate person takes pleasure (ἡδεσθαι) in his very temperance. Again, we say that a fool, though full of foolish opinions and hopes, gets pleasure (ἡδεσθαι), but likewise a wise man takes pleasure (ἡδεσθαι) in his very wisdom.

(12c8-d4)

He then states that only a fool thinks that 'these pleasures' (τούτων τῶν ἡδονῶν 12d4), i.e. a debauched person's pleasure and a temperate person's pleasure from his own temperance, or a fool's pleasure and a wise man's pleasure from his own wisdom,<sup>192</sup> are similar to each other. Protarchus disagrees.<sup>193</sup> He first

---

<sup>191</sup> I have adopted this phrase from Gosling (1975, 139).

<sup>192</sup> As has been noted since Damascius in Westerink (1982, 16), it is important for an attempt at understanding the dialogue as a whole to note that Plato adds 'in his very temperance (or wisdom)' (αὐτῷ τῷ σωφρονεῖν (or φρονεῖν)) in the cases of a temperate person's pleasure and a wise man's pleasure. I suggest that these pleasures anticipate 'the pleasures of health and of temperance and all those that commit themselves to virtue as to their deity and follow it around everywhere' (63e4-6) that are given place in the good life achieved at the very end of the dialogue (*pace* Frede (1993, 78 n.1), who,

proposes that the dissimilarity Socrates is hinting at derives not from the pleasures themselves, but from the sources of the pleasures, and then justifies his proposal in this way: 'For how could pleasure not be, of all things, most like pleasure? How could that thing not be most like itself?' (12d8-e2) To show that Protarchus' justification does not work, Socrates refers to the cases of colour and shape.

(P53) SOCRATES: *Colours certainly won't differ insofar as every one of them is a colour*

(κατά γε αὐτὸ τοῦτο οὐδὲν διοίσει τὸ χρώμα εἶναι πᾶν); but we all know that black is not only different from white but is in fact its very opposite. And shape is most like shape in the same way. For shape is all one as a kind (γένει), but some of its parts (μέρη) are absolutely opposite to one another, and others differ in innumerable ways.

(12e3-13a2)

Protarchus falters at this point, thus showing signs of conceding that there are

---

commenting on 63e4-6, suggests that 'these pleasures cannot be those of possession but only those of the pursuit of these good states.'). Having said that, in what follows for the sake of conciseness I shall simply refer to these four instances of pleasure as 'pleasure as instantiated in persons', omitting the phrases in question.

<sup>193</sup> The connection of particles 'μὲν γάρ ..., οὐ μὴν ... γε' (12d7-8) implies Protarchus' partial agreement with Socrates. But it should be noted that this partial agreement is about Socrates' exposition at 12c4-d6 as a whole, and not particularly about Socrates' rhetorical question at 12d4-6, as Hackforth (1972, 15) seems to suppose in his translation: '*They are unlike*, because they arise from opposite sources, Socrates: nevertheless in themselves they are not opposites' (emphasis mine). Hackforth's version implies that Protarchus distinguishes two aspects of pleasure: pleasures are different in that they come from opposites, but are the same in themselves. But this is very unlikely because the distinction of aspects in question is exactly the point brought into the discussion by Socrates immediately afterwards (12e3-13a3). I therefore suggest that Protarchus entirely disagrees about Socrates' rhetorical question at 12d4-6. Cf. also Dancy (1984, 185 n.43).

pleasures that are opposite to each other. However, when Socrates provocatively argues that his concession will lead to the conclusion that there are both good and bad pleasures, thereby refuting Philebus' proposal that pleasure is identical with the good,<sup>194</sup> Protarchus, dissatisfied with such a quick conclusion, decides against the concession after all in the following exchange:

(P54) SOCRATES: But you will grant that they are unlike each other and that some are opposites?

PROTARCHUS: *Not insofar as they are pleasures* (Ὅτι καθ' ὅσον γε ἡδοναί).

(13c3-5)

Protarchus' answer in this passage marks the culmination of the opening skirmish. But Socrates' reaction is simply dismissive; he says that this answer just brings them back to the situation before he introduced the cases of colour

---

<sup>194</sup> I propose that Socrates' argument at 13a7-b5, which is very compact and cryptic, should be schematised in the following way:

- (A1) All pleasures are good. (A variation of Philebus' proposal, 13a8; cf. 13b6-7)
- (A2) There are many and dissimilar pleasures. (Socrates' claim and Protarchus' temporary admission, 13b2-3)
- (A3) Some pleasures are good, but others are bad. (Socrates' suggestion, 13b1)
- (A4) Protarchus, by saying that all pleasures are good, attributes a name that is not appropriate. (13a7-8 explained by 13b2-3)
- (A5) (A4) would not be the case if there were something that is the same in both good and bad pleasures, and by which all pleasures are good—but this is impossible. (13b3-5)

I accept Stallbaum's comment on ἐτέρω ... ὀνόματι at 13a7-8: 'alio nomine atque oportebat quodque cum dissimilitudine illa minime convenit' (1842, 104) and understand the sentence at 13a7-8 as the anticipation of the conclusion. (Others (e.g. Bury (1897, 7), Delcomminette (2002, 39)) take it simply as 'another name', but the mere attribution of another name does not seem to be problematic, as is the case with synonyms, e.g. 'largeness' and 'protruding' (see *Hi.Ma.* 294b2), νοῦς and φρόνησις (cf. *Phlb.* 59d1-5), or ἰδέα and εἶδος.) In principle, Protarchus could have avoided (A4) by denying (A3), namely by arguing that either what Socrates thinks bad pleasure, e.g. a debauched person's pleasure, is in fact good, or it does not exist at all (i.e. a debauched person never gets pleasure). But he does not dare to do this, and so denies (A2).



and shape, with the result that they are discussing in a manner only suitable for the most incompetent person who is a raw beginner in discussion. He then compares Protarchus' view with the statement that the most dissimilar thing is most similar to the most dissimilar thing. Thus, having made clear that Protarchus' view makes for a cul-de-sac in their discussion, he offers a compromise: Socrates' candidates for the good will be treated in the same way; there are many sciences and some of them are unlike each other. Protarchus accepts this, and finally they reach the agreement that pleasure is complex.

Now, what is at issue here? Scholars have often suggested that it is the disagreement about the nature of pleasure that is at stake.<sup>195</sup> According to these scholars, in proposing that the dissimilarity of pleasure Socrates has in mind derives not from pleasure itself but from the sources of pleasure (12d7-8), Protarchus appeals to a theory of pleasure that is fundamentally different from Socrates'. Socrates thinks that pleasure *consists in* activities or experiences, while Protarchus identifies pleasure with mere feelings of pleasure, feelings that are separable from their sources, *merely accompanying* activities or experiences. Thus, for Protarchus, it is as silly to say that the pleasure of a debauched person is bad as to say that Socrates in bad company is bad. A feeling of pleasure is identical with another feeling of pleasure except in *quantity*; there is no *qualitative* difference among feelings of pleasure. The point of the opening skirmish is, then, according to these scholars, to persuade Protarchus into abandoning his theory of pleasure and also accepting a Socratic theory of pleasure.

---

<sup>195</sup> See Frede (1993, xviii): 'A fundamental disagreement about the nature of pleasure is at work.' Cf. also Hackforth (1972, 16 n.1); Gosling (1975, 74-76); Frede (1997, 103-110).

However, this interpretation seems to me to be misleading and to result from an unjustifiable attempt to reinforce Protarchus' position. I myself suggest that the point of the opening skirmish is related to a purely logical issue and not to competing theories of pleasure. The key to understanding the point of the argument is to pay close attention to (P54), in which Protarchus denies Socrates' words with the qualification 'insofar as they are pleasures'. This qualification is important not only because we would expect an unconditional negation if he had a different theory of pleasure in mind, but also because it points to the fact that *Socrates and Protarchus are in agreement that pleasures do not differ from one another insofar as they are pleasures*. This is clear from (P53) in which Socrates says that colours will not differ insofar as they are colours.<sup>196</sup> But then why is Socrates so dismissive towards Protarchus' answer in (P54)? Because Protarchus has *ignored* Socrates' point in (P53) that it is not pleasures insofar as they are pleasures, but pleasures insofar as they are 'instances'<sup>197</sup> (i.e. pleasures as instantiated in certain persons) that are at issue. In other words, Protarchus, while adopting Socrates' distinction between aspects of pleasures in which all pleasures are alike and in which some pleasures are different from others, somehow sticks to the former aspect, ignoring and 'hiding' (ἀποκρυπτόμενοι

---

<sup>196</sup> The Greek expressions for 'insofar as ...' in (P53) and (P54) are different, but I think Frede (1993; 1997) is right in translating both of the expressions in the same way: both of them are used for specifying the aspect in which every *F* is *F*. In the early dialogues, Socrates uses other expressions for specifying the aspect in which every *F* is *F*: e.g. τῷ ἡδὺ εἶναι (*Hi.Ma.* 299d3), τῷ μελίπτας εἶναι (*Men.* 72b4-5), ἢ μέλιπται εἰσὶν (*Men.* 72b8-9), πρὸς τὸ ἰσχυρὸς εἶναι (*Men.* 72e6). Plato, at any rate, is consistent in distinguishing the aspect in which every *F* is *F* from the one in which an instance of *F* is different from another instance of *F*. Gosling (1975, 162; cf. 73-74) is wrong when he writes: 'the language of 12-13 [in the *Philebus*] reads like a conscious rejection of views held in the *Meno* and *Hippias Major*.'

<sup>197</sup> I mean 'instances' in my sense, i.e. *F* as instantiated in things, actions, and situations, and parts of *F*. More on this later.

14b1) the latter aspect.<sup>198</sup> Similarly, I suggest that, when Socrates says ‘I could say the same thing as you did’ (13d5) in relation to the statement about the most dissimilar things, he has the following conversation in mind:

A: The most dissimilar thing is dissimilar to the most dissimilar thing, isn’t it?

B: Not insofar as they are the most dissimilar things.

B’s answer is certainly correct, but this is not the answer A is after. In short, the lesson we learn here is that it is ridiculous to stick to the aspect in which every *F* is *F*, while ignoring the aspect in which an instance of *F* differs from another instance of *F*.

One might think that this is too trivial a point to be discussed so extensively by Plato. But Plato himself makes clear that the problem Socrates and Protarchus are facing is easy to avoid, by indicating that Protarchus’ position is ridiculous. If Socrates or Protarchus take that position, then they will be ‘behaving and speaking in just the same way as those who are *the most incompetent* and at the same time *new-comers* (νέοι) in such discussions’ (13c9-d1), or they will turn out to be ‘*quite childish* (νεώτεροι τοῦ δέοντος)’ (13d6), or again ‘[their] whole discussion would come to an end [...] with [them] kept safe and sound through *some absurdity* (τινος ἀλογίας)’ (14a3-5). The

---

<sup>198</sup> For similar lines of interpretation, see Benitez (1989, 34): ‘Protarchus found this easy to dispute: pleasures occur in different circumstances, but *qua* pleasures they are all alike (12d7-e2). Socrates then argued that colors *qua* colors are alike; nevertheless, there are many, even opposite, colors’; Irwin (1995, 320): ‘[Protarchus’] argument exploits an ambiguity in “qua pleasures”, which might mean (1) “qua some pleasure or other” or (2) “qua the sorts of pleasures they are”.’

implication is that one will not make the same move as Protarchus, if one is better than a childish or unreasonable interlocutor. On the other hand, even though the position in question is unreasonable, Protarchus is not exceptional in taking it. Indeed, as we shall see, Socrates later says that whoever ‘among the young’ (τῶν νέων 15d9) has first found out that *F* is both one and many ‘revels in moving every discussion, now turning [each thing, i.e. *F*]<sup>199</sup> to one side and rolling it all up into one, then again unrolling it and dividing it up’ (15e2-3), and end up floundering in utter confusion. Protarchus takes this remark as an allusion to him and his companions (16a4-5), and I think he is not mistaken; by sticking to pleasures insofar as they are pleasures, he has rolled up pleasures into one. Meno in the dialogue named after him is, I suggest, making the same kind of mistake, only the other way round. That is to say, he tends to think of virtue in terms of instances, neglecting virtue insofar as it is virtue, and so Socrates requests: ‘stop making many out of one, as jokers say whenever someone breaks something; but allow virtue to remain whole and sound, and tell me what it is.’ (*Men.* 77a7-9) Plato carefully explains Meno’s ‘dividing up’ in

---

<sup>199</sup> I suggest that we should supply ἕκαστον (from ἕκαστον τῶν λεγομένων ἀεί at 15d5) as the object of κυκλῶν, συμφύρων, ἀνειλίπτων, and διαμερίζων at 15e2-3. Diès (1949) and Pradeau (2002), who insert ‘tout’ as the object of these verbs in their translations, seem to understand the sentence in the same way. (And perhaps so do Fowler (1925) and Hackforth (1972); they insert, respectively, ‘things’ and ‘the stuff’ in their translations.) Others, e.g. Gosling (1975), Waterfield (1982), Benitez (1989), Frede (1993; 1997), Benardete (1993), translate the sentence in such a way that λόγον, taken from the main clause at 15e2, is the object of the verbs in question. This is certainly a more natural reading of Greek than my own suggestion, but it is unlikely that Socrates is talking about one λόγος and many λόγοι here. In fact, none of the scholars mentioned here seem to understand that the argument is about the one and many of λόγος. Benitez (1989, 35), for example, explicitly supplying ‘definition’ as the object of the verbs in question, paraphrases the passage in this way: ‘The paradox monger can unroll such a definition by showing that the definiendum applies to many things. He can knead a definition into one by claiming that the definiendum, e.g. “pleasure”, always means just one thing.’ In Benitez’s version, it is only one definition that is at issue; what is divided up is not the definition, but the definiendum. But if so, λόγος would not be a suitable object of διαμερίζων (dividing up).

the *Meno* (74b2-77b1), using the same examples as in (P53), i.e. shape and colour. It stands to reason, then, that Plato wants an opportunity to explain at length what ‘rolling *F* up into one’ amounts to.

When the opening skirmish is finally settled, Socrates next turns to methodological issues and discusses them in detail. In this methodological passage (14c1-18d2), he first refers to some ‘controversy’ or ‘dispute’ (see ἀμφισβητῆσαι 14c9; ἀμφισβήτησις 15a7; τὰ ἀμφισβητούμενα 15d2)<sup>200</sup> about one and many, and then explicates a dialectical procedure. How the controversy Socrates describes here should be understood, and in what way it is connected with the dialectical procedure, have been matters of fierce and longstanding discussion among scholars. I shall examine these matters closely in the next section. For the moment, I shall roughly follow Socrates’ words, trying to make clear the role of the methodological passage in the dialogue, by paying particular attention to the way Socrates first broaches the issues at 14c1-10 and also to the lesson of the methodological passage he sums up at 18e3-19a2.

First, let us have a look at the introductory part of the methodological passage, where Socrates seems to give us some hints about the reasons for taking up the controversy about one and many:

---

<sup>200</sup> Scholars almost without exception assume that Socrates here refers to some one-and-many *problems*. This assumption is, in my view, one of the main causes of the endless discussion on the passage, for, under this assumption, it is natural to expect that Socrates gives *solutions* to these problems, but, to the dismay of these scholars, he does not appear to be dealing with these problems anywhere in the dialogue. The truth is that Socrates only talks about *controversy*, and he emphasises the importance of *agreement*. Agreement can be reached even without coping with objections—for example, interlocutors can agree that certain objections are made just for their own sake, and so are pointless or unproductive. It is precisely this kind of agreement, or so I shall argue later, that Socrates and Protarchus reach in the course of the methodological passage.

(P55) SOCRATES: Let us then give even stronger support to this account by an agreement (τοῦτον τοίνυν τὸν λόγον ἔτι μᾶλλον δι' ὁμολογίας βεβαιωσώμεθα).

PROTARCHUS: What account?

SOCRATES: The one that creates difficulties for everyone, for some willingly, for some, sometimes, against their will.

PROTARCHUS: Explain this more clearly.

SOCRATES: *It is this account that has turned up just now*, which somehow has an amazing nature. For that the many are one and the one is many are amazing statements (θαυμαστόν λεχθέν), and it is *easy* (ῥᾶδιον) to dispute with anyone who posits (τιθεμένῳ) either of them.

(14c1-10)

It is clear that Socrates means by the 'account that has turned up just now' the essential point established in the opening skirmish, namely:

(OM1) *F* is one *qua F*, but *qua* instances of *F* it is many, and these instances are dissimilar to one another.<sup>201</sup>

Pleasure, for example, is one *qua* pleasure, but *qua* a collection of instances (e.g. pleasure as instantiated in a temperate person, pleasure as instantiated in a debauched person) it is many, and these instances are dissimilar to one another.

---

<sup>201</sup> For the sake of conciseness, I shall use hereafter '*qua* ...' instead of 'insofar as it is ... (or they are ...)'.

This account implies that one thing (e.g. pleasure) is many, or that many things (e.g. pleasures) are just one. But both statements are, according to Socrates, easily disputable; there are apparent objections readily available. It stands to reason, then, that Socrates turns to the controversy about one and many; he wants to secure agreement in relation to the one and many so that the apparent objections he mentions will not cause any problems for them.

Protarchus, however, cannot see what the 'account that has turned up just now' amounts to. So he asks Socrates whether or not he means the following case, which also implies that one thing is many, or that many things are just one:

(OM2) Protarchus is one by nature, but is many and opposite Protarchuses by being tall and short, heavy and light, etc.

Of course, Socrates does not mean (OM2), which he calls a 'widely circulated' (τὰ δεδημευμένα 14d4) version of the paradox about one and many. Indeed, he says that it is admitted by virtually everyone that one should not touch or refute it, as it is childish, easy, and just a hindrance to discussion (see 14d5-8; cf.15a4). It then seems to follow that in this case *controversy does not arise at all*; there are no objections available, for (OM2) is not worth objecting to. Socrates has another example of this kind of paradox.<sup>202</sup>

---

<sup>202</sup> I understand 14d5-8 in the following way: 'such things (τῶν τοιούτων) are agreed by virtually everyone to be no longer even worth touching [...]; [I say 'such things'] because the following case is not [worth refuting], either (ἐπεὶ μηδὲ τὰ τοιάδε).' Ἀπ' ἐπει clause, which introduces a reason for the content of the main clause, sometimes only loosely connects with that clause. It is such a loose connection that is given by the ἐπεὶ clause in our passage; Socrates is in effect simply adding another, *equally* childish and

(OM3) Each thing is one, but is many and infinitely many by being divided by statements into limbs and parts.

Socrates makes clear that neither (OM2) or (OM3) is the case about which he wants to secure agreement.<sup>203</sup> Having understood this, Protarchus asks him what kind of case he did have in mind; which case is it that has not yet been admitted not to be touched or refuted?<sup>204</sup>

Socrates answers that it is the case in which one does not posit 'one thing' or 'the unity' (τὸ ἓν) among things that come to be and cease to be. In both (OM2)

---

easy paradox [i.e. OM3] at 14d8-e4. For similar uses of ἐπεὶ καὶ (ἐπεὶ μηδέ is its negative form) introducing an extra example, see e.g. *Ap.*20a3, *Phdr.*244c5. Waterfield (1989, 57 n.2) and Meinwald (1996, 99), according to whom the use of ἐπεὶ suggests that either (OM2) or (OM3) is more significant than the other, make unnecessarily heavy weather of this.

<sup>203</sup> Scholars have often wondered why Socrates is so dismissive towards (OM2) and (OM3), while in the *Parmenides* he appeals to the theory of Forms in order to solve analogous problems ((OM2) and (OM3) respectively correspond to 128e6-129b1 and 129c4-d2 in the *Parmenides*). But we should be cautious in the treatment of the *Parmenides*, in which Plato deliberately creates puzzles by exploiting the ambiguity of εἶδος and ἰδέα (forms/Forms) and by swapping the relation between Platonic Forms and particulars, i.e. μετέχειν, with the one between Socratic forms and particulars, i.e. ἔχειν (for the replacement of μετέχειν with ἔχειν, see Fujisawa (1974)). I suggest that things already go wrong in the *Parmenides* when Socrates appeals to Platonic Forms in order to solve these 'childish' problems. In fact, the formulae given by Protarchus and Socrates, i.e. (OM2) and (OM3), which make explicit the aspects in which something is said to be one or many, neatly resolve the paradox, and no further ado is necessary, let alone any appeal to the theory of Forms. Scholars also quote passages from other, earlier dialogues in which they claim Plato is dealing with (OM2) or (OM3) at length (cf. e.g. Dancy (1984, 176-83), Benitez (1989, 12-24), Frede (1993, xx-xxi; 1997, 114-18), Delcomminette (2002, 22-25; 2006, 53)); however, in my view, Plato only makes use of his customary distinction between *F* things and the Socratic form of *F* in these passages, and this does not imply that he is dealing with (OM2) or (OM3). For instance, Plato's point in the *Phaedo* (102b3-d2) is not to explain how Simmias can be simultaneously large and small (and so many), as Benitez and Delcomminette propose, but to explain how largeness and smallness in Simmias function as the causes for him to be large and small respectively.

