

ALEXANDER TULIN

ON THE REFUTATION OF POLEMARCHUS:  
ANALYSIS AND DIALECTIC IN *REPUBLIC I*\*

*For Professor Leonardo Tarán  
on the occasion of his retirement*

The dialectical passages found in Book I of Plato's *Republic*\*\* have long troubled students of the dialogue, for many of the arguments appear to be confused, possibly fallacious, or resting, at the very least, on premises implausible and unpersuasive. But if we overlook for a moment the *material* aspects of these arguments (*e.g.*, abandoning attempts to determine the precise philosophical import of this or that particular premise or inference), and focus instead, so far as is possible, on the purely *formal* aspects of these arguments, many of the difficulties that scholars have noted will quickly evaporate; at the same time, a proper analysis of one of these passages, Socrates' refutation of Polemarchus, will cast some needed light both on the purpose of Bk. I in its relation to the

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\*\* Throughout, and unless stated otherwise, I follow Burnet's lineation.

remainder of the dialogue – that is, on the vexed problem of the logical and compositional unity of the *Republic* as a whole – and on the positive value to be attached to Plato's use of what otherwise appears to be a largely negative or destructive dialectic.

Book I of the *Republic* (327 A-354 C), explicitly marked as a προοίμιον (II 357 A 2)<sup>1</sup>, opens with a dramatic introduction in which Socrates and his associates are brought to the house of Cephalus, the father of Lysias and Polemarchus (327 A-328 B), and after some initial pleasantries, and a seemingly rambling discussion on the nature of happiness, old age, and wealth, a definition of Justice is elicited from Cephalus, formalized by Socrates, and then refuted (cfr. 331 A 10-B 7, with C 1-D 3). As such, this

<sup>1</sup> Προοίμιον (see M. COSTANTINI-J. LALLOT, *Le προοίμιον est-il un proème?*, in M. COSTANTINI et al. (éds.), *Le texte et ses représentations*, Paris 1987, pp. 13-27) was used early on (PIND. *Nem.* II 1-3; THUCYD. III 104, 4; PLAT. *Phaed.* 60 D 2 ) of the so-called *Homeric Hymns* (presumably because they were performed in advance of epic recitations: see N.J. RICHARDSON, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Oxford 1974, p. 3 f.; contrast J.S. CLAY, *The Homeric Hymns*, in I. MORRIS-B. POWELL (eds), *A New Companion to Homer*, Leiden 1997, pp. 494-8), and, more loosely, of certain preliminary statements or speeches in tragedy (AESCH. *Agam.* 829, 1354; *Eum.* 20, 142; *Prom.* 741, etc.); by the fourth century, if not earlier, it was a term of art in rhetoric (*Phaedr.* 266 D 7; see G.J. DE VRIES, *A Commentary on Plato's 'Phaedrus'*, Amsterdam 1969, *ad loc.*; also P. CHIRON, *Pseudo-Aristote. Rhétorique à Alexandre*, Paris 2002, p. 170 note 468). On the other hand, the use of προοίμιον to signify the “prelude” to a legislative enactment, familiar from Plato's *Laws* (718 B-723 D *et passim*; see G. MORROW, *Plato's Cretan City*, Princeton 1960, pp. 552-60), is commonly thought to have been an innovation of Plato's own (*leg.* 722 D-E; cfr. CIC. *de leg.* II 16; certainly, the tradition concerning the “preambles” of Zaleucus and Charondas is worthless [see H. YUNIS, *Taming Democracy*, Ithaca 1996, p. 223 f.; K.J. HÖLKESKAMP, *Schiedsrichter, Gesetzgeber und Gesetzgebung im archaischen Griechenland*, Stuttgart 1999, p. 58 f.]). Yet it must be noted that long before the *Laws* was composed, Plato was wont to play with both uses of προοίμιον by punning on the double sense of νόμος as “law” and “song” (for νόμος as “song” or “tune”, cfr. M.L. WEST, *Ancient Greek Music*, Oxford 1992, pp. 215-7); see P. SHOREY, *Plato. Republic*, Cambridge 1935-37 (rev. ed.), II, p. 194 note *d ad resp.* 531 D; P. LOUIS, *Les Métaphores de Platon*, Paris 1945, pp. 83 and 211; P. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Plato* (trans. Engl.), Princeton 1958-69, III, p. 92 f. This pun was all the easier in that the use of νόμος for legislative enactment was itself of fairly recent origin, dating from the time of Cleisthenes (if not later), and there is some evidence, curiously, that laws were sung, even down to the time of Cicero (R. THOMAS, *Written in Stone? Liberty, Equality, Orality and the Codification of Law*, «Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London», XL (1995) p. 63).

opening section of Bk. I (327 A 1-331 D 3), like the antechamber to the hall of a great house, itself plays the role of a mini-dialogue. And so, while Bk. I in its entirety serves as a *prooimion* to the dialogue as a whole, the opening section with Cephalus plays as a “prelude” to the whole of Bk. I<sup>2</sup>.

Before proceeding to our discussion of the refutation of Polemarchus, one point in the present section requires mention because it illustrates, in the clearest fashion imaginable, both the manner and the degree to which logical and dramatic elements are carefully coordinated in the Platonic dialogues. In response to Socrates’ query regarding how it is with old age, Cephalus observes that many of his companions are wont to complain that advancing age is the source of all their grievances. But Cephalus thinks that their view of it cannot be right, for if old age truly were the cause of all their ills, then he too would suffer likewise (τὰ αὐτὰ ταῦτα ἐπεπόνθη: 329 B 4 f.) – as would many others – which is not at all the case; and that the *real* cause of their misery is rather the character of men. As such, Cephalus dismisses the complaints of his companions by adducing both himself and others as counterinstances. We are thus prepared, by a type of compositional anticipation or *prolepsis* that abounds in the dialogues, for Socrates’ sole and swift refutation of Cephalus’ own definition of Justice.

<sup>2</sup> *Republic I* falls into three distinct sections (cfr. G. GIANNANTONI, *Il primo libro della ‘Repubblica’ di Platone*, «Rivista critica di storia della filosofia», XII (1957) pp. 132-6): [i] the opening scene to and at the house of Cephalus (327 A-331 D); [ii] a discussion with Polemarchus (331 D-336 A); [iii] a discussion with Thrasymachus (336 B-*fin.*). While the transitions to the sections dealing with Polemarchus (331 D 4: ὑπολαβόν) and Thrasymachus (336 B 1 ff.) are strongly marked, there is no formal break between the initial *mise-en-scène* and the conversation with Cephalus; rather, the shift from the meeting on the road to Piraeus over to the house (and to the conversation with Cephalus) is effected simply by the glide of a narrative οὖν (328 B 4: ἡμεν οὖν οἴκαδε κτλ.). The similarity of structure that holds between *resp. I* and the *Gorgias* is often remarked. Each consists of a sequence of three conversations of ascending length. And, as in *resp. I*, the opening conversation with Gorgias is interwoven into the *mise-en-scène* (cfr. *Gorg.* 448 A 1-5, with D 4 *et sqq.*), while the transitions to Polus (461 B 3: τί δέ, ὦ Σώκρατες;) and Callicles (481 B 6: Εἰπέ μοι, ὦ Χαίρεφῶν, κτλ.) are each strongly marked by vocatives and other such devices (for these formulae of transition, see G.H. BILLINGS, *The Art of Transition in Plato*, Chicago 1920, esp. pp. 53-70).

Justice, Cephalus is made to concede, is to return whatever one has taken from another (331 C 3). But as Socrates can point to an instance of this (viz., returning weapons one has borrowed from a friend who, having since gone mad [μῶνεις], demands them back again) which can in no way qualify as Justice (331 C), the definition fails. In other words, by counter-instance Socrates shows that the definition is, in fact, too broad. Thus, Plato's preference for *logica utens* over *logica docens*, often noted when comparing the dialogues with the formal treatises of Aristotle, goes far deeper than is sometimes realized<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Another example of this type of anticipation can be found in the *Theaetetus*; compare the refutation of Theaetetus' first definition of knowledge by enumeration (146 C ff.), which is convicted of circularity (147 A-C), with his last (208 B-210 D), which also fails, albeit in a far more intricate way, on the same ground (210 A 7-9; see L. CAMPBELL, *The 'Theaetetus' of Plato*, Oxford 1883, p. 18 ad 11: οἰόμενοι συνιέναι; for this fallacy of *circulus in definiendo*, cfr. *Men.* 78 D-79 E). I have called attention elsewhere to the fact that Plato is wont, *within* a given dialogue (and often in a slyly humorous fashion), to *verbally* anticipate ("proleptically", if you will) later thematic developments (e.g., *Men.* 71 C 8-D 2: οὐ πᾶν εἰμὶ μνήμων, [...] ἀνόμησον οὖν με, with 81 C-86 C; see A. TULIN, *Please Remind Me of Anamnesis: A Double-Entendre in Plato's 'Phaedo'*, «Quaderni urbinati di cultura classica», LXXV (2003) pp. 63-6, esp. note 11, with numerous examples). Others have used this approach more broadly to establish the unity of the *Republic* as a whole, showing how features of Bks. II-X have been carefully prepared or anticipated by the specifics of Bk. I: see, e.g., H. RAEDER, *Platons Philosophische Entwicklung*, Leipzig 1905, pp. 198-203; A. DIÈS, *Platon. Oeuvres complètes*, Tome VI: *La République*, Paris 1932, p. XXI note 2; A.R. HENDERICKX, *Eerste Boek van Platoons Staat of Dialoog Thrasymachos*, «Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire», XXIV (1945) pp. 5-46; G. GIANNANTONI, *art. cit.*, *passim*; W.C. GREENE, *The Paradoxes of the 'Republic'*, «Harvard Studies in Classical Philology», LXIII (1958) pp. 200 f., 203 f.; K. VRETSKA, *Platonica III*, «Wiener Studien», LXXI (1958) pp. 30-45; H. CHERNISS, *Plato (1950-1957)*, «Lustrum», IV (1959) p. 161 f.; P. JAVET, *Céphale et Platon 'sur le seuil de la vieillesse'. Réflexions sur le prologue de la 'République'*, «Revue philosophique», CLXXII (1982) p. 244 (rightly comparing 330 D-331 B, with 496 B-E, esp. D 9-E 2); L. TARÁN, *Platonism and Socratic Ignorance (with Special Reference to 'Republic' I)*, in D.J. O'MEARA (ed.), *Platonic Investigations*, Washington DC 1985, pp. 85-109 = *Leonardo Tarán. Collected Papers (1962-1999)*, Leiden 2001, pp. 218-46; CH. KAHN, *Proleptic Composition in the 'Republic', or Why Book I Was Never a Separate Dialogue*, «Classical Quarterly», XLIII (1993) pp. 131-42; J.R.S. WILSON, *Thrasymachos and the Thumos: A Further Case of Prolepsis in 'Republic' I*, «Classical Quarterly», XLV (1995) pp. 58-67; N. BLÖSSNER, *Dialogform und Argument: Studien zu Platons 'Politeia'*, Stuttgart 1997, Kap. I; H. ERBSE, *Beobachtungen über Platons 'Politeia A-Δ'*, «Hermes», CXXIX (2001) pp. 198-207. I leave aside for now Kahn's broader thesis (CH. KAHN, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue*,

Cephalus, who represents a type of honest, if unreflective virtue<sup>4</sup>, quickly withdraws, presumably because he has neither the inclination nor the aptitude for dialectic<sup>5</sup>. His place is taken by his

Cambridge 1996) regarding the “proleptic” relationships that he finds *between* individual dialogues of the *corpus* (a fundamentally sound, though hardly novel intuition that suffers from having been applied in an overly schematic manner). Kahn, admittedly, has backed away from the use of the term *prolepsis* in this broader context of his («Ancient Philosophy», XX (2000) p. 190). But the term remains useful for describing the *compositional* techniques that are at issue here. I trust that my observations (here and elsewhere) on Plato’s use of “foreshadowing” will not be confused with the recent and far less modest attempt by M. GIFFORD, *Dramatic Dialectic in ‘Republic’ Book I*, «Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy», XX (2001) pp. 35-106, to unlock the secrets of the text by appealing to what he deems to be Plato’s extensive and deliberate use of “tragic irony” – many of whose proposals, despite the occasionally clever hint (pp. 62 note 37, 68 note 47), rest on little more than accidental associations, innuendo, and surmise.

<sup>4</sup> For this conception of Cephalus (cfr. 619 C 7: ἔθει ἄνευ φιλοσοφίας; and, for this type of ordinary or “demotic” virtue, *Phaed.* 82 A 10-B 3, with R.D. ARCHER-HIND, *The ‘Phaedo’ of Plato*, London 1894<sup>2</sup>, Appendix I), see G.H. BILLINGS, *op. cit.*, p. 34; P. SHOREY, *Plato. Republic*, *cit.*, I, p. 12 note d; J. KAKRIDIS, *The Part of Cephalus in Plato’s ‘Republic’*, «Eranos», XLVI (1948) pp. 35-41; G. GIANNANTONI, *art. cit.*, p. 132 f.; K. VRETSKA, *art. cit.*, p. 40; P. FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 52-4; P. JAVET, *art. cit.*, pp. 243-5; L. TARÁN, *art. cit.*, p. 104 note 86; S. CAMPESE in M. VEGETTI (a cura di), *Platone. La Repubblica*, Napoli 1998-, I, p. 137 note 3 *et seqq.*; J. BEVERSLUIS, *Cross-Examining Socrates*, Cambridge 2000, pp. 189-92. Thus, J. ANNAS, *An Introduction to Plato’s ‘Republic’*, Oxford 1982 (corr. ed.), pp. 18-23; also M. GIFFORD, *art. cit.*, pp. 63 note 38, 68 f., 71 f.; R. BLONDELL, *The Play of Character in Plato’s Dialogues*, Cambridge 2002, pp. 169-73, have thoroughly misunderstood both the tone and purpose of the passage. That Cephalus’ unreflective conception of virtue is insufficient and contains the seeds of its own inversion is, of course, true; see the literature cited above with notes 10 and 61 *infra*. For the manner in which one and the same character may be both anticipatory *and* flawed, cfr. Friedländer’s apt and subtle observation (albeit in a wholly different context) at *op. cit.*, III, p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> Cfr. *Cic. ad Att.* IV 16, 3; G. GIANNANTONI, *art. cit.*, p. 133 note 31. The practical man shuns dialectics as a game suitable only for the young (cfr. *resp.* 487 C-D and 497 E-498 C, with Shorey’s notes *ad loc.*; *Gorg.* 484 C-486 C, with E.R. DODDS, *Plato. Gorgias*, Oxford 1959, *ad loc.*; P. SHOREY, *What Plato Said*, Chicago 1933, p. 506 *ad Gorg.* 484 C, 485 D; ID., *The Idea of Good in Plato’s ‘Republic’*, «Studies in Classical Philology», I (1895) p. 220 f. = *Selected Papers*, ed. by L. TARÁN, New York 1980, II, p. 60 f.). Indeed, youth is supple (*Theaet.* 162 B 4-7), retentive (*Parm.* 126 C 6-8; cfr. *Tim.* 26 A-B), and ripe for dialectic (*resp.* 539 B-C; *Theaet.* 146 B; *Parm.* 135 D 5 f.; *Phil.* 15 D-E; ISOCR. *Panath.* [12] 26), while Cephalus is old and long past the age for it (cfr. 328 C 6-D 6, and the play at 331 D 6 ff., with 536 D, *Lach.* 189 C, *Theaet.* 146 B, 162 B 4-7, 165 A 9 f., 168 E 4 f., 177 C 3-5, *Parm.* 136 D 1, and the joke at *Euthyd.* 272 B; see, further, R. BLONDELL, *op. cit.*, p. 77 with note 121).

son, Polemarchus, ὁ τοῦ λόγου κληρονόμος, who reiterates his father's position – formulated now as τὸ τὰ ὀφειλόμενα ἐκάστω ἀποδιδόναι (331 E 3)<sup>6</sup> – which he then confirms on the authority of the poet, Simonides<sup>7</sup>. In order to avoid the very thrust that had caused Cephalus to give way (cfr. 331 E 8-332 A 8), Polemarchus draws a distinction and refines τὸ τὰ ὀφειλόμενα ἐκάστω ἀποδιδόναι as doing good to friends and harm to enemies (A 9-B 8)<sup>8</sup>, which Socrates then reformulates, somewhat mischievously, as τὸ προσῆκον ἐκάστω ἀποδιδόναι (C 2 f.)<sup>9</sup>. Thus begins the refutation of Polemarchus (332 C 5-336 A 1).

