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# Hippias Major 301b2-c2: *Plato's Critique of a Corporeal Conception of Forms and of the Form-Participant Relation*

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## I i Introduction

In the final movement of the investigation in *Hippias Major*, Socrates and Hippias agree that unlike pleasures experienced through taste, touch, and smell, pleasure experienced through sight (*Ps*), pleasure through hearing (*Ph*), and pleasure through both sight and hearing (*Psh*) are beautiful (καλόν).<sup>1</sup> In other words, *Ps*, *Ph*, and *Psh* have something in common, call it *K*, that makes them beautiful.<sup>2</sup>

I will speak of *K* as a **continuous property**, where by a continuous property I mean that if two entities (be they particulars or properties) separately possess a property, then the two entities conjointly possess that property, and vice versa. Accordingly, *Ps* and *Ph* each possess *K*; and *Psh*, which is a conjunction of *Ps* and *Ph*, possesses *K*. Socrates notes: 'If these pleasures [*Ps* and *Ph*] are conjointly affected by something, but

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- 1 Throughout I maintain the traditional translation of 'καλόν'. I agree with Woodruff (1981) that 'fine' has a broader semantic range and in this respect is a more adequate translation; but 'fine' also seems to me rather anemic. In fact, no single English word is satisfactory.
  - 2 Of course *K* is beauty, that is, the beautiful itself (αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν). But it will be convenient to be able to refer to beauty by both means.

separately not so affected, then they would not be beautiful because of that affection' (*Hp Ma* 300b4-5).

In confirming this condition of *K*, Socrates' statement also suggests the possibility of a contrary kind of property, call it a **discontinuous property**. By a discontinuous property I mean that if two entities separately possess a property, then the two entities conjointly do not possess that property, or vice versa.<sup>3</sup> In the dialogue Socrates uses the example of duality; two individuals are conjointly, but not separately, a duality.

Since Hippias maintains that *K* is a continuous property,<sup>4</sup> he agrees to Socrates' statement. But, regardless of *K*, Hippias also rejects the possibility of discontinuous properties that Socrates' statement implies:

Socrates, your reply seems to contain wonders even greater than your previous reply. For consider this; is it not the case that if both of us were just, then each of us would be? Or if each of us were unjust, then both of us would be? Or if both of us were healthy, then each of us would be? Or if each of us were tired or wounded or struck or affected in any way whatsoever, then both of us would be so affected? Furthermore, if both of us were golden or silver or ivory, or, if you will, of noble birth, wise, honored, old, young, or anything else you wish that happens to humans, is it not greatly necessary that each of us would be? (*Hp Ma* 300e7-301a7)

In view of this range of properties, Hippias insists that there are no discontinuous properties. Moreover, Socrates' belief that there may be discontinuous properties elicits the following general criticism of Socrates' discursive practice:

But you see, Socrates, you do not consider the wholes of things (τὰ ὅλα τῶν πραγμάτων), nor do those with whom you are accustomed to hold discussions. Rather, you all test that which is beautiful (τὸ καλόν) and each thing (ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων) by taking it separately (ἀπολαμβάνον-

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3 Note that neither Socrates nor Hippias speaks of the Greek equivalent of continuous or discontinuous properties; I employ these phrases to facilitate the exegesis. On the other hand, the word 'continuous' is based on the Greek 'διανεκής', which Hippias and Socrates use.

4 On whether Plato or his characters actually recognize property as an ontological kind, see Section III iv.

τες) in your discussions (ἐν τοῖς λόγοις) and cutting it up (κατατέμνον-τες). And for this reason it escapes you that bodies of essence (σώματα τῆς οὐσίας) are so great (οὕτω μεγάλα) by nature (πεφυκότα) and continuous (διανεκῆ). And now it has escaped you to such an extent that you think there is something (τι), either an affection (πάθος) or an essence (οὐσίαν), which exists in the case of these things [*Ps* and *Ph*] conjointly, but not separately, or in the case of each, but not both. You are all so illogical, negligent, naive, and thoughtless. (*Hippias Major* 301b2-c3)

The objective of this paper is to explicate this passage, Hippias' criticism of Socrates.

### I ii *Status quaestionis*

Over the last century, three sustained examinations of *Hippias Major* 301b2-c2 have been published. The first occurs in Eugène Dupréel's *La légende socratique et les sources de platon* of 1922.<sup>5</sup> Dupréel argues that Hippias attacks Socrates' commitment to 'réalisme idéaliste', that is, to the metaphysical realist position that Forms (des Idées) exist separately from concrete beings. In 1927 Auguste Diès severely criticized Dupréel's interpretation as an extravagant departure from the text — 'comment osez-vous en tirer tout un système de métaphysique?'<sup>6</sup> — and replaced it with a reading wholly innocent of metaphysics.

The third discussion is Michael Morgan's 'The Continuity Theory of Reality in Plato's *Hippias Major*' of 1983.<sup>7</sup> Morgan, like Dupréel, regards Socrates and Hippias' exchange as metaphysically significant: 'There is here metaphysics of an incipient and undeveloped sort but explicit metaphysics nonetheless'.<sup>8</sup> But note that between the francophone literature on Plato of the twenties and the American literature of the eighties, the concept of metaphysics has undergone a shift. Morgan does not mean to imply that *Hippias Major* refers to or intimates transcendent Forms.

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5 (1922), 190-213

6 (1927), 182-209; the quotation is from 194.

7 (1983)

8 *Ibid.*, 152

Rather, metaphysical discourse is distinguished by its preoccupation with concepts pertaining to fundamental aspects of being, whatever these may be.

Morgan appears to be ignorant of Dupréel's and Diès' contributions, for he mentions neither. Morgan also neglects Paul Woodruff's edition of *Hippias Major* of 1981. Woodruff has but brief comments on 301b2-c2. Still, it is worth noting that he rejects Dupréel's treatment as 'madcap' and cites Diès' discussion approvingly.<sup>9</sup>

In short, Morgan's discussion occurs in a relative vacuum, and Dupréel's and Diès' papers are now eighty years old. If Woodruff were correct in support of Diès, there would be little to add to a discussion of the *Hippias Major* passage. Though I too believe that Dupréel's conclusions are inadequately grounded in the textual evidence, I am dissatisfied with Diès' metaphysically sterilizing response and Woodruff's endorsement of it.<sup>10,11</sup> I agree with Morgan that Hippias and Socrates' exchange is metaphysically pregnant, understanding metaphysics in the recent sense. But I disagree with Morgan in a number of respects.

I will argue for the following theses:

- ◆ 'σώματα' at 301b6 means *physical bodies*. 'οὐσία' at 301b6 means *essence*. Thus, in speaking of 'σώματα τῆς οὐσίας' Hippias is conceptualizing essences as spatially extended.<sup>12</sup>
- ◆ Hippias uses 'πράγμα' at 301b3, like 'ὄν' at 301b5, as an all-purpose word for any kind of thing. (I will translate both words as 'entity' or 'thing'.) An important consequent of this is that οὐσίαί are πράγματα (entities); but some πράγματα are not οὐσίαί.
- ◆ Hippias uses 'τὸ καλόν' at 301b4 to mean *that which is beautiful*.

9 (1981), 85-6

10 By 'metaphysically sterilizing' I mean dismissal of metaphysics in both senses.

11 Note that the passage has certainly received comments by other scholars, for example, Apelt (1907), n 2; Tarrant (1928), 76-9; Soreth (1953), 55-7. However, their remarks are cursory. Note that Ludlam (1991) does not discuss the passage.

12 By 'conceptualizing essences as spatially extended' is meant that essences are conceived as physical bodies, that is, as three-dimensional.

As such, 'τὸ καλόν' ranges over entities that have the property beauty; it does not refer to the property beauty itself.<sup>13</sup>

- ◆ In claiming that Socrates tends to cut up τὸ καλόν and each thing (ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων), Hippias means that Socrates, in his preoccupation with the 'What-is-F?' question, abstracts the essence (beauty) from things that have the essence (things that are beautiful). This tendency to abstract *F* from entities that have *F* results in Socrates' false belief in the existence of discontinuous properties.
- ◆ Hippias does not explain precisely how Socrates' tendency to abstraction misleads Socrates to assume the existence of discontinuous properties. However, Hippias does emphasize two points about essences, one regarding their spatial extension, the other regarding their continuity. In speaking of bodies of essence as 'οὕτω μεγάλα (so great)' at 301b5-6, Hippias means that the spatial extension of essences is equal to the entities that possess them. In speaking of bodies of essence as 'διανεκῆ (continuous)' at 301b6, Hippias means that all entities of a given kind possess the corresponding essence. The spatial extension and continuity of essences contradicts the hypothesis of discontinuous properties.
- ◆ 'πάθος' at 301b8 means *affection* (not *property* or *accident*). The contrary of πάθος is ποιήμα (action). At 301b8 Hippias applies his claims about the spatial extension and continuity of οὐσίαι to πάθη. Here too Hippias indicates that he is non-committal about whether beauty is an essence or an affection.
- ◆ Socrates' mathematical examples, for instance, unity and duality,<sup>14</sup> suggest that the continuity principle does not apply to all properties. In other words, some discontinuous properties exist. Moreover, the existence of discontinuous properties suggests that at least some essences should not be conceived as spatially

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13 Given the self-predicability of beauty, it is more accurate to say that τὸ καλόν ranges over entities that are beautiful, except beauty itself.

14 See *Hippias Major* 301d5-2b3; and for other examples see 303b6-c2.

extended. Indeed, this is the principal reason why Plato includes Hippias' criticism of Socrates and Socrates' rebuttal: to criticize a corporeal conception of Forms and of the Form-participant relation.