<sup>204</sup> Note that Protarchus' τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον λόγον (14e6) is not the same as Socrates' τοῦτον ... τὸν λόγον (14c1). The former refers to the statements that the one is many or that the many are one, which is common among (OM1) – (OM3), but the latter only refers to the special case of one and many that gives rise to controversy, i.e. (OM1).



and (OM3), the unity at issue is taken from such things. He then continues:

(P56) SOCRATES: But when someone tries to posit man as one, or ox as one, or the beautiful as one, and the good as one, zealous concern with these unities and the like (περὶ τούτων τῶν ἐνάδων καὶ τῶν τοιούτων), together with division,<sup>205</sup> gives rise to controversy.  
(15a4-7)

It is fairly clear from the context that in (P56) Socrates is not introducing a new case of one and many, but is referring back to (OM1), thereby viewing it in a new light by way of contrast with (OM2) and (OM3). So far it has only been agreed that *F* is one insofar as it is *F*, and what kind of thing this one *F* is has not been considered. He now points out that *F qua F* does not belong to things that come to be and cease to be. When he and Protarchus posit pleasure, or science, as one (see 12c7; cf. 18a6), they do not think of it as an individual or a certain thing divisible into limbs or parts. But, then, in relation to (OM1) there are apparent objections, as Socrates anticipated in (P55), and now he describes them

---

<sup>205</sup> I think the 'division' only anticipates 15b5-7 ('whether one must posit [such a unit] as *dispersed* ... or as a whole *separated* from itself'). By contrast, Delcomminette (2002, 29-30), taking this word as a reference to the dialectical method, writes: 'Socrates explicitly presents these problems [at 15b1-8] as *resulting from* the practice of division. [...] [T]his implies that the method is not meant to *deal* with these problems, but rather to *give rise* to them. In other words, these problems do not appear *before* the practice of dialectic' (his emphases). However, it is unlikely that Plato would describe the dialectical method just as 'division' (which is merely a piece of jargon sometimes used by Platonic scholars in order to refer to Plato's later dialectic in general). Delcomminette himself seems to suppose that the process of division is only equivalent to the second of the three steps of dialectic, thus implying that the first objection, which according to him the first step of dialectic invites, arises *before* division. In any case, Socrates makes explicit in (P55) that the opponents make objections simply if one posits either that one is many or many are one in the relevant sense; they are not so kind as to wait for the practice of division.

in detail (15b1-8). I shall examine these objections in the next section. Having described the objections, Socrates reemphasises the significance of agreement about the one and many that appear in (OM1) and the objections in question.<sup>206</sup> And ostensibly he turns to discuss this issue straightaway (see 15c4-d2). However, it is not clear where Socrates in fact secures agreement about the one and many, if he does at all. At least it seems evident that he nowhere directly addresses the objections he described; he nowhere considers whether they are valid or not, and if so, why.

At any rate, Socrates turns to what he claims to be an appropriate starting point for the battle over the things in dispute, i.e. the kind of one and many that is at issue. He first remarks that it is because of the everlasting nature of language inherent in human beings that the same thing (*F*) appears everywhere, becoming both one and many (15d4-8). He then describes a young boy's way of dealing with the one and many: he enjoys making mess of every discussion, 'now turning [*F*] to one side and rolling it all up into one, then again unrolling it and dividing it up' (15e2-3), and throws himself and others into confusion. I have already suggested that this is partly an allusion to Protarchus' way of dealing with the one and many of pleasure in the opening skirmish. Protarchus

---

<sup>206</sup> I understand ταῦτ' ἔστι τὰ περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἓν καὶ πολλά, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκεῖνα ... (15b8-c1) as 'it is this one and many that is related to this sort of issues [i.e. (OM1) and the objections], and not that one and many [that appears in (OM2) and (OM3)] that, etc.', connecting ταῦτα τὰ ἓν καὶ πολλά together. Cf. Stallbaum (1842, 116): 'Haecce sunt in talibus quaestionibus τὰ ἓν καὶ πολλά [...], nec vero illa [...] quae [...] omnis dubitationis caussae existunt.' By contrast, Bury (1897, 14) connects τὰ τοιαῦτα ἓν καὶ πολλά together and renders: 'It is these questions, —viz. those which deal with the One and Many of the kind described, —and not those first mentioned (ἐκεῖνα), Protarchus, which', etc. Bury's rendering seems to have been accepted by many scholars (e.g. Taylor (1956, 108), Hackforth (1972, 19), Frede (1993, 7), Benardete (1993, 8), Delcomminette (2006, 76)). But I do not think Bury's view is correct, for, as I have made it clear, in the cases of (OM2) and (OM3) controversy does not occur; there are no objections or questions that are comparable to those at 15b1-8.

seems to perceive a veiled insinuation about himself, but is only jokingly indignant. He asks Socrates to teach him a device for clearing up such confusion from their discussion and a way finer than the young boy's to approach their discussion.<sup>207</sup>

Responding to Protarchus' request, Socrates introduces what he claims to be the finest way ever, that is, dialectic.<sup>208</sup> He first makes some prefatory remarks, i.e. that he is always a 'lover' (ἔρασις 16b6) of this method, and that everything in the realm of 'science' (τέχνης 16c2) that has been discovered has come to light through this method. He then offers a rather detailed depiction of this dialectical method (16c5-e2). I shall carefully examine the description of the method in section 4, and only give a basic outline here. First, Socrates puts forward a theory on the structure of each thing (*F*) that is said to trace its origins back to gods: 'whatever is always said to be consists of one and many, having in its nature limit and unlimitedness.' (16c9-10) Second, on the basis of this theory, he prescribes a method for the investigation or the learning and teaching of *F*,

---

<sup>207</sup> By 'their discussion' (cf. τοῦ λόγου 16a8; τὸν λόγον 16b1), I mean the original discussion as to whether pleasure or knowledge is the good. (This will of course be included in 'every discussion' (πάντα ... λόγον 15e2) a young boy can make a mess of.) I think that 'a better way than this towards the discussion' (ὁδὸν ... τινα καλλίω ταύτης ἐπὶ τὸν λόγον 16a8-b1; cf. ὁδός 16b5) makes clear that Protarchus somehow understands that what is at issue here is a method for approaching their original discussion. Similarly, I suggest that Protarchus' immediately following words, i.e. 'the present discussion (λόγος) is no mean thing' (16b2-3), emphasise the significance of their original discussion. By contrast, many scholars seem to have supposed that the λόγος that appears twice in Protarchus' words at 16a4-b3 refers to the discussion on the one and many. But in this case the expression ὁδὸν ... ἐπὶ τὸν λόγον seems puzzling, and accordingly they give up a strict translation; see, e.g., Fowler (1925): 'some better road than this to bring us towards the goal of our argument'; Diès (1949): 'une route plus belle vers la conclusion de cette enquête'; Gosling (1975): 'a better way than this to conduct the argument'; Benitez (1989, 37): 'some better way than this for the argument'; Frede (1993): 'a better solution to the problem'; Benardete (1993): 'some more beautiful way than this for the argument'; Frede (1997): 'ein besserer Weg zu einer Lösung'.

<sup>208</sup> See 'we are engaged with each other in dialectical discourse' (τό ... διαλεκτικῶς ... ἡμᾶς ποιεῖσθαι πρὸς ἀλλήλους τοὺς λόγους 17a3-5).

which consists of the following three steps: (D1) one should posit a single form of *F* and search for it; (D2) one should examine if *F* is somehow two or three or some other number, and then examine if each of them is again somehow two or three or some other number, and so on, until one sees how many of *F* there are in total; (D3) one can release each of *F* into the unlimited.

Thus having described the methodological procedure, Socrates contrasts it with the attitudes of contemporary 'intellectuals' (σοφοί) towards the one and many (16e3-17a5). He says that these intellectuals make one haphazardly, and many faster or slower than they should, and that they turn to the unlimited immediately after the one, while the number between them escapes their attention. He then characterises his own method as the dialectical method in contrast to the merely eristic attitudes of contemporary intellectuals. It seems clear that these intellectuals are also involved with the one and many that appear in (OM1), but it is unclear whom Socrates has in mind and what kind of attitude they take towards the one and many, or more specifically, whether or not these intellectuals are different from the young boys described at 15d8-16a3. I shall discuss these issues in the next section.

Socrates then offers an illustration of the dialectical method using vocal sound and musical sound as examples (17a6-e6). I shall discuss this illustration together with the dialectical method in section 4. The illustration is then followed by the introduction of a different case, in which someone is obliged to get hold of the unlimited of *F* first, instead of the one (18a6-b4). Socrates advises that in this case one should examine the number of *F* before getting to the one. He then adds an illustration for this case too: Theuth, an Egyptian god or

godlike person, invented a writing system in this way (18b6-d2). This concludes the methodological passage of the *Philebus*.

Protarchus and Philebus accept the explanation of the dialectical method, but cannot quite make out the connection of the method with their original discussion about pleasure and knowledge. Accordingly, Socrates brings home to them the lesson of the methodological passage in the following exchange:

(P57) SOCRATES: Did we not embark on an investigation of knowledge and pleasure, to find out which of the two is preferable?

PHILEBUS: Yes, indeed.

SOCRATES: And we do say that each of them is one.

PHILEBUS: Right.

SOCRATES: This is the very point in question to which our preceding discussion obliges us to give an answer: to show how each of them is one and many, and how instead of becoming unlimited straightaway (πῶς μὴ ἄπειρα εὐθύς), each one of them acquires some definite number (τινά ποτε ἀριθμόν) before it becomes unlimited.

(18e3-19a2)

As is indicated in (P55), the methodological passage started with a view to establishing (OM1) firmly by an agreement. If they agree, in the course of the discussion, that any cases of (OM1) should be treated by way of the dialectical procedure, then it is reasonable to suppose that this is the agreement Socrates wants to secure. However, an important question seems to remain: what has

happened to the apparent objections described at 15b1-8? In (P57), Socrates seems to confirm that they posit knowledge as one, or pleasure as one, in a manner reminiscent of the condition for the objections described in (P56), in which someone is said to posit 'man as one, or ox as one, or the beautiful as one, and the good as one'. Plato cannot have simply forgotten the objections in question. I suggest, then, that Plato has already given his answer to the objections, and we shall find it if we examine the text carefully.

So far we have looked at the passages in the *Philebus* in which the methodological procedure is the subject of discussion. In this dialogue, there are two other passages that are also important for an understanding of Plato's later dialectic. The first passage is 23b5-25b4, in which Socrates makes it clear that he is applying the dialectical method by referring back to the procedure described at 16c10-e2. The second passage is 57e3-59d9, in which Socrates introduces dialectic as the most exact of all sciences. These two passages may be placed in the following context. After (P57), Protarchus complains about the way Socrates leads the discussion, for at least he himself cannot show how many kinds of pleasure there are, and what each of them is like (19a3-20a8). Socrates then suggests that they can do, for the moment at least, without the examinations of pleasure and knowledge, and offers an argument that shows that neither a life of pleasure nor that of knowledge is the good life (20b1-22b9). But this argument does not end the discussion; it only changes the main question of the dialogue into this: which of pleasure and knowledge is the more akin to the cause of the good life (22c1-23b4)? Socrates ends up undertaking the examinations of pleasure and knowledge to find out the answer to this new

question. He first sets up the framework of the investigation, i.e. the fourfold division of the things now existing in the universe (23b5-31b1). In the course of this fourfold classification Socrates explicitly makes use of the dialectical method (the first passage mentioned above). Socrates then offers a detailed analysis of pleasure (31b2-55c3), which constitutes the main part of the dialogue, and also an analysis of knowledge (55c4-59d9). In this analysis of knowledge Socrates refers to dialectic (the second passage mentioned above). On the basis of these analyses Socrates and Protarchus finally agree that Socrates' candidates for the good are more closely related to the cause of the good life than Philebus' candidates, thus concluding the dialogue (61a4-67b13).

### §3. *One and Many*

In this section, as I have anticipated, I would like to address the issues of what the apparent objections described at 15b1-8 amount to, and how Socrates responds to these objections. A glance at a lengthy list of the secondary literature on them will show that these issues are highly controversial.<sup>209</sup> Indeed, many and various attempts at settling these issues have been proposed, but, to my mind, they are all unsatisfactory because they do not sufficiently take into consideration the surrounding context. As has been indicated, the main subject of the methodological passage (14c1-18d2) is the one and many that

---

<sup>209</sup> Such a list can be found in Delcomminette (2002, 21 n.1; 2006, 51 n.1). Here is mine: Archer-Hind (1901); Anscombe (1966, 406-408); Friedländer (1969, 534-36 n.27); Striker (1970, 11-30); Shiner (1974, 38-42); Gosling (1975, 143-53); Casper (1977); Hahn (1978); Dancy (1984); Benitez (1989); Hampton (1990, 13-21); Löhr (1990); Mirhady (1992); De Chiara-Quenzer (1993); Frede (1993, xx-xxx); Barker (1996, 161-64); Meinwald (1996); Frede (1997, 112-46); Dixsaut (2001, 285-340); Delcomminette (2002; 2006, 51-78); Muniz&Rudebusch (2004); Schmidt-Wiborg (2005, 7-35).

appear in (OM1) ('*F* is one *qua F*, but is many *qua* instances of *F*'), in which the 'one' does not belong to things that come to be and cease to be. Socrates describes the following four ways of being involved with this kind of one and many:

- (#1) raising apparent objections (15a4-b8)
- (#2) the young boys' way (15d8-16a3)
- (#3) applying the dialectical procedure (16c10-e2)
- (#4) the way of contemporary intellectuals (16e4-17a5)

Scholars almost without exception assume that the apparent objections raised at (#1) are dealt with by the dialectical procedure at (#3).<sup>210</sup> However, it is not clear how (#3) is supposed to give answers to (#1), for apparently (#1) and (#3) are concerned with quite different cases. By contrast, I shall argue that the reference to 'contemporary intellectuals' at (#4) is an ironical reference to *both* those who raise the apparent objections at (#1) *and* the young boys at (#2). I suggest that the agreement Socrates secures in the methodological passage is that we should adopt the dialectical procedure and dismiss as merely eristic the other two ways described at (#1) and (#2).

In what follows, I shall first turn to the text in which the apparent objections are described (15b1-8) and give a concise description of the interpretations that

---

<sup>210</sup> So far as I know, the only exception is Delcomminette (2002; 2006, 51-78), who suggests that the apparent objections are outcomes of the dialectical method. But as I have noted in n.205, his interpretation does not seem to be compatible with the way Socrates embarks on the methodological issues in (P55).



have been proposed so far (§3.1). I shall then move on to an examination of the proposals that have been made to connect (#1) with the surrounding context (§3.2). After this, I shall explain my own proposal in detail (§3.3).

### *§3.1. The text and interpretations of 15b1-8*

First of all, let us have a look at the passage in question. I shall first quote it in Greek, for the proper reading of the Greek text has been disputed, and alternative ways of punctuating and several proposals for emendation have been suggested. In Burnet's standard edition, at any rate, the passage runs as follows:

15b1    πρῶτον μὲν εἶ τινας δεῖ τοιαύτας εἶναι μονάδας  
         ὑπολαμβάνειν ἀληθῶς οὕσας· εἶτα πῶς αὖ ταύτας, μίαν  
         ἑκάστην οὕσαν ἀεὶ τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ μήτε γένεσιν μήτε ὄλεθρον  
         προσδεχομένην, ὅμως εἶναι βεβαιοτάτα μίαν ταύτην; μετὰ  
b5       δὲ τοῦτ' ἐν τοῖς γιγνομένοις αὖ καὶ ἀπείροις εἴτε διεσπα-  
         σμένην καὶ πολλὰ γεγονυῖαν θετέον, εἴθ' ὅλην αὐτὴν αὐτῆς  
         χωρὶς, ὃ δὴ πάντων ἀδυνατώτατον φαίνοιτ' ἄν, ταῦτόν καὶ  
b8       ἐν ἅμα ἐν ἐνί τε καὶ πολλοῖς γίγνεσθαι.

This text may be translated in the following way (this translation is intended to be as literal as possible):

(Q1) First, [the question is] whether one should suppose that there are some

such monads truly being; (Q2) then again, how [one should suppose that] these, each being one and always the same and admitting neither coming-to-be nor perishing, are nevertheless most firmly this one. (Q3) After this again, (whether one must posit [such a monad] as having been dispersed in the comings-to-be and unlimited things and as having become many, or as being itself, as a whole, separate from itself, which would seem to be the most impossible of all), [how one should suppose that] the same and one comes to be in one and many at the same time.<sup>211</sup>

It has been commonly agreed by scholars that the 'monads' in this passage refers to Platonic Forms, and that the objections put forward here correspond, at least partially, to Parmenides' objection to Socrates' postulation of Platonic Forms in the *Parmenides* (130a3-135c4). Under this supposition, the meanings of (Q1) and (Q3) seem fairly clear; (Q1) questions the existence of Platonic Forms (cf. *Prm.* 134e9-135b2),<sup>212</sup> and (Q3) questions the possibility of the instantiation

---

<sup>211</sup> The translation is mine. I have taken here, following the majority of scholars, the εἴτε ... εἴτε ... clause (from ἐν τοῖς γιγνομένοις at 15b5 to φαίνοιτ' ἄν at 15b7) as a long parenthesis. In this case, we must supply an interrogative, i.e. πῶς ('how') taken from (Q2), to (Q3). Alternatively, one might take it that εἴτε at 15b5 and εἴτε at 15b6 are themselves interrogatives introducing the third question by assuming that the second εἴτε clause continues up to πολλοῖς γίγνεσθαι at 15b8 (cf. e.g. Benitez (1989, 24-30)). According to this view, the passage runs as follows:

(Q3\*) After this again, *whether* one must posit [such a monad] as having been dispersed in the comings-to-be and unlimited things and as having become many, *or whether* [one must posit that such a monad], as being itself, as a whole, separate from itself, which would seem to be the most impossible of all, being the same and one, comes to be in one and many at the same time.

In this case, we do not need to supply the interrogative as in (Q3), but we have to assume that θετέον ('posit') at 15b6 is first connected with participles (διεσμομένην, γεγονυῖαν 15b5-6) and then with an infinitive (γίγνεσθαι 15b8), which seems certainly unnatural. This seems to be the reason why the majority of scholars prefers (Q3) to (Q3\*).

<sup>212</sup> Muniz&Rudebusch (2004) argue that Plato coined the word ἐνάς in order to

of Platonic Forms in things that come to be and cease to be (cf. *Prm.* 130e4-131c11). However, it is hard to see the meaning of (Q2). In essence, (Q2) would be asking 'how one should suppose that these, each being one [...], are nevertheless most firmly this one?', and on the face of it such a question seems hardly to make sense.

In view of the incomprehensible wording of (Q2), some scholars have suggested that we should recognise only two questions in the passage by unifying (Q2) and (Q3) into a single objection (let us call these scholars 'two-questionists'). Some of them claim that this fusion is possible without emendation, but by adopting a punctuation different from the one given by Burnet (punctuation was not marked in Plato's original text) and by construing the position of the adversative conjunction at 15b4, i.e. ὁμῶς, through hyperbaton.<sup>213</sup> That is to say, they first replace the question mark at 15b4 in Burnet's edition with a comma, and then contrast the ὁμῶς clause not with the preceding clause but with the one that follows. The outcome can be translated as follows:

---

distinguish it from *μονάς* 'much as *genera* are distinct from *species*' (401). According to this view, (Q1) questions only the existence of those Platonic Forms which are somehow analogous to species. Even if we set aside apparent implausibility involved in the supposition that Plato introduces such an important distinction without any explanation, there seems to be an argumentative and philosophical reason for denying such a supposition. Let us suppose that the view in question is right. Then, either (Q1) questions the existence of all species-Forms or only some particular species-Forms. If the former, there seems to be little reason to take the objection seriously, for the mere existence of black as species of colour (cf. 12e5) or that of man as species of animal (cf. 15a4) are sufficient for sweeping aside the objection. If the latter, that is, if (Q1) is concerned with only some unclear cases, e.g. the existence of the hunting of tame animals as a species of hunting (see *Sph.* 222b6-c3), it will no longer be an objection about the one and many in general.

<sup>213</sup> See e.g. Badham (1855a, 8-9), Poste (1860, 9-10), Jackson (1897, 292), Cherniss (1947, 230 n.62), Ross (1953, 131 n.1), Striker (1970, 14 n.1), Frede (1997, 122 n.17).

(Q2\*) Then again, how [one should suppose that] these, each being one and always the same and admitting neither coming-to-be nor perishing, are most firmly this one, *and yet* after this again (whether one must posit [such a monad] as having been dispersed in the comings-to-be and unlimited things and as having become many, or as being itself, as a whole, separate from itself, which would seem to be the most impossible of all), the same and one comes to be in one and many at the same time.

