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# Euthyphro 10a2-11b1: *A Study in Platonic Metaphysics and its Reception Since 1960*

David Wolfsdorf

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## I Introduction

### *I i The Elenchos at Euthyphro 10a2-11b1: Outline*

At *Euthyphro* 10a2-11b1 Socrates criticizes the third account of that which is holy qua holy (τὸ ὅσιον). The critique is more complex than many of Socrates' *elenchoi* in response to proposed definitions among the early definitional dialogues. Basically, the response has the following form.

#### *Original disjunction*

Socrates presents Euthyphro a set of two alternatives:

- (1) That which is holy is loved by the gods because it is holy.
- (2) That which is holy is holy because it is loved by the gods.

#### *First epagoge*

Euthyphro fails to understand the alternatives, and Socrates proceeds to explain himself through two *epagogai*. In the first, he introduces the distinction between agent and patient by means of three examples: something carrying and something being carried, something leading and something being led, and something seeing and something being seen. In view of these, he distinguishes between something loving and something being loved.

*Second epagoge*

Given the agent-patient distinction, Socrates suggests, through development of the three examples employed in the first *epagoge*, that patients have affections (that is, patient conditions) because they are acted upon, rather than that patients are acted upon because they have affections. For example, something carried has the affection of being carried because it is carried, that is, because something carries it, rather than that something carried is carried because it has the affection of being carried. Socrates expresses this as a general principle (P), which he then applies to something being loved; and he presents Euthyphro with a second set of alternatives:

- (3) That which is god-beloved is god-loved because it is loved by the gods.
- (4) That which is god-beloved is loved by the gods because it is god-beloved.

Euthyphro agrees that (3) is true and (4) is false.

On the basis of the two *epagogai*, Euthyphro more clearly understands the original disjunction, and he accepts (1) and rejects (2).

*Argument*

Socrates now argues against the identity of that which is holy qua holy (that is, holiness) and that which is god-beloved qua god-beloved (that is, god-belovedness) using a *reductio* and a pre-theoretical ancestor of Leibniz' Law (precisely, the indiscernibility of identicals in its contrapositive formulation, the distinctness of discernibles). Assume that holiness and god-belovedness are identical. Then, if (1) that which is holy were loved by the gods because it is holy, (4) that which is god-beloved would be loved by the gods because it is god-beloved. And if (3) that which is god-beloved were god-beloved because it is loved by the gods, (2) that which is holy would be holy because it is loved by the gods. But (4) and (2) are false. Therefore, holiness and god-belovedness are not identical.

*First clarification*

In the wake of the argument, Socrates clarifies the distinction between holiness and god-belovedness in two ways. First, he states that:

That which is god-beloved is such as to be loved (οἶον φιλεῖσθαι) because it is loved, whereas that which is holy is loved by the gods because it is such as to be beloved.

### *Second clarification*

Socrates then explains that by identifying that which is holy qua holy with that which is god-beloved qua god-beloved, Euthyphro identified an affection (πάθος) of that which is holy, not the being or essence (οὐσία) of that which is holy.

### *I ii Notes on the Outline of the Elenchos*

The *elenchos* is difficult to interpret, and the articulation of the outline itself involves a number of controversial positions:

- (i) It is unclear how to interpret the phrases formed from the neuter definite article and adjective, for example, 'τὸ ὅσιον'. I call these 'τὸ phrases'.
- (ii) It is unclear what Socrates' 'What-is-F?' question seeks.
- (iii) The nature of the distinction in the first *epagoge* is controversial.
- (iv) It is unclear how to interpret the because-clauses, specifically in (1)-(4). Accordingly, the meaning of (P) in the second *epagoge* is also controversial.
- (v) It is unclear how the *epagogai* clarify the original disjunction.
- (vi) It is controversial whether the argument is for the non-identity of holiness and god-belovedness.
- (vii) It is unclear what principle of (non-)identity the argument employs.
- (viii) It is controversial how the phrase 'οἶον φιλεῖσθαι' in the first clarification is to be understood.
- (ix) It is controversial what Socrates means by the distinction between πάθος and οὐσία in the second clarification.

The aim of this paper is to resolve these nine problems. The discussion divides into five sections, (I) Introduction, (V) conclusion, and three sections that constitute the body of the argument: (II) The ‘What-is-F?’ Question, (III) Πάθος and the *Epagogai*, and (IV) Plato’s *Aetiology* and the Argument of *Euthyphro* 10a9-11e4. Subsection I ii ii addresses problem (i). Section II addresses (ii). Subsections III ii-iii address (iii) and (iv). Subsections IV i-iv address (v)-(viii). Section III ii addresses (ix).

With slight modifications, each of the three main sections arguably could stand as an independent paper. But since the aim is to interpret the *elenchos* at *Euthyphro* 10a2-11b1 as a whole, their compresence is necessary. And since this compresence also interilluminates the various problems of the *elenchos* as well as the scholarly controversies from the ‘60s to the present surrounding these problems, the interpretation of the *elenchos* as a whole is desirable.

### *II i Note on Translation and Notation*

The adjective ‘ὅσιον’ is translated by both ‘pious’ and ‘holy’. The two English words are used under different conditions. Something that is pious has or is related to a particular psychological state — for instance, a pious person or action performed by such a person. Something that is holy need not have or be related to such a psychological state — for example, holy site or holy water, whereas the phrases ‘pious water’ or ‘pious location’ are nonsensical. In *Euthyphro* Socrates and Euthyphro are mainly concerned with people and their actions. But since the adjective ‘ὅσιον’ is in fact used in Greek in conjunction with artifacts and places, throughout I translate ‘ὅσιον’ and its cognates by ‘holy’ and its cognates.

In certain passages of the paper I also employ an idiosyncratic notation, the symbol ‘*f*’, in addition to the familiar symbol ‘*F*’. ‘*f*’ is used for the adjective corresponding to the general term ‘*F*’; for example, ‘δικαιοῖον’ and ‘δικαιοσύνη’ respectively. Both designate the same property. However, the distinction is useful insofar as the symbols convey different syntactical information.<sup>1</sup> The employment of both devices facilitates the interpretation of *Euthyphro* 10a2-11b1.

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1 I have discussed this point in Wolfsdorf (2003b).

## II ii Tò Phrases

Throughout the *elenchos* Socrates uses phrases composed of the neuter singular definite article 'τὸ' and a neuter singular adjective; for example, 'τὸ ὅσιον' and 'τὸ θεοφιλές'. I call these expressions 'τὸ phrases'. τὸ phrases may be used in at least two ways, as quantifier phrases or as referring expressions. As quantifier phrases, the definite article functions like a universal quantifier ranging over all entities of the kind characterized by the adjectival expressions. For example, 'τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶ καλόν' may be translated as 'that which is good is beautiful'. But, of course, Socrates also and distinctively uses τὸ phrases to refer to Forms. So the sentence 'τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶ καλόν' could also be translated as 'the Form of the good (or goodness) is beautiful'. This ambiguity of the τὸ phrase is noteworthy since one of the central objectives of *Euthyphro* is to distinguish the Form *F* from *f* instances or, as I prefer to call them, *f* participants.

Throughout the *elenchos* Socrates uses τὸ phrases in both ways, although mainly as quantifier phrases. However, since he is not arguing that the sets of holy and god-beloved participants are not identical, but that holiness and god-belovedness are not identical, he must employ τὸ phrases to designate these entities at least twice in the argument, as in the following: 'But, if, Euthyphro, my friend, τὸ θεοφιλές and τὸ ὅσιον were same ...'<sup>2</sup>

The bivocal use of the τὸ phrase runs through the entire investigation of the identity of τὸ ὅσιον in *Euthyphro*. When he initially formulates the 'What-is-F?' question, Socrates attempts to clarify that he is seeking τὸ ὅσιον *insofar as it is ὅσιον*, that is to say, that which is holy *insofar as it is holy*. He employs the emphatic pronoun 'αὐτό' to make this *restricting qualification*, as I call it: τὸ ὅσιον αὐτό.<sup>3</sup> In defining the opposite Form of unholiness, he uses the restricting qualification 'κατὰ τὴν ἀνοσιότητα' for the same purpose.<sup>4</sup> However, Socrates does not always employ a restricting qualification when he uses the τὸ phrase to designate a Form, and throughout his *elenchos* to the third definition he does not.

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2 *Euthphr* 10c9-10

3 *Euthphr* 5d2

4 *Euthphr* 5d4; for this reason Schanz' (1887) bracketing of this phrase and Fowler's (1914) adoption of its removal are mistaken. Burnet (1900) rightly retains it.

In fact, the occasional use of restricting qualifications suggests that the proper logico-semantic interpretation of the  $\tau\acute{o}$  phrase as Form designator is actually not as a referring expression, but as a quantifier phrase as well. In this case, the restricting qualification limits the kind of entity over which the quantifier ranges. Thus, ' $\tau\acute{o}$  ὅσιον αὐτό' would be interpreted as *that which is holy insofar as it is holy*; and, according to Platonic metaphysics, there is only one entity that satisfies that description, namely, the Form  $\tau\acute{o}$  ὅσιον. As such, it must be inferred that in *Euthyphro* Socrates sometimes uses the  $\tau\acute{o}$  phrase with an elliptical restricting qualification, that is, one not explicitly expressed, as in the citation immediately above.

If this is the correct account of the derivation of phrases such as ' $\alphaὐτὸ \tau\acute{o} f$ ', then, strictly speaking, it is misleading to characterize the two distinct uses of the  $\tau\acute{o}$  phrase as 'quantificational' and 'referring'. On the other hand, one may accept the logico-semantic derivation of the  $\tau\acute{o}$  phrase with restricting qualification given, yet also grant that through frequent employment of the phrase in connection with his metaphysics Plato establishes a use of the  $\tau\acute{o}$  phrase as a referring expression. Accordingly, I will characterize the distinct uses of the  $\tau\acute{o}$  phrase as 'quantificational' and 'referring'.

### III Status Quaestionis

In the first half of the twentieth century, the *elenchos* at 10a2-11b1 received cursory consideration.<sup>5</sup> The first sustained examination appeared in 1964, Brown's critique of the logic of the argument. In 1966 Geach published his better-known analysis and commentary on *Euthyphro*.<sup>6</sup>

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5 In 1958 Robert Hoerber published a short piece on *Euthyphro* that includes a few pages on the *elenchos* at 10a2-11b1. These are not philosophically illuminating, nor were they influential. Hoerber writes that 'special studies of the *Euthyphro* were frequent up to 1926: the editions of Schanz (1887), Christ (1890), Adam (1890) and Heidel (1902)' (n 1). Articles Hoerber cites (n 1) include: Wagner (1895), Heidel (1900), Hoetterman (1910), Gottlieb (1926). 'For the occasional notices on the *Euthyphro* in the periodicals' between 1945-56, see *Classical Weekly* 50 (1956-7) 179-80 (n 1). 'But ... the *Euthyphro* has received in the last thirty years only passing attention ...' (95).

6 The piece is better known in part because Geach is, but perhaps mainly because of Geach's criticism in it that Socrates commits the so-called 'Socratic fallacy'.

Like Brown's treatment, Geach's is predominantly critical. Also, Geach does not seem to have been aware of Brown's paper.

Brown's and Geach's papers came to serve as points of orientation for subsequent examinations of the *Euthyphro* passage. Both conclude that Socrates' argument is unsound. Five subsequent discussions — Hall (1966), Anderson (1969), Allen (1970), Cohen (1971), and Paxson (1972) — argue the contrary. Sharvy (1972) argues that the argument is valid, but he does not examine its soundness. Thom (1978) and Friedman (1982) argue that the argument is unsound. Since 1982, no serious examination of the passage has been published.

The central problem of the argument, to which Brown first drew attention and which is the focus of most subsequent discussions, is the interpretation of the because-clauses in the central premises, more precisely, the interpretation of the relation implied by the 'because' ('ὅτι', 'διότι', or 'διά'). As we have seen, these premises are:

- (1) That which is holy is loved by the gods because it is holy.
- (2) That which is holy is holy because it is loved by the gods.
- (3) That which is god-beloved is god-beloved because it is loved by the gods.
- (4) That which is god-beloved is loved by the gods because it is god-beloved.

So, for instance, *prima facie*, (1) seems to imply a causal relation or a psychological reason, while many scholars claim that (3) seems to imply a relation of some logical kind.

Brown, who considers causal, psychological, and logical interpretations of the because-clauses concludes that no interpretation 'fits every context in the passage and produces a formally valid argument whose premises are unambiguous and not implausible.'<sup>7</sup> Thus, while Brown grants that the argument is formally valid, 'so,' he says, 'are many sophistries.'<sup>8</sup> Geach, who does not even entertain a univocal interpretation of the because-clauses, treats (1)-(2) and (3)-(4) independently. He

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7 *Ibid.*, 13

8 *Ibid.*, 5

argues that 'we just do not know how Plato conceived [the because-clauses in (3) and (4) and the other coordinate converses from the second *epagoge*]; but, he contends, 'there is no need to try [to] solve this problem; for the supposed parity of reasoning between "carried" and "loved" just does not exist. Socrates is made to treat both as examples of "what things have done to them".'<sup>9</sup> Geach offers what he believes is a sound non-causal, psychological interpretation of (1) as *the gods love that which is holy in respect of being holy*. Accordingly, (2), interpreted as *that which is god-beloved is loved by the gods in respect of being god-beloved*, is clearly false; and Geach claims that 'this shows that "god-beloved" and "pious" differ in meaning.'<sup>10</sup> The problem with this superficially attractive interpretation of (1) and (2) is that it is disconnected from the rest of the argument; and Geach himself admits that 'we cannot quite clearly see the rationale of this principle.'<sup>11</sup>

The six attempts from 1968 to 1972 to defend Socrates' argument against Brown's and Geach's charges of fallacy accordingly focus on the interpretation of the because-clauses.<sup>12</sup> Hall, Anderson, Allen, Paxson, and Sharvy defend univocal interpretations of these clauses. Cohen defends a bivocal interpretation. Thom cites no secondary literature, so it is unclear whether he is responding to anyone; but he too argues for a bivocal interpretation.

Hall claims that the because-clause in (3) implies logical sufficiency, but that 'Plato's emphasis is not on the *logical* nature of the relation between what is asserted by the participle ... and the verb.'<sup>13</sup> Instead, Plato's concern is the asymmetry of the relation. This asymmetrical relation is one of 'logical or conceptual priority' such that holiness must be understood prior to understanding the emotion to which it gives rise

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9 (1966) 378

10 *Ibid.*, 379-80

11 *Ibid.*, 380; Geach's interpretation of the explanatory clauses in (1) and (2) obviously cannot be applied to (3) and (4); the god-beloved is neither god-beloved in respect of being loved by the gods, nor is it loved by the gods in respect of being god-beloved. But surely an interpretation that does not even attempt to clarify the *intended* integrity of the argument is deeply unsatisfactory.

12 Thom's (1978) is also so focused.

13 (1968) 6

in the gods, and love itself must be understood prior to understanding the distinction between subjects and objects of love.<sup>14</sup>

Anderson suggests that the because-clauses imply the thing-sort or token-type relation. Thus, (3) is interpreted as *a thing is (properly) a loved thing when it belongs to the sort of things that are loved*.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, the rejected proposition (4) is interpreted as *because a thing is loved, it is the sort of thing that is loved*.<sup>16</sup> Among numerous problems with Anderson's proposal is the failure to apply this interpretation to (1) and (2).<sup>17</sup>

Cohen argues that the because-clauses in (1) and (4) imply psychological causation, whereas those in (2) and (3) imply logical sufficiency and perhaps also necessity. For example, (4) is interpreted as *the reason the gods love the god-beloved is that it is god-beloved*, which is surely false. And (2) is interpreted as *being loved by the gods is sufficient and perhaps also necessary for being holy*, which, Cohen claims, is false. Furthermore, Cohen defends Socrates against Brown's charge of committing a fallacy of

14 'Since the concept of loving must be understood before that of the subject of loving can be distinguished from that of the object of loving, the first must be logically prior to the other two [i.e., loving and being-loved differ in this way, viz., that they are differently related, one as subject and one as object, to the activity of loving.] ... [Plato] is saying, surely rightly, that the meaning of a participle must be understood in terms of that of a finite verb rather than vice versa ... "It is because it is pious that all the gods love the pious" will be intended to convey that what is signified by the adjective *pious* is logically prior to what is signified by a narrative of the emotion of all the gods. In other words, you can't understand what is meant by the attribution of the emotion signified by the verb *to love* to all the gods unless you first understand what is meant by calling something *pious* ... The conclusion that I think Plato means us to draw from the argument as a whole is, I think, as follows: narratives of events in the world of change are fundamentally distinct from descriptions that could be applied to unchanging objects. Fundamentally, verbs are used to give the former, adjectives to give the latter' (ibid., 8-9).

15 (1969) 478

16 Ibid., 477

17 And it is unclear how it could be applied. The reduction of (3) and (4), which involve three nominal or verbal elements (noun-phrase, participle, and verb), to two elements (participle and verb), is at least plausible insofar as the linguistic items are cognate. But (1) and (2) contain non-cognates. Paxson (1972) also criticizes Anderson for failing to explain the relevance of his conclusions to the first *epagoge*, the relation of the first to the second *epagoge*, and the relevance of Socrates' general principle of becoming (P) (1972, n 8).

equivocation: 'Although he equivocates on *hoti* in the argument, the word is used univocally within each of the inferences that Socrates draws.'<sup>18</sup>

Paxson, whose argument is akin to Hall's, regards the asymmetry in the because-clauses as pertaining to ontological priority. The 'proper classification of things [underlies] the "Platonic" interpretation of the *epagogai*. The question as to how Forms are to be assigned is decided by appeal to the proper way to carve up the world.'<sup>19</sup> According to Paxson, intrinsic properties, such as holiness, are more ontologically basic than activities, and activities are more ontologically basic than passive conditions, which are actually 'bastard[s] of the intellect illicitly derived.'<sup>20</sup>

Sharvy interprets the because-clauses as implying definitional analyses. Unlike accounts of meanings, definitional analyses are asymmetrical; for example, the meaning of 'father' = the meaning of 'male parent' and the meaning of 'male parent' = the meaning of 'father'; however, father =<sub>df</sub> male parent, but it is not the case that male parent =<sub>df</sub> father.<sup>21</sup> The rejections of (2) and (4) are explained accordingly as follows. The gods' love is not a definitional analysis of that which is holy, and being god-beloved is not a definitional analysis of the gods' love. The fatal problem for Sharvy, of course, is that the acceptance of (1) and (3) must be explained similarly. But there is no sense to be made of the following: the gods' love is a definitional analysis of being holy, and the gods' love is a definitional analysis of being god-beloved.