<sup>6</sup> A *topos*. “Justice” is frequently viewed in commercial terms, and is often used of those with whom one may safely leave one's valuables on deposit (ARISTOT. *rhet.* B 6. 1383 b 19-20; *eth. nic.* E 2. 1131 a 1-5; K 8. 1178 a 29-30, b 10-2); see K.J. DOVER, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle*, Oxford 1974, p. 170 f.; E. SCHÜTRUMPE, *The Definition of Justice in Plato's 'Republic'*, in R. FABER-B. SEIDENSTICKER (Hrsgg.), *Worte, Bilder, Töne*, Würzburg 1996, pp. 51-3; S. CAMPESE in M. VEGETTI (a cura di), *op. cit.*, I, pp. 141 note 6, and 150. For ἀποδιδόναι, see E.M. COPE, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle*, Cambridge 1877, ad 11, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Fr. 137a Page; cfr. G. GIANNANTONI, *art. cit.*, p. 133 note 33. The use of Simonides here and throughout has a touch of malice to it (“ironical courtesy”: R. NETTLESHIP, *Lectures on the 'Republic' of Plato*, London 1901<sup>2</sup>, p. 21). The objections of J. LABORDERIE, *Le Dialogue platonicien de la maturité*, Paris 1978, p. 95 note 1, are merely special pleadings. J. BEVERSLUIS, *op. cit.*, p. 204 f.; cfr. 192, tries to distinguish the views of Polemarchus and Cephalus on the ground that Cephalus, at 331 A 1-3, rejects the *lex talionis*, whereas Polemarchus obviously does not. Yet this interpretation is based on what is surely an unwarranted extension of the Greek, which simply states that those whose conscience is clear of any injustice (τῷ δὲ μηδὲν ἐαυτῷ ὄδικον συνειδότι) will always have a “sweet hope” for the afterlife as a dear companion and nurse («als gute Alterspflegerin», Apelt) for his old age, as Pindar has it. (For ἐλπὶς here, see P. SHOREY, *Plato. 'Republic'*, *cit.*, ad loc.; F. GRAF, *Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung Athens in vorhellenischer Zeit*, Berlin 1974, p. 138 f.; A. TULIN, review of M. MORGAN, *Platonic Piety*, «American Journal of Philology», CXIII (1992) p. 633; S. LAVECCHIA, *Filosofia e motivi misterici nel 'Fedone'*, «Seminari romani di cultura greca», II (1999) p. 276.) For a more accurate account of the relation that holds between the various doctrines espoused in Bk. I, see *infra*, note 10.

<sup>8</sup> For this conventional formula, see K.J. DOVER, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-4; L. TARÁN, *art. cit.*, p. 104 note 87; M.W. BLUNDELL, *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies. A Study in Sophocles and Greek Ethics*, Cambridge 1989, pp. 26-59; S. GASTALDI in M. VEGETTI (a cura di), *op. cit.*, I, pp. 178-86; S.R. SLINGS, *Plato. Clitophon*, Cambridge 1999, p. 193 note 348.

<sup>9</sup> Polemarchus apparently thinks this substitution by synonym (introduced with some fanfare: B 9 ff.: ἠνίξατο ἄρα) significant, as it receives his hearty approval (C 4). But Socrates, though he often resorts in dialectical contexts to such dodges himself (cfr. 336

Socrates offers two distinct and independent refutations: the first, at 332 C 5-334 B 6, is punctuated (B 7-9) by Polemarchus' statement of *aporia* (οὐκέτι οἶδα ἔγωγε ὅτι ἔλεγον), followed by a restatement of the *refutandum*: τοῦτο μέντοι ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ ἔτι, ὠφελεῖν μὲν τοὺς φίλους ἢ δικαιοσύνη, βλάπτειν δὲ τοὺς ἐχθρούς. The second refutation runs from 334 C 1-335 E 6<sup>10</sup>.

The first refutation, which utilizes (but does not attempt to justify) the familiar analogy of the arts, as well as the sound "Socratic" principle that all arts are of contraries<sup>11</sup>, ends with the paradoxical conclusion that justice is the art of thievery – for the benefit of friends, of course, and to the harm of enemies (334 B 3-5).

D), is fully aware that it is only the underlying *meaning* of words that is significant; and, in fact, in what follows he proceeds immediately to re-conflate these two terms (C 6 f.: ἢ τίσιν οὖν τί ἀποδιδούσα ὀφειλόμενον καὶ προσήκον κτλ.; also C 11), and then seeks, by deepening his analysis, to determine precisely what these terms entail in their fields of operation, without any further attention paid to the distinction made here: see 335 E 1 f. (at the very end of the refutation of Polemarchus): εἰ ἄρα τὰ ὀφειλόμενα ἐκάστω ἀποδιδόναι φησὶν τις δίκαιον εἶναι κτλ.; also E 3: ὀφείλεσθαι. 332 B 9-C 3 is thus heavy with irony.

<sup>10</sup> 335 E 7-336 A 8, where Socrates dryly notes that the view under discussion is not the view of Simonides nor of any of the other sages, but of tyrants like Periander, draws the moral that applies to Polemarchus' treatment of justice *in toto* – as is shown compositionally even by the reference back to Simonides (cfr. 335 E 8 with 331 D 5) – and thus forms a pendant to the entire Polemarchus section. In fact, since Polemarchus' definition itself is presented simply as an elaboration of the definition offered by Cephalus, his father and bequeather (cfr. 331 D 6- E 1: σὺ ὁ τοῦ λόγου κληρονόμος), 335 E 7-336 A 8 actually closes the first half of the book and provides a perfect transition between the largely conventionalist doctrines of Cephalus and Polemarchus (notes 6 and 8 *supra*) and the radical sophistic immoralism espoused by Thrasymachus. Through this compositional device, two sets of ostensibly independent positions are shown to be closely allied (L. TARÁN, *art. cit.*, p. 103 f., with note 84; P. FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 52-6; also J. DE ROMILLY, *La Loi dans la pensée grecque des origines à Aristote*, Paris 1971, p. 91 f.). For Plato's view that these positions are both widespread and thoroughly conventional, see N.R. MURPHY, *The Interpretation of Plato's 'Republic'*, Oxford 1951, p. 1 f.; L. TARÁN, *art. cit.*, p. 104 note 87 *fin.*; R. BLONDELL, *op. cit.*, p. 197 f.

<sup>11</sup> See J. ADAM, *The 'Republic' of Plato*, Cambridge 1902, I, p. 18; P. SHOREY, *What Plato Said*, cit., p. 476; H. CHERNISS, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy*, Baltimore 1944, p. 26 f. For Aristotle's use of this doctrine, see H. BONITZ, *Index Aristotelicus*, Berlin 1870, 247 a 13-21, 279 b 12-6.

Because this conclusion is disquieting and paradoxical, but in no way strictly contradictory, the argument is purely *ad hominem*<sup>12</sup>.

As there are two refutations, so the second refutation (334 C 1-335 E 6) itself breaks into two – *i.e.*, it presents a dilemma, either horn of which leads to a refutation: if justice is to help one's friends and harm one's enemies, we must mean by "friends" either (a) those who only seem to each to be so (334 C 1-5), or else (b) those who both seem to be and really are (334 E 10, 335 A 8-10); and the first of these disjuncts itself is viewed from two points of view (334 C 6-E 3): for, as men's judgment may be in error, so that the good will sometimes be one's enemies and the wicked will sometimes be one's friends, it will follow either that one will have to harm the good and aid the wicked (334 C 10-D 8) or help one's enemies and harm one's friends (D 9-E 3). Thus, from the first horn it follows that, however we turn it, we have contradicted (334 E 3-4: τούναντίον ἦ) the dictum of Simonides (cfr. B 7-9; Aristot. *top.* A 10. 104 a 20-7).

The original premise, the *refutandum* of B 7-9, obviously has not led *itself* into contradiction, as some writers might have us think. Several additional premises have been introduced<sup>13</sup>. The specifics are interesting and highly instructive. Let us consider:

334 B 7 Οὐ μὰ τὸν Δι', ἔφη, ἀλλ' οὐκέτι οἶδα ἔγωγε ὅτι ἔλεγον  
τοῦτο μέντοι ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ ἔτι, ὠφελεῖν μὲν τοὺς φίλους ἢ  
δικαιοσύνη, βλάπτειν δὲ τοὺς ἐχθρούς.

<sup>12</sup> Cfr. K. VRETSKA, *art. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>13</sup> Cfr. 334 C 6-9 with D 12: ὅσοι διημαρτήκασιν; C 10: οἱ μὲν ἀγαθοὶ ἐχθροί, οἱ δὲ κακοὶ φίλοι; D 3: οἱ γὰρ ἀγαθοὶ δίκαιοι τε καὶ οἱ μὴ ἀδικοῦντες. That the elenchus does not consist in reducing a thesis to contradiction without the introduction of additional premises, as Robinson mistakenly believed (R. ROBINSON, *Plato's Earlier Dialectic*, Oxford 1953<sup>2</sup>, pp. 20-32), has been argued by others: see P. FRIEDLÄNDER, review of R. ROBINSON, *op. cit.*, «Classical Philology», XL (1945) p. 253 f.; H. CHERNISS, *Some War-Time Publications Concerning Plato*, «American Journal of Philology», LXVIII (1947) p. 136; L. TARÁN, *art. cit.*, pp. 87, 90 f., 94 note 38; G. VLASTOS, *Socratic Studies*, Cambridge 1994, p. 3 f. Claims that Plato has made elementary mistakes in logic can almost always be dispelled by paying close attention to the text.



- C 1 Φίλους δὲ λέγεις εἶναι πότερον τοὺς δοκοῦντας ἐκάστω χρηστοὺς εἶναι, ἢ τοὺς ὄντας, κἄν μὴ δοκῶσι, καὶ ἐχθροὺς ὡσαύτως;  
Εἰκὸς μὲν, ἔφη, οὕς ἂν τις ἠγῆται χρηστοὺς φιλεῖν, οὕς
- C 5 δ' ἂν πονηροὺς μισεῖν.  
Ἐὰρ οὖν οὐχ ἁμαρτάνουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι περὶ τοῦτο, ὥστε δοκεῖν αὐτοῖς πολλοὺς μὲν χρηστοὺς εἶναι μὴ ὄντας, πολλοὺς δὲ τὸναντίον;  
Ἐμαρτάνουσιν.
- C 10 Τοῦτοις ἄρα οἱ μὲν ἀγαθοὶ ἐχθροί, οἱ δὲ κακοὶ φίλοι;  
Πάνυ γε.  
Ἄλλ' ὅμως δίκαιον τότε τούτοις τοὺς μὲν πονηροὺς ὠφελεῖν, τοὺς δὲ ἀγαθοὺς βλάπτειν;
- D 1 Φαίνεται.  
Ἄλλὰ μὴν οἷ γε ἀγαθοὶ δίκαιοί τε καὶ οἷοι μὴ ἀδικεῖν;  
Ἀληθῆ.
- D 5 Κατὰ δὴ τὸν σὸν λόγον τοὺς μηδὲν ἀδικοῦντας δίκαιον κακῶς ποιεῖν.  
Μηδαμῶς, ἔφη, ὃ Σώκρατες· πονηρὸς γὰρ ἔοικεν εἶναι ὁ λόγος.  
Τοὺς ἀδίκους ἄρα, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, δίκαιον βλάπτειν, τοὺς δὲ δικαίους ὠφελεῖν;
- D 10 Οὗτος ἐκείνου καλλίων φαίνεται.  
Πολλοῖς ἄρα, ὃ Πολέμαρχε, συμβήσεται, ὅσοι διημαρτήκασιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, δίκαιον εἶναι τοὺς μὲν φίλους βλάπτειν – πονηροὶ γὰρ αὐτοῖς εἰσιν – τοὺς δ' ἐχθροὺς ὠφελεῖν – ἀγαθοὶ γάρ· καὶ οὕτως ἐροῦμεν αὐτὸ τὸναντίον ἢ τὸν Σιμωνίδην ἔφαμεν λέγειν.
- E 1 Καὶ μάλα, ἔφη, οὕτω συμβαίνει. ἀλλὰ μεταθώμεθα·

Like so many of the dialectical passages in the corpus, this one is somewhat hard to analyze, harder than appears at first glance, partially because several threads are running simultaneously. So, we are sometimes told that the difficulty here is that Socrates equivocates on *ἀγαθός*; that, as he slides unobtrusively from *χρηστός* (C 2, 4, 7) to *ἀγαθός* (C 10, D 1) to *δίκαιος* (D 3), he subtly shifts from a “non-moral” or utilitarian conception of *φίλος* to a moral one<sup>14</sup>; that Polemarchus fails to realize that he has been

<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., T.G. TUCKER, *The Proem to the Ideal Commonwealth of Plato*, London 1900,

led along thus until, confronted with the consequence that he may sometimes have to harm the just, he pulls up short<sup>15</sup>. There is something to this view – for Polemarchus does indeed seem to grow more alarmed as the argument slides from term to term to term (cfr. C 4-5, 11, D 2, 7 f.). But there is not as much to this account as one might suppose. First, the semantics of *χρηστός* are not so clear-cut. Despite its etymological association with *χρησθαί* and *χρήσιμος*, the term is not commonly used by Plato of “utility”<sup>16</sup>. On the other hand, if we allow that *χρηστός* here connotes “utility”, then we are left (on the present analysis) with the clear implication that, were it not for the slide and equivocation of *ἀγαθός*, Polemarchus would have had no difficulty in accepting the proposition that one will sometimes want to harm *χρηστοί* – *i.e.*, those who are serviceable – and promote those who are useless, though this admission, once made, would presumably entail difficulties of its own. Finally, even apart from semantics, this analysis fails to explain the peculiar criss-cross (shoe-laced) structure of the argument which results in a pair of reversals (D 5- E 3) and a contradiction (E 3-4: *τὸν ἀντίον*). In other words, it has not got the syntax right either. In fact, as we shall now try to demonstrate, the true root of the problem is that it is actually Polemarchus, and

pp. XXXIV f., LV f.; also S. GASTALDI in M. VEGETTI (a cura di), *op. cit.*, I, p. 189 f. *Ἀγαθός*, which easily associates itself with terms like *δίκαιος* at one end of the moral spectrum, just as easily consorts with notions of utility at the other end of the moral spectrum; see E.S. THOMPSON, *The 'Meno' of Plato*, London 1901, p. 104 *ad* 77 D 34, with XENOPH. *mem.* IV 6.8; A.W.H. ADKINS, *Merit and Responsibility*, Oxford 1960, chap. III *et passim*; W.K.C. GUTHRIE, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Cambridge 1969, III, pp. 462-7; B. SNELL, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes*, Göttingen 1975<sup>4</sup>, esp. pp. 153-6. *Δίκαιος*, too, can be taken in this strictly utilitarian manner; see K.J. DOVER, *op. cit.*, pp. 181 f., 185 f.

<sup>15</sup> His refusal to accept this consequence would, presumably, be ascribed to a sense of “shame”; cfr. *Gorg.* 461 B, 482 D, 494 C-E; *resp.* 350 D 3 (of Thrasymachus); E.R. DODDS, *op. cit.*, p. 30 note 2.

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., *Euthyd.* 285 A-B, with C 5, which is fairly typical. On *χρηστός*, see K.J. DOVER, *op. cit.*, pp. 296-9 (with 52 f., 58, 62 f., 65 note 6, 165, etc.). For Plato's use, cfr. É. DES PLACES, *Platon. Oeuvres complètes*, Tome XIV: *Lexique*, Paris 1964, *s.v.* Aristotle's usage is similar (see H. BONITZ, *Index Aristotelicus*, cit., *s.v.*). The negative (*ἄχρηστος*), on the other hand, is the contrary of *χρήσιμος*; cfr. *resp.* 332 E with K.J. DOVER, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

not Socrates, who equivocates, and that he equivocates not with a slide on ἀγαθός, but squarely on φίλος.

We are often told<sup>17</sup> that the initial question (C 1-3) is simply: by “friends” and “enemies” do you mean those who *seem* so, or those who *are* so? This is inaccurate. For the question is rather whether by “friends” and “enemies” we mean those who *seem* to be χρηστοί (or its opposite), or those who really *are* χρηστοί (or its opposite). As such, the question is, from the very start, synthetic<sup>18</sup>. In the course of the elenchus, Socrates expands on χρηστός by equating it first with ἀγαθός (C 10) and then with δίκαιος (D 3). These expansions are immediately accepted by Socrates and Polemarchus both; and so, on the rules of dialectic (which is to argue from premises accepted and received), this move is not to be deemed problematic. It plays its role, as we saw above; but it is not the pivot on which the refutation turns<sup>19</sup>. The relevant contrast is rather between those who really *are* good, serviceable, and just, and those who only *seem* to be so; and the question is which of *these* two should be accounted as φίλοι. Polemarchus avers, in a highly conventionalist manner, that mere seeming will suffice – *i.e.*, that each man should himself be the measure of his φίλοι. This seems, at first glance, to be rather plausible. As soon as this point has been established, however, Polemarchus immediately concedes that the failure to take as friends (and enemies) those who are good (or bad, as the case may be) is the result of an error in human judgment (C 6-10: ἀμαρτάνουσιν). As such, when we

<sup>17</sup> *E.g.*, T.G. TUCKER, *op. cit.*, p. XXXIV; *cfr.* my own formulation (in the paragraph that is placed between notes 12 and 13 *supra*) – put thus so as not to prejudge the topic.