My account of Hippias and Socrates' exchange principally differs from Morgan's in the following five respects. First, Morgan explicates Hippias' 'continuity theory of reality' using a concept slightly different from that of a continuous property, call it an M-continuous. By an M-continuous property I mean that if two *substances*, that is, concrete particulars, separately possess a property, then the two substances conjointly possess that property, and vice versa. Accordingly, the difference between a continuous property and an M-continuous property is that the former can be a property of properties, whereas the latter can only be a property of concrete particulars. Clearly, Hippias does not merely want to commit to M-continuous properties, for *Ps*, *Ph*, and *Psh* themselves are properties, not concrete particulars.

Second, Morgan maintains that 'τὰ ὅλα τῶν πραγμάτων (the wholes of things)' at 301b2-3 refers to aggregates of concrete particulars of a kind, for example, the set of beautiful things. Third, Morgan maintains that 'οὐσία', 'πρᾶγμα', and 'ὄν' are used interchangeably throughout the passage. Fourth, Morgan does not explain the disjunction of 'οὐσία' and 'πάθος' at 301b8, nor Socrates' subsequent uses of the terms. Fifth, Morgan does not explain the function of Socrates' and Hippias' exchange within the broader investigation.

Finally, it must be noted that my interpretation of *Hippias Major* 301b2-c2 proceeds upon the assumption that the dialogue was composed by Plato and belongs among the early dialogues.<sup>15</sup>

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15 Woodruff (1981, 94-103) provides, to my mind, a satisfactory response to Thesleff's (1976) argument against the dialogue's authenticity. Moreover, as Woodruff notes, stylometric studies have consistently confirmed the authenticity of the dialogue. Other notable contributions to this debate include Grube (1926) and (1929) and Horn (1964). Kahn (1985) remains an important dissenting voice that has not been directly answered. On the other hand, Kahn's argument has not persuaded many scholars. Most treatments of Plato's early dialogues since 1985 include *Hippias Major*. Still, in view of the state of the controversy, my argument for authenticity is hypothetical. I assume the authenticity of the dialogue and develop my discussion on the basis of this assumption. The cogency of my conclusions supports the dialogue's authenticity.

## II 'σώμα' at 301b6

In his criticism of Socrates, Hippias speaks of 'bodies of essence (σώματα τῆς οὐσίας)' as 'so great (οὕτω μεγάλα) by nature (πεφυκότα) and continuous (διανεκῆ)'. The word 'σώματα' suggests physicality. Accordingly, Dupréel claims that 'Hippias met à la base de sa philosophie l'affirmation des êtres individuels', and he describes these as 'êtres concrets'.<sup>16</sup>

The view that Hippias commits to some kind of materialism was already familiar in the first decade of the twentieth century, for in 1907 Otto Apelt criticized it.<sup>17</sup> Apelt proposed to emend 'σώματα' to 'σχήματα'. His reason relates to Socrates' response to Hippias' criticism. Socrates responds by citing unity and duality as discontinuous properties and by suggesting that if Hippias' continuous account of essence (διανεκεῖ λόγῳ τῆς οὐσίας κατὰ Ἰππίαν)' were correct, then separately Socrates and Hippias would be two because conjointly they are two. Socrates' description, διανεκής, of Hippias' λόγος obviously corresponds to Hippias' description of σώματα as διανεκῆ. Apelt claims that in this particular context 'λόγος' means *Verhältnis* and that accordingly in Hippias' criticism the meaning of the noun that 'διανεκῆ' modifies, 'σώματα', must semantically correspond.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, Apelt concludes that 'σώματα' must be a scribe's confusion of 'σχήματα', which he translates as 'Verhältnisse'.<sup>19</sup>

Grube characterizes Apelt's emendation as 'drastic'.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Apelt's argument is feckless. There is no reason to attribute an unusual sense to the word 'λόγος' here; one of its standard meanings, *account*, will do. Socrates' description of Hippias' account as continuous refers to the

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16 (1922), 200-1

17 'Kein Wunder, daß das närrische σώματα nicht etwa bloß Anstoß erregt, sondern zu den verwegenen Vermutungen über angebliche Beziehungen zu gewissen materialistischen Philosophemen Anstoß gegeben hat' (n 2). Apelt mentions by name only one proponent of such 'Vermutungen', Dümmler (1889).

18 '... der hiesigen Bedeutung von λόγος (Verhältnis) entspricht' (n 2). Note that the manuscript tradition is consistent on the reading 'σώματα'; see Vancamp (1996), 102.

19 'Dies Wort dürfte kein anderes sein als σχήματα "Verhältnisse", das vortrefflich paßt und als seltener vorkommend mit dem häufigen σώματα graphisch leicht verwechselt werden konnte' (n 2).

20 (1926), 148

content of the account, not to the account as an entity itself. Compare the phrase 'materialist theory'.

A second attempt to skirt the physicalist significance of 'σώματα' is to attribute to it a figurative sense. Woodruff, who translates 'bodies', claims that "'body" does not appear to have the significance it has in *Sophist* 247bc [where it is described as that which can be handled and is resistant to touch].<sup>21</sup> However, Woodruff provides no further comment on the sense it does have. Dorothy Tarrant is more explicit. She notes that 'Plato normally uses σώμα in the obvious physical sense, as a correlative to ψυχή', and she suggests that 'σώματα may ... be here used in the figurative sense ("masses") as a piece of philosophic slang'.<sup>22</sup>

It is necessary to distinguish two figurative senses of 'σώμα' from the primary sense. The primary sense of 'σώμα' in the fourth century BC is the body of a human or animal. Accordingly, as Tarrant observes, among Plato's dialogues, σώμα and soul often are correlatives. The first figurative sense is the one Tarrant mentions: 'σώμα' refers to any physical object. For example, in *Phaedrus* Socrates says: 'Every body (σώμα) whose source of motion is external to it is soul-less'.<sup>23</sup> The second figurative sense is an aggregate or whole. For example, when in *Timaeus* Timaeus speaks of the 'σώμα τοῦ παντός' and the 'σώμα τοῦ κόσμου',<sup>24</sup> he means a physical whole of physical constituents. But in this second figurative sense, the body *qua* aggregate or whole need not be composed of physical objects. For example, when Aristotle in *Rhetoric* speaks of the 'σώμα τῆς πίστεως', that is, the set of reasons that constitute an argument,<sup>25</sup> he is referring to what may be called a logical kind.

At *Hippias Major* 301b6 'σώματα' obviously cannot have its primary sense. The first figurative sense is, at least, consistent with Dupréel's view that Hippias here has in mind concrete particulars. Accordingly, in criticizing Dupréel, Diès argues for the second figurative sense: 'Tout le monde est habitué à cet emploi du mot *corps* dans le sens de dimension,

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21 (1981), 85, n 175

22 (1928), 79

23 *Phdr* 245e

24 *Ti* 31b, 32c

25 *Rh* 1354a15

épaisseur, volume, masse, substance, et l'on parle chez nous d'un *corps de logis*, comme d'un *corps de voilure*, mais aussi ... du *corps de la langue*'.<sup>26</sup>

Diès' contrast between *corps de logis* and *corps de voilure*, on the one hand, and *corps de la langue*, on the other, suggests that he means to convey that 'corps' is ontologically neutral. He proceeds to cite from Montaigne a passage in which that author speaks of 'les corps des livres'.<sup>27</sup> Given that a body of books consists simply of the books, Diès argues that 'σώματα' in 'σώματα τῆς οὐσίας' is 'pléonastique'. Accordingly, 'σώματα' has no ontological significance. In other words, the genitive 'τῆς οὐσίας' is epexegetic, and any ontological significance in the phrase 'σώματα τῆς οὐσίας' depends upon the phrase 'τῆς οὐσίας'. Diès commends Croiset's translation, 'les grandes réalités continues des essences', as 'peut-être un peu rapide, mais ... exacte au fond'.<sup>28</sup> The reason for the qualification, 'peut-être un peu rapide', is that Diès thinks Croiset has gone too far in translating 'οὐσία' as 'essence'.<sup>29</sup>

We will come to 'οὐσία' shortly. Presently, let us emphasize the fallacy in Diès' argument. The way the French use the word 'corps' is of course irrelevant to the question of the meaning of the Greek 'σῶμα' in *Hippias Major*. That is to say, Diès offers no evidence from Plato to support his figurative interpretation of 'σῶμα', namely, the second figurative sense. Precisely, Diès owes his readers at least one instance of 'σῶμα' in Plato applied to a whole that is not physical. We have found an instance in Aristotle, but I know of none from Plato. Therefore, the evidence strongly supports interpreting 'σώματα' according to the first figurative sense. In other words, 'σώματα' is not ontologically neutral; Hippias is here speaking of *physical bodies*.<sup>30</sup>

26 (1927), 195

27 'Car les Lancelots du Luc, des Amadis, des Huons de Bordeaus, et tel fatras de livres à quoy l'enfance s'amuse, je n'en connoissois pas seulement le nom, ny ne fais encore le corps, tant exacte estoit ma discipline' (195).

28 Ibid., 196

29 'Qu'est-ce que cette οὐσία que je traduis, avec M. Croiset, par *essence*?' (196)

30 It is also noteworthy that even if Diès were correct in his contention that 'σῶμα' is ontologically neutral, it still needn't be pleonastic. Consider that the phrases 'the books' and 'the body of books' may have the same referent, but not the same meanings; contrast 'Plato's corpus contains 36 dialogues' with 'Plato's dialogues contain 36 dialogues'.