Thom argues that the because-clauses in (1) and (2) imply psychological reasons, whereas those in (3) and (4) imply logical priority. Thom's conception of logical priority resembles Hall's and Paxson's. '[L]oving-*x* [is] more of a genuine property than being-loved-by-the-gods. If you know that the gods love *x* then you know at least something about the gods; but if all you know about *x* is that the gods love it, you don't even know what kind of thing it is ... The relation of loving, one might say, has a certain direction: it goes from the lover to the loved ... Only one of the *relata* can be regarded as the *cause* of the relation's

18 (1971) 11-12

19 (1972) 176

20 *Ibid.*

21 (1972) 127

holding.<sup>22</sup> Contrary to Cohen, although without justification, Thom maintains that 'for the argument to be successful ... the word "because" must be being used in one and the same sense throughout';<sup>23</sup> and since this is not the case, Thom concludes that the argument 'commits a fallacy of equivocation.'<sup>24</sup>

Friedman's paper does not seriously examine interpretations of the because-clauses. Since he regards the flaw of the formal reconstruction of the argument as lying precisely in the because-clauses, this is a serious defect of his discussion.

A number of the ten commentators on *Euthyphro* 10a2-11b1 from 1964 to 1982 display noteworthy ingenuity. But it is also noteworthy that none attempts to support his interpretation by consideration of related passages and so relevant evidence in the Platonic corpus. As such, the contributions tend to be rather speculative or at least hypothetical. These speculations or hypotheses could derive their cogency from at least two sources — conformity with commonsense or, more broadly, common philosophical belief or from consistency with the evidence of the passage itself. But these sources of justification are problematic. In the former case, implicit or explicit dependence on commonsense or common philosophical belief may be anachronistic. For example, consider the following gross anachronism: 'If Socrates had wanted to show ... that "pious" and "god-loved" were not *synonymous*, he would have presented us with substitution failures in *modal* contexts.'<sup>25</sup> It is doubtful whether Plato distinguished between sense and reference and obvious that he would not have analyzed meaning in terms of possible world semantics. In the latter case — especially since the commentators consistently do not appeal to other relevant passages in the Platonic corpus — the interpretations should derive strength from their ability to make sense of all the evidence in the passage. Remarkably, however, some commentators ignore certain evidence, and it is by no means clear how their views can be extended to making sense of the data ignored.<sup>26</sup>

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22 (1978) 67-8

23 *Ibid.*, 66

24 *Ibid.*, 69

25 Paxson (1972) 125

26 Geach, Anderson, Sharvy, and Thom are particularly guilty of this charge.

Beyond these central difficulties, commentators do not consistently recognize that the phrase 'τὸ ὅσιον' and syntactically equivalent phrases themselves are used bivocally. Hall, Paxson, and Sharvy note that 'τὸ ὅσιον' can mean either *holiness* or *piety* or *that which is holy* or *pious*. Hall calls the former an 'abstract quality', Paxson an 'abstract substantive'; Sharvy says that phrases so used refer to an idea or attribute. Paxson calls the latter a 'collective singular', Sharvy a 'quantifier-noun' or 'denoting expression'. Others simply ignore the equivocation. For example, Brown and Anderson assume that Socrates is seeking the οὐσία of piety or holiness, whereas others assume he is seeking the οὐσία of that which is holy or pious.

The meanings of 'οὐσία' and 'πάθος' themselves are also disputed. For example, Hall argues that the distinction between οὐσία and πάθος is not that of essence and attribute. Incidentally, only Hall notes that the words 'piety' and 'holiness' are not synonyms.

Among those who discuss the crucial conditional cited above in which an identity principle operates, there is dispute over the nature of the principle employed. Most commentators claim some sort of substitutivity principle. So, Brown argues for substitution of definitional identity; Geach argues for substitutivity of synonymous expressions; Cohen argues for the substitutivity of definitional equivalents. However, Sharvy argues that no substitution principle is employed; and Friedman examines the object language formulation of Leibniz's Law, the distinctness of discernibles.

There is dispute regarding what a definition is and what sort of thing the 'What-is-F?' question seeks. Brown does not specify. Geach, Allen, and Paxson think that the question seeks the definition of a Form (εἶδος or ἰδέα). Hall vacillates; he says that the question seeks to clarify a concept; he also says that it seeks the meaning of a term. Anderson is simply unclear. Cohen thinks that the question seeks the definition of a term. Sharvy thinks that it seeks a definition and that a definition requires the analysis of an object. Broadly speaking, some scholars interpret the passage linguistically or semantically, while others interpret it metaphysically. Moreover, the distinction between synonymy, identity, and definition is not generally appreciated or considered.

These various difficulties make for a strong cocktail. In view of the richness and complexity of the *elenchos* as well as the *status quaestionis* — again, since 1982 there has been no serious, published discussion of the *Euthyphro* passage — the time is ripe for a re-examination.

## II Socrates' 'What-is-F?' Question

### *I The Vlastos-Penner Debate*

Scholars commonly call proposed answers to the 'What-is-F?' question (hereafter WF question) 'definitions' of *F*. Occasionally among the early definitional dialogues the word "ὄρος" or a cognate is employed to describe what Socrates is seeking, and this word is usually translated as 'definition'. For example, in *Republic I* Socrates rejects Cephalus' account of justice with the statement: 'Then, this ὄρος is not of justice, truth telling and returning what one takes.'<sup>27</sup> However, for the most part, Socrates simply says that he wants to know what *F* is. In stating, then, that Socrates' WF question seeks a definition of *F*, I am speaking according to convention and not implying anything in particular about the kind of account of *F* that Socrates seeks.<sup>28</sup>

Nowadays, a number of scholars claim that Socrates seeks a real definition.<sup>29</sup> In that case, Socrates seeks the (true) identity of *F*. Identity is a symmetric relation. But, according to one conception, a definition is an analysis, and that is asymmetric.<sup>30</sup> Thus,  $(a = b) \supset (b = a)$ , but if  $a =_{df} b$ , it follows that not- $(b =_{df} a)$ .<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, synonymy is also a symmetric relation, but co-referring expressions can have different meanings. So it is one thing if the WF question seeks the meaning of the general term '*F*' and another if it seeks a definition qua analysis. Still further, assuming that Socrates seeks a definition qua analysis, presumably this means the analysis of a concept, that is, the concept of *F* (which has been symbolized as '*F*'). Consequently, it is necessary to clarify whether Socrates seeks the identity of *F*, the meaning of '*F*', or an analysis of '*F*'.

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27 RI 331d2-3; it is, of course, disputed whether *Republic I* was originally written as an independent aporetic dialogue of definition. I assume that it was.

28 Consider Aristotle's claim that the pursuit of definitions was one of Socrates' principal interests (*Metaph* 987b1-3).

29 For example, Irwin (1977), (1995); Fine (1995).

30 Sellars (1967); Sharvy (1972)

31 For example, a definition of father is male parent, but a definition of male parent is not father.

The view that Socrates' WF question seeks a real definition can be traced back through recent decades of Platonic scholarship to Penner's influential paper of 1973. At that time, Penner informs us, the standard view of Socrates' WF question was 'the meaning view.'<sup>32</sup> Under this view, Penner subsumes interpretations according to which Socrates' WF question seeks an essence or universal or the meaning of 'F'. The reason for this disjunction appears to be that, according to Penner, the identity conditions of universals and essences are the same as those of meanings.<sup>33</sup> It must be stressed, however, that even if this claim is true, Socrates might conceive of his WF question as seeking a universal or essence, but not a meaning, or vice versa. In any event, Penner himself challenged the meaning view *tout court*:

[In *Laches*, Socrates's WF question is] not a request for a conceptual analysis (as usually conceived: the generating of a certain set of analytic truths about [courage]). His question [is] rather the *general's* question ... — that is, "What is it that makes [courageous] men [courageous]?" The general asks this question not out of interest in mapping our concepts, but out of a desire to learn something substantial about the human psyche. He wants to know what psychological state it is, the imparting of which to his men will make them brave ... [In *Laches*, Socrates's WF question] is not a request for the meaning of a word or a request for an essence or a universal ... but rather a request for a psychological account (explanation) of what it is in men's psyches that makes them [courageous]. For the [WF] question is often put [by Socrates] as "What is that single thing by virtue of which (with or by which) the many [f] things are [f]?"; and I will be arguing that that too is a causal or explanatory question rather than an epistemological or semantical one.<sup>34</sup>

In his defense of this causal interpretation of the WF question, Penner claims that Vlastos is the clearest and finest proponent of the meaning

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32 'For the [WF question] is generally taken ... to be a request for meanings' (Penner, 1973, 38).

33 Consider Penner's comment: 'R.E. Allen's Socratic "essences" ... are entities with the same identity conditions as those of meanings' (ibid., n 6).

34 Ibid., 40 and 56-7

view.<sup>35</sup> And in 1981, Vlastos published a reply to Penner defending his commitment to the 'semantical' view.<sup>36</sup>

Both Penner's and Vlastos' discussions of Socrates' conception of the WF question occur in the context of examinations of Socrates' conception of the unity of virtue thesis.<sup>37</sup> Penner's causal interpretation is intended to support the view that Socrates believes that the putative components of virtue in fact are identical. And Vlastos' semantic interpretation is intended to support the view that Socrates believes that the virtues are equivalent or biconditionally related such that a person is, for instance, courageous if and only if that person is wise, sound-minded, just, and holy. Penner notes, moreover, that preference for the biconditionality interpretation of the unity thesis follows from the common interpretation of the WF question as a 'request for meanings ... [for] nothing could be more obvious than that ... [for example, the] meaning of "[courage]" ≠ the meaning of "wisdom"'.<sup>38</sup> Much has since been written on Socrates' unity thesis, but little has directly addressed Penner's and Vlastos' contributions to the WF question. Indeed, even if, as it appears, the real-definition interpretation of the WF is the dominant view, there has been no serious examination of the Penner-Vlastos debate. Thus, although they are over twenty years old, Penner's and Vlastos' papers are the appropriate points of departure for an assessment of Socrates' conception of the WF question.

## *II i The Scope of Penner's and Vlastos' Arguments*

The scopes of Penner's and Vlastos' theses differ. While Vlastos interprets Socrates' WF question as consistent throughout the early dialogues, Penner's interpretation only pertains to *Protagoras*, *Charmides*,

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35 *Ibid.*, notes 3, 7

36 Vlastos (1981); Vlastos notes (n 1) that the reply was originally composed in 1976. In this reply, Vlastos also notes that he 'would prefer to call [his view] the "constitutive" [view since] in asking "What is courage?" what [Socrates] wants to know is what *constitutes* Courage' (*ibid.*, 411).

37 Vlastos explicitly presents his paper 'as a companion piece' to his essays 'Socrates on "The Parts of Virtue"' and 'The Unity of the Virtues in the *Protagoras*', both in (1981), at 418-23 and 221-65 with appendix an additional notes at 266-9 and 427-45 respectively.

38 Penner (1973) 38

and *Laches*. This restriction in the scope of Penner's thesis is due to the fact that in *Euthyphro* and *Meno*, Socrates, in the initial and subsequent formulations of his WF question, explicitly states that he is seeking a Form (εἶδος or ἰδέα). Moreover, in response to the third definition in *Euthyphro*, he states that he is seeking an οὐσία (typically translated as 'essence'). Penner is, therefore, also bound to explain why Socrates' conceptions of the WF question are inconsistent among these two sets of dialogues. He claims that in *Protagoras*, *Charmides*, and *Laches*, which he regards as earlier early writings, Socrates advances the view that the putative components of virtue are in fact identical, whereas in *Euthyphro* and *Meno*, which Penner regards as later or transitional early dialogues, Socrates admits that the virtues are not unified. Penner explains this shift on the grounds that in the earlier early dialogues Socrates is concerned with 'real' virtue, whereas in the later early dialogues, Socrates is concerned with conventional or demotic virtues.<sup>39</sup> In other words, in the earlier early dialogues, the WF question seeks what *F really is*, whereas in the later dialogues, the WF question seeks what '*F*' means or what *F* is conventionally thought to be. And since, as stated, Penner assumes that universals, essences, and meanings have the same identity conditions, his claim that the later early dialogues focus on demotic virtues is consistent with Socrates' pursuit of Forms in those dialogues.<sup>40</sup>

It should also be noted that in *Hippias Major* Socrates speaks of *F* as a Form. Moreover, Vlastos cites evidence from *Hippias Major* in support of his interpretation and against Penner. Penner, himself does not mention *Hippias Major* in his discussion. Perhaps this is due to the fact that in 1973 the authenticity of this dialogue was more controversial than it became after the '70s.<sup>41</sup> Yet — it is worth stating — Penner could preserve his

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39 Penner (1973) 42-3

40 In the later early dialogues Plato 'begins to attend to the popular or "demotic" virtues, those virtues which do not require knowledge or wisdom.' So, in fact, these later early dialogues are irrelevant to Socrates' commitment to the unity of 'real virtue'. 'If my conjecture is correct, that the *Euthyphro*, *Euthydemus*, and *Meno* do represent this transition to the consideration of the demotic virtues, then it is possible that "Socrates-Plato" still thought that *real* virtue (Plato's "philosophic virtue" ...) was one' (ibid., 43).

41 Paul Woodruff, who was a student of Vlastos', published the first significant English edition of *Hippias Major* in 1982. In it, he defended the authenticity of the dialogue (see esp. 94-103).

thesis and grant the authenticity of *Hippias Major* on the grounds that *Hippias Major* too is a later early dialogue. Indeed, those who regard *Hippias Major* as authentic *and* make claims about the chronological order of the early dialogues consistently place *Hippias Major* among the later early dialogues.<sup>42</sup>

Vlastos' argument against Penner is organized about passages in three texts: *Meno*, *Laches*, and *Hippias Major*, in that order. Granted the distinct scopes of Penner's and Vlastos' theses, Vlastos' treatments of *Meno* and *Hippias Major* arguably are beside the point. Indeed, Vlastos recognizes that 'Penner ignores [evidence from *Meno*] ... because of his view that the *Meno* is a "transitional dialogue" and that its doctrines are not those of Socrates, but of "Socrates-Plato".'<sup>43</sup> However, while Vlastos himself grants that *Meno* is a later early dialogue, he claims that the WF question is 'logically independent' of and 'structurally insulated from' the doctrines in *Meno*, *anamnesis* and the sufficiency of true belief for right action, that demonstrate the dialogue's transitional condition. Therefore, Vlastos writes:

Why then should we suppose that the [WF question] has changed so drastically that while it was causal in earlier dialogues, it has become strictly non-causal in the *Meno*? Penner gives no reason, and I know of none; in a longer discussion I would argue that there *is* none.<sup>44</sup>

Penner may defend his position here with the claim that the evidence from *Laches* (and *Protagoras* and *Charmides*) shows that the WF question, in these dialogues, is causal and that *this* is the reason a distinction between the WF questions in the earlier and later dialogues must be acknowledged. True, Penner does not explain why, between the earlier and later dialogues, Plato shifts from discussion of real virtue to demotic virtue, but still, he does give some reason to believe that such a shift in conceptions of the WF question occurs. Consequently, the strength of

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42 In citing evidence from *Hippias Major*, Vlastos notes: 'I do not know what Penner's chronology does with this dialogue. He does not name it among those he attributes to "Socrates-Plato" [that is, to the later early dialogues]' (1981, n 8).

43 *Ibid.*, 412

44 *Ibid.*

Vlastos' argument as a reply to Penner rests on Vlastos' treatment of *Laches*.

### II ii Vlastos on 'δύναμις' at *Laches* 192b6

Vlastos' contention turns on the interpretation of Socrates' claim that courage is a δύναμις. Penner claims that in *Laches* as well as *Protagoras* and *Charmides* Socrates conceives of the (putative) virtues as motive-forces and states of the soul.<sup>45</sup> Thus, he interprets the word 'δύναμις' in *Laches* as *power*. Accordingly, he claims that in posing the WF question in *Laches*, Socrates seeks that entity that is causally responsible for and as such explains courageous behavior.<sup>46</sup>

Vlastos is aware that *power* is the standard meaning of 'δύναμις'. However, he argues that here in *Laches* 'δύναμις' means *quality* or *property*, which might be an acceptable, although secondary meaning.<sup>47</sup> Vlastos' argument for interpreting 'δύναμις' as *quality* or *property* is, however, indefensible. So that my explanation of this does not too much detract from the central argument here, I have confined it to an appendix (pp. 28-32 below).

### II iii Critique of Penner and Vlastos

Granted, then, that Vlastos is wrong to insist that 'δύναμις' in *Laches* means *quality* or *property*. To this extent, his reply to Penner fails. And granted this, it is a question what significance the fact that 'δύναμις' in

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45 Penner (1973) 44-5

46 'What precludes the possibility of the general we met with in Section I asking "What is [courage]?" and meaning thereby "What is it that these men have, that makes them so [courageous] in combat? And how can I impart it or inculcate it in other men?" Would Freud have been precluded from asking "What is hysteria?" when he sought thereby an *explanation* of hysterical behavior? What the general and Freud seek is neither label nor meaning but *explanation*. They are asking, surely, about inner motive-forces or states of the soul. So what we have here is surely the possibility of ["courage"] and "hysteria" sometimes referring to motive-forces or states of the soul' (ibid., 45).

47 To my mind, it is controversial whether Plato had a concept for property at this stage of his career. Nonetheless, in the only serious examination of the concept of δύναμις in the Platonic corpus, Souihlé (1919) argues that Plato does develop a sense for 'δύναμις' of this kind.

*Laches* means *power* has for Penner's causal interpretation of the WF question in *Laches* (or *Protagoras* or *Charmides*). In fact, there is an irony in Vlastos' unsuccessful attempt to defeat Penner's causal interpretation by arguing against the standard translation of 'δύναμις'. Socrates' conception of courage as a power does not imply that Socrates conceives of the WF question as a request for a causal explanation. In this regard, there is a fundamental confusion in Penner's own account.

