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# Δικαιοσύνη *and* Ὁσιότης *at* Protagoras 330-1

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## I Introduction and Review

In an argument in *Protagoras* for the similarity of δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης Socrates introduces the following set of propositions:

(1) δικαιοσύνη is δίκαιον.<sup>1</sup>

(2) ὁσιότης is ὅσιον.<sup>2</sup>

(3) δικαιοσύνη is ὅσιον.<sup>3</sup>

(4) ὁσιότης is δίκαιον.<sup>4</sup>

The meanings of (1)-(4) remain controversial. The objective of this paper is to give an update on the state of the discussion and to offer my own interpretation.

The words 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'δίκαιον' are typically translated as 'justice' and 'just'. Thus, (1) is rendered as 'Justice is just'. The words 'ὁσιότης' and 'ὅσιον' are typically translated as 'piety' or 'holiness' and 'pious' or 'holy'. But 'piety' and 'holiness' are not synonyms. Humans and their actions can be pious or holy, but inanimate objects can be holy,

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1 330c4-d1

2 330d2-e1

3 331a7-b3

4 331a7-b3

but not pious. Thus, it is unclear whether to translate (2)-(4) as 'Holiness is holy', 'Justice is holy', and 'Holiness is just', or 'Piety is pious', 'Justice is pious', and 'Piety is just'. For much of the paper I will retain the original Greek and render the key words in English only where necessary. Translations are semantic clarifications, so I want to avoid begging the question.

In view of the surface grammar, it has often been suggested that (1) and (2) are self-predications. Vlastos, following Russell,<sup>5</sup> introduced the phrase 'self-predication' into Platonic studies in the 1950s.<sup>6</sup> He interprets the condition as the attribution of a property (or character, as he calls it) to a 'corresponding' εἶδος and he schematizes instances as  $\Phi \varepsilon F$ . According to this schema, "Φ" is the name of a Form, "F" [designates the] character corresponding to that Form (as, e.g., "just" to "Justice"), and "ε" is the Peano symbol for class-membership.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the schema means that the εἶδος Φ is a member of the set whose members have the property F. In short, the εἶδος Φ has the property F.

There are difficulties with this conception of self-predication, one of which Vlastos discusses and which I will explain now. In the schema  $\Phi \varepsilon F$  the property F is said to correspond to the εἶδος Φ. The logical symbols make it appear that Φ is ontologically distinct from F. But this is misleading, since the relation of so-called correspondence can be nothing other than identity. In Platonic metaphysics what it means to have a certain property F is to participate in the εἶδος Φ, and, as Vlastos notes, participation is always conceived as aliorrelative. This implies that the εἶδος participates in itself, and that is metaphysical nonsense.<sup>8</sup>

Another difficulty, which Vlastos does not acknowledge, is that there is no evidence in *Protagoras* that Socrates regards the ἀρεταί as abstract Forms. There is not even evidence that he regards them as immanent universals. The words 'εἶδος' and 'ιδέα' do not occur in *Protagoras*. Consequently, (1)-(4) are not self-predications, for self-predication, as

5 Bertrand Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics* (Cambridge: 1903), §§96, 97, 102

6 Gregory Vlastos, 'The Third Man Argument in the *Parmenides*', *Philosophical Review* 63 (1954) 319-49. The phrase is first introduced at 324.

7 Gregory Vlastos, 'The Unity of the Virtues in the *Protagoras*', in *Platonic Studies* [PS], 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1981) 221-65, at 258

8 Gregory Vlastos, 'Self-Predication and Self-Participation in Plato's Later Period', in *PS*, 335-341

defined, is a condition that can only occur within a metaphysical discursive context.<sup>9</sup>

Insofar as the condition of self-predication depends upon the subject of the given proposition being conceived as an εἶδος, Vlastos' definition of self-predication is unnecessarily narrow. I propose to broaden it to include the referents of general expressions, whether or not these are conceived as εἶδη.<sup>10</sup> With the definition thus broadened, the question may again be posed whether (1) and (2) are self-predications.

Some scholars have suggested that they should not be interpreted as such.<sup>11</sup> In view of the apparent unintelligibility of (1) and (2) as self-predications, Vlastos himself developed an alternative solution.<sup>12</sup> He suggests that (1)-(4) are Pauline predications.<sup>13</sup> As Pauline predications, the deep grammar of (1) and (2) govern their interpretation as  $\forall x (\Delta x \supset \Delta x)$  and

- 9 Daniel T. Devereux, 'Pauline Predications in Plato' [PPP], *Apeiron* 11 (1977) 1-4, also makes this point: 'We may note first of all that Socrates does not use the term εἶδος (or ἰδέα) ... anywhere in *Protagoras*. I suggest that the term "Justice" ... refers to a power or disposition of an individual's soul rather than to a form' (2).
- 10 As I will discuss in section II, this conception of self-predication is also in some respect misleading.
- 11 R.E. Allen, 'Participation and Predication in Plato's Middle Dialogues', *Philosophical Review* 69 (1960) 147-64, argues that these should be interpreted as identity statements. Alexander Nehamas, 'Self-Predication and Plato's Theory of Forms', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16 (1979) 93-103, argues that (1) and (2) should be interpreted to mean *F* is what it is to be *F*. But Gregory Vlastos, 'On a Proposed Redefinition of "Self-Predication" in Plato', *Phronesis* 26 (1981) 76-9, shows that when 'correctly analyzed [the predicate "what it is to be *F*"] turns out to be a simple identity disguised by periphrastic grammar.' So, Nehamas' interpretations of (1) and (2) may, in spite of the author, also be understood as identity statements.
- 12 Vlastos remarks that if interpreted as self-predications the propositions from *Protagoras* would be nonsense, because they assert that 'an abstract Form [has] a property which only concrete individuals — persons — and by legitimate extension, their actions, dispositions, institutions, laws, etc., could possibly have' (PS, 405). Though, again, there is no evidence in *Protagoras* that Socrates regards the ἀπεραι as abstract Forms. (I comment on this citation from Vlastos in n. 73.)
- 13 'The term "Pauline predication" originated with Sandra Peterson. It is an allusion to St. Paul's statement that "Charity is long-suffering and kind", which Vlastos takes to be a paradigm case of Pauline predication' (Jerome Wakefield, 'Vlastos on the Unity of Virtue: Why Pauline Predication Will Not Save the Biconditionality Thesis' [VUV], *Ancient Philosophy* 11 (1991) 47-65, at n. 1).

$\forall x (Ox \supset Ox)$  respectively. Accordingly, the subjects of (1) and (2) do not function as referring expressions but as universal quantifier phrases; and so, (1) and (2) are logically true analytic propositions.<sup>14</sup>

Several scholars have criticized Vlastos' proposal.<sup>15</sup> Devereux, Teloh, Nehamas, Malcolm, and Wakefield all take the subjects of (1)-(4) as referring expressions. I believe this is correct, given the character of the discussion preceding the introduction of (1)-(4). I will return to this point in section II. Granting this, it remains a question why Socrates and Protagoras do not find (1)-(4) odd. After all, Vlastos suggests a Pauline interpretation of (1)-(4), because he finds the idea of δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης having the properties δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης nonsensical.

One response to (1)-(4) has been to deny that they are in fact odd. Taylor writes: 'If justice is seen as a force in a man causing him to act justly, it is by no means *obviously nonsensical* to describe it as holy, or for that matter just.'<sup>16</sup> The problem with Taylor's remark is that he owes us an account of how sensibly to interpret them.