(Q2\*) is admittedly a very clumsy and complicated sentence, but the general meaning seems clear enough. It is just an elaborated version of (Q3); it questions the instantiation of Platonic Forms. There are also scholars who appeal to emendation in order to unify (Q2) and (Q3) into a single objection. Diès, for example, adopting an emendation proposed and abandoned by Badham, changes ὅμως into ὅλως ('wholly'), and then unifies the two objections.<sup>214</sup> Similarly, one can plausibly adopt Susemihl's emendation of ὅμως into ὄντως ('really') in order to merge the two objections.<sup>215</sup> More radical emendations than these have also been proposed. However, the sentences that emerge as the result of such proposals are only slightly different from (Q2\*),<sup>216</sup>

---

<sup>214</sup> See Diès (1949, 7 n.1). This proposal does not appear in either of Badham's two editions (1855a; 1878), but appears at p.341 in his (1855b), an article in which he offers addenda to his first edition.

<sup>215</sup> See Susemihl (1857, 9 n.688). It should be noted that the proposals offered by Badham and Susemihl were originally intended to ease the interpretation of (Q2), and not as a means of merging (Q2) and (Q3) into a single objection. Benitez (1989, 28-29) offers a good argument for the advantage of Susemihl's proposal over Badham's, but his argument does not seem to me to be conclusive.

<sup>216</sup> Instead of 'these, each being one [...], are most firmly this one, and yet after this again ...' in (Q2\*), Diès's proposal will give 'these, each being one [...], are *wholly* and most firmly this one, and after this again ...', and the reading which adopts Susemihl's emendation will give 'these, each being one [...], are *really* and most firmly this one, and after this again ...'.

and so I shall hereafter treat (Q2\*) as standing for the two-questionist interpretations in general.

By contrast, other scholars, dismissing such interpretations on account of the difficulties involved in merging (Q2) and (Q3), claim that it is possible to give a relevant sense to (Q2) (let us call them 'three-questionists'). The difficulties raised are partly *grammatical and philological*.<sup>217</sup>

(GP) First, there is no known parallel to the alleged case of hyperbaton of ὁμῶς in Ancient Greek.<sup>218</sup> The appeal to hyperbaton, therefore, unreasonably requires a revision of our knowledge of Greek grammar. Second, the appeal to emendation is unsatisfactory, especially since there are no reported difficulties in the manuscripts.<sup>219</sup>

Difficulties are also raised on *structural and argumentative* grounds:

---

<sup>217</sup> I have adopted the distinction between 'grammatical and philological' and 'structural and argumentative' grounds from Delcomminette (2002, 26-27).

<sup>218</sup> For this difficulty, cf. e.g. Dancy (1984, 163), Benitez (1989, 27), Frede (1997, 122 n.17), Muniz&Rudebusch (2004, 396). Dancy and Benitez point out that the cases that have often been quoted as parallels, i.e. *Ly.* 213a2, *Phd.* 91c8, *Tht.* 145d5-7, and *Phlb.* 12b5-6 are not really parallels, since these passages all have either ὁμῶς μὲν or ὁμῶς καί.

<sup>219</sup> Three-questionists also sometimes argue that the use of the three conjunctions, πρῶτον μὲν, εἴτα, and μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο, is a clear sign that Plato introduces three distinct thoughts. Cf. Friedländer (1969, 534 n.27), Benitez (1989, 25), and especially Delcomminette (2002, 27), who writes: 'actually, this feature is already sufficient by itself to show that there must be three parts in the text.' However, the wrongness of his claim can be seen from *Lg.* 875a5-b3: 'The first difficulty (μὲν γὰρ πρῶτον) is to realize that the proper object of true political skill is not the interest of private individuals but the common good. [...] The second difficulty (δεύτερον δέ) is that even if a man did get an adequate theoretical grasp of the truth of all this, he might then (μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο) attain a position of absolute control over a state, with no one to call him to account.' In my view, the three-questionists have a certain advantage in this regard, but this advantage is offset by the fact that there are only two interrogatives, εἴ (15b1) and πῶς (15b2), in this passage, which seem to be a clear sign that Plato introduces only two distinct questions (provided that, with the majority of scholars, we understand the εἴτε ... εἴτε ... clause (15b5-7) as a parenthesis; cf. n.211).

(SA) (Q1), i.e. the question about the existence of Platonic Forms, and (Q2\*), i.e. the question about the instantiation of Platonic Forms in particulars, do not have any connection with the passages that come before and after 15b1-8. For one thing, neither of the questions is relevant to the main subject of the opening skirmish, namely that pleasure is both one and many. For another, the dialectical procedure does not give any solution to either of them. Accordingly, the two-questionists would isolate 15b1-8 and turn it into a digression.<sup>220</sup>

While pointing out such difficulties, the three-questionists customarily claim that, when properly understood, (Q2) reveals the connection between the opening skirmish (12c8-14b8), the apparent objections (15a4-b8: #1), and the dialectical procedure (16c10-e2: #3).<sup>221</sup> Thus, according to them, we must posit three questions in order to avoid (GP), and we must contrive a proper interpretation of (Q2) in order to avoid (SA).

The result of all this is that there has been a longstanding controversy

---

<sup>220</sup> For this objection, see esp. Delcomminette (2002, 27; 2006, 57-58). Cf. also Moravcsik (1979, 86), Dancy (1984, 166), Barker (1996, 161), Meinwald (1996, 102), Muniz&Rudebusch (2004, 401-402).

<sup>221</sup> See e.g. Dancy (1984, 166): 'In fact, of the three questions we find Socrates raising, it is really this second one that is of primary relevance in this context'; Barker (1996, 161-62): 'It seems to me clear [...] that the main puzzle in which Socrates is interested, in the *Philebus*, is [...] a problem about the relation between any rather general kind and the lesser kinds which in some sense it includes. [...] [T]he second (lines 2-4) should be our question about the relation between unities and their sub-kinds'; Meinwald (1996, 102): 'only the middle one is setting the agenda for the *Philebus*'; Muniz&Rudebusch (2004, 402-3): 'We make sense of this question [i.e. (Q2)], [...] producing an intelligible question complementary to the First (and Third) Controversies and directly connected both to the immediate context of the metaphysical discussion and to the larger context of the discussion of the henads Pleasure and Knowledge and their alleged division into monads.'

between the two- and the three-questionists;<sup>222</sup> the former claim that (Q2) is unintelligible, and the latter claim that (Q2\*) is fraught with difficulties. At this point, I make it clear that I myself belong to the two-questionist group. In my view, (SA) is not a real difficulty; it just looks like a difficulty under the presupposition that the dialectical method at (#3) is an answer to the apparent objections at (#1). It is true that (SA) was not settled satisfactorily by any previous two-questionists who share this presupposition.<sup>223</sup> But, as I shall argue, there is a different way of understanding the context; Socrates' response to objections is to be found somewhere else. Moreover, I think I can offer a good structural and argumentative reason for saying that. However, I admit that (GP) is unavoidable. I would prefer emendation to hyperbaton, but I would not deny that 'it would be nice to do without emendation.'<sup>224</sup> I shall therefore first examine the interpretations of (Q2) proposed by the three-questionists in the hope that it will make us fully realise the necessity for emendation.

### §3.2. *An examination of proposed interpretations of (Q2)*

Let us have a look at the controversial question once again:

---

<sup>222</sup> For a quick summary of who belongs to the two- or the three questionists, see Hahn (1978,159-63) and Delcomminette (2002, 26 n.10). (Note, however, that Delcomminette mistakenly includes De Chiara-Quenzer, who is a two-questionist, in the 'Three-Question group'.) Since Delcomminette's article, Pradeau (2002) and Schmidt-Wiborg (2005) have joined the Two-Question group, and Dixsaut (2001) and Muniz&Rudebusch (2004), as well as Delcomminette (2002; 2006), have joined the Three-Question group.

<sup>223</sup> Two-questionists usually suppose that Socrates avoids coping with the apparent objections squarely, or *implicitly* dismisses it, by offering the dialectical method as an alternative way of dealing with the one and many at issue. See, e.g. Hackforth (1972, 22 n.1), Striker (1970, 15), Frede (1997, 136). Cf. also Benitez's understanding of the context in his (1989, 34).

<sup>224</sup> Dancy (1984, 163).

(Q2) Then again, how [one should suppose that] these, each being one and always the same and admitting neither coming-to-be nor perishing, are nevertheless most firmly this one. (15b2-4)

Before undertaking the examination of different proposals for dealing with this sentence, one should observe an immediate stumbling block for any attempt at finding a relevant sense in this passage: contrary to Socrates' words in (P55) [14c1-10], it is *not* easy to dispute in this way. Anscombe, for example, declares that it takes 'philosophical acuteness' to see the meaning of (Q2).<sup>225</sup> But any interpretation of (Q2) that presupposes a profound philosophical insight seems to be incompatible with Socrates' words, and so fails to identify the objection Socrates has in mind. Possibly, one might cope with this difficulty by distinguishing the meaning of (Q2) from its expression; the objection itself is not difficult to understand, but the words Socrates uses to describe (Q2) just happen to be difficult. This does not seem to me to be a plausible explanation, but let us assume that such an explanation is right, and turn to particular interpretations.

At an early stage of the discussion on (Q2), it was commonly held that (Q2) should be understood as an oblique reference to some arguments concerning the theory of Forms in other dialogues. Thus, for example, some scholars claimed to find in (Q2) a reference to the problematic relation between 'one' and 'being' that is discussed in the *Parmenides* (142b1-155e3) and the *Sophist*

---

<sup>225</sup> See Anscombe (1966, 407 n.4). To this Gosling (1975, 146) replies: 'When it comes to finding the problem in the present text what is needed is not philosophical acuteness, but a high degree of clairvoyance.'



(244b6-245e5). They would typically paraphrase (Q2) in the following way (I shall omit hereafter, when it is appropriate, the phrase: 'and always the same and admitting neither coming-to-be nor perishing'):

(Q2-1) Then again, how one should suppose that these monads, each being *one* [...], nevertheless *are* most firmly this one [i.e. how one should suppose that these monads are not only *one*, but also *being*].<sup>226</sup>

At the same time, there were also scholars who supposed that 'the relation of the special Ideas to the supreme Idea'<sup>227</sup> that is mentioned, e.g., in the *Republic* (507a7-509c11) is at issue here.<sup>228</sup> This suggests a different version of (Q2):

(Q2-2) Then again, how one should suppose that these [special Forms] (e.g. all the Forms except the Form of the Good), each being one [...], are nevertheless most firmly this one [supreme Form] (e.g. the Form of the Good).

---

<sup>226</sup> (Q2-1) is proposed by Burnet (1914, 326 n.2) and supported by, e.g., Taylor (1956, 107-8) and Guthrie (1978, 207). Casper's view in his (1977, 21) may be regarded as an interesting variation of (Q2-1), according to which (Q2) is concerned with the relation between a set of 'several different characteristics (being one, being the same, being ungenerated, being imperishable)' that are assigned to each Form, on the one hand, and each Form's 'being one', on the other.

<sup>227</sup> Archer-Hind (1901, 231).

<sup>228</sup> This interpretation seems to have a long tradition. I do not know who first proposed it, but Susemihl (1857, 9) already gave a version of it more than 150 years ago: 'zweitens, [...] die weitere Frage [...] angedeutet [...] im Grunde nichts Anderes, als das Verhältniss von Einheit und Vielheit rein innerhalb der Ideen selbst, von dem Fürsichsein jeder einzelnen zu der Inhärenz aller in der höchsten besagt.' A reference to the Form of the Good is proposed by Archer-Hind (1901) and G. E. Moore, whose view is mentioned in Bury (1897, 215-16).

However, it is now generally agreed that interpretations like (Q2-1) and (Q2-2) are, as they stand, plainly inadequate because they do not take into consideration the context within the *Philebus*; the issues referred to in (Q2-1) and (Q2-2) do not have any bearing on the issues in the *Philebus*.<sup>229</sup> The difficulty that is pointed out in (SA) in relation to the disagreement between the two- and the three-questionists is really present here: such interpretations would isolate 15b1-8 and turn it into a digression.

Recent three-questionists are evidently more attentive to the context than those who propose (Q2-1) or (Q2-2). Their proposals are in essence variations of (Q2-2); they also suppose that what is questioned by (Q2) is the interrelation of Platonic Forms. However, they claim that (Q2) need not be understood as a reference to discussions of the theory of Forms in other dialogues. In fact, according to these scholars, the interrelation of Forms is at issue both in the opening skirmish in the *Philebus* itself, and in the description there of the dialectical method.<sup>230</sup> What has turned out in the opening skirmish is that pleasure is, like colour, 'one as a kind, but some of its parts are absolutely opposite to one another' (12e6-13a1), or to put it differently, that the Form of Pleasure is one as a *genus*, but contains many *species*-Forms which are somehow opposite to one another. The dialectical method described at (#3) is basically the

---

<sup>229</sup> As for (Q2-1), it has also been pointed out that it is not really consistent with the arguments given in the *Parmenides* and the *Sophist*. See e.g. Dancy (1984, 163-64), Löhr (1990, 75-81).

<sup>230</sup> Note that interpretations of this kind are also put forward by two-questionists. See, e.g., Frede (1993, xxii): 'The most natural supplement [that would make (Q2) a question worth asking] would be the assumption that Plato is somehow referring to the fact that the Forms as *genera* are wholes with parts. This would connect both with what preceded and with what is to follow, for the subsequent elucidation of the question of the 'one and many' is concerned with the division of genera into species.'

procedure of dividing a *genus*-Form into many *species*-Forms. In both passages, then, the Platonic Form of *F* is put forward as an item that is somehow both one and many. On the basis of such observations, the updated three-questionists conclude that (Q2) is asking how the Platonic Form of *F* can be both one and many.

It is difficult, however, to extract the genus-and-species relation from (Q2), for both *ταύτας* at 15b2 and *ταύτην* at 15b4 refer, in all likelihood, to unities (*ἐνάδες*) such as man, ox, the beautiful, and the good mentioned at 15a5, and these unities do not themselves constitute the genus-and-species relation. Depending on how they solve this difficulty, the recent three-questionists' views take different forms. First, Meinwald, proposing that (Q2) only refers to the unities as *genera*, supplies a whole clause about *species*:

(Q2-3) Then again, 'how each of these, [though it is divided into many species or sub-species] while not admitting generation or destruction, is nevertheless most securely this one.'<sup>231</sup>

Second, Barker claims that *ταύτας* at 15b2 and *ταύτην* at 15b4 can be taken to refer to *species* and a *genus* respectively, by understanding the *ταύτας* as an instance of what he calls the 'demonstrative of random selection'.<sup>232</sup> The *ταύτας*,

---

<sup>231</sup> Meinwald (1996, 100) (her parenthesis).

<sup>232</sup> Barker (1996, 163) gives the following example to explain this usage of demonstrative: 'a Lecturer in Philosophy, discoursing on the subject of individuation, might say: "Take a box-full of qualitatively identical apples. How are *these* apples in the box distinct items from *those* ones?" [...] In using the expression "these", he or she is obviously not referring to all the apples together; nor [...] are we being asked to focus on just that particular group of them [...] which the Lecturer has in mind. At the most we are being invited to think of any random sub-group of (imaginary) apples, and to

when used this way, according to him, does not refer to the unities taken together or the unities Socrates has specifically in mind, but to 'any arbitrarily chosen group of them'. With this in mind, he paraphrases (Q2) as follows:

(Q2-4) 'How can *these* (the plurality, red, green, yellow, etc.) most firmly be *this one* (the 'one thing', colour)?'<sup>233</sup>

Third, Muniz and Rudebusch propose that Plato tacitly assumes a distinction between the two kinds of unities, i.e. *henads* and *monads*, 'much as *genera* are distinct from *species*',<sup>234</sup> and then claim that ταύτας at 15b2 and ταύτην at 15b4 *respectively* refer back to τοιαύτας μονάδας ('any such monads') at 15b1 and τούτων τῶν ἐνάδων ('these henads') at 15a6.<sup>235</sup> Here is their paraphrase of (Q2):

(Q2-5) 'How *these monads* (for example, Intemperate and Temperate Man)—each one always being the same [...]—nevertheless most steadfastly are *this one henad* (for example, Man).'<sup>236</sup>

Thus, the views of these modern three-questionists differ from one another in the way they secure the genus-and-species relation in (Q2). On the other hand, they seem to accord closely with one another in terms of the explanation of the

---

think of them as distinct from any other such sub-group.' I wonder whether such a usage is really possible in Ancient Greek, for at least I am sure that his example does not make sense if it is translated into Japanese.

<sup>233</sup> Barker (1996, 163).

<sup>234</sup> Muniz&Rudebusch (2004, 401).

<sup>235</sup> They claim that the referents of 'any such monads' are omitted through brachylogy.

<sup>236</sup> Muniz&Rudebusch (2004, 403).

force of ὅμως ('nevertheless') at 15b4.<sup>237</sup> In essence, they all find the following train of thought in Socrates' words: it is not hard to see how it is possible for many sensible particulars to *become* one, for they can change; but many species-Forms are not subject to change; how, then, can these many species-Forms, while not subject to change, *nevertheless be*—for we cannot use 'become' here—this one genus-Form? This is the question, according to the updated three-questionists, that is asked in the *Philebus*.

There are, however, serious difficulties inherent in the interpretations along these lines. The first, and the most crucial, difficulty is that the updated three-questionists only superficially connect 15b1-8 with the passages that come before and after it. In fact, if (Q2-3), (Q2-4), or (Q2-5) were the objection Socrates has in mind, then his answer would be found already in the opening skirmish. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that Socrates and Protarchus are dealing with the genus-and-species relation of Platonic Forms in 12c8-14b8. Under this assumption, it seems clear that what is established in the opening skirmish would become the following variant of (OM1):

(OM1\*) A Platonic Form is one *qua* genus, but *qua* species it is many, and these species are dissimilar to one another.

Now, the updated versions of (Q2) ask either how a Platonic Form can be both one and many, or how a genus-Form, i.e. a Platonic Form *qua* genus, can be both one and many. If the former, (OM1\*) is itself the answer; a Platonic Form is

---

<sup>237</sup> See Meinwald (1996, 101), Barker (1996, 164), and Muniz&Rudebusch (2004, 403).

certainly both one and many, but in different respects. If the latter, the answer would be: there is no way, for a genus-Form is just one, not many. But, if its solution is found in the opening skirmish, it seems hardly appropriate to suppose that Socrates should mention such an objection at 15b1-8. If anyone tries to argue that he just wants to make it clearer by a further agreement in the methodological passage (14c1-18d2) that (OM1\*) gives the required solution, the answer is that it is not the case that he discusses this issue in detail after 15b1-8.<sup>238</sup> It seems to follow, then, that none of (Q2-3), (Q2-4), and (Q2-5) fits into the context.

Second, it is not likely that Platonic Forms are directly at issue in the surrounding context, either. Specifically, it is implausible that Socrates and Protarchus have in mind the Form of Pleasure or Knowledge in the opening skirmish, or that dialectic is a dividing process of one genus-Form into many species-Forms. First, each of 'pleasure' and 'knowledge', which are established to be both one and many in the opening skirmish, was originally presented as 'a certain state or disposition of the soul' (11d4-5) that would constitute 'what is the best of all human possessions (τῶν ἀνθρώπινων κτημάτων)' (19c6). But such things can hardly be Platonic Forms; a state of the soul is always instantiated in the soul, but Platonic Forms are not instantiated in anything, nor are they something we can 'possess' (κτῆσθαι), but something we can only 'participate

---

<sup>238</sup> One might argue that (Q2) is asking for an answer more fundamental than (OM1\*) to the question as to how a Platonic Form can be both one and many, and the answer is given at 16c7-10, i.e. that our ancestors passed on us the tradition that what is each time said to be consists of one and many. But then the question should have been something like: 'how can we *justify* saying that a Platonic Form has these two aspects?'. As it is, (Q2) is supposed to ask, 'how can we *understand* the idea that a Form is both one and many?', and it is just unsatisfactory to answer this by saying, 'our ancestors told us that a Form is both one and many'.

in' (μετέχειν). Second, it seems clear that the 'one form' (μίαν ἰδέαν 16d1) that is posited at the outset of the dialectical procedure is not a Platonic Form. For one thing, Socrates says that 'we find [this one form] in [things]' (εὕρησεν ... ἐνοῦσαν 16d2), while, once more, Platonic Forms are not instantiated in anything. This characterization of Platonic Forms seems to be confirmed later in the dialogue when Socrates says that they are 'always the same in every respect and *the least mixed*' (τὰ ἀεὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ ὡσαύτως ἀμεικτότατα ἔχοντα 59c3-4).<sup>239</sup> For another, in the description of the method the investigation of *F* continues after one has discovered and grasped the 'form' of *F* (see 16d2-3), but clearly this would not be the case if 'one form' at 16d1 referred to a Platonic Form, for one will be already knowledgeable about *F* when one has grasped the Platonic Form of *F*, and there will be no need for further investigation.<sup>240</sup> One might object that 'discovering' or 'grasping' a Form is different from *knowing* it. But this will not do. At 17b6-7, illustrating the dialectical procedure by the example of vocal sounds, Socrates says that 'Neither of these two facts alone yet makes us knowledgeable, neither that we know its unlimitedness *nor that we know its unity* (τὸ ἕν)'. There is no ambiguity here. If 'one form' were to be a Platonic Form, Socrates' words would imply that knowledge of the (genus) Form of Vocal Sound (which is to be divided into many species-Forms) does not

<sup>239</sup> Note that Plato never uses the term 'Form' (εἶδος or ἰδέα) to refer to the entities in question in the passage in which Socrates is unambiguously talking about Platonic Forms in the *Philebus* (57e3-59d9).