In his 1979 study of the early dialogues, Santas distinguishes between the semantics and pragmatics of Socrates' WF question.<sup>48</sup> Consonantly with Penner (at least in *Protagoras*, *Laches*, and *Charmides*), Santas claims that, semantically, Socrates' WF question seeks the identity of *F*. He then describes three reasons why Socrates seeks the identity of *F*. In other words, Santas appreciates that the pursuit of the identity of *F* is distinguishable from the interest in pursuing the identity of *F*. Accordingly, in claiming that Socrates' WF question (in *Laches*) is the general's question and that Socrates seeks the cause of courageous behavior, Penner conflates semantic and pragmatic analyses of the WF question.

The question why Socrates seeks the identity of *F* and, more specifically whether, in *Laches* (or *Charmides* or *Protagoras*), Socrates seeks a causal explanation of courageous (or sound-minded or virtuous) action, is separate from the question of whether Socrates seeks the identity of *F*. I will return to the pragmatic question shortly. Presently, I wish to resolve the semantic question.

When he poses the WF question, Socrates asks what *F* is:

[*Laches*]      Let us first try to say this: What is courage?<sup>49</sup>

[*Meno*]        By the gods, Meno, what do you yourself say that virtue is?<sup>50</sup>

[*Euthyphro*]   Say, then, what you affirm holiness and unholiness to be.<sup>51</sup>

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48 Santas (1979) 105-26. It is noteworthy that Vlastos (1981) does not reference Santas' work.

49 *La* 190d

50 *Meno* 71d

51 *Euthyphr* 5d

[*Hp Ma*] "Tell me then, stranger," he will say, "what is this thing, beauty?"<sup>52</sup>

Likewise, when the investigation has failed satisfactorily to answer the WF question, Socrates states that his interlocutor(s) and he have failed to determine what *F* is:

[*Charmides*] ... and we are unable to discover to what thing (ἐφ' ὅτῳ ποτὲ τῶν ὄντων) the lawgiver gave the name "sound-mindedness".<sup>53</sup>

[*Lysis*] ... but we have not yet been able to discover what a friend is.<sup>54</sup>

[*R I*] So that for me the present outcome of the discussion is that I know nothing; for if I don't now what justice is, I will hardly know whether it is a virtue or whether its possessor is happy.<sup>55</sup>

Socrates never asks what '*F*' means, nor does he state that the investigation has failed to determine what '*F*' means.<sup>56</sup> Also, he never uses mentalistic language or a word for concept in clarifying what he is seeking. He never says that he wants an analysis of anything. In *Protagoras* Socrates distinguishes words from objects, and he wonders whether the various virtue-terms all refer to the same or separate entities:

Are the five names of "wisdom", "sound-mindedness", "courage", "justice", and "holiness" attached to one thing (ἐπὶ ἐνὶ πράγματι), or underlying each of these names is there a distinct being (οὐσία) or thing (πρᾶγμα) that has its own particular power ...?<sup>57</sup>

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52 *Hp Ma* 287d

53 *Chrm* 175b; the notion that a lawgiver originally correlated words and objects also occurs in *Cratylus*, and in *Republic* Apollo is specifically characterized as the lawgiver.

54 *Ly* 223b

55 *R* 354b-c

56 Penner is, therefore, quite right to warn 'Greekless readers of the Jowett translation ..., whenever they see the word "meaning," to check a more modern translation' (1973, n 7).

57 *Prt* 349b-c

Furthermore, in *Protagoras* and *Hippias Major*, in investigating *F* and the relation of the components of virtue, Socrates first elicits assent to the question 'Is *F* something ( $\tau\iota$ )?' He does so because if *F* were not thought to exist, it would be idle to inquire into its properties and identity.<sup>58</sup> All this strongly suggests that when Socrates poses the WF question, he seeks a real definition. In other words, Socrates' WF question seeks the identity of *F* — not the meaning of '*F*' or an analysis of  $\cdot F$ .<sup>59,60</sup>

There is no good reason, moreover, to believe that in so-called later or transitional early dialogues Socrates' WF question seeks the meaning of demotic virtues. First, for several reasons, it is doubtful that the early dialogues, specifically the early definitional dialogues, are divisible into earlier and later groups as Penner suggests. One reason others have advanced for the division is that Socrates' method or manner of pursuing definitions among these texts shifts. However, I have elsewhere demonstrated that Socrates' manner of pursuing the WF question is consistent among these texts.<sup>61</sup> Another reason is that Socrates' conception of the relation between definitional knowledge of *F* and pertinent non-definitional knowledge shifts among these texts. Again, I have elsewhere demonstrated that Socrates' conception of this relation is consistent.<sup>62</sup>

58 On the ontological weight of this question, contra Woodruff (1978), see Wolfsdorf (2002) 207-10. Note that Socrates employs the same type of question in the argument at *Prt* 330-1; on which, see Wolfsdorf, *ibid.*

59 Cf. Wolfsdorf (2003a).

60 One general reason why scholars have been inclined to claim that Socrates' WF questions seek meanings or conceptual analyses may relate to the manner in which the investigations proceed. The pursuit of *F* is, of course, not undertaken as an empirical inquiry. (Related to this claim is the common misconception that Socrates pursues definitions of *F* principally through comparison of putative examples of *F*. This is simply false. On Socrates' manner of pursuing definitions, see *ibid.*) Rather, Socrates and his interlocutors share their beliefs and evaluate these through consideration of the logical relations of these beliefs to other beliefs. In other words, pursuit of the identity of *F* is more strictly intellectual than empirical. Even so, as I have said, Socrates never speaks of meanings or concepts and their relations. Rather, through the course of the investigations the interlocutors assess beliefs and concepts under the assumption that these mental entities (well or ill) characterize the objective world.

61 Wolfsdorf (2003a)

62 Wolfsdorf (2004a)

Another reason for the division is that topics treated in *Meno* occur in other middle dialogues, but not in other early dialogues. But this segregates *Euthyphro* and *Hippias Major*, as well as *Protagoras*, *Laches*, *Charmides*, *Lysis*, and *Republic I*, from *Meno*. Moreover, Vlastos is correct that the WF question itself is independent of the doctrines of *anamnesis* and the sufficiency of true belief for right action. Penner's suggestion that in the later early dialogues Socrates pursues *F* qua demotic virtue is also based on the fact that in these texts Socrates admits the disunity of the virtues. But I have elsewhere offered an alternative explanation for such claims and Socrates' claim that holiness is a part of justice in *Euthyphro* in particular.<sup>63</sup> Finally, the very progression of the investigations in the so-called later definitional dialogues makes abundantly clear that Socrates is not seeking a conventional conception or nominal definition of *F*; in these dialogues, Socrates repeatedly rejects conventional conceptions of *F*.

Granted, then, that throughout the early definitional dialogues, Socrates' WF question consistently seeks the (true) identity of *F*, Vlastos' evidence from *Meno* and *Hippias Major* on behalf of his semantic view cannot be ignored. In the case of *Meno*, Vlastos refers to the fact that, in his examples of color and figure, Socrates offers two model accounts of what he seeks when he poses the WF question:

Both are model answers because each purports to give a formula which covers all possible kinds of figures, stating "what is the same in all". Each shows clearly that the single thing "by virtue of which" differently shaped things have figure is simply what constitutes the property, figure — not what causes things to have this property.<sup>64</sup>

Like Penner's criticism of Vlastos (and the meaning view), Vlastos' reply to Penner conflates the semantics and pragmatics of the WF question.<sup>65</sup> Granted, color and figure do not *cause* entities to have figure

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63 Wolfsdorf (2004b)

64 (1981) 412

65 Vlastos notes that he composed his reply to Penner in 1976; and although this reply was published in 1981, Vlastos does not cite Santas' work.

and color;<sup>66</sup> but Penner does not argue that courage causes people to have courage. His claim is that courage causes people to act courageously.

The same confusion occurs in Vlastos' comment on a passage in *Hippias Major* where Socrates speaks of beauty as that because of which beautiful things are beautiful:

One would like to believe that it would be agreed without argument that [Socrates] could not have made the mistake of regarding the Beauty of an object as that which causes the object to be beautiful.<sup>67</sup>

Granted, then, these passages are irrelevant to the question of whether Socrates' interest in the identity of  $F$ , in *Laches* or elsewhere, is to determine what makes people act  $f$ -ly. On the other hand, as we saw above, Penner himself says that 'the WF question is often put as "What is that single thing by virtue of which (with or by which) the many [ $f$ ] things are [ $f$ ]?"'; and I will be arguing that that too is a causal or explanatory question rather than an epistemological or semantical one.' Thus, Vlastos' comments can also be viewed and evaluated as responding to Penner's claim that Socrates' statements of the form ' $f$  entities are  $f$  because of  $F$ ' imply a causal relation. In this respect, Vlastos' criticism of Penner is legitimate. Penner is wrong to claim that the analysis of the following two statement types that occur among the early dialogues is identical — at least if the analysis is *not* intended to determine how Plato would have conceptualized the statements: ( $\alpha$ )  $f$  actions are  $f$  because of  $F$  (or people act  $f$ -ly because of  $F$ ), and ( $\beta$ )  $f$  entities are  $f$  because of  $F$ . The syntactic similarity between ( $\alpha$ ) and ( $\beta$ ) does not imply that the relation between  $F$  and  $f$  entities in ( $\alpha$ ) and ( $\beta$ ) is identical. That relation depends upon the identity of  $F$  and the  $f$  entities in question. We have seen that ( $\alpha$ ) explicitly occurs in *Protagoras*, and we may grant that it operates implicitly in other dialogues such as *Charmides* and *Laches*. In such cases, the  $f$  entities are actions, and  $F$  is understood as a psychological state. Thus, a causal account of the relation may be fitting. But in ( $\beta$ ), which occurs in *Euthyphro*, *Meno*, and *Hippias Major*, the relation is not causal — at least not according to our conventional conception of causation. In this case, constitution may be the more fitting description of it — and certainly so if we accept the

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66 Although, I would urge, it is questionable whether Plato would have claimed that color and figure are not the  $\alpha\tau\tau\alpha$  of things being colored or shaped.

67 (1981) 416

current standard view that in the early dialogues the relation between Forms and their participants is one of immanence.

The *Meno* and *Hippias Major* passages Vlastos cites, therefore, tell against Penner's view that the relation between *F* and *f* entities is, in all cases, causal. But it remains a question whether these passages support the semantic view of the WF question per se — that is, as opposed to the view I have endorsed, that the WF question seeks the identity of *F*. As I noted above, Vlastos prefers to speak of his conception of the WF question as 'constitutive' as opposed to 'semantic'. I am not certain why Vlastos prefers this description. One possibility is that Vlastos believes that an account of the constitution of a property *F* is identical to an account of the meaning of '*F*', but that the latter way of speaking is preferable since Socrates himself does not speak of meanings. If this is correct, then Vlastos does not resist the view that the WF question seeks the identity of *F*. And so, at least as far as the relation of the virtues is concerned, Vlastos simply believes that Socrates does not argue for the identity of (the properties) courage, sound-mindedness, justice, etc. On the other hand, Socrates obviously believes that courage, sound-mindedness, and so forth, are epistemic states; yet it seems very odd to claim that 'courage' means knowledge of some kind. This suggests that, in fact, it is quite wrong to speak of Socrates' WF question as seeking the meaning of '*F*'. Meanings may have the same identity conditions as universals and essences. But the pursuit of the meaning of '*F*' implies the pursuit of a nominal definition, whereas in Socrates' case the pursuit of the identity of *F* is the pursuit of a real definition. In short, the meaning view of Socrates' WF question is misguided and misleading.

#### *II iv The Pragmatics of Socrates' Question*

We have now explained how Socrates understands the WF question and what Socrates means when he poses the WF question. We have not considered whether Penner's causal account, albeit confused as a semantic account of the WF question, nonetheless accurately explains Socrates' interest in pursuing the identity of *F*, at least in certain early dialogues. That is to say, we have not considered the pragmatics of Socrates' WF question.

In *Laches*, Lysimachus and Melesias want to cultivate virtue in their sons. They have invited Laches and Nicias to evaluate whether Stesilaus' course in hoplomachy will serve this goal. Socrates advises the fathers first to consider what virtue is, for, as he says:

And you know, Laches, at this moment our two friends are inviting us to consult on the way in which virtue may be joined to their sons' souls and so make them better ... Then our first requisite is to know what virtue is, for surely if we did not know at all what virtue was, we could not possibly consult with anyone on how he might best acquire it.<sup>68</sup>

As I have recently shown, passages among the early definitional dialogues such as this one reflect Socrates' commitment to the following principle, called 'the epistemological priority of definitional knowledge':

(PD) If one does not know what *F* is, one cannot know anything substantive about *F*, including whether, for any ethically substantive property *P*, *F* has *P*, and whether, for any *x*, *x* is an instance of *F*.<sup>69</sup>

Accordingly, in *Laches* Socrates pursues the WF question in the interest of assisting Lysimachus and Melesias in cultivating virtue in their sons. Socrates is interested in Lysimachus' and Melesias' sons acting virtuously. And so, we can agree with Penner, Socrates is interested in what will cause the boys to act virtuously. However, particularly given his commitment to (PD) throughout the early definitional dialogues, Socrates' interest in pursuing the WF question is importantly unlike the question the general asks in his desire to know what will make his soldiers courageous. The general believes he knows what courageous action is; his objective is to determine how to instill courage in his soldiers so that they will act accordingly. But given his commitment to (PD), Socrates does not know what courageous action is. So, whereas the general wants to know what courage is — whatever it is — that will make men act courageously, Socrates wants to know what courage is — whatever it is — that will make the boys act courageously — *whatever that is*.

To this, it should also be added that Socrates' identification of courage as a δύνάμις (and the analogy he draws, however infelicitously, between courage and quickness) is not intended to explain the cause of courageous action. Socrates introduces these ideas to assist Laches in the identification of courage. In response to the WF question, Laches first defines courage as remaining in position, defending against the enemy,

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68 *La* 190b-c

69 Wolfsdorf (2004a)

and not fleeing. In other words, Laches initially defines courage as an act-type. Socrates' response to Laches' response has two aspects. On the one hand, Socrates believes that many other act-types might be described as courageous. So, in considering the identity of courage, Socrates believes that Laches is canvassing too narrow a range of courageous actions. On the other hand, Socrates would not be satisfied with an account of courage as an act-type no matter how general, for example, stalwart endurance in dangerous circumstances. This is because Socrates believes that courage is not an act-type but a psychological state. Consequently, in his response Socrates encourages Laches to think more broadly about courageous actions and, more specifically, to consider what a range of courageous agents 'possess' in common that enable them to act courageously. I emphasize, then, that to the extent that he draws attention to the causal relation between courage and courageous action, Socrates does so to assist Laches in the *identification* of courage, not because, in seeking the identity of courage, Socrates seeks a causal explanation of courageous action.

One should, moreover, be careful in generalizing from Socrates' interest in pursuing the identity of courage in *Laches* to Socrates' interest in pursuing the identity of *F* in other dialogues. For example, in *Protagoras*, Socrates' (proximate) interest in the identity of virtue, more precisely in the relation of the putative components of virtue, is to determine whether virtue is teachable. This relates to his further interests in determining whether Protagoras can teach virtue and whether Protagoras can cultivate virtue in Hippocrates. In *Charmides*, Socrates poses the WF question to determine whether Charmides possesses sound-mindedness. He assumes that if Charmides possesses this virtue, Charmides should be able to define it. Socrates does not, at least not explicitly or obviously, pursue the WF question in *Charmides* in order to determine what will make Charmides or anyone else act sound-mindedly. In *Republic I* Socrates does not give a reason why he is pursuing the WF question. Cephalus' evaluation of old age involves a conception of justice that happens to provoke Socrates' curiosity about the identity of justice.

In contrast to Penner's account, Santas' analysis of the pragmatics of the WF question yields the following general conclusion: 'Socrates saw definitions as essential instruments in the search for knowledge.'<sup>70</sup> More

precisely, Santas distinguishes three types of epistemic interest in definitions: diagnostic, *aetiological*, and epistemic.<sup>71</sup> By 'diagnostic' Santas means that knowledge of *F* (hereafter 'definitional knowledge') enables one to determine whether a given entity *x* instantiates *F*. By '*aetiological*' Santas means that definitional knowledge enables one to justify the claim that *x* does or does not instantiate *F*.<sup>72</sup> And by 'epistemic' Santas means that definitional knowledge enables one to know 'general truths' about *F*, that is to say, properties of *F*, such as that *F* is teachable.<sup>73</sup> So, according to Santas, the investigation in, for example, *Euthyphro* is motivated by diagnostic interest, that in *Hippias Major* by *aetiological* interest, and that in *Protagoras* by epistemic interest.

Granted that Socrates' proximate or local interest in the pursuit of the WF question vary from text to text, still, it seems reasonable to speak of a general interest motivating his pursuit of the WF question or rather a general interest motivating Plato's interest in the pursuit of the WF question. Socrates and Plato surely believe(d) that definitional knowledge of *F*, the foundation of all ethical knowledge, is at least sufficient for living well. In view of this, and with certain qualifications, Penner's and Santas' accounts can be integrated.

Finally, I would like to make one further point that falls under the topic of the semantics of the WF question. Above I rejected Penner's chronological distinction between earlier and later early dialogues and specifically his distinction between two conceptions of the WF question in these sets of texts. On the other hand, there is a genuine distinction between the investigations of *F* in *Protagoras*, *Laches*, *Charmides*, and *Republic I*, on the one hand, and *Hippias Major*, *Euthyphro*, and *Meno*, on the other, that is reminiscent of Penner's distinction.

Elsewhere, I have characterized the distinction as between those definitional dialogues in which Socrates focuses on conditions for the identity of *F* (*F* conditions) that are psychological and more specifically ethical versus those definitional dialogues in which Socrates focuses on *F* conditions that are metaphysical, specifically concerned with the identity of *F* qua Form. I emphasize that this distinction is not exclusive, but

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71 *Ibid.*, 115-26

72 Below and also in section IV, I use '*aetiological*' with a different meaning.

73 Santas' view that Socrates is *not* committed to (PD) to some extent mars his account of these epistemic interests.

a matter of emphasis and pedagogy.<sup>74</sup> Since being a psychological state, being good or fine, and being a Form are compatible properties, the distinction in kinds of *F* conditions employed among the two sets of dialogues is, I believe, simply due to Plato's distinct pedagogical interests in the various texts.