### III i οὐσία in Plato's Early Dialogues

But what are 'bodies of οὐσία'? Thesleff characterizes the phrase as 'vexed'.<sup>31</sup> Grube speaks of it as a 'rather queer expression'. He suggests that the meaning is 'not clear, but we should remember that Hippias is probably purposely represented as obscure. He is camouflaging his ignorance with big words that mean little'.<sup>32</sup> Kahn claims that 'such confused and sometimes obscure terminology is not to be found in Plato, where the role of οὐσία as nominalization either of veridical εἶναι or of the τί ἐστὶ question is normally clear from context'.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Kahn claims that the dialogue 'repeatedly uses οὐσία as a frozen technical term, as in Aristotle or even later'.<sup>34</sup>

On the assumption that *Hippias Major* was composed by Plato and is among his early dialogues, it will be helpful to examine the use of 'οὐσία' in these texts. Outside of the instance of 'οὐσία' at *Hippias Major* 301b6 and three others in its immediate vicinity (301b8, e4, 302c5), the word occurs eight times among the early dialogues. Four instances with the meaning *property* (as in real estate) are irrelevant.<sup>35</sup> The remaining four are germane. At *Meno* 72b1, Socrates uses the analogy of bees to explain the meaning of his 'What-is-F?' question (hereafter referred to as the WF question):

If I were asking of a bee with regard to the οὐσία, what it is, and you answered that there are many and various bees, what would you reply if I said: "Do you mean that they are many and varied from one another insofar as they are bees?" (*Men* 72b1-5)

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31 (1976), 113

32 (1926), 147; Grube continues. 'We may perhaps see here a quotation (or a parody?) of a passage from one of the sophist's works. But I do not believe that Hippias is putting forward a deeply thought-out theory of nature, although he doubtless thinks it deep enough. Nor is some rival school of thinkers made to speak through him, for in either case he would express himself more clearly and probably more at length' (147).

33 (1985), 270; Kahn cites *Euthphr* 11a7 and *Phd* 65d13, 76d9 as examples of genuine Platonic uses of οὐσία.

34 *Ibid.*

35 *Grg* 472b6, 486c1; *Cri* 44e5, 53b2

Meno admits that bees are the same *qua* bees. Accordingly, the passage suggests that an οὐσία is what a thing is. In other words, as Kahn puts it, 'οὐσία' is a nominalization of the τί ἐστὶ question. The correlation between οὐσία and the WF question helps. For instance, in *Euthyphro* Socrates insists that he is seeking the οὐσία of τὸ ὄσιον. Consider also Socrates' response to Polus in *Gorgias* when Polus, in response to Socrates' question 'What is rhetoric?', characterizes rhetoric as the finest craft: 'No one was asking you what sort (ποία) of craft Gorgias' is, but what (τίς) it is?' (*Grg* 448e6-7) Polus' unsatisfactory answer here is also similar to his unsatisfactory answer later in the dialogue when, following Socrates' account of rhetoric as a kind of flattery, he says: 'So you think that rhetoric is flattery?' Socrates responds: 'I said that it is a *part* of flattery' (*Grg* 466a4-6). Both here and earlier in the dialogue Polus confuses (what we call) identification with predication. Accordingly, to give the οὐσία of a thing is to give its identity. Of course, the way Plato conceives of the identity of a thing is largely pretheoretical and remains vague.

At *Protagoras* 349b1-5 Socrates asks Protagoras:

Are knowledge, sound-mindedness, courage, justice, and holiness five words for which there is one thing (πράγματι)? Or underlying each name is there a particular οὐσία where each thing (πρῶγμα) has its own power (δύναμιν)?

The referent of each excellence-term, whether or not the excellence-terms are coreferring, is a πρῶγμα. Here in *Protagoras* an οὐσία is described as a πρῶγμα; but 'πρῶγμα' can be used as an all-purpose word for any kind of thing. This is clear from the following passage in *Hippias Major*: '[So:] We have been seeking that thing by which all beautiful things (πάντα τὰ καλὰ πρῶγματα) are beautiful' (*Hp Ma* 294a8-b1). And elsewhere in the dialogue Socrates describes a range of beautiful things as follows:

Don't you remember that I was asking about the beautiful itself, whose addition to anything (παντι) makes that thing beautiful, be it a stone, a stick, human, god, every action and course of study. (*Hp Ma* 292c9-d3)

We call the whole human body beautiful, sometimes for running, sometimes for wrestling. And the same is true for all animals. We call a horse beautiful, a rooster, a quail, and all equipment and vehicles, both those used on land and those used at sea, cargo ships and warships, as well as all tools, instruments used in music and in all the other

crafts, and still further, if you will, pursuits and customs, we basically call all of these things beautiful in the same way. (*Hp Ma* 295c8-d6)

Given that a *πρῶγμα* is anything whatsoever, all *οὐσίαι* are *πράγματα*. However, some *πράγματα* are not *οὐσίαι*. At least, one kind of *πρῶγμα* does not include *οὐσίαι*. The WF question seeks an account of a universal, not a concrete particular. Thus, for instance, Socrates is not an *οὐσία* — although he may have an *οὐσία*.

The *Protagoras* passage also suggests a distinction between a thing and its power: 'Or underlying each name is there a particular *οὐσία* where each thing (*πρῶγμα*) has its own power (*δύναμιν*)'. This distinction recalls Socrates' initial presentation earlier in the dialogue of the question whether excellence has parts: 'Does each [part of excellence] have its own particular power ... Is each distinct from the others both in itself (*αὐτὸ*) and in its power?' (*Prt* 330a4-b1). I take it that the distinction here between a thing itself and its power is equivalent to the distinction (at 349b) between a *πρῶγμα* or *οὐσία* and its power. Thus, in *Protagoras* we have an implicit definition of *οὐσία* through contrast to *δύναμις*, the power of the thing.

The distinction between *οὐσία* and *δύναμις* also occurs in an instance of 'οὐσία' at *Charmides* 168d2. Socrates is considering the possibility of knowledge of knowledge. On the basis of a set of analogous examples, including vision of vision and hearing of hearing, he infers the following principle: 'If a thing should have its own power (*δύναμιν*) related to itself (*πρὸς ἑαυτὸ*), it would not have the *οὐσία* to which its power is related (*πρὸς ἧν*)' (*Chrm* 168d-3).

The example of vision of vision clarifies this principle. The power of vision is sight (where sight is understood as the entity that capacitates the act of seeing, not the act itself). The objects of sight are shape and color. Accordingly, the possibility of vision of vision, that is, of vision seeing itself, depends upon vision itself having shape and color. Because vision is colorless and shapeless, vision of vision is impossible, as the principle claims. The *Charmides* passage thus corroborates the distinction between *οὐσία* and *δύναμις* in *Protagoras*. Here again, an *οὐσία* is what a thing itself is, in contrast to what it is capable of doing.

The distinction between *οὐσία* and *δύναμις* requires further clarification in two respects. First, for instance in *Sophist*, two kinds of *δύναμις* are distinguished: powers to act and powers to be acted upon or affected: 'I say that that which possesses any *δύναμις* whatsoever, be it to affect (*ποιεῖν*) any other thing or to be affected (*πάθειν*), ... exists' (*Sph* 247d8-e3). Among the early dialogues *δύναμις* are consistently treated as

powers to act. This may merely be a coincidence, or it may be Plato's deliberate simplification for pedagogical reasons.<sup>36</sup> Second, 'οὐσία' and 'δύναμις' clearly have different meanings. An οὐσία is what a thing is in itself, whereas a δύναμις is explicable in terms of the relation between a thing itself and a correlative action or affection: a δύναμις is the power of a thing for a certain kind of action or affection. But the power of a thing, be it the power to act or to be affected, depends upon what the thing is. Compare the distinction between categorical and dispositional properties. In other words, power is based on an οὐσία. In light of this, consider that in *Laches* Socrates clarifies his WF question by telling Laches that in seeking what courage is, he is seeking a δύναμις.

One further instance of 'οὐσία' among the early dialogues occurs at *Euthyphro* 11a8:

Euthyphro, it seems that when you were asked what the holy (τὸ ὅσιον) is, you were unwilling to make clear its οὐσία; instead you described an affection (πάθος) of it, that is, something that this thing the holy (τοῦτο τὸ ὅσιον) has undergone (πέπονθε), being loved by all the gods. But you have not yet said what it is. (*Euthyphr* 11a6-b1)

As we have noted, οὐσία is here explicitly related to the WF question. Furthermore, Socrates implicitly defines οὐσία in contrast to πάθος. In a recent discussion of this passage, I have emphasized that 'affection' or 'passion', rather than 'property', is the right translation of 'πάθος' and that the distinction between οὐσία and πάθος is not, as has sometimes been claimed, equivalent to the distinction between essence and accident.<sup>37</sup> I show that the οὐσία-πάθος distinction in *Euthyphro* includes two elements of the trinity οὐσία-πάθος-ποιήμα (action) operative elsewhere in the Platonic corpus. Ποιήμα and πάθος are contraries, action and passion or affection. The relation of οὐσία to ποιήμα and πάθος should then be understood as follows. An οὐσία is that which makes an entity the kind of thing it is. For example, a holy particular is so because it has the οὐσία holiness. Furthermore, οὐσίαί are δυνάμεις. Thus, the possession of an οὐσία enables an entity to act or to be affected in a specific way.

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<sup>36</sup> See Wolfsdorf (2006).