<sup>18</sup> Tucker amazingly says that it is Polemarchus who confuses the matter by introducing this question of χρηστός. As such, his complaint that the question should have been kept simple, «that φίλοι are simply those who φιλοῦσι», is not in the least relevant.

<sup>19</sup> See text *supra*. This identification of friends with those who are good, just, etc., is thus brought about easily, and not «attraverso un lungo e non certo limpido tragitto dialettico» (S. GASTALDI in M. VEGETTI (a cura di), *op. cit.*, I, p. 188; contrast D. BLYTH, *Polemarchus in Plato's 'Republic'*, «Prudentia», XXVI (1994) p. 77). It was typically assumed, as we certainly would expect, that one's friends and enemies would be good or bad respectively; see the passages collected by M.W. BLUNDELL, *Helping Friends cit.*, p. 51 f.

judge *correctly* and when we do not err, presumably, we will get it right. And so there is, even for Polemarchus, and despite his conventionalist pose, an independent standard. And we will strive, so it seems, to the best of our ability, given the weaknesses due to our all too human limitations, to take as “friends” (and “enemies”) those who really *are* good, serviceable, and the like (or not, as the case may be). And so, the truth of the matter is that Polemarchus, during the course of a single argument (*i.e.*, in this initial horn of the argument: C 1- E 4), actually holds two different conceptions of what sort of φίλος he wants us to consider, and these two conceptions are inconsistent; hence, the contradiction that shatters the current horn<sup>20</sup>. Moreover, one of these two conceptions, the second, the more “realistic” or less conventionalist one, is actually the premise (as we know) on which the second horn will be constructed (see below), and is also the premise which the first horn had actually and explicitly claimed to have rejected (C 4-5). Polemarchus thinks he has dispensed with an independent standard – but he has not.

It is fully in Plato’s manner to have his interlocutors espouse what Plato deems to be a false and thoroughly conventionalist position, and then to allow them (often unremarked) to suddenly endorse what Plato considers to be the right position – as if the interlocutor could barely restrain himself – and then to wreck havoc dialectically with the inconsistencies that inevitably ensue<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> At 334 E 2: πονηροὶ γὰρ αὐτοῖς εἰσιν, the dative (of course) is objective: «denn sie sind (ja in der Tat) schlecht gegen sie»; see K. VRETSKA, *Platonica*, «Wiener Studien», LXIV (1949) p. 77 f.; cfr. G.L. COOPER III, after K.W. KRÜGER, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, Ann Arbor 1998-, 48.8.0 and 48.13.2.

<sup>21</sup> An example of this can be found in the famous “Euthyphro argument”, especially in Euthyphro’s free admission (at 10 D 1-5) that the pious is loved *because* it is pious. Euthyphro has been criticized for this (*e.g.*, P. GEACH, *Plato’s ‘Euthyphro’: An Analysis and Commentary*, «Monist», I (1966) p. 378; J. HALL, *Plato: ‘Euthyphro’ 10A1-11A10*, «Philosophical Quarterly», XVIII (1968) p. 10; S.M. COHEN, *Socrates on the Definition of Piety: ‘Euthyphro’ 10A-11B*, «Journal of the History of Philosophy», IX (1971) pp. 1-14; T. PAXSON, *Plato’s ‘Euthyphro’ 10A-11B*, «Phronesis», XVII (1972) p. 180, etc.). But such criticisms are beside the point. Another example can be found in the refutation of Callicles: cfr. *Gorg.* 494 A-495 B, with 499 B 6- C 2 (and *n.b.* Socrates’ astonished cry at B 9 ἰὸν

It is part of his polemic against all sorts of relativisms that such positions cannot be consistently upheld. Nor is it hard to fathom why Polemarchus, in this particular instance, when it comes to choosing one's "friends" and "enemies", would find it difficult to maintain the view that mere "seeming" will suffice. Indeed, Plato always held that while men may be mistaken in their calculations, all seek at the very least what each takes to be the good; that while men may be content with a sham reputation (so long as they *seem* to be just or pious in the eyes of other men), the notion that anyone could possibly be satisfied with what merely *appears* to be useful, or with the *seemingly* good, is absurd<sup>22</sup>. It is hardly surprising, then, that in spite of the conventionalist views espoused at 334 C 1-5, Polemarchus would show himself committed (albeit unwittingly) to a very different – indeed, to a contrary – set of views.

We may now turn to the other horn (334 E 5-335 A 5): the friend is he who both seems and actually is χρηστός (E 10). The definition can now be restated, once and for all (δή: A 6), such that Justice is to help one's friends – provided that they are truly good (ἀγαθὸν ὄντα), and to harm one's enemies, when they too are truly (ὄντα) bad (335 A 9-10). The refutation that follows is often treated and paraphrased in books and articles, but it is not commonly analyzed with any real precision. An appreciation of the actual structure of the argument will therefore be worthwhile in itself, and it will cast some needed light (as we have indicated) on the structure and purpose of *Republic I* both as a whole and in its relation to the remainder of the dialogue. The Greek runs as follows:

ίου, with E.R. DODDS, *op. cit.*, *ad loc.*).

<sup>22</sup> See esp. *Theaet.* 171 D-172 B and 177 C-179 C, with P. SHOREY, *art. cit.*, p. 191 (= *Selected Papers*, *cit.*, II, p. 31); cf. DEMOCR. 68 B 69 D-K.: ἀνθρώποις πᾶσι τὸν ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἀληθές· ἡδὺ δὲ ἄλλω ἄλλο. For the doctrine that all men desire the good, cf. *Euthyphr.* 7 E 6 f., *Gorg.* 467 C-468 C, *Men.* 77 C-E, *symp.* 204 E-206 A, *Euthyd.* 278 E-279 A, *resp.* 413 A, 438 A, 505 D, *Phil.* 20 D, etc. A similar choice between that which *seems* and that which really *is*, is offered to Thrasymachus at 340 A-C. For the topic of τὰ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν τῶν πρὸς δοξάν, cf. ARISTOT. *rhet.* A 7. 1365 a 37-b 20, esp. b 5-7.

- 335 A 6 Κελεύεις δὴ ἡμᾶς προσθεῖναι τῷ δικαίῳ ἢ ὡς τὸ πρῶτον ἐλέγομεν, λέγοντες δίκαιον εἶναι τὸν μὲν φίλον εὖ ποιεῖν, τὸν δ' ἐχθρὸν κακῶς· νῦν πρὸς τοῦτ' ὧδε λέγειν, ὅτι ἔστιν δίκαιον<sup>23</sup> τὸν μὲν φίλον ἀγαθὸν ὄντα εὖ ποιεῖν, τὸν δ' ἐχθρὸν κακὸν ὄντα βλάπτειν;
- B 1 Πάνυ μὲν οὖν, ἔφη, οὕτως ἂν μοι δοκεῖ καλῶς λέγεσθαι. Ἔστιν ἄρα, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, δικαίου ἀνδρὸς βλάπτειν καὶ ὄντινοῦν ἀνθρώπων;  
Καὶ πάνυ γε, ἔφη· τοὺς γε πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἐχθροὺς δεῖ βλάπτειν.
- B 5 Βλαπτόμενοι δ' ἵπποι βελτίους ἢ χεῖρους γίνονται; Χεῖρους.  
Ἔρα εἰς τὴν τῶν κυνῶν ἀρετὴν, ἢ εἰς τὴν τῶν ἵππων; Εἰς τὴν τῶν ἵππων.
- B 10 Ἔρ' οὖν καὶ κύνες βλαπτόμενοι χεῖρους γίνονται εἰς τὴν τῶν κυνῶν, ἀλλ' οὐκ εἰς τὴν τῶν ἵππων ἀρετὴν; Ἀνάγκη.
- C 1 Ἀνθρώπους δέ, ὃ ἑταῖρε, μὴ οὕτω φῶμεν, βλαπτομένους εἰς τὴν ἀνθρωπεῖαν ἀρετὴν χεῖρους γίνεσθαι; Πάνυ μὲν οὖν.  
Ἄλλ' ἡ δικαιοσύνη οὐκ ἀνθρωπεῖα ἀρετή;
- C 5 Καὶ τοῦτ' ἀνάγκη.  
Καὶ τοὺς βλαπτομένους ἄρα, ὃ φίλε, τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀνάγκη ἀδικωτέρους γίνεσθαι.  
Ἔοικεν.  
Ἔρ' οὖν τῇ μουσικῇ οἱ μουσικοὶ ἀμούσους δύνανται
- C 10 ποιεῖν; Ἀδύνατον.  
Ἄλλὰ τῇ ἵπικῇ οἱ ἵπικοὶ ἀφίππους; Οὐκ ἔστιν.  
Ἄλλὰ τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ δὴ οἱ δίκαιοι ἀδίκους; ἢ καὶ συλλήβδην ἀρετῇ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ κακοὺς; Ἄλλὰ ἀδύνατον.  
Οὐ γὰρ θερμότητος οἶμαι ἔργον ψύχειν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐναντίου.  
Ναί.
- D 5 Οὐδὲ ξηρότητος ὑγραίνειν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐναντίου.

<sup>23</sup> ὅτι ἔστιν δίκαιον (A 8 f.) is deleted by S.R. SLINGS, *Platonis Rempublicam*, Oxford 2003, *ad loc.* (see also ID., *Critical Notes on Plato's 'Politeia' I*, «Mnemosyne», XLI (1988) p. 284 f.), who here (as elsewhere: see *Remarks on Some Recent Papyri of the 'Politeia'*, «Mnemosyne», XI (1987) p. 30 note 19; also *Platonis Rempublicam*, cit., pp. IX and XI) seems to have overestimated the value of F.

- Πάνυ γε.  
 Οὐδὲ δὴ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ βλάπτειν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐναντίου.  
 Φαίνεται.  
 Ὅ δέ γε δίκαιος ἀγαθός;
- D 10 Πάνυ γε.  
 Οὐκ ἄρα τοῦ δικαίου βλάπτειν ἔργον, ὃ Πολέμαρχε, οὔτε φίλον οὔτ' ἄλλον οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐναντίου, τοῦ ἀδίκου.  
 Παντάπασι μοι δοκεῖς ἀληθῆ λέγειν, ἔφη, ὃ Σώκρατες.
- E 1 Εἰ ἄρα τὰ ὀφειλόμενα ἐκάστῳ ἀποδιδόναι φησὶν τις δίκαιον εἶναι, τοῦτο δὲ δὴ νοεῖ αὐτῷ τοῖς μὲν ἐχθροῖς βλάβην ὀφείλεσθαι παρὰ τοῦ δικαίου ἀνδρός, τοῖς δὲ φίλοις ὀφελίαν, οὐχ ἦν σοφὸς ὁ ταῦτα εἰπών. οὐ γὰρ ἀληθῆ ἔλεγεν·
- E 5 οὐδαμοῦ γὰρ δίκαιον οὐδένα ἡμῖν ἐφάνη ὄν βλάπτειν.  
 Συγχωρῶ, ἦ ὅς.

The *refutandum* of the second horn is stated at 335 A 9-10: it is just to help one's friends (provided that they are truly good) and harm one's enemies (if they are truly bad). Formally, the *refutandum* is a conjunction. Socrates now asks [A] whether it ever falls to the just man to harm anyone (B 2-5). This question is finally answered [C] in the negative at D 11-2, when Socrates infers (D 11: ἄρα) that it is never the function of the just man to harm anyone at all. From this, one may surmise that the entire midsection of this portion of text must be concerned with securing a single premise; and indeed, the lines intervening between [A] and [C] – viz., B 6-D 10 = [B] – are introduced, clearly and unequivocally, precisely in support of the premise queried at [A] and drawn (ἄρα) at [C]. The conclusion drawn at [C] states that one of the conjuncts posted by the *refutandum* (viz., the second) is false. And so, at E 1-5, the full refutation itself is finally drawn (E 1: ἄρα) thus: it is not, in fact, the case that Justice is to harm one's enemies and help one's friends, since the just man will not harm anyone at all<sup>24</sup>. The argument thus runs as follows:

<sup>24</sup> That the conjuncts at A 9-10 and again at E 2-4 are chiasmatically arranged only serves, in typical fashion, to point the ring.

*Refutandum*: Justice is to help one's friends and harm one's enemies (335 A 9-10)

[A] But does the just man ever harm anyone? (B 2-5)

[B] Supporting argument (B 6- D 10)

[C] no (ἄρα), the just man never harms anyone at all (D 11-3)

*Refutation*: The proposal (that Justice is to harm one's enemies and help one's friends) therefore (ἄρα) fails; for one of the conjuncts (that Justice is to harm one's enemies) is seen to fail (cfr. E 1-5).

The argument, so constructed, is simple and clear. The difficulties come only in [B].

As we saw, B 6-D 10 = [B] is given in support of [C]. But [B] itself falls into two parts, with a slight break in the argument falling after C 8 εἶκεν (*n.b.* C 6 ἄρα). Each part, in fact, is syllogistic. Consider the following:

[B1]: Men that are harmed become unjust (B 6-C 8).

{α} Just as horses and dogs that are harmed become worse (χειρόν) with respect to their own proper virtue or excellence (ἀρετήν), so too (by *epagoge*) men that are harmed become worse with respect to human excellence (B 6-C 3)<sup>25</sup>;

{β} Justice is human excellence (C 4-5)<sup>26</sup>;

{γ} Therefore (ἄρα: C 6), men that are harmed necessarily become more unjust (ἀδικωτέρους: C 6-8)<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Another *topos*: SIMONID. fr. 37, 14-6 Page (= *Prot.* 344 C 4-5): ἄνδρα δ οὐκ ἔστι μὴ οὐ κακὸν ἐμμεναι, ὃν ἀμήχανος συμφορὰ καθέλη.

<sup>26</sup> Ἄλλ' ἢ δικαιοσύνη οὐκ ἀνθρωπεῖα ἀρετή; Καὶ τοῦτ' ἀνάγκη. For progressive ἀλλά, marking the transition from major to minor premise, see J.D. DENNISTON, *The Greek Particles*, Oxford 1950<sup>2</sup>, p. 22.

<sup>27</sup> This conclusion, of course, is dialectical, and as such is only as firm as the premises on which it rests. Consequently, to insist (as is often done) that the argument fails because of an equivocation on βλάπτειν (T.G. TUCKER, *op. cit.*, p. XXXVI f.; T. GOMPERZ, *Griechische Denker*, Leipzig 1922<sup>4</sup>, II, p. 363; R.C. CROSS-A.D. WOOLEY, *Plato's 'Repub-*



[B2] It is not the function of the just man to harm anyone at all (C 9-D 13)<sup>28</sup>.

{α i} = C 9-D 2

{{x}} – The musical man cannot make others unmusical by means of the musical art (C 9-11);

{{y}} – Nor can the expert in horses make others unskilled with horses (ἄφιππους) by the art of horsemanship (C 12-3)<sup>29</sup>;

*lic*: A *Philosophical Commentary*, London 1964, pp. 20-2; T. IRWIN, *Plato's Moral Theory*, Oxford 1977, p. 324 note 3; É. MÉRON, *Les Idées morales des interlocuteurs de Socrate dans les dialogues platoniciens de jeunesse*, Paris 1979, p. 132; K. LYCOS, *Plato on Justice and Power*, Albany 1987, pp. 99-101; B. AUNE, *The Unity of Plato's 'Republic'*, «Ancient Philosophy», XVII (1997) p. 303; J. BEVERSLUIS, *op. cit.*, p. 215; contrast A. JEFFREY, *Polemarchus and Socrates on Justice and Harm*, «Phronesis», XXIV (1979) pp. 55-61, even if true, would be quite irrelevant (on the purely dialectical nature of this and similar passages, see the second section of this paper *infra*). At any rate, the premise, at least when broadly construed (cfr. 601 D 4-6) – which is all that the present context requires – is sufficiently sound (cfr. H.W.B. JOSEPH, *Essays in Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, Oxford 1935, p. 13 f.): analogies between animals and men, especially in the context of education and improvement (and its contrary), are a staple (*Euthyphr.* 13 B 7-C 10; *apol.* 20 A 7-B 6, 25 A 12-C 1; *Gorg.* 515 E 2-516 D 3; XENOPH. *mem.* IV 1.3-4, IV 4.5; ISOCR. *ad Nic.* [2] 12; *Antid.* [15] 211-4).