<sup>240</sup> To put it differently, if the 'one form' refers to a Platonic Form, then the following case, for example, might occur: someone, who is in the middle of the investigation into the Forms of Mammal, Bird, Fish, Reptile, Amphibian, claims that he has already grasped the Form of Animal and is knowledgeable about animals (but not knowledgeable about mammals, etc.). This appears to be an odd picture. If someone were to claim such things, we would be tempted to say that his claim on knowledge of animals is false, precisely because he thinks he can know animals without knowing mammals, etc.

make us knowledgeable about vocal sound. But such a position would be completely incompatible with Plato's own position in other dialogues.<sup>241</sup> In short, since Platonic Forms are not directly at issue in the passages that come before and after 15b1-8, reading the interrelation of Platonic Forms into (Q2) is not helpful for understanding the apparent objections in the proper context.

Finally, the manoeuvres of the updated three-questionists to extract the genus-and-species relation from (Q2) are not entirely plausible. It is hard to believe that Plato deliberately omitted the essential clause supplied by Meinwald, or used the demonstrative pronouns in a very special way as suggested by Barker, or tacitly assumed the significant distinction between henads and monads as claimed by Muniz and Rudebusch. It may be the case that Plato sometimes challenges his readers by deploying a very concise and cryptic argument in spite of its significance. However, our passage is not such an occasion; Socrates is here simply describing objections that are *easy* to raise. It seems then unlikely that such clever interpretative devices as designed by the updated three-questionists are required in order to identify the objection Socrates has in mind.

In consideration of such difficulties, it seems clear that the updated three-questionists are no more successful in explaining (Q2) than their

---

<sup>241</sup> Benitez (1989, 55-56) tries to avoid this difficulty by claiming that 'there is an ambiguity in Socrates' use of the term ἕν throughout 16b-19a' which sometimes means 'an undifferentiated unity (e.g. the 'initial one': κατ' ἀρχὰς ἕν 16d5)' and sometimes means 'the one Form' (= a genus-Form). Thus, the 'unity' at 17b7 whose knowledge does not make us knowledgeable, according to him, is the former, i.e. the undifferentiated unity of vocal sound, and not the Platonic Form of Vocal Sound. But his claim is far from convincing. There is no suggestion at all in the description of dialectic (16c10-e2) that we come to know the 'one form' we posited at the beginning of the procedure just when we have finished the whole procedure. It is fairly clear that discovering and grasping one form before turning to its species corresponds to knowing the unity of vocal sound before turning to each letter or phoneme.



predecessors. Indeed, there is in my view no way of squeezing out of (Q2) an *apparent* objection that fits into the context. I therefore suggest that it is necessary to set aside the apparently powerful objections contained in (GP) and to accept a plausible emendation (or hyperbaton) in order to find a way out of this interpretative cul-de-sac. The main criterion for the correct interpretation will then be whether or not the 'apparent objections' that are given as a result of emendations have a place in the context. In the next sub-section, I would like to show that the postulation of two questions, (Q1) and (Q2\*), can perfectly maintain the flow of the argument in the methodological passages in the *Philebus*.

### §3.3. *My interpretation*

One might wonder, if I am right in suggesting that the passages that come before and after 15b1-8 are not directly dealing with Platonic Forms, how the apparent objections, which are plainly concerned with Platonic Forms, can fit into the context. My answer is that they fit well if the context is understood in the following way. At the beginning of the investigation of the nature of *F*, one must posit, if one can, the unity (τὸ ἓν or ἑνός) of *F*, or *F qua F*, just as Socrates and Philebus posited the unities of knowledge or pleasure. However, the ontological and epistemological status of the unity in question is, at this stage, inevitably unclear. Exploiting this unclarity, someone might regard the unity of *F* as the Platonic Form of *F* and raise the objections described at 15b1-8. Although his or her way of approaching the one and many at issue is not entirely misplaced, Socrates thinks that this approach stops their investigation

by causing unnecessary difficulties. Thus, before entering the investigation of the nature of pleasure and knowledge, Socrates secures agreement from his interlocutors that, in dealing with the one and many at issue, they should adopt the dialectical method and dismiss as merely eristic the approach in which the objections about Platonic Forms are raised (as well as a young boy's approach described at 15d8-16a3). I shall defend this interpretation in what follows.

First, let us consider the ontological and epistemological status of the unity of *F*. Just before mentioning the apparent objections, Socrates informs us that the objections are raised about the 'unities' (ἐνάδων 15a6) involved when we posit, say, man, ox, the beautiful, or the good as 'one' (ἓν 15a4-6) (see (P56) [15a4-7]). In relation to this passage, scholars almost without exception suppose that the reference to 'unities' is a reference to Platonic Forms,<sup>242</sup> noting as they do so that the expression has no parallels in Plato's other dialogues.<sup>243</sup> However, such a supposition seems to me to be implausible; it is unlikely that the mere postulation of something universal commits someone to the postulation of a theoretically loaded Platonic Form. As a matter of fact, while Socrates and Philebus posit pleasure and knowledge as 'one' (ἓν 18e6) (see (P57) [18e3-19a2]), they are concerned with 'a certain state or disposition of the soul' (11d4-5) and not—at least immediately or directly—with the Platonic Forms of Pleasure and Knowledge. It is indeed true that 'such monads' (τοιαύτας μονάδας) at 15b1 refers back to the 'unities' at 15a6, and these monads are treated as Platonic Forms by those who raise the apparent objections. But we need not suppose

---

<sup>242</sup> So far as I know, Gosling (1975, 143-53) is the only exception.

<sup>243</sup> See Ross (1953, 130): 'The reference to the Forms as units or monads is not paralleled elsewhere in Plato.'

that the opponents of Forms who are overcome with 'immense enthusiasm' (πολλή σπουδή 15a6-7) have correctly identified the referents of the 'unities' in question.<sup>244</sup> Rather, the situation Socrates has in mind, I submit, should be understood like this: when someone posits the unity of *F* at the beginning of the investigation of the nature of *F*, his opponents take this unity as the Platonic Form of *F* and raise objections against the postulation of such an entity. On this construal of the context, we can find the connection between the things Socrates and his interlocutors are talking about, on the one hand, and the Platonic Forms that are at issue in the apparent objections, on the other. I suggest, then, that the 'unities' at 15a6 is not a reference to Platonic Forms.

At this point, the following two questions may naturally arise: what is the status of the unity of *F*, and why does not Socrates simply say that the apparent objections are raised because of a misunderstanding about the referent of the 'unities'? Let us first take up the former question, the answer to which I think will shed light on the latter. My answer to the former question is that the status of the unity of *F* is not unequivocally specifiable, for it changes in accordance with the development of the investigation, which has the following three stages. The first stage is the mere postulation of the unity of *F* at the very beginning of the investigation. At this stage, the unity of *F* is not something carefully reflected upon; it is just treated as the referent of a general noun, whatever that might be. The unity of *F* in this phase does not have any specific ontological

---

<sup>244</sup> Compare Mirhardy (1992, 172-73), who, pointing out that πολλή σπουδή sometimes implies 'misspent effort' (cf. *Chrm.* 175e4-5; *Smp.* 177c2, 181e1; *Phdr.* 248b6; *Sph.* 218e4-5, 259c3; *Lg.* 652a3-4), suggests 'the great fuss' as the translation of πολλή σπουδή in our passage. To my mind, 'the great fuss' is simply an overtranslation, but I agree with him that πολλή σπουδή at *Phlb.* 15a6-7 does not have a positive connotation as suggested by the widely shared term for the apparent objections, i.e. the 'serious problems'.

status. Presumably, Philebus' and Protarchus' postulation of the unity of pleasure belongs to this stage. The second stage corresponds to the first step of the dialectical procedure, i.e. the postulation of the form of *F* and the discovery of the form of *F* in things (see 16d1-2), which is, as I shall argue, nothing other than Socrates' procedure for definition. The unity of *F* at this stage is instantiated in things, and is the subject of definition (or knowledge by definition);<sup>245</sup> or, in a word, it is the Socratic form of *F*. The third stage, finally, is the completion of the dialectical procedure and the mastery of the science of the unity of *F*. The unity of *F* is now the object of expertise, and so is the Platonic Form of *F*, whose ontological status I have characterized as context-independent (see Ch. 3, §4); it is not instantiated in anything at all. In a nutshell, the unity of *F* can be any one of the following: the unspecified referent of '*F*', the Socratic form of *F*, and the Platonic Form of *F*.

By now, the answer to the second question is, I think, not hard to see. Socrates does not say that the apparent objections are based on a misunderstanding about the referent of the 'unities', because it is not the case that those who raise the objections are entirely mistaken about it. To put it differently, in so far as the unity of *F* can designate a Platonic Form, the clarification of the referent of the 'unities' does not by itself solve the apparent

---

<sup>245</sup> For the meaning of 'knowledge by definition', see Ch.3 §3, where I have argued that Socrates' usage of 'knowledge' is ambiguous between (a) knowledge by definition and (b) expertise. The same kind of ambiguity of 'knowledge' appears in the illustration of the dialectical method at 17a6-e6. Thus, when Socrates says, 'Neither of these two facts alone yet makes us knowledgeable, neither that we know (ἴσμεν) its unlimitedness nor that *we know its unity*' (17b6-7), he has (a) knowledge by definition about the unity of *F* in mind. On the other hand, when he says, 'when you have grasped the unity of any of the other things there are, by investigating in this way, you have become *wise about that* (ἐμφορων περὶ τοῦτο)' (17e1-3), he has (b) expertise in the unity of *F* in mind.

objections; a lengthy metaphysical discussion together with a detailed characterization of both Socratic forms and Platonic Forms would be necessary for that purpose.<sup>246</sup> But such a treatment will be suitable only if the objections are raised with serious intent. This is not the case, at least as supposed by Socrates, with the opponents of Forms mentioned in our passage. Indeed, the objections are easy to raise, so that they can be exploited by those who are not philosophically-minded just in order to cause difficulties. Besides, Platonic Forms come into view only at the completion of the whole process of investigation, and so it is not necessary for Socrates and his interlocutors to hold up investigation on account of the objections involved in Platonic Forms. It stands to reason, then, that Socrates does not undertake to examine whether the apparent objections are valid or not, and if so, why.

Now one might object that, if my diagnosis is right, at least some word would be expected from Socrates to the effect that he would be dismissing the apparent objections, when in fact nothing of the sort is to be found anywhere in the text. As I have said earlier, I myself think we can find a clear hint in this direction if we pay close attention to Socrates' words. At 16c10-e4 (#3) Socrates describes the god-given method for the investigation of *F*, according to which (D1) one should first posit the form of *F* and search for it until one finds it in things, and then (D2) one should enumerate the number (of all the different

---

<sup>246</sup> Plato himself nowhere in his works undertakes such a metaphysical discussion. If my interpretation is right, then (Q2\*) (or (Q3)) might be countered by pointing out that Platonic Forms are not instantiated in, but just 'participated in' by, things that come to be and cease to be. But an adequate answer should also provide an explanation of what 'participation' amounts to, which Plato seems to have left open. See *Ti.* 50c4-6: 'The things that enter and leave it are imitations of those things that always are, imprinted after their likeness in a marvelous way that is hard to describe.'

kinds of *F*) between the one and the unlimited. By contrast,

(P58) (E1) contemporary intellectuals among us make a one, haphazardly, and a many, faster and slower than they should (ἐν μὲν, ὅπως ἂν τύχωσι, καὶ πολλὰ θᾶπτον καὶ βραδύτερον ποιοῦσι τοῦ δέοντος); (E2) they go straight from the one to the unlimited and omit the intermediates. It is these characteristics that have made all the difference as to whether we are engaged with each other in dialectical or only in eristic discourse.

(16e4-17a5; #4)

It is crystal clear that in (P58) Socrates dismisses as merely eristic the contemporary intellectuals' way of dealing with the one and many. Now, my suggestion is that the 'contemporary intellectuals' is a reference to both those who raise the apparent objections at (#1) and the young boys described at (#2). If I am right, then Socrates dismisses the apparent objections here, and the pieces of the methodological passage neatly fit together. But no one has previously understood (P58) this way, and so first let us consider interpretations of (P58) that have been offered by other scholars.

As a matter of fact, (P58) has been another source of perplexity for scholars. Specifically, they have been puzzled over the phrase 'make [...] a many [...] *slower* than they should'. On the face of it, the sentence immediately afterwards, i.e. (E2), seems to imply that the contemporary intellectuals in question always make many *faster* than they should, for they go straight from the one to the unlimited, passing over the intermediates. Accordingly, scholars have proposed

several ways of solving this difficulty, but to my mind none of their solutions is plausible. First, there are scholars who try to secure consistency in (P58) by getting rid of ‘many’ from the text or translation. Some of these scholars directly excise καὶ πολλά (‘and many’) from the text as an interpolation;<sup>247</sup> the others suggest that the πολλά should be understood as an adverbial accusative, meaning ‘much’ rather than ‘many’.<sup>248</sup> These devices certainly seem to mend the apparent inconsistency; (E1) only indicates that the contemporary intellectuals make a one badly, which smoothly connects with (E2), i.e. that after the one they go immediately to the unlimited. But clearly neither device is satisfactory; on the one hand, the elimination of καὶ πολλά is a rather radical emendation, which it would certainly be nice to do without; on the other hand, it is unlikely that the πολλά that appears with ἔν in (E1) exceptionally means ‘much’, especially because Socrates uses ἔν and πολλά, the subject of discussion, in the sense of ‘one’ and ‘many’ consistently through the methodological passage. Second, there are also scholars who suggest that the implication is that doing something too quickly ends up making no progress, i.e. doing something too slowly.<sup>249</sup> Thus, Gosling writes: ‘Socrates is quite clear that because these

<sup>247</sup> See Bury (1897, 19), Diès (1949, 9). We may also add Dixsaut (2001, 301) to the supporters of this view, judging from her paraphrase: ‘les seconds [sc. les savants d’*à* present] font «un» plus vite ou plus lentement qu’il ne faudra, et ensuite vont immédiatement (*euthus*) de l’unité à l’illimité.’ There is also another proposal for emendation suggested by Badham (1855a, 11-12), who, instead of excising καὶ πολλά, accuse βραδύτερον (‘slower’) and replace it with βραχύτερον (‘shorter’). Benardete (1993, 10) follows Badham’s proposal.

<sup>248</sup> See Taylor (1956, 110); Frede (1993, 9): ‘But nowadays the clever ones among us make a one, haphazardly, and make it *many times* faster or slower than they should’ (emphasis mine; note that she has abandoned this translation in Cooper (1997)); Pradeau (2002, 89; 242 n.24).

<sup>249</sup> See Gosling (1975, 85), Löhr (1990, 185-88), and Frede (1997, 144), who quotes the following passage from the *Republic*: ‘In my haste to go through them all quickly (ταχύ), I’ve only progressed more slowly (βραδύνω).’ (528d7-8)

men move directly to the indeterminate [= the unlimited in (P58)] the intermediates get away, so that for all their speed they are too slow to catch them.’<sup>250</sup> This interpretation would require that the ‘many’ is ambiguous between the unlimited and the intermediates: they make a many, i.e. the *unlimited*, too fast, but they make a many, i.e. the *intermediates*, too slowly. However, making the intermediates (whether slowly or not) seems to contradict (E2) in which Socrates makes it quite clear that these men entirely omit the intermediates. I therefore conclude that the interpretations that have been offered so far are not quite satisfactory.<sup>251</sup> Clearly, then, another attempt is not amiss.

I suggest that we should understand ‘make a many slower than they should’ as a contemporary intellectual’s refusal, or sheer unwillingness, to admit that there are many *F*s. In view of the surrounding context, two interpretations along these lines seem to be possible: the first interpretation, which I do not favour, connects this phrase with a kind of attitude Protarchus took in the opening skirmish; the second, which I support, connects it with the apparent objections, or more specifically (Q2\*). First, one might think of someone who at first, like Protarchus, refuses to admit that there are many instances of *F*, but gives up his position at some point, and then, unlike Protarchus (who never

---

<sup>250</sup> Gosling (1975, 85).

<sup>251</sup> I have omitted here Hackforth’s unique view in his (1939, 23-24) mainly because no one has supported it since his proposal. In essence, he supposes that ‘faster’ and ‘slower’ refer to the time occupied by the activity in question. Thus, he suggests that ‘For the dialectician and his interlocutor the time occupied will depend on no subjective factor’, while the Eristics ‘take an unduly short or an unduly long time over their demonstration that a Many are One, or (maybe) that a One is Many’. However, it is very unlikely that the Eristics, in demonstrating that a one is many or *vice versa*, bother to spend a *longer* time than the time needed for someone to become knowledgeable about the one in question (which would be days or even years).



'goes to the unlimited'),<sup>252</sup> starts to claim that there are indeed infinitely many Fs. If Plato has this kind of person in mind, the phrase in question seems to be intelligible: some contemporary intellectuals make a many too slowly (because of their initial refusal to make a many), and they go from the one straight to the unlimited (after they have converted). A problem involved in this interpretation is that it is not clear why Plato should mention such a person at this point. We may be able to justify such apparently capricious behaviour by mixing Protarchus' concession with a young boy's way of dealing with the one and many, but the behaviour in question is in fact neither Protarchus' nor the young boy's; Protarchus did not claim that there are infinitely many instances of pleasure, and the young boy was not described as ready to give up his position. An interpretation that could connect (P58) with the surrounding context more closely than this would be desirable, and I suggest that my second proposal is exactly such an interpretation.

The second interpretation proposes that 'making a many slower than they should' refers to the attitude of those who raise the apparent objections. It is clear from (Q2\*) that they also refuse to admit that there are many instances of *F*, for they question the possibility of instantiation itself. Moreover, in questioning this, they turn their attention first to *one* Platonic Form, and then to 'the

---

<sup>252</sup> Delcomminette (2006, 86-87) proposes an interpretation along these lines, but he supposes that refusing to admit the existence of many instances in the way Protarchus does is compatible with going to the unlimited: 'D'un côté, il [sc. Protarque] va trop lentement lorsqu'il refuse de passer du plaisir lui-même aux différentes espèces de plaisirs, et de l'autre, il va trop vite lorsqu'il attribue immédiatement toutes les différences entre les plaisirs à leurs sources particulières.' But the latter half of his statement cannot be true, for, as I have made clear in n.193, Protarchus does not admit at all that there are differences among the pleasures. Cf. also Moravcsik (1979, 93), who understands (E1) in (P58) in a similar manner, but omits any reference to (E2).

comings-to-be and *unlimited things*' (τοῖς γιγνομένοις αὖ καὶ ἀπείροις 15b5), thereby omitting the intermediates. The opponents of Forms, therefore, seem to satisfy the conditions for the referent of those contemporary intellectuals who make a many slower than they should.

Thus having found a way past the difficulty involved in (P58), let us consider the passage as a whole. Scholars sometimes propose that 'contemporary intellectuals' is intended to be a reference to the 'young boys' described at (#2),<sup>253</sup> who enjoy making a mess of every discussion, 'now turning [F] to one side and rolling it all up into one, then again unrolling it and dividing it up' (15e2-3). I think that they are right in relation to those who make a many *faster* than they should. If so, the meaning of (P58) seems to be clear. First, (D1) a dialectician posits the form of *F* and searches for it until he finds it in things. By contrast, (E1) both a young boy and an opponent of Forms fail to perform such an investigation, the former exploiting the unity of *F* without thinking about what *F* is, the latter taking it as a Platonic Form and starting to criticize it on that basis (in (Q1)); in short, both of them make a one haphazardly. And then, young boys make a many *faster* than they should by 'unrolling it and dividing it up', while the opponent of Forms makes a many *slower* than he or she should by refusing to admit that there are many *Fs* (in (Q2\*)). Second, (D2) a dialectician enumerates the intermediates, i.e. the number of the kinds of *F* between the one and the unlimited. By contrast, (E2) both the young boy and the opponent of Forms fail to pay attention to the intermediates at all. The

---

<sup>253</sup> See Hackforth (1939, 23), Crombie (1963, 363), Benitez (1989, 42), Frede (1993, xxix; 1997, 144), Delcomminette (2006, 86-87). For a different view, see Löhr (1990, 186), Dixsaut (2001, 301).

implication of the last sentence of (P58), then, will be this: we should dismiss both the apparent objections and the young boy's way of dealing with the one and many because they are simply eristic.