<sup>37</sup> Wolfsdorf (2005)

Two more points before returning to 'οὐσία' at *Hippias Major* 301b6. First, we have seen that in *Meno* Socrates speaks of the οὐσία of bees: 'If I were asking of a bee (μελίττης) with regard to the οὐσία, what it is ...'. And in *Euthyphro* Socrates speaks of the οὐσία of τὸ ὅσιον: 'when you were asked what τὸ ὅσιον is, you were unwilling to make clear its οὐσία; instead you described an affection (πάθος) of it, that is, something that this thing τὸ ὅσιον has undergone (πέπονθε), being loved by all the gods'. In these instances, the relation between οὐσία, on the one hand, and μέλιττη and τὸ ὅσιον, on the other, is unclear. The phrase 'τὸ ὅσιον' itself is ambiguous. It may be rendered *holiness* or *that which is holy*. In the former case, the relation between 'οὐσία' and the noun-phrase is exegetical; compare 'the city of Rome'. In the latter case, the relation is possessive: the holiness possessed by that which is holy. In the case of the *Meno* passage 'μέλιττη' is indefinite and singular; Socrates is asking about the οὐσία of any given bee.<sup>38</sup> In other words, he is asking what makes any given bee a bee. In this case, the relation is possessive. In my discussion of *Euthyphro* 10a2-11b1 I argue that 'τὸ ὅσιον' here means *that which is holy*. Accordingly, again, the relation is possessive.

The second point concerns the relation between οὐσία, on the one hand, and πάθος and ποιήμα, on the other. Consider the following case: something that is holy is loved by the gods because it is holy; therefore, that holy thing has the πάθος of being god-beloved.<sup>39</sup> Which of the following two accounts is more accurate: the holy thing is god-beloved, or the holiness of the holy thing is god-beloved? Consider a second case: Socrates sees the river, or Socrates' eye or sight sees the river? In *Euthyphro*, as I argue, Socrates speaks of something holy, rather than the holiness of something holy, being god-beloved — even though something holy is god-beloved because of its holiness. This suggests, as we would also naturally put it, that Socrates, rather than his eye or sight, sees the river. In that case, although we draw a distinction between a particular and the οὐσία that makes the particular the kind of thing it is, and although the οὐσία of the particular is responsible for its active and passive δυνάμεις, we speak of the particular, not the οὐσία, as acting and being affected.

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38 Sharples (1985, 39) writes: 'if I asked you what constitutes being a bee'.

39 Never mind that being-god-beloved is not a genuine property.

So much for a survey of οὐσία among Plato's early dialogues. Returning now to 'σώματα τῆς οὐσίας' in *Hippias Major*, we must first admit that we cannot be sure that when he uses 'οὐσία' at 301b6, Hippias is using it as Socrates would. However, if we assume that he is and cogent consequences follow, this supports the assumption.<sup>40</sup>

Consider again the first two sentences of Hippias' criticism:

But you see, Socrates, you do not consider the wholes of things (τὰ ὅλα τῶν πραγμάτων), nor do those with whom you are accustomed to hold discussions. Rather, you all test (κρούετε) that which is beautiful (τὸ καλόν) and each thing (ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων) by separating it and cutting it up.

Hippias' contrast between the consideration of the wholes of things and Socrates' testing of that which is beautiful by separating and cutting it up indicates that 'πράγματα' and 'ὄντα' are coreferring and that τὸ καλόν is one πρᾶγμα or ὄν among many.

Note that Hippias refers to Socrates and his associates. I take it that Hippias includes Socrates' associates because Socrates has been referring to his tough-minded and aggressive housemate throughout the dialogue. Hippias assumes that the sorts of discussions Socrates and his associates hold are of the kind that Hippias himself and Socrates are holding now, that is, conversations in which that which is beautiful and each thing are tested. In other words, Hippias is thinking of investigations governed by the WF question.

The πράγματα from the phrase 'τὰ ὅλα τῶν πραγμάτων' and ὄντα from the phrase 'ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων' are clearly coextensive, and Hippias clearly understands 'τὸ καλόν' to designate one among the many πράγματα or ὄντα. On the grounds that Socrates' WF question seeks an οὐσία it might be inferred that Hippias is here using 'πράγματα' and 'ὄντα' to refer to οὐσίαι. In that case 'σώματα τῆς οὐσίας' would refer to the physical bodies of *definienda* such as beauty. This is Morgan's view.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> This point is discussed further in section V.

<sup>41</sup> 'Hippias's ... is a theory about things which can be called collectively οὐσίαι or πράγματα or πάθη or σώματα τῆς οὐσίας. All of these terms seem to be used interchangeably ...' (1983) 140.

I agree with Morgan that Hippias uses 'σώματα τῆς οὐσίας' to refer to *definienda* such as beauty *qua* physical bodies. But, granted that Hippias uses 'πράγματα' and 'ὄντα' as coreferential and that he conceives of τὸ καλὸν as an ὄν or πρᾶγμα, I disagree with Morgan that Hippias is using 'πράγματα' and 'ὄντα' to refer to οὐσίαι or that he conceives of τὸ καλὸν as an οὐσία. To understand why, it is necessary to return to the beginning of the investigation.

### III ii 'τὸ καλόν'

When Socrates first poses the WF question, Hippias and he engage in the following exchange:

[So:] Tell me ... what is this thing τὸ καλόν? [Hi:] Socrates, does he who asks this question want to learn anything other than what is καλόν? [So:] I don't think so — rather, what is τὸ καλόν, Hippias. [Hi:] But what is the difference between these questions? [So:] Don't you think there's a difference? [Hi:] No, they don't differ at all. [So:] Well, clearly your knowledge is more beautiful. But all the same, consider ... for he is not asking you what is καλόν, but what is τὸ καλόν. (*Hp Ma* 287d2-e1)

At the beginning of the investigation, Plato emphasizes Hippias' failure to distinguish the meanings of the questions 'What is τὸ καλόν?' and 'What is καλόν?'. We might think that Hippias' problem is meta-physical: he cannot distinguish the property from the entity that has the property; he cannot distinguish beauty from that which is beautiful. But the problem also has a linguistic dimension.

The phrase 'τὸ καλόν' and phrases similarly composed of the neuter definite article and adjective, which I will call τὸ phrases,<sup>42</sup> are semantically ambiguous. Plato often uses τὸ phrases as referring expressions, specifically to refer to Forms. But τὸ phrases are also used, in and out of Plato, as quantifier phrases. For example, 'τὸ καλόν' can mean *that which is beautiful*. The use of τὸ phrases as Form-designators in fact derives from the use of τὸ phrases as quantifier-phrases. Assume that 'f' stands for the

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42 Here I follow Wolfsdorf (2005), 5-6.

adjective corresponding to the general term 'F'; for example, 'ἅγιον' (holy) relative to 'ἁγιότης' (holiness). In posing his WF question in the form 'What is τὸ f?', Socrates means 'What is that which is f *qua* f (or insofar as it is f)?'. Here the phrases '*qua* f' and 'insofar as it is f' are restricting qualifications. When the τὸ phrase is used as a quantifier phrase, the article 'τὸ' serves as the quantifier, and the adjective or adjectival phrase defines the domain over which the quantifier ranges. For example, in 'that which is holy', 'that which is' functions as a universal quantifier, and 'holy' defines the domain as the set of holy entities. The phrases '*qua* holy' or 'insofar as it is holy' further restrict the domain over which the quantifier ranges, in this case to the property holiness that all holy things share; for that which is holy *qua* holy is the property holiness. Socrates sometimes explicitly attaches a restricting qualification to the τὸ phrase, namely the emphatic pronoun 'αὐτό' (itself); for example, 'αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν'. However, often he does not, but still intends the τὸ phrase to refer to the Form F.

In sum, the phrase 'τὸ καλόν' literally means *that which is beautiful*. But Socrates here understands it to mean *that which is beautiful insofar as it is beautiful*. Indeed, immediately prior to posing the WF question, Socrates asks a series of questions whose purpose is threefold: to distinguish F from f things, to affirm the existence of F, and to identify F as responsible for things being f.

[So:] Is it not because of justice (δικαιοσύνη) that just men (οἱ δίκαιοι) are just? [Hi:] I answer that it is because of justice. [So:] Then this thing justice (δικαιοσύνη) is something (τι)? [Hi:] Yes. [So:] Then are wise men (οἱ σοφοί) wise because of wisdom (σοφία) and all good things (πάντα τὰγαθὰ) good because of the good (τῷ ἀγαθῷ)? [Hi:] How could it be otherwise? [So:] And these things [wisdom and the good] are something (τισι) ...? [Hi:] Yes, they are something. [So:] Then is it not also the case that all beautiful things (τὰ καλὰ πάντα) are beautiful because of the beautiful (τῷ καλῷ)? [Hi:] Yes, because of the beautiful. [So:] And this thing [the beautiful] is something? [Hi:] It is. (*Hp Ma* 287c1-d2)

Embedded in this exchange are four propositions with a similar syntactic structure: just men are just because of justice; wise men are wise because of wisdom; all good things are good because of the good; and all beautiful things are beautiful because of the beautiful. In the first two Socrates uses a general term for F: 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'σοφία'; in the latter two he uses τὸ phrases. In the case of justice Socrates could have used the τὸ phrase 'τὸ δίκαιον'; conversely, in the case of the beautiful he could

have used the general term 'κάλλος'.<sup>43</sup> In using the mixture of general terms and τὸ phrases Socrates intends to convey that although the forms differ grammatically, their semantic function is the same: they refer to *F* rather than things that have *F*.