<sup>28</sup> The lengthy *epagoge* that follows (C 9- D 8) itself falls into two distinct parts: {α i} = C 9-D 2 and {α ii} = D 3-8. The first part is based on the familiar analogy of the arts, which has already been utilized (and accepted by Polemarchus) several times during the preceding discussion. The second part {α ii} provides the ground (D 3 γάρ) of {α i}, and extends the *epagoge* to additional instances: the musical man does not make others unmusical by virtue of his own special power or skill (*i.e.*, by virtue of being musical); nor does heat make things cold by virtue of its own special quality, heat; for (presumably) the function of every power or art is to make things *like* what they are, and not unlike what they are. This premise has not been justified and obviously rests on a metaphysical pre-supposition which Socrates cannot pause to consider at this point in time. But it is *prima facie* plausible (Polemarchus, at least, accepts it), and it will be utilized again more than once later in this very book (*e.g.*, 346 A ff. [*n.b.* D 5 f.: καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι πᾶσαι οὕτως τὸ αὐτῆς ἐκάστη ἔργον ἐργάζεται], 352 D 8 ff.), whereupon Thrasymachus accepts it.

<sup>29</sup> ἄλλά (at C 12 and 14) introduces a fresh example. J. BEVERSLUIS, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-20, thinks that the premise used at 335 C 9-13 is inconsistent with a premise used in the first refutation (333 E-334 B). But the two arguments are logically independent and so the “inconsistency” (even if it should be admitted) is irrelevant to the *formal* validity, and thus to the dialectical flow of either passage. At any rate, the two principles (*pace* Beversluis) are not really the same: for the first (333 E-334 B), see *supra*, note 11; for the second (335 C 9-13), compare ARISTOT. *phys.* B 3. 195 a 11-4 (= *metaph.* Δ 2. 1013 b 11-

{{z}} – Nor will the Just make others unjust by Justice; nor, in general (συλλήβδην), can the good make men bad by means of virtue (C 14-D 2)<sup>30</sup>.

{α ii} = D 3-8

{{x}} – For (γάρ) it is not the function (ἔργον) of heat to cool, but this task falls to the contrary power (D 3-4);

{{y}} – Nor of dryness to moisten (D 5-6);

{{z}} – Nor of the good to harm (D 7-8)<sup>31</sup>.

{β} And the just man is good (D 9-10)<sup>32</sup>.

{\*} Therefore (ἄρα), it is not the function of the just man to harm anyone at all (D 11-3).

At first glance it would appear as if the conclusion {\*} at D 11-3 follows simply as the conclusion of [B2] alone. After all, the

5), with H. CHERNISS, *Aristotle's Criticism cit.*, pp. 269-71. Plato simply makes use, in purely dialectical contexts (see section two of this paper *infra*), of diverse *topoi* of contrariety and negation as need arises. C.D.C. REEVE, *Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato's 'Republic'*, Princeton 1988, p. 8 f.), for his part, glosses the present passage with *eth. nic.* E 1. 1129 a 11-7 (on which, see H. CHERNISS, *loc. cit.*, p. 18; also F. DIRLMEIER, *Aristoteles. Nikomachische Ethik*, Darmstadt 1979<sup>7</sup>, p. 399). But this renders the argument incoherent; for the topic is applied equally to all three of the coordinate cases (C 9-D 2), whereas (on Reeve's supposition) the last should be distinguished (as ἕξις) from the first and second (as τέχνη and so ἐπιστήμη). The fact is that each of the two arguments is internally consistent and, at the same time, logically independent of one another.

<sup>30</sup> D 1 συλλήβδην marks the critical instance to which the *epagoge* has led; obviously, this instance is not quite parallel to the previous instances (A. JEFFREY, *art. cit.*, p. 65 f.), and it is presumably this fact which necessitates the explanation (γάρ) that follows in D 3-8. The explanation itself, however, is given by further instances, rather than in a generalized or abstract form; see *supra*, note 28.

<sup>31</sup> Compare the similar leap made at {α i} {{z}} = C 14-D 2 (cf. note 30 *supra*), and see next paragraph.

<sup>32</sup> ὁ δέ γε δίκαιος ἀγαθός δέ γε is often used to mark the minor premise (e.g., 346 C 9, 431 C 5, *Lach.* 198 C 6, 199 E 9, *Gorg.* 499 D 2 [with E.R. DODDS, *ad loc.*], etc.); see E.S. THOMPSON, *op. cit.*, p. 208 *ad Men.* 95 E 4; G.H. BILLINGS, *op. cit.*, p. 69 note 94; J.D. DENNISTON, *op. cit.*, p. 154. This premise is offered here without any support because it had already been accepted by Polemarchus at 334 D 3.

conclusion at D 11-3 does follow formally from  $\{\alpha\ ii\} \{\{z\}\} = D\ 7-8$  and  $\{\beta\} = D\ 9-10$ ; the compositional structure of the argument suggests this as well, for  $\{*\}$  in [B2] seems to be structurally analogous to  $\{\gamma\}$  in [B1]. But this cannot be right. For in this case, [B1] = B 6-C 8 would be utterly superfluous; yet *all* of [B], as we saw above, had been subordinated to the establishment of the conclusion [C] = D 11-3. Still worse, the argument thus construed from [B2] is circular: for  $\{\alpha\ ii\} \{\{z\}\} = D\ 7-8$  (as we saw; cfr. *supra*, note 31) is not strictly parallel to the other cases of the *epagogē*, and is – given the substitution that follows at  $\{\beta\} = D\ 9-10$  – just what has to be proved. The question is begged, and the argument is fallacious (cfr. Aristot. *top.* Θ 13. 162 b 34-163 a 1). Yet now we can see precisely why [B1] = B 6-C 8 was needed, though it seemed, as we read along, to have been established at C 6-8, only to be left at the roadside as something of a relic. For, if men who are harmed become unjust = [B1], and it is not the function of the just (or of the good, for that matter; cfr. [B2]  $\{\beta\} = D\ 9-10$ ) to make men unjust (see [B2]  $\{\alpha\ i\} \{\{z\}\} = C\ 14$ ), then it surely ought to follow that it is not the function of the just (or of the good; D 9-10) to harm anyone at all (D 11-3)<sup>33</sup>.

The compositional structure of the argument and the logical structure of the argument are thus not in accord. This must be intentional. It is precisely this, in fact, that produces the impression, so common in the Socratic elenchus, that we have been carried along by the flow of the argument, and yet..., that something is wrong, that somehow we have somewhere been hoodwinked<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> This conclusion, of course, is a commonplace of “Socratic” discourse: see, e.g., the passages cited by T.C. BRICKHOUSE-N.D. SMITH, *Socrates on Trial*, Princeton 1989, p. 44 note 152; G. VLASTOS, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, Ithaca 1991, ch. 7; add *leg.* 904 B 2-3: καὶ τὸ μὲν ὠφελεῖν ἀεὶ πεφυκός, ὅσον ἀγαθὸν ψυχῆς, διενεοῖθι, τὸ δὲ κακὸν βλάπτειν. Yet we are not here concerned with the ethical dimensions of this thesis, but only with the *formal* aspect of the passage.

<sup>34</sup> Socrates purports to follow the argument wherever it leads (e.g., *Euthyphr.* 14 C, *Gorg.* 527 E, *Phaed.* 82 D, 115 B, *resp.* 365 D, 394 D 7-9, 415 D, 607 B, *Theaet.* 172 D, *leg.* 667 A; cfr. R. BLONDELL, *Play of Character cit.*, p. 124 note 73), and the interlocutors of Socrates often feel not merely stymied (*Men.* 80 A-B), but hoodwinked (e.g., 336 B 8-D 4

Still, and despite appearances, the argument is sound. But if the conclusion [C] (= {\*}) at D 11-3 rests on both [B2] and, now, as we see, also on [B1], we can also see that [B1] itself rests not only on the *epagoge* of B 6-C 3 = [B1] {α} (whose premises are plausible enough), but also on the bald assertion, neither prepared nor supported, that Justice, after all, is human excellence (C 4-5): viz., on the minor premise at [B1] {β}. Thus, the whole refutation of the second horn remains suspended from this single hook. And, as we shall see, quite a hook it is!

The refutation of Thrasymachus (344 D-354 C), which immediately follows upon the refutation of Polemarchus, first attacks Thrasymachus' claim that Justice is the advantage of the stronger (τὸ μὲν τοῦ κρείττονος συμφέρον; cfr. 345 B-347 E) before turning to the "greater" question (πολὺν δὲ μοι δοκεῖ μείζον εἶναι: 347 E 2 f.) of whether the life of the unjust man is better than (κρείττω ἢ) that of the just man<sup>35</sup>. After the argument from *pleonexia* (348 E-

[Thrasymachus], 487 B-C [with Shorey's notes *ad loc.*]; *Hipp. min.* 369 B 8-C 3; *Gorg.* 489 B 7-C 1 [cfr. 482 E 2-483 A 4], 513 C). Indeed, nearly all the complaints registered by modern scholars against the elenchus are voiced in the dialogues themselves: see P. SHOREY, *What Plato Said*, cit., p. 513 *ad Men.* 80 A; ID., *Plato. Republic*, cit., I, p. 38 note c; II, p. 14 note a; L. TARÁN, *art. cit.*, p. 87 note 3. Plato is thus fully aware of the issue; yet he chooses to use the elenchus nonetheless. For his reasons, see section two below.

<sup>35</sup> This division of the topic (we want to know *both* what Justice is *and* whether the life of the unjust man is better than that of the just man), already fully anticipated in the great *rhesis* of Thrasymachus (443 B-444 C), is introduced once again at the close of Bk. I (354 B-C). The second question, which indeed runs a course throughout Bks. II-IV, is effectively answered as soon as Justice is defined (445 A-B, with A. DIÈS, *République*, cit., p. XXXVIII f.). This question is then taken up again at the start of Bk. VIII (544 A, 545 A-C; P. SHOREY, *Plato. Republic*, cit., II, p. 237 note g) – that is, immediately after the digression of Bks. V-VII – and again at the close of Bk. IX (576 C-592 B); see further A. DIÈS, *loc. cit.*, pp. CIII-CVIII, CXVI-CXXII; P. FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 65-71. For Plato's general view, here and elsewhere, of "justice" or virtue (cfr. *infra*, note 39) as a harmony of the soul (e.g., *resp.* 410 D-E, 430 E, 443 D-E, 500 B, 554 E, 586 E, 588 E f., 591 D-E, 604 D, 605 B; *Gorg.* 482 B-C, 504 B, 506 C-508 C; *Phaed.* 93 C; *Tim.* 47 D, 89 D-90 D; *leg.* 689 D), see E. ZELLER, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, Leipzig 1889<sup>4</sup>, II.1, pp. 876-9, 884 f.; P. SHOREY, *Idea of Good cit.*, p. 218 (= *Selected Papers*, cit., II, p. 58); ID., *The Unity of Plato's Thought*, Chicago 1903, p. 10 ff.; ID., *What Plato Said*, cit., p. 505 *ad Gorg.* 482 B-C (cfr. E.R. DODDS, *op. cit.*, p. 260); P. SHOREY, *Plato. Republic*, cit., II, pp. 276 note e and 394 note e; A. DIÈS, *loc. cit.*, pp. XLIII-LXXXVIII, CVI ff.; C. LARSON, *The*

350 C), and that from the congeries of thieves (350 D-352 C), the third and final refutation (352 D 1-354 A 9) – just before the epilogue (354 A 10-C 3) – first establishes the general notion that everything has its own proper function (ἔργον) and its own special virtue or excellence (ἀρετή) by virtue of which each thing does its own proper function well; and then argues specifically that, as the function of soul is to care, to rule, to counsel and, indeed, to live (353 D 3-11), while it had been agreed to previously (συνεχωρήσαμεν: E 7) that the virtue of soul is justice (D 11-E 9), it follows (ἄρα: E 10) that the just soul and the just man lives well and that the unjust soul lives ill. That the function of “soul” is, indeed, to live (τί δ’ αὖ τὸ ζῆν; οὐ ψυχῆς φήσομεν ἔργον εἶναι; 353 D 9) is almost a truism<sup>36</sup>; it is the minor premise (353 D 11-E 9) that needs, apparently, to be bulked with argument. Hence the attempt to secure the truth of this premise by referring us back (συνεχωρήσαμεν: E 7) to the place of its proof.

The reference at 353 E 7 (συνεχωρήσαμεν) to a prior agreement refers, of course, to 350 D where we were told *in narratione* –

*Platonic Synonyms, ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ and ΣΩΦΡΟΣΥΝΗ*, «American Journal of Philology», LXXII (1951) pp. 395-414; P. FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, II, p. 309 note 5; S. GASTALDI in M. VEGETTI (a cura di), *op. cit.*, III, pp. 231-4; F. BECCHI, *La Nozione platonica e medioplatonica di “Giustizia”*, «Prometheus», XXVII (2001) pp. 222-32.

<sup>36</sup> Ψυχή, in its most popular conception, is simply “life”: cfr., e.g., EPICHRM. 23 B 4.5 D.-K. = fr. 278 Kassel-Austin; EMPED. 31 B 138 D.-K.; ANAXAG. 59 B 4, B 12; DIOG. APOL. 64 B 4; ANON. IAMB. 89.4.2 (= D.-K. II, p. 402.1); PLAT. *Crat.* 399 D 10-E 3, *Phaed.* 105 C ff., *resp.* 609 A ff., *Phaedr.* 245 C 6-246 A 2, *leg.* 894 E ff., esp. 895 C 7 f. (H. CHERNISS, *Aristotle’s Criticism cit.*, pp. 411-3, 436 f., 441 f.); ARISTOT. *protrept.* B 83 Düring (IAMB. *protrept.* 57.19-23 Pistelli = 87.12-15 Des Places); *de an.* A 1. 402 a 6 f.; A 2. 405 b 26-9; B 1. 412 b 25-6; B 2. 413 a 21-2, 414 a 12; B 4. 415 b 13 f.; *metaph.* Θ 8. 1050 a 35-b 2; *eth. nic.* A 7. 1098 a 12-13 (see H. BONITZ, *Index Aristotelicus*, cit., 864 a 30-7; H. DÜRING, *Aristotle’s Protrepticus*, Göteborg 1961, p. 247 f.); for literary examples, see L.-S.-J. *s.v.* ψυχή I: for HOMER, *Il.* IX 408 f., XVI 505, etc. (E. BICKEL, *Homerischer Seelenglaube*, Berlin 1926, pp. 43-50; cfr. J.N. BREMMER, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul*, Princeton 1983, pp. 14-24); for Attic orators, ANTIPH. II 14, v 82; [LYSIAS] VI 43, etc. (H. MEUSS, *Die Vorstellungen vom Dasein nach dem Tode bei den attischen Rednern*, «Jahrbücher für classische Philologie», XXXV (1889) p. 803). See, finally, the detailed and thorough discussion in D.B. CLAUS, *Toward the Soul: An Inquiry into the Meaning of ψυχή Before Plato*, New Haven 1981; S.D. SULLIVAN, *Psychological and Ethical Ideas: What Early Greeks Say*, Leiden 1995, pp. 76-122.

though we were not shown it *in actione* – that Thrasymachus had finally, though reluctantly (οὐχ [...] ῥαδίως [...], ἀλλ' ἐλκόμενος καὶ μόγις: C 12 f.), granted that justice is virtue and wisdom (D 4 f. ἐπειδὴ δὲ οὖν διωμολογησάμεθα τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἀρετὴν εἶναι καὶ σοφίαν, τὴν δὲ ἀδικίαν κακίαν τε καὶ ἀμαθίαν). The actual proof, however, while thus alluded to, is itself withheld. This, then, is the basis of the final refutation of Thrasymachus and it rests, as we see, on the very same premise on which the refutation of Polemarchus relied (335 C 4-5). The refutation of Polemarchus, of course, was only *ad hominem* – not least because this critical premise had been introduced (though it was accepted) baldly and without support. In the case of Thrasymachus, the refutation is scarcely even that. Though there has been an allusion at 350 C-D to some type of argumentation (*extra scaenam*), it now appears that Thrasymachus only accepts the premise (contrast Polemarchus' assent at 335 C 5: καὶ τοῦτ' ἀνάγκη) and its implications for the sake of argument (353 E 12 f.: φαίνεται, ἔφη, κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον); for, indeed, Thrasymachus had long since announced that he would merely nod assent to whatever Socrates said simply so as to keep his rival satisfied (350 D 9-E 10)<sup>37</sup> – though he himself believes none of it. His own view is rather that virtue is really injustice<sup>38</sup>!