Wakefield comments that 'the attribution of moral properties to psychological states, of which traits of character are instances, is not only legitimate and sensible, but commonplace. For example, people can possess courageous resolves, cowardly fears, wise beliefs, just intentions, temperate desires, and holy attitudes of reverence.'<sup>17</sup> Admittedly, certain psychological states can sensibly be said to have ethical properties, including piety or holiness and justice. But (1)-(4) seem odd because Socrates attributes the particular ethical properties, δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης, to the particular entities, δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης. It does not

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14 This expression is from Willard van Orman Quine, 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism', in *From a Logical Point of View*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (New York: Harper Torchbooks 1961) 20-46, at 22

15 Henry Teloh, 'Self-Predication or Anaxagorean Causation in Plato' [SPA], *Apeiron* 9 (1975) 15-23; Devereux, *PPP*; John Malcolm, 'Vlastos on Pauline Predication', *Phronesis* 30 (1985) 79-91; Wakefield, *VUV*; cf. also Jerome Wakefield, 'Why Justice and Holiness are Similar: *Protagoras* 330-331' [WJH], *Phronesis* 32 (1987) 267-76; John Malcolm, *Plato on the Self-Predication of Forms* [PSP] (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1991), at 11-46

16 C C W. Taylor, *Plato: Protagoras* [PProt], rev. edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1991), at 119-20. The phrase 'obviously nonsensical' is a reference to Vlastos (see n. 12)

17 Wakefield, *VUV*, 54

follow from the demonstration that the attribution of some ethical properties to some psychological states is intelligible that the attribution of other ethical properties to other psychological states is intelligible. Wakefield, like Taylor, owes us an account of what it means to attribute the properties δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης to the psychological states δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης.

Malcolm, who, like Taylor, Teloh, and Wakefield, takes the predicates in (1)-(4) to be 'ordinary descriptive predicates' speaks of (1) and (2) as self-exemplifications:

... some general immanent characteristics can plausibly be taken to be instances of themselves. The common characteristic, Unity, is one. It does not unduly strain credulity to suppose that the universal nature of Beauty is itself a beautiful thing.<sup>18</sup>

Accordingly, Malcolm suggests that Socrates understands (1) and (3) as claiming that δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης are δίκαιον, where 'δίκαιον' means '[forming] a part of the ordered nature of things ... being what it is and keeping to the limits of its own nature and function.'<sup>19</sup> Likewise, in (2) and (4) ὀσιότης and δικαιοσύνη are understood to be ὅσιον, where 'ὅσιον' means 'hallowed, sanctioned, or allowed by the law of God or nature' and 'intrinsically lovable by the gods'.<sup>20</sup>

I find Malcolm's proposal unsatisfactory for three reasons. Each of these may not in and of itself be sufficiently compelling to reject his proposal, but collectively they render it unpersuasive. First, consider the meanings Malcolm ascribes to the predicates 'δίκαιον' and 'ὅσιον'. It is conceivable that Socrates or Protagoras could have recognized 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'ὀσιότης' as having the meanings Malcolm suggests. At least, such meanings are in some sense consonant with Greek thought. But I doubt Socrates and Protagoras would have understood (1)-(4) in this way in the present context. When Socrates introduces (1)-(4) there has been no prior discussion of the identity of δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης suggestive of the meanings Malcolm ascribes to the related predicates. Thus, the suggested interpretation of (1)-(4) would have to rest on the

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18 *PSP*, 37

19 *ibid.*, 38

20 *ibid.*, 37

assumption that this interpretation is the most obvious and natural one to Socrates and Protagoras. I find this implausible, again, particularly in view of the context in which (1)-(4) are introduced. I return to this point in section II.

A second problem is that on Malcolm's reading Socrates' argument for the similarity of δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης is significantly weakened, so much so that it seems unlikely he could have intended the argument as such at all. On the same grounds as the interpretation Malcolm gives, Socrates could argue for the similarity of unity and δικαιοσύνη. Both are one and form a part of the ordered nature of the world, being what they are and keeping to the limits of their own nature and function.<sup>21</sup>

The third problem has to do with Protagoras' view of (2)-(4). In response to the question, 'Is ὁσιότης ὅσιον?', the interlocutors exchange the following dialogue:

"For my part I should be annoyed (ἀγανακτήσαιμι) at this question," I said, "and should answer: Hush, my good sir! It is hard to see how anything could be ὅσιον if ὁσιότης itself is not ὅσιον. And you — would you not make the same reply?" "Certainly I would," [Protagoras] said.<sup>22</sup>

Both Socrates and Protagoras take (2) to be extremely obvious. On the other hand, while Socrates finds (3) and (4) also to be obvious, Protagoras does not agree.<sup>23</sup> If Protagoras understands the predicates 'δίκαιον' and

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21 Malcolm might respond here that Socrates' argument is precisely so weak. The evidence for this is Protagoras' response that agreement to (1)-(4) does not license the conclusion that δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης are alike, for, as he says, each thing in the world is like each other thing in *some* way. 'Thus, there is a point in which white resembles black, and hard soft, and so with all the other things which are regarded as most opposite one another — and the things which we spoke of before as having different δυνάμεις and not being of the same kind as one another, the parts of the face. These in some sense resemble one another and are of like sort. In this way, therefore, you could prove, if you chose, that even these things are all like one another. But it is not fair to describe things as like which have some point alike, however small, or as unlike that have some point unlike' (331d2-e4). But Socrates finds this response remarkable: 'This surprised me and I said to him, "What? Do you regard τὸ δίκαιον and τὸ ὅσιον as so related to one another that they only have some small point of likeness?"' (331e4-6)

22 330d5-e2

23 'Well now, Protagoras, after that admission, what answer shall we give him if he

'ὄσιον' as Malcolm suggests, then it is unclear why he is reluctant to admit (3) and (4) as Socrates does. Perhaps Malcolm would respond that Socrates understands (3) and (4) as suggested, but that Protagoras understands them differently. But if this is so, then Protagoras could not have understood (1) and (2) as Socrates does either. Yet he finds (1) intelligible, and he agrees that (2) is annoyingly obvious. So, there is need to explain how Protagoras could understand (1) and (2) differently, but also readily. In short, I am not persuaded by Malcolm's interpretation of (1) and (2) as self-exemplifications and (3) and (4) as derivatively explicable.

Another feature of Malcolm's interpretation is the claim, in contrast to that of Teloh, Wakefield, and Devereux, that Socrates conceives of δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης in (1)-(4) as universals, but not as psychic states. I have suggested that this view is mistaken because Socrates does not use the words 'εἶδος' or 'ιδέα' for the ἀρεταί or at all in *Protagoras*. But Malcolm also claims that although in *Protagoras* and *Laches* the cardinal aretaic terms are used in investigating states of the ψυχή, in *Republic I* and *Charmides* they are also considered to be properties of action.<sup>24</sup> Assuming that *Charmides*, *Republic I*, *Laches*, and *Protagoras* are concep-

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goes on to ask this question: Is not ὀσιότης something of such a nature as to be δίκαιον, and δικαιοσύνη such as to be ὄσιον, or can it be ἀνόσιον? Can ὀσιότης be not δίκαιον and therefore ἄδικον and δικαιοσύνη ἀνόσιον? What is to be your reply? I should say myself, on my own behalf, that both δικαιοσύνη is ὄσιον and ὀσιότης is δίκαιον; and with your permission I would make this same reply for you also, since δικαιοσύνη is either the same thing as ὀσιότης or extremely like it; and above all δικαιοσύνη is of the same kind as ὀσιότης and ὀσιότης as δικαιοσύνη. Are you minded to forbid this answer, or are you in agreement with it? I do not take quite so simple a view of it, Socrates, as to grant that δικαιοσύνη is ὄσιον and ὀσιότης is δίκαιον. I think we have to make a distinction here' (331a6-c3).

- 24 'It is true that in dialogues such as the *Laches* and *Protagoras* the virtue-terms are introduced in the context of gaining insight into 'states of soul'. Hence, arriving at a common characteristic and determining a type of psychic state will not be distinguishable. But this is not always the case, as Penner admits. He grants that in the *Charmides* and *Republic I* the discussion begins by considering virtues as properties of actions, but stresses that Socrates soon focuses on qualities of agents. It is, indeed, a natural progression to start from the more accessible overt behavior and proceed to the more fundamental factor, the psychic state producing this. This is no reason to believe, however, that the virtue-term is no longer intended to cover virtuous actions' (PSP, 34; see also 34-6). The reference to Penner is Terry Penner, 'The Unity of Virtue', *Philosophical Review* 82 (1973) 35-68, at 48, n. 17.

tually unified on this point, Malcolm thinks the ἀρεταί cannot simply be viewed as psychic states. I grant that Socrates' conception of the ἀρεταί in *Charmides*, *Republic I*, *Laches*, and *Protagoras* is unified. But I do not believe he regards them as properties or characteristics of action as well as of psychic states.