One of the central, general tasks of the investigation of *F* in *Euthyphro*, as well as *Meno* and *Hippias Major*, is to advance the view that the world contains two fundamentally distinct ontological kinds: Forms and the empirically apprehensible entities that are their participants. Much of the investigation of *F* in these dialogues attempts to clarify and also to explore the nature of these ontological kinds. In *Euthyphro*, in particular, the *definiens* is supposed to satisfy the following three conditions:

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Basic Ontological Condition:          | <i>F</i> is not identical to the many<br><i>f</i> entities  |
| Purity Condition:                     | <i>F</i> is purely <i>f</i> ; in other words, <i>F</i> is<br>not partly <i>f</i> and partly not- <i>f</i> |
| Aetiological Condition: <sup>75</sup> | <i>F</i> is responsible for <i>f</i> entities<br>being <i>f</i> .   |

Each of these conditions is successively emphasized in response to the first, second, and third definitions of the discussion. Thus, loosely speaking, Socrates finds the third definition unsatisfactory because even if all and only holy things were god-beloved, their being loved by the gods would not be responsible for their being holy. Rather, in posing his WF question Socrates seeks that because of which all holy things are holy.

*Appendix: Against Vlastos' Interpretation of  
'δύναμις' at Laches 192b6*

Vlastos' principal reason against interpreting 'δύναμις' as *power* is that such an interpretation yields an absurd consequence. In clarifying his WF question for Laches, Socrates draws an analogy between courage and quickness:

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74 Cf. Wolfsdorf (2003b).

75 See note 72.

What I mean is this: as if in the case of quickness [I were asking] what on earth is it that is [quickness] in running and in playing the lyre and in talking and learning and in many other things — what is the same in nearly every [quick] action worth mentioning: of the arms and the legs and the mouth and the voice or the mind. Isn't that what you too mean? — Of course. — So if someone were to ask me, "Socrates, what is that which you call 'quickness' in all of them?" I would say, it is the δύναμις of going through much in little time (τὴν ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ διαπραττομένην δύναμιν) whether in speech or in running or in all other cases.<sup>76</sup>

Vlastos argues that 'δύναμις' cannot here mean *power* (or *disposition*) for in that case Socrates' implications about quickness would be absurd:

If Socrates had called quickness a *dynamis* because he thought of it as the power which causes a given action to be quick, he would be making the extraordinary assumption that the cause of everything done quickly by anyone anywhere is *the same*, e.g., that the very same thing which caused a man to run quickly would also cause him to learn and to think quickly. Is it at all possible that Socrates would be tempted to entertain such a fantastic notion, which would fly in the face of the most common experience — say that of a superlatively fast runner who is a hopeless learner and a sluggish thinker? It would be gratuitous, to say the least, to hold that Socrates is pegging his question on a premise of which there is no hint in the text and which is never mooted in Greek physical speculation even in its wildest vagaries.<sup>77</sup>

There is, however, strong evidence in support of the view that Socrates believes that quick action is something like the effect of the power or disposition of quickness.<sup>78</sup> In discussing the relation of the virtues in *Protagoras*, Socrates and Protagoras agree that courage as well as holiness, sound-mindedness, knowledge, and justice have δυνάμεις.<sup>79</sup> Evi-

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76 La 192a-b; the translation is Vlastos' from (1981) 413.

77 Ibid., 414

78 As I will discuss in sections III-IV, it is questionable whether Plato's conception of causation or rather *aetiology* is equivalent to ours.

79 Prt 330a4-b3

dence that the word 'δύναμις' is used in this context to mean *power* or *capability* comes from the way Socrates analogizes the virtues with the parts of the face. In *Charmides* and *Republic I*, the δυνάμεις of, for example, the eye and ear are understood to be sight and hearing, and these δυνάμεις enable the eye and ear to see colors and shapes and to hear sounds.<sup>80</sup> Further evidence comes from the use of the word 'δύναμις' earlier in *Protagoras*. It is Protagoras who, during his account of the origin of society, first introduces the word 'δύναμις'.<sup>81</sup> There, δυνάμεις are treated as entities Zeus charges Prometheus and Epimetheus to distribute to animals. Among the entities said to be δυνάμεις are strength and quickness, as well as other means of self-preservation.<sup>82</sup> Presumably, Protagoras intends to convey that Epimetheus distributed the δύναμις of strength to certain animals to enable them to fight well and the δύναμις of quickness to other, weaker (ἀσθενεστερούς) animals to enable them to flee. In short, 'δύναμις' here has its standard meaning.

Later in *Protagoras*, the interlocutors are discussing the relation of the virtues, and Socrates proposes the following principle:

If something is done (πράττεται) in such-and-such a way (ὡσαύτως), it is done (πράττεται) by the same thing (τοῦ αὐτοῦ).<sup>83</sup>

The examples Socrates uses to support this principle include the ethical virtues and vices as well as strength and quickness:

Things done foolishly (ἀφρόνως) are done so because of foolishness (ἀφροσύνη); and things done sound-mindedly (σωφρόνως) are done so because of sound-mindedness (σωφροσύνη) ... And if something is done with strength (ισχύι), it is done strongly (ισχυρῶς) ... And if something is done with quickness (μετὰ τάχους), then it is done quickly (ταχέως).<sup>84</sup>

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80 *Chrm* 167c8-d2, d4-5, 168d3-7, d9-e1; *R* 477c1-d5

81 *Prt* 320d5

82 *Prt* 320d8-e3

83 *Prt* 332c1-2

84 *Prt* 332b4-8

Socrates does not use both expressions, 'μετὰ τάχους' and 'ταχέως', to describe the quality of actions, for then the consequent of the conditional would be redundant. Rather, as the preceding examples and the earlier discussion in *Protagoras* suggest, entities like foolishness, sound-mindedness, and quickness are particular δυνάμεις (or have particular δυνάμεις) that enable their possessors to act in a correlative way.

In *Republic VI*, the manifestation or realization of the δυνάμεις of sight is said to depend upon the presence of a visible object as well as light. In the same passage, the eye is characterized as the instrument of sight.<sup>85</sup> Although it is not stated, it is possible that Socrates appreciates that the condition of the instrument may also affect the realization of the δυνάμεις. In either case, Socrates does recognize that the realization of the δυνάμεις depends upon multiple factors, including the nature of light and its source, the condition of the eye, the shape and color of the perceptible object. Perhaps the realization of the δυνάμεις of quickness can be conceived in the same way. That is to say, discrepancies in the body of the agent, as well as other factors, might explain why one person who possessed quickness could run quickly, but not solve mathematical problems so fast.<sup>86</sup>

Furthermore, in *Republic V* Socrates claims that δυνάμεις are not directly perceptible entities.<sup>87</sup> But if, as Vlastos claims, quickness were a 'property of actions',<sup>88</sup> it would be perceptible, and Socrates' characterization of a δυνάμεις in *Republic V* would contradict his characterization of quickness as a δυνάμεις in *Laches*. However, if quickness were a *power* of bodies or souls that manifested itself in action, Socrates'

85 R 508b4

86 A propos of this suggestion, Vlastos himself writes: 'It has been suggested to me [by Burnyeat] that good sense could still be made of the idea that [Socrates] thought of quickness as a power which enables those who have it to do other things quickly, by supposing that he would think of it as a power of a higher order of generality — "quickness(H)", let us call it — which could be exercised in some actions but not in others, depending on what additional conditions are satisfied. This power could be imputed to a person who does some things quickly without entailing that he would do all things quickly. Thus, both A who runs fast and thinks slowly, and B who runs slowly and thinks fast, would have quickness(H)' (1981, 414, n 6).

87 R 477c1-d5

88 Vlastos (1981) 414

characterization of quickness as a δύναμις would be consistent with his characterization of δύναμις.<sup>89</sup>

Finally, in *Laches* Socrates describes quickness as a possession of agents: 'we have come to possess it' (αὐτὸ κεκτήμεθα). This expression parallels his claim that various courageous agents possess courage: 'they have come to possess courage' (τὴν ἀνδρείαν κέκτηνται).<sup>90</sup> Note that Socrates does not say that actions, but *people* possess quickness or courage. Thus, even if the analogy between courage and quickness is infelicitous because quickness is not a single disposition possessed by all who in any way act quickly, the evidence strongly favors interpreting Socrates' use of the word 'δύναμις' to mean *power, capability, or disposition*.

### III Πάθος and the *Epagogai*

#### I 'Πάθος' at Euthyphro 11a8

The *elenchos* to Euthyphro's third definition concludes with Socrates' statement that being god-beloved is a πάθος of that which is holy, not its οὐσία. Burnet claims that the πάθος-οὐσία distinction is equivalent to that of accident-essence and that this 'fundamental distinction is found here in Attic prose for the first time, so far as we know.'<sup>91</sup> Hoerber characterizes the distinction as between attribute and essence.<sup>92</sup> Hall argues that the attribute-essence distinction is anachronistic and claims that 'πάθος' means *state of affairs*, but that through the argument Plato stipulatively defines this in the following 'technical' sense: 'to give a πάθος of the pious is ... to refer to the very same quality of things that the adjective *pious*

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89 It should also be noted that when Socrates analogizes the δύναμις of courage with that of quickness, he describes the latter with the phrase 'τὴν ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ πολλὰ διαπρατομένην δύναμιν'. Vlastos, who claims that Socrates must understand quickness as a property of actions, translates the phrase as 'the *dynamis* of going through much in little time.' But 'going through' is an inaccurate translation of the participle 'διαπρατομένην', which means *accomplishing*. If one correctly renders this active sense of the participle, the translation of 'δύναμις' as 'quality' or 'property' becomes strained. So Vlastos mistranslates the participle to preserve his interpretation.

90 *La* 191e6

91 Burnet (1924) 46

92 Hoerber (1958) 103

refers to; only to refer to it in terms that presuppose an understanding of *pious*.<sup>93</sup> Anderson and Paxson interpret 'πάθος' in its conventional sense: 'whatever it is that happens [to piety]',<sup>94</sup> 'something that befalls [piety]'.<sup>95</sup> Other commentators on the *elenchos* avoid an explanation of the distinction.<sup>96</sup>

I argue that Socrates uses the word 'πάθος' here in its most conventional sense, *that which happens to a thing* or, as it is often translated, an *affection*. But this conventional use generates puzzles (that others have not addressed). Although being loved or god-beloved is, in a sense, something that happens to an object, it does not imply being affected. Thus, either Plato is mistaken or he is using πάθος loosely for anything referred to by a passive verb or participle. Simple as the latter solution is, evidence in fact supports the former criticism.

## II Πάθος-Ουσία-Ποίημα

LSJ define 'πάθος' according to five categories, three of which are relevant to Plato's use throughout the corpus.<sup>97</sup> I. (i) That which happens to

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93 Hall (1968) 11; cf. 'what is signified by the adjective *pious* is logically prior to what is signified by the narrative of the emotion of all the gods. In other words, you can't understand what is meant by the attribution of the emotion signified by the verb *to love* to all the gods unless you first understand what is meant by calling something *pious*' (9).

94 Anderson (1969) 477. Allen (1970) characterizes πάθος as 'a property which happens to be connected with [holiness].'

95 Paxson (1972) 175

96 Brown (1964); Rose (1965); Geach (1966); Cohen (1971); Thom (1978); Sharvy (1972) cites Burnet, apparently approvingly (124), but he does not discuss the issue; Friedman (1982).

97 In Brandwood's *Word Index* (1978), among the standardly accepted authentic Platonic dialogues — *Apology*, *Euthyphro*, *Crito*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Charmides*, *Laches*, *Lysis*, *Gorgias*, *Hippias Major*, *Hippias Minor*, *Ion*, *Protagoras*, *Euthydemus*, *Meno*, *Menexenus*, *Cratylus*, *Symposium*, *Theaetetus*, *Parmenides*, *Republic*, *Timaeus*, *Critias*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Laws* — the noun 'πάθος' in its various grammatical forms is listed as occurring 170 times; 'πάθημα' 97 times. Plato, then, uses 'πάθος' almost twice as often as 'πάθημα'. Yet he uses both terms throughout the corpus, in early, middle, and late works; and I do not find interesting discrepancies in the quantities or locations of these instances. Πάθος: *Apology* (2) 22c4, 41b4; *Euthyphro* (1) 11a8;

a person or thing. In the case of people, (ii) what one has experienced and so also experience; often, negative experience as well as the state of affairs or event(s) responsible for it; thus, (iii) misfortune, calamity, or suffering. In medical contexts, (iv) symptoms or troubles. II. That which happens to the *psyche*, specifically, a particular set of psychological conditions: (i) emotion, passion, and sensation. III. More generally or abstractly, (i) state or condition; (ii) 'incidents of things, changes or happenings occurring in them', where III.ii may be distinguished from I.i as, for example, a leaf becoming brown versus being blown from a tree. Finally, (iii) 'properties and qualities of things'.<sup>98</sup>

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*Philebus* (17) 15d8, 17d5, 31b3, 32b7, 34a3, 35e9, 36b13, 41c7, 46a10, 46c7, 48b2, c8, d9, e3, 49a5, 60d9, e1; *Critias* (1) 111b1; *Phaedo* (11) 59a5, 68e4, 72b5, 78b5, 83d1, 89c11, 90c8, 94b7, c5, 96a2, c1; *Symposium* (2) 191a5, 217e6; *Republic* (21) 376a11, 378a2, 380a6, 381a4, 426a5, 432d5, 435b7, c1, 454a10, 488a2, 514a1, 518b2, 539a5, 579d5, 604b1, d8, e6, 606b1, 8, 612a5, 620b5; *Parmenides* (9) 129c3, 136b8, 148b1, 4, 5, 158e6, 159a1, 2, 7; *Theaetetus* (8) 155d3, 161d4, 166b3, 179c3, 187d3, 193c7, d4, 199c8; *Phaedrus* (11) 238c6, 245c3, 250a7, 251c2, d8, 252b2, c2, 254e1, 262b3, 265b6, 269b7; *Timaeus* (21) 19b5, 43e6, 48b5, 52d6, 58e7, 61e1, 62b5, 63d4, 64b4, c2, d1, 65b6, 66c1, 68a6, 76c1, 77e5, 78e4, 79a5, 81d4, 83d2, 86b5; *Hippias Major* (3) 300b7, 301b8, 302e6; *Hippias Minor* (1) 364a1; *Protagoras* (1) 352e6; *Cratylus* (3) 395a8, 411c1, 419c2; *Euthydemus* (1) 293e3; *Gorgias* (9) 476c2, 481c5, 7, 482c6, 495e3, 513c5, 522b3, 525a7, c6, *Sophist* (7) 228e4, 243c3, 245a1, b4, c2, 248d5, 264a5; *Statesman* (8) 264b2, 269b5, c1, 270b3, 273d1, 277d7, 303d7, 308a3; *Laws* (27) 639b4, 644d6, e1, 682c5, 691b2, 699e2, 712e6, 728c2, 741c6, 790e8, 791a1, 801b2, 811c10, 819d6, 859e11, 860a5, 863b3, 876b5, d4, 879b6, 888c4, 893d5, 894a2, 895c6, 900b1, 3, 908c5. Πάθημα: *Protagoras* (2) 353a5, 357c7; *Gorgias* (4) 481d1, 483b1, 524b7, d6; *Symposium* (2) 189d6, 222b6; *Phaedo* (4) 79d6, 94e3, 98a5, 103a2; *Ion* (1) 531c8; *Timaeus* (25) 42a6, 43b7, 44a8, 57c1, 61c5, d1, 4, 62a4, 63e7, 9, 64a3, 6, d6, 65b4, c2, 66b6, c6, 67b1, e3, 69d1, 79e10, 80c6, 84b4, e8, 88e2, 89c1; *Sophist* (6) 228e6, 234d5, e6, 248b5, d5, 252b9; *Philebus* (16) 32c1, 33d2, 35c9, 13 (twice), 36a1, 5, c3, 39a2, 4, 41c2, 42a9, 47c2, 50d5, 52b3, 54e8; *Hippias Major* (1) 300b5; *Hippias Minor* (1) 372e4; *Republic* (14) 380e6, 381a9, 382b10, 388d7, 389c4, 393b5, 437b4, 439d2, 462c1, 504c6, 511d7, 577c3, 602d1, 610b5; *Parmenides* (2) 141d4, 157b4; *Theaetetus* (2) 186c2, d2; *Phaedrus* (1) 141d4, 157b4; *Statesman* (3) 270d2, e10, 274a1; *Laws* (13) 632a6, 648b8, 681d8, 687e2, 695e3, 708b5, 777c6, 812c3, 859e4, 860b4, 5, 866b3, 894c6.

- 98 LSJ offer two more categories that happen to be irrelevant for Plato. IV. encompasses (i) grammatical modification in word, especially in dialectical variations; (ii) modification syntactical construction of omission or redundancy; (iib) passivity; (iic) written signs other than accents and breathings. V. (i) encompasses emotive style or treatment in rhetoric.

The approximate synonym 'πάθημα' is defined according to three categories, all of which overlap with some of the categories for 'πάθος' and which constitute a more haphazard structure. I. (i) That which befalls one, suffering, misfortune. II. (i) Emotion, condition, affection, feelings; again, in medical literature (ii) troubles and symptoms. III. (i) incidents, happenings; (ii) incidents or changes of material bodies; (iii) in logic, incidents, properties, accidents.<sup>99</sup>

All but the last subcategories — III.iii for both 'πάθος' and 'πάθημα' — are more or less directly connected to the primary meaning of *that which happens to a thing*. Following others, I will speak of this as an 'affection'. Of course, some properties and qualities may be affections too, but certainly some are not. Thus, these last subcategories are notable, albeit subtle, semantic departures. LSJ list some Platonic instances among them. Below I will consider whether their decision to do so is defensible.