We have now found the weakest and most vulnerable *formal* link in the refutations alike of Polemarchus and Thrasymachus, and it turns out also to be the very premise that lies at the root of contention throughout the dialogue as a whole: what is justice –

<sup>37</sup> See P. SHOREY, *Plato. Republic*, cit., I, p. 76 note *a*; also R. ROBINSON, *op. cit.*, p. 77 f. G. VLASTOS, who makes the demand that the interlocutor say just what he believes into an axiom of "Socratic" dialectic, himself recognized the exceptions (*Socratic Studies*, cit., p. 10 f.); others are less flexible. For recent discussion and bibliography, see C.D.C. REEVE, *Socrates in the Apology*, Indianapolis 1989, p. 46; CH. KAHN, *Vlastos' Socrates*, «Phronesis», XXXVII (1992) pp. 254-6; T.C. BRICKHOUSE-N.D. SMITH, *Plato's Socrates*, Oxford 1994, p. 13 f.; J. BEVERSLUIS, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-58; R. BLONDELL, *Play of Character*, p. 116 note 10, with p. 186.

<sup>38</sup> 348 B 8 ff., esp. E 1-4; also 344 C. For the shift that has occurred here *vis-à-vis* Thrasymachus' original position (338 C 1-2), see L. TARÁN, *art. cit.*, pp. 102-7.

that is to say, the moral life<sup>39</sup>? And wherein lies human excellence? We must assume that this procedure, and the interweaving in this fashion of the formal and material threads, is quite deliberate; it is handled too deftly, at any rate, to be merely accidental.

We turn now to a matter of more general import. Vlastos thought that Plato believed he had established the doctrine of 335 A-E *positively*, by means of the so-called Socratic elenchus – that critical examination by question and answer of his several interlocutors that serves to reveal (and thereby confute) the inconsistencies and contradictions in their held positions<sup>40</sup>. Vlastos was hardly the first to argue that the elenchus was not entirely negative, that

<sup>39</sup> That δικαιοσύνη in the *Republic* entails far more than “justice” in the narrow, purely political or legalistic sense (for which latter sense, see G. PENDRICK, *Antiphan the Sophist: The Fragments*, Cambridge 2002, p. 321 *ad* F44[a] I.6-11), is proved (*pace* G. VLASTOS, *The Theory of Social Justice in the ‘polis’ in Plato’s ‘Republic’*, in H. NORTH (ed.), *Interpretations of Plato*, Leiden 1977, pp. 2-10; also J. ANNAS, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-3) by 344 E 1-3, 352 D 5-6, 578 C, 608 B, *Gorg.* 472 C 6-D 1 (with E.R. DODDS, *ad loc.*), *leg.* 630 A-C (with 631 C 7 f.), as well as by the course and structure of the dialogue as a whole (and *cfr.* now 335 C 14-D 1); see G. STALLBAUM, *Platonis Opera Omnia*, III, 1: *Politica*, Gothae 1858, pp. XXXIV-XXXVII; J. ADAM, *op. cit.*, I, p. 12 *ad* 331 E ff.; P. SHOREY, *What Plato Said*, *cit.*, p. 484 *ad* *Lach.* 185 A; K. VRETSKA, *Platonica III*, *cit.*, p. 40, with note 23; P. FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, II, p. 307 note 13; E.A. HAVELOCK, *Dikaiousune: An Essay in Greek Intellectual History*, «Phoenix», XXIII (1969) pp. 49-70; T. IRWIN, *Plato’s Moral Theory*, *cit.*, p. 22 f.; F. BECCHI, *art. cit.*, pp. 222-4. On THEOGN. 147 ἐν δὲ δικαιοσύνη συλλήβδην πᾶς ἀρετή ἐστίν, whose authenticity is supposed to be guaranteed by the presence of the vocative Κύρνε at v. 148 (on this criterion, however, *cfr.* B.A. VAN GROENINGEN, *Theognis. Le Premier Livre*, Amsterdam 1966, pp. 446-9), see R.A. GAUTHIER-J.Y. JOLIF, *Aristote. L’Éthique à Nicomaque*, Louvain-Paris 1970, II, pp. 341 f.; also S.D. SULLIVAN, *op. cit.*, p. 198 f.

<sup>40</sup> See G. VLASTOS, *Socratic Studies*, *cit.*, p. 11 f. For discussion of the origin and legitimacy of this technical use of the term elenchus, see G. VLASTOS, *op. cit.*, p. 2; also T. IRWIN, *Plato’s Ethics*, Oxford 1995, p. 357 note 1. For the “legal”/rhetorical sense of “refutation”, *cfr.* O. NAVARRE, *Essai sur la rhétorique grecque avant Aristote*, Paris 1900, p. 271. Aristotle often uses it of rhetorical and dialectical refutation (see H. BONITZ, *Index Aristotelicus*, *cit.*, s.v.; E.M. COPE, *An Introduction to Aristotle’s Rhetoric*, London 1867, p. 262 f.). ἐρωτᾶν καὶ ἀποκρίνεσθαι is merely a periphrasis for this sort of dialectic: see M. WOHLRAB, *Platonis Theaetetus*, Leipzig 1891, *ad* 190 A 13; P. SHOREY, *Plato. Republic*, *cit.*, II, p. 209 note f; P. VICAIRE, *Platon. Phédon*, Paris 1983, p. 34 note 2.

it was somehow capable of actually *establishing* ethical and other doctrines on a relatively sound epistemological basis, but his ultimate conversion to this position certainly gave renewed impetus to the notion that there somehow existed some sort of “positive” elenchus<sup>41</sup>. This question is critical to the present study as it will obviously affect any interpretation of *Republic* I, both in itself and in its relation to the remainder of the dialogue<sup>42</sup>.

Considerations of space preclude a detailed examination of this now popular conviction. Suffice it to say that while Vlastos’ writings on the elenchus have been hailed in many quarters, they have not escaped detailed criticism by at least a few, and the strictures have in some cases been quite deservedly severe. His arguments rest on a developmentalist thesis whose chronology, in the absence of any explicit supports, can only be established in a circu-

<sup>41</sup> G. VLASTOS, *Socratic Studies*, cit., pp. 1-37 and 135 f., is a modified version of *The Socratic Elenchus*, «Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy», 1 (1983) pp. 27-58, 71-4. For a concise account of the *status questionis*, see G.A. SCOTT (ed.), *Does Socrates Have a Method?* University Park 2002, esp. pp. 2-6.

<sup>42</sup> The logical problem, for Vlastos and his followers, is to explain how a method that advances solely by exploiting the inconsistencies and imprecisions latent in the largely conventionalist views of the interlocutors can be in any way constructive. Proponents proceed by segregating out a group of putatively early, “Socratic” dialogues (in which the metaphysical apparatus of the theory of Ideas appears to be absent), and then by allowing (if often tacitly) that the elenchus is productive of positive knowledge only insofar as knowledge itself can be reduced to one or another species of “elenctically” justifiable true belief – *i.e.*, only insofar as knowledge is reduced to *doxa*: see, *e.g.*, T. IRWIN, *Plato’s Moral Theory*, cit., pp. 37-42, 68-71; C.D.C. REEVE, *Socrates in the ‘Apology’*, cit., pp. 35, 47-62 (esp. 51-3); T.C. BRICKHOUSE-N.D. SMITH, *Plato’s Socrates*, cit., esp. pp. 23, 33 note 9, 36 ff., 43 f., 57 f., 126-8; G. VLASTOS, *Socratic Studies*, cit., pp. 42 f., 48-58. The Socratic limb, thus severed from the Platonic *corpus*, proves to be indistinguishable from the sophistic and Isocratean ideal which finds our highest aspirations only on the plane of *δόξα* or *εὐβουλία*. Against this it may be said that the early dialogues “already” contain certain clear and unmistakable signs that Plato had sharply distinguished knowledge and opinion (see L. TARÁN, *art. cit.*, p. 88 note 7; H. BENSON, *Socratic Wisdom: The Model of Knowledge in Plato’s Early Dialogues*, Oxford 2000, p. 93 f.), and that even in *Republic* I *εὐβουλία* is the ideal not of any “Socrates”, but only of Thrasymachus (348 D 2!). On *εὐβουλία*, see W. SCHMID-O. STÄHLIN, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, München 1920-24, I 3, p. 22 note 3; W. NESTLE, *Platon. Protagoras*, Leipzig 1931<sup>7</sup>, ad 318 E; R.A. GAUTHIER-J.Y. JOLIF, *op. cit.*, II, p. 509 f.



lar fashion<sup>43</sup>; on the importation of certain assumptions, intrinsically implausible, for which there is no textual support<sup>44</sup>; and on a blatant misinterpretation of a critical passage in the *Gorgias*<sup>45</sup>. Be that as it may, I believe that we are now in a position to introduce one further argument against this doctrine of a “positive” elenchus – at least as concerns the conclusion drawn at 335 A-E; an argument, admittedly, which is far more difficult to establish conclusively, but which, if established, is perhaps the most decisive of all. If my analysis of the second horn of the second refutation of Polemarchus (335 A-E) should prove correct (an analysis that has at least the merit of being directly falsifiable, simply by having recourse to the text), then we need to admit that the argument as a whole – regardless of whether each of its component premises proves to be “true”<sup>46</sup> – is, at the very minimum, *formally* sound.

<sup>43</sup> Vlastos does not rely (wisely enough) on the somewhat dubious claims of stylo-metry, and bases his chronology instead on a development in doctrine that he sees within the corpus (G. VLASTOS, *Socrates: Ironicist and Moral Philosopher*, cit., p. 46 note 2). But since the development he postulates is grounded necessarily in a controversial interpretation of the dialogues that itself is predicated on the prior adoption of one or another postulated sequence of texts or of doctrines, the whole procedure is circular, as many have seen (e.g., H. RAEDER, *op. cit.*, p. 74 f.; J. CHEVALIER, *La Notion du nécessaire chez Aristote et chez ses prédécesseurs particulièrement chez Platon*, Paris 1915, p. 218; L. STEFANINI, *Platone*, Padova 1949<sup>2</sup>, I, p. LXII f.: «un circolo vizioso»; CH. GRISWOLD, JR., *Unifying Plato: Charles Kahn on the Platonic Prolepsis*, «Ancient Philosophy», X (1990) p. 248; M.M. McCABE, *Plato's Individuals*, Princeton 1994, p. 309, who then proceeds to ignore her own warnings).

<sup>44</sup> For Vlastos' “tremendous” assumption(s), see G. VLASTOS, *Socratic Studies*, cit., pp. 24-8; cfr. A.M. IOPPOLO, *Vlastos e l'elenchos socratico*, «Elenchos», VI (1985) pp. 153-6; CH. KAHN, *Vlastos' Socrates*, cit., p. 251 f.; H. BENSON, *The Dissolution of the Problem of the Elenchos*, «Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy», XIII (1995) p. 48; B. AUNE, *art. cit.*, p. 292 f.; J. BEVERSLUIS, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>45</sup> Vlastos' interpretation of *Gorg.* 479 E 8 is demonstrably erroneous (see H. BENSON, *The Dissolution cit.*, pp. 106-8 = *Socratic Wisdom cit.*, p. 83 f.), and depends on an over-literal interpretation of a chance phrase (ἀποδείκνυται) which, as Vlastos surely ought to have known, is entirely neutral; see FR. AST, *Lexicon Platonicum*, Lipsiae 1835-38, s.v. ἀποδείκνυμι; also G. STALLBAUM, *op. cit.*, II, 1: *Gorgias*, Gothae 1861, ad 516 B. The verbal instances adduced by C.D.C. REEVE, *Socrates in the Apology*, cit., p. 54 f., are frankly naïve.

<sup>46</sup> In speaking of the “truth” of a premise, I simply refer to its correspondence with the actual state of affairs – this being the only conception of truth that Plato ever entertained: see *Crat.* 385 B; *Euthyd.* 283 E-284 C; *soph.* 262 E-263 B (cfr. F. CORNFORD, *Plato's*

For all of its apparent complexity, the structure of the argument is actually quite elementary; each of the inferences – both mediate and final – rests squarely and securely on its premises. Plato holds the threads firmly in his grasp; he knows what leans on what. And yet the ultimate support (335 C 4-5 = [B1] {β}) – as Plato shows us clearly and unequivocally (albeit in purely dramatic fashion; see *infra* on Plato's use of *logica utens* as opposed to *logica docens*) – is the most astonishing and controversial of all. It is precisely the premise which much of the remainder of the dialogue seeks to establish and confirm. Clearly, then, the author knows that nothing has been established *positively*, that everything here is provisional.

But why, then, one asks, all this play and sport with inference, all this thrust and parrying of thesis and refutation whose frequent clashes, to the dismay of so many critics, are often so thick in Plato's "Socratic" dialogues? In part, at least, the answers have long been known. The elenchus was fashioned out of the self-same tools that had been forged by sophistic dialectic – that formal or semi-formal parlor game of question and answer and refutation developed by the wits and intellectual *virtuosi* active in late fifth century sophistic circles, stingingly parodied in Plato's *Euthydemus*, and eventually analyzed and formalized in Academic treatises like Aristotle's *Topica* and *Sophistici Elenchi*<sup>47</sup>.

*Theory of Knowledge*, London 1935, p. 310 f.); for Aristotle, see *de int.* 9. 19 a 33: ὁμοίως οἱ λόγοι ἀληθεῖς ὥσπερ τὰ πράγματα; *metaph.* Γ 7. 1011 b 26-8; E 4. 1027 b 17-25; Θ 10. 1051 b 1-5; J. TRICOT, *Aristote. La Métaphysique*, Paris 1953, p. 521 note 3; cfr. H. MEIER, *Die Syllogistik des Aristoteles*, Tübingen 1896-1900, I, pp. 16-24.

<sup>47</sup> For the game, its rules, and its close connection with Socrates' elenchus, see O. NAVARRE, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-66; E. ZELLER-W. NESTLE, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, Leipzig 1919-1920<sup>6</sup>, I, 2, pp. 1377-84; A. DIÈS, *Autour de Platon*, Paris 1927, p. 413 f.; J. BRUNSCHWIG, *Aristote. Topiques: Livres I-IV*, Paris 1967, p. XCII f.; P. MORAUX, *La Joute dialectique d'après le huitième livre des 'Topiques'*, in G.E.L. OWEN (ed.), *Aristotle on Dialectic. The 'Topics'*, Oxford 1968, pp. 277-311. L.-A. DORION, *Aristote. Les Réfutations sophistiques*, Laval 1995, pp. 37-58, has recently reargued the view that dialectic was Megaric rather than Sophistic (for the Megaric use of the method of question and answer, see E. ZELLER, *op. cit.*, II, 1, p. 264 note 1), and that Plato had simply "transposed" contemporary polemics onto a Socratic backdrop (so too P. FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, II, p. 335 note 5; P. MORAUX, *art. cit.*, p. 297 ff.; W. SCHMID-O. STÄHLIN, *op. cit.*, I, 3, p. 25 note 11; contrast H. GOMPERZ, *Sophistik und Rhetorik*, Leipzig-Berlin 1912, pp. 128

For the Sophists, no doubt, such dialectical exercises served several purposes: vanity, displays of virtuosity, φιλονικία, the accumulation of wealth, of influence<sup>48</sup>, even pure entertainment and *joie d'esprit*. But its most vital function was to serve as a sort of mental gymnastic<sup>49</sup>. It not only helped to develop mental agility in general terms; it was actually a vehicle – indeed, *the* principal vehicle – for the analysis and transmission of both sound and unsound logical method. And though the practitioners of this art do not seem at this stage, at least, to have tried to elaborate any regulative precepts regarding the more technical aspects of the art of reasoning, but were content instead to teach and analyze by means of specimen and *exemplum* – that is, it was by means of a *logica utens*, rather than a *logica docens*, that logic or proto-logic was first developed<sup>50</sup> – nonetheless, diverse modes of inference, rules of conversion, proofs direct and indirect, equivocations, amphibolies,

f., 167-71; E.S. THOMPSON, *op. cit.*, pp. 275-8; H. THROM, *Die Thesis*, Paderborn 1932, pp. 166-71). But as Dorion is concerned solely with the method of question and answer narrowly conceived, and allows in any case that «l'école de Mégare [...] exist même déjà au moment où Platon commence à rédiger ses premiers dialogues» (L.-A. DORION, *op. cit.*, p. 47 note 1), his thesis does not fundamentally affect the point at issue.

<sup>48</sup> Sophistic displays undoubtedly served as advertisements aimed at the recruitment of students; see F. HEINIMANN, *Eine vorplatonische Theorie der Τέχνη*, «Museum Helveticum», XVIII (1961) p. 110 f.