#### §4. *The dialectical method in the Philebus*

Now that the surrounding context has been sufficiently discussed, my next task is to turn to the dialectical method itself. First of all, I would like to make it clear that I regard only 16c10-e2 (#3) as the general description of the dialectical procedure. Socrates mentions two cases in which someone deals with *F* in an appropriate manner, namely the case in which he or she gets hold of the one (16c10-e2), and the case in which he or she is compelled to get hold of the unlimited (18a9-b4). But I suggest that these two cases do not stand for two uses of dialectical method. To begin with, as I shall argue, the two cases are essentially different in their approaches: the first case is standard, while the second case is very rare and special; indeed, no use seems to be made of the approach described in the second case either in the *Philebus* itself or in any other dialogue.<sup>254</sup> Now, Socrates' introductory remarks at 16b5-c3 are concerned with the method that should be adopted for the investigation of the nature of pleasure and knowledge, and so seem only to be related to the first case. Here at 16c2-3, Socrates says: 'everything that has ever been discovered, belonging to any field of science, *has become evident through this* [sc. the dialectical method]'

---

<sup>254</sup> By contrast, Delcomminette (2006, 158) proposes, following Isenberg (1940, 161-62; 165-66), Gadamer (1991, 125), Dixsaut (1999, xvii-xviii), that it is the approach illustrated by the second case that is being applied in the investigation of the nature of pleasure. I shall argue later that this is not the case.

(πάντα ... ὅσα τέχνης ἐχόμενα ἀνευρέθη πάποτε διὰ ταύτης φανερὰ γέγονε 16c2-3). On a superficial reading, one might be tempted to connect this remark with the illustration of the second case, i.e. Theuth's discovery of the alphabet. It should be noted, however, that Socrates does not say that everything in any field of science *has been discovered through this*.<sup>255</sup> Rather, he seems to be suggesting that the role of the dialectical method consists in investigation and elucidation of a thing whose existence is already known. Moreover, it is only the approach in the first case that is explicitly described as 'dialectical' (διαλεκτικῶς 17a4). On the basis of such observations, I suggest that the passage at 18a6-d2 in which Socrates introduces the second case and illustrates it by Theuth's discovery of alphabet is merely a digression.<sup>256</sup> Theuth discovered, or was compelled to discover, the alphabet independently of the dialectical method; it is for the sake of clarification and systematization of the result of his discovery that the dialectical method is required. With this restriction of scope in mind, I shall argue in what follows that the dialectical method described in the *Philebus* is essentially the same as internal analysis, i.e. one of the two main

---

<sup>255</sup> Although this is the way in which Socrates' words in question have been often understood. See e.g. Benardete (1993, 9), translating the sentence in question: 'Everything connected with and dependent on art was always discovered through it and has become manifest'; Meinwald (1998, 168): 'the method is described as one by which all results dependent on τέχνη have been obtained'; Delcomminette (2006, 92): 'mais il [sc. Socrate] ajoute qu'elle [sc. la dialectique] est responsable de toutes les découvertes dans le champ de l'art (τέχνη)'; Harvey (2009, 21): 'Of special interest here is the fact that this method is the means by which any discovery in any τέχνη is made (16c2-3)'.

<sup>256</sup> I owe this suggestion to Christopher Rowe. In a similar manner, Sayre (1983,130-33; 1987, 50-52) proposes that the first case belongs to a dialectician and the second case to a divine intelligence, but his interpretation seems to be different from mine in that he supposes that Socrates' prefatory remarks at 16b5-c3 are concerned with both cases, since he shares the view of the scholars mentioned in the previous note (see his (1983, 119): 'Yet it is to this method that we owe our discoveries in any undertaking requiring skill').

applications of the method of collection and division, developed in the *Phaedrus* (269c6-272b6, 273d7-e5, 277b5-c6).

Let us then have a look at the text. Socrates prefaces the description of the dialectical method with a suggestion of its divine origin and the 'tradition' (φήμην 16c8) about the structure of the subjects of the method. According to this tradition, 'whatever is each time said to be consists of one and many, having in its nature limit and unlimitedness' (ἐξ ἑνὸς μὲν καὶ πολλῶν ὄντων τῶν ἀεὶ λεγομένων εἶναι, πέρασ δὲ καὶ ἀπειρίαν ἐν αὐτοῖς σύμφυτον ἐχόντων 16c9-10). He then describes the method in detail as follows (for the sake of clarity I shall divide the description of the dialectical method into three parts, in accordance with the three steps of the procedure):

- (D1) Since this is the structure of things, having posited one form (μίαν ἰδέαν) for every one of them in each case, we always have to search for it, for we will indeed find it in [things] (εὐρήσειν γὰρ ἐνοῦσαν). (16c10-d2)
- (D2) And once we have grasped it, we must examine two, if there are somehow two, or if not, three or some other number. And we must treat every one of those further unities in the same way, until one sees of the original unit (τὸ κατ' ἀρχὰς ἓν) not only that it is one, many and unlimited (ἄπειρα), but also how many it is. (16d3-7)
- (D3) One must not apply the form of the unlimited to the plurality (τὴν δὲ τοῦ ἀπείρου ἰδέαν πρὸς τὸ πλῆθος μὴ προσφέρειν) before one knows the exact number of this [sc. the original unit] that lies between the unlimited (τοῦ ἀπείρου) and the one. Only then is it permitted to release each unity of all

these into the unlimited (τὸ ἄπειρον) and let it go. (16d7-e2)

Socrates then makes a brief concluding remark by which he reminds us of the divine origin of dialectic and also makes it clear that this method should be adopted in investigation, learning, and teaching.

After this, Socrates adds illustrations of the dialectical method using literacy and music as examples. First, he explains the case of literacy (17b3-10). While vocal sound is one as a thing that comes out of the mouth and is also unlimited in quantity, to know that it is one or unlimited does not make anyone knowledgeable about vocal sound, or literate (γραμματικόν 17b8). One needs to know how many kinds of vocal sound there are, and what each vocal sound is like (πόσα τ' ἐστὶ καὶ ὅποια 17b7-8). Second, Socrates describes the example of music (17b11-d3). A student of music starts with musical sound as a unity, and then posits low pitch, high pitch, and unison (ὁμότονον 17c4). But he is not yet knowledgeable about music, just by knowing these. He becomes an expert in music only when he knows how many intervals (διαστήματα 17c11), or limits (τοὺς ὅρους 17d1) of the intervals, there are, and what each of them is like, as well as how many systems or arrangements (συστήματα 17d2)—which are also called 'harmony' (ἁρμονίας 17d3) in association with the number (ἀριθμὸν 17c12)<sup>257</sup>—are constituted from the intervals.<sup>258</sup> Socrates then generalises the

---

<sup>257</sup> I suggest that at 17d2-3 Plato offers an etymological analysis that derives ἁρμονία from ἀριθμὸν (17c12) in the spirit of the *Cratylus*; something which has escaped Delcomminette's notice, even though he has acutely recognised the other etymological analysis that derives rhythms and measures (ῥυθμοὺς καὶ μέτρα 17d6) from δι' ἀριθμῶν μετροθέντα (17d5) in his (2006, 156).

<sup>258</sup> In relation to the characterization of the musical terms, I am basically following Barker (1996, 146-48), except for the interpretation of ὅποια, on which he comments: 'The word ὅποια is slightly unexpected in this obtrusively quantitative environment'.

lesson of the illustrations, and emphatically states that this way of investigation makes one knowledgeable about any unity, while the unlimited quantity leaves one in unlimited ignorance.

This passage is yet another source of perplexity for scholars. Many have tried to reach a satisfactory interpretation by minutely examining it, but they have only succeeded in providing widely diverse interpretations of the method described in the passage.<sup>259</sup> I am not going to review their proposals in detail here.<sup>260</sup> Instead, I shall focus on the following three controversial issues, which I think it is absolutely crucial to settle if we are to reach a correct interpretation: (1) what are the objects of the dialectical method? (2) what is the unlimited (*ἄπειρον*)? (3) how can the illustrations given at 17a6-e6 be connected to the description of the method?

(1) First, I suggest that the objects the dialectical method immediately deals with are Socratic forms, and that the search for one form, *F*, in step (D1) is equivalent to Socrates' procedure for the definition of *F*. In relation to the objects of the method, scholars often formulate the following question: 'are the objects in question Platonic Forms, sensible particulars, both of Platonic Forms and sensible particulars *separately*, or both of them *collectively*?'<sup>261</sup> But this

---

In fact, in the context of collection and division *ὅποια* means 'what they are' (see e.g. *Phdr.* 237c8, 271d2, *Sph.* 254c4) rather than 'what their qualities are' (Barker (1996, 147)), and corresponds to the definition by which each thing is numerically separated from others.

<sup>259</sup> See e.g. Hackforth (1972, 20-28); Trevaskis (1960); Striker (1970, 17-30); Gosling (1975, 153-81); Moravcsik (1979, 87-93); Waterfield (1980, 280-83); Sayre (1983, 118-33; 1987, 47-53); Benitez (1989, 38-58); Miller (1990, 323-40); Löhr (1990, 101-93); Frede (1993, xxiv-xxx; 1997, 130-67); Barker (1996, 143-61); Meinwald (1998), Dixsaut (2001, 285-340); Delcomminette (2006, 91-159); Thomas (2006).

<sup>260</sup> Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive and accessible review of the secondary literature available on this issue. For some attempts see Gosling (1975, 153-65) and Löhr (1990, 102-43).

<sup>261</sup> This question is raised especially in connection with the 'tradition' at 16c9-10 in this

question seems to me to be inappropriate, for I think none of the options given here is correct. I have already argued above (see pp. 270) that the ‘one form’ that is posited in (D1) is not a Platonic Form on account of the facts (a) that the ‘one form’ is said to be found *in* things and (b) that the investigation must continue even after one has grasped it. Now if we take the ‘one form’ as a Socratic form, both problems will disappear. A Socratic form is always found *in* things or, more precisely, *in* contexts, and grasping the Socratic form of *F* only means that one knows *F* by definition; one has to continue investigation in order to become an expert in *F*. On top of this, the feature that every Socratic form is both one and many matches up very well with the description in (D2) that one must continue investigation ‘until one sees of the original unit not only that it is one, many, and unlimited, but also how many it is’ (16d5-7). It is natural to suppose that the ‘original unit’ here refers back to the ‘one form’ a dialectician posited at the beginning of the procedure.<sup>262</sup> If so, then obviously

---

way: does ‘τῶν ἀεὶ λεγομένων εἶναι’ (whatever is each time said to be) refer to (I) Platonic Forms, (II) sensibles, (III) both *separately*, (IV) both *collectively*? For a useful assessment of each position, see especially Benitez (1989, 39-42). The difference between (III) and (IV), according to Benitez, lies in whether (III) one supposes that ‘being one and many, and having limit and unlimited in its nature’ applies to Forms and sensibles separately (perhaps in different ways), or whether (IV) one supposes that the characteristic in question applies to a set of undifferentiated objects that share a general term, *F*, which includes both the Form of *F* and sensible *F* things.

<sup>262</sup> Cf. e.g. Gosling (1975, 158): “‘The original unit’ (16d5) would most naturally be taken to refer to the one form (the *summum genus*), we found a line or two earlier.’ By contrast, Delcomminette (2003, 34 [2006, 65-66]) claims that ‘the original unit’ ‘corresponds to a general term like “apeiron” (or “pleasure”, or “science”) before dialectic takes place: and it is dialectic which shows that it is both one, because it can refer to a genus, and many, because it can also refer to many species.’ But this interpretation is not plausible because the relation between one general term and a genus/many species never comes into focus in the course of the actual applications of the dialectical method in the main part of the dialogue (23b5-27c2, 31b2-59d9). Delcomminette seems to hold this view mainly because of his assumptions that the ‘one form’ is a Platonic Form and that a Platonic Form is simply one (see his (2006, 103): ‘La principale difference entre un universel et une Idée tient au fait que le sens du premier est à la fois un et multiple [...] tandis que l’Idée est seulement *une*’ (his emphasis)). I agree with him on the latter assumption, but not on the former.



the 'one form' does not refer to a Platonic Form that is simply one, but to a Socratic form that is both one and many.<sup>263</sup>

As for the 'sensible particulars', we should be careful about the ambiguity of the term which might obfuscate a crucial distinction in Plato's ontology. On the one hand, this term can be understood as *observable* particular properties, such as beauty in Helen or beauty in Andromache or beauty in this series of prime numbers I am counting at the moment.<sup>264</sup> On the other hand, it can also be taken as referring to proper objects of our sense perception, such as beautiful particular things, for example, Helen or Andromache or this series of prime numbers printed on the sheet of paper I am looking at now.<sup>265</sup> In my construal of Plato's ontological scheme, the former correspond to Socratic forms as instantiated in particular things, and the latter to many particular *F* things.<sup>266</sup> Now I suggest that the original unit, or a Socratic form, is unlimited mainly because it is instantiated in an unlimited quantity of particular things, or more

---

<sup>263</sup> See Delcomminette (2006, 103) quoted in the previous note. By contrast, Frede (1993, xxix-xxx; cf. 1997, 136-37) writes: 'the genus animal, for instance, is the nature common to all animal, and this common nature is *invariable* and *one*. [...] If the Forms are conceived in this "scientific way" neither their unity nor their plurality is problematic any longer.' Her characterization of the 'Forms' essentially corresponds to my characterization of Socratic forms.

<sup>264</sup> Cf. Devereux (1994, 73): 'It also seems that many immanent characters can be perceived by the senses; we can see the largeness in Simmias, and feel the heat in the fire.' Cf. also Fine's criticism against Vlastos' view that Socratic forms are not sensible or observable in her (1992, 71-76). Fine suggests that the disagreement between Vlastos and her stems from their different views on the nature of Socratic forms; see *ibid.* (1992, 72 n.11): 'I take Socratic forms [...] to be properties conceived in realist fashion [...]. Vlastos, however, may view forms more as concepts or meanings.' But I suspect that their disagreement is rather about the meaning of terms such as 'sensible' or 'observable'.

<sup>265</sup> For this kind of characterization of 'sensibles' (τὰ αἰσθητὰ) see e.g. *R.* 507a7-c5.

<sup>266</sup> Here I assume that most properties, including the property courage or the property justice or the property having-a-soul, are either directly or indirectly observable. But one might say, for example, beauty is observable, but intellect is not, recalling a passage in the *Phaedrus* (250c7-e1). If the range of observable properties is restricted in a way that excludes some objects of our knowledge, then we should rather say that observable particular properties *belong to* Socratic forms as instantiated in particular things.

precisely, particular contexts (I shall argue more on this in connection with the meaning of ἄπειρον below),<sup>267</sup> and not because there are unlimitedly many particular *F* things that are *F* in a certain context, but not *F* in another context—indeed, many particular *F* things are by themselves irrelevant for the dialectical method. For example, the Socratic form of beauty is unlimited *qua* beauties as instantiated in Helen, in Andromache, or in prime numbers, etc., and not *qua* Helen, Andromache, or prime numbers (these are beautiful in a certain context, but not beautiful in another context). With this in mind, I conclude that *in a sense*, i.e. in the sense of observable particular properties, sensible particulars belong to the immediate objects of the dialectical method. But it is simply misleading, in my view, to claim that the objects of the dialectical method are sensible particulars.

If the ‘one form’ (16d1) is a Socratic form, then the ‘searching’ for it (ζητεῖν 16d2) must be Socrates’ procedure for definition. I submit that this consequence is confirmed later in the course of the discussion of the fourfold classification of ‘everything that exists now in the universe’ (πάντα τὰ νῦν ὄντα ἐν τῷ παντί 23c4), in which Socrates *defines* four ‘forms’ or ‘kinds’ (εἶδη or γένη 23c12, d2, 5, *et passim*), i.e. limit, the unlimited, mixture of limit and the unlimited, and cause, as the framework for a further investigation of the nature of pleasure and knowledge (23b5-27c2). As some scholars have observed, in defining the nature of the unlimited, Socrates seems to refer to (D1) in the following passage.<sup>268</sup>

<sup>267</sup> I say ‘*mainly* because’ because I think for Plato it is not important whether a Socratic form is instantiated in a type or in a token. Plato seems also to hold that a Socratic form is unlimited because it is instantiated in the unlimited quantity of *types* of things or *species* (cf. *Tht.* 147c4, where ἀπέραντον ὁδόν is used for the enumeration of types of knowledge). Cf. Hackforth (1972, 23 n.2); Crombie (1963, 364).

<sup>268</sup> See especially Dixsaut (2001, 300). Cf. also Friedländer (1969, 323), Frede (1997, 204),

(P59) Whatever is seen by us to become 'more or less' or susceptible to 'strong and mild' or to 'too much' and all of that kind, all that we ought to subsume under the kind of the unlimited as under the unity (εἰς τὸ τοῦ ἀπείρου γένος ὡς εἰς ἓν δεῖ πάντα ταῦτα τιθέναι). This is *in accordance with our earlier discussion*, where we said that we should try to collect whatever is dispersed and split up, and then stamp some one nature on them as far as we can (ὅσα διέσπασται καὶ διέσχισται συναγαγόντας χρῆναι κατὰ δύναμιν μίαν ἐπισημαίνεσθαί τινα φύσιν), if you remember.

(24e7-25a4)

It is true that in (D1) Socrates only said that one should posit and search for one form for every object of the method (which is both one and many), and did not specify how one should search for it, whether it is the collection of the many or not. But since there is no passage in which he said that one *should* collect a many,<sup>269</sup> it is reasonable to suppose that it is (D1) that Socrates refers to by 'our

---

Delcomminette (2006, 104 n.97). Benitez (1989, 63-65) and Meinwald (1998, 168), by contrast, emphatically denies that the fourfold classification is the application of the dialectical method. Benitez develops several arguments to support his position that 'Socrates' tactics in 23b-31b merely parody the Heavenly Tradition [= the dialectical method]' (63). But I do not find any of his arguments cogent; I shall discuss some relevant points below. Meinwald does not offer any explanation of the reference to 'our previous discussion' (25a2).

<sup>269</sup> The first reference to 'collection' in the *Philebus* is found just slightly earlier than (P59), at 23e3-6 (= (P61) quoted below), but I do not think that τὸν ἔμπροσθεν λόγον in (P59) refers back to this passage. First, the procedure of collection described in (P61) is still *being applied* in (P59), and so it would be strange that Socrates asks Protarchus if he remembers it or not. Second, in (P61) he only says: 'Let's make an effort (πειρώμεθα) to collect them', but in (P59) he says: 'we said that we *should* (χρῆναι) try to collect [them]'. Third, 'to study how each of them is in fact one and many' in (P61) clearly resonates with Socrates' earlier statement: 'This is the very point in question to which our preceding discussion obliges us to give an answer: *to show how each of them is one and many*' (18e8-9; in (P57) quoted above), which in turn refers back to (D1). It is then reasonable to suppose that in (P59) Socrates reminds Protarchus of the fact that the

earlier discussion' in (P59). Indeed, a close examination of the text will show that this interpretation is harmonious with the actual procedure for the definition of the unlimited. First, exactly as (D1) prescribed it, the procedure starts with the postulation of the form of the unlimited:

(P60) SOCRATES: We agreed earlier, I think, that the god had revealed the unlimited and limit as belonging to beings.

PROTARCHUS: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Let us now *posit* these as two of forms (τούτω δὴ τῶν εἰδῶν τὰ δύο τιθώμεθα).

(23c9-12)

Socrates then adds two other forms, i.e. mixture and cause, into the framework, and then says:

(P61) Let us first take up three of the four, and since we observe that two of them are split up and dispersed as many (πολλὰ ἐκάτερον ἐσχισμένον καὶ διεσπασμένον ἰδόντες), let's make an effort to collect them into a unity again (εἰς ἓν πάλιν ἐκάτερον συναγαγόντες), in order to study how each of them is in fact one and many.

(23e3-6)

---

procedure they are applying has in fact been established in the methodological passage.

The collection of the many described here is the main process that takes Socrates and his interlocutor to the immediate goal of the search, i.e. the definition of the unlimited proposed in (P59). It seems fairly clear that the postulation of the form of the unlimited in (P60), the collection of the many into its unity in (P61), and the discovery of the common characteristic in (P59) respectively correspond to the postulation of one form, the search for it, and the discovery of it in things in (D1). The search for the one form in (D1) is, therefore, equivalent to the collection of the many into its unity.<sup>270</sup> Now, in the course of the investigation of the unlimited, Socrates only makes use of one example, i.e. hotter and colder (see 24a6-d7), before reaching the definition of the unlimited. It seems clear, however, that he has also other examples in mind, some of which are spelled out slightly later, i.e. dryer and wetter, more and less, faster and slower, and taller and shorter (see 25c8-10).<sup>271</sup> These are all parts or kinds, and so 'instances', of the unlimited. Thus, in applying the procedure described in (D1), Socrates first posits the form of the unlimited, observes that it is split up and dispersed as many *instances*, and then examines them in order to find the common characteristic of the unlimited. This procedure for the definition of the

---

<sup>270</sup> It follows from this that the dialectical method deals with a many from its initial stage. One might wonder, then, how contemporary intellectuals, or young boys in my interpretation, can make a many *faster* than dialecticians, as described at 17a1-2. My answer is that what makes difference is the fact that a dialectician not only enumerates but also *examines* many instances in order to find a common characteristic (see 18e8-9; 23e6). A young boy, by contrast, simply enumerates many *Fs* without considering their nature, and so he makes a many faster than he should.