I return to this point in section II. But I raise the topic here, because Teloh's discussion of (1)-(4) focuses on the relation of states of the ψυχή and action. He suggests that at the time Plato composed *Protagoras* (and throughout the composition of the early dialogues) he '[took] for granted the causal principle that a cause must have the quality [that] it produces in something else.'<sup>25</sup> Thus, since, e.g., δίκαιον action is caused by δικαιοσύνη, a state of the ψυχή, δικαιοσύνη must have the quality that it causes such acts to have; and so, δικαιοσύνη is δίκαιον.<sup>26</sup>

I do not deny that in some dialogues Socrates is committed to something like the causal principle.<sup>27</sup> But, I do not believe he is committed to it in *Protagoras*. Moreover, I do not deny that in some early dialogues Socrates grants that if *x* causes *y* to have certain properties, then *x* itself must have those properties. But I do not believe Socrates assumes this as a general principle about all properties, their transitivity and derivation.<sup>28</sup> In *Charmides* Socrates assumes that if σωφροσύνη makes a man

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25 SPA, 15. Teloh finds a precedent of this idea in Wilfred Sellars, 'Vlastos and the "Third Man"', *Philosophical Review* 64 (1955) 405-37, at 435, and Evan L. Burge, 'The Ideas as Aitiai in the *Phaedo*', *Phronesis* 16 (1971) 1-26, at 4-5

26 'Since Justice has the power to make men just, it is itself just; since Holiness has the power to make men holy, it is itself holy' (SPA, 19). Devereux argues for the same solution, though he does not cite Teloh's paper and may have arrived at his conclusion independently. '... Socrates' argument presupposes the general principle that if an individual has the property *F* in virtue of a certain quality of the soul, *X*, then *X* itself must have the property *F*. Accordingly, if justice as an inner disposition of an individual's soul disposes one to be just and pious in his behavior towards other men and the gods, then justice itself must be just and pious' (PPP, 3 and n. 10)

27 For instance, I believe he is in both *Euthyphro* and *Hippias Major*.

28 By 'transitivity of properties' I mean that *x*, which has *F*, is responsible for other entities having *F* in virtue of its relation to them, whether this be causal or constitutive. By 'derivation of properties' I mean that *y*'s having *F* is derived from *x*'s having *F* and *x*'s (causal or constitutive) relation to *y*.



ἀγαθόν it must itself be ἀγαθόν.<sup>29</sup> I would assume he would say the same of the property κάλλος and that he would say of the other ἀρεταί that they are ἀγαθά and καλά since they make men ἄριστοι. But I suggest that the reasonableness of such claims has to do with the idiosyncratic semantics of the predicates 'ἀγαθόν' and 'καλόν', which differs from the semantics of predicates such as 'δίκαιον' and 'ὀσιον'.<sup>30</sup> For instance, there is nothing odd about the claim that if justice makes men good it must be a good thing itself. But there is something odd about the idea that if justice makes men just, then it must be just itself. We do not find claims of this kind anywhere in *Charmides*, *Laches*, *Protagoras*, or *Republic I* — and I believe this is because such claims would seem odd to Socrates and his interlocutors, as they do to us.<sup>31</sup>

A related problem for Teloh's account is that it fails to explain why Protagoras, as well as Socrates, readily accepts (1) and then grants (2) as annoyingly obvious. Are we to suppose that Protagoras assumes the causal principle also? I am dubious. I suspect that if Socrates were introducing (1) and (2) as claims based on a causal principle, he would first have gained Protagoras' assent to the following set of propositions:

- (c) δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης produce δίκαια and ὅσια acts respectively.

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29 160e6-12

30 It may also be noted that Teloh's evidence from *Lysis* (217c) where Socrates suggests that whiteness is white does not lend support to the idea that the causal principle applies to the ἀρεταί (*SPA*, 17-8). The reason Socrates regards whiteness as white may have to do with the semantic or perhaps epistemological-ontological idiosyncrasies of colors and color-terms. Sentences such as 'Whiteness is white' or 'Redness is red' do not seem so odd as 'Justice is just' or 'Courage is courageous'. Perhaps this is because self-predications of color-terms are most naturally interpreted as logically true analytic propositions. If so, such sentences would be akin to sentences such as 'Justice is just', 'Piety is pious', and 'Holiness is holy' where the general terms are understood to mean just action and pious action or just conditions and holy conditions. (I note in passing that thus itself is of course a possible interpretation of (1)-(4). But, as I discuss in section II, I do not think this is how Socrates and Protagoras understand the referents of the subjects.)

31 I believe something like the causal principle plays a role in Socrates' thinking about the relation of properties and particulars in dialogues where the concept of an εἶδος and the distinction between εἶδη and non-eidetic individuals is formulated, discussed, or assumed. But in *Laches*, *Protagoras*, *Charmides*, and *Republic I* this is not the case.

- (d) That which produces an act of a certain kind must itself be of that kind. Therefore, δικαιοσύνη is δίκαιον and ὁσιότης is ὅσιον.

So, Teloh believes Socrates assumes (c) and (d). But, even if this were true, there would still be need to explain Protagoras' assent to (1) and (2). The notion that Protagoras himself assumes (c) and (d) seems implausible.

## II i Overview of the Solution

Making sense of (1)-(4) requires that we accomplish three tasks: determine the meanings of the subjects; determine the meanings of the predicates; and determine what is implied when the latter are predicated of the former.

Teloh, Wakefield, Devereux,<sup>32</sup> Nehamas,<sup>33</sup> Allen,<sup>34</sup> and Malcolm regard the subjects of (1)-(4) as referring expressions. But the first three regard them as referring to psychic states, whereas the last three regard them as referring to universals or εἴδη (that are not identical to psychic states). Vlastos does not regard the subjects of (1)-(4) as referring expressions, but as quantifier phrases.

Only Malcolm discusses precisely what the predicates mean. The other six scholars either explicitly or implicitly take the predicates according to their ordinary meanings. In certain cases and in certain respects, this is harmless. For instance, in Vlastos' case, if 'δικαιοσύνη is δίκαιον' means  $\forall x (\Delta x \supset \Delta x)$ , then it is enough to know the syntactic function of the subject and unimportant what it and the predicate mean. Similarly, in the case of Teloh and Devereux, since both claim Socrates is committed to the causal principle, it doesn't much matter what the subjects and predicates mean.

Teloh, Wakefield, and Malcolm view (1) and (2) as self-predications. Vlastos views them as Pauline predications. Allen views (1) and (2) as identity statements; and although Nehamas does not regard his own

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32 See n. 9.

33 See n. 11.

34 See n. 11.

conception of (1) and (2) as such, he too commits himself to a view of (1) and (2) as identity statements.<sup>35</sup>

Teloh regards (1)-(4) as strange and explicable via the causal principle, which he acknowledges to be a peculiar metaphysical conception. Devereux acknowledges that (1)-(4) are puzzling claims as well.<sup>36</sup> Wakefield does not think the attribution of δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης to δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης is odd. Malcolm regards (1)-(4) as intelligible for a Greek, though perhaps odd for us. Vlastos reckons that as far as the surface grammar is concerned (1)-(4) are nonsensical, but perfectly sensible according to their deep grammar.

Wakefield might agree that Socrates would assent to other self- or inter-predications of the ἀρεταί. Vlastos, Allen, Nehamas, and Teloh certainly are committed to the view that Socrates would assent to propositions of the same grammatical form as (1)-(4) if the subjects and predicates were substituted for the other cardinal aretaic expressions. But, Malcolm does not believe Socrates is committed to the self-predication and inter-predication of all the ἀρεταί.<sup>37</sup>

My own suggestion is that 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'ὀσιότης' are understood as referring expressions and that they are understood to refer to psychic states, specifically to virtues. I take the predicates according to their ordinary meanings. But it is especially important for my interpretation that I explain what these meanings are. I admit that (1) and (2) are syntactically, but not semantically self-predications. I regard (1)-(4) as perfectly intelligible for Socrates and Protagoras; but I suggest that, due to the distinctness of the meanings of 'δίκαιον' and 'ὅσιον', propositions syntactically similar to (1)-(4), but using the other aretaic terms would

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35 See n. 11.