While Hippias assents to Socrates' questions, evidently he fails to appreciate their implications.<sup>44</sup> His misunderstanding manifests itself precisely in his failure to appreciate the distinction between the questions 'What is τὸ καλόν?' and 'What is καλόν?', which Socrates makes when, immediately following Hippias' assent to the preceding set of questions, he poses the WF question. Specifically, I suggest that Hippias interprets the τὸ phrase in the WF question as a quantifier phrase such that he understands Socrates to be asking him: 'What is that which is beautiful?'. John Palmer agrees: 'When Socrates asks him what is the beautiful (τὸ καλόν), Hippias takes this in a perfectly straightforward manner to mean: "what is that which is beautiful?" Thus he naturally sees Socrates's question as equivalent to "what is beautiful (καλόν)?"'.<sup>45</sup>

Insofar as Hippias understands the τὸ phrase 'τὸ καλόν' to mean *that which is beautiful*, he understands the phrase to distinguish entities that have *F* rather than *F* itself. So, for example, his first response to the WF question is a beautiful maiden.

At least at the beginning of the investigation, then, Hippias understands the phrase 'τὸ καλόν' to mean *that which is beautiful* rather than *beauty*.

It might be argued, however, that in the course of the investigation Hippias comes to appreciate the semantic distinction between the questions 'What is καλόν?' and 'What is τὸ καλόν?' so that when, in the course of his critique of Socrates, he speaks of 'τὸ καλόν' at 301b4-5, he means *beauty*. In fact, there is good reason to think that from the beginning to the end of the investigation, Hippias confuses the meanings of 'τὸ καλόν' and other τὸ phrases. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that Plato

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43 Note that Socrates could not have used the general term 'ἀγαθωσύνη', which does not occur in the fourth century. Also, among the early dialogues Plato does not compose τὸ phrases with 'ἀνδρείον', 'σῶφρον', or 'σόφον'. On this see Wolfsdorf (2002), 203-5.

44 For a further explanation of Hippias' confusion, see Wolfsdorf (2003), 175-88.

45 Palmer (1999), 62

actually deliberately plays upon the semantic ambiguity of the τὸ phrase late in the investigation.

The investigation in *Hippias Major* is divisible into three movements: Hippias' three definitions: a beautiful maiden, gold, and a paradigmatic Greek male life; Socrates' subsequent three definitions: the proper or decorous, the useful, and the beneficial; and Socrates' fourth and final definition: pleasure through sight and hearing, subsequently reinterpreted as beneficial pleasure.<sup>46</sup> In criticizing his own third definition, Socrates develops the following argument:

- (1) τὸ ὠφέλιμον (the beneficial) is τὸ ποιοῦν ἀγαθόν (that which makes good).
- (2) τὸ ποιοῦν (that which makes) is nothing other than τὸ αἴτιον (the cause).
- (3) τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) is αἴτιον τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ (responsible for the good).
- (4) But the cause and that of which the cause is the cause are different.
- (5) But if τὸ καλόν is αἴτιον ἀγαθοῦ (responsible for good), then τὸ ἀγαθόν (the good) would come into being from τὸ καλόν.
- (6) Then neither is τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) ἀγαθόν (good), nor is τὸ ἀγαθόν (the good) beautiful (καλόν).
- (7) But this is absurd; therefore, τὸ ὠφέλιμον (the beneficial) is not τὸ καλόν (the beautiful).

The argument contains a flaw that relates to the ambiguity of the τὸ phrases it employs. Consider the following sentence: τὸ καλόν is the cause of τὸ καλόν. If the τὸ phrases are univocal and refer to the property beauty, then the sentence is absurd insofar as it claims that something is the cause of itself. But if the τὸ phrases are bivocal, the first used as a referring expression, the second as a quantifier phrase, then the meaning

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<sup>46</sup> The reason for dividing Socrates' contributions into two movements will be explained in section IV.

of the sentence is equivalent to the claim that beautiful things are beautiful because of beauty; in other words, beauty is the cause of that which is beautiful. Furthermore, given the self-predicability of beauty — which Socrates assumes in the dialogue — beauty, *qua* cause of beautiful things, is itself beautiful.

Granted this, beauty (τὸ καλόν) may well be the cause of that which is good (τὸ ἀγαθόν) and be good (ἀγαθόν) or something good (τὸ ἀγαθόν). Precisely, if beauty and goodness are identical, then good things are good because of beauty, and, given the self-predicability of beauty, beauty is good.

The argument is faulty precisely because it fails to distinguish beauty and goodness, on the one hand, from beautiful and good things, on the other. So, for example, premise (3) is reasonable if the grammatical object of 'αἴτιον' (cause or thing responsible for), which is the τὸ phrase 'τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ' (the good), is interpreted not as a referring expression designating the Form or property goodness, but as a quantifier phrase ranging over good entities: viz., beauty is responsible for *that which is good*. However, 'τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ' in (3) is mistakenly interpreted as a referring expression. In short, the problems of Socrates' refutation of his third definition directly relate to the semantic ambiguities of the τὸ phrase that were adumbrated at the beginning of the investigation when Socrates initially posed the WF question.<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, the rejection of the final definition and so terminal aporia of the investigation also results from confusion of τὸ phrases. Pleasure through sight and hearing is identified with beneficial pleasure, and beneficial pleasure contains the concept of the beneficial. Accordingly, Socrates says:

Then this ... is τὸ καλόν: beneficial pleasure (ἡδονὴν ὠφέλιμον) ... But then beneficial (ὠφέλιμον) ... is that which makes the good (τὸ ποιοῦν τὰγαθόν). Yet that which makes and that which is made just now

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47 Compare Dancy's (2004, 177-85) treatment of the argument. Dancy remarks: '[Socrates's] use of the definite article in these lines is erratic' (178); 'Socrates is not consistent in his use of the definite article here' (182). Dancy concludes that the 'argument is an experiment that failed' and 'unsound' (185). He does not, however, understand the reason for the failure; nor does he correlate the fallacy of ambiguity on which the failure of the argument hinges and the confusion of τὸ phrases at the beginning of the investigation.

appeared different from one another. And so our present discussion has returned to the previous discussion. For neither could the good (τὸ ἀγαθόν) be beautiful nor the beautiful (τὸ καλόν) good, if each of them is different from the other. (*Hippias Major* 303e8-304a2)

In sum, the problem of the semantic ambiguity of the τὸ phrase riddles the investigation from beginning to end, and the final aporia of the investigation depends precisely on a failure to disambiguate the τὸ phrases.

Of course, it is remarkable that in the refutation of his third and fourth definitions, Socrates himself falls victim to the ambiguity of the τὸ phrases, for it was he who at the beginning of the investigation suggested that the questions 'What is *f*?' and 'What is the *f*?' were not semantically equivalent. Yet, as we have also seen, Socrates misguidedly concedes that since Hippias has better knowledge, the questions might be equivalent. Of course, this is inconsistent with Socrates' alleged friend's belief. But to insist that Socrates' confusion of τὸ phrases is psychologically implausible on the grounds that his alleged friend recognizes the ambiguity of τὸ phrases is to reject one instance of psychological implausibility by appeal to grounds that admit a far more egregious condition of psychological implausibility. The split personality of Socrates throughout the investigation in *Hippias Major* is a dramatic device not beholden to realist injunctions. What the congenial Socrates' confusion of τὸ phrases here and at the end of the investigation emphasizes, I submit, is the danger of naively submitting to the putative wisdom of alleged authorities such as Hippias. The disagreeable Socrates (Socrates' alleged friend and housemate), who ignores conventional etiquette and spurns popular values, knows better. But the two personalities are *eo ipso* not integrated into one psychologically real human being.

### III iii 'οὐσία' at 301b6

The problem of τὸ phrases throughout the investigation provides good reason not to assume that Hippias understands 'τὸ καλόν' at 301b4 to mean *beauty*. Rather, I suggest that he understands 'τὸ καλόν' to mean *that which is beautiful*, in other words, to range over beautiful entities.<sup>48</sup>

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48 Note, then, that there is an inconsistency between our interpretation of 'τὸ καλόν'

Accordingly, τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων, *μα* πράγματα and ὄντα, would not include beauty and the other sorts of *definienda* that Socrates pursues in his WF question. In other words, τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων would not include *F*, but the entities that have *F*. Given this, assuming the word ‘οὐσία’ is used at 301b6 as Plato uses the word ‘οὐσία’ elsewhere among the early dialogues, then bodies of essence (οὐσία) are not identical to the bodies of the πράγματα or ὄντα such as beautiful particulars. Precisely, in the case of τὸ καλόν, essence (οὐσία) and entity (πράγμα) correspond to beauty and that which is beautiful respectively.<sup>49</sup>

Accordingly, when Hippias criticizes Socrates and his associates for not considering the wholes of things (τὰ ὅλα τῶν πραγμάτων), in the case of τὸ καλόν this means that Socrates does not consider beautiful things in their entirety. Instead, Hippias accuses Socrates and his associates of ‘testing (κρούετε)’ that which is beautiful and each thing by ‘taking it separately (ἀπολαμβάνοντες) in their discussions and cutting it up (κατατέμνοντες)’.

The verb ‘κρούειν’, which literally means *to strike*, is here used figuratively, as ‘διακρούειν’ and ‘περικρούειν’ are used at *Theaetetus* 179d3 and *Philebus* 55c7 respectively, to refer to the practice of tapping a vessel in order to determine its structural soundness.<sup>50</sup> The participle ‘ἀπολαμβάνοντες’ is here being used as it is used at *Gorgias* 495a11 where Socrates is developing the position that a person is never sick and healthy at the same time. He begins with an example of ophthalmia: ‘Consider, for example, any part of the body you like, taking it by itself (ἀπολαβόν). A man may have a disease of the eye’. Accordingly, in *Hippias Major*, Hippias is claiming that Socrates takes that which is beautiful and each thing by itself and tests it. In a sense, this is an accurate and uncon-

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as a quantifier phrase, which *ex hypothesi* is not a referring expression, and Hippias’ treatment of τὸ καλόν as one among numerous entities. While I acknowledge that this complicates my interpretation, I do not see that it weakens it; for Hippias’ use of the τὸ phrase as a quantifier phrase does not entail his understanding of it as a non-referring expression.