<sup>49</sup> See ARISTOT. *top.* A 2. 101 a 25-30; Θ 14. 164 b 1-2; [*probl.*] XVIII 916 b 20-5: οἱ ἐριστικοὶ λόγοι γυμναστικοὶ εἰσιν. See H. BONITZ, *Index Aristotelicus*, cit., 163 a 16-9, 21-3; P. MORAUX, *art. cit.*, pp. 287-90, 301-4; also ISOCR. *ad Nic.* [2] 51. For this metaphor in Plato, see P. LOUIS, *op. cit.*, pp. 62 and 213.

<sup>50</sup> At the close of the *Sophistici Elenchi* (183 a 37-*fin.*), Aristotle states that whereas his attempts to formalize rhetoric had its predecessors in the early writers of handbooks (τέχνηται), nothing of the sort had been done previously for dialectics, and that all those who taught dialectics professionally (τῶν περὶ τοὺς ἐριστικούς λόγους μισθαροφούντων) taught in the manner of Gorgias simply by producing specimen arguments for memorization. Had he wished, Aristotle could probably have pointed to predecessors in the Academy (cf. L.-A. DORION, *op. cit.*, p. 415); but his boast may at least be said to hold in a more general sense. For the presence of precept in early rhetoric, by contrast, see the literature cited by A. TULIN, review of E. GONDOS, *Auf dem Weg zur rhetorischen Theorie*, «Classical World», XCIII (1999) p. 221; S. USHER, *Greek Oratory: Tradition and Originality*, Oxford 1999, p. 2 note 3, with p. 21 f.; D. WHITEHEAD, *Tradition and Originality: Aspects of Athenian Forensic Oratory in the Late Fifth and Early Fourth Centuries B.C.*, «Electronic Antiquity», VII (2003) n.p.

and other types of fallacy – all this and more must have been on quite conscious and deliberate display. And so, a culture that traditionally had thought of education simply in terms of exhortation, *gnome* and illustration, suddenly found itself being trained, in the course of a few quickening decades, to think sharply and critically and increasingly abstractly.

Admittedly, Plato never tired of distinguishing *bis* dialectic<sup>51</sup> from the petty, logic-chopping sophistic which he terms eristic, antilogic, and the like<sup>52</sup>: his seeks the truth; theirs seeks only victory, *doxa*, and appearance<sup>53</sup>. But this said, the fact remains that there is no *formal* difference between the two, and that Plato retains (from first to last) a lively interest in the gymnastic, or purely logical aspect of the elenchus – developing by example many of the fine points of logic which Aristotle would later formalize as precept<sup>54</sup>. Much of the dialectical play found in the dialogues must therefore be analyzed and understood within just this

<sup>51</sup> The term “dialectic”, of course, is used by Plato to cover everything from elenchus to hypothesis to diaeresis (T.R. ROBINSON, *op. cit.*, p. 70). I use the term loosely here to cover the sort of arguments (probing and refutative) encountered in the early, “Socratic” dialogues and elsewhere. But *n.b.* the comments of L. TARÁN, *art. cit.*, p. 90, with what follows in the text of this paper below.

<sup>52</sup> On these terms, see E.S. THOMPSON, *op. cit.*, pp. 280-5; P. SHOREY, *The Unity of Plato's Thought*, *cit.*, p. 13 f.; ID., *What Plato Said*, *cit.*, pp. 586-8; ID., *Plato. Republic*, *cit.*, I, pp. 82 note *b* and 440 note *d*; R. ROBINSON, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-8; P. MORAUX, *art. cit.*, p. 294 f.; H. CHERNISS, *Ancient Forms of Philosophical Discourse*, in *Harold Cherniss Selected Papers*, ed. by L. TARÁN, Leiden 1977, p. 28; R.K. SPRAGUE, review of G.B. KERFERD, *The Sophistic Movement*, «Apeiron», XVII (1983) pp. 136-8; C. EUCKEN, *Isokrates*, Berlin 1983, pp. 7-12. ἀντιλογική, of course, need not always refer to opposing speeches: cf. ISOCR. *Antid.* [15] 45: ἄλλοι δὲ τινες περὶ τὰς ἐρωτήσεις καὶ ἀποκρίσεις γεγονόσιν οὐς ἀντιλογικούς καλοῦσιν.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *Euthyd.* 272 A-B, with *Gorg.* 457 C-458 B; *resp.* 490 A-E; 499 A, with P. SHOREY, *Plato. Republic*, *cit.*, II, p. 63 note *d*; *Theaet.* 167 D-168 B; ARISTOT. *top.* A 14. 105 b 30-1; *rhet.* A 1. 1355 b 15-21; TH. WAITZ, *Aristotelis Organon*, Lipsiae 1844-46, pp. 435-9; H. THROM, *op. cit.*, pp. 54 f., 65 f.; P. MORAUX, *art. cit.*, pp. 298-300; L.-A. DORION, *op. cit.*, p. 47 note 1 *fin.*; H. BENSON, *Socratic Wisdom cit.*, p. 85 note 119; contrast J. BEVERSLUIS, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-40.

<sup>54</sup> This does not mean that Plato did not fully understand the underlying precepts; that he did not develop them as such is due primarily to his use of the dialogue form (on which, see below).

context. As such, a purely formal analysis of these passages is always justifiable<sup>55</sup>.

It is futile, then, to complain that an argument fails through an equivocation in one of its terms, or through *ignoratio elenchi*, *secundum quid*, or any other fallacy of this sort, all of which were openly recognized by the Greeks<sup>56</sup>. It is up to the interlocutor – or rather, up to the reader – to diagnose the problem. For only thus can we truly come to “see” it. And if the interlocutor is sufficiently on guard so as to require that a word previously taken thus should henceforth be taken thus, or if he longs now to specify or wishes in any other way to retract or modify a move<sup>57</sup>, then we should follow the *Logos* whither it leads, reconstitute the argument, and start off boldly on a fresh examination, upon a new elenchus. From this point of view, at least, nothing is ever finalized. Everything is open to examination. We must always try to see what is involved in any claim, what is entailed by what. And every dialectical claim, it seems, every popular conception offered by

<sup>55</sup> The premises of a dialectical argument need be neither true nor necessary, but simply generally accepted (ἐνδοξά), whether by the many or by the wise (ARISTOT. *top.* A 1. 100 a 25-b23; H. BONITZ, *Index Aristotelicus*, cit., 250 a 12-27); hence, for most purposes, Socrates is content to argue from commonplaces or from his interlocutors' assent. By the same token, as dialectics is something of a game, the use of fallacy is legitimate: it is the task of the answerer, who is striving to maintain a thesis and avoid contradiction, to detect them; it is not the obligation of the questioner always to avoid them (*Men.* 75 C 8-D 2; *top.* Θ 1. 155 b 26-8; 11. 161 a 24-36, with b 16-7: αἴτιος δ' ὁ ἀποκρινόμενος, τὰ μὲν οὐ διδοῦς, τὰ δὲ τοιαῦτα διδοῦς); cfr. P. MORAUX, *art. cit.*, pp. 286 and 289.

<sup>56</sup> Much work still needs to be done on Plato's use of fallacy, the book by R.K. SPRAGUE, *Plato's Use of Fallacy*, New York 1962, being incomplete; cfr. S.R. SLINGS, *Plato. Clitophon*, cit., pp. 158-60. Equivocation especially was treated extensively by Plato in the dialogues and became a mainstay of Academic debate: for the latter, cfr. ARISTOT. *soph. elench.* 4. 165 b 30-166 a 6, with L. TARÁN, *Speusippus of Athens*, Leiden 1981, pp. 72-7; for the former, cfr. *Euthyd.* 277 D ff., with P. SHOREY, *The Unity of Plato's Thought*, cit., p. 16 note 86; ID., *What Plato Said*, cit., pp. 126 (with notes *ad loc.*), 518 f.; also E.H. GIFFORD, *The Euthydemus of Plato*, Oxford 1905, pp. 35-9; E.R. DODDS, *op. cit.*, p. 335 f.; L.-A. DORION, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-104 (also pp. 218-22, 337-9).

<sup>57</sup> P. SHOREY, *Plato. Republic*, cit., I, p. 54 note *a*.

the interlocutors in these putatively “early”, elenctic dialogues, can be pushed and probed still further, unpacked yet again, until...<sup>58</sup>.

But let us pause for a moment, lest we run ahead of ourselves. In 1957, Gabriele Giannantoni launched a fresh attack on *Republic* I. Though he resolutely opposed the separatist views of those who held that it was simply an early, independent dialogue later “recycled” for use in the finished *Republic*, and though he recognized that, from a logical point of view, the elenchus was entirely negative, he thought that therein lay its limitation, that Plato had written Bk. I to draw this very point, and that Bks. II-X were to be seen as announcing Plato’s rejection of this ultimately sterile use of the elenchus, formerly used by Plato himself in the “early” dialogues. The *Republic*, in other words, was a work of self-criticism. This thesis has now been revived as part of a far broader attack on the elenchus by Ruby Blondell<sup>59</sup>.

The answer to this type of criticism has been offered repeatedly<sup>60</sup>. Plato holds to an intellectualist ethics. Our actions are

<sup>58</sup> For Aristotle, the conceptions formed by men over long periods of time – certainly those formed by the wise (*top.* A 14. 105 b 17 f.) – are often fundamentally sound, needing only to be purified and parsed so as to yield their quotient of truth (cfr. *rbet.* A 1. 1355 a 15-7; *eth. nic.* A 8. 1098 b 27-9; Z 11. 1143 b 11-4; *de cael.* A 3. 270 b 16-20; *metaph.* A 8. 1074 b 10-4; *pol.* H 9. 1329 b 25-31, etc.; J.M. LE BLOND, *Logique et méthode chez Aristote*, Paris 1939, pp. 15, 247-68; also H. CHERNISS, *Aristotle’s Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy*, Baltimore 1935, p. 348). For Plato, by contrast, operating with a quite different set of epistemological presuppositions, the conceptions formed by the many (οἱ πολλοί), as also those framed by those reputed to be wise, have no such intrinsic credibility. All are gist for the dialectical mill; all may quite well be erroneous.

<sup>59</sup> See G. GIANNANTONI, *art. cit.*, esp. pp. 139-41; R. BLONDELL, *Letting Plato Speak For Himself: Character and Method*, in G. PRESS (ed.), *Who Speaks For Plato?*, Lanham 2000, p. 138 f.; ID., *Play of Character cit.*, ch. 4 *passim*, esp. pp. 184-99, 209 f.; for her critique of the elenchus, see pp. 115-27; also L.-A. DORION-M. BANDINI, *Xénophon. Mémoires*, T. I, Paris 2000, p. XCII ff.

<sup>60</sup> P. SHOREY, *The Unity of Plato’s Thought*, cit., pp. 9-27; ID., *What Plato Said*, cit., p. 296 f. *et passim*; ID., *Plato. Republic*, cit., I, p. 261 note b; II, p. 124 note a; L. TARÁN, *art. cit.*, *passim*; A. TULIN, *Dike Phouou: The Right of Prosecution and Attic Homicide Procedure*, Stuttgart 1996, pp. 94-7; and for Hellenistic and later discussion of this view of the elenchus, H. CHERNISS, *Plutarch’s Moralia* 13.1: *Platonic Questions*, Cambridge 1976, p. 22 notes a-b ad 999 E-F. None of these works is so much as noticed by Blondell, though each contains argument and copious evidence.

guided in critically important ways precisely by the ideas we hold. Knowledge – not, to be sure, mere opinion, but a far more deeply rooted type of knowledge, one capable of exercising control over the will – is thus an essential component of virtue. As such, no one who *truly* knows the good, could ever do otherwise. Yet most men suppose that they already know what they do not *really* know at all (P. Shorey, *What Plato Said*, cit., p. 547 *ad symp.* 203-4). This is the worst sort of ignorance (*apol.* 29 B 1-2; *soph.* 229 B 7-C 6; *leg.* 863 C; Shorey, *loc. cit.*, p. 490 *ad Lys.* 218 A-B; L. Tarán, *art. cit.*, p. 97 f.), for such men not only act amiss, they refuse to learn anew (*symp.* 204 A). The initial task of philosophy is therefore negative and therapeutic, to uproot this false conceit of wisdom so as to found in the ensuing *aporia* a healthier and more philosophic type of ignorance, one that will allow for and encourage constructive thought. The elenchus, in other words, is essentially purgative (*soph.* 229 E-230 E). To this extent – and here students of Vlastos will generally concur – the elenchus is *ad hominem*. For it is a testing not merely of ideas, but of the men who hold them<sup>61</sup>.

Yet one final point concerning the elenchus still needs to be made, one that is far less familiar, perhaps, but equally important,

<sup>61</sup> *Lach.* 187 E-188 A; cfr. G. VLASTOS, *Socratic Studies*, cit., p. 9 f.; C.D.C. REEVE, *Socrates in the 'Apology'*, cit., p. 46; M. FREDE, *Plato's Arguments and the Dialogue Form*, in J.C. KLAGGE-N.D. SMITH (eds), *Methods of Interpreting Plato and His Dialogues*, Oxford 1992, pp. 216-8; T.C. BRICKHOUSE-N.D. SMITH, *Plato's Socrates*, cit., pp. 11-6, 23-9; J.-F. BALAUDÉ, *La finalité de l'elenchos d'après les premiers dialogues de Platon*, in G. GIANNANTONI-M. NARCY (a cura di), *Lezioni Socratiche*, Napoli 1997, pp. 244-50; J. BEVERSLUIS, *op. cit.*, p. 38 f.; R. BLONDELL, *Play of Character cit.*, p. 113 f., with 124 note 70; in the older literature, see L. STEFANINI, *op. cit.*, I, p. LXXXI f.; P. FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, II, p. 41; R. SCHAEERER, *La Question platonicienne*, Neuchâtel 1969<sup>2</sup>, p. 13 f.; finally, ARISTOT. *soph. elench.* 8. 170 a 12-3. This "testing of persons", however, must be understood in the context of the intellectualism described above (for a clear illustration drawn from Plato's *Euthyphro*, see A. TULIN, *Dike Phronou cit.*, pp. 93-100); it has nothing to do with the probing of some vaguely defined existential or pathetic state (see *infra*, note 86). For the rest, one ought to recall that character for Plato is both inborn and acquired (see J.W. BEARDSLEE, JR., *The Use of ΦΥΣΙΣ in Fifth-Century Greek Literature*, Chicago 1918, pp. 97-100) and, insofar as it is acquired, it must be molded by an intelligent and purposeful ordering of action and environment. To this extent, character is *always* subordinate to thought; cfr. *resp.* 400 E 2-3: τὴν ὡς ἀληθῶς εὖ τε καὶ καλῶς τὸ ἦθος κατασκευασμένην διάνοιαν, *et saepe*.

for it affects our understanding not only of the elenchus and of Platonic dialectic generally, but of Plato's use of the dialogue form itself. For the dialogue is merely an externalization of those interior processes of thought (διάνοια) which Plato describes as a "conversation" of the soul with itself (πρὸς αὐτὴν διάλογος), a process by which the soul posits to itself (at best, serially and systematically) propositions to be either affirmed or denied<sup>62</sup>.

In the seventeenth century, René Descartes distinguished analysis and synthesis (*i.e.*, resolution and composition) as the methods of discovery and exposition respectively<sup>63</sup>. In analysis, a complex whole is resolved into its elemental components<sup>64</sup>, while synthesis recombines them again into the complex whole<sup>65</sup>, whose logical structure is thereby rendered explicit. In metaphysics, the primary task is that of analysis, since the deductions are relatively easy if one has successfully isolated the principles and elements (*primae notiones*). But, in contrast with geometry, whose elements are accepted easily because they accord with sensation («quae [...], cum sensuum usu convenientes, facile a quibuslibet admittan-

<sup>62</sup> For thought as a dialogue of the soul with itself, cfr. *Theaet.* 189 E-190 A; *soph.* 263 E-264 A; *Tim.* 37 B-C; *Phil.* 38 C-E; P. SHOREY, *Plato. Republic*, cit., II, p. 207 note e; L. TARÁN, *art. cit.*, p. 90. For discourse as the externalization of thought, see *resp.* 382 B (with P. SHOREY, *ad loc.*); *Theaet.* 206 D; *soph.* 263 E. Cfr. ISOCR. *Antid.* [15] 255-7; ARISTOT. *an. post.* A 10. 76 b 24-5; J. MAGEE, *Boethius on Signification and Mind*, Leiden 1989, p. 118 note 113.

<sup>63</sup> Cfr. R. DESCARTES, *reg. V*, Adam-Tannery [henceforth = AT] X 379,15-21; *Discours*, AT VI 18, 24-19, 2; *resp. sec. obj.*, AT VII 155, 4-157, 19: «Analysis veram viam ostendit per quam res methodice [...] inventa est [...] Synthesis [...] è contra per viam oppositam [...] clare quidem id quod conclusum est demonstrat» (155, 23-156, 16). See É. GILSON, *René Descartes. Discours de la méthode. Texte et commentaire*, Paris 1939, pp. 187-92, 195 (ID., *Index scolastico-cartésien*, Paris 1979<sup>2</sup>, *s.v. Méthode*); L.J. BECK, *The Method of Descartes: A Study of the Regulae*, Oxford 1952, pp. 156-9, 175 f.; A.C. CROMBIE, *Robert Grosseteste and the Origins of Experimental Science 1100-1700*, Oxford 1953, pp. 310-5; M. GUEROUULT, *Descartes selon l'ordre des raisons*, Paris 1968<sup>2</sup>, I, pp. 22-8, 357-60. The difficulties conceived by D. GARBER-L. COHEN, *A Point of Order: Analysis, Synthesis, and Descartes' 'Principles'*, «Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie», LXIV (1982) pp. 136-47, are not cogent and reflect an imperfect grasp of the classical and medieval tradition.

<sup>64</sup> «Atque hanc [*scil.* veritatem inveniamus] exacte servabimus, si propositiones involutas et obscuras ad simpliciores gradatim reducamus» (*reg. V*, AT X 379, 17-9).

<sup>65</sup> «Ac deinde ex omnium simplicissimarum intuitu ad aliarum omnium cognitionem per eosdem gradus ascendere tentemus» (*reg. V*, AT X 379, 19-21).



tur»), it is precisely the elements that are disputed in metaphysics, («contra vero in his metaphysicis de nulla re magis laboratur, quam de primis notionibus clare et distincte percipiendis»). This, says Descartes, is why he wrote *Meditations* rather than a scholastic treatise, *more geometrico*, as several of his objectors had urged<sup>66</sup>. This conception of analysis was a mainstay of sixteenth and seventeenth century thought<sup>67</sup>, and it can be traced to medieval discussions on the nature and scope of scientific induction (known under the Averroist term of *regressus*) that were themselves derived (via Latin and Arabic intermediaries) from Greek medical, mathematical, and philosophical writers<sup>68</sup>.

Students of Descartes have complained of inconsistencies in the Cartesian use of these terms, but this only reflects the somewhat protean nature of the Greco-Arabic tradition on which Descartes ultimately relied. Analysis was generally conceived of as be-

<sup>66</sup> *Resp. sec. obj.*, AT VII 156, 27-157, 26; cfr. AT VII 128, 11-9.

<sup>67</sup> L. MEYER, *Praef. ad SPINOZA, Princ. Philos. Cart. (Opera I, 128, 32-129, 31 Gebhardt)*; T. HOBBS, *De corpore* VI, 1; G. LEIBNIZ, *Nouveaux Essais* IV, II, 7. For Descartes' immediate sources, see E. GILSON, *René Descartes. Discours de la méthode cit.*, pp. 181 f., 187 (a 16<sup>th</sup> century Latin translation of PAPPUS Bk. VII by Commandinus, for which see now A. JONES, *Pappus of Alexandria. Book 7 of the Collection*, New York-Berlin 1986, I, p. 62 f.); L.J. BECK, *op. cit.*, p. 157 note 1, citing the handbook used at La Flèche: «ἀνάλυσις et συναγωγή, hoc est resolutio et collectio [...] Resolutionis ordo est, cum a toto integro ad partes integrantes procedimus [...] Collectionis vero est, cum ab inferioribus ad superiora conscendimus» (where *inferioribus* and *superiora* clearly refer to what is "furthest" and "closest" respectively, in the order of knowledge, to us; see *infra*, note 76; this, I might add, explains Descartes' otherwise controversial use of *tanquam a priori... & tanquam a posteriori* at AT VII 155, 24/156, 6 f.; see (pace D. GARBER-L. COHEN, *art. cit.*, p. 139 note 5) J. COTTINGHAM *et al.* (trr.), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Cambridge 1984-91, II, p. 110 note 2).

<sup>68</sup> See J.H. RANDALL, *The School of Padua and the Emergence of Modern Science*, Padua 1961 (orig. 1940), pp. 15-68; A.C. CROMBIE, *op. cit.*, *passim*; L.M. RÉGIS, *Analyse et synthèse dans l'oeuvre de Saint Thomas*, in *Studia mediaevalia in honorem... R.J. Martin*, Brugis Flandorum 1948, pp. 303-30; for Galen, see A.C. CROMBIE, *op. cit.*, p. 76 f.; for Chalcidius, cfr. CHALCID. in *Tim.* 302: *Est igitur propositarum quaestionum duplex probatio, altera quae ex antiquioribus posteriora confirmat, quod est proprium syllogismi – praecedunt quippe ordine acceptiones, quae elementa vocantur, conclusionem –, altera item, quae <ex> posterioribus ad praecedentium indaginem gradatim pervenit, quod genus probationis resolutio dicitur* (303, 10-5 Waszink, with notes *ad loc.*).

ing only a single branch of dialectics<sup>69</sup>, but the term itself was nonetheless used in many ways<sup>70</sup>. In addition to geometrical analysis, whose propositions are convertible *simpliciter*<sup>71</sup>, it included the

<sup>69</sup> ALCIN. *didasc.* 156, 30-3 Whittaker; AMMON. *in Porph. isag.* 34, 17-25 Busse (this and all subsequent references to the Aristotelian commentators are, unless stated otherwise, to the *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* [C.A.G.], ed. H. DIELS, Berlin 1892-1909); DAVID, *in Porph. isag.* 88, 6-8; ELIAS, *in Porph. isag.* 37, 9-19 (*et sqq.*): ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τὰς διαλεκτικὰς μεθόδους· τέσσαρες γὰρ αὐταί, διαιρετική, ὀριστική, ἀποδεικτική, ἀναλυτική [...] ἴδιον δὲ τῆς μὲν διαιρετικῆς τὸ ἐν πολλὰ ποιεῖν, οἷον τὸ ζῶον διελεῖν εἰς λογικὸν καὶ ἄλογον, θνητὸν καὶ ἀθάνατον. τῆς δὲ ὀριστικῆς τὸ ὑπονοεῖν τὰ πολλὰ ἐν ποιεῖν, τοῦτ' ἔστι λαβεῖν τὸ ζῶον, τὸ λογικόν, τὸ θνητὸν καὶ ὀρίσασθαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον. ἴδιον δὲ τῆς ἀποδεικτικῆς τὸ δεῖξαι ἄλλο ἄλλω ὑπάρχον δι' ἄλλου μέσου [...] ἴδιον δὲ τῆς ἀναλυτικῆς τὸ λαβεῖν σύνθετον τι πρᾶγμα καὶ ἀναλύσαι εἰς τὰ ἀπλά ἐξ ὧν συντέθη κτλ.; also PROCL. *Plat. theol.* 1, 40, 5-10 Saffrey-Westerink (cfr. *in Eucl.* 42, 20-43, 1 Friedlein; *in Parm.* 987, 25-8 Cousin); S.V.F. II, 135. Analysis is sometimes contrasted with the other three (AMMON. *in an. pr.* 7, 26-8, 14).

<sup>70</sup> λέγεται γὰρ ἀνάλυσις πολλαχῶς [...] καὶ ἄλλως δὲ πολλαχῶς λεγομένης ἀναλύσεως (PHILOP. *in an. pr.* 5, 16-21; cfr. EUSTRAT. *in an. post.* 3, 10-1); AMMON. *in an. pr.* 5, 5-7, 25: καὶ λέγομεν ὅτι ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς συλλογισμοῖς σύνθεσις, ἔστιν δὲ καὶ ἀνάλυσις, ὡς περὶ καὶ παρὰ τοῖς γραμματικοῖς ἔστιν σύνθεσις καὶ ἀνάλυσις, σύνθεσις μὲν καθ' ἣν ἀπὸ τῶν στοιχείων ἢ τῶν συλλαβῶν συντιθέασιν ὀνόματα ἢ ῥήματα, ἀνάλυσις δὲ καθ' ἣν τὰ συντεθέντα ἀναλύουσιν ἐπὶ τὰ ἀπλά [...] ἔστιν δὲ καὶ παρὰ τοῖς φυσιολογοῖς σύνθεσις καὶ ἀνάλυσις [...] καὶ παρὰ τοῖς φιλοσόφοις δὲ ἔστιν σύνθεσις καὶ ἀνάλυσις, σύνθεσις μὲν, ὅταν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀπλῶν εἰδῶν ἔλθωσιν ἐπὶ τὰ σύνθετα, οἷον ἀπὸ τοῦ καθ' αὐτὸ καλοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ἐν τῷ νῶ καλόν, ἐπὶ τὸ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, ἐπὶ τὸ ἐν τοῖς σώμασιν· ἀνάλυσις δὲ ἔστιν, ὅταν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς εἰδῶν ἀναδράμωσιν ἐπὶ τὰ ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς. ἔστιν δὲ καὶ ἐρωτική ἀνάλυσις, ἣ κέχρηται ἐν τῷ Συμποσίῳ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς κάλλους ἀνατρέχων ἐπὶ τὸ νοητὸν κάλλος· ἔστιν δὲ καὶ γεωμετρικὴ ἀνάλυσις [...] καὶ τὴν τοιαύτην ἀνάλυσιν ὁ Γεμῖνος ὀρίζομενός φησιν “ἀνάλυσίς ἐστιν ἀποδείξεως εὗρεσις” [...] ἔστιν δὲ καὶ παρὰ τοῖς ἀστρονόμοις σύνθεσις καὶ ἀνάλυσις, ἔστιν οὖν καὶ ἐν τοῖς συλλογισμοῖς [...] οἷον θέλω ἀποδείξαι ὅτι ἡ ψυχὴ ἀθάνατος ἔστιν [...] ἀλλ' εἴποι τις, οὐ καὶ περὶ συνθέσεως διδάσκει καὶ περὶ εὗρεσεως, τί δήποτε οὐ Συνθετικὰ ἐπέγραψεν οὐδὲ Εὗρετικά ἀλλὰ Ἀναλυτικά; τίς ἢ ἀποκλήρωσις; καὶ λέγομεν ὅτι ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐπιστημονικωτέρου καὶ τοῦ τιμωτέρου· ὁ γὰρ εἰδὼς ἐπιστημονικῶς ἀναλύσαι καὶ συνθεῖναι οἶδεν, οὐ πάντως δὲ ὁ εἰδὼς συνθεῖναι καὶ ἀναλύσαι κτλ. (cfr. PHILOP. *in an. pr.* 5, 30-2). ALCIN. *didasc.* 157, 11-5 Whittaker (Ἀναλύσεως δὲ εἶδη ἐστὶ τρία); ARETH. *schol. in Porph. isag.* 16, 7, 29-8, 4 Share (διττὴ δὲ ἡ ἀνάλυσις· φυσικὴ, λογικὴ [...] ἢ λογικὴ δὲ ἀνάλυσις διττὴ; also DAVID, *in Porph. isag.* 103, 24-30).

<sup>71</sup> For geometrical analysis, see TH. HEATH, *Euclid. The Thirteen Books of the Elements*, Cambridge 1925<sup>2</sup>, I, pp. 137-42, with III, p. 442 f.; N. GULLEY, *Greek Geometrical Analysis*, «Phronesis», III (1958) pp. 1-14; J. HINTIKKA-U. REMES, *The Method of Analysis: Its Geometrical Origin and Its General Significance*, Holland 1975. For Aristotle's know-

“upward path” of *Symposium* 210 A-211 E<sup>72</sup>, the method of hypothesis described in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*<sup>73</sup>, collection (συναγωγή)<sup>74</sup>, and the division of any complex whole into its component parts – including substance and attribute, genus and difference, matter and form<sup>75</sup>. This last is but an extension of Aris-

ledge of geometrical analysis, see H. CHERNISS, *Plato as Mathematician*, «Review of Metaphysics», IV (1951) p. 244 f.; and, for Plato, pp. 245-8; also H.-P. STAHL, *Ansätze zur Satzlogik bei Platon*, «Hermes», LXXXVIII (1960) pp. 417-9; K.M. SAYRE, *Plato's Analytic Method*, Chicago 1969, pp. 22-8; S. MENN, *Plato and the Method of Analysis*, «Phronesis», XLVII (2002) pp. 193-223. On the relation between “dialectic” and geometrical analysis in the *Republic*, see *infra*, note 73.

<sup>72</sup> ALCIN. *disc.* 157, 16-21 Whittaker; AMMON. *in an. pr.* 5, 19-25; cfr. PROCL. *Plat. theol.* 2, 28-9 Saffrey-Westerink.

<sup>73</sup> ALCIN. *disc.* 157, 36-43 Whittaker: Ἡ δὲ ἐξ ὑποθέσεως ἀνάλυσις ἐστὶ τοιαύτη [...] μέχρις οὗ ἂν ἐπὶ τινα ἀρχὴν ἀνυπόθετον ἔλθῃ ποιῆ. This method, termed “dialectics” in the central books of the *Republic*, should not be confused with geometrical analysis – though both are obviously analytical. In geometrical analysis we proceed by deductive inference from the proposition that needs to be proved to one that is already known to be true (or false), and the inferences are convertible *simpliciter*, so that the “upward” and “downward” paths are essentially the same. In “dialectics”, by contrast, we proceed by hypothesis from a proposition already known to be true to one that entails it (but which is not in turn entailed by it), thus moving “upwards” till we reach one that is not itself entailed by any other (τὸ ἀνυπόθετον); see H. CHERNISS, *Plato as Mathematician*, cit., p. 242 f.

<sup>74</sup> See IAMBL. *protrep.* 23, 5-16 Pistelli (= 54, 21-55, 5 Des Places), with H. CHERNISS, *Plato as Mathematician*, cit., p. 245 note 56. That collection and comparison were among the initial steps to be taken in analysis or resolution (see A.C. CROMBIE, *op. cit.*, p. 64 f.), receives its clearest form in Bacon's Tables of Presence, Deviation, and Degrees (A.C. CROMBIE, *op. cit.*, p. 301 f.). Compare the handbook used at La Flèche (note 67 *supra*) which contrasts analysis with συναγωγή or *collectio* (which last was then itself interpreted as *compositio*), and one realizes why there is confusion in the Cartesian usage.

<sup>75</sup> AMMON. *in an. pr.* 8, 4-9: συντόμως δὲ εἰπεῖν ἡ μὲν διααιρετικὴ τὰ γένη εἰς τὰ εἶδη τέμνει, ἡ δὲ ἀναλυτικὴ τὰ εἶδη συνάγει εἰς τὰ γένη. πάλιν ἡ μὲν ὀριστικὴ ἐκ μερῶν ὅλον τι ποιῆ, ἡ δὲ ἀναλυτικὴ ἀπὸ τῶν ὅλων εἰς τὰ μέρη μεταβαίνει ἐξ ὧν τὸ ὅλον γέγονεν. πάλιν δὲ ἡ μὲν ἀποδεικτικὴ ἀπὸ τῶν αἰτίων τὰ αἰτιατὰ δείκνυσιν, ἡ δὲ ἀναλυτικὴ ἀπὸ τῶν αἰτιατῶν ἐπὶ τὰ αἴτια μεταβαίνει; EUSTRAT. *in an. post.* 3, 16-8: ἔστιν ἀνάλυσις καὶ ἡ ἀπὸ τῶν μερικωτέρων ἄνοδος ἐπὶ τὰ καθολικώτερα, οἷον ἀπὸ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστα ἐπὶ τὰ εἰδικώτατα καὶ ἀπὸ τούτων ἐπὶ τὰ ὑπὲρ αὐτὰ γένη; [ALEX.] *in metaph.* 686, 35-687,1; AMMON. *in Porph. isag.* 37, 7-13; PHILOP. *in an. post.* 335, 6-35 (esp. 9-11: ἐξ ἀναλύσεως γὰρ ἡμῖν αἱ ἀρχαὶ ταύτης εὐρίσκονται ἀπὸ τῶν ἡμῖν προτέρων αἰτιατῶν ἀνιούσιν ἐπὶ τὰ τῆ φύσει πρότερα; cfr. *in phys.* 382, 16-7); *in phys.* 160, 3-11 (substance and attribute); SIMPL. *in phys.* 179, 18-9, 480, 9-13 (form and matter); cfr. ARETH. *schol. in Porph. isag.* 16, 7, 12 f. Share; L.M. RÉGIS, *art. cit.*, p. 315 f. (St. Thomas).

tote's conception of the role to be played by analysis in physics<sup>76</sup>, which was glossed by Pacius as a «methodus resolutiva a toto integrato ad partes integrantes». A slightly different, but still related form of analysis is described by Plato himself in the *Phaedrus*<sup>77</sup>. It will be noticed that the concept of analysis here canvassed covers quite well the entire range of meanings ascribed in various dialogues to the single notion of dialectics, a range (as we noted; cfr. *supra*, note 51) that Robinson and others found troubling. Yet Plato's intuition, it now appears, was far sounder than his critics had realized<sup>78</sup>.