<sup>271</sup> I do not agree with Delcomminette, who considers it significant that Socrates' enumeration of the instances other than hotter and colder comes only after the definition. From this fact he claims: 'Cela montre clairement que le rassemblement est un processus *virtuel* qui nous dispense d'énumérer tous les cas particuliers' (2006, 104 n.97) and 'le rassemblement est un processus *virtuel* plutôt qu'une énumération de participants déjà différenciés.' (2006, 108). Socrates, in my view, has clearly distinct instances in mind before reaching the definition, but just does not mention them.

unlimited perfectly corresponds to Socrates' procedure for definition I have discussed in Chapter 1. I therefore conclude that the searching for the form of *F* in (D1) is nothing other than Socrates' procedure for the definition of *F*.

(2) The second crucial question in connection with the dialectical method is, what is the unlimited (ἄπειρον)? I have already suggested my answer: when Socrates states at 16d5-6 that an original unit, or the Socratic form of *F*, is unlimited, the meaning of the 'unlimited' is *unlimited in quantity*, and this statement implies that there is *an unlimited quantity of instances of F*.<sup>272</sup> By suggesting this, I am closely following the traditional interpretation of the unlimited (let us call this line of interpretation the 'instancist view').<sup>273</sup>

The instancist view, however, has recently come under vigorous attack from many scholars who believe that this view is unable to explain the unlimited consistently throughout the dialogue.<sup>274</sup> These scholars argue, in essence, in the following way. At 23c9-10 (in (P60) quoted above), in reintroducing limit and the unlimited as two of the four forms or kinds in the fourfold classification, Socrates states that they have already mentioned them as having been shown by god. His statement clearly indicates that limit and the unlimited in the

---

<sup>272</sup> I agree with Delcomminette (2006, 106; 116) that any ἀριθμός, which is regularly translated as 'number', should belong to πέρας on account of its definition, 'multiplicity composed of unities' (τὰ ἐκ μονάδων συγκείμενον πλῆθος, Euclid *Elements* VII Def. 2). Accordingly, just in order to steer clear of confusion, I shall always use 'unlimited in quantity' or 'an unlimited quantity of instances' instead of the expression favoured by scholars, i.e. 'unlimited in number' or 'an unlimited number of instances'.

<sup>273</sup> See e.g. Hackforth (1972, 24 n.1): 'infinite plurality'; Diès (1949, xxv): 'individualités innombrables'; Taylor (1956, 33): "'indefinitely many" members' and 'the multiplicity of individual "instances"'; Crombie (1963, 364): 'innumerable cases of P-hood'; Striker (1970, 29): 'Einzeldinge'; Benitez (1989, 53-55): 'unlimited many things' and 'sensible instances'; De Chiara-Quenzer (1992, 361): 'an unlimited number of instances'; Frede (1993, xxv): 'an unlimited multitude of the many instances'.

<sup>274</sup> See e.g. Gosling (1975, 165), Moravcsik (1979, 88), Sayre (1983, 140), Miller (1990, 330), Barker (1998, 145; 157), Meinwald (1996, 167-68), Delcomminette (2006, 105), Thomas (2006, 211 n.20).

fourfold classification are the same as those that appeared in the dialectical method which, according to Socrates, is a gift from gods. Now in the fourfold classification the unlimited is explicitly defined as 'whatever is seen by us to become more or less, etc.' (see (P59) quoted above). That, for example, the hotter and colder is unlimited means that the hotter and colder is seen by us always to become more or less, or, to put it differently, that the hotter and colder constitutes a *continuum* of temperature. It does not mean at all that there is an unlimited quantity of instances of the hotter and colder. It follows, then, that Socrates' statement at 16d5-6 that an original unit is unlimited also indicates that the original unit makes up a continuum, since the limit and the unlimited are the same in both of the two passages. It is therefore wrong to suppose, according to these scholars, that the original unit's being unlimited signifies an unlimited quantity of instances of *F* (let us call these scholars 'continuists').

This argument of the continuists is admittedly very clear and straightforward, but its consequence is hard to digest; it seems implausible that every object of the dialectical method somehow constitutes a continuum. The continuists often claim that they find strong support for their view in the illustrations of the dialectical method. According to them, the example of music is best explained as the process of division of the high-and-low continuum of pitch. However, even if this is the case (I shall argue later that it is not), it will not provide a good reason for reading into the other illustration, i.e. the example of literacy, the process of division of the 'maximal release of

breath'-and-'maximal cutting off of breath' continuum.<sup>275</sup> For one thing, there is no reference to such a continuum at all in the text, and, for another, such a continuum cannot be an instance of the unlimited defined in the fourfold classification, which by definition has no 'maximal' whatsoever.<sup>276</sup> It seems still less plausible that other objects of investigation, e.g. health, a man, the beautiful, the good, somehow make up a linear continuum of the kind described in the fourfold classification. One might suggest that there are several linear continua involved in each such case; for example, health consists in at least two linear continua, i.e. hot and cold, and dry and wet (cf. *Smp.* 186d6-e1).<sup>277</sup> But this suggestion will take us far away from what is actually described in (D1) – (D3). Clearly, it is not the process of division of various relevant linear continua that is described there; such a process would have to start with an enquiry as to what kind of continua the object of investigation somehow constitutes, and not with the postulation of, and the search for, one form. Finally, when it comes to limit and the unlimited, which, as we have seen, themselves are treated as objects of the dialectical method in the fourfold classification, the continuists will face a flat contradiction.<sup>278</sup> Their view would imply, on the one hand, that

---

<sup>275</sup> This continuum is proposed by Miller (1990, 330-31), and is approved of by Meinwald (1998, 179).

<sup>276</sup> This is clear from the definition of the unlimited in (P59). See also *Phlb.* 31a9: 'Pleasure itself is unlimited, and belongs to the kind that in and by itself neither possesses nor will ever possess a beginning, middle, or end.'

<sup>277</sup> For a proposal along these lines, see Harvey (2009, 22).

<sup>278</sup> For an argument along these lines, see Benitez (1989, 64). The continuists tend to deny that the dialectical method is applied to limit and the unlimited. See Meinwald (1998, 168): 'For the things studied by the Promethean Method [= the dialectical method], having *peras* and *apeiron* in them, are all combinations of *peras* and *apeiron* and so members of the Fourfold Division's mixed class. From this it follows that the Fourfold Division is not itself an application of the Promethean Method'; and Thomas (2006, 213): 'It is plausible to suppose that the mixtures of the fourfold ontology just are the objects enquired into via the Promethean method.' Cf. also Miller (1990, 323-24). It is not easy to imagine how these scholars explain the close correspondence between the



limit, which cannot be a continuum by definition, somehow constitutes a continuum, and, on the other hand, that the unlimited, which is devoid of limit by definition, would emerge as being limited if one were to move on to step (D2) and to find its number.

Having said that, it would be of course unsatisfactory to claim that, despite Socrates' words at 23c9-10, limit and the unlimited in the description of the dialectical method just are different from those that appear in the fourfold classification, as some instancists do.<sup>279</sup> But I think that there is a simple solution to this issue. What is absolutely necessary is, in my view, the identity of *the form of the unlimited* (16d7, 23c9-12) that appears in the two distinct sections of the dialogue. In connection with the dialectical method, Socrates says:

One must not apply *the form of the unlimited* to the plurality (τὴν δὲ τοῦ ἀπείρου ἰδέαν πρὸς τὸ πλῆθος μὴ προσφέρειν) before one knows the exact number of this [sc. the original unit] that lies between the unlimited (τοῦ ἀπείρου) and the one. (16d7-e1; this passage has been already quoted in (D3))

Note that the form of the unlimited is applied to *the plurality or quantity* of the

---

procedure for the definition of the unlimited and (D1), and the referent of the 'our earlier discussion' in (P59).

<sup>279</sup> See e.g. Hackforth (1972, 41); Frede (1993, xxxviii: 1997, 202). By the same token, Benitez (1989, 65-67) proposes that the fact that limit and the unlimited have the same *general* meaning 'limited and unlimited quantity' throughout the *Philebus* is 'enough for Socrates to claim that *peras* and *apeiron* are the same in 23b-31b as they were in 16b-19a' despite that they are applied differently, that is: 'In the Heavenly Tradition the terms are quantitative in respect of *plurality*, in the Four-Fold Classification they are quantitative in respect of *degree*' (his emphases).

object of the method, and is not directly applied to the object in question. In other words, in (D1) – (D3) it is the quantity involved in the form of *F* that is unlimited, or seen by us always to become more or less, and it is not the case that the form of *F* itself constitutes the unlimited. Socrates sometimes reminds us of this fact by using the expression ‘unlimited in quantity’ (ἄπειρος ... πλήθει 17b4) and ‘the unlimited quantity’ (τὸ ... ἄπειρον πλήθος 17e3). It is true that he often refers to the unlimited without any qualification (see 16d6, e1, 2, 17a2, 18a9, b6, 9), but this is because he has already made clear the connection between the form of the unlimited and the quantity of the form of *F* in (D3). Besides, under the continuist view Socrates’ reference to *the number between one and the unlimited* at 16e2 and 17a2 would be unintelligible; for example, speaking of the number of pitch between one and the continuum of pitch does not make sense at all. I therefore conclude that in the methodological passage it is the application of the form of the unlimited to quantities that is at issue.<sup>280</sup> By contrast, in the fourfold classification it is the nature of the form of the unlimited itself that is discussed. Of course, these different treatments of the form of the unlimited do not affect its identity. There seem to be no problems for the instancist view that the form of *F* is unlimited (in quantity) as instantiated in the unlimited quantity of contexts, which in turn implies that there is an unlimited quantity of instances of *F*.

---

<sup>280</sup> It may be useful to compare my view with Benitez’s view referred to in the previous note. He thinks that terms ‘limit’ and ‘the unlimited’ mean ‘limited and unlimited quantity’ both in the methodological passage and in the fourfold classification, but that in the former they are quantitative in respect of *plurality* while in the latter they are quantitative in respect of *degree*. By contrast, I think that the terms basically mean ‘limited and unlimited quantity in respect of *degree*’ in both of the two sections, but in the former they are applied to plurality, and *derivatively* become ‘quantitative in respect of *plurality*’.

(3) Finally, let us turn to the third crucial question, i.e. how can the illustrations given at 17a6-e6 be connected to the description of the method? My answer to this question is simple and perhaps self-evident: the illustrations clearly illuminate the fact that the number of kinds between one and the unlimited, or 'how many kinds there are and what they are like' (ὅποσα καὶ ὅποῖα cf. 17a7-8, c11-d2), makes one knowledgeable in each case. The kernel of the dialectical method consists in the determination of the number of kinds involved in its objects, which is neatly captured by the lesson Socrates sums up at 17d7-e6, to the effect that the number makes one knowledgeable in each case just as it does in literacy and music, while the unlimited quantity leaves one in unlimited ignorance. However, hardly any scholars have seen matters in this way. Indeed, many scholars have just found our third crucial question puzzling, so that they have either criticised Plato for inapt illustrations, or developed complicated interpretations in order to find an answer to it. It would be, then, worthwhile to consider what the problem that has been troubling these scholars is.

So far as I can see it, this issue was brought into focus by Hackforth's influential criticism of the illustrations.<sup>281</sup> He first puts forward an interpretation of the dialectical method, basically following the view that was commonly accepted by scholars (the view which I myself am basically following; see below), namely:

(A1) The central feature of the dialectical method consists in the division of

---

<sup>281</sup> See Hackforth (1972, 24-26).

a genus into its species.

He then argues that neither of the illustrations clarifies (A1); in the case of literacy (17b3-10), we must supplement the actual process of division of the alphabet (e.g. the division of vocal sound into vowels, semi-vowels, and consonants) from the description of Theuth's discovery of the alphabet (18b6-d2); in the case of music (17b11-d3), the procedure described here, which, starting with the high-and-low continuum of musical sound, marks off specific intervals on it in order to produce harmony, is concerned with a procedure different from (A1). Many scholars have found this argument compelling, but most of them have chosen to reject (A1),<sup>282</sup> or at least (A1) as traditionally understood,<sup>283</sup> rather than to blame Plato for inappropriate illustrations. These scholars have often paid particular attention to the 'procedure' applied to music, which according to them yields a valuable clue as to how we should understand the dialectical method; and, simultaneously taking into consideration the use of the unlimited in the fourfold classification, they have advanced the continuist view, according to which the dialectical method is a process of marking off specific points on a certain continuum.<sup>284</sup>

In my view, Hackforth's argument is not compelling. I suggest that his

---

<sup>282</sup> See Trevaskis (1960); Gosling (1975, 162-81; esp. 174: '[...] the genus/species interpretation would be an intelligent speculation as to what is being said, but not more. If the illustrations are to help, then, as we have seen, trouble starts for that interpretation'); Waterfield (1980, 281); Thomas (2006, 215 n.26).

<sup>283</sup> See Miller (1990, 326 n.8), quoting Sayre (1969, 223): 'collection and division do not presuppose or work within "the Aristotelian format of genus, subordinate difference, and *infima species*."' For similar views, see Meinwald (1998) and Delcomminette (2006, 110-125).

<sup>284</sup> For details, see esp. Gosling (165-81), Miller (1990, 325-40), Meinwald (1998), and Delcomminette (2006, 91-159).

criticism of the illustrations is based on the following two closely interconnected assumptions, which are, as a matter of fact, shared by most of the continuists, even though they are unwarranted by the text:

(A2) The illustrations should illuminate the *process* of division.<sup>285</sup>

(A3) The dialectical method should always deal with *just one kind* of unity in relation to each particular science.<sup>286</sup>

With (A2) in mind, one would claim that the example of literacy is not appropriate, since it does not illustrate the process of division. With (A2) or (A3) in mind, one would assume that the successive treatments of musical sound, intervals, and harmony describe the process of division, either because that is what the example should illustrate, or because the unity of musical sound is the single object of the method in relation to music. I myself reject both assumptions. First, the fact that the example of literacy does not illustrate the *process* of division shows, in my view, that that is not Plato's point here. Rather, his point is, as I have suggested above, only that it is the number, or 'how many and what kind', of vocal sound—which is the *outcome* of the division of vocal sound—that makes one knowledgeable about it, or literate. If so, then what is to be blamed is not the example of literacy, but the assumption about what the examples should illustrate, i.e. (A2). Second, a glance at the following passage

---

<sup>285</sup> For explicit commitments to this assumption, see e.g. Striker (1970, 24), Moravcsik (1979, 91-92), Waterfield (1980, 281), Barker (1996, 146-47), Frede (1997, 146), Delcomminette (2006, 130), Thomas (2006, 214-21).

<sup>286</sup> For explicit commitments to this assumption, see e.g. Moravcsik (1979, 92), Barker (1996, 146; 150), Delcomminette (2006, 130).

from the *Phaedrus* will clearly show that (A3) is mistaken:

(P62) Since the power of speech is in fact a leading of the soul, the man who is going to be an expert in rhetoric must know *how many forms soul has*. Their number is so and so, and they are of such and such kinds (ἔστιν οὖν τόσα καὶ τόσα, καὶ τοῖα καὶ τοῖα), which is why some people are like this, and others like that; and since these have been distinguished in this way, then again *there are so many forms of speeches*, each one of such and such a kind (λόγων αὖ τόσα καὶ τόσα ἔστιν εἶδη, τοιόνδε ἕκαστον). So people of one kind are easily persuaded for this reason by one kind of speech to hold one kind of opinion, while people of another kind are for these reasons difficult to persuade.

(271c10-d7)

Note that Socrates explains here that an expert in rhetoric must determine the number ('how many and what kind') of two things, i.e. soul and speeches. Note also that, as is clear from the context surrounding (P62), the emphasis is placed on the determination of the forms of soul (see 270c9-271a11, 273d7-e4, 277b8-c2). I suggest, then, that, analogously, the example of music in the *Philebus* deals with two things, i.e. musical sound and intervals, and the emphasis is placed on the latter; the division of musical sound into high pitch, low pitch, and unison is merely preliminary for understanding or defining what interval is. The main task for the dialectical method in relation to music is to discern the number (ἀριθμόν 17c12), or 'how many and what kind' (ὅποσα ... καὶ ὅποια 17c11-d1), of intervals (and the limits of intervals, which I think are not independent of

intervals). This may start with the definition of interval as ‘a degree of higher and lower that can properly be used in music’, and then divide the intervals in accordance with the *size* of interval, such as 2:1, 3:2, 4:3, 1:1.<sup>287</sup> Arrangements of intervals (συστήματα 17d2), or ἄρμονίαι, do not seem to constitute an independent object of the method, but one gets hold of them through the arrangement of the *outcome* of the application of the method to intervals, which is analogous to the combinations of a certain type of soul with a certain type of speech described in the *Phaedrus* (see (P62); cf. Ch. 4 §5). At any rate, to repeat my suggestion, it is not the details of the procedure that Plato wants to describe here. The point of the illustrations is simply that the number or, ‘how many and what kind’, of *F* will make one knowledgeable about *F* in each case. It does not seem to be right, then, to criticise Plato for not illustrating the *process* of division in detail, as Hackforth has done, nor does it seem to be right, either, to reconstruct the dialectical method on the basis of the treatments of musical sound, intervals and harmony in the example of music, as the continuists have proposed.

Thus, I hope to have shown (1) that the immediate objects of the dialectical method are Socratic forms, (2) that the statement that the form of *F* is unlimited implies that there is an unlimited quantity of instances of *F*, and (3) that the illustrations illuminate the fact that the number, or ‘how many and what kind’, of the form of *F* makes one knowledgeable about *F*. In relation to (2) and (3), I have basically defended the traditional interpretation against the continuist view. With these points in mind, I would like to offer my interpretation of the

---

<sup>287</sup> Cf. Barker (1996, 146-47).

whole process of the dialectical method.

As has been indicated, (D1) is Socrates' procedure for the definition of *F*, which consists of the following three sub-steps: first, a dialectician posits the form of *F*; second, he enquires into what *F* is by generalising or abstracting the common characteristic, *F*, on the basis of many instances of *F*; third, he discovers this common characteristic as instantiated in various contexts, and defines it. In consideration of the ontological status of Socratic forms, we may be in a position to add that a dialectician's postulation of the form of *F* entails his commitment to the existence of the form of *F* by which many *F* things are *F*. By contrast, the mere postulation of *the unity of F* (τὸ ἕν 15a1), which he shares with the young boys and the opponents of Platonic Forms, does not seem to entail such a commitment.

Next, a dialectician turns to step (D2), which is essentially the procedure for dividing a genus-form into its species. If a genus-form, *F*, turns out to be equal to two species-forms, *G* and *H*, in terms of instances,<sup>288</sup> then a dialectician *divides* the form of *F* into the forms of *G* and *H*. This means that he *collects* all the instances of *F* into the instances of *G* and the instances of *H* without residue, and provides the definitions of *G* and *H* through Socrates' procedure for definition. If a dialectician cannot find two species-forms, then he should try and see if the form of *F* can be divided into three, or the smallest possible number of, species-forms. After this, a dialectician should examine the species-forms that have been discovered through this procedure in the same

---

<sup>288</sup> To put it differently, if the instances of *F* are equal to the sum of the instances of *G* and the instances of *H*.



way; for example, he should examine if the species-form of *G* can be divided into two subspecies-forms, *P* and *Q*. He should repeat this process until he sees, of the form of *F*, not only that it is one as liable to one and the same definition, and many and unlimitedly many as instantiated in many and unlimitedly many contexts, but also how many species-forms (and subspecies-forms, etc.) it is equal to in respect of instances.

Finally, after having determined the number of species-forms involved in the form of *F* by defining every one of them, at step (D3) a dialectician applies the form of the unlimited to the quantity of the forms of *F*, *G*, *H*, *P*, *Q*, etc., which implies that there are an unlimited quantity of instances of *F*, *G*, *H*, *P*, *Q*, etc. This final step seems to indicate that a *voluntary* acceptance of an unlimited quantity of instances entails putting an end to the treatment of these instances as data on the basis of which a certain common characteristic is to be found. To put it differently, in the preceding steps, i.e. (D1) and (D2), a dialectician has regarded instances as *enumerable* in order to carry out the method, even though in reality there is an unlimited quantity of instances from the beginning, as is clear from the example of literacy (see 17b4). He has only *suppressed* this aspect of the quantity of instances, since certainly an unlimited quantity of instances would be beyond any dialectician's grasp. Only at step (D3), after he has determined the number of the species-forms, is he permitted to claim that there are indeed an *innumerable* quantity of instances for each of the genus-form and the species-forms. This concludes the investigation of the form of *F* by the dialectical method.

Now that we have obtained a full picture of the dialectical method, my next

task is to argue that the method in question is substantially the same as the procedure for internal analysis described in the *Phaedrus*. Let us first recall what this procedure is like. For the present purpose, I would like to call attention to the passage close to the end of the dialogue in which Socrates sums up the discussion on the science of rhetoric (I have discussed this passage in detail in Ch.4 §5):

(P63) Until a man knows the truth about each of the things about which he speaks or writes, and **(B1)** becomes capable of defining the whole itself, and **(B2)** having defined it, knows how to cut it up again according to its forms until it can no longer be cut; and until he has reached an understanding of the nature of soul along the same lines [...] not before then will he be capable of pursuing the making of speeches as a whole in a scientific way.

(277b5-c5)

Socrates here explains several conditions a true and scientific rhetorician should satisfy. All the conditions are important for understanding a full application of the method, but his explanation of the condition concerning the subject of a speech is particularly illuminating. According to this, a student of true rhetoric should learn the truth about the subject, *F*, and **(B1)** he should define *F* as a whole, and **(B2)** after he has acquired the definition of *F*, he should divide *F* into species-forms, subspecies-forms, etc. as far as possible. It is crystal clear that **(B1)** and **(B2)** in (P63) respectively correspond to (D1) and (D2) in the description of the dialectical method in the *Philebus*. It is true that there is no

mention of step (D3) or limit and the unlimited in the *Phaedrus*. But I do not think that this omission alters the nature of the method greatly. To begin with, it should be noted that in the *Phaedrus* Plato hints at the importance of *enumeration* in the context of internal analysis (see ἀριθμησόμενον 270d6, διαριθμήσεται 273e1), which implies that he regards number, which is equivalent to limit, as a significant factor for internal analysis.<sup>289</sup> Second, the reference to limit and the unlimited in the methodological passage in the *Philebus* is mostly explained through its contextual and thematic relevance. If my interpretation of the unlimited is correct, then the unlimited is not significant for investigation itself; this is the aspect of the quantity of *F* that should be *suppressed* in the course of investigation. The unlimited comes to the fore in the *Philebus* partly because it is the contrast between dialecticians' and contemporary intellectuals' ways of dealing with one and many that is at stake here. If Plato criticises contemporary intellectuals for directly turning from the one to the unlimited, then it is of course important to make it clear at what point the dialecticians turn to the unlimited. Another reason seems to be compositional; Plato probably wanted to make use of limit and the unlimited as the key terms that integrate apparently variegated arguments of the dialogue. They are only indirectly at issue as applied to the quantity of the form of *F* in the dialectical method, but they are closely examined as two of the four forms that constitute Plato's mature cosmological framework in the fourfold classification, and then, as part of the framework, they lay the foundations of

---

<sup>289</sup> Some scholars have failed to notice this fact. See e.g. Frede (1997, 133): 'Eine Neuerung in der Beschreibung der dialektischen Methode im *Philebos* liegt vor allem darin, daß auf numerisch korrekter „Buchführung“ bestanden wird.'

the main task of the dialogue, i.e. the investigation of the nature of pleasure and knowledge. It is not really a surprise, then, that in the *Phaedrus* Plato does not mention limit and the unlimited, or include a step corresponding to (D3), for these things do not have a direct pertinence to the actual procedure of the dialectical method. I conclude, then, that the procedure for internal analysis in the *Phaedrus* perfectly corresponds to the dialectical method in the *Philebus*. It also follows from this that the application of the dialectical method to the investigation of pleasure and knowledge in the main part of the *Philebus* offers a working example of internal analysis.

##### §5. Two more issues: *Theuth's case and Platonic Forms*

Before concluding this chapter, I would like briefly to discuss two more relevant issues. The first issue is concerned with the case I have excluded from my discussion of the dialectical method, that is, the case described at 18a9-d2 in which one is first compelled to get hold of the unlimited, just as Theuth was when he discovered the alphabet. The second issue is, what is the relation between the dialectical method and Platonic Forms?

I have suggested, at the beginning of the previous section, that the dialectical method and Theuth's case are essentially different in their approaches. I shall now explain what I mean by this suggestion: while a dialectician carries out his investigation by defining every form that emerges during the procedure, *Theuth's case does not involve any definitions at all*. Now, it is at least clear from the text that the contrast (cf. τὸ ἐναντίον 18a9) between the two cases lies in their starting point; a dialectician starts with the unity of *F*,

while a Theuth starts with the unlimited. The latter does not mean, as some scholars have taken it, that he has absolutely no idea about *F* at this stage,<sup>290</sup> which is simply implausible; what it does mean is that he cannot carry out step (D1), or define *F*, because there are no instances of *F* under his control. In such a case, Socrates advises, one should not directly turn to the unity of *F*, but consider 'a certain number each of which has some quantity' (ἀριθμόν ... τινα πλῆθος ἕκαστον ἔχοντά τι 18b2).<sup>291</sup> On the surface of it, one might be tempted to take Socrates' guidance as indicating that one should investigate and define species-forms before a genus-form. But here is a snag: as I have argued in Chapter 2, Socrates seems to be committed to what I call the principle of the priority of the definition of the whole over the definitions of parts:

**(PDWP)** If one fails to know the definition of *F*, then one fails to know the definition of any part (or any kind) of *F*.

This principle makes it impossible to define species-forms before a genus-form. Had Plato changed his mind about this principle by the time he wrote the *Philebus*? This is unlikely, for **(PDWP)** explains very well the reason why Plato developed the method of division in the late dialogues; **(PDWP)** is not just a minor principle involved in Plato's later dialectic, but it forms the backbone of

---

<sup>290</sup> For example, Hackforth's influential criticism of the case of Theuth in his (1972, 26) shows, by implication, that he holds such a view. He argues that Plato was wrong in thinking that Theuth reached the generic notion of the alphabet at the end of his investigation, for 'it is plain that what Theuth has done is merely to give a name to a generic notion which must have been present to his mind from the outset.' This implies that, in Hackforth's view, Plato meant that Theuth did not have the generic notion at the beginning.

<sup>291</sup> For a detailed consideration of this phrase, see Delcomminette (2006, 144 n.177).

his methodology. It is true that some scholars have indeed claimed that they have found a case of the investigation of species-forms prior to a genus-form in the main part of the *Philebus*. They propose that, in examining the nature of pleasure, Socrates first defines bodily pleasure and then turns to pleasure of soul (see 31d1-32c5) without defining pleasure as a whole or considering how many kinds of pleasure there are, which, according to these scholars, indicates that Theuth's case is being applied here.<sup>292</sup> On the face of it, their proposal might appear attractive, since it would help to explain the role of Theuth's case in the dialogue. However, at 18e6-19a2 (in (P57) quoted above) Socrates makes it perfectly clear that it is steps (D1) – (D3), and not Theuth's case, that are applied to the investigation of both pleasure and knowledge. We would do well to remember here that the apparent absence of the definition of *F* does not necessarily mean that *F* as a whole is still under investigation; it might indicate that *F* is obvious and there is no need for definition (see e.g. *Phdr.* 263a2-c12). Pleasure as a whole would plausibly be considered to be such a case. It would be, then, safe not to attribute the withdrawal of **(PDWP)** to Plato on account of the brief description of Theuth's discovery of the alphabet. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that Theuth, who has not obtained the definition of a genus-form, cannot obtain the definitions of species-forms either; or, in short, Theuth's case does not involve any definitions at all. Then what was Theuth doing? I suggest that his investigation was mostly intuitive, being deprived of λόγος. Socrates introduces Theuth's case in the methodological passage presumably because he thinks that Theuth's intuition worked by not directly

---

<sup>292</sup> See n.254 above.

turning from the unlimited to the one. But intuition resists the formulation into a systematic procedure; it is impossible to explain the work of intuition transparently. Accordingly, I propose that the whole passage about Theuth's case (18a9-d2) is nothing more than general advice to be followed when one first gets hold of the unlimited, and not the description of a certain *method*.

Moving on now to the second issue I have proposed to discuss in this final section, I suggest that the dialectical method is always concerned with Platonic Forms, by looking to them as *its ultimate goal*.<sup>293</sup> Close to the end of the dialogue, in the course of the investigation of intellect and knowledge (νοῦ ... καὶ ἐπιστήμης 55c5), Socrates mentions dialectic (ἡ τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι δύναμις 57e6-7) as the only science that is 'concerned with what is, and with the "really and truly", and with what is by nature always the same in every respect' (περὶ τὸ ὄν καὶ τὸ ὄντως καὶ τὸ κατὰ ταῦτὸν ἀεὶ πεφυκός 58a2-3).<sup>294</sup> He also uses some variations of this expression in order to depict this entity, most notably 'what is always the same in every respect and the least mixed' (τὰ ἀεὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ ὡσαύτως ἀμεικτότατα ἔχοντα 59c3-4). These are very close to the expressions used exclusively to refer to Platonic Forms in the middle dialogues, and so there seems to be little room for doubt that Socrates has the same entities in mind here in the *Philebus*.<sup>295</sup> The dialectical method is, then, concerned with Platonic

---

<sup>293</sup> Cf. Delcomminette (2006, 530): '*La saisie de l'Idée n'est pas le point de départ de la dialectique, elle en est le résultat*' (his emphasis).

<sup>294</sup> I have adopted 'the "really and truly"' from Benardete's translation in his (1993, 72).

<sup>295</sup> Under the influence of Owen's proposal in his (1953) that Plato abandoned the theory of Forms in his late dialogues, Shiner (1974, esp. 53-66) argued that the metaphysical doctrine in the *Philebus* does not imply the theory Plato held in the middle dialogues, especially in the *Republic*. His argument sparked off some interesting debate; see Fahrnkopf (1977) and Shiner (1979); Mohr (1983) and Shiner (1983). Shiner's argument will be of considerable significance if one shares Shiner's sympathy towards Owen's proposal and also agrees with his interpretation of Plato's theory of Forms in the middle dialogues. I myself do not agree or sympathise with Shiner on these issues,

Forms. I have not given any place for these context-independent entities in my picture of the dialectical method, but it does not follow from this that my interpretation is inconsistent with this reference to Platonic Forms. The key to understanding the role of Platonic Forms in the dialectical method is given by Socrates in the following passage:

(P64) SOCRATES: But there was also a difference between different sciences, since one kind *looks towards* things that come to be and perish, the other *towards* things that do not come to be and perish, being always the same in every respect (ἡ μὲν ἐπὶ τὰ γινόμενα καὶ ἀπολλύμενα ἀποβλέπουσα, ἡ δ' ἐπὶ τὰ μήτε γινόμενα καὶ μήτε ἀπολλύμενα, κατὰ ταῦτὰ δὲ καὶ ὡσαύτως ὄντα ἀεί).

(61d10-e3)

The kind of science that looks towards Platonic Forms is, of course, dialectic. The implication of this passage, I submit, is that dialectic pursues and strives for the Platonic Forms as its goal. Thus, when a dialectician engages in the investigation of the nature of *F*, he aims at the perfect understanding of *F*, or, in other words, at knowledge of the Platonic Form of *F*. In this sense, he is always concerned with the Platonic Form of *F*. Sciences that belong to the other kind, by contrast, look towards things that come to be and perish, since their goal is successfully to apply the knowledge of *F* acquired through the dialectical method to the sensible world. In order to master the science of rhetoric, for

---

and so I will not pursue his position here. With the majority of scholars, I simply take that Socrates is referring to Platonic Forms with the expressions such as 'what is always the same in every respect' in the *Philebus*.



example, a student must learn the nature of soul and speeches as revealed by the dialectical method, but this is not the end of the story; 'after that the student must observe them as they are in real life, and actually being put into practice, and be able to follow them *with keen perception* (τῇ αἰσθήσει), or otherwise get no advantage, as yet, from the things he heard earlier [...]' (*Phdr.* 271d7-e2). In general, any particular sciences that belong to this kind make use of 'conjecture and the training of *our senses* through experience and routine' (εἰκάζειν ... καὶ τὰς αἰσθήσεις καταμελετᾶν ἐμπειρία καὶ τιμὴ τριβῆ *Phlb.* 55e5-6). This is the reason why these particular sciences are concerned with things that come to be and perish, even though they must get hold of knowledge of their own subject in order to be true sciences.<sup>296</sup> In short, then, the dialectical method is *ultimately* concerned with Platonic Forms, while almost all the other sciences are *ultimately* concerned with things that come to be and perish.

---

<sup>296</sup> Incidentally, I suggest that the importance of sense perception for particular sciences will explain the situation described at 62a7-b4 in the *Philebus*, the situation in which someone knows the explanation of the divine circle and the divine sphere, but is ignorant of the human circle and the human sphere. The situation seems to indicate that he has not yet learned how to apply his knowledge to sensible world (note that the human circle and the human sphere correspond to many *F* things, and not to instances of *F*). This situation is analogous to the freed prisoner's situation after he has returned to the cave in the allegory of the cave in the *Republic* (516e7-517a7).

## Conclusion

### §1. *A systematic recapitulation of Plato's method*

With the complicated discussion of the *Philebus* in Chapter 6, I hope to have completed the examination of all important passages relevant for our understanding of the method of collection and division. It is now time to sum up what I have argued throughout this thesis. Here I shall systematically recapitulate what, according to my proposals, constitutes the essence of Plato's method throughout the dialogues.<sup>297</sup> This recapitulation will at the same time illustrate my unitarian understanding of Plato's method: on my view, the Socratic method and the ontology it presupposes, as described in the early dialogues, are not superseded but rather incorporated as fundamental elements of Platonic philosophy.

Underlying Plato's method is a Socratic intuition that there is a vital distinction in our world between the common characteristic (*F*)—the Socratic form of *F*—on the one hand (e.g. beauty), and many *F* things and actions, on the other (e.g. beautiful girls, beautiful pots). Put it in more contemporary terms, this distinction may be characterised as one between properties and contexts. It does not correspond to the distinction between universal and particulars, for

---

<sup>297</sup> Having said that, my recapitulation does not include any reference to Socratic elenchus—the method Socrates employs in order to examine his interlocutor's claim for knowledge in the early definitional dialogues—or the method of hypothesis prominent in the *Meno*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic*, since I have not discussed these methods in my present thesis (they are main topics of Robinson's *Plato's Earlier Dialectic*). But I believe that they too can be integrated into the framework I am proposing here.

the form of *F* is both one and many, and many *F* things and actions may be either many universals or many particulars. The form of *F* is always *F*, but many *F* things and actions are *F* at one moment, or in one relation, or in one part, but are not *F* at another moment, etc. The consequence is that we can obtain a stable understanding or knowledge of *F* only when we are dealing with the form of *F*.

In order to deal with every Socratic form both in its single and in its plural aspects, Plato put forward two basic procedures: collection and division. Collection is the movement from many to one, since it provides *one* definition on the basis of *many* instances. It is a procedure that examines many instances of *F*, or the plural aspect of the form of *F*, in order to determine the common characteristic (*F*), or the single aspect of the form of *F*, and to provide the definition of *F*. By contrast, division is the movement from one to many, since it provides *two or more* species-forms on the basis of *one* genus-form. Division always operates in tandem with collection: it is the procedure of examining many instances of *F*, or the plural aspect of the form of *F*, in order to find two, or the smallest possible number of, common characteristics (e.g. *G* and *H*) that divide the instances of *F* into the instances of *G* and those of *H* without residue, and provide the definitions of *G* and *H*.

With respect to these two kinds of procedures, Plato went on to present two kinds of application: (1) the procedure for definition and (2) internal analysis. The procedure for definition provides understanding in the form of a simple proposition that distinguishes a definiendum from all the other things. This application can be further divided into two kinds of cases: (1a) cases in which

only collection is used, and (1b) cases in which the whole procedure is collection, but division is applied in the course of collection. Examples of (1a) are the definition of speed in the *Laches*, and the definitions of colour and shape in the *Meno*. Those of (1b) are the definition of human love in the *Phaedrus*, the definitions of angling and sophistry in the *Sophist*, and the definitions of weaving and statesmanship in the *Politicus*. Internal analysis, by contrast, provides the theoretical aspect of expert knowledge, or knowledge of a Platonic Form. Examples of this application are the internal analysis of the alphabet in the *Cratylus* (424b4-425b5), the internal analysis of soul in the *Phaedrus*, and the internal analysis of pleasure in the *Philebus*.<sup>298</sup>

The result of my argument shows the underlying continuity between the Socratic method described in the early definitional dialogues and the Platonic method of collection and division described in the *Phaedrus*, *Sophist*, *Politicus*, and *Philebus*. In the early dialogues Socratic forms—the objects with which the Platonic method is *directly* concerned—and the method of collection were already at work. In the later dialogues, in addition to these Socratic elements, Platonic Forms—the objects with which the Platonic method is *ultimately* concerned—and the method of division came into view. In the current interpretative environment in which the revisionist interpretation is dominant,

---

<sup>298</sup> The examples listed in this paragraph are only those in which it seems to me clear that the methods in question are being applied. As a matter of fact, I think that these methods are applied, at least tacitly, whenever Plato establishes something as a 'form' or 'kind'. Examples of such cases are prevalent throughout the dialogues. Here are some random samples: the form of persuasion providing conviction without knowledge, and the form of persuasion that does provide knowledge in the *Gorgias* (454e3-4); the forms of the visible and the invisible in the *Phaedo* (79a6-7); the forms or kinds of soul in the *Republic* (435d9-441c3); the forms of by-itself and in-relation-to-others in the *Sophist* (255c14-d6); and the forms of the four primary bodies (i.e. fire, air, water, and earth) in the *Timaeus* (58c5-60e2).

one might be tempted to suppose that the proposed continuity should only indicate that, just before he undertook to write the *Phaedrus*, Plato got an idea about the new method for philosophers generally to attain their goal, wisdom, on the basis of the Socratic foundation. But since there is no inconsistency involved, it is not impossible to suppose that Plato had the whole system of his methodology from the very beginning of his career but just did not present it. I myself believe that the truth is somewhere between these two suppositions: Plato had not worked out the whole system of his methodology when he was writing his first several dialogues, but obtained a fairly clear idea about it by the time he started to write the middle dialogues. The aim of my work, however, will be fulfilled if a reader is tempted to think about the possibility of a unitarian interpretation of Plato's method just a little more seriously than before.

## Bibliography

- van Ackeren, M., ed. (2004) *Platon Verstehen*. (Darmstadt)
- Adam, J. (1969) *The Republic of Plato*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge)
- Allen, R. E. (1960) 'Participation and Predication in Plato's Middle Dialogues', *Philosophical Review* 69, 147-64. Reprinted in his, ed. (1965), 43-60.
- (1970) *Plato's Euthyphro and the Earlier Theory of Forms*. (London)
- , ed. (1965) *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics*. (London)
- Annas, J. (1981) *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. (Oxford)
- Annas, J. and Rowe, C. J., eds. (2002) *New Perspectives on Plato, Modern and Ancient*. (Cambridge, Mass.)
- Anscombe, G. E. M. (1966) 'The New Theory of Forms', *Monist* 50, 403-20.
- Archer-Hind, R. D. (1901) 'Note on Plato *Philebus* 15a, b', *Journal of Philology* 27, 229-31.
- Anton, J. P. and Kustas, G. I., eds. (1971) *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy*. (Albany)
- Badham, Ch. (1855a) *Platonis Philebus*. (London)
- (1855b) 'Addenda ad Notas in Platonis *Philebum*', *Philologus* 10, 340-42.
- (1878) *The Philebus of Plato*, 2nd edition. (London)
- Barker, A. (1996) 'Plato's *Philebus*: The Numbering of a Unity', in Benitez, ed. (1996), 142-64.
- Benardete (1993) *The Tragedy and Comedy of Life: Plato's Philebus*. (Chicago)
- Benitez, E. E. (1989) *Forms in Plato's Philebus*. (Assen)
- , ed. (1996) *Dialogues with Plato*. (Edmonton)
- Benson, H. (1990) 'The Priority of Definition and the Socratic Elenchus', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 8, 19-65.
- (2000) *Socratic Wisdom: The Model of Knowledge in Plato's Early Dialogues*. (Oxford)
- , ed. (1992) *Essays on the Philosophy of Socrates*. (Oxford)
- Beverluis (1987) 'Does Socrates Commit the Socratic Fallacy?', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 24, 211-23. Reprinted in Benson, ed. (1992), 107-22.

- Bluck, R. S. (1964) *Plato's Meno*. (Oxford)
- (1975) *Plato's Sophist: a Commentary*. (Manchester)
- Bostock, D. (1984) 'Plato on "Is Not"', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 2, 89-119.
- (1986) *Plato's Phaedo*. (Oxford)
- (1988) *Plato's Theaetetus*. (Oxford)
- Brickhouse, T. C. and Smith, N. D. (1994) *Plato's Socrates*. (New York)
- Brown, L. (1994) 'Theaetetus: Knowledge and Definition, Parts, Elements and Priority', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 94, 229-42.
- Burnet, J. (1914) *Greek Philosophy*. (London)
- Burnyeat, M. (1977) 'Examples in Epistemology: Socrates, Theaetetus, and G. E. Moore', *Philosophy* 52, 381-98.
- (1990) Introduction to M. J. Levett (trans.), *The Theaetetus of Plato*, rev. Myles Burnyeat. (Indianapolis)
- (2000) 'Plato on Why Mathematics is Good for the Soul', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 103, 1-81.
- Bury, R. G. (1897) *The Philebus of Plato*. (Cambridge)
- Campbell, L. (1867) *The Sophistes and Politicus of Plato*. (Oxford)
- Casper, D. J. (1977) 'Is there a Third One and Many Problem in Plato?', *Apeiron* 9/2, 20-26.
- Chappell, T. (2004) *Reading Plato's Theaetetus*. (Sankt Augustin)
- Cherniss, H. F. (1947) 'Some War-Time Publications Concerning Plato II', *American Journal of Philology* 68, 225-65.
- de Chiara-Quenzer, D. (1992) 'Commentary on Miller', *The Proceeding of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 6, 360-70.
- (1993) 'A Method for Pleasure and Reason: Plato's Philebus', *Apeiron* 26, 37-55.
- Cohen, S. M. (1973) 'Plato's Method of Division', in Moravcsik, ed. (1973), 181-91.
- Cooper, J. M., ed. (1997) *Plato: Complete Works*. (Indianapolis)
- Cornford, F. M. (1939) *Plato and Parmenides: Parmenides' Way of Truth and Plato's Parmenides*. (London)

- (1957) *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*. (London)
- Couvreur, P. (1971) *Hermiae Alexandrini: In Platonis Phaedrum Scholia*. With additions by C. Zintzen. (Hildesheim)
- Cresswell, M. J. (1972) 'Is there One or are there Many One and Many Problems in Plato?', *Philosophical Quarterly* 22, 149-54.
- Crombie, I. M. (1963) *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines*. vol.2. (London)
- Dancy, R. M. (1984) 'The One, the Many, and the Forms: *Philebus* 15b1-8', *Ancient Philosophy* 4, 160-93.
- (2004) *Plato's Introduction of Forms*. (Cambridge)
- Delcomminette, S. (2002) 'The One-and-Many Problems at *Philebus* 15B', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 22, 21-42.
- (2006) *Le Philèbe de Platon: Introduction à l'Agathologie Platonicienne*. (Leiden)
- Devereux, D. (1994) 'Separation and Immanence in Plato's Theory of Forms', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 12, 63-90.
- Diès, A. (1949) *Platon, Philèbe, Oeuvres Complètes*. vol. 9. (Paris)
- Dixsaut, M. (1999) 'L'affirmation de Philèbe (11a-12b)', in Dixsaut and Teisserenc (1999), 27-42.
- (2001) *Métamorphoses de la dialectique dans les dialogues de Platon*. (Paris)
- Dixsaut, M. and Teisserenc, F., eds. (1999), *La Fêlure du Plaisir, Études sur le Philèbe de Platon, 1: Commentaires*. (Paris)
- Dorter, K. (2006) 'The Method of Division and the Division of the *Phaedrus*', *Ancient Philosophy* 26, 259-73.
- Fahrnkopf, R. (1977) 'Forms in the *Philebus*', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 15, 202-7.
- Ferrari, G. R. F. (1987) *Listening to the Cicadas. A Study of Plato's Phaedrus*. (Cambridge)
- Fine, G. (1984) 'Separation', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 2, 31-87. Reprinted in her (2003), 252-300.
- (1986) 'Immanence', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 4, 71-97. Reprinted in her (2003), 301-25.
- (1992) 'Vlastos on Socratic and Platonic Forms', in Irwin and Nussbaum,



- eds. (1992), 67-83.
- (1993) *On Ideas: Aristotle's Criticisms of Plato's Theory of Forms*. (Oxford)
- (2003) *Plato on Knowledge and Forms: Selected Essays*. (Oxford)
- Forster, M. (2006) 'Socrates' Demand for Definitions', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 32, 1-47.
- (2007) 'Socrates' Profession of Ignorance', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 33, 1-35.
- Fowler, H. N. (1925) *Philebus*. (The Loeb Classical Library; London)
- Frede, D. (1993) *Plato: Philebus*. (Indianapolis)
- (1997) *Platon, Philebos: Übersetzung und Kommentar*. (Göttingen).
- (2004) 'Dialektik in Platons Spätdialogen', in van Ackeren, ed. (2004), 147-67.
- Friedländer, P. (1969) *Plato, iii. The Dialogues, Second and Third Periods*, translated from the 2nd German edition by H. Meyerhoff. (London)
- Fujisawa, N. (1974) 'Echein, Metechein, and Idioms of "Paradeigmatism" in Plato's Theory of Forms', *Phronesis* 19, 30-58.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1991) *Plato's Dialectical Ethics: Phenomenological Interpretations Relating to the Philebus*, translated and with an introduction by Robert M. Wallace. (New Heaven and London)
- Gallop, D. (1975) *Plato: Phaedo*. (Oxford)
- Geach, P. T. (1966) 'Plato's *Euthyphro*: An Analysis and Commentary', *Monist* 50, 369-82.
- Genzler, J., ed. (1998) *Method in Ancient Philosophy*. (Oxford)
- Gómez-Lobo, A. (1977) 'Plato's Description of Dialectic in the *Sophist* 253d1-e2', *Phronesis* 22, 29-47.
- Gosling, G. C. B. (1975) *Plato: Philebus*. (Oxford)
- Griswold, C. (1986) *Self-Knowledge in Plato's Phaedrus*. (New Haven)
- Grube, G. M. A. (1935) *Plato's Thought*. (London)
- Guthrie, W. K. C. (1971) *Socrates*. (Cambridge)
- (1975) *A History of Greek Philosophy: IV Plato: the man and his dialogues: earlier period*. (Cambridge)
- (1978) *A History of Greek Philosophy: V The later Plato and the Academy*.

(Cambridge)

Hackforth, R. (1939) 'On Some Passages of Plato's *Philebus*', *Classical Quarterly* 23, 23-29.

———(1951) *Plato's Phaedrus*. (Cambridge)

———(1972) *Plato's Philebus*. (Cambridge)

Hahn, R. (1978) 'On Plato's *Philebus* 15b1-8', *Phronesis* 23, 158-72.

Hampton, C. (1990) *Pleasure, Knowledge, and Being: An Analysis of Plato's Philebus*. (Albany)

Harvey, G. (2009) 'Technê and the Good in Plato's *Statesman* and *Philebus*', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 47, 1-34.

Heath, M. (1989a) 'The Unity of Plato's *Phaedrus*', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 7, 151-73.

———(1989b) 'The Unity of Plato's *Phaedrus*: A Postscript', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 7, 189-91.

Høyrup, J. (1990) 'Dynamis, the Babylonians, and Theaetetus 147c7-148d7', *Historia Mathematica* 17, 201-22.

Irwin, T. (1977a) *Plato's Moral Theory: The Early and Middle Dialogues*. (Oxford)

———(1977b) 'Plato's Heracleiteanism', *Philosophical Quarterly* 27, 1-13.

———(1995) *Plato's Ethics*. (Oxford)

Irwin and Nussbaum, eds. (1992) *Virtue, Love and Form: Essays in Memory of Gregory Vlastos*. (Edmonton)

Isenberg, M. W. (1940) 'The Unity of Plato's *Philebus*', *Classical Philology* 35, 154-79.

Jackson, H. (1897) 'On Passages in Plato's *Philebus*', *Journal of Philology* 25, 290-98.

Kahn, Ch. (1996) *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form*. (Cambridge)

———(2002) 'On Platonic Chronology', in Annas and Rowe, eds. (2002), 93-127.

Koike, S. (1982) 'Bunkatsu-hou Kouan', *Tetsugaku Kenkyu* 545, 342-64.

Lane, M. S. (1998) *Method and Politics in Plato's Statesman*. (Cambridge)

Lee, E. N. (1972) 'Plato on Negation and Not-Being in the *Sophist*', *Philosophical Review* 81, 267-304.

- Lee, E. N., Mourelatos, A. P. D., and Rorty, R. M., eds. (1973) *Exegesis and Argument*. (Assen)
- Leshner, J. H. (1987) 'Socrates' Disavowal of Knowledge', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 25, 275-88.
- Löhr, G. (1990) *Das Problem des Einen und Vielen in Platons Philebos*. (Göttingen)
- Mabbot, J. D. (1926) 'Aristotle and the *Chôrismos* of Plato', *Classical Quarterly* 20, 72-79.
- Malcolm, J. (1991) *Plato on the Self-Predication of Forms: Early and Middle Dialogues*. (Oxford)
- McDowell, J. (1973) *Plato: Theaetetus*. (Oxford)
- Meinwald, C. C. (1996) 'One/Many Problems: *Philebus* 14c1-15c3', *Phronesis* 41, 95-103.
- (1998) 'Prometheus's Bounds: *Peras* and *Apeiron* in Plato's *Philebus*', in Genzler, ed. (1998), 165-80.
- Miller, M. (1990) 'The God-Given Way', *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 6, 323-59.
- Mirhady, D. C. (1992) 'The Great Fuss over *Philebus* 15b', *Apeiron* 25, 171-77.
- Mohr, R. (1983) '*Philebus* 55c-62a and Revisionism', in Pelletier and King-Farlow, eds. (1983), 165-70.
- Moravcsik, J. M. E. (1971) 'Reason and Eros in the Ascent Passage of the *Symposium*', in Anton and Kustas, eds. (1971), 285-302.
- Moravcsik, J. M. (1973a) 'Plato's Method of Division', in his, ed. (1973) 158-180.
- (1973b) 'The Anatomy of Plato's Divisions', in Lee, Mourelatos, and Rorty, eds. (1973), 324-48.
- (1979) 'Forms, Nature, and the Good in the *Philebus*', *Phronesis* 24, 81-104.
- , ed. (1973) *Patterns in Plato's Thought*. (Reidel)
- Morrison, J. S. (1977) 'Two Unresolved Difficulties in the Line and Cave', *Phronesis* 22, 212-31.
- Muniz, F. and Rudebusch, G. (2004) 'Plato, *Philebus* 15B: A Problem Solved', *Classical Quarterly* 54, 394-405.
- Nehamas, A. (1975a) 'Confusing Universals and Particulars in Plato's Early Dialogues', *Review of Metaphysics* 29, 287-306. Reprinted in his (1995), 159-75.

- (1975b) 'Plato on the Imperfection of the Sensible World', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 12, 105-17. Reprinted in his (1995), 135-58.
- (1987) 'Socratic Intellectualism', *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 2, 275-316. Reprinted in his (1995), 27-58.
- (1995) *Virtues of Authenticity*. (Princeton)
- Nehamas, A. and Woodruff, P. (1995) *Plato: Phaedrus*. (Indianapolis)
- O'Brien, D. (1967) 'The Last Argument of Plato's *Phaedo*. I', *Classical Quarterly* 17, 198-231.
- Owen, G. E. L. (1953) 'The Place of the *Timaeus* in Plato's Dialogues', *Classical Quarterly* 3 (new series), 79-95. Reprinted in Allen, A. E., ed. (1965), 313-38.
- Pelletier, F. J. and King-Farlow, J., eds. (1983) *New Essays on Plato*. (Ontario)
- Poste, E. (1860) *The Philebus of Plato*. (Oxford)
- Pradeau, J.-F. (2002) *Platon: Philèbe*. (Paris)
- Price, A. W. (1997) *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, 2nd edition. (Oxford)
- Prior, W. (1998) 'Plato and the "Socratic Fallacy"', *Phronesis* 43, 97-113.
- Rist, J. M. (1975) 'Plato's "Earlier Theory of Forms"', *Phoenix* 29, 336-57.
- Robinson, R. (1953) *Plato's Earlier Dialectic*, 2nd edition. (Oxford)
- Ross, W. D. (1953) *Plato's Theory of Ideas*, 2nd edition. (Oxford)
- Rossetti, L. (1992) *Understanding the Phaedrus, Proceedings of the II Symposium Platonicum*. (Sankt Augustin)
- Rowe, C. J. (1984) *Plato*. (London)
- (1986a) *Plato: Phaedrus*. (Warminster)
- (1986b) 'The Argument and Structure of Plato's *Phaedrus*', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 32, 106-25.
- (1989) 'The Unity of Plato's *Phaedrus*: A Reply to Heath', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 7, 175-88.
- (1995) *Plato: Statesman*. (Warminster)
- (1998) *Plato: Symposium*. (Warminster)
- Santa-Cruz, M. I. (1992) 'Division et Dialectique dans le *Phèdre*', in Rossetti, ed. (1992), 253-56.
- Santas, G. X. (1972) 'The Socratic Fallacy', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 10,

127-41.

———(1979) *Socrates, Philosophy in Plato's Early Dialogues*. (London)

Sayre, K. M. (1983) *Plato's Late Ontology: a Riddle Resolved*. (Princeton)

———(1987) 'The *Philebus* and the Good', *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 2, 45-71 (with the commentary by Phillip Mistis, 72-78).

———(2006) *Metaphysics and Method in Plato's Statesman*. (Cambridge)

Schmidt-Wiborg (2005) *Dialektik in Platons Philebos*. (Tübingen)

Scott, D. (1987) 'Platonic anamnesis revisited', *Classical Quarterly* 37, 346-66.

———(2006) *Plato's Meno*. (Cambridge)

Sedley, D. (1993) 'A Platonist Reading of *Theaetetus* 145-147', *Aristotelian Society*, suppl. vol. 67, 125-49.

———(2004) *The Midwife of Platonism: Text and Subtext in Plato's Theaetetus*. (Oxford)

Sheffield, F. (2006) *Plato's Symposium: The Ethics of Desire*. (Oxford)

Shiner, R. A. (1974) *Knowledge and Reality in Plato's Philebus*. (Assen)

———(1979) 'Must *Philebus* 59a-c Refer to Transcendent Forms?', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 17, 71-77.

———(1983) 'Knowledge in *Philebus* 55c-62a: A Response', in F. J. Pelletier and J. King-Farlow, eds. (1983), 171-83.

Silverman, A. (2002) *The Dialectic of Essence: A Study of Plato's Metaphysics*. (Princeton)

Skemp, J. B. (1952) *Plato's Statesman*. (London)

Stallbaum, G. (1842) *Platonis Philebus: Platonis Opera IX, 2*. (Gotha)

Stough, C. (1976) 'Forms and Explanation in the *Phaedo*', *Phronesis* 21, 1-30.

Striker, G. (1970) *Peras und Apeiron: Das Problem der Formen in Platons Philebos*. (Göttingen)

Susemihl, F. (1857) *Die Genetische Entwicklung der Platonischen Philosophie, Zweiten Theiles Erste Hälfte*. (Leipzig)

Taylor, A. E. (1956) *Plato: Philebus and Epinomis*, Edited by Raymond Klibansky. (London)

Teloh, H. (1981) *The Development of Plato's Metaphysics*. (Pennsylvania)

- Thomas, C. J. (2006) 'Plato's Prometheanism', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 31, 203-31.
- Thompson, W. H. (1868) *The Phaedrus of Plato*. (London)
- Trevaskis, J. R. (1960) 'Classification in the *Philebus*', *Phronesis* 5, 39-44.
- Vlastos, G. (1969) 'Reasons and Causes in the *Phaedo*', *Philosophical Review* 78, 291-325. Reprinted in his (1981), 76-110.
- (1981) *Platonic Studies*, 2nd edition. (Princeton)
- (1985) 'Socrates' Disavowal of Knowledge', *Philosophical Quarterly* 35, 1-31. Reprinted in his (1994), 39-66.
- (1990) 'Is the "Socratic Fallacy" Socratic?', *Ancient Philosophy* 10, 1-16, reprinted in his (1994), 67-86.
- (1991) *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher*. (Cambridge)
- (1994) *Socratic Studies*. (Cambridge)
- de Vries, G. J. A. (1969) *A Commentary on the Phaedrus of Plato*. (Amsterdam)
- Waterfield, R. (1980) 'The Place of the *Philebus* in Plato's Dialogues', *Phronesis* 25, 270-305.
- (1982) *Plato Philebus*. (Harmondsworth)
- Wedin, M. V. (1987) 'Collection and Division in the *Phaedrus* and *Statesman*', *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne* 5, 207-33.
- Werner, D. (2007) 'Plato's *Phaedrus* and the Problem of Unity', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 32, 91-137.
- Westerink, L. G. (1982) *Damascius: Lectures on the Philebus, Wrongly Attributed to Olympiodorus*. (Amsterdam)
- White, F. C. (1989) 'Love and Beauty in Plato's *Symposium*', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 109, 149-57.
- White, N. P. (1976) *Plato on Knowledge and Reality*. (Indianapolis)
- Wittgenstein, L. (1958) *The Blue and Brown Books*. (Oxford)
- Wolfsdorf, D. (2003) 'Socrates' Pursuit of Definitions', *Phronesis* 48, 271-312.
- Woodruff, P. (1982) *Plato: Hippias Major*. (Oxford)
- Woodruff, P. (1978) 'Socrates and Ontology: The Evidence of the *Hippias Major*', *Phronesis* 23, 101-17.
- (1982) *Plato: Hippias Major*. (Indianapolis)

——(1990) 'Plato's Early Theory of Knowledge', in *Ancient Greek Epistemology*, edited by S. Everson, 60-84. (Cambridge) Reprinted in Benson (1992), 86-106.

## List of quoted passages

- |       |                          |       |                         |
|-------|--------------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| (P1)  | <i>La.</i> 191a1-5       | (P33) | <i>Euthphr.</i> 5c8-d1  |
| (P2)  | <i>La.</i> 191c7-e11     | (P34) | <i>La.</i> 190c4-7      |
| (P3)  | <i>La.</i> 192a1-b3      | (P35) | <i>Men.</i> 71c8-d2     |
| (P4)  | <i>Hi.Ma.</i> 304d5-e2   | (P36) | <i>R.</i> 337e4-338a1   |
| (P5)  | <i>Euthphr.</i> 6e4-7    | (P37) | <i>Smp.</i> 210e6-211b1 |
| (P6)  | <i>Men.</i> 71e1-72a1    | (P38) | <i>Phd.</i> 100c3-6     |
| (P7)  | <i>Hi.Ma.</i> 292c9-d3   | (P39) | <i>R.</i> 476a1-8       |
| (P8)  | <i>Hi.Ma.</i> 295c4-d2   | (P40) | <i>R.</i> 478e7-479a3   |
| (P9)  | <i>Hi.Ma.</i> 296e2-4    | (P41) | <i>R.</i> 485a10-b3     |
| (P10) | <i>Hi.Ma.</i> 298a1-8    | (P42) | <i>R.</i> 508d3-8       |
| (P11) | <i>Chrm.</i> 159b2-4     | (P43) | <i>Phdr.</i> 262c5-d2   |
| (P12) | <i>Men.</i> 73e7-74a10   | (P44) | <i>Phdr.</i> 265c5-7    |
| (P13) | <i>Men.</i> 74d4-75a8    | (P45) | <i>Phdr.</i> 263d1-e2   |
| (P14) | <i>Euthphr.</i> 6c9-d11  | (P46) | <i>Phdr.</i> 270c9-e5   |
| (P15) | <i>Tht.</i> 146c7-d3     | (P47) | <i>Phdr.</i> 271b1-5    |
| (P16) | <i>Tht.</i> 147d4-e1     | (P48) | <i>Sph.</i> 219d10-e3   |
| (P17) | <i>Tht.</i> 148d4-7      | (P49) | <i>Sph.</i> 220b9-c9    |
| (P18) | <i>Men.</i> 79c8-79e1    | (P50) | <i>Sph.</i> 222c5-d1    |
| (P19) | <i>Sph.</i> 239d7-9      | (P51) | <i>Sph.</i> 257c7-d2    |
| (P20) | <i>Sph.</i> 240a4-6      | (P52) | <i>Phlb.</i> 12c8-d4    |
| (P21) | <i>Euthphr.</i> 5d3-5    | (P53) | <i>Phlb.</i> 12e3-13a2  |
| (P22) | <i>La.</i> 191e4-6       | (P54) | <i>Phlb.</i> 13c3-5     |
| (P23) | <i>Chrm.</i> 158e7-159a1 | (P55) | <i>Phlb.</i> 14c1-10    |
| (P24) | <i>Hi.Ma.</i> 289d2-5    | (P56) | <i>Phlb.</i> 15a4-7     |
| (P25) | <i>Euthphr.</i> 5d1-2    | (P57) | <i>Phlb.</i> 18e3-19a2  |
| (P26) | <i>Men.</i> 75a3-8       | (P58) | <i>Phlb.</i> 16e4-17a5  |
| (P27) | <i>Men.</i> 72c6-d1      | (P59) | <i>Phlb.</i> 24e7-25a4  |
| (P28) | <i>Hi.Ma.</i> 299d8-e2   | (P60) | <i>Phlb.</i> 23c9-12    |
| (P29) | <i>Hi.Ma.</i> 300a9-b1   | (P61) | <i>Phlb.</i> 23e3-6     |
| (P30) | <i>La.</i> 191e10-11     | (P62) | <i>Phdr.</i> 271c10-d7  |
| (P31) | <i>La.</i> 191e4-11      | (P63) | <i>Phdr.</i> 277b5-c5   |
| (P32) | <i>La.</i> 192b5-8       | (P64) | <i>Phlb.</i> 61d10-e3   |