36 'The supposition that Socrates is using "justice" in [(1) and (3)] to refer to a disposition or state of an individual's soul does not of course make these statements any less puzzling. After all, how could a state of the soul be just or pious?' (PPP, 3)

37 He specifically regards it as a strong point of his interpretation that it explains (1) and (2) as the only self-predications of ἀρεταί in the early dialogues. And he suggests that a successful interpretation of (1)-(4) must meet the 'Differentiation Condition' which '(1) authorizes the four predications arising from self-predication and inter-predicability in the case of Justice and Holiness, but (2) does not allow for a corresponding four for either Temperance and Wisdom or Courage and Wisdom' (PSP, 41).

probably not be intelligible to Socrates and Protagoras.<sup>38</sup> In the following section, I will provide evidence for these claims.

## II ii The Solution

Both Socrates and Protagoras take the subjects in (1)-(4) to be referring expressions. Shortly before he introduces (1)-(4), Socrates asks Protagoras whether 'σωφροσύνη', 'δικαιοσύνη' and the other cardinal aretaic terms are names (ὀνόματα) applied to one entity or many entities (ὄντα/πράγματα/οὐσίαι).<sup>39</sup>

... you often said in your speech that δικαιοσύνη, σωφροσύνη, ὁσιότης, and all these things were all some one thing, ἀρετή. Now explain to me precisely whether ἀρετή is some single thing and δικαιοσύνη, σωφροσύνη and ὁσιότης are parts of it, or whether these things of which we were just speaking are all names of the same thing.<sup>40</sup>

Similarly, later in *Protagoras* he says:

... σοφία, σωφροσύνη, ἀνδρεία, δικαιοσύνη, and ὁσιότης, are these five names for some single thing or does some distinct being underlie each of these names ...?<sup>41</sup>

Though it is in question in *Protagoras* whether the names of the ἀρεταί refer to one entity or many, it is not in question whether they refer to something.<sup>42</sup> On the assumption that the ἀρεταί are distinct entities,

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38 It is not necessary that a correct interpretation meet Malcolm's Differentiation Condition. Rather, his stipulation that a satisfactory interpretation must meet this condition is question begging. On the other hand, all other things being equal, I would regard an interpretation that satisfied this condition as stronger than one that did not.

39 329c6-d1, 349b1-5. Various expressions are used to describe the relation between words and objects: the objective genitive, the dative of possession, the preposition 'ἐπὶ', the verbs 'ὑποκείσθαι' and 'ἐπικείσθαι'.

40 329c2-d1

41 349b1-6

42 Similarly, in *Charmides*, although Socrates does not know what the name

Socrates wonders what sort of entities they are.<sup>43</sup> He then asks what sort of thing δικαιοσύνη is, specifically, whether δικαιοσύνη is δίκαιον and ὅσιον. In other words, in asking what sort of entity (ποῖόν τι) the ἀρεταί are Socrates wants to know what can be predicated of the aretaic terms. But before he asks what can be attributed to the ἀρεταί he asks whether δικαιοσύνη is some entity or not an entity and subsequently says that he himself believes it is: 'Is δικαιοσύνη something (πρᾶγμα τί) or is it not something?'<sup>44</sup>

Note that Socrates uses the word 'πρᾶγμα' to identify δικαιοσύνη, which is among the words he used to distinguish the name 'δικαιοσύνη' from the entity to which the name refers. The significance of Socrates' question in the context of the discussion seems to be this. Before asking what can be predicated of 'δικαιοσύνη' he wants to gain Protagoras' assent to the claim that 'δικαιοσύνη' names some entity. Presumably he believes that if the word 'δικαιοσύνη' lacks a referent then it would be idle to inquire into its attributes.<sup>45</sup> When Protagoras agrees that δικαιοσύνη is some entity, Socrates asks: 'Tell me then you two, this thing (πρᾶγμα), which you have just called δικαιοσύνη, is it itself δίκαιον or is it ἄδικον?'<sup>46</sup> Here again Socrates speaks of δικαιοσύνη as a πρᾶγμα and clearly distinguishes it as an entity from the word that names it.<sup>47</sup>

Assuming Socrates and Protagoras believe the subjects of (1)-(4) are referring expressions, I now turn to consider what type of entity they take the referents to be. Socrates and Protagoras speak of δικαιοσύνη and ὀσιότης as ἀρεταί. 'Αρετή is of course a property that may be attributed

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'σωφροσύνη' refers to, he assumes that it refers to something: '... we have failed to determine to what the lawgiver gave the name "σωφροσύνη"' (175b3-4).

43 'σκεψώμεθα ποῖόν τι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἕκαστον' (330b6-7).

44 'ἡ δικαιοσύνη πρᾶγμα τί ἐστὶν ἢ οὐδὲν πρᾶγμα;' (330c1).

45 Paul Woodruff, 'Socrates and Ontology: The Evidence of the *Hippias Major*' [SO], *Phronesis* 23 (1978) 101-17, argues that Socrates' propositions of the form *F* is *τι* do not commit him to the existence of *F*. I am not persuaded by his paper, but it would be inconvenient here to explain my reasons. I discuss the problems of his argument in an appendix to this paper.

46 'εἶπετον δὴ μοι, τοῦτο τὸ πρᾶγμα ὃ ὀνομάσατε ἄρτι ἡ δικαιοσύνη, αὐτὸ τοῦτο δίκαιόν ἐστιν ἢ ἄδικον;' (330c3-5).

47 Socrates and Protagoras assent to the same claims regarding ὀσιότης at 330d1-5.

to a wide variety of ontological kinds. But in this context the term is used with regard to humanity. Protagoras specifically characterizes δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης (as well as σωφροσύνη) as the ἀρεταί of a man.<sup>48</sup>

That Socrates regards human ἀρετή as a psychic entity is clear from the ensuing discussion, where he identifies ἀνδρεία, σωφροσύνη, ὁσιότης, and δικαιοσύνη with σοφία — σοφία of course being an epistemic state and so a psychic entity.<sup>49</sup> In Protagoras' case, he suggests at the beginning of his discussion with Socrates that his instruction will make Hippocrates a better person.<sup>50</sup> Specifically, he claims to teach a μάθημα consisting of good counsel regarding one's own affairs as well as how to manage one's household best and how most effectively to speak and act in public affairs.<sup>51</sup> Socrates and Protagoras identify this as πολιτική τέχνη;<sup>52</sup> a τέχνη is an epistemic condition and so a psychic entity. Later, Protagoras suggests in his account of the origin of society that the lack of πολιτική τέχνη caused humans to harm one another and threatened their complete self-destruction.<sup>53</sup> To remedy this condition, Zeus introduced δίκη and αἰδώς.<sup>54</sup> The implication is that these are central components of πολιτική τέχνη. Shortly after this he speaks of 'partaking of δικαιοσύνη and the rest of πολιτική τέχνη'.<sup>55</sup> As τέχναι or components of πολιτική τέχνη, δίκη or δικαιοσύνη and αἰδώς must also be understood as psychic entities.

More specifically, I suggest that Socrates and Protagoras consider the ἀρεταί to be psychic dispositions to act virtuously.<sup>56</sup> Evidence for this

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48 ' . . . ἀλλὰ δικαιοσύνη καὶ σωφροσύνη καὶ τὸ ὅσιον εἶναι, καὶ συλλήβδην ἔν αὐτὸ προσαγορεύω εἶναι ἀνδρὸς ἀρετήν' (325a1-2).

49 The most concise expression of this identification in the early dialogues occurs in *Laches* where Nicias attributes to Socrates the idea that a man is ἀγαθός insofar as he is σοφός. Socrates confirms that he does claim this (194d1-3).

50 318a6-9

51 318e5-19a2

52 319a3-7

53 322b7-c1

54 322c1-2

55 323a6-7

56 In using 'disposition' here I am following Vlastos, *PS*, 434, who follows Willard van Orman Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge: MIT Press 1960), 223: Dispositions are

comes from the description of the ἀρεταί as δυνάμεις. When (1)-(4) are introduced, it is agreed that the ἀρεταί, like the parts of a face, have δυνάμεις. The word 'δύναμις' is first introduced by Protagoras earlier in his account of the origin of society.<sup>57</sup> Specifically, δυνάμεις are there treated as entities Zeus charges Prometheus and Epimetheus to distribute to the animals. Among the entities said to be a δύναμις are strength,<sup>58</sup> speed,<sup>59</sup> and 'other means of self-preservation (σωτηρίαν)'.<sup>60</sup> In these cases, the word 'δύναμις' seems to mean power or capability, which is of course its most common meaning. I assume it continues to be used with this meaning when it is later attributed to the parts of the face and the ἀρεταί.

It is not explicitly stated in *Protagoras*, but it is implied, and I suggest it is understood by both Protagoras and Socrates that specific δυνάμεις are related to specific types of action.<sup>61</sup> The δυνάμεις of the animals are distributed to protect them from harm; e.g., speed enables some to flee and strength enables others to fight. In the case of facial parts, eyes enable one to see, ears to hear.<sup>62</sup> In the case of ἀρεταί, I suggest δικαιοσύνη enables people to behave in a δίκαιον manner and ὁσιότης enables them to behave in a ὅσιον manner.

These suggestions are supported by the following considerations. In his account of the origin of society Protagoras claims that by means of τέχνη (= ἔντεχνος σοφία)<sup>63</sup> human beings were able to acquire speech and

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not merely tendencies to act in a certain way but '... are conceived as built-in, enduring structural traits.'

57 320d5

58 320d8

59 320e1

60 The phrase is from David Savan, 'Self-Predication in *Protagoras* 330-331' [*SPP*], *Phronesis* 9 (1964) 130-5, at 132. The Greek 'δύναμιν εἰς σωτηρίαν' occurs at 320e3.

61 Cf. Hugh H. Benson, 'Socratic Dynamic Theory: A Sketch', *Apeiron* 30 (1997) 79-93, at 80-1.

62 The function of the facial parts is not at all described in *Protagoras*, but these claims may reasonably be inferred from the context of the discussion. The inferences are also supported by evidence from a passage in *Republic V* discussed later in the paper.

63 The phrase 'ἔντεχνον σοφίαν' occurs at 321d1.

to create clothing, shelter, and agriculture.<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, through lack of πολιτικὴ τέχνη they harmed one another (ἡδίκουν ἀλλήλους).<sup>65</sup> Consequently, Zeus sent δίκη and αἰδώς in order to foster civil order and friendship.<sup>66</sup> The implication, I suggest, is that the introduction of civic virtues altered human behavior.<sup>67</sup>

More explicit evidence for the relation of δυνάμεις and activity comes from a later passage. Immediately after the discussion of (1)-(4), Socrates elicits Protagoras' assent to a number of propositions that exemplify the following general principle: '... if something is done in such-and-such a way (ὡσαύτως), it is done by the same thing (τοῦ αὐτοῦ) ...'.<sup>68</sup> For instance, it is agreed that men behave foolishly because of foolishness and temperately because of σωφροσύνη.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, that which is done strongly is so done because of strength; and that which is done swiftly is so done because of speed.<sup>70</sup> These last two examples of course recall the two δυνάμεις Protagoras mentions as distributed by Epimetheus to animals.

In sum, I suggest that in the context in which (1)-(4) are introduced Socrates and Protagoras understand δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης as psychic dispositions (or δυνάμεις of the ψυχή) that produce action of a particular kind.

Having clarified the meaning of the subjects of (1)-(4), I turn to the predicates 'δίκαιον' and 'ὅσιον'. Although the subjects and predicates are grammatically cognate, this does not imply that the predicates designate the psychic dispositions to which the subjects are here used to refer. (1)-(4) clearly do not mean that the psychic dispositions δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης have ψυχαί that possess those very psychic dispositions. Pro-

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64 322a5-8

65 322b7

66 322c1-3

67 Shortly before this it is suggested that as a result of the divine gifts of τέχνη human beings worshipped the gods by building altars and idols (322a3-5). This suggests how the virtue of ὁσιότης might be understood to influence behavior.

68 332c1-2

69 332b4-6, also 332a8-b3

70 332b6-c1



tagoras' and Socrates' use of 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'ὀσιότης' to refer to psychic dispositions is a particularly narrow use of these general expressions, which, as I have said, is due to the particular focus of the discussion on civic virtue.

The expressions 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'ὀσιότης' are generally used more broadly. Especially when paired together, as in the *Protagoras* passage, the predicates 'δίκαιον' and 'ὅσιον' are commonly used to mean fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens and fitting or lawful with respect to gods respectively. So, for example, in *Gorgias*, Socrates says: '... one who does what is fitting (τὰ προσήκοντα) with regard to men does δίκαι', and one who does what is fitting with regards to gods does ὅσια.'<sup>71</sup> Similarly, in Antiphon's *Prosecution for Poisoning*, Philoneus' son says:

Who has a better claim to pity, the murdered man or the murderess?  
To my mind the murdered man; because in pitying him you would be acting δικαιοτέρον and ὀσιότερον before gods and before men.<sup>72</sup>

Accordingly, (1) means that the psychic disposition δικαιοσύνη is fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens. (2) means that the psychic disposition ὀσιότης is fitting or lawful with respect to gods. (3) means that the psychic disposition δικαιοσύνη is fitting or lawful with respect to gods. And, (4) means that the psychic disposition ὀσιότης is fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens.

To further clarify these meanings, consider that in Greek literature a wide variety of ontological kinds, including people, their actions, social conditions and processes, institutions, inanimate objects, and laws, are said to be δίκαιον or ὅσιον. Moreover — and this is a crucial point — these entities and the properties attributed to them may be variously related, depending on the identity of the ontological kind to which the property is attributed.<sup>73</sup> For instance, a man may be δίκαιον because *his*

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<sup>71</sup> *Gorg* 507b1-3

<sup>72</sup> 1.25. (The order of the relevant syntactical components here is chiasmic.) Similarly, in *Euthyphro* after Socrates has suggested that τὸ ὅσιον is a part of τὸ δίκαιον, Euthyphro explains their relation as follows: '... the part of τὸ δίκαιον that has to do with attention to the gods is εὐσεβές and ὅσιον, and the remaining part has to do with attention to human beings' (12e5-8)

<sup>73</sup> It is not the case, as Vlastos claims, that the attribution of the properties to the various

*behavior is fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens, or because his character is responsible for behavior that is fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens. A treaty may be δίκαιον because it was ratified by a procedure that is fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens. A statement may be δίκαιον because it represents a principle of behavior that is fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens, or because it is made with the intention of encouraging behavior that is fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens. A law may be δίκαιον because it promotes behavior that is fitting or lawful.*

It is an open question then how the psychic dispositions δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης are here understood as fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens and gods. In considering an answer to this question, the following points should be kept in mind. The answer must conform to the meanings of the subjects and predicates given. The answer must explain the relation as transparent or obvious to Socrates and Protagoras; for Socrates does not explain the predications and Protagoras does not ask for clarification of their meanings. The answer must also make sense in terms of the broader argument in which (1)-(4) are embedded; and it should make sense in terms of Socrates' assent to (1)-(4) and Protagoras denial of (3) and (4).

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ontological kinds is just an extension of their attribution to people, of which they are in some sense primary attributes. '[O]nly concrete individuals — persons — and by legitimate extension, their actions, dispositions, institutions, laws, etc. [can] possibly have [the properties that the predicates "δίκαιον" and "ὁσιον" designate].' (Cf. n. 12) In this statement Vlastos implies that the properties 'δίκαιον' and 'ὁσιον' designate are in some sense *primarily* attributes of people and attributable to other entities, such as actions and social kinds, insofar as people are causally responsible for the production of the latter. At least, this is how I interpret his use of 'legitimate extension'. But Vlastos' point is by no means obviously true, and he gives no argument in support of it. Why should we assume the properties are *primarily* of people? I do not think we should. Another problem with Vlastos' claim is his assumption that these properties are only attributable to concrete individuals. Again, this is not obviously true. Consider the claim that (e) aiding one's friends is just. This implies that (f) each instance of aiding one's friends is just. But, the fact that (e) implies (f) does not imply that (e) means (f), in other words, that (e) should be interpreted as a Pauline predication. According to (e), each act, only insofar as it aids one's friends, is just. So, it is just this aspect of action that is just. Wakefield engages in a more elaborate discussion of this criticism of Vlastos in reference to the claim, tallness is attractive (VUV, 61-2).

I suggest that the psychic dispositions δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης are understood to be δίκαιον and ὅσιον, because the former *are conducive to social conditions that are fitting or lawful with respect to human beings and citizens and gods*. In particular, the psychic dispositions are *conductive to δίκαιον and ὅσιον acts*;<sup>74</sup> and these either constitute or promote social conditions that are fitting or lawful with respect to human beings or citizens.

In view of the preceding interpretations of the meanings of the subjects and predicates, we are now in a better position to consider the status of (1) and (2) as self-predications. Outside of Vlastos' precise, though unnecessarily narrow application, the phrase 'self-predication' is sometimes used rather loosely in the discussion of (1) and (2). Recall that Teloh and Wakefield regard the subjects of (1)-(4) as psychic states, i.e., virtues. However, neither claims that when 'δίκαιον' and 'ὅσιον' are predicated of 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'ὁσιότης' Socrates is suggesting that the virtues have the psychic states δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης; in other words, that the virtues have ψυχαί and that these contain virtues. Strictly speaking, if the referents of the subjects in (1)-(4) are psychic states, then if (1) and (2) are self-predications the predicates must also imply this, namely, that being-ὅσιον or -δίκαιον implies having a certain psychic state. But of

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74 Savan, *SPP*, argues for a similar position. Though, his defense differs from mine, mainly in that he offers no semantic support for his interpretation, and that the significance of Protagoras' understanding of (1)-(4) does not figure in his explanation. Commenting on Savan, Taylor writes: 'Savan is indeed correct in saying that Socrates is in fact represented as holding that, on the analogy with the power of the eye or the ear, the power of justice, conceived as a permanent state of the person, is to promote just action, and that of holiness to promote holy action ... But it is quite impossible that the Greek of 330c7 [i.e., "Ἔστιν ἄρα τοιοῦτον ἡ δικαιοσύνη οἷον δίκαιον εἶναι ..."] should *mean* "The power of justice is (to promote) just action". For that sentence follows directly from c1-2 "Justice is something" and c3-6 "That thing is just", and is given as the answer to the question "Is justice just or unjust?" ... Again, Savan's interpretation does not give a good sense to 330d8-9 "How could anything else be holy, if holiness itself is not to be holy?" The first occurrence of "be holy" in that sentence is clearly an ordinary predication; it is very hard to see the second as something altogether different' (*PProt*, 117). I agree that the predicates 'οἷον δίκαιον (or ὅσιον) εἶναι' and 'δίκαιον (or ὅσιον)' are intended to convey the same idea. Moreover, I agree that the predicates 'δίκαιον' and 'ὅσιον' are used in their ordinary senses. The question is what their ordinary senses are. I suggest that Taylor fails to consider what the predicates mean and how their designations may be variously related to the referents of the subjects.

course Wakefield and Teloh are claiming that the psychic states, δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης, have the characteristics or properties, δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης. So, strictly speaking, the predicates do not have the same meanings as the subjects.<sup>75</sup> Accordingly, (1) and (2) would be self-predications just to the extent that the predicates are grammatically cognate with the subjects; that is to say, they are self-predications syntactically.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, according to my interpretation, (1) and (2) are only self-predications insofar as the subjects and predicates are grammatically cognate; the subjects and the predicates are not understood here with the same meaning; that is to say, they are not self-predications semantically.<sup>77</sup>

So far I have provided evidence that my interpretation of (1)-(4) is syntactically and semantically licensed. I have also provided some evidence that it is contextually warranted. I will now present further supporting evidence by considering the broader argument in which (1)-(4) are embedded. The broader argument of course concerns the relation of the ἀρεταί. Protagoras claims that σωφροσύνη, ἀνδρεία, ὁσιότης, and δικαιοσύνη are proper parts of ἀρετή.<sup>78</sup> He likens their relation to the parts of a face, as opposed to parts of a nugget of gold.<sup>79</sup> The analogy is supposed to convey that the parts of ἀρετή are structurally or qualitatively distinct. Socrates elicits Protagoras' assent to the claim that the distinct ἀρεταί are also distinct with respect to their δυνάμεις.<sup>80</sup> Again, the suggestion is made by analogy with the parts of the face, each of which has a distinct power or capability; as I have suggested, e.g., the eyes to see, the ears to hear. According to Protagoras' claim that the

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75 Of course psychic states may be understood as universals, properties, or characteristics. But even so, in this case the meanings of the subjects and predicates still cannot be the same.

76 Wakefield and Teloh do not discuss the meanings of the predicates, and thus is a limitation of their accounts. But, I do not regard it as a shortcoming of their explanations that, granting either of their views, Socrates must be using the subject and predicate expressions with different meanings.

77 In contrast, according to Malcolm's interpretation of (1) and (2) as self-exemplifications, (1) and (2) are self-predications in respect of the meanings of the subject and predicates as well as their grammatical relation.

78 329d3-4

79 329d4-e2

80 330a4-b3

ἀρεταί are not identical, it is assumed that the ἀρεταί are not alike either in themselves or in their powers.<sup>81</sup>

I want to consider why, in analyzing the distinction of the ἀρεταί from one another, Socrates introduces the concept of δύναμις at all. In other words, why it is not sufficient for Socrates to consider whether the ἀρεταί are qualitatively or structurally distinct?<sup>82</sup> I suggest that Socrates' focus on the δύναμις of ἀρετή is due to the fact that the ἀρεταί, *qua* psychic dispositions, are publicly imperceptible. Therefore, in analyzing their (assumed) distinction, he considers their manifestation in publicly perceptible action. This idea is supported by comments Socrates makes about the nature of δυνάμεις in *Republic V*. Note that in the following passage Socrates' aim is to distinguish two psychic dispositions, knowledge and opinion.

Shall we agree that δυνάμεις are a type of entity by which (αἷς) we, as well as everything else, are able to do what we are able to do? I mean that sight and hearing are δυνάμεις, if you understand the type of entity I want to describe ... Listen then to what I think of them. I do not see the color of a δύναμις, nor its shape, nor any such thing, as I do in the case of many other sorts of things when I fix my eye upon them and look to distinguish one from the other. But in the case of a δύναμις I look at one thing only, at that to which it is related (ἐφ' ᾧ τε ἔστι) and

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81 'ἄρ' οὖν οὕτω καὶ τὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς μόρια οὐκ ἔστιν τὸ ἕτερον οἷον τὸ ἕτερον, οὔτε αὐτὸ οὔτε ἡ δύναμις αὐτοῦ; ἢ δῆλα δὴ ὅτι οὕτως ἔχει, εἴπερ τῷ παραδείγματι γε ἔοικε; — 'Ἄλλ' οὕτως, ἔφη, ἔχει, ὦ Σώκρατες' (330a7-b3).

82 Wakefield puts the inverse question: 'If virtues are identified by reference to their powers, why is Socrates also interested in demonstrating that Justice and Holiness share properties other than powers [i.e., structural or qualitative properties]? A thing's powers depend on its properties, and if Socrates is to go far toward his goal of suggesting the identity of Justice and Holiness he must show not only that they share powers, but that their essential properties, those which give rise to the powers, are also shared. Otherwise, like the insect eye and the human eye, or the horse's hoof and the human's foot, the virtues might share powers but [structurally or qualitatively] be entirely different' (W/H, 270). The problem with Wakefield's question is that if it is the case that two entities may share the same power, but differ in their 'essential' properties, why should Socrates introduce the concept of the δύναμις of ἀρετή at all? (Note also that according to his position Wakefield must assume that the ἀρεταί cannot be identified by reference to their δυνάμεις. Presumably, this is why he speaks of certain non-functional properties of the ἀρεταί as 'essential')

at what it produces (ὃ ἀπεργάζεται). In this way I come to call each of them a δύναμις. And that which is related (τεταγμένην) to the same thing and produces (ἀπεργαζομένην) the same thing I call the same δύναμις, and that which is related to a different thing and produces a different thing I call a different δύναμις.<sup>83</sup>

In *Protagoras* Protagoras believes that since there are various kinds of virtuous acts there must be various virtues that produce them. In contrast, Socrates believes just one psychic disposition is responsible for all virtuous action. Protagoras finds such an idea implausible, for, as he says: '... many are ἀνδρείοι, but ἄδικοι, and many again are δίκαιοι but not σοφοί.'<sup>84</sup> It is immediately following this statement of Protagoras' that Socrates questions whether each of the ἀρεταί has a distinct δύναμις. Again, I suggest that Socrates' point is to analyze the nature of the ἀρεταί by considering their operation in human behavior. If δικαιοσύνη is agreed to be conducive to ὅσια acts and ὁσιότης to δίκαια acts, then one may be inclined to believe that there is actually only one virtue, rather than two.

According to my interpretation, both Socrates and Protagoras will find (1) and (2) obvious, and, as they agree with respect to (2), so obvious as to be annoying. Of course the virtues δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης are conducive to δίκαια and ὅσια acts respectively.<sup>85</sup> But, given their differing beliefs about the unity and disunity of the ἀρεταί, we would not expect Protagoras to assent to (3) and (4),<sup>86</sup> while we would expect Socrates to — and this of course is what occurs.

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83 477c1-d5

84 329e5-6. Presumably in making this claim Protagoras has made an inference from the observation that there are many men who act courageously, but not justly, and there are many who act justly, but not wisely.

85 Note that both will assent to (1) and (2) as obvious, even though Socrates believes the aretaic terms are co-referring and Protagoras believes they are not.

86 Protagoras' hesitation to admit (3) and (4) accords with common conceptions of δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης, as I briefly discussed above. At least, the antithesis between τὰ δίκαια, things fitting with respect to citizens, and τὰ ὅσια, things fitting with respect to gods, was common in popular discourse. Note also that Protagoras does not flatly deny (3) and (4). He says, 'It does not seem to me to be so simple (οὕτως ἀπλοῦν)' (331b8-c1). Thus, Protagoras might also not accept the polar opposite view that the extensions of 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'ὁσιότης' in action do not overlap, but some

I conclude my interpretation with one further semantic consideration. It is questionable whether Protagoras and Socrates would find intelligible propositions of the same syntactical structure as (1)-(4) but employing other aretaic terms. As we have seen, most scholars believe Socrates would assert self- and inter-predications using all the aretaic terms; and so, the fact that he does not must be explained as coincidental. In contrast, Malcolm claims as a strongpoint of his interpretation its explanation of why only 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'οσιότης' are self- and inter-predicated.<sup>87</sup>

Vlastos also thinks all the aretaic terms are self- and inter-predicable. He cites the following examples from *Protagoras*:<sup>88</sup>

(5) ἀρετή is καλόν.<sup>89</sup>

(6a) σοφία is ἀνδρεία.<sup>90</sup>

(7a) δικαιοσύνη is ἐπιστήμη.<sup>91</sup>

(8a) σωφροσύνη is ἐπιστήμη.<sup>92</sup>

(9a) ἀνδρεία is ἐπιστήμη.<sup>93</sup>

Of course (6a)-(9a) do not have the same syntactical structure as (1)-(4). But Vlastos cites them because he believes they are to be interpreted as biconditionals in a Pauline fashion. For instance, (6a) would be interpreted as  $\forall x (\Sigma x \equiv A x)$ . I have explained why Vlastos is mistaken: the general terms in (6a)-(9a) are all understood as referring expressions. As such, (6a)-(9a) are identity statements. This leaves just (5). Proposi-

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middle position. Again, though, his reaction is relatively commonsensical. It is Socrates' assent to (3) and (4) and, more generally, his commitment to the unity of ἀρετή that is atypical.

87 See nn. 37, 38.

88 PS, 236

89 349e4

90 350c4-5

91 361b1-2

92 ibid.

93 ibid.

tions of this form are common in the definitional dialogues;<sup>94</sup> and there is nothing odd about the claim that human virtue is a good (ἀγαθόν) or fine (καλόν) thing.<sup>95</sup>

Rather, we want to know whether Protagoras and Socrates would have found it intelligible to predicate 'ἀνδρεῖον', 'σώφρον', and 'σοφόν' of the cardinal aretaic terms, as for instance:

(6) σωφροσύνη is ἀνδρεῖον.

(7) ἀνδρεία is σώφρον.

(8) δικαιοσύνη is σοφόν.

I believe the answer to this question is no; and the reason has to do with the distinction between the meanings of 'δίκαιον' and 'ὅσιον', on the one hand, and 'ἀνδρεῖον', 'σώφρον', and 'σοφόν', on the other. The first two differ from the last three in that the last three are, as I will call them, personal aretaic predicates, whereas the first two are impersonal aretaic predicates in the following respect. To be σοφόν, σώφρον, or ἀνδρεῖον implies acting in a certain fashion, having a certain psychic state, or being the product of an entity that has a certain psychic state. Thus, the attribution of these properties to non-human entities, e.g., acts or utterance, implies that they are products of agents or speakers who possess the corresponding virtues. Consequently, an act cannot be ἀνδρεῖον, σοφόν, or σώφρον unless a distinct psychic state accompanies it. This is explicitly brought out in *Charmides*. The fourth definition of σωφροσύνη is τὰ τὰγαθὰ πράττειν (doing what is good). Socrates asks Critias whether a doctor who accidentally healed a patient, thereby doing something good, would be σώφρων, although he didn't know what he was doing. Critias denies that he would be.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, it seems an act could not be ἀνδρεῖον if the agent were completely unaware of the danger in the environment. And likewise, an act could not be σοφόν, if the agent successfully performed the act, but by luck and without the relevant understanding.

In contrast, being δίκαιον or ὅσιον does not imply acting in a certain way, having a certain psychic state, or being the product of an entity that

94 E.g., *Lach* 192c5-6; *Charm* 159c1.

95 See n. 73 and Wakefield, *VUV*, 61-4.

96 164a-c



has a certain psychic state. Thus, an act or utterance or social condition may be δίκαιον or ἄδικον or ὅσιον or ἀνόσιον regardless of an agent's intention or disposition. Being δίκαιον or ὅσιον simply implies conforming with an established conception of propriety with regard to human beings or citizens and gods; and there are many ways in which entities may be understood to satisfy this condition. Thus, psychic dispositions can intelligibly be said to be δίκαιον or ὅσιον because they are conducive to the appropriate social conditions.

In contrast, it does not seem intelligible to predicate the personal aretaic predicates of the virtue terms, because attribution of the corresponding properties implies a distinct relation to psychic states. On the one hand, the virtues themselves do not possess ψυχαί or bodies; therefore, they cannot possess virtues or perform acts. On the other hand, they are not in any straightforward way products of agents that possess virtues. Thus, they cannot be said to be courageous, wise, or restrained.<sup>97</sup>

Granting this point, we can now see why at first glance (1)-(4) might appear odd. If 'δίκαιον' and 'ὅσιον' are interpreted as personal aretaic predicates, their predication of 'δικαιοσύνη' and 'οσιότης' becomes unintelligible. The translation of 'ὅσιον' as 'pious' is particularly misleading in this regard, for 'pious', like 'courageous', 'wise', and 'restrained', is a personal predicate. In contrast, 'holy' is not. So, for instance, a site may be said to be holy, without implying its production by an agent with the corresponding virtue.<sup>98,99</sup>

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97 There are cases, as for instance in *Laches*, where we encounter phrases such as 'φρόνιμος καρτερία' (192d10) and 'ἄφρων τόλμα τε καὶ καρτερήσις' (193d1). But here the implication is that the agent acts with both prudence or foolishness and daring or steadfastness. A person can of course possess wisdom and courage and exercise them simultaneously. But, it does not seem that courage itself can possess wisdom or vice versa.

98 The phrase 'ὅσιον χωρίον' occurs in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (743).

99 Interestingly, the impersonal and personal aretaic predicates are also used in distinct syntactical constructions. For example, 'δίκαιον' and 'ὅσιον' may be used in the impersonal constructions 'δίκαιον ἐστὶ' and 'ὅσιον ἐστὶ' with the infinitive. But equivalent constructions with 'ἀνδρείον', 'σοφόν', and 'σῶφρον' do not occur. Also, the phrases 'τὸ δίκαιον' and 'τὸ ὅσιον' are common enough. Both occur in *Protagoras* and in the definitional dialogues. But 'τὸ ἀνδρείον', 'τὸ σῶφρον', and 'τὸ σοφόν' do not occur. I am not sure what to make of this. But it seems significant

## Appendix: The Ontological Significance of the Proposition $F$ is $\tau\iota$ <sup>100</sup>

In *Hippias Major* Socrates elicits assent to the following questions:

So then this thing δικαιοσύνη is something ( $\tau\iota$ )? ... And these things [wisdom and goodness] are things? For presumably they would not be so [i.e., wise men would not be wise and good things good because of them] if they [wisdom and goodness] did not exist? ... And this thing beauty is something?<sup>101</sup>

Woodruff claims that Socrates is not committing himself here to the existence of δικαιοσύνη, τὸ ἀγαθόν, or σοφία.<sup>102</sup> He argues that in sentences such as “Ὅντι γέ τινι τούτῳ;” and “Οὐκοῦν ἔστι τι τοῦτο ἡ δικαιοσύνη;” the copula serves a ‘nuncupative’ use, that is, a use most like the natural language use of ‘is’ for logical identity. Sentences schemata such as  $x = y$  are ‘not falsified by the non-existence of  $x$  and  $y$  in the world’.

Woodruff subsequently focuses the ‘ontological burden’ on the indefinite pronoun ‘ $\tau\iota$ ’. He argues that describing an entity as ‘ $\tau\iota$ ’ is ‘ontologically neutral’: ‘for something to be a  $\tau\iota$  is not for it to have necessarily a clearly defined ontological status.’<sup>103</sup> I suggest that it does commit Socrates to the existence of  $F$ , though to nothing more specific than that  $F$  is an entity of some kind.

Woodruff cites evidence from Plato’s middle and late writings to support the conclusion that for Plato what is not-nothing is not necessarily what is. In *Republic* Socrates distinguishes between what-is-not, what-is, and what-neither-is-nor-is-not. Consequently, what-is-not may be either what-is or what-neither-is-nor-is-not.<sup>104</sup> There are two difficulties with Woodruff’s use of this passage from *Republic* to support his argument. *Hippias Major* is not even by Woodruff thought to be a work

100 This appendix makes good on a promise in n. 45.

101 ‘Οὐκοῦν ἔστι τι τοῦτο ἡ δικαιοσύνη; . . . Οὐδὲ γὰρ τίσις τούτοις [σοφία τε καὶ τῷ ἀγαθῷ] οὐ γὰρ δὴ που [οἱ σοφοὶ σοφοὶ σοφία τε καὶ τὰγαθὰ ἀγαθὰ τῷ ἀγαθῷ] μὴ οὐσί γε . . . “Ὅντι γέ τινι τούτῳ [τῷ καλῷ];” (287c4-d2).

102 Woodruff, *SO*

103 *Ibid.*, 106

104 478b-c

of the middle period, hence the tri-fold ontological distinction made in *Republic* may be inapplicable to *Hippias Major* or any early dialogue. There is simply no evidence of such a tri-fold ontological distinction in *Hippias Major* or any of the other early dialogues and there is no reason to presume such a distinction. The entities about which Socrates is talking in *Republic* are objects of opinion, which are distinguished from objects of knowledge. But in the early dialogues the ἀρεταί are never assumed to be merely objects of opinion.<sup>105,106</sup>

Woodruff is also wrong to suggest that in the definitional dialogues Socrates does not have ontological concerns about the *definienda*. In *Charmides* a relatively lengthy argument is devoted to the suggestion that the knowledge of knowledge and all other knowledges and lack of knowledge does not exist.<sup>107</sup> In view of this argument Socrates does not suggest that therefore σωφροσύνη may not exist. On the contrary, the possibility that the knowledge of knowledge and lack of knowledge does not exist is used as evidence that it may not be the correct definition of σωφροσύνη.

As we have seen, strong support that Socrates understands questions such as 'Is *F* something (τι)?' as ontologically significant comes from *Protagoras*. I suggest that Socrates' questions in *Hippias Major* about whether δικαιοσύνη, σοφία, τὸ ἀγαθόν, and τὸ καλόν are something (τι) function similarly to the way I have interpreted these questions in *Protagoras*. Socrates asks such questions in order to make explicit the assumption that such entities exist. Again, presumably he thinks that if they did not exist, talk of their attributes and their relation to other entities would be idle.

So, for instance, Socrates says:

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105 Woodruff also cites a passage from *Sophist* (237d1-2) concerning how words such as 'nothing' and 'not any' can be meaningful, yet have no referents. But it is unreasonable to assume that the content of *Sophist* is relevant to *Hippias Major* in this regard. Such ideas appear nowhere in the definitional dialogues and seem entirely alien to their content.

106 Note also that if the copula has no existential significance, then it may also be questioned whether the ontological status of τι matters.

107 167bff.

Then these things, goodness and wisdom, are something. For presumably wise men would not be wise by wisdom and good things good because of goodness if wisdom and goodness were not something?<sup>108</sup>

Here Socrates confirms the existence of entities such as goodness and wisdom, because if these entities did not exist then it would be incorrect to claim that the reason ἀγαθά or σοφοί individuals are ἀγαθά or σοφοί is because of the εἶδη τὸ ἀγαθόν and σοφία.

In interpreting Hippias' first definition in preparation for his criticism of it Socrates develops this point as follows:

Come now, Hippias, let me consider for myself what you are saying. My friend will question me in some such way as this. "Go ahead, Socrates, answer me this. *All these things that you assert are beautiful, these things would be beautiful if αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν is something* (τι)?" And I will say that if a beautiful young woman is beautiful, it is for this reason that these things would be beautiful.<sup>109</sup>

Socrates' alleged friend's question is somewhat oddly put, both in the Greek and in my literal translation. Without jeopardizing the relevant content, I propose the following re-phrasing of it for the sake of clarity:

Things that are (asserted to be) beautiful would be beautiful, if αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν were something.

In other words, the possibility that many entities are beautiful depends on beauty itself being some thing. This assumption is based on the further unexpressed assumption that if multiple entities are καλά it is in virtue of some other single entity αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν that they are so. This

108 'Οὐσί γε τισι τούτοις οὐ γὰρ δὴ που [οἱ σοφοὶ σοφοὶ σοφία τε καὶ τὰγαθὰ ἀγαθὰ τῷ ἀγαθῷ] μὴ οὐσί γε (287c7).

109 '... φέρε δὴ, ὦ Ἱππία, πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν ἀναλάβω ὃ λέγεις. ὁ μὲν ἐρήσεται με οὕτως πῶς· ἴθι μοι, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀποκρίναι· ταῦτα πάντα ἃ φῆς καλά εἶναι, εἰ τί ἐστιν αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, ταῦτ' ἂν εἴη καλά; ἐγὼ δὲ δὴ ἐρῶ ὅτι εἰ παρθένος καλὴ καλόν, ἔστι δι' ὃ ταῦτ' ἂν εἴη καλά' (288a6-11). H.N. Fowler translates 'ἔστι' in '... ἔστι δι' ὃ' as 'there is something [by reason of which] ...' (*Plato IV* [Cambridge 1926] at 361); but surely the antecedent of 'ὃ' is a suppressed 'τοῦτο' which refers to the preceding noun-clause 'ὅτι εἰ παρθένος καλὴ καλόν' (not a suppressed 'τι' recalling the 'τι' from the preceding sentence).

further unexpressed assumption entails a rejection of an alternative such as that various καλά entities are καλά in virtue of a variety of distinct entities, e.g., αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν<sub>1</sub>, αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν<sub>2</sub>, etc. Again, the substantial contribution to the investigation of both the expressed and unexpressed assumptions depends upon the existence of the referent of the general term.

In sum, what Woodruff should have argued is that the claims in *Hippias Major* and *Protagoras* that τὸ καλόν (τὸ ἀγαθόν, σοφία, or the like) is something (τι), a πράγμα and an ὄν, are limited or rather minimal ontological claims. They assert that the referent of the general term is some kind of entity, though they assert nothing about the kind of entity that it is.

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