LSJ list 'πάθος' at *Euthyphro* 11a8 under definition III.iii. As such, being god-beloved is a quality or property of that which is holy, whereas Socrates is seeking its οὐσία. LSJ also cite under 'πάθος' III.iii Aristotle's analysis of 'πάθος' from *Metaphysics* Δ:

[1] A quality (ποιότης) in virtue of which alteration (ἀλλοιοῦσθαι) is possible, for example, blackness, whiteness, sweetness, bitterness, heaviness, lightness. [2] The actualizations (ἐνέργειαι) of these [qualities], that is, the alterations already realized (ἀλλοιωσεις ἤδη).<sup>100</sup>

Aristotle's use belongs under LSJ III.iii since he explicitly analyzes πάθος as a kind of ποιότης. But Plato's does not belong here. Being god-beloved may be a property and, arguably, a use of 'πάθος' approximately meaning *property* might have been available to Plato. But the context of the *Euthyphro* passage in which 'πάθος' occurs strongly suggests that Plato did not intend to use 'πάθος' in this way here.

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99 It is interesting to compare Aristotle's analysis of πάθος in *Metaph* 1022b15-22. 1. A quality in virtue of which alteration is possible, e.g., blackness, whiteness, sweetness, bitterness, heaviness, lightness. 2. The actualizations of these qualities, that is, the alterations already realized. 3. More particularly, hurtful alterations and motions, especially hurts that cause suffering. 4. Extreme cases of misfortune and suffering.

100 *Metaph* 1022b15-19

The *elenchos*, at the end of which the usage occurs, begins with two *epagogai*. The first distinguishes something leading from something being led, something carrying from something being carried, something seeing from something being seen, and, in view of these, something loving from something being loved.

One commentator has suggested that Plato intended here to introduce the grammatical distinction between active and passive.<sup>101</sup> But this is dubious. First, such a grammatical distinction occurs nowhere in Plato; it seems to be first introduced among the Stoics perhaps at least a century later.<sup>102</sup> Second, the distinction between action and affection is rife in the Platonic corpus;<sup>103</sup> Aristotle himself introduces the distinction in *Categories* and devotes several sections to its explication in *On Generation and Corruption*. The first *epagoge*, then, undoubtedly distinguishes loving and being loved as action and affection respectively.

In the second *epagoge*, Socrates claims that a thing is a carried, led, seen, and loved thing because it is carried, led, seen, and loved, rather than that a thing is carried, led, seen, and loved because it is a carried, led, seen, and loved thing. This claim is puzzling rendered, as I have, literally in English. It is also to some extent puzzling in Greek. In Greek, a 'φ-ed thing' is rendered by the pronoun and the passive participle, so 'τὸ φερόμενον' or 'τὸ φιλούμενον'. Thus, the noun phrase is contrasted with the passive verb, for example, 'φέρεται' or 'φιλείται'. Socrates' claim, then, is that there is an asymmetrical relation between what is described by the noun-phrase and the verb and that what is described

101 Cohen (1971)

102 Cf. Kemp (1987) 170. The instance in Dionysius Thrax's *Techne*, sect. XIII is, like all of sects. VI ff., believed to have been composed in the third or fourth century AD. I am grateful to Bob Kaster for this reference.

103 I record over 50 instances in which the dichotomy explicitly occurs. With 'πάθος' or 'πάσχειν' and 'ποίημα' or 'ποιεῖν': *Sph* 247d8-e4, 248c4-5, 248b7; *Plt* 279c8; *Tht* 156aff., 157aff., 159a10-11, c8-9, c14-d1, 174b5, 182a-b; *Grg* 476b3-d4; *Ap* 41e7-42a1; *Cri* 49c10-11; *Phd* 93a4-5; 97c; *Mx* 244b3; *Lg* 728b7-c1, 834a1, 903b7, 8-9, 904e7-905a1; *Phdr* 270d4-5, 7, 271a10; *Phlb* 59a4; *Smp* 178d5; *R* 344c3, 436b8, 437a1-2; With 'πάθος' and 'ἔργον': *R* 378a2; *Phdr* 245c3; *Ti* 78e4. With 'πάθος' and 'πράξις': *Lg* 876d4. With 'πάθημα' and 'ποίημα': *Lg* 859e4, 894c6; *R* 437b4; *Sph* 248b5. With 'πάθημα' and 'ἔργον': *Lg* 777c6. With 'δρῶν' and 'πάσχειν': *Lg* 649d2, 834a1, 953b1. Note that some of these are multiple occurrences. There are surely numerous others.

by the verb has some sort of priority over what is described by the noun phrase.

In explaining his point, Socrates also expresses the following general principle (P):

If something becomes (γίγνεται) or undergoes (πάσχει), not because it is a becoming (γιγνόμενον) thing does it become (γίγνεται); rather, because it becomes (γίγνεται), it is a becoming (γιγνόμενον) thing. Nor because it is an undergoing thing does it undergo (πάσχει); rather, because it undergoes (πάσχει), it is an undergoing thing.<sup>104</sup>

Particularly in view of the distinction between action and affection in the first *epagoge*, the basic, intuitive interpretation is clear enough. The noun-phrases in (P) and in the instantiations of (P) describe the affections of objects that are subjected to actions. The verbs in (P) and in the instantiations of (P) describe actions. Granted, they are passive verbs and so the actions are described from the perspective of the objects acted upon; still, the verbs describe actions. Consider Socrates' following question, the content of which he takes to be true and to which Euthyphro assents:

Is not that which is loved (τὸ φιλούμενον) either becoming (γιγνόμενον) or undergoing (πάσχον) something from something (ὑπό του)?<sup>105</sup>

Note the use of the prepositional phrase 'ὑπό του', where the preposition 'ὑπό' is being used in its standard sense with a passive verb or participle, (or, in the case of 'πάσχον', an active participle with passive sense) to characterize the agent responsible for the action.

Thus, when Socrates says that a thing is a loved thing because it is loved, he means that a thing has the affection of being loved because it is acted upon.

Several commentators have stressed that there is a fallacy here, for one entity's acting upon another and the other entity's being acted upon by the one constitute one and the same event, only described from two perspectives. Thus, if, for instance, Plato assumes that the relation between the action and the affection is causal — an interpretation often

104 *Euthphr* 10c

105 *Euthphr* 10c6-7

considered and dismissed — he is mistaken. The action does not have temporal priority over the affection.<sup>106</sup> In what sense, then, does the action have priority over the affection?

In considering this question, it is interesting to note that Aristotle conceived of the agent and patient of change as coterminous. On this point, Annas writes: ‘the agent of change is active in producing the change only, and exactly, for as long as the patient is passive in suffering it.’<sup>107</sup> Plato himself never makes this point, at least not so explicitly.<sup>108</sup> But if, at least intuitively, Plato would have agreed to the simultaneity of action and affection, then the conventional conception of causation as a relation between temporally contiguous events, the former of which, in some sense, brings about the latter, is ill applied to the present case. And if so, then in seeking why Socrates and Euthyphro agree to (P) and, specifically, regard the priority of agent over patient, we must look elsewhere than at the temporal relations of agent and patient. I suggest that the proper site is the soul, for in Plato as well as Aristotle the soul is conceived as being the source of movement and change.<sup>109</sup> And specifically here in *Euthyphro* where all four examples in the *epagogai* are actions (two physical and two mental), the priority of action over affection is explicable accordingly.

Granted this interpretation of the second *epagoge*, Socrates argues that that which is holy qua holy and that which is god-beloved qua god-beloved, in other words holiness and god-belovedness, are not identical. At the conclusion of the argument, he states — as we began — that being god-beloved is a *πάθος* of that which is holy, whereas he was seeking its *οὐσία*. Given that ‘*πάθος*’ here means *affection*, the intuitive distinction between *πάθος* and *οὐσία* emerges as obvious enough. The gods love that

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106 This is not to suggest that temporal priority is in fact a necessary condition for genuine causality — or at least not for the ancients. In private correspondence, Prof. Hankinson makes the following point: ‘Stoic synectic causes are defined as being coterminous with and functionally covariant with their effects ... cf. their example — the tightening of the noose causes the increasing strangulation: Sextus, *PH* 3.15.’

107 Annas (1982) 319-20. See *Ar Ph* 195b16-21, 242a57-60, 251b1-5, 255a33-b12; *GC* 324b15-17; *MA* 702a10-21; *GA* 742a30-1; *Metaph* 1047b35-1048a8 (all cited from Annas, n 23).

108 Cf. *Ti* 57e.

109 Cf. *Phdr* 245c; *Lg* 894aff.

which is holy, but knowing this does not inform one about what holiness itself is. Being loved by the gods is, then, merely something that happens to that which is holy. As such, Plato uses 'πάθος' here in its primary sense, *something that happens to a person or thing*.

Assuming the concept of οὐσία is more or less equivalent to essence, the distinction between πάθος and οὐσία is still not equivalent to accident-essence or attribute-essence. An affection is one kind of attribute or property. Its contrary, action, is another. Indeed, it is unclear whether at the composition date of *Euthyphro* (or ever) Plato had a concept of attribute or property under which both affections and actions as well as other kinds of attributes might be subsumed.

As far as the accident-essence distinction is concerned, Aristotle himself, who clearly does recognize a distinction akin to that between essence and accident, does not use the word 'πάθος' for accident. And the word he does use, 'συμβέβηκος', he does not define equivalently to 'πάθος'. Actions, like affections and other kinds of properties, may also be accidental.

The accident-essence and attribute-essence interpretations are, then, untenable and, indeed, anachronistic. Generally speaking, Plato does not use the word 'πάθος' in a technical philosophical sense anywhere in the corpus. Granted, there are several other instances in the corpus where πάθος and οὐσία are juxtaposed, but these are consistent with the interpretation I have given.

The dichotomy of πάθος and οὐσία occurs once elsewhere in the Platonic corpus. In *Hippias Major* Socrates suggests that two entities may suffer a condition individually that they do not suffer collectively or vice versa. Hippias objects:

And now [your failure to recognize the character of things<sup>110</sup>] has gotten to such a point that you think there is some πάθος or οὐσία in both of these together, but not each individually, or in each, but not both.<sup>111</sup>

In defense of his objection, Hippias lists a number of conditions an entity may suffer. The examples seem to fall into two or three categories.

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110 'Things' here stands in for a rather complex phrase 'σώματα τῆς οὐσίας'. I have suppressed this for the sake of simplicity. My point is unaffected.

111 *Hp Ma* 301b-c

Hippias first speaks of being just, healthy, tired, wounded, struck, or 'affected in any other way' (ἄλλ' ὅτιοῦν πεπονθώς); he then speaks of being of gold, silver, or ivory, and, 'if you will', being wise, honored, old, young, or whatever else that may happen to humans. Being of gold, silver, or ivory are listed after the phrase 'affected in any other way' and before the phrase 'if you will', and they do not constitute characteristics that humans may have. Their inclusion in Hippias' list is no doubt explicable in view of earlier definitions of τὸ καλόν such as gold. Accordingly, I suggest that Hippias himself recognizes a distinction between these characteristics and the others. Being of gold, silver, and ivory he assumes to constitute the οὐσία of an entity, whereas he believes the other conditions to be πάθη. (Whether Hippias takes οὐσία in general to be the material constituents of a thing is, I presume, indeterminable from the evidence of the text.)

Four passages in the Platonic corpus contain the trichotomy of πάσχειν, ποιεῖν, and εἶναι or πάθος, ποιήμα, and ὄν or οὐσία. And these examples suggest that the πάθος-οὐσία distinction in *Euthyphro* and *Hippias Major* may be interpreted consistently with the πάθος-ποιήμα-οὐσία distinction.<sup>112</sup> For example, in *Phaedrus* Socrates describes Hippias' account of the investigation of nature as follows:

In considering the nature (φύσις) of anything, we must first consider whether [it] is uniform or multiform. Then, if it is uniform, we must consider the power (δύναμις) it has for acting upon something and for being affected by something. And if it is multiform, we must number its forms and, as we did in the case of that which is uniform, consider what it possesses to act and to be affected.<sup>113</sup>

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112 'So if anyone wants to discover the cause of coming to be and perishing for each thing, it is necessary first to discover how it is best for that thing either to be or to be affected in any way whatsoever, or to act (εἶναι ἢ ἄλλο ὅτιοῦν πάσχειν ἢ ποιεῖν)' (*Phd* 97c). 'No such remarks will then disconcert us or in any way make us believe that it is ever possible for the same thing at the same time in the same respect and the same relation to suffer, be, or do opposites (πάθοι ἢ καὶ εἶη ἢ καὶ ποιήσειεν)' (*R* 436e-7a). 'But what a human being is (τί . . . ποτ' ἐστίν) and what it befits such a nature, different from the rest, to do (ποιεῖν) and to suffer (πάσχειν), this he inquires after and exerts himself to discover' (*Tht* 174b). Cf. *Phlb* 59a.

113 *Phdr* 270c-d

This passage suggests that an account of an entity's οὐσία is equivalent to an account of its Form (εἶδος). This, of course, is consistent with *Euthyphro*, for Socrates there characterizes the WF question as seeking the εἶδος as well as the οὐσία of that which is holy. Granted, a more satisfactory account of the distinction between οὐσία and πάθος or ποίημα requires a fuller account of οὐσία. That will not be attempted here.

### III Πάθος and Change

There is a further puzzle regarding 'πάθος' in the *Euthyphro* passage. Although in the first and second *epagogai*, leading, carrying, seeing, and loving and their corresponding affections are used as examples en par, there appears to be a disanalogy between the first two and the last two. Geach draws attention to this:

[T]he supposed parity of reasoning between "carried" and "loved" just does not exist. Socrates is made to treat both as examples of "what things have done to them" ... But this assimilation is certainly wrong; among grammatically transitive verbs, like "know", "love", and "see" are logically quite different from verbs expressing that something is shifted or altered.<sup>114</sup>

In short, being seen and being loved do not constitute instances of change or alteration in the object seen or loved. And if objects seen or loved do not change or are not in any way altered, then it is peculiar to speak of them as becoming or undergoing, in other words, as subject to affection. Of course, this is not simply because 'love' and 'see' refer to intentional states. Plato surely intends these mental events to be veridical, that is, loving and seeing have mind-independent objects. But, even so, the problem remains. Loving or seeing something does not affect that thing.

A simple solution is to allow Plato here a relaxed conception of πάθος such that a πάθος is any passive property whatsoever. By this I mean that a πάθος is what is referred to by any passive grammatical construction. Allowing this, the argument itself will be more or less unaffected insofar as it does not crucially depend upon the notion that being loved or seen

implies being changed, only that action has a kind of priority over affection.

Even so, this solution is suspect. Geach himself cites a provocative passage from *Sophist* as evidence that Plato in fact regarded such mental states as seeing and loving as actions that affect their objects. Theaetetus and the Stranger are examining knowledge as involving participation in being, in contrast to perception as involving participation in becoming. In other words, the objects of knowledge belong to the ontological domain of being. Moreover, it is initially assumed that the entities of this domain are not subject to becoming, which is to say to change. The Stranger now raises the following problem:

If knowing (γινώσκειν) is doing (ποιεῖν) something, then being known (γινωσκόμενον) necessarily is undergoing (πάσχειν). And since, according to this account, being (οὐσία) is known by intellection, insofar as it is known, it is changed (κινεῖσθαι) through undergoing (διὰ τὸ πάσχειν), which we agree cannot occur in the case of that which is at rest.<sup>115</sup>

On the basis of this argument, the Stranger does not draw the inference that being cannot be known, but instead that being to some extent participates in becoming. Whether Plato intended to endorse this view is not crucial to the present discussion. What is crucial is the assumption that being known implies being changed — which is not challenged. Moreover, importing the explicit distinction in *Theaetetus* between ἀλλοίωσις (alteration) and motion (φορά) as two forms of change (κίνησις),<sup>116</sup> being known constitutes neither.<sup>117</sup>

We have a real problem: we cannot merely assign to Plato a use of 'πάθος' as any kind of passive property whatever. Instead, it appears that at least on two occasions, Plato confusedly treats certain passive properties, being known, seen, and loved, as affections analogous to being carried and led.

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115 *Sph* 248d-e

116 *Tht* 181c-d

117 It is remarkable that no commentator since Geach who has rejected Geach's criticism has discussed the *Sophist* passage.

Examination of the scattered treatments of motion and change throughout the corpus offers no remedy either. In these passages the ontological sorts of entities we would expect to be subject to alteration and movement consistently are. And in fact, in the discussion of motion in *Laws X*, the Stranger, describing the tenth kind, relates this to actions and affections in the following statement:

Then there's the motion that moves both itself and other things [namely, motion of the soul], suited (ἐναρμόττουσαν) to all actions (πᾶσι ποιήμασι) and all affections (πᾶσι παθήμασι) and accurately described as the source of change and motion in all things that exist.<sup>118</sup>

It would be illuminating to know just how Plato understood the participle 'ἐναρμόττουσαν' here; still, the fact that this form of motion is related to *all* actions and affections lends some further support to the view that Plato conceived of the passive conditions of being known, seen, and loved as (genuine) affections.<sup>119</sup>

Aside from *Euthyphro* 10a-11b and *Sophist* 248c-d, there are no other instances in the corpus of 'πάθος' or 'πάθημα', used to mean *affection*, but applied to an entity that is not affected.<sup>120</sup> There is, however, one passage in *Parmenides* where action and affection are ascribed to static conditions. In this case, Parmenides is speaking with Aristotle about the properties of the one, and he suggests that the one cannot have a location or be in (the midst of) anything. More specifically, he suggests that the one cannot surround itself:

For nothing can be in anything that does not surround it ... Then that which surrounds (τὸ περιέχον) would be other than that which is surrounded (τὸ περιεχόμενον), for a whole cannot be both undergoing (πέισεται) and doing (ποιήσει) at the same time.<sup>121</sup>

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118 Lg 894c

119 R 381aff. also links passions and actions to movement and change. Cf. also *Ti* 64b-c.

120 There is one instance in which the verb 'πάσχειν', used to describe the condition of being seen in a certain way, is; see note 122.

121 *Prm* 138b

Evidently, Plato, presumably under the influence of the active and passive participles 'ἔχον' and 'ἐχόμενον', here assimilates the (in this case) static conditions of surrounding and being surrounded to action and affection respectively.<sup>122</sup>

I should emphasize, moreover, that Plato — arguably<sup>123</sup> — sometimes applies 'πάθος' or 'πάθημα' to what we regard as static conditions — and not merely static conditions that have resulted from affections. However, the crucial difference between such cases and the present case is that πάθος here is explicitly contrasted with ποίημα. So, the *Parmenides* example provides further evidence that Plato was prone to confuse genuine affections with whatever might be referred to by a passive verb or participle.