49 If we are to interpret Hippias himself as a psychologically plausible character — an assumption that seems to me debatable — then, regardless of whether he is confused about τὸ phrases, he must at this point recognize an ontological distinction between *F* and *f* entities. For further consideration of this point and the problem it raises, see section V.

50 I owe these two citations to Grube (1926), 140.

troversial account of Socrates' pursuit of the WF question. For example, consider Socrates' question to Critias in *Charmides*: 'Don't you think it is a common good for more or less everyone that it should become clear how it is with each thing (ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων ὅπη ἔχει)?' (*Chrm* 166d5-6). On the other hand, up to this point Hippias has understood the WF question to ask 'What is that which is F?' not 'What is F?'

The participle 'κατατέμνοντες' is at the crux of Hippias' criticism. Indeed, the place of the participle at the end of the sentence is emphatic. Hippias claims that Socrates in his discussions *cuts up* that which is beautiful and each thing.<sup>51</sup> In opposition to Socrates' discursive dissection, Hippias insists that bodies of essence are so great (οὕτω μεγάλα) by nature (πεφυκότα) and continuous (διανεκῆ). Hippias thus contrasts Socrates' λόγοι about things with the nature (φύσις) of things themselves: in nature bodies of essence are so great and continuous, whereas in Socrates' discussions they are dissected.

Hippias' reference to Socrates' dissection is of course figurative; Socrates dissects in discourse, not actually. Still, it is a question how figuratively Hippias means to use the participle 'κατατέμνοντες'. For example, we speak of analyzing the beauty of beautiful things or of mentally distinguishing beauty as an aspect of beautiful things. But Hippias conceives of Socrates' dissection more literally; he claims that Socrates dissects, albeit in discourse, physical parts of physical things.

Insofar as τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων includes particulars, 'the wholes of things (τὰ ὅλα τῶν πραγμάτων)' refers to these particulars in their physical entirety. Accordingly, 'cutting these up (κατατέμνοντες)' refers to distinguishing different physical parts of the particulars. What physical parts? 'Bodies of essence (σώματα τῆς οὐσίας)' refers to the οὐσίαι, understood as physical bodies, of the πράγματα. For example, in the case of that which is beautiful, a given beautiful thing, say, a maiden,

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51 Compare Socrates' description of his method in *Phaedo*: 'I was afraid my soul would be blinded if I looked at things with my eyes and tried to grasp them with any of my senses. So I thought I must have recourse to accounts (λόγους) and to examine in them the truth of beings (τῶν ὄντων). Now perhaps my metaphor [of being blinded by looking at the sun during an eclipse] is not quite accurate; for I do not grant in the least that he who studies beings (τὰ ὄντα) by means of conceptions (ἐν τοῖς λόγοις) is looking at them in images any more than he who studies them in deeds (ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις). However, that is the way I began' (*Phd* 99e-100a).

is a physical whole and the οὐσία that makes her beautiful (= beauty), is itself a physical body.

Hippias claims that on account of their habit of discursive dissection, Socrates and his associates have overlooked the fact that bodies of being are 'by nature so large (οὕτω μεγάλα ... πεφυκότα)'. Commentators typically translate the adverb 'οὕτω' as emphatic; viz., 'so large' as in *very large*. But with the adjective 'μεγάλα' it is more natural to take the adverb 'οὕτω' as a correlative. As such, it implies that bodies of essence are as great as something else. The question is what else. According to my interpretation, Hippias is claiming that bodies of οὐσίαι are as great as the entities that possess them. In other words, οὐσίαι, which make entities what they are, have the same spatial extension as the entities that possess them.<sup>52</sup>

Hippias also emphasizes that οὐσίαι are continuous: 'καὶ διανεκῆ'. There are at least two ways to interpret this phrase. If the correlative adverb 'οὕτω', which modifies 'μεγάλα', is also taken to modify 'διανεκῆ', then by the continuousness of the bodies of essence Hippias would mean that each οὐσία is continuously extended throughout each entity that possesses it. But this interpretation is undermined by several considerations. First, syntax — 'οὕτω μεγάλα' and 'καὶ διανεκῆ' are separated from one another by 'ὑμᾶς λανθάνει'. While 'καὶ' obviously conjoins 'μεγάλα' and 'διανεκῆ', the separation of the two adjectives by 'ὑμᾶς λανθάνει' suggests that the correlative adverb 'οὕτω' may only modify 'μεγάλα'. Second, sense — if 'διανεκῆ' means that the body of the οὐσία is coextensive with the entity that possesses it,<sup>53</sup> then 'καὶ διανεκῆ' is redundant.

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52 I note that while Hippias conceives of οὐσίαι and the entities that possess them as spatial and coextensive, it is unclear precisely how to interpret their coextension. Consider two alternatives. The spatial extension of οὐσίαι and the entities that possess them may be identical, that is, they may have the same volume. Or οὐσίαι and the entities that possess them may have the same or approximately the same surface areas. In other words, οὐσίαι may, as it were, coat the entities that possess them. Consider in this case Hippias' second definition gold; entities are beautified by gilding. Insofar as Hippias conceives of beauty sensually and cosmetically, the second alternative, however counterintuitive, might in fact be the one he has in mind.

53 The following objection might be raised. Although two bodies have the same extension, one may be discontinuously or non-uniformly extended. Therefore, their magnitudes may differ. I grant this, but see no evidence in the text to support the interpretation of 'διανεκῆ' that this objection encourages.

Consequently, I suggest that 'οὕτω' should not be taken to modify 'διανεκῆ' as well as 'μεγάλα'. Instead, 'διανεκῆ', unmodified, emphasizes that the οὐσία, which makes a given entity the kind of thing that it is, is continuously extended throughout the *aggregate* of entities of that kind. For example, given a set of beautiful particulars, the beauty (οὐσία) which makes beautiful each particular in that aggregate is present in each of the particulars.<sup>54</sup>

Admittedly, (i) the continuity of οὐσία among the aggregate of entities of a kind follows from (ii) a physical conception of οὐσία and the claim that bodies of οὐσία are as large as the entities that possess them. But it is one thing to claim (i) and another thing to emphasize (ii). I am suggesting that the logic of Hippias' expression is that since (i), therefore (ii).

With this, we have arrived at Hippias' rejection of discontinuous properties. Given that bodies of essence are as large as the entities that possess them, it follows that these essences are continuous among aggregates of entities of a given kind. Consequently, discontinuous properties do not exist.

### III iv 'πάθος ἢ οὐσίαν' at 301b8

Hippias concludes his criticism of Socrates with the following words:

And now it has escaped you to such an extent that you think there is something (τι), either an affection (πάθος) or an essence (οὐσίαν), which exists in the case of these things [Ps and Ph] conjointly, but not separately, or in the case of each, but not both.

Up to this point Hippias has been speaking of bodies of essence (οὐσία) and their relation to entities that possess them. He now includes πάθη and subsumes οὐσία and πάθος under a more general, albeit vague category (τι). This maneuver raises two questions. Why does Hippias now include the concept πάθος? And why does he subsume οὐσία and πάθος under a more general category?

In discussing the use of οὐσία in *Euthyphro* in particular, we noted the distinction between οὐσία and πάθος. Furthermore, we noted that the οὐσία-πάθος distinction includes two elements of the trinity οὐσία-

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54 Consistent with this interpretation is the scholiast Diogenianus' gloss of 'διανεκῆ' as 'διὰ παντός', on which see Allen (1938), 177.

πάθος-ποιήμα. The distinction between οὐσία and πάθος is not equivalent to that between essence and accident because ποιήματα as well as πάθη might be accidental features of a thing. For example, Socrates running does not identify what Socrates is. Furthermore, 'property' is an unsatisfactory translation of 'πάθος' since ποιήματα too are properties. Indeed, οὐσίαι are also properties. This might encourage the view that the distinction between οὐσία, on the one hand, and πάθος and ποιήμα, on the other, is equivalent to the distinction between essence or essential properties and accidental properties. But surely Plato would not want to say that seeing is an accidental property of the eye or that being seen is an accidental property of color and shape. It is most prudent, then, to identify πάθη with affections, ποιήματα with actions, and οὐσίαι with essences, and to speak of all of these as properties. It must be emphasized, however, that Plato himself has no word for property. Yet when Hippias speaks of something (τι) that exists, be it a πάθος or οὐσία, we may reasonably identify the nondescript category under which πάθος and οὐσία fall as that of property.

It remains a question why Hippias introduces πάθος at all since his criticism is specifically of Socrates' misconception of bodies of οὐσία, not bodies of πάθη. The reason is that Socrates himself introduces the concept of πάθος when he first considers the relation between *K* and *Ps*, *Ph*, and *Psh*: 'If, then, these pleasures [*Ps* and *Ph*] both undergo (πεπόνθασιν) something, but each does not, they would not both be beautiful because of this affection (τούτω τῷ παθήματι)' (*Hippias Major* 300b4-5). Hippias subsequently follows Socrates' lead and speaks in terms of affections and being affected. Accordingly, the question in fact should not be why at 301b8 Hippias introduces the word 'πάθος' in the disjunction 'πάθος ἢ οὐσίαν', but why at 301b6 he speaks of bodies of essence (οὐσία) rather than bodies of affection (πάθος). The answer to this question is that Hippias, in speaking of Socrates and his associates' customary discursive dissections, alludes to the WF question and the WF question seeks an οὐσία, for *F* is the οὐσία of beautiful things.<sup>55</sup> Hippias subsequently includes the word 'πάθος' because in defense of his continuity principle,

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55 I acknowledge that this explanation entails that Hippias here comprehends the nature of Socrates' WF question in a way that may seem inconsistent with his confusion of the WF question up to this point in the investigation. I discuss this point in section V.

the properties that he introduced into the discussion — being just, healthy, tired, wounded, struck 'or being affected (πεπονθώς) in any way whatsoever, being golden, silver, ivory, of noble-birth, wise, honored, old, young, or anything else you wish that happens to humans' — include πάθη. Thus, Hippias' continuity principle includes οὐσία of the kind that the WF question pursues as well as πάθη. For this reason, at the beginning of the paper, I introduced the continuity principle as concerning the continuity of *properties*, rather than merely affections.

### III v 'οὐσία' at 302c5

There is one further instance of 'οὐσία' in *Hippias Major* that deserves brief consideration:

For I said at the beginning of this discussion that pleasures through sight and hearing were beautiful not because of that thing that each [*Ps* and *Ph* separately] happens to have experienced, but not both conjointly, but because of that thing that both conjointly and each separately have experienced; for you granted that both conjointly and each individually were beautiful. For this reason, I thought that if both conjointly were beautiful, it was because of that being (τῇ οὐσίᾳ) that attends (ἐπομένῃ) upon (ἐπ' ) both (ἀμθότερα). (*Hippias Major* 302b6-c6)

In view of the preceding interpretation of Hippias' criticism, this passage is significant in two respects. The first is that in speaking here of *K* as an οὐσία, Socrates himself clearly recognizes a distinction between οὐσία and the entities, *Ps* and *Ph*, that possess the οὐσία. This strongly supports my interpretation of the distinction in Hippias' criticism between that which is beautiful (τὸ καλόν), a πράγμα, and that because of which that which is beautiful is beautiful, an οὐσία.

Socrates' use of 'οὐσία' at 302c5 is also significant for the following reason. As we noted, Socrates initially speaks of *K* as a πάθος; while in his criticism Hippias initially speaks of οὐσία, but subsequently extends the application of the continuity principle to include both οὐσία and πάθη. It is a question, then, why Socrates himself switches from talk of πάθος to οὐσία. Of course, we may say that Socrates simply follows Hippias' usage, but I propose a more substantive explanation. *Ps* and *Ph* are identifiable in at least two distinct ways, *qua* pleasures and *qua* beautiful things. As we noted, when Socrates first speaks of *Ps* and *Ph*, he distinguishes them from other sensory pleasures, namely pleasures

through touch, taste, and smell. The relation of *K* to *Ps* and *Ph qua* pleasures is that of *πάθος*, for pleasures are not pleasures insofar as they possess *K*. But the relation of *K* to *Ps* and *Ph qua* beautiful things is that of *οὐσία*, for beautiful things are beautiful because they possess *K*.

#### IV The Function of Hippias' Critique

I suggest that Plato composes Hippias' critique of Socrates at 301b2-c2 and Socrates' response in order to criticize a corporeal conception of *F* and of the relation between *F* and *f* entities (hereafter referred to as the *Ff* relation).

In view of his first two definitions, it is clear, at least in the initial stages of the investigation, that Hippias conceives of *F* and of the *Ff* relation corporeally. Hippias' corporeal conception of *F* and of the *Ff* relation is complicit with his interpretation of the meaning of τὸ phrase in the WF question as *that which is beautiful*; Hippias' first response to the question 'What is τὸ καλόν?' is a beautiful maiden. Following the rejection of this definition, Socrates encourages Hippias to reconsider the WF question: 'Do you still think that the beautiful itself (αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν), by which everything else is ordered (κοσμεῖται) and appears beautiful when that Form (εἶδος) is added (προσγένηται), is a young woman, horse, or lyre?' (*Hippias Major* 289d2-4). Here Socrates describes the *Ff* relation as one of addition (προσγεννήσις).<sup>56</sup> He clearly does not mean that the physical attachment of *F* to *f* particulars makes them beautiful. But Hippias' conception of *F* and of the *Ff* relation appears to be quite concrete. Under the influence of the verb 'κοσμεῖται', which Hippias interprets to mean *is adorned*, and the word 'εἶδος', which he interprets to mean *visual aspect* or *appearance*, Hippias takes Socrates to be asking him to identify the kind of physical thing that when added to other objects, beautifies them.

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56 Compare *Phaedrus* 100d4-e3: '... nothing else makes it [whatever is beautiful] beautiful than the presence or communion with that thing which is the beautiful itself (αὐτοῦ τοῦ καλοῦ) in whatever way and howsoever it is added or attached (προσγενομένη) — for I do not yet confidently affirm this. But I do assert that all beautiful things become beautiful because of the beautiful (τῷ καλῷ). For this seems to me to be the safest reply to myself and to another ... that [it is] because of the beautiful (τῷ καλῷ) [that] beautiful things become beautiful'.

Furthermore, given Socrates' emphasis on the purity condition — that *F* must not admit the contrary of *F* — Hippias considers the sort of physical thing that is not in any respect ugly and so whose capacity to beautify objects through its addition is greater than any other. His solution is gold; objects are made fine through gilding. Thus, the *Ff* relation is conceived as one of physical contiguity.

Granted that in the first stages of the investigation Hippias conceives of *F* and of the *Ff* relation corporeally, it may well be doubted whether his conception of *F* and of the *Ff* relation remains corporeal throughout the investigation. In particular, Hippias' third definition of τὸ καλὸν is of a paradigmatic Greek male life: to be rich, healthy, honored by the Greeks, to reach old age, and after having provided a beautiful funeral for one's parents, to be beautifully and magnificently buried by one's own children. Thus, arguably by the time Hippias proposes his third definition, he no longer conceives of the *definiendum* as corporeal; consequently, he would not conceive of the *Ff* relation as corporeal.

Certainly when he proposes his third definition, Hippias cannot have a corporeal conception of τὸ καλὸν in mind. Nevertheless, he might revert to one later in the investigation. Among other early Platonic definitional dialogues, there are examples of interlocutors who revert to a particular conception of *F* at some later point in the investigation following the rejection of that conception. For example, in *Lysis* Lysis and Menexenus initially agree that friendship is based on likeness; this conception is subsequently refuted, but at the end of the investigation, they again suppose that friendship is between likes. Another example occurs in *Euthyphro*. Euthyphro initially suggests that the holy is the god-beloved; this definition is refuted, but at the end of the dialogue Euthyphro re-commits himself to this view.

Plato's composition of such conditions seems to suggest that Socrates' interlocutors are deeply wedded to particular, often conventional conceptions. Consequently, one counter-argument, however sound, may not suffice to disabuse an interlocutor of a misguided view. Indeed, certain interlocutors are especially intractable. Consider Socrates' statement to Callicles late in the investigation in *Gorgias*: 'Callicles, the love of Demos in your soul resists me. And yet if we were to examine these same matters frequently and perhaps better, you would be convinced' (*Grg* 513c7-d1). Compare also Socrates' claim in *Apology* that the time constraints on legal proceedings undermines his ability to convince the jury, though he is confident he could succeed if he had the leisure.

In *Hippias Major* Socrates criticizes his own first definition, τὸ πρέπον (the decorous or proper), on the grounds that the decorous makes things

appear, not be beautiful. Hippias agrees that the decorous makes things appear beautiful. But, as his following remark indicates, he understands this claim concretely: 'as when a man takes clothes or shoes that fit, even if he is laughable [without these accoutrements], he appears to be more beautiful [with them]' (*Hp Ma* 294a4-5). Thus, here, as in the case of his second definition, Hippias seems to conceptualize τὸ καλόν in sensual and corporeal terms.

Once more, as we have seen in considering Hippias' critique of Socrates' commitment to discontinuous properties, and specifically his use of the word 'σώματα' at 301b6, Hippias treats the οὐσία that makes things beautiful as corporeal.

Granted that Hippias' remarks at various points throughout the investigation suggest that he conceives of *F* and of the *Ff* relation in corporeal terms, it is not coincidental that the evidence I have cited for Hippias' corporeal conception derives specifically from the initial stages of the first movement of the investigation, the consideration of Socrates' first definition, and the final definition. To appreciate the reason for this correlation between the evidence for Hippias' corporeal conception of *F* and the *Ff* relation and the structure of the investigation as a whole, we need to further clarify the structure of the investigation.

As I suggested above, the investigation is divisible into three movements: Hippias' three definitions, Socrates' first three definitions, and Socrates' fourth and final definition. My reason for dividing Socrates' definitions into two movements is as follows. In the course of the proposal and examination of Hippias' first three definitions, beauty is conceptualized in three distinct *modes*. Hippias initially conceives of *F* sensually, specifically in terms of visual perception. A beautiful maiden and gold are attractive to the eye. In criticizing Hippias' second definition, Socrates argues that a figwood ladle is more beautiful than a golden ladle because it is more useful. Through this criticism, beauty is conceptualized in terms of instrumentality or functionality. Finally, Hippias' third definition is ethical.

Socrates' first three definitions correspond to each of these modes of conceptualizing beauty: the decorous, which is conceived in sensual terms and rejected on the grounds that it makes things appear rather than be beautiful; the useful, which is rejected on the grounds that that which is instrumental to a bad end is not beautiful (that is, has negative value); and the beneficial, which of course entails the concept of goodness.

The fundamental difference between Hippias' three definitions and Socrates' first three definitions does not, then, lie in what I am calling

their various modes of conceptualizing beauty, but rather in the fact that Hippias' definitions are formally incorrect, whereas Socrates' definitions are formally correct answers to the WF question. By formally incorrect, I mean that Hippias' answers are not even plausible candidates for satisfying certain conditions implicit in the WF question. Precisely, these conditions include the fact that  $F$  itself is identical in the case of all  $f$  entities, that  $F$  is that because of which all  $f$  entities are  $f$ , and that  $F$  is not identical to  $f$  entities.<sup>57</sup> Hippias' failure to provide candidates that may plausibly satisfy these conditions results from his semantic confusion of the τὸ phrase 'τὸ καλὸν' and from his failure to appreciate that  $F$  and  $f$  entities belong to distinct ontological kinds. Accordingly, in response to all three of Hippias' definitions Socrates' alleged friend complains: 'stop making answers of this kind and in this way, for they are too simple minded and easy to refute' (*Hp Ma* 293d7-8). Socrates' three formally satisfactory definitions then follow. In short, the first two movements of the investigation have a parallel structure in that they progress through the same modes of conceptualizing beauty in the same order.

The question now is how Socrates' fourth and final definition relates to the preceding two movements. We have seen that the rejection of Socrates' third definition is based on an error, a semantic confusion of τὸ phrases. As such, the rejection of Socrates' third definition is misguided. On the other hand, even if the semantic confusion did not hamstring the investigation, Socrates' third definition would be unsatisfactory insofar as it lacks explanatory power, that is, substance. Assume that in fact beauty and goodness or benefit are identical; a substantive account of these things is still wanting. In this respect, consider Thrasymachus' criticism of Socrates:

And don't tell me that it [justice] is the obligatory or the beneficial or the profitable or the gainful or the advantageous, but tell me clearly and precisely what you maintain it is, for I won't accept it if you speak that sort of nonsense. (*R I*, 336c6-d4)

In this light, and assuming that beauty is identifiable with goodness or benefit, Socrates' fourth definition can be understood as an attempt

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<sup>57</sup> The notion of a formally correct answer to the WF question is discussed in Wolfsdorf (2003). These particular formal, so-called category conditions of the WF question are explained on page 186.

to provide a substantive account of beauty.<sup>58</sup> Here Socrates appeals to an obvious conventional conception, pleasure, precisely a form of sensual pleasure. Observe that Socrates' fourth definition differs from Hippias' first definition in that it plausibly satisfies the formal conditions of the WF question and that it differs from Socrates' first definition in that it offers a substantive account. At the same time, it resembles both of these previous definitions in that it reverts to the sensual mode of conceptualizing beauty. The sensual is bound to the corporeal. For this reason, evidence for a corporeal conception of *F* and of the *Ff* relation emerges precisely in the initial stages of the first movement, in consideration of Socrates' first definition, and in the final movement of the investigation.

In contrast to the evidence for Hippias' corporeal conception of *F* and of the *Ff* relation, Socrates, in his criticism of Hippias' continuity principle through appeal to mathematical examples, makes it clear that the *Ff* relation is not, generally, reducible to corporeal or sensual terms.<sup>59</sup>

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58 In formulating this conception of the relation between Socrates' fourth definition and his previous three definitions, I am influenced by Tarrant (1991).

59 Granted this, it is curious that Socrates nonetheless concedes to Hippias that beauty is a continuous property. Thus, one might speculate on whether Plato himself would have endorsed Socrates' concession on this point. The answer clearly depends on what substantive conception of beauty Plato would endorse. I assume that Plato would endorse the identification of beauty and goodness. If so, then the question can be reformulated in terms of what substantive conception of goodness Plato would endorse. There is only one passage in the early dialogues where Socrates offers a substantive account of goodness. The passage occurs in the Callicles episode of *Gorgias* after Socrates has refuted Callicles' hedonism: '... we and all things are good (ἀγαθά) insofar as we are good through the presence of some excellence (ἀρετῆς) ... The excellence of each thing, be it equipment, the body, the soul, or any living thing, is not best produced just at random, but through an order (τάξει), correctness (ὀρθότητι), and craft (τέχνη) that is assigned to each thing ... The excellence of each thing is its being arranged (τεταγμένον) and designed (κεκοσμημένον) according to an order (τάξει) ... And so a certain design (κόσμος) appropriate to each thing being present in each thing renders each thing good (ἀγαθόν)' (*Grg* 501d1-e4). According to this passage, goodness is order, and, I emphasize, order here replaces Callicles' conception of goodness as pleasure. Again, in *Gorgias* immediately following his comment that wise men call the universe a κόσμος (order), Socrates criticizes Callicles as follows: 'But it has escaped you that geometrical equality has great power among humans and gods; and you think it is necessary to exercise greed because you neglect geometry' (508b). Socrates here conceives of order in mathematical terms. This is noteworthy in relation to Socrates' examples of discontinuous properties in *Hippias Major*. If Plato would have en-

## V Conclusion

Socrates rebuts Hippias' critique of his discursive practice and specifically of his commitment to the existence of discontinuous properties. The existence of discontinuous properties precludes a general conception of  $F$  and of the  $Ff$  relation in corporeal terms. Nevertheless, the foregoing discussion has revealed Hippias' critique, granted its limitations, to be clearer and more complex than has previously been recognized. Hippias and Socrates' exchange is metaphysically charged. Its contents adumbrate, for instance, problems with Forms and of their relation to participants that figure in the introductory movement of *Parmenides*.

On the other hand, my interpretation of Hippias and Socrates' exchange is not without its problems. The main difficulty concerns the inconsistency that arguably emerges between the coherence and cogency of Hippias' critique, again, granted its limitations and the poverty of Hippias' contributions prior to this point in the investigation. In other words, for Hippias to articulate the kind of critique of Socrates that I suggest he does at 301b2-c2, arguably he would have to have a better grasp of the material under discussion than he demonstrates prior to his critique. In particular, Hippias uses 'οὐσία' consistently with Socrates' use elsewhere among the early dialogues. Yet in *Hippias Major* it is Hippias himself who introduces the term. Moreover, Hippias' distinction between οὐσία and πράγματα or ὄντα suggests a grasp of the WF question that Hippias does not demonstrate prior to his critique. In short, my clarification of Hippias' critique arguably comes at the expense of creating some inconsistency in the portrayal of Hippias.

Assuming that this difficulty is real, I see three distinct sorts of response to it. One is to reject my interpretation of Hippias' critique for a view such as Grube's or Kahn's. That is to say, at 301b2-c2 Hippias in

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dorsed the conception of goodness in *Gorgias* and if he would have identified beauty with order — two large ifs — then arguably he would have denied that beauty is a continuous property; for arguably order is not a continuous property. If so, this deepens the explanation of the function of Hippias' critique at 301b2-c2. Support for this speculation should include an explanation of the divergence between Plato and his character, at least the congenial half of Socrates' split personality. I defer that for another place.

fact is confused and incoherent; he deploys sophisticated metaphysical concepts, but with an inadequate grasp of them. As I hope my discussion has shown, the textual evidence, including Socrates' response to Hippias' critique, does not support this position.

The second and third responses grant the accuracy of my interpretation. The second would seek to minimize the appearance of inconsistency between Hippias' critique and his prior contributions. More precisely, it might attempt to explain how in the course of the formulation and consideration of Socrates' fourth definition, Hippias gains a certain insight that he heretofore lacked. In support of this alternative, consider the following. Hippias' belated recognition of the ontological distinction between *F* and entities that possess *F* may be explained as following Socrates' distinction, in the course of his formulation of his fourth definition, between different kinds of pleasures and claim that *Ps*, *Ph*, and *Psh* — unlike pleasures through touch, taste, and smell — must have *K* in common. Consider especially Socrates' use of 'εἶδος' at 298b4, 'μέρος' at 299b3, and 'τὸ ἄτιον' at 299e4. In this passage Socrates introduces the concept μέρος (part) to distinguish *Ps*, *Ph*, and *Psh* from pleasure in general. Thus, Socrates' claims may clarify for Hippias that *K* is a part of and so distinguishable from things that possess *K*, in other words, that beauty is distinct from beautiful things.

The third alternative would simply accept that Plato's portrayal of Hippias is not entirely consistent or psychologically plausible. Instead, Plato's interest in composing Hippias' critique and Socrates' rebuttal, given the function that I have attributed to it, would be interpreted as superceding any interest that Plato might have had in complying with the strictures of realism. In support of this position, one might appeal to un-realistic dimensions of Plato's dramaturgy, perhaps especially to the bifurcation of Socrates throughout *Hippias Major* itself — granted that if Hippias' critique is psychologically implausible, the inconsistency is not composed as a systematic device in the way that Socrates' split personality throughout the dialogue is. Admission of some degree of unrealism in Plato's dramaturgy is, no doubt, a dangerous hermeneutic maneuver. It could be abused to bend the text to the interpreter's will, as, for instance, the appeal to Socratic irony is often conveniently used. Nonetheless, if independent evidence could be marshaled to show that there are limits to realism in the dialogues, then perhaps this third alternative would be corroborated.

The second alternative is less controversial. But at present, I need not settle the issue. So long as either the second or third succeeds, the results

generated in the preceding pages will stand. I note the difficulty because I observe it and to suggest a direction for further inquiry.

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