The elenchus does not correspond precisely to any of these modes of analysis; in fact, from a logical point of view, it is not

<sup>76</sup> *Phys.* A 1. 184 a 16-23: πέφυκε δὲ ἐκ τῶν γνωριμωτέρων ἡμῖν ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ σαφεστέρων ἐπὶ τὰ σαφέστερα τῆ φύσει καὶ γνωριμώτερα· οὐ γὰρ ταῦτα ἡμῖν τε γνώριμα καὶ ἀπλῶς, διόπερ ἀνάγκη τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον προάγειν ἐκ τῶν ἀσαφεστέρων μὲν τῆ φύσει ἡμῖν δὲ σαφεστέρων ἐπὶ τὰ σαφέστερα τῆ φύσει καὶ γνωριμώτερα. ἔστι δ' ἡμῖν τὸ πρῶτον δῆλα καὶ σαφὴ τὰ συγκεχυμένα μᾶλλον· ὕστερον δ' ἐκ τούτων γίνεται γνώριμα τὰ στοιχεῖα καὶ αἱ ἀρχαὶ διαιροῦσι ταῦτα. For the doctrine that we ought to proceed from what is more knowable to us (ἡμῖν), *i.e.* from the sensible particulars, to what is more knowable *per se* (τῆ φύσει), see G. RODIER, *Aristote. Traité de l'âme*, Paris 1900, II, pp. 188-91.

<sup>77</sup> See *Phaedr.* 270 c 9-D 7: τὸ τοίνυν περὶ φύσεως σκόπει τί ποτε λέγει Ἰπποκράτης τε καὶ ὁ ἀληθὴς λόγος, ἄρ' οὐχ ὧδε δεῖ διανοεῖσθαι περὶ ὁτουοῦν φύσεως· πρῶτον μὲν, ἀπλοῦν ἢ πολυειδές ἐστὶν οὐ πέρι βουλησόμεθα εἶναι αὐτοὶ τεχνικοὶ καὶ ἄλλον δυνατοὶ ποιεῖν, ἔπειτα δέ, ἂν μὲν ἀπλοῦν ἦ, σκοπεῖν τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ τίνα πρὸς τί πέφυκεν εἰς τὸ δρᾶν ἔχον ἢ τίνα εἰς τὸ παθεῖν ὑπὸ τοῦ, ἐὰν δὲ πλείω εἶδη ἔχη, ταῦτα ἀριθμησόμενον, ὅπερ ἐφ' ἐνός, τοῦτ' ἰδεῖν ἐφ' ἐκάστου, τῷ τί ποιεῖν αὐτὸ πέφυκεν ἢ τῷ τί παθεῖν ὑπὸ τοῦ; *Theaet.* 201 c-206 c; and compare the method pursued in *Phil.* 12 c-22 e, esp. 16 c-18 d (with AMMON. *in an. pr.* 8, 11 f.: ὡς ἐν τῷ Φαίδρῳ τὴν διαιρετικὴν καὶ τὴν ὀριστικὴν, ὡς ἐν τῷ Φιλήβῳ τὴν ἀναλυτικὴν κτλ.).

<sup>78</sup> Dialectics, then, is Plato's Universal Science (his *mathesis universalis*, so to speak). Superior to mathematics and, indeed, to all of the special sciences (H. CHERNISS, *Plato as Mathematician*, cit., p. 223; L. TARÁN, *Academica: Plato, Philip of Opus, and the Pseudo-Platonic 'Epinomis'*, Philadelphia 1975, p. 28 notes 116-7), it is the capstone (Θριγκός; P. SHOREY, *Plato. Republic*, cit., II, p. 209 note g; for the subsequent history of this image, see J. WHITTAKER, *Alcinoos*, Paris 1990, p. 95 note 133). And because it ultimately deals directly with the Ideas (*resp.* 531 d-533 c; dialectic investigates the relations that hold between the Ideas, which notions cohere and which do not; see *soph.* 253 d-e; P. SHOREY, *What Plato Said*, cit., p. 302 f., with notes *ad loc.*; H. CHERNISS, *Lafrance on Doxa*, «Dialogue», XXII (1983) p. 157 note 43), it is the only truly autonomous science; see L. TARÁN, *Speusippus cit.*, p. 62 note 304, with references.

really a single method at all. But it is quite clearly analytical<sup>79</sup>. Like a weaver teasing apart the threads of a valued cloak, it lays bare the fine reticulations of thought and argument. It reveals, as we have seen, the weaknesses in, as well as the interconnections between, the apparently diverse views of his interlocutors. But it may also reveal something about the various topics themselves. For it brings to light the very assumptions on which Socrates' own refutations rest, and thereby points the way, like posts set along a path, to yet further analysis. The elenchus, in other words, is clarifying as well as purgative<sup>80</sup>. And so, to return at last to our point of departure, the destructive analysis of the interlocutors in *Republic I*, whose largely conventionalist views are thus shown to harbor the seed and fruit of a most radical immoralism, but which itself is shown, explicitly and repeatedly, to rest on the quite remarkable assertion that justice is, indeed, the excellence or virtue of the soul – a position itself in need of extended support – all this forms a most fitting prelude to the more constructive por-

<sup>79</sup> Bacon, at least, seems to have realized this (BACON, *Novum Organon*, I, 105: «The induction, which is to be available for the discovery and demonstration of sciences and arts, must analyze nature by proper rejections and exclusions; and then, after a sufficient number of negatives, come to a conclusion on the affirmative instances: which has not yet been done or even attempted save only by Plato, who does indeed employ this form of induction to a certain extent for the purpose of discussing definitions and ideas»; cfr. CIC. *tusc.* I 8: *Haec est enim, ut scis, vetus et Socratica ratio contra alterius opinionem disserendi. nam ita facillime quid veri simillimum esset inveniri posse Socrates arbitrabatur*; CHRYSIP. *apud PLUTARCH. de stoic. rep.* 1037 B Casevitz-Babut (= *S.V.F.* II 129): πρὸς μὲν γὰρ τὴν τῶν ἀληθῶν εὗρεσιν δεῖ χρῆσθαι αὐτῇ [*scil.* τῇ τοῦ λόγου δυνάμει] καὶ πρὸς τὴν τούτων συγγυμνασίαν, εἰς τὰναντία δ' οὐ, πολλῶν ποιούντων τοῦτο; ARISTOT. *soph. elench.* 16. 175 a 26-30: συμβαίνει δέ ποτε καθάπερ ἐν τοῖς διαγράμμασιν καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖ ἀναλύσαντες ἐνίοτε συνθεῖναι πάλιν ἀδυνατοῦμεν· οὕτω καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐλέγχοις, εἰδότες παρ' ὃ ὁ λόγος συμβαίνει συνεῖραι, διαλύσαι τὸν λόγον ἀποροῦμεν (on διαλύειν here, see H. BONITZ, *Index Aristotelicus*, cit., 184 a 43-8; *rhet.* B 4. 1382 a 17-8, with E.M. COPE *ad loc.*; *eth. nic.* H 2. 1146 a 24-7, with b 6-8); finally, XENOPH. *mem.* IV 6, 13: ἐπὶ τὴν ὑπόθεσιν ἐπανήγεν ἂν πάντα τὸν λόγον ὧδέ πως κτλ.

<sup>80</sup> Cfr. *Gorg.* 453 A 8-454 C 6, esp. 453 C 1-4: τοῦ ἔνεκα δὴ αὐτὸς ὑποπιπεύων σὲ ἐρήσομαι, ἀλλ' οὐκ αὐτὸς λέγω; οὐ σοῦ ἔνεκα ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου, ἵνα οὕτω προῖη ὡς μάλιστ' ἂν ἡμῖν καταφανὲς ποιῶι περὶ ὅτου λέγεται; cfr. *Theaet.* 210 C 1-2: ἐάντε γίγνη [*scil.* ἐγκύμων], βελτιόνων ἔση πλήρης διὰ τὴν νῦν ἐξέτασιν (with 150 B 9-C 3).

tions of the dialogue (Bks. II-X), which deal extensively and in depth, if not quite conclusively, with just this very strange assertion. This, then, is proof that the “attachment” of *Republic* I was no mere afterthought, but that it formed an integral part of Plato’s conception of the dialogue *ab initio*.

If the elenchus nonetheless seems to break apart on the ever-shifting sands of debate, this is only because the interlocutors invariably fail to recognize the need for the assumption of absolute standards. Plato was forever haunted by the specter of relativism, and he saw more clearly than most that in the absence of such absolutes there could be no stability, no form, no delimitation at all, that everything would crumble and dissolve into an infinite crumbling of infinite parts *ad infinitum* such that nothing could any more be said to be this than not-this; and that even change, the *sine qua non* of such a thoroughly relativized environment, itself required the assumption of fixed and absolute termini of change, since any unrestricted, absolutely infinite motion or change, without any limits from which and to which change may be said to proceed, is, it would seem, strictly indistinguishable from absolute rest. To this extent, then, the very failure or negativity of the elenchus is of itself an indirect argument for the assumption of a theory of Ideas<sup>81</sup> – those fixed points in a universe that is otherwise victim to an unending and self-annihilating flux<sup>82</sup>.

<sup>81</sup> Plato’s method is to follow the *Logos* wherever it leads (note 34 *supra*) so as «to show that wherever the ‘logos’ begins and whatever course it takes it ends either in an impasse or in the doctrine of ideas» (H. CHERNISS, review of G. MÜLLER, *Studien zu den platonischen Nomoi*, «Gnomon», XXV (1953) p. 378; also Lafrance on *Doxa*, cit., p. 144 f, with note 14).

<sup>82</sup> There is not, in the corpus, nor can there be, any deduction of the theory of Ideas (any more than there is a deduction of categories in Kant or in Aristotle), all first principles being by nature indemonstrable. The Ideas are simply required *ex hypothesi* so as to sort and save phenomena. They are, in other words, the final products in the “upward” path of analysis and dialectic. For Plato’s critique of relativism and its philosophical implications, see H. CHERNISS, *Aristotle’s Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy*, cit., pp. 76-89; ID., *The Philosophical Economy of the Theory of Ideas*, «American Journal of Philology», LVII (1936) pp. 445-56; ID., *Aristotle’s Criticism of Plato and the Academy*, cit., pp. 214-20; also P. SHOREY, *The Unity of Plato’s Thought*, cit., p. 29 f.; ID., *What Plato Said*, cit., pp. 266

Certainly, at the end of the day, the elenchus cannot actually discover the truth in any positive or constructive fashion. This can only be gained through a recollection (*anamnesis*) of those primary realities (the Ideas) that are said – always, perhaps, with a slightly mischievous gleam – to have been discerned originally in the pre-natal state<sup>83</sup>. Yet the elenchus can, for all that, through repeated questioning, help to rouse the mind to recollection<sup>84</sup>.

Dialectics, then, to return to the more general point, plays for Plato an impressive variety of roles: it is gymnastic, purgative, protreptic. It is also analytical in a broad sequence of ways: through question and answer, it allows us to dissect and clarify, to articulate thoroughly the often imprecise notions we form of

(with 570 *ad Crat.* 439 D), 270-79 (with p. 573 f. notes *ad loc.*), 498 *ad Prot.* 334 A; and for a brief survey of the principal characteristics of the Platonic εἶδος/ἰδέα, viewed as separately existing hypostatized universals, see H. CHERNISS, *The Riddle of the Early Academy*, Berkeley 1945, p. 5 f.; L. TARÁN, *Speusippus cit.*, p. 13 f. The Ideas, in Friedländer's famous phrase, are the "center of gravity" in Plato's universe of thought. They are also the center of gravity compositionally in the *Republic* – the central, "metaphysical" books (V-VII), explicitly marked as a digression (cf. 449 A-B with 543 C-544 B), supplying the essential, explanatory ground of the argument that runs from II-IX (Bks. I and X serving as prelude and climax respectively). For the compositional structure of the dialogue, see A. DIËS, *République*, cit., pp. X-XIII (whose whole discussion of the dialogue is exemplary). These central books are not, then, mere "moments" to be superseded, as D. ROOCHNIK, *Beautiful City: The Dialectical Character of Plato's 'Republic'*, Ithaca 2003, has imagined.

<sup>83</sup> For *anamnesis* in Plato as just what Plato says it is, viz. recollection, see E.S. THOMPSON, *op. cit.*, p. 132; A. DIËS, *Autour de Platon*, cit., pp. 470-2; H. CHERNISS, *Philosophical Economy cit.*, p. 451 f.; ID., *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy*, cit., p. 213 note 127, with the important discussion relating to this topic at pp. 69-80; ID., *Lafrance on Doxa*, cit., pp. 139-41; L. TARÁN, *Speusippus cit.*, p. 14 note 69. I cannot enter here into a discussion of Platonic epistemology except to say, by way of summation, that Plato's epistemology is every bit as realistic as is his metaphysics; that knowledge differs from opinion not by any accretion of accounts, or opinions, but only by the objects to which each of these faculties is turned (*resp.* 477 E-478 B; *Theaet.* 184 B-186 E; *Tim.* 51 D-52 A, etc.); and that since the universals, i.e. the *real* (subsisting) universals that are the Ideas, cannot be gained *a posteriori* by abstraction, they must have been known somehow *prior* to experience and are, in fact, the very means by which experience is organized and grasped. That it is, in fact, the Ideas that are the objects of knowledge (as distinct from opinion), is Plato's consistent view; see L. TARÁN, *Academica cit.*, p. 33 note 145, with full references; also A. TULIN, *Please Remind Me of Anamnesis cit.*

<sup>84</sup> For this last point, see H. CHERNISS, *Ancient Forms of Philosophical Discourse*, cit., p. 30.

things; through hypothesis, it drives us on to the assumption of Ideas that can serve as the ground of experience; and by collection and by division it helps us to map out the schema of ideal relations that girds this phenomenal reality. It is, in sum, the philosophical method of investigation *par excellence*. And this, I venture to add, if only by way of a *coda*, amply explains, even in the face of mounting controversies, Plato's adoption of the dialogue form. For quite apart from its obvious dramatic functions<sup>85</sup>, it was only natural that Plato would attempt to fashion a mode of exposition that directly mirrored his dialectical procedures – the dialogue, as we saw, being merely the externalization, in dramatic key, of those internal processes of analysis and thought through which we seek to reduce the complex and ever-changing particulars and events presented by phenomenal reality to their underlying logical and ontological patterns and foundations<sup>86</sup>.

<sup>85</sup> This is especially clear in the field of ethics, where the dramatic element allows us to see ideas in action, to see their *real* implications and entanglements, so to speak, in the actual world (cfr. *supra*, notes 60-61 with the accompanying text).

<sup>86</sup> See *supra*, note 62. Aristotle's very different handling of the dialogue form, consisting of long, continuous speeches antithetically arranged so as to present competing views for synthesis and arbitration, mirrored his own, quite different conception of dialectics; see H. CHERNISS, *Ancient Forms of Philosophical Discourse*, cit., p. 31 f. As for Plato's use of the dialogue, the literature admittedly is enormous. For varied discussion and bibliography, see J. LABORDERIE, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 531-46; J. BLÖSSNER, *op. cit.*, p. 7 note 10; F.M. GIULIANO, *Filosofia in letteratura: il dialogo platonico e la sua interpretazione*, «Atene e Roma», XLV (2000) pp. 1-43; G. PRESS, *The Logic of Attributing Characters' Views to Plato*, in ID. (ed.), *Who Speaks For Plato?*, cit., p. 29 note 9. The foregoing should be taken as an attempt to demonstrate that we need not resort to those types of argument that see Plato's use of the dialogue form as inspired by a desire to hide his true intentions (CH. KAHN, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue*, cit., pp. 65-70 *et passim*), to avoid or destroy philosophical dogmatism (R. BLONDELL, *Play of Character* cit., pp. 39-46, 103 f.), or as necessitated by the fact that truth is in some way essentially incomplete (P. STEMMER, *Platons Dialektik: Die frühen und mittleren Dialoge*, Berlin 1992; cfr. N.P. WHITE, *Observations and Questions about Hans-Georg Gadamer's Interpretation of Plato*, in CH. GRISWOLD (ed.), *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings*, University Park 1988, pp. 247-57) or otherwise ineffable (P.J. GONZALEZ, *Dialectic and Dialogue: Plato's Practice of Philosophical Inquiry*, Evanston 1998). It is instead the vestment of his analytical and dialectical procedure and it presupposes that reality is indeed patent to knowledge.