#### *Appendix: The Logical Use of 'Πάθος'*

I say it is arguable that Plato sometimes applies 'πάθος' or 'πάθημα' to what we regard as static conditions and not merely static conditions that have resulted from affections. Most conditions in Plato called 'πάθη' or 'παθήματα', be they psychological or physical, clearly are results, that is, outcomes of historical processes, and more specifically outcomes of ways in which entities have been affected. Indeed, it may be that these effects are permanent; for example, the state of intelligence ascribed to the soul after death is explicitly described in *Phaedo* as unchanging, 'ἀεὶ κατὰ ταῦτ' ὡσαύτως ἔχει'.<sup>124</sup> But that is no matter; that the condition has *come to be* is crucial, for then it may be conceived as a condition to which an entity has been subjected.<sup>125</sup> Likewise, in *Timaeus* characteristics of the four basic elements are described as 'πάθη',<sup>126</sup> but consider that in *Ti-*

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122 One other instance is worth noting. In *Republic* VII (525a), entities that may be perceived as a unity are said to be subject (πέπονθε) to being perceived as pluralities as well. Further, this condition is said to be attributable to every number.

123 This point is to some extent developed in the appendix to this section.

124 *Phd* 76d

125 Cf. the two occasions where passions are distinguished from conditions of nature: *Grg* 524d6, *Smp* 189d6.

126 *Ti* 48b5

maeus' discourse, the properties of these elements are explained as having changed during the creation of the universe.<sup>127,128</sup>

Still, on several occasions 'πάθος' and 'πάθημα' are used in ways difficult to conceptualize in historical or affective terms. Ten of the eleven instances in *Parmenides* appear to be used this way.<sup>129</sup> (Note that these ten instances occur in five passages, for two passages contain three and four instances: *Prm* 129c3; 136b8; 148b1, 4, 5; 158e6, 159a1, 2, 7; and 157b4.) For example, it is considered whether Forms undergo the opposite πάθη of unity and plurality; and whether the one, being unlike others, will be the same as others insofar it, like them, partakes of unlikeness, that is, has the same πάθος of unlikeness. Some of these instances occur in conditional statements; for example, 'the one would undergo (πάσχοι) all these παθήματα if it exists'.<sup>130</sup> This may be significant. At least, it raises the possibility that the conditionality of the proposition, specifically its position in the apodosis of the conditional, might be responsible for the employment of 'πάθος' and its cognates. By this I mean that the language in the material conditional may be under the influence of temporal sequencing and specifically causation.<sup>131</sup>

However, since the instances are not all embedded in conditionals and in fact the verb 'πάσχειν' without the nouns 'πάθος' and 'πάθημα' is used in several additional passages in *Parmenides* to convey the idea of entities at least nominally undergoing affections that are difficult to conceive in

127 So, perhaps, the heat of fire at *Ti* 61e1 is to be explained.

128 It is true that in *Republic* II, dogs are described as having a philosophical condition by nature, the ability to distinguish friends from enemies (376a11). But, possibly, this may also be explained in affective and historical terms.

129 *Prm* 141b4 arguably is not. Here, temporal entities are said to partake of the παθήματα of becoming younger and older than themselves as well as being the same age as themselves. Aging is elsewhere in Plato conceived as a passion (*Ti* 81d4). Admittedly, being the same age as oneself is a logical property. But perhaps it is being assimilated to being a πάθημα under the influence of the other two properties.

130 *Prm* 157b4

131 By this I mean that the syntactical structure of conditional sentences might influence a temporal conceptualization of the states of affairs described in the protasis (prior) and apodosis (posterior). Similarly, the syntactical structure might influence a causal conceptualization of the states of affairs described in the protasis (cause) and apodosis (effect).

historical or affective terms, it seems more likely that at least these ten instances of 'πάθος' and 'πάθημα' are in fact being used non-historically and non-affectively. Following LSJ III.iii, we may call such a usage 'logical', but using this term in a loose sense. I say 'loose sense' because the *Parmenides* instances may be used logically, yet whether Plato would have conceptualized their use as logical himself is, I think, quite difficult to determine.

In all the *Parmenides* instances, the undergoing of πάθη or παθήματα implies participating in Forms. So, it must be considered whether Plato conceived of participation as involving affection. Of course, Plato is notoriously cryptic about the relation of participation. I must defer the question here.

In addition to the *Parmenides* instances are three from a passage in *Sophist*.<sup>132</sup> Coincidentally, these occur in a context similar to that of the *Parmenides* instances, an analysis of being itself and unity. Indeed, the pertinent section of *Sophist* begins with a quote from Parmenides. All three instances concern whether being may have the πάθος of unity. Here, however, there is no explicit talk of participation. So, unless the concept of participation is implicit, at least at the back of the author's mind, the passage contains three instances of 'πάθος' that are rather less controversially logical. But again, I think, we would need much more evidence to conclude that Plato himself conceived of such usage as logical.

We can broaden our examination of this problem by considering all instances of the verb 'πάσχειν' in the corpus. Brandwood's *Word Index* lists the verb in its various forms as occurring 469 times. 47 of these occur in *Parmenides*. In addition to many of the instances in *Parmenides*, among the remaining 422, five in *Sophist* (245a5, b7, c1, 253a1, 257d5), one in *Phaedo* (104a4), one in *Meno* (87a7), one in *Cratylus* (432a9), and several<sup>133</sup> in *Hippias Major* (289b1, 300-302), arguably exemplify a logical use of the verb corresponding to LSJ 'πάθος' III.iii.

Some of these instances concern mathematical entities. In *Phaedo*, three is said to be in the condition (πέπονθε) that it is never away from (ἀπολεί-

132 *Sph* 245a1, b4, c2. One other instance I have found, 'πάθημα' at *Hp Ma* 300b5, seems to me a controversial case. I discuss it below. LSJ also cite *Phdr* 271b2 as a 'logical' use of 'πάθημα', but this is clearly wrong.

133 For reasons that will become clear, it is difficult to specify the quantity here.

πεσθαι) the odd.<sup>134</sup> In *Meno* Socrates is explaining the hypothetical method through the example of a geometric problem: to inscribe within a circle an isosceles triangle of a given area. Represent the given area as a rectangle whose side is the length of the diameter and where the altitude of the triangle is a segment of the diameter. Then, if the segment  $s$  from the base of the triangle to the perimeter of the circle along the diameter is of a given length  $l$ , the triangle may be inscribed, and if not, then not. Whether segment  $s$  has length  $l$  is said to be something  $s$  may or may not suffer (πάθειν).<sup>135</sup> In *Cratylus*, it is said that numbers, such as ten, necessarily suffer (πάσχειν) the condition that if one subtracts from or adds anything to them, they immediately become different numbers.<sup>136</sup>

The examples from *Parmenides* and all but one from *Sophist* require no further comment since they are consistent with the occurrences of 'πάθος' and 'πάθημα' touched upon above. The one instance in *Sophist*, strictly, falls outside of the discussion of whether being may have the πάθος of unity — although there is some connection between the cases. In this instance, knowledge is said to be a unity, but also to have a plurality of parts, by which is meant *kinds*. It is implied that this characteristic of knowledge is something that it has suffered (πέπονθε), for the Stranger proceeds to ask whether non-knowledge suffers this same thing.<sup>137</sup>

Finally, in a passage of *Hippias Major* (discussed above) Socrates and Hippias examine whether it is possible for two entities to suffer the same conditions individually but not collectively or vice versa. Throughout this passage the verb 'πάσχειν' is used, and the nouns 'πάθημα' and 'πάθος' are each used once to describe such conditions.<sup>138</sup> As we saw, the conditions in question are wide-ranging. Hippias first speaks of being just, healthy, tired, wounded, struck, or 'affected in any other way'. He then speaks of being of gold, silver, or ivory, and finally of being wise, honored, old, young, or whatever else that may happen to humans.<sup>139</sup>

134 *Phd* 104a

135 *Meno* 87a

136 *Cra* 432a

137 *Sph* 257d5

138 *Hp Ma* 300b5, 7

139 *Hp Ma* 301a

Later Socrates speaks of being strong, beautiful, even, odd, having a rational or irrational quantity.<sup>140</sup> In particular, Socrates observes that he and Hippias individually *suffer* being units, but collectively a duality.

In the various cases from *Parmenides*, *Sophist*, *Phaedo*, *Cratylus*, *Republic*, and *Hippias Major*, it is perhaps natural to think that the semantic range of the verb 'πάσχειν', like the cognate nouns in *Parmenides* and *Sophist*, is simply being extended. So, although πάθος or πάθημα is conventionally conceived as the condition of being affected or the condition of having been affected, it comes to be used of any condition or property.

There are several reasons to hesitate before embracing this view of semantic extension, however. First, as already alluded to, the allegedly logical usage may well predate the conscious recognition, let alone theorization, of the distinction between causal and logical or formal or constitutive or mereological relations. Second, also briefly noted, the usage, which may appear logical to us, may in fact be conceptualized, intuitively or explicitly, as causal for Plato. Third, and related to the second point, the usage may be under the influence of causal conceptualization. For example, in the *Hippias Major* examples, Socrates may speak of quantities using the language of affection simply because the various other properties among his examples are themselves properly conceived as affections.<sup>141</sup> And the *Meno* example seems to me plausibly interpretable in this way as well. Fourth, specifically with regard to mathematical properties or entities, we have to consider whether Plato conceived of numbers and mathematical operations as abstractly as we do.<sup>142</sup> Fifth and finally, one wonders why ex hypothesi 'πάθος' and 'πάθημα', as opposed to, say, 'ἕξις' or 'διάθεσις', would have acquired the meaning in question.

In sum, even in view of the previous examples, there are grounds for remaining uncertain whether Plato ever really does use 'πάθος' to mean *property* or *quality*, LSJ's sense III.iii, or 'πάθημα' to mean *logical property* or *accident*, LSJ's sense III.iii, or 'πάσχειν' to mean simply *to have a property*. I am inclined to believe that all of Plato's uses retain some

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140 *Hp Ma* 303b

141 The use of 'πέισεται' at *Hippias Major* 289b1 seems to me clearly under the influence of causation. The mental operation of comparison results in young women appearing ugly relative to goddesses.

142 For instance, Pritchard (1995) convincingly argues that he did not.

substantial connection to the primary sense of *undergoing or being affected*. But, clearly, a good deal more work on this problem is required.

#### IV Plato's Aetiology and the Argument at *Euthyphro* 10a9-11a4

##### *I The Original Disjunction and the Epagogai*

Euthyphro fails to understand the original disjunction between (1), that which is holy is loved by the gods because it is holy, and (2), that which is holy is holy because it is loved by the gods.<sup>143</sup> Socrates introduces the two *epagogai* as a means of explaining the disjunction.<sup>144</sup> The second *epagoge* concludes by confirming that (3), a god-beloved thing is a god-beloved thing because it is loved by the gods, and not (4), a god-beloved thing is loved by the gods because it is a god-beloved thing. Upon this conclusion, Socrates returns to the original disjunction, and Euthyphro, now understanding the disjunction, affirms (1) and rejects (2).<sup>145</sup>

The *epagogai* say nothing about that which is holy itself. Thus, it is a question how they are intended to inform Euthyphro's understanding of the original disjunction. The *epagogai* clarify that being god-beloved is an affection of the object of divine love and that this affection is due to the action of loving. They thereby clarify (1), for in presenting (1) Socrates asks why that which is holy is loved by the gods. Initially, (1) might be mistaken to mean: *Why does that which is holy have the affection of being god-beloved?* Instead, the *epagogai* clarify that (1) means: *To what is the gods' loving that which is holy due?* The answer to this question, now understood, is that the holiness of that which is holy evokes the gods' love. The *epagogai* also clarify (2), for (2) states that that which is holy is holy due to the gods' love. But the *epagogai* indicate that the gods' love is responsible for that which is holy being loved, not holy. Because the *epagogai* do not say anything about that which is holy itself, they do not imply (1) and not-(2). Rather, they help clarify these propositions. Euthyphro's acceptance of (1) and rejection of (2) requires the additional, independent intuition that, granted that the gods love that which is holy, the holiness of that which is holy evokes that love.

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143 'Οὐκ οἶδ' ὅ τι λέγεις, ὦ Σώκρατες.' (*Euthyphr* 10a4).

144 "Ἄλλ' ἐγὼ πειράσομαι σαφέστερον φράσαι." (*Euthyphr* 10a5).

145 *Euthyphr* 10d1-8

The following schema is derivable from the *epagogai* and the resolution of the original disjunction. Assume that 'H' stands for that which is holy qua holy, that is, the οὐσία of that which is holy, that 'L' stands for the action of divine love, that 'A' stands for the affection of being god-beloved, and that '⇒' stands for the asymmetrical (and intransitive) relation whereby the symbol to the left of '⇒' designates the entity responsible for the entity designated by the symbol to the right of '⇒'. Then, Socrates is claiming:

$$H \Rightarrow L \Rightarrow A$$

In view of this, we might anticipate a number of ways that Socrates could draw his conclusion for the non-identity of that which is holy qua holy and that which is god-beloved qua loved. One way would be to claim that if that which is holy qua holy and that which is god-beloved qua god-beloved were identical, then the relation represented by '⇒' would in this case be symmetrical, but it isn't. For if that which is holy qua holy and that which is god-beloved qua god-beloved were identical, then it would follow that  $H \Rightarrow L \Rightarrow H$  and that  $A \Rightarrow L \Rightarrow A$ . Socrates does not argue in this way. Instead, the complex conditional he deploys states that if that which is holy qua holy and that which is god-beloved qua god-beloved were identical, then:

$$A \Rightarrow L \Rightarrow H$$

This is to say, the gods' loving would be responsible for the holiness of that which is holy, contradictory to (2), and the affection of being loved would be responsible for the gods' loving, contradictory to (4).

In view of this, we are now poised to address the fundamental question of the argument. What is the correct interpretation of the relation that I have represented by '⇒'?

## *II i The Because-Clauses and the Aetiological Relation*

Section III explained the asymmetrical relation in (3) as between affection and action, where action is conceived as having priority over affection. Given that action and affection are coterminous and that, plausibly, Plato himself regarded them as such, the action-affection relation is inconsistent with a conventional conception of causation.<sup>146</sup>

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146 See note 106.

The asymmetrical relation in (1) between the holiness of that which is holy and divine love, where the former has priority over the latter, appears straightforwardly causal. Granted, holiness is not an event, the ontological category to which the *relata* of causation commonly belong;<sup>147</sup> still, holiness plays the salient role in the event whose effect is divine love.

According to our conceptual scheme, then, the relations in (1) and (3) are not identical. It is another question, of course, whether Plato regarded them as identical.

As discussed in section I.iii, the secondary literature on *Euthyphro* 10a2-11b1 of the '60s and '70s applies the distinctions between logical, causal, and psychological reason-giving relations to the interpretation of the because-clauses. However, no commentator examines whether in fact Plato conceived of these as distinct relation types. As such, the commentators' interpretations may involve anachronisms. In the following subsections, I consider this question and offer a more conceptual-historically appropriate context for the interpretation of the because-clauses.

Regarding (1)-(4), Plato would have spoken of all the dependent clauses following the conjunctions 'διά', 'ὅτι', and 'διότι' as describing the αἰτίαι or αἴτια of the conditions that the independent clauses describe. It is well-known that the Greek words 'αἰτία' and 'αἴτιον' have a broader semantic range than the word 'cause' which has traditionally been used to translate it. Thus, Aristotle famously distinguishes four kinds of αἰτία, and in *Physics* he speaks of these as 'all the ways of stating τὸ διὰ τί [the because]'. As Vlastos aptly puts it, 'Aristotle's so-called four "causes" are his four "because"'.<sup>148</sup>

Unless we too use 'cause' in the older Latinate sense for 'αἰτία' or 'αἴτιον', we do not have an equivalent English word. An explanation is an *account* rather than the object, condition, event, or state of affairs that the linguistic item describes. Sedley speaks of the αἰτία of an entity *x* as

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147 In private correspondence, Prof. Hankinson has suggested to me that arguably some causal relations do not have events as *relata*, particularly in cases of sustaining or preventive causation: 'constant vigilance saved the president from assassination this week'; 'the suitably placed brick stopped the car from rolling backwards'; 'the desktop kept the pencil above the floor'. Such cases are, indeed, arguable.

148 Vlastos (1969), reprinted in (1981) 79; the preceding quote, derived from Vlastos, is originally from *Ar Ph* 198b5.

'the thing responsible for'  $x$ .<sup>149</sup> Arguably, no single English noun captures this concept. Consequently, it will be convenient not to translate, but to transliterate the Greek as *'aitia'* or *'aition'* — and I will prefer *'aitia'* (and *'aitiai'* for the plural) when not transliterating from a specific passage.<sup>150</sup> I will also speak of the relation between an *aitia* and the entity  $x$  for which the *aitia* is responsible as *'aetiological'*. Causal and psychological reason-giving relations that are causal may, then, fall under the *aetiological* relation type. And, I suggest, the action-affection relation would have been conceived as *aetiological* as well since the action is conceived as responsible for the affection. Lastly, it will be convenient to employ a word corresponding to the entity for which the *aitia* is responsible. I will use *'ergon'* — which can mean *result*, *product*, or *effect* — in a loose sense to mean *thing for which an aitia is responsible*. So, in short, the *aetiological* relation is between an *aitia* and an *ergon*, where the former is responsible for the latter.

## II ii Plato's Basic Conception of Aitia

Plato makes his central characters define an *aitia* consistently throughout the corpus as the entity responsible for something's coming to be:

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149 Sedley (1998)

150 It is also important to note here that there has been controversy over whether Plato uses the Greek nouns *'αἴτιον'* and *'αἴτια'* with distinct meanings. For example, Frede (1980) has argued that Plato uses *'αἴτια'* for propositional items and *'αἴτιον'* for non-propositional items. But more recently Ledbetter (1999) has shown that Frede's thesis is untenable. She also advances her own thesis, that Plato always uses *'αἴτιον'* for *cause*, whereas he uses *'αἴτια'* for *cause* as well as *reason*. By *'reason'* Ledbetter means *a person's ground or part of his rationale for a conclusion or justification for an action that advances some good*. If Ledbetter's argument were sound, it would provide strong evidence that Plato self-consciously distinguished causation from one or more other *aetiological* relation types. But my own review of all 242 uses of *'αἴτιον'*, *'αἴτια'*, and the cognate adjective in the Platonic corpus convinces me that Ledbetter has distorted the evidence, that her thesis is untenable, and that Plato uses *'αἴτιον'* and *'αἴτια'* indiscriminately. This conclusion does not, of course, demonstrate that Plato failed to recognize distinct types of *aetiological* relations. He could have distinguished *aetiological* relation types without having coined or employed terminology for these distinctions. At any rate, evidence for such a Platonic distinction, if one exists, will have to come from elsewhere. See Wolfsdorf (2005).

- [*Lysis*] When the *aitia* is destroyed, then that of which the *aitia* is [namely, the *ergon*] cannot exist.<sup>151</sup>
- [*Cratylus*] For that because of which [δι' ὃ] something comes to be is the *aition*.<sup>152</sup>
- [*Philebus*] Consider whether you think that all things that come to be (πάντα τὰ γινόμενα) necessarily come to be (γίγνεσθαι) through some *aitia*. — I do think so, for how else would they come to be apart from this.<sup>153</sup>
- [*Timaeus*] Everything that comes to be (πάν τὸ γινόμενον) necessarily comes to be (γίγνεσθαι) through some *aition*, for without an *aition* it is impossible for anything to have generation (γένεσιν).<sup>154</sup>

### Compare Socrates' assumption in *Euthyphro*:

Is not that which is loved (τὸ φιλούμενον) either becoming (γινόμενον) or undergoing something from (ὑπό) [that is, through the agency of] something?<sup>155</sup>

Plato's central characters also consistently relate the *aitia* to ποιήσις such that the *aetiological* relation is conceived as one of ποιήσις and the *aitia* is conceived as the maker (τὸ ποιῶν) of the *ergon*:

- [*Symposium*] For the whole *aitia* of anything whatsoever going from non-being to being is ποιήσις.<sup>156</sup>
- [*Sophist*] Whenever someone brings into existence anything that previously did not exist, we say that the person bringing it into existence is making (ποιεῖν) it, and that which is brought into existence is made (ποιεῖσθαι).<sup>157</sup>

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151 *Ly* 221c

152 *Cra* 413a

153 *Phlb* 26e

154 *Ti* 28a

155 *Euthphr* 10c6-7

156 *Smp* 205b

157 *Sph* 219b

[*Philebus*] [Consider whether you think that all things that come to be (πάντα τὰ γινόμενα) necessarily come to be (γίγνεσθαι) through some *aitia*. — I do think so, for how else would they come to be apart from this.] — Then isn't it the case that the nature of that which makes (τοῦ ποιοῦντος) differs from the *aitia* in nothing except its name? ... And just as we found now, we will find that that which is made (τὸ ποιούμενον) and that which comes to be (τὸ γινόμενον) differ in nothing except name.<sup>158</sup>

Furthermore, in case it be suggested that the preceding examples are solely concerned with the creation of entities as wholes, as opposed to the changes wrought upon entities, consider that in *Hippias Major* Socrates says that in pursuing the WF question Hippias and he should 'try to say ... what the maker of beautiful things (τὸ ποιοῦν καλὰ) is.'<sup>159</sup> Soon after he says that that which makes (τὸ ποιοῦν) is nothing other than the *aition*. He also says that the *aitia* is 'of that which comes to be through it' ('τοῦ γινομένου ὑφ' ἑαυτοῦ').<sup>160</sup> Later he speaks of the *definiendum* as the *aitia* of beautiful things being beautiful.<sup>161</sup>

In short, these citations indicate that the *aitia* is conceived as being the maker (τὸ ποιοῦν) responsible for a thing coming to be (τὸ γινόμενον), be it coming to be as a whole or coming to have particular properties (that is, affections). And so, the *aetiological* relation is conceived as a relation of ποιήσις. Significantly, however, at no point in the corpus is there analysis of the concept of ποιήσις and so of the relation between τὸ ποιοῦν and τὸ ποιούμενον.

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158 *Phlb* 26e

159 *Hp Ma* 294b

160 *Hp Ma* 296e

161 *Hp Ma* 299e4; this passage in particular suggests that Plato might have conceived of the properties of participants as affections and of Forms as playing an active role in yielding those affections.

II iii i A Possible Objection: *Phaedo* 95-105

A possible objection to the preceding account is that in one important passage where Socrates discusses *aetiology*, namely *Phaedo* 95-105, he distinguishes between logical and causal relations. Vlastos first advanced this view in an influential paper published in 1969.<sup>162</sup> The *Phaedo* passage has subsequently received significant attention.<sup>163</sup> It will be illuminating to review the character of the discussion.<sup>164</sup>

Vlastos' own treatment begins by noting that his prominent predecessors' claims regarding Plato's *aetiology* in *Phaedo* encompass a 'wild diversity of interpretations.' For instance, Zeller claims that 'the Forms are meant to be formal, efficient, and final causes all rolled into one.'<sup>165</sup> Shorey claims that Plato is offering a substitution of 'the logical reason for all other forms of cause.'<sup>166</sup> Crombie claims that the passage involves a 'nest of confusions' due to 'Plato's jumb[ing] mathematical and non-mathematical topics together, and fail[ing] into the bargain to distin-

162 Vlastos (1969)

163 Taylor (1969); Burge (1971); Creswell (1971) 244-9; Gallop (1975); Stough (1976); Dye (1978); Annas (1982); Bostock (1986); Fine (1987); Rowe (1993); Sedley (1998); Mueller (1998); Bolton (1998); Hankinson (1998) 84-98; Ledbetter (1999)

164 The basic structure of *Phaedo* 95-105 is clear and uncontroversial. Socrates presents his third and final argument for the immortality of the soul. The argument responds to Cebes' concern that, regardless of whether and for how long the soul existed prior to its union with the body, in the course of this union it gradually perishes and at what is conventionally regarded as death altogether ceases to exist. Socrates' answer involves a general account of the *aitia* of becoming and perishing, part of which is autobiographical. When he was young, Socrates was fascinated by natural philosophy (περί φύσεως ιστορία). However, he ultimately became confused by this approach and rejected it. Anaxagoras' principle that mind orders all things offered him hope of more satisfactory answers. But Socrates became disappointed with Anaxagoras as well. Consequently, he embarked upon his own, altogether different approach, which involves Forms as *aitiai*. This, he refers to as his 'second sailing', by which he means his second best method. In this approach, Socrates describes two related *aetiological* accounts: the so-called simple and safe *aitia* and the so-called sophisticated *aitia*. By means of the second, in particular, Socrates defends the claim that the soul does not perish.

165 Zeller (1922) 687, cited from Vlastos (1981) 76-7 and n 1.

166 Shorey (1933) 179, cited by Vlastos (1981) 77 and n 2.

guish different senses of such notions as “through” and “in virtue of”.<sup>167</sup> Above all, as the first line of his paper runs, Vlastos contests the view, held by ‘many scholars ... that Plato’s Forms are meant to be causes.’<sup>168</sup>

Notably, Vlastos’ discussion proceeds through Aristotle’s *aetiological* distinctions in *Physics*. As such, for Vlastos, the central hermeneutic problem of *Phaedo* 95-105 is to determine whether Forms are material, teleological, formal, or causal *aitiai*. Vlastos’ basic conclusion is that although Plato does not explicitly state that ‘αἰτία’ has a wide semantic range, he anticipates Aristotle’s distinctions and offers a logical, as opposed to causal, account of Forms as *aitiai*.<sup>169</sup> Vlastos’ conception of Forms as logical *aitiai* more or less assimilates the Form-participant relation to Aristotle’s formal *aitia*.

Subsequent scholarship on the topic can be divided into two phases. Like Vlastos’, most contributions from the late ‘60s through mid ‘80s analyze Plato’s *aetiology*, either favorably or critically, in Aristotelian or post-Aristotelian terms. So, Taylor’s ‘Forms as Causes in the *Phaedo*’ criticizes Plato for failing to provide a coherent *aetiology* and specifically for failing to distinguish logical and causal (sufficient) conditions as well as necessary and sufficient conditions.<sup>170</sup> Creswell’s ‘Plato’s Theory of Causality: *Phaedo* 95-106’, following a ‘mad’ suggestion of Crombie’s, argues that Forms in fact are causal agents. Annas’ ‘Aristotle on Inefficient Causes’ argues that in *On Generation and Corruption* Aristotle does *not* criticize Plato for conceptualizing Forms as causes, but for wholly ignoring causes. So, in rejecting the accounts of the natural philosophers in *Phaedo*, Socrates negligently switches from causal to formal explanations — and idiosyncratic and rather limited formal explanations at that. Fine’s ‘Forms as Causes: Plato and Aristotle’, whose rigor and acumen culminates this phase of scholarship, reconsiders whether Plato’s Forms are causes through Kim’s analysis of events as complex entities whose constituents include objects, properties, and times.<sup>171</sup> This is significant

167 Crombie (1963) 169, cited by Vlastos (1981) 77 and n 3.

168 Vlastos (1981) 76

169 *Ibid.*, 91; 109-10

170 (1969) 54

171 Kim (1973); Fine provides the following example: ‘Thus, if at 2:00 I put pen to paper, I am a constituent object of that event, 2:00 is its constituent time, and the relation

because Forms are not events, but objects. Yet rather than rule out Forms as causes for this reason, Fine invokes Aristotle's distinction between two ways of specifying causes: potentially and actually. The builder, for instance, is the potential cause of the building; the builder building is the actual cause.<sup>172</sup> Thus, Fine suggests that when Plato speaks of Forms as *aitiai*, consideration of whether these are causes may reasonably be taken to mean whether they are potential causes; and so, she argues, Forms in fact are causally (as well, incidentally, as teleologically) relevant.<sup>173</sup> Finally, it is especially noteworthy that Creswell and Fine, defenders of the view that Forms are causes or causally relevant, do not engage the question whether Plato actually recognized causation as a distinct *aetiological* kind. In other words, their arguments are that in *Phaedo* 95-105 Forms are in fact causes, regardless of how Plato conceived them.

The second phase of scholarship on *Phaedo* 95-105, which runs from the mid '80s to late '90s, is distinguishable from the first insofar as it involves some shift away from the examination of Plato's *aetiology* in

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of putting is a constituent property of it' (1987, 72). Note that Fine has a slightly different conception of event-constituents from Kim (*ibid.*, n 9).

- 172 *Ph* II 3, 195b4-6; cited by Fine (1987) 71; strictly speaking, if this is an example of causation according to Fine's definition the effect must be the building coming into being.
- 173 Stough's paper (1976) noteworthy does not approach the *Phaedo* passage from an Aristotelian perspective, but, rather uniquely, in a way that brings Plato's metaphysics in line with the pre-Socratics. Central to Stough's position is the view that Plato's conception of the substance-attribute distinction was consonant with the Pre-Socratics' and distinct from our own. In order to understand Socrates' original *aetiological* perplexities, it is, she writes, 'necessary to erase the familiar distinction between substance and attribute and to view both alike as possible "thing"-components of a complex object' (5-6). Insofar as objects are conceived as blends of property-things, the fundamental problem of becoming and perishing is *not* how some substance *x* has *F* at *t*<sub>1</sub> and then comes to have not-*F* (that is, the polar opposite of *F*) at *t*<sub>2</sub>, but how the property *F* comes to be the property not-*F*. In this case, becoming and perishing are logically impossible; for example, it is absurd that smallness should become largeness (cf. 8). This ultimately compels Socrates to resort to the explanation of participation in Forms. Moreover, as Stough emphasizes, this account explains why the various puzzles that Socrates describes indiscriminately involve the relations of physical and logical entities (cf. 13). Her work, for better or worse, has had little influence. However, cf. Mann (2000).

Aristotelian terms.<sup>174</sup> The groundwork for this shift was in fact laid in the earlier phase of scholarship. A central criticism of Taylor's 1969 paper is that Socrates fails to clarify *aetiological* conditions that his *aitiai* satisfy, but that his predecessors' do not. In response to Taylor, Creswell clarifies

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174 Hankinson (1998) and Sedley (1998) are paradigmatic here. For instance, Sedley writes that he 'can find no common ground at all' with Vlastos' paper (ibid., n 2). Matthews and Blackson (1989) argue that Plato's *aetiology* in *Phaedo* is incompatible with the pursuit of definitions in the earlier dialogues. Moreover, in focusing on this question, they do not consider whether Plato's *aitiai* are consistent with Aristotle's formal *aitiai*. They 'agree with Annas that Plato is not trying to distinguish senses of "aitia" in the *Phaedo* [and that] Annas is right to refuse to try to read back into Plato even a confused discussion of the senses of "aitia" that Aristotle later made famous' (ibid., 587-8). At the same time, contra Annas, they deny that 'Plato's project in the *Phaedo* would be aided by an Aristotelian stroke of disambiguation [for, they claim,] Plato simply has a different agenda' (588). Rowe's (1993) approach to the passage is quite distinctive. He argues that Socrates is aware that his *aetiological* account is incomplete, but this not just because Socrates cannot give the sort of teleological account he had hoped to gain from Anaxagoras. Rather, the hypotheses of the existence of Forms and of participants having certain attributes through their participation in Forms, with which Socrates' second sailing begins require for their clarification a higher hypothesis. And this higher hypothesis concerns the nature of the Form-participant relation about which Socrates is unclear. Thus, 'the Socrates of the *Phaedo* is still in mid-ocean, with no clear sight of landfall' (ibid., 69). Bostock's discussion (1986, 135-56) falls in between his predecessors' and successors' accounts. He does consider whether the Forms are formal *aitia* — and, somewhat like Matthews and Blackson (1989), rejects this identification. But, perhaps following Burge, whom he cites in his bibliography, he presents more or less the same three *aetiological* conditions governing Socrates' account and makes no attempt to argue that the Forms are efficiently or productively causal. In contrast, the contributions of Bolton (1998) and Mueller (1998) continue to pursue the question of Plato's *aetiology* in *Phaedo* in terms of Aristotle. Both scholars consider the extent to which Aristotle's criticism of Plato's *aetiology* in the *Phaedo* passage is defensible. For instance, against Bolton, Mueller argues that while Aristotle does not ascribe to Plato the view that Forms are *efficient* causes, 'he does ascribe to Plato the view that Forms are *productive* causes — i.e., causes which act on matter to produce effects in the way in which the sun acts on things to warm them.' Note that this is Bolton's (ibid., n 12) summary of Mueller (1998, 78-91). Bolton continues: 'Mueller feels comfortable in reading Aristotle's testimony about *Phd* in this way because he assumes that Aristotle's own formal and final causes are themselves productive causes of this sort, just as much as his efficient causes are' (ibid., 70-1). Finally, Ledbetter (2002) argues in conformity with Vlastos — and on the basis of her own philological evidence, which, as noted above, I contest — that Plato does distinguish reasons and causes in *Phaedo*.

three conditions implicit in Plato's *aetiology* that the safe and sophisticated *aitiai* satisfy and that the *aitiai* of Socrates' predecessors do not.<sup>175</sup> Burge's 'The Ideas as *Aitiai* in the *Phaedo*', which appeared in the same year as Creswell's paper, describes a strikingly similar set of three conditions.<sup>176</sup> And in most subsequent scholarship, these three conditions reappear in nearly identical forms.<sup>177</sup> In articulating these conditions, I follow Hankinson, whose treatment is the most sophisticated to date. Where  $F$  and  $F^*$  and  $G$  and  $G^*$  are at least incompatible properties and possibly polar opposites:

- (a) If  $x$ , in virtue of being  $G$ , is responsible for  $y$ 's having property  $F$ , then there cannot be a  $z$  such that  $z$ , in virtue of having  $G^*$ , is responsible for  $y$  having  $F$ .<sup>178</sup>
- (b) If  $x$ , in virtue of being  $G$ , is responsible for  $y$ 's having property  $F$ , then there cannot be a  $z$  such that  $z$ , in virtue of having  $G$ , is responsible for  $y$ 's having  $F^*$ .<sup>179</sup>
- (c) If  $x$  is responsible for  $y$ 's having  $F$ , then  $x$  itself cannot have  $F^*$  — which suggests, although it does not entail, that if  $x$  is responsible for  $y$ 's having  $F$ , then  $x$  itself must have  $F$ .

Compare Sedley's formulation of these so-called 'Laws of Causation'. If  $x$  causes anything to have  $F$ , where the opposite of  $F$  is  $F^*$ , then:

- (a<sub>s</sub>)  $x$ 's opposite must not cause anything to have  $F$ .
- (b<sub>s</sub>)  $x$  must never cause anything to have  $F^*$ .
- (c<sub>s</sub>)  $x$  must not have  $F^*$ .

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175 (1971) 245-6

176 (1971) 5

177 Bostock (1986) 137, 151; Matthews (1989) 584; Hankinson (1998) 89-94; Sedley (1998) 121

178 Hankinson simplifies this to: if  $G$  is responsible for  $F$ , then  $G^*$  cannot be responsible for  $F$ .

179 Hankinson simplifies this to: if  $G$  is responsible for  $F$ , then  $G$  cannot be responsible for  $F^*$ .

In his discussion, Bostock expresses puzzlement over why Plato finds these principles compelling.<sup>180</sup> Sedley explains Plato's commitment to (a<sub>s</sub>), (b<sub>s</sub>), and (c<sub>s</sub>) as conforming to the pre-Socratic principle that like 'causes' like.<sup>181</sup> In sum, the account developed in the second phase of scholarship on *Phaedo* 95-105, though particularly indebted to the contributions of Creswell and Burge made in the first phase, divorces Plato's *aetiology* from Aristotle's and brings Plato's conception closer to some of his pre-Socratic predecessors.

### II iii ii Logical and Causal Relations in *Phaedo* 95-105

Let us now consider whether in fact it is correct to conceptualize Plato's *aetiology* in *Phaedo* 95-105 as logical as opposed to causal. I note that the logical interpretation is not confined to scholars entirely sympathetic to Vlastos.<sup>182</sup> Even Sedley claims that 'Plato sees the basic causal relationship as a matter of *logic*, on a par with the self-evident truth of tautologies and the self-evident falsity of self-contradictions.'<sup>183</sup> Still, we have also seen that the logical interpretation is not uncontested.

When he describes his safe *aetiological* account, Socrates says:

I maintain basically, simple-mindedly, and perhaps foolishly that nothing else makes (ποιεῖ) something beautiful than the presence or communion or addition in some way or other of the beautiful — for I do not yet affirm this (τοῦτο) — but I do affirm that all beautiful things become beautiful because of the beautiful.<sup>184</sup>

In this passage, Socrates clearly states that the Form of the beautiful is the *aitia* of beautiful participants qua beautiful; but he also clearly states that he does not understand how the Form of the beautiful makes

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180 (1986) 152

181 (1989) 117, with Sedley's list of examples from other dialogues; see Anaxagoras fr. B10 and Makin (1990-1); cf. also Lloyd (1976).

182 Burge (1971) 7; Stough (1976) 8, 13

183 (1998) 118

184 *Phd* 100d

participants beautiful. There is no contradiction here. Consider Sedley's comment: 'the essence of a [Platonic *aetiological*] statement lies in its nominating the item [that] functions as the [*aitia*] ... [A]ny further statement about *how* the item achieves its [*ergon*] is secondary.'<sup>185</sup> From this, it can be seen that the *concept* of the *aetiology* of the Form-participant relation is ambiguous. On the one hand, Plato is committed to three conditions that serve to identify the *aitia* of, in this case, beautiful participants qua beautiful. These *aetiological* conditions describe one kind of relation between the Form and its participants; let us call this relation '*aitia*-identifying'. The three *aetiological* conditions do not, however, clarify how the *aitia* 'makes' participants have a given property. Let us call the relation in which the Form and its participants stand such that the Form 'makes' its participants have a given property '*ergon*-realizing'. Since Socrates explicitly denies understanding the *ergon*-realizing *aetiological* relation, we definitely cannot attribute to him a self-conscious conception of this relation as either causal or logical. We might claim that his treatment of this relation *de facto* commits him one way or another, but that is beside the point since our concern is to determine whether Plato himself distinguished between causal and logical relations. Furthermore, regarding the nature of the *aitia*-identifying *aetiological* relation, we may grant that this relation is logical just insofar as the three *aetiological* conditions describe (arguably) necessary conditions for the identity of the relevant *aitia*.<sup>186</sup> But for two reasons this does not resolve the question whether Plato conceived the *aetiological* relation as logical or causal. First, it does not resolve the question whether Plato himself conceived the *aitia*-identifying relation as logical. And second, in asking that question, we were concerned to determine whether the *ergon*-realizing *aetiological* relation, not the *aitia*-identifying *aetiological* relation, was

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185 (1998) 116

186 True, beautiful participants conform to the Form of the beautiful; there is a correspondence of properties between the Form and its participants; and participants are called after the Form. But does the existence of beautiful participants necessarily imply that the (incorporeal, unchanging) Form of the beautiful exists? In other words, is it logically necessary that if beautiful participants exist, then the (incorporeal, unchanging) Form of the beautiful exists? Indeed, Socrates himself regards the existence of Forms as a hypothesis. However, granting the existence of Forms and a particular (Platonic) conception of Forms, the three *aetiological* conditions may indeed constitute necessary conditions for the identity of the *aitia*.

logical or causal.<sup>187</sup> As we began by showing — the fact is that Socrates does not know, and admits he does not know, how Forms make their participants have correlative properties.<sup>188</sup>

#### *II iv Aetiology in Phaedo and Euthyphro*

Examination of the recent history of scholarship on *Euthyphro* 10-11 is revealing in light of the recent history of scholarship on *Phaedo* 95-105. From the '60s to the '80s, scholars struggled, on parallel tracks, in their attempts to interpret in post-Platonic categories what Plato regarded as *aetiological* relations. Since the mid '80s, scholarship on *Phaedo* 95-105 has progressed precisely by liberating itself from this anachronistic tendency. Interestingly, there has been no scholarship on *Euthyphro* 10-11 since Friedman's discussion of 1982. One is inclined to say that scholarship on *Euthyphro* 10-11 ground to a halt. Moreover, as I have indicated, it is remarkable that scholars working on *Euthyphro* 10-11 made no

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187 It is noteworthy that while some scholars, notably in the first phase of scholarship, criticized Plato's *aetiology* for failing to clarify necessary and sufficient conditions — for example, Taylor (1969), Bostock (1986) — others, notably in the second phase, have emphasized that Plato's account is more concerned with *salience*, that is, with identifying the salient item responsible for the *ergon* in question — for example, Fine (1978), Hankinson (1998). Sedley suggests that this emphasis conforms to conventional legal practice, the pre-philosophical, formal institutional home of *aetiological* concerns; there, the principal objective is to identify the party responsible for the wrongdoing, rather than the means by which the wrongdoing was perpetrated (1998, 116). Ironically, Hankinson's formulation of Plato's *aetiological* principles, which employs the phrase-type 'x is responsible for y' (rather than the phrase-type 'x causes y'), is more accurate than Sedley's precisely for this reason.

188 In their discussion of the *Phaedo* passage, Matthews and Blackson, perhaps deliberately, are entirely silent on the question of whether the *aetiological* relation is causal or logical. But in his discussion of cause and definition in *Hippias Major* of 1992, and specifically of Socrates' claim in this dialogue that the beautiful makes things beautiful and is the *aition* of beautiful things, Blackson writes that 'if Plato ... were asked a series of questions designed to determine whether on a given occasion he intended to use "αἴτιος" for logical cause, as opposed to productive cause, he would admit that he did not have the distinction in mind. These distinctions are below his level of the definiteness of intention.' (On the concept of definiteness of intention, Blackson refers to Naess 1952.) I agree — and add that perhaps the relation characterized by Plato's three *aetiological* principles subsumes or overlaps both causal and logical relations.

attempt to examine the topic of Plato's *aetiology* elsewhere in the corpus or specifically to engage the contemporaneous debate over Plato's *aetiology* in *Phaedo*. It is also notable that no scholar working on *Phaedo* 95-105 has engaged the scholarly debate on *Euthyphro* 10-11.

Finally, it is a question just how far Plato's *aetiology* in *Phaedo* 95-105, in light of the most recent scholarly work on this topic, is applicable to the *aetiology* of the because-clauses of (1)-(4) in *Euthyphro*. We have already noted, in the case of *Phaedo*, that Plato is less concerned with analyzing the *aetiological* relation per se than in identifying the *relata* or salient *relata* of this relation. We saw that this is true of the various remarks Plato central characters make of *aetiology* and ποιήσις in general throughout the corpus. So, it seems quite clear that Socrates' use of 'because' in (1)-(4) is univocal and that the because-clauses imply the broad *aetiological* relation. But it is a further question whether the three *aetiological* conditions that Creswell, Burge, and others have derived from *Phaedo* 95-105 (and that most likely derive from the pre-Socratic principle that like causes or is responsible for like) play a role in *Euthyphro* 10-11.

In the case of (2) and, more generally speaking, the relation of action and affection, there are obvious correspondences. The following passage from *Gorgias* corroborates this point:

If somebody acts (ποιεῖ) upon something, necessarily there is something that suffers (πάσχει) something from the thing acting (ὑπὸ τοῦτου τοῦ ποιούντος) ... [Socrates now runs through several examples] ... Summing it up, see if you agree with what I was saying just now, that in all cases, in whatever way the thing acting upon something acts upon it, the thing suffering is affected in just that way.<sup>169</sup>

In the case of (1), the relation to the *aetiological* conditions from *Phaedo* is less evident. Consider, however, that upon the completion of the argument in *Euthyphro* Socrates distinguishes that which is holy qua holy from that which is god-beloved qua god-beloved as follows:

(Φ1) That which is god-beloved is the sort of thing that is loved (οἶον φιλεῖσθαι) because it is loved (φιλεῖται).

( $\phi 2$ ) That which is holy is loved ( $\phi\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\tau\alpha\iota$ ) because it is the sort of thing that is loved ( $\omicron\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu\ \phi\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ ).<sup>190</sup>

Given the preceding *epagogai* and the argument for the non-identity of that which is holy qua holy and that which is god-beloved qua god-beloved, I interpret ( $\phi 1$ ) and ( $\phi 2$ ) as follows. ( $\phi 1$ ) agrees with (3) and means that that which is god-beloved has the affection of being (god-)beloved because it is the object of the action of (divine) love. ( $\phi 2$ ) agrees with (1) and means that that which is holy is loved because qua holy it evokes love; compare Fowler's translation: '... because it is in itself lovable.'<sup>191</sup> According to this interpretation, the clause ' $\omicron\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu\ \phi\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ ' has different meanings in ( $\phi 1$ ) and ( $\phi 2$ ). In ( $\phi 1$ ) ' $\omicron\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu\ \phi\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ ' implies *being a loved thing and so belonging to the set of loved things*; in ( $\phi 2$ ) ' $\omicron\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu\ \phi\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ ' implies *being the sort of thing that evokes love*. To my mind, this semantic difference is infelicitous — although I think the weight of the evidence suggests that it must be the correct interpretation of ( $\phi 1$ ) and ( $\phi 2$ ). I presume that Plato was compelled by the rhetorical symmetry of the ( $\phi 1$ ) and ( $\phi 2$ ) to retain the clause ' $\omicron\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu\ \phi\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ ' in both. In any event, ( $\phi 2$ ) suggests that the *aetiological* relation between that which is holy qua holy and divine love, that is, between the  $\omicron\upsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$  and the  $\pi\omicron\acute{\iota}\eta\mu\alpha$ , may be compatible with the principle that like causes like insofar as that which is holy qua holy is lovable.

### III The Principle of Identity

Finally, let us turn to the identity principle operating in the argument. Section II argued that Socrates' WF question seeks the identity of *F*, not the meaning of '*F*' or an analysis of the concept *F*. Accordingly, the argument at *Euthyphro* 10a9-11a4 is against the identity of that which is holy qua holy and that which is god-beloved qua god-beloved. As such, the argument employs a logical principle that is a pre-theoretical ancestor of Leibniz' Law.

Leibniz' Law has a metalinguistic and an object language formulation. The metalinguistic formulation states that one word '*W*' is or is not substitutable with another '*X*'. In the positive, this is the principle of the

190 *Euthyphr* 11a4-6

191 Fowler (1914) 41

substitutivity of identicals; in the negative, the non-substitutivity of discernibles. The object language formulation states that one object *a* is or is not identical to another object *b*. In the positive, this is the principle of the indiscernability of identicals; in the negative, the distinctness of discernibles.<sup>192</sup> As Friedman notes, commentators on *Euthyphro* 10-11 have focused on metalinguistic formulations and 'neglected the object language formulation.'<sup>193</sup> Again, Socrates' argument is for the non-identity of that which is holy qua holy and that which is god-beloved qua god-beloved. Therefore, the argument employs a principle of distinctness, not non-substitutivity.

According to the distinctness of discernibles, for any objects *a* and *b*, *a* is not identical to *b* if *a* has a property *P* that *b* lacks or if *b* has a property *P* that *a* lacks. But since that which is holy qua holy and that which is god-beloved qua god-beloved are themselves properties, holiness and god-belovedness respectively, Socrates' argument tacitly employs the following higher-order principle: for any properties *P* and *Q*, *P* is not identical to *Q* if *P* has a (second-order) property *R* that *Q* lacks or if *Q* has a (second-order) property *R* that *P* lacks. That Socrates here uses this principle akin to the distinctness of discernibles is hardly surprising since, as I have discussed in section II and more fully elsewhere,<sup>194</sup> Socrates uses such a principle throughout the early definitional dialogues when testing and specifically rejecting proposed definitions. For example, Socrates rejects Charmides' first definition of sound-mindedness, restraint (ἡσυχιότης), by arguing that while sound-mindedness is in all cases a fine thing (καλόν), restraint is not in all cases fine.

It is well known, however, that Leibniz' Law does not consistently preserve truth-values in referentially opaque contexts. Moreover, it is clear that some because-contexts are referentially opaque. For example, Oedipus entered the bridal chamber because Jocasta there awaited him, not because his mother did. For this reason, in his object language reconstruction of Socrates' argument using the higher order principle of

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192 I am here following Friedman (1982) 1-2, 7.

193 *Ibid.*, 2. Friedman refers to Geach's (1966) substitutivity of synonymous expressions, Cohen's (1972) substitutivity of definitional equivalents. To these should be added, Brown's (1964) substitution of definitional identity, and Paxson's (1972) substitutivity of intensional equivalents in modal contexts.

194 Wolfsdorf (2003b)

the distinctness of discernibles, Friedman argues that although valid, Socrates' argument is flawed. The main problem with Friedman's discussion, however, indeed, with all previous accounts of Socrates' argument, is that commentators have failed satisfactorily to elucidate the because-clauses in (1)-(4). As has now been shown, the because-clauses univocally imply *aetiological* relations. Specifically, holiness, but not god-belovedness, is the *aitia* of divine love; and divine love, but not holiness, is the *aitia* of the affection of being god-beloved. The question, then, is whether *aetiological* contexts are referentially opaque.

Among the numerous discussions of Plato's *aetiology* in *Phaedo* 95-105, only one scholar has commented on this topic. In discussing how Plato identifies the *aitia* of a given *ergon*, Sedley writes:

... it may be — and often is — suspected that *explanation* is the dominant motivating notion — that he is requiring a description under which the [*aitia*] in question will prove maximally explanatory of its [*ergon*], in the way that — to adapt an example from Aristotle — it is more explanatory (though it may be no truer) to call a person responsible for my house “a builder” than “an amateur trombonist”. But that this kind of explanatoriness is not what he is seeking seems clear to me. In no case does Socrates replace a rejected [*aitia*], such as the bones and sinews rejected as the [*aitia*] of his sitting,<sup>195</sup> with a redescription of the same item, in this case Socrates's judgment about what is best. Socrates anyway assumes that a satisfactory [*aitia*] must be able to *survive* such redescription, at least in the following case: he excludes a head as the [*aitia*] of someone's largeness on the ground that, a head being something small, this [*aetiological*] account would entail something small's being the cause of largeness (101a-b). It seems, then, that [*aetiological*] contexts are referentially transparent, and the aim of [*aetiological*] inquiry is to identify the thing responsible, no matter under what description.<sup>196</sup>

Sedley's consideration is provocative — and, for those who hope to defend Plato, encouraging — but, clearly, the topic requires a good deal more examination. I will not attempt this here. But I suggest that such examination may well be illuminated by joint consideration of the

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195 *Phd* 98c-d

196 Sedley (1998) 121-2

problem of identity in causal contexts. And it is noteworthy that the question whether causal contexts produce referential opacity currently remains contested.<sup>197</sup>

## V Conclusion

Scholarship on *Euthyphro* 10a2-11b1, galvanized from the mid '60s through the early '70s, ground to a halt in the early '80s. At the crux of the debate was the interpretation of the because-clauses in the central premises (1)-(4). Notably, all attempts to explain these were narrowly based on the immediate evidence of the passage itself and on speculation, which, as I have shown, is anachronistic. No attempts were made to examine the problem within a broader Platonic conceptual framework.

During approximately the same period in which work on *Euthyphro* 10-11 occurred, work in two related areas of Platonic scholarship was ensuing. In one case, amid a dominant semantic or conceptual analytic interpretation of Socrates' WF question, through the work of Penner and also Santas, an alternative real-definitional interpretation became available and gradually ascendant. This shift, which is relevant to the interpretation of Socrates' argument at *Euthyphro* 10a9-11a4, was not influential as such because most of the work on *Euthyphro* 10-11 was completed before Penner's publication. Thus, the *Euthyphro* commentators remained committed to semantic interpretations of the WF question and so to a correspondingly semantic interpretation of the *elenchos*.<sup>198</sup>

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197 For instance, Davidson (1967) has argued that singular causal sentences are extensional with respect to contained singular terms. Chisholm (1965) and Brand (1972) have argued the contrary, but Gottlieb and Davis (1972) have shown that Chisholm's and Brand's arguments are flawed and that substitution in singular causal sentences may preserve truth-values. Føllesdal (1971) has argued that causal necessity contexts are opaque, but Levin has criticized Føllesdal's argument (1976, esp. 271-4), and yet Stern (1978) has in turn criticized Levin. It should be noted, though, that Stern's response to Levin focuses on that part of Levin's analysis devoted to causal explanatory contexts, not causal contexts per se. On the other hand, Levin's criticism of Føllesdal involves Føllesdal's conflation of causation and causal explanatory contexts, so Stern's response remains relevant. Consider also Anscombe (1969) and Mackie (1974) 248-69.

198 As I have already noted, Thom's (1978) paper does not engage the work of other scholars. And while Friedman (1982) notes that his predecessors had not considered

In the second case, from the late '60s to the present there has been steady engagement with the topic of Plato's *aetiology* in *Phaedo* 95-105. This scholarship has developed in two phases. From the late '60s to the mid '80s, Plato's *aetiology* in *Phaedo* was examined in Aristotelian terms. From the mid '80s to the present, conceptualization of Plato's *aetiology* in *Phaedo* in pre-Aristotelian and, to my mind, more appropriately Platonic terms, has been ascendant. Again, the *Euthyphro* commentators were unaffected by this work, although in this case some of it was available to them.

In light of the work on Socrates' WF question and Plato's *aetiology* in *Phaedo*, particularly in the latter case, work of the second phase, but also through rather novel work on the concept of πάθος, this paper has attempted to advance understanding of Socrates' *elenchos* to Euthyphro's third definition of τὸ ὄσιον. Whatever has been achieved, several points remain unresolved and invite further inquiry. The πάθος-οὐσία (or πάθος-οὐσία-ποίημα) distinction, partially illuminated, will only be fully illuminated following a study of οὐσία in Plato. The discussion of πάθος has also developed Geach's concern that Plato might have been subject to a certain kind of confusion regarding affections and what may loosely be called 'passive properties'. The topic, particularly the examples involving mathematical entities and Forms, requires further study. Indeed, this topic opens onto the question of the conceptual foundations of logic in Plato. The question whether *aetiological* contexts produce referential opacity also remains unanswered. More generally, by linking the interpretation of *Euthyphro* 10-11 with *Phaedo* 95-105, this discussion encourages further investigation of Plato's *aetiology* throughout the corpus in terms appropriate to Plato.<sup>199</sup>

Temple University  
 Department of Philosophy  
 748 Anderson Hall  
 Philadelphia, PA 19122  
 U.S.A.  
 dwolfsdo@temple.edu

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applying object language interpretations of Leibniz' Law to Socrates' argument, he does not explain why this is so.

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