The Sincere Response Requirement in Plato

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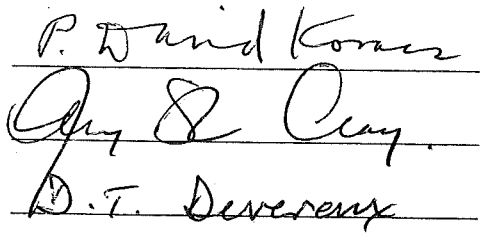

Introduction

The problem with which this thesis originated is simple. In Plato's early dialogues[1] in general, and in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* in particular, Socrates seems to insist strongly that he only cares to hear his interlocutors' sincere beliefs. So why, in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*, do Callicles and Thrasymachus, respectively, refuse, at a certain point, to continue to answer Socrates sincerely? It is easy to get the impression that Plato is trying to tell us something by depicting such a dramatic turn of events, but it is less clear what his point is.

This paper has several goals. First I try to establish definitively (against one recent scholar in particular) that what I call the sincere response requirement is a general rule of the early dialogues. In the second chapter I analyze all of the passages where Socrates invokes the sincere response requirement, and formulate what seem to be his explicit goals in requiring sincerity of his interlocutors. The bulk of the paper, however, is taken up with a close analysis of selected passages from the *Gorgias*, which I (along with many other scholars) believe is pivotal in Plato's philosophical development. In the third chapter I present evidence that Plato is questioning some of the psychological assumptions upon which the sincere response requirement is based. He does this in Socrates' conversations with Gorgias and Polus by suggesting, first, that Socrates' conception of belief is not rich enough to explain how people can sincerely answer the same question in different ways at different times, and second, by suggesting that the denial of *akrasia*, which is most fully formulated in the *Protagoras* but reaffirmed in the

[1] On which dialogues I consider to be early, see Chapter I n.1.

first half of the *Gorgias* (in the conversation with Polus), no longer makes sense if a person can simultaneously hold contradictory beliefs. In the fourth chapter I examine the passages in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* where Socrates abandons the sincere response requirement. I describe the former goals that can no longer be achieved without insisting that the interlocutor answer sincerely, and I try to explain why Plato felt compelled to change the way that Socrates does philosophy. The conversation with Callicles provides evidence that Socrates rejects the hedonism upon which the denial of *akrasia* depends for its soundness, and it also gives evidence that Plato already begins, in this conversation, to use new methods of philosophical discussion which do not harmonize with the former *ad hominem* nature of the dialogues in which Socrates requires sincerity of his interlocutors. The *Republic* confirms what I find in the *Gorgias*: Socrates once again abandons the sincere response requirement, the denial of *akrasia* is definitively rejected, and Plato clearly switches to a new, more expansive and expository manner of philosophical writing.

The broad conclusion which I reach in this paper is not novel.[2] This is that the *Gorgias* presents a crisis for Socratic philosophy. Plato provides us with an interlocutor who seems to be immune to rational persuasion via the elenchus, and who thereby provides telling evidence against Socrates' psychological intellectualism, broadly conceived. At the same time, Callicles refuses to participate in the discussion according to Socrates' rules, and Socrates adjusts his method appropriately. These developments prefigure the *Republic*, whose radically new psychology and noticeably different method

[2] Two scholars who make findings quite similar to my own are Klosko (1983) and Beversluis (2000) 367-376. Klosko's paper in particular deserves a wider readership. Cooper (1999) and Woolf (2000) have also recently come to conclusions which broadly agree with my own.

mark a strong Platonic departure from some characteristically Socratic beliefs and practices.[3]

What I have tried to do more specifically (and I hope this is where my conclusions are more novel) is to trace the career of the sincere response requirement in Plato's work (especially its abandonment in the *Gorgias*) and show how it is intimately connected to Plato's conception of Socratic philosophy. Not only is the requirement the *sine qua non* of the Socratic elenchus, it also relies for its effectiveness on the truth of Socratic psychology. As Plato decides, in the *Gorgias*, that Socratic psychology does not accurately describe human thought and behavior, he realizes that the sincere response requirement, the cornerstone of Socratic method, is no longer an effective means of achieving the goals of the early dialogues. We can see two simultaneous procedures begin to take place in the *Gorgias* and continue in the *Republic*: on the one hand, Plato begins to adopt new goals for Socrates' conversations, and on the other hand he provides Socrates with a new method to achieve those goals. Thus I hope to show that Plato always recognized an intimate relationship between philosophical doctrine and philosophical method.

At the same time, if my thesis is correct, it provides a new defense for a developmental view of Plato's thought, but within a framework that considers more than just the philosophical arguments of the dialogues. I believe that I have not only traced changes both in Plato's psychology and in his method (changes which have often been noticed before), but that I have also shown how those two sorts of changes make sense

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[3] By "Socratic" I mean merely that which is characteristic of the so-called "early" dialogues (see Chapter I, n. 1). I am agnostic on the question of whether the Socrates of the early dialogues is in any way historical. For a vigorous defense of the claim that he is historical, see Vlastos (1991) 1-106.

together and explain each other. If I am right, then we cannot just examine each dialogue in isolation if we wish to understand it fully. The *Gorgias* makes the most sense if we see it as, in part, a reaction to certain views developed in the *Protagoras*, and the *Republic* can best be understood as, in large part, a development of many of the ideas first described or hinted at in the *Gorgias*.

Thus I try to bridge the gap perceived by Robin Waterfield (2003) between developmentalism and those studies "which relate the form, or artistry, and the content of the dialogues." As he puts it, "those who focus on the artistry of the dialogues will be more inclined to look at each dialogue as a self-sufficient unit, without relating it to others, and also tend to think that Plato was not the kind of dogmatic or systematic thinker who can usefully be approached from a developmental perspective." I hope that this thesis reveals some of the ways in which a developmental perspective is a useful way of looking at some aspects of Plato's work. At the same time I hope to continue what I see as a recent and fruitful trend in Plato scholarship, the attempt by many to overcome the perceived split between "philosophical" and "literary" approaches to the dialogues. Plato was too great a writer for his students to ignore what he tells us by means of the sometimes subtle methods of the literary and dramatic artist. On the other hand, most readers of Plato will agree that he was first and foremost a great philosophical thinker and a moral and political reformer, and it is in the service of his ideas that his artistry must constantly be viewed. Such is the balance I have tried to strike in this thesis.

Chapter I: The Sincere Response Requirement: An Overview and Defense

What Is the Sincere Response Requirement?

In several of Plato's early dialogues[1], Socrates[2] encourages or requires his interlocutors only to answer what they really believe. Vlastos (1994, 8) cites the following four passages:

T1. *Gorg.* 500b5-c1: *καὶ πρὸς Φιλίου, ὦ Καλλίκλεις, μήτε αὐτὸς οἷου δεῖν πρὸς ἐμὲ παίζειν μηδ' ὅτι ἂν τύχῃς παρὰ τὰ δοκοῦντα ἀποκρίνου, μήτ' αὖ τὰ παρ' ἐμοῦ οὕτως ἀποδέχου ὡς παίζοντος·*
["And in the name of Zeus of Friendship, Callicles, don't let yourself think that you ought to play with me, and don't give any old answer, contrary to what seems right to you, and don't understand the things I'm saying as though I'm playing with you."]

T2. *Rep.* 346a2-3: *καί, ὦ μακάριε, μὴ παρὰ δόξαν ἀποκρίνου, ἵνα τι καὶ περαίνωμεν.*
["And dear man, don't answer contrary to your belief, so that we might accomplish something."]

T3. *Crito* 49c11-d1: *καὶ ὅρα, ὦ Κρίτων, ταῦτα καθομολογῶν, ὅπως μὴ παρὰ δόξαν ὁμολογῇς·*
["And watch out, Crito, while you agree to these things so strongly, that you don't agree contrary to your belief."]

T4. *Prot.* 331c4-d1: *Μή μοι, ἦν δ' ἐγώ· οὐδὲν γὰρ δέομαι τὸ "εἰ βούλει" τοῦτο καὶ "εἴ σοι δοκεῖ" ἐλέγχεσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐμέ τε καὶ σέ· τὸ δ' "ἐμέ τε καὶ σέ" τοῦτο λέγω, οἰόμενος οὕτω τὸν λόγον βέλτιστ' ἂν ἐλέγχεσθαι, εἴ τις τὸ "εἰ" ἀφέλοι αὐτοῦ.*
["Don't tell me that, I said. For I don't need to test this 'if you wish' and 'if it seems right to you,' but rather me and you. I say 'me and you' in the belief that in this way the account is tested best, if someone keeps the 'if' out of it."]

To the above examples we might add the following:

T5. *Gorg.* 495a7-9: *Διαφθείρεις, ὦ Καλλίκλεις, τοὺς πρώτους λόγους, καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἔτι μετ' ἐμοῦ ἱκανῶς τὰ ὄντα ἐξετάζοις, εἴπερ παρὰ τὰ δοκοῦντα σαυτῷ ἐρεῖς.*

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[1] What I refer to as "early" dialogues are the same as those which Friedländer places in Plato's "First Period." These are, in Friedländer's chronological order (with which I do *not* agree): *Protagoras*, *Laches*, *Republic* I, *Euthyphro*, *Lysis*, *Hippias Major*, *Hipparchus*, *Ion*, *Hippias Minor*, *Theages*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Euthydemus*, *Cratylus*, *Menexenus*, *First Alcibiades*, *Gorgias*, and *Meno*; Friedländer (1969) 447-456; cf. Clay (2000) 285-286; Kahn (1996) 42-48. We get effectively (for my purposes) the same list if we combine the "Elenctic" and "Transitional" dialogues of Vlastos (1991) 46-47.

[2] The Socrates whom I discuss throughout this paper (except where otherwise stated) is the Socrates of these early dialogues.

["You're ruining our first arguments, Callicles, and you would no longer sufficiently be examining the present matters with me if you say the opposite of what seems right to you."]

T6. *Prot.* 331b7-8: *ἀλλ' ὅρα εἰ διακωλύεις ἀποκρίνεσθαι, ἢ καὶ σοὶ συνδοκεῖ οὕτως.*
["But see whether you forbid my answering, or if it also seems right to you in this way."]

T7. *Prot.* 359c7-d1: *Ἀληθῆ, ἔφην ἐγώ, λέγεις· ἀλλ' οὐ τοῦτο ἐρωτῶ, ἀλλὰ σὺ ἐπὶ τί φῂς ἴτας εἶναι τοὺς ἀνδρείους;*
[" 'You're telling the truth,' I said. 'But I'm not asking you this (i.e., what most people think), but rather, what do you say that people go towards when they're brave?' "]

T8. *Hipp. Min.* 365c8-d4: *Τὸν μὲν Ὅμηρον τοίνυν ἐάσωμεν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἀδύνατον ἐπανερέσθαι τί ποτε νοῶν ταῦτα ἐποίησεν τὰ ἔπη· σύ δ' ἐπειδὴ φαίνῃ ἀναδεχόμενος τὴν αἰτίαν, καὶ σοὶ συνδοκεῖ ταῦτα ἅπερ φῂς Ὅμηρον λέγειν, ἀπόκριναι κοινῇ ὑπὲρ Ὁμήρου τε καὶ σαυτοῦ.*
["Therefore, let us leave Homer out of it, since it is impossible to question him about what was in his mind when he wrote these words. But since you seem to be taking up this charge, and these things which you say that Homer says seem right to you, answer in common on Homer's behalf and on your own."]

T9. *Meno* 71d1-5: *ΣΩ. εἰ δὲ βούλει, αὐτὸς εἰπέ· δοκεῖ γάρ δήπου σοὶ ἅπερ ἐκείνῳ.*
MEN. Ἔμοιγε.
ΣΩ. Ἐκεῖνον μὲν τοίνυν ἐῶμεν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἄπεστιν· σὺ δὲ αὐτός, ὦ πρὸς θεῶν, Μένων, τί φῂς ἀρετὴν εἶναι;
[Socrates: "But if you wish, speak yourself; for I suppose what things seem right to him [i.e., Gorgias] seem right to you."
Meno: "Yes, they seem right to me."
Socrates: "Then let us leave him out of it, since he's not here. But you yourself, in the name of the gods, Meno, what do you say that virtue is?"]

What I call the "sincere response requirement"[3] is widely recognized as a characteristic, even essential, feature of Socrates' conversations.[4] Perhaps the primary role of the sincere response requirement is, as one of the rules of Socratic elenchus, to ensure that the interlocutor really is refuted when Socrates says he is. One of the major goals of the Socratic elenchus is to demonstrate to an interlocutor that he does not really

[3] I prefer 'sincere response' to the "sincere assent" of Beversluis (2000) 38. Vlastos (1994) 7 uses the term "the 'say what you believe' requirement." Benson (2000) 37-38 more rigorously defines what he calls the "doxastic constraint: [. . .] Being believed by the interlocutor is a necessary and sufficient condition for being a premise of a Socratic elenchos." He distinguishes this from Vlastos's constraint, in which "[b]eing believed by the interlocutor is a necessary *but not sufficient condition* for being a premise in a Socratic elenchos" (39).

[4] See, e.g., Irwin (1979) 1; Robinson (1953) 78; Vlastos (1994) 7-11; Benson (1987) 79-80 and (1989) 596-597; Bailly (1999) 65-66; Brisson (2001) 212-214; for further references see Beversluis (2000) 38, n.3.

know or believe what he claims to know or believe.[5] Socrates generally accomplishes this by showing the interlocutor that he holds other beliefs which entail something opposite to or incompatible with the belief which is targeted for refutation.[6] In the *Gorgias* for example, the title character claims that rhetoric is not always used for just purposes. Gorgias's claim is that:

a. Rhetoric is not always used justly.

Socrates then gains his assent to the following statements:

b. "If ever you make anyone a rhetor, he must know the just and the unjust things." (460a5-7)

c. "The man who has learnt just things is just." (460b6-7)

d. "The just man will never want to do injustice." (460c3)

Socrates then concludes:

e. "The rhetor will never want to do injustice." (460c5-6)

Socrates understands (e) as incompatible with (a). He has demonstrated to Gorgias that Gorgias's belief (a) is not consistent with his beliefs (b), (c), and (d). He concludes that the inconsistency is a problem that needs to be solved if they are to find out what rhetoric is:

T10. *Gorg.* 461a7-b2: *ταῦτα οὖν ὅπῃ ποτὲ ἔχει, μὰ τὸν κύνα, ὦ Γοργία, οὐκ ὀλίγης συνουσίας ἐστὶν ὥστε ἱκανῶς διασκέψασθαι.*
["And so, by the dog, Gorgias, it's not a matter of a short conversation to investigate sufficiently how these matters really are."]

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[5] As Benson (2000) 22 puts it, "Testing the individual's knowledge is the immediate aim of Socrates' method;" cf. Brickhouse and Smith (1994) 12-13; Benson (1987) 74-77. The goals specific to the sincere response requirement will be examined in Chapter 2.

[6] See Vlastos's classic account of the elenchus, (1994) 1-37, esp. 11, and Benson (1987) 69.

Socrates here reiterates the *aporia* into which Gorgias has been cast, and emphasizes that they have gained no new knowledge, but only demonstrated the inconsistency of Gorgias's beliefs.

Socrates' claim to have discovered an inconsistency in Gorgias's account of rhetoric strongly implies that Gorgias does not know what he thought he knew about what rhetoric is and what the rhetor does. The inconsistency is only demonstrated, though, if Gorgias has sincerely answered all of the relevant questions; if he has answered insincerely at any point, saying what he does not believe, then Socrates cannot conclusively say whether Gorgias holds inconsistent beliefs: maybe his account of rhetoric, here in this conversation with Socrates, is inconsistent, but what he really believes might be consistent – there is no way for Socrates to know. If he can demonstrate to his interlocutor that the latter's sincere beliefs are inconsistent, he ought to be able thereby to convince the interlocutor that what he previously took to be knowledge is merely belief, and further that this belief cannot be relied on because it is contradicted by other beliefs the interlocutor holds. Therefore Socrates generally wants to know only what his interlocutors really believe.

Does the Sincere Response Requirement Really Exist?

As we can see, there seems to be an ever-present danger that, if his interlocutor does not cooperate, Socrates' questioning will be largely ineffective. On this view, the sincere response requirement is crucial for Socrates' method of philosophical discussion. At least one scholar, however, would dispute this. Beversluis (2000, 57), claiming that

most commentators put too much weight on the sincere response requirement in general, declares that the "meager textual base" provided by the four passages cited by Vlastos (T1-4) "is too precarious a foundation on which to erect so momentous a methodological principle." Vlastos's response to such an objection is that the sincerity requirement "is a standing rule of elenctic debate, generally taken for granted, mentioned only when there is special need to bring it to the interlocutor's notice" (1991, 111, n.21).[7] I find both positions unconvincing in certain ways.

First, Beversluis's claim that "Socrates explicitly invokes the sincere assent requirement with only four interlocutors" (2000, 57) is simply false. As we see in T8 and T9, Socrates also invokes the requirement with Hippias and Meno. We should note that the emphasis in these two passages is slightly different from that in T1-4. There, it is *sincerity* which is emphasized, being contrasted with *insincerity*, whereas with Hippias and Meno what is requested is *their own views* as opposed to *someone else's*. I believe that the requirement is essentially the same in both situations. To support this we might cite T7, where Socrates demands that Protagoras give his own opinion rather than that of "most people." Coming as it does after Socrates' explicit insistence on the *sincerity* of Protagoras's answers, this latter request, for Protagoras's own opinion rather than that of the many, seems to be merely a new formulation of the requirement for sincerity, adapted to the present situation.

There are several additional passages where, though sincere response is not explicity required, Socrates either praises sincerity or reveals that he assumes it in his

[7] Irwin (1993) 13 justifies two of the exceptions which Beversluis complains about, and seems to agree with Vlastos's explanation that it is a "standing rule" which only gets violated for important reasons.

interlocutor. So at one point in Socrates' conversation with the slave-boy in the *Meno*, they have the following exchange:

T11. *Meno* 83d1-2: *ΠΑΙ. Ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ οὕτω.*
ΣΩ. Καλῶς· τὸ γάρ σοι δοκοῦν τοῦτο ἀποκρίνου.[8]
[Boy: It seems like that to me.
Socrates: Good; you should answer what seems right to you.]

And in the *Laches* we read:

T12. *Lach.* 193c6-8: *ΛΑ. Τί γὰρ ἄν τις ἄλλο φαίη, ὦ Σώκρατες;*
ΣΩ. Οὐδέν, εἴπερ οἴοιτό γε οὕτως.
ΛΑ. Ἀλλὰ μὴν οἶμαί γε.
[Laches: Why, what else would someone say, Socrates?
Socrates: Nothing, if he really thought that it was like this.
Laches: Well, I certainly think so, at least.]

In the *Euthydemus* Socrates twice reveals that he assumes that someone having a discussion should say what he really thinks. In the first passage he urges Clinias to answer Euthydemus's questions sincerely:

T13. *Euthyd.* 275d7-8: *Θάρρει, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὦ Κλεινία, καὶ ἀπόκριναι ἀνδρείως, ὁπότερα σοι φαίνεται.*
[" 'Take heart, Clinias,' I said, 'and boldly give whichever answer seems right to you.'"]

Later, in his discussion with Dionysodorus, Socrates expresses surprise that he might be answering contrary to his opinion:

T14. *Euthyd.* 286d11-13: *Λόγου ἕνεκα, ὦ Διονυσόδωρε, λέγεις τὸν λόγον, ἵνα δὴ ἄτοπον λέγῃς, ἢ ὡς ἀληθῶς δοκεῖ σοι οὐδεὶς εἶναι ἀμαθὴς ἀνθρώπων;*
["Are you making that claim for the sake of argument, Dionysodorus, just in order to say something strange, or does it really seem to you that no person is ignorant?"]

In the *Theaetetus*, when Socrates asks Theaetetus how he would answer an especially perplexing question,[9] Theaetetus answers:

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[8] Bluck (1961) 300 states ad loc., "The use of the *present* imperative means that the slave should *always* state his real opinions;" cf. also his note on *Meno* 82e4-5 (296).
[9] I.e., "Is it possible for anything to become larger or greater in number without being increased?" (154c8-9)

T15. *Theaet.* 154c10-d3: *ΘΕΑΙ. Ἐὰν μέν, ὦ Σώκρατες, τὸ δοκοῦν πρὸς τὴν νῦν ἐρώτησιν ἀποκρίνωμαι, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν· ἐὰν δὲ πρὸς τὴν προτέραν, φυλάττων μὴ ἐναντία εἴπω, ὅτι ἔστιν.*
ΣΩ. Εὖ γε νὴ τὴν Ἥραν, ὦ φίλε, καὶ θείως.
[Theaetetus: "Socrates, if I answer what seems right according to the present question, I would say that it isn't; but if I answer according to the earlier question, then, being careful not to say the opposite, I would say that it is."
Socrates: "By Hera, that was well and excellently spoken, my friend!"]

Socrates' praise of Theaetetus seems to apply both to his intellectual acuity in seeing that he is in danger of contradicting himself and to his reluctance to answer insincerely. Even if we discount Socrates' reaction,[10] Theaetetus's answer reveals that *he* assumes that he should answer sincerely.[11] Overall, these five passages make it clear that Socrates and his interlocutors expect people in discussion to say what they think.[12]

Nevertheless, it might still be objected that there are only six interlocutors of whom sincere response is explicitly required, whereas there are at least ten more, from the early dialogues alone, to whom the sincerity requirement is never even mentioned, and that this evidence still constitutes a "meager textual base."[13] My response to such a complaint, similar to that of Vlastos, is that sincerity is not so much a "standing requirement" as a basic assumption of conversation.

As a general rule, if someone asks me what my profession is (as Socrates begins his questioning of Gorgias), I will have no reason to lie to him, and he will have no reason not to expect an honest answer. The same might be said of any conversation *in*

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[10] One could argue that Socrates' role as midwife, which is so prominent in this dialogue, is a strong departure from the Socrates in the other, early, dialogues that I discuss. Therefore I use this passage mostly to demonstrate Theaetetus's assumptions about sincere response.
[11] On this passage see the comments of Benson (1989) 594, who demonstrates that Socrates emphasizes the contrast between his preferred method, which establishes inconsistency in what someone really believes, and eristic, which only establishes inconsistency in what someone says.
[12] See also T21 below (*Rep.* 337c4-10) for more evidence of the sincere response requirement apparently being assumed by Socrates.
[13] My calculation of ten is two less than that counted by Beversluis (2000) 57 because I have removed Laches and Hippias from his list of interlocutors from whom sincere assent is not required. He excludes the *Meno* from his list of 'early dialogues.'

general. It is only extraordinary circumstances which might elicit a desire to give an insincere response or a suspicion that one has been given. For example, if I go on a blind date with the friend of a friend of mine, and my friend asks me whether I think her friend is pretty, I might say 'yes' even if that answer is not sincere. On the other hand, if I try to avoid answering the question, or give a vague or non-commital answer (e.g., "I guess so," "Some people would say so"), those could be reasonable grounds for suspecting my sincerity. In general, though, an assumption of sincerity exists in human conversation.

And in fact, in certain types of conversation in which Socrates takes part, this assumption of sincerity might be even stronger than normal. So in the case of a conversation with an alleged expert in some field (e.g., Euthyphro, Ion, Laches, Nicias, Gorgias, and Cephalus[14]), we might expect the expert, on the one hand, not to feel any need to lie, because he thinks he has all the answers, and on the other hand actually to be eager to answer sincerely so that he might better impress Socrates with his expert knowledge.[15] While with young interlocutors (e.g., Charmides, Polus, Hippocrates, Polemarchus, and Theaetetus) we might expect that a combination of fear, respect, and/or lack of guile would prevent most attempts at insincere responses.[16]

We might take this argument a step further and say that in a typical conversation in which Socrates is involved the assumption of sincerity would be stronger than in a normal conversation without Socrates. There are two reasons for this. First is that Socrates often expresses how eager he is to find out something or to understand

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[14] Here I am taking Cephalus as an expert on old age.
[15] This is a two-edged sword, though. When the expert realizes that Socrates is refuting his answers, he may have a stronger motivation to be insincere in order to save face.
[16] Parmenides makes this assumption explicit when he says, "Then who will answer me? Or will it be the youngest? For he would be least meddlesome and would most likely say what he thinks." *Parm.* 137b6-8. Theaetetus's guileless question to Socrates (T15, above) also demonstrates this principle.

something. In such situations it would be rude and mean-spirited for an interlocutor to lie. Second is that Socrates sometimes claims that he is investigating questions which he thinks are the most important for a person to know, such as "What is justice?" and "What is the best way to live?"[17] Again, to answer such questions dishonestly would be little else than mockery of Socrates' avowed seriousness. One further consideration should help to convince us that the sincerity requirement is implicit in a typical Socratic conversation, despite any alleged lack of textual evidence. This is that it could be considered rude to tell your interlocutor to be honest. It reveals that you do not trust him and that you are afraid that he might lie. We should expect Socrates to invoke the sincerity requirement only if his interlocutor brings up the matter himself or if Socrates has a good reason to suspect him of not being sincere.

We see, therefore, that Vlastos is essentially correct: there is an underlying assumption of human conversation that all participants will speak sincerely. Because of the subject matter of Socrates' conversations and the nature of his interlocutors, we should expect the sincerity assumption to be even stronger in those conversations. And Socrates in fact reveals that, even when he does not explicitly require sincerity, he does indeed praise it, and he and his interlocutors assume it.

Where I do not agree with Vlastos, though, is in his assertion that sincerity is "a standing rule of elenctic debate." It is not clear whether by "elenctic debate" he means a peculiarly Socratic form of conversation, with which the interlocutors would be familiar only from their contact with Socrates, or whether he is suggesting that there was, in Socrates' and Plato's time, a more widespread and well-known type of argument with its

[17] Cf. *Gorg.* 487e7-488a2, *Apol.* 30a2-4 for examples of Socrates asking such questions.

own familiar standing rules. In the two dialogues where we see the strongest evidence for a familiar Athenian or Greek practice of a kind of elenctic debate (*Protagoras* and *Euthydemus*), there is no hint of a sincerity requirement being built in to the rules of the debate. In the *Protagoras*, in the debate over method in which the other intellectuals present take part (334d-338e), the question is whether Protagoras should be required to give brief answers, as Socrates would like, or whether he should be allowed to answer at whatever length he deems necessary. Although Socrates has already required Protagoras's sincerity (331b-d), and will do so soon again (359c-d), that is not the issue with which the onlookers are concerned: insofar as they see this to be a competitive debate, they do not seem to assume a sincerity requirement.

In the *Euthydemus*, where the brothers Euthydemus and Dionysodorus perform public refutations, there do seem to be some standing rules, including answering every question, no matter whether you understand it (295b-c), and only answering with 'yes' or 'no' (295e-296b). However, they make no mention of requiring sincerity, and in fact, immediately after Socrates encourages Clinias to answer them sincerely (T13, 275e), Dionysodorus whispers to Socrates that "whichever way the boy answers he will be refuted" (*ὁπότερ' ἂν ἀποκρίνηται τὸ μειράκιον, ἐξελεγχθήσεται*, 275e5-6). In addition, when Socrates tries at one point to find out if Dionysodorus is being sincere, the latter avoids the question and replies, "You just refute me" (*ἀλλὰ σύ, ἔφη, ἔλεγξον*, 286e1). Socrates himself describes to Crito the ability of the brothers "to refute what is always being said, in the same way whether it's false or true" (*ὁμοίως ἐάντε ψεῦδος ἐάντε ἀληθὲς ᾖ*, 272b1). Sincerity seems to play no role in their arguments, and in fact it seems to be irrelevant to them. Again, though, it is not clear that (as Vlastos seems to imply) the kind of

performance which the brothers put on is an example of some kind of popular 'eristic competition' which would have pre-established rules outside of what the brothers themselves demand.

But even if we grant the existence of such a 'competition of refutation' with which educated Athenians would have been familiar, Plato's dialogues (with the possible exception of the two cited just above) make it clear that neither Socrates nor his interlocutors considered themselves to be taking part in any kind of formal conversation with its own external rules.[18] On the contrary, the Socratic conversations which Plato creates for us generally seem to spring up almost spontaneously among friends and acquaintances,[19] though his friends are not surprised when Socrates steers the discussion toward his favorite topics, nor when he reduces an interlocutor to *aporia*.[20]

Conclusion

I have tried to show that Socrates expects the people with whom he holds discussions to speak sincerely. He demonstrates this expectation both through explicit requirements for sincerity and through his reactions in other relevant situations. I suggested that the main reason for Socrates' insistence on sincerity results from his attempts to refute his interlocutors. As we will see in the next chapter, though, analysis of individual passages reveals that Socrates in fact has a wide variety of reasons for requiring sincerity from his interlocutors.

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[18] Vlastos (1994) 1-2 contrasts the strict "method" of the middle dialogues with the procedure of the early dialogues, where Socrates "never troubles to say why his way of searching is the way to discover truth or even what this way of searching is."

[19] Cf., e.g., *Charmides*, *Laches*, *Republic* I, *Euthydemus*.

[20] Cf. Nicias's comments, in the *Laches*, on the effects of Socratic questioning (187e6-188c3).

Chapter II: Why does Socrates invoke the sincere response rule?

We saw in the previous chapter that, in general, Socrates and his interlocutors would most likely assume that questions should be answered sincerely. It is reasonable next to ask what circumstances, or which kinds of interlocutors, prompt Socrates to invoke the sincere response requirement, and what Socrates expects to achieve by means of this invocation in each instance. The interlocutors in question are Callicles, Thrasymachus, Crito, Protagoras, Hippias, and Meno. Three of them (Thrasymachus, Protagoras, and Hippias) are sophists. In fact, they are the only sophists with whom Socrates holds discussions in the Platonic dialogues. Meno, though not a sophist, is the student of Gorgias, the famous rhetor, and therefore also considers himself skilled at speaking. As I pointed out earlier, we might reasonably expect these four experts in speaking to go to great lengths, including insincerity, in order to avoid being defeated in argument by a professed amateur. Such attempts would provide clear reasons for Socrates explicitly to demand that they answer sincerely.[1] It is more difficult to predict why Socrates might have to insist that Crito and Callicles, both Athenian gentlemen, respond sincerely. Let us look at each invocation of the sincerity requirement and see if we can find any common elements.

Meno

In the *Meno*, Socrates' insistence that Meno give his own views comes right at the beginning of the dialogue (T9, 71d1-5). Meno begins by asking Socrates whether virtue

[1] As Vlastos (1994) 8-9 puts it, Socrates wants "to test honesty in argument. [. . .] One must say what one believes, even if it will lose one the debate."

can be taught (70a1-2). Socrates responds that he does not even know what virtue is (*τί ἐστιν*, 71b4), much less what it is like (*ὁποῖον γέ τι*, 71b4). Meno then asks whether Socrates hasn't met Gorgias, and if he did not think that Gorgias knew what virtue was (71c5-7). Socrates claims that he does not remember, but that, since Meno knows what Gorgias said, he should tell Socrates. He continues,

T9. *Meno* 71d1-5: *ΣΩ. εἰ δὲ βούλει, αὐτὸς εἰπέ· δοκεῖ γὰρ δήπου σοὶ ἅπερ ἐκείνῳ.*
MEN. Ἔμοιγε.
ΣΩ. Ἐκεῖνον μὲν τοίνυν ἐῶμεν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἄπεστιν· σὺ δὲ αὐτός, ὦ πρὸς θεῶν, Μένων, τί φῂς ἀρετὴν εἶναι;
[Socrates: "But if you wish, speak yourself; for I suppose you hold the same views as he [i.e., Gorgias] does."
Meno: "Yes, I do."
Socrates: "Then let us leave him out of it, since he's not here. But you yourself, in the name of the gods, Meno, what do you say that virtue is?"][2]

Though Socrates does not thoroughly explain his insistence on hearing Meno's own views, beyond saying that Gorgias is not present with them, this insistence is soon justified.

Meno starts to describe virtue (evidently elaborating the view that he and Gorgias share), concluding that there are different virtues for different kinds of people (71e1-72a5). Socrates clarifies that what he is looking for is a description common to all examples of virtue (72c6-d1). This is where his insistence on Meno giving his own opinion comes into play. Just as Meno had not predicted (and does not understand at first) this new formulation of Socrates' question, it is quite likely that he does not have a prepared response from Gorgias for every question that Socrates will ask. So the main purpose of Socrates' insistence here on sincere response seems to be to ensure the interlocutor's ability to answer any question that Socrates asks.

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[2] As I explained in Chapter I, though the emphasis here is on Meno giving his own beliefs rather than those of Gorgias, I still classify this demand under the sincere response requirement.

The concern with responsiveness which Socrates reveals in this passage relates closely to the concerns expressed by Socrates in at least two other dialogues. In the *Protagoras* Socrates criticizes popular orators (*δημηγόρων*, 329a1) for only being able to give long speeches, and being unable to answer questions briefly (329a1-b5). We might guess that, if Meno were relating Gorgias's opinions, each answer would be a kind of miniature speech of the sort Meno gives to describe virtue. The second expression of this concern is found in the *Phaedrus*, where Socrates criticizes written words because they cannot answer questions:

T16. *Phaedr.* 275d7-9: *δόξαις μὲν ἄν ὥς τι φρονοῦντας αὐτοὺς λέγειν, ἐὰν δέ τι ἔρῃ τῶν λεγομένων βουλόμενος μαθεῖν, ἕν τι σημαίνει μόνον ταὐτὸν ἀεί.*
["You would believe that they're speaking as though they understand something, but if you ask something about what has been said, in a desire to understand it, it indicates one thing only, always the same."]

We see that Socrates' insistence that Meno say what he thinks fits nicely into a broader abiding concern in Plato that an interlocutor respond not only sincerely, but, more generally, in a manner appropriate to the form of conversation in which he is participating.

Hippias

The situation in which Socrates insists that Hippias give his own opinion (T8, *Hipp. Mi.* 365c8-d4) is parallel to that of the *Meno*. Hippias has just given a speech praising the *Iliad* above the *Odyssey* to the same extent that Achilles is superior to Odysseus (363b2-4). Socrates asks him to explain more clearly what the differences are between the two heroes (364b9-c2). Hippias explains that Homer presents Achilles as "honest and straightforward" (*ἀληθής τε καὶ ἁπλοῦς*, 365b4), whereas Odysseus is "tricky

and dishonest" (*πολύτροπός τε καὶ ψευδής*, 365b5). Then the following exchange brings us to the passage cited earlier (T8):

T17. *Hipp. Mi.* 365c3-7: *ΣΩ. Ἐδόκει ἄρα, ὡς ἔοικεν, Ὁμήρῳ ἕτερος μὲν εἶναι ἀνὴρ ἀληθής, ἕτερος δὲ ψευδής, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁ αὐτός.*
ΙΠ. Πῶς γὰρ οὐ μέλλει, ὦ Σώκρατες;
ΣΩ. Ἦ καὶ σοὶ δοκεῖ αὐτῷ, ὦ Ἱππία;
ΙΠ. Πάντων μάλιστα· καὶ γὰρ ἂν δεινὸν εἴη εἰ μή.
[Socrates: "Then to Homer, as it seems, the honest man was one thing, and the false man another, but not the same."
Hippias: "How could that not be, Socrates?"
Socrates: "And does it seem right to you yourself, Hippias?"
Hippias: "Absolutely; for it would certainly be remarkable if it weren't so."]

Socrates immediately begins to ask questions which could not be answered from the text of Homer without significant interpretation on Hippias's part.

We should notice that the situation in the *Hippias Minor*, so close to that in the *Meno*, is even more relevant to the criticism of books offered in the *Phaedrus*. Here it is actual books whose testimony is rejected for that of a live interlocutor. Again, Plato is here emphasizing the importance of an interlocutor's responsiveness to questioning: one must be able to answer whatever sort of question Socrates might ask. Also, the opening statement of the dialogue, by Eudicus, emphasizes the difference between the display that Hippias has just given (*Ἱππίου τοσαῦτα ἐπιδειξαμένου*, 363a1-2) and the 'testing' which Socrates might like Hippias to undergo if Socrates has questions about anything he said (*ἢ καὶ ἐλέγχεις, εἴ τί σοι μὴ καλῶς δοκεῖ εἰρηκέναι*, 363a2-3). This context for the sincere response requirement recalls the passage in the *Protagoras* cited earlier (*Prot.* 329a-b), where unresponsive orators are criticized.

Crito

Crito is visiting Socrates in prison in order to attempt to persuade Socrates to let his friends break him out and take him away from Athens. Crito addresses Socrates with a short speech (45a-46a), giving several reasons for him to escape from prison. One of the reasons is that Socrates' friends will get a bad reputation if they fail to save him. In his response, claiming that he is willing to examine the questions that Crito has brought up, Socrates says:

T18. *Crito* 46c6-d4: *πῶς οὖν ἂν μετριώτατα σκοποίμεθα αὐτά; εἰ πρῶτον μὲν τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἀναλάβοιμεν, ὃν σὺ λέγεις περὶ τῶν δοξῶν. πότερον καλῶς ἐλέγετο ἑκάστοτε ἢ οὔ, ὅτι ταῖς μὲν δεῖ τῶν δοξῶν προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν, ταῖς δὲ οὔ; ἢ πρὶν μὲν ἐμὲ δεῖν ἀποθνήσκειν καλῶς ἐλέγετο, νῦν δὲ κατάδηλος ἄρα ἐγένετο ὅτι ἄλλως ἕνεκα λόγου ἐλέγετο, ἦν δὲ παιδιὰ καὶ φλυαρία ὡς ἀληθῶς;*
["How could we most reasonably look into these matters? If we first take up this statement which you make concerning opinions: was it well said at that time or not that it is necessary to pay attention to some opinions but not to others? Or, before I had to die, was that well spoken, but now does it become quite clear that it was spoken in vain, for the sake of argument, and was really a game and empty talk?"]

Socrates makes two points here and in the exchange which immediately follows (up to 47a11). First, that only the opinions of intelligent people (or 'wise,' *φρονίμων*, 47a9) should be of any concern to us. Crito agrees with this (47a12). Second, that an opinion which one does not maintain in difficult circumstances is only "a game and empty talk" (46d4). After a brief demonstration that one should not live with an unhealthy body or an unjust soul (47e4-48a2), Socrates secures Crito's agreement that "one must never do wrong" (*οὐδαμῶς ἄρα δεῖ ἀδικεῖν*, 49b7). Socrates has just explained that this is what he and Crito used to agree to, and this reference to their former discussions emphasizes the importance that Socrates places on consistency of beliefs throughout one's life.

It is in this context that Socrates insists on Crito's sincerity, trying to make absolutely sure that he really agrees with Socrates on this point. Let us repeat T3, this time including Socrates' explanation for why he is being so careful here:

T19. *Crito* 49c10-e4: *ΣΩ. Οὔτε ἄρα ἀνταδικεῖν δεῖ οὔτε κακῶς ποιεῖν οὐδένα ἀνθρώπων, οὐδ' ἂν ὁτιοῦν πάσχῃ ὑπ' αὐτῶν. καὶ ὅρα, ὦ Κρίτων, ταῦτα καθομολογῶν, ὅπως μὴ παρὰ δόξαν ὁμολογῇς· οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι ὀλίγοις τισὶ ταῦτα καὶ δοκεῖ καὶ δόξει. οἷς οὖν οὕτω δέδοκται καὶ οἷς μή, τούτοις οὐκ ἔστι κοινὴ βουλή, ἀλλὰ ἀνάγκη τούτους ἀλλήλων καταφρονεῖν ὁρῶντας ἀλλήλων τὰ βουλεύματα. σκόπει δὴ οὖν καὶ σὺ εὖ μάλα πότερον κοινωνεῖς καὶ συνδοκεῖ σοι καὶ ἀρχώμεθα ἐντεῦθεν βουλευόμενοι, ὡς οὐδέποτε ὀρθῶς ἔχοντος οὔτε τοῦ ἀδικεῖν οὔτε τοῦ ἀνταδικεῖν οὔτε κακῶς πάσχοντα ἀμύνεσθαι ἀντιδρῶντα κακῶς, ἢ ἀφίστασαι καὶ οὐ κοινωνεῖς τῆς ἀρχῆς; ἐμοὶ μὲν γὰρ καὶ πάλαι οὕτω καὶ νῦν ἔτι δοκεῖ, σοὶ δὲ εἴ πῃ ἄλλῃ δέδοκται, λέγε καὶ δίδασκε. εἰ δ' ἐμμένεις τοῖς πρόσθε, τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο ἄκουε.*
ΚΡ. Ἀλλ' ἐμμένω τε καὶ συνδοκεῖ μοι· ἀλλὰ λέγε.
[Socrates: "Therefore it is right neither to do injustice in return nor to wrong any person, no matter what you suffer at his hands. And make sure, Crito, that in assenting to this you don't assent contrary to your belief. For I know that these things seem right – and will seem right – to only a few people. And those to whom it has seemed right, and those to whom it has not, have no common counsel, but they necessarily despise each other when they see each other's plans. And so you, check very carefully whether you agree and it seems right to you, and let us begin our deliberation from that point, that it is never right, either to act unjustly, or to do an injustice in return, or, if one has been treated unjustly, to defend oneself by acting unjustly in return; or are you of a different mind and do you not agree with this beginning? For this has seemed right to me for a long time, and it still does now, but if it seems any different to you, speak and let me know. But if you stand by the things said back then, listen to what comes next."
Crito: "Well, I stand by it and it seems right to me, too. Speak on."]

And Socrates does indeed speak on "from that point," as he proceeds to use this agreement to prove that he should not escape from jail, because that would violate the laws of Athens and harm the city, which is never the right thing to do (50a ff.).

Socrates has two main goals in securing Crito's sincere response here. The first is what (as I suggested in the first chapter) is generally considered to be the major reason for Socrates' invocation of the sincerity requirement: elenctic refutation, i.e., demonstrating to an interlocutor that he does not know what he thinks he knows. Socrates wants to ensure that he and Crito both understand what is happening when Crito ends up getting refuted. Only in this way will Socrates' second goal be achieved; that is,

to convince Crito that Socrates is doing the right thing by not escaping from jail. Socrates so strongly emphasizes the point about never acting unjustly (by gaining Crito's assent to five different statements of the claim, 49b2-c9) that it is clear that he really wants to convince Crito that he is making the right decision. In fact, this is Socrates' most emphatic insistence on sincere response in the entire Platonic corpus , and I think it is no coincidence that it occurs in a situation where he is trying to persuade a good friend about a very important question in a matter of life and death.

But refutation and persuasion are not the only purposes of the sincere response requirement here. Socrates is also emphasizing the importance of consistency in one's views, by telling Crito that if he changes his beliefs now, when they are really being put to the test, then the beliefs never really meant anything in the first place. In this way Socrates tests Crito, to see whether he will live in accord with his stated beliefs. If Crito's beliefs are inconsistent, then who is to say which beliefs will govern his actions at any particular time? On the other hand, if his beliefs stay the same over a long period of time, and in diverse circumstances, that is strong evidence that Crito lives and acts by them.

Finally, Socrates stresses that it is the opinion of the individual that matters when one is deciding how to live one's life, rather than the opinion of the many. It is significant, though, that Socrates seems to be saying that this only holds true if that individual is intelligent (*φρόνιμος*) and the crowd is senseless (*ἀφρόνων*, 47a10). Not just

any interlocutor will be adequate for discovering the right course of action, and therefore the opinions of the many cannot be used as reliable evidence for the truth of a view.[3]

Thrasymachus

Thrasymachus enters the conversation of the first book of the *Republic* when Socrates has just refuted Polemarchus and convinced him that it is never just to harm anyone (335e5). Thrasymachus is annoyed that Socrates is only refuting others, rather than offering his own definition of justice. He therefore insists that Socrates tell them what he thinks justice is:

T20. *Rep.* 336c5-d3: *ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀπόκριναι καὶ εἰπὲ τί φὴς εἶναι τὸ δίκαιον. καὶ ὅπως μοι μὴ ἐρεῖς ὅτι τὸ δέον ἐστὶν μηδ' ὅτι τὸ ὠφέλιμον μηδ' ὅτι τὸ λυσιτελοῦν μηδ' ὅτι τὸ κερδαλέον μηδ' ὅτι τὸ συμφέρον, ἀλλὰ σαφῶς μοι καὶ ἀκριβῶς λέγε ὅτι ἂν λέγῃς·*
["But answer yourself, and tell me what you say the just is. And however you do it, don't tell me that it's the necessary, nor that it's the beneficial, nor that it's the profitable, nor that it's the gainful, nor that it's the advantageous, but clearly and precisely tell me what you say."]

Socrates complains that Thrasymachus is unfairly forbidding answers that might be correct, and compares himself to someone asked a question of arithmetic and similarly restricted in his answers:

T21. *Rep.* 337c4-10: *ἧττόν τι αὐτὸν οἴει ἀποκρινεῖσθαι τὸ φαινόμενον ἑαυτῷ, ἐάντε ἡμεῖς ἀπαγορεύωμεν ἐάντε μή;*
Ἄλλο τι οὖν, ἔφη, καὶ σὺ οὕτω ποιήσεις· ὧν ἐγὼ ἀπεῖπον, τούτων τι ἀποκρινῇ;
Οὐκ ἂν θαυμάσαιμι, ἦν δ' ἐγώ· εἴ μοι σκεψαμένῳ οὕτω δόξειεν.
["Do you think that he will any less answer what seems right to him, whether or not we forbid him to?"
"Certainly," he said, "you're also going to act this way: you'll give one of the answers which I disallowed?"
"I wouldn't be surprised," I said, "if this is how it seems right to me when I've looked into it."]

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[3] It is not clear whether Socrates considers Crito to be *φρόνιμος* in the matter at hand (though given his comments at 47d we might reasonably believe that he does not). But, because his main goals here are refutation and persuasion, rather than discovering the truth (Socrates already seems to think he possesses the truth), that is no objection to Socrates' wider point.

Here we see Socrates on the other side of the bench, but even in the role of the person being questioned he both assumes and insists on sincere responses. Of course, Socrates will soon be in the position of questioner again, but this exchange helps create an atmosphere, in his debate with Thrasymachus, in which sincere responses are expected.

Thrasymachus then offers his own definition of justice, claiming that it is the advantage of the stronger (338c2). He argues that in each city the stronger element is that which rules (338d10). After Socrates demonstrates that this definition leads to a contradiction,[4] Thrasymachus claims that when he said 'ruler' before, he meant it in the common sense of the term by which we speak of rulers who make mistakes. Then he adds:

T22. *Rep.* 340e7-341a4: *τοιοῦτον οὖν δή σοι καὶ ἐμὲ ὑπόλαβε νυνδὴ ἀποκρίνεσθαι· τὸ δὲ ἀκριβέστατον ἐκεῖνο τυγχάνει ὄν, τὸν ἄρχοντα, καθ' ὅσον ἄρχων ἐστίν, μὴ ἁμαρτάνειν, μὴ ἁμαρτάνοντα δὲ τὸ αὑτῷ βέλτιστον τίθεσθαι, τοῦτο δὲ τῷ ἀρχομένῳ ποιητέον. ὥστε ὅπερ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἔλεγον δίκαιον λέγω, τὸ τοῦ κρείττονος ποιεῖν συμφέρον.*
["But this happens to be the most precise formulation: that the ruler, insofar as he is ruling, does not err, and in not erring he orders what is best for himself, and this must be done by the one being ruled. So what I was saying from the beginning I say is just: bringing about the advantage of the stronger."]

Though he insists that his definition has not changed, Thrasymachus seems to be modifying his definition so that it might be able to withstand the refutation which he just endured. We may have here an example of the phenomenon I predicted at the beginning of the chapter: a sophist sees that he risks being refuted and therefore changes his answer, with the result that Socrates (and the reader) is not sure what his interlocutor really believes. Socrates recognizes this tactic, and, in resuming the questioning, asks

[4] On the one hand, Thrasymachus has claimed that it is always just for a subject to do what the ruler orders him to do; but he admits the possibility that a ruler could mistakenly order a subject to do something that is not to the ruler's advantage. Therefore justice (doing what the ruler, aka 'the stronger', orders) is not always the benefit of the stronger.

Thrasymachus to define (*διόρισαι*, 341b4) whether he means 'ruler' in the common or in the precise sense.

When Socrates proceeds to demonstrate that the 'precise' ruler is only concerned with the well-being of those he rules, Thrasymachus does not assent, but instead insults Socrates and gives a short speech about how rulers are only concerned with themselves (343a1-344c8). Socrates then claims that Thrasymachus has reverted to the 'common' meaning of ruler, and that he is trying to change his position covertly:

T23. *Rep.* 345b7-c3: *ἀλλὰ πρῶτον μέν, ἃ ἂν εἴπῃς, ἔμμενε τούτοις, ἢ ἐὰν μετατιθῇ, φανερῶς μετατίθεσο καὶ ἡμᾶς μὴ ἐξαπάτα. νῦν δὲ ὁρᾷς, ὦ Θρασύμαχε—ἔτι γὰρ τὰ ἔμπροσθεν ἐπισκεψώμεθα—ὅτι τὸν ὡς ἀληθῶς ἰατρὸν τὸ πρῶτον ὁριζόμενος τὸν ὡς ἀληθῶς ποιμένα οὐκέτι ὤου δεῖν ὕστερον ἀκριβῶς φυλάξαι.*
["But first, stand by whatever you said, or if you change your mind, change your mind clearly and don't deceive us. You see now, Thrasymachus – for we should still examine the earlier matters – that though at first you defined the one who is really a doctor, later on you no longer thought it was necessary to keep a hold precisely on the one who is really a shepherd."]

Here Socrates is clearly telling Thrasymachus to say what he believes, and if he changes what he believes, to reveal that fact openly to those present. When he takes up the questioning again, we get an explicit insistence on sincerity:

T2. *Rep.* 346a2-3: *καί, ὦ μακάριε, μὴ παρὰ δόξαν ἀποκρίνου, ἵνα τι καὶ περαίνομεν.*
["And dear man, don't answer contrary to your belief, so that we might finish something."]

Socrates is addressing two separate problems when he insists that Thrasymachus say what he believes. The first is that he wants to be clear about what proposition he is testing: is it always just only to obey the 'precise' ruler, or is it also always just to obey the 'common' ruler? The second problem is that Socrates cannot securely test Thrasymachus if Thrasymachus changes his opinion every time he gets into dialectical

trouble. Socrates wants his refutation of Thrasymachus to be a refutation of Thrasymachus stating his real beliefs.[5]

Protagoras

Socrates and his young friend Hippocrates go to Protagoras in order to decide whether Hippocrates should become Protagoras's student (313c-314c). When they arrive at Callias's house, Socrates asks Protagoras what will happen to Hippocrates if he associates with Protagoras (318a3-4). Protagoras answers (after some clarification of the question by Socrates) that he will teach Hippocrates how best to manage his household and how to become most powerful in the affairs of the city (318e6-319a2). When Socrates asks if he is claiming to make men into good citizens (*ὑπισχνεῖσθαι ποιεῖν ἄνδρας ἀγαθοὺς πολίτας*, 319a4-5), Protagoras says yes. Socrates then explains why he thinks that such matters cannot be taught (319a8-320c1), and therefore Protagoras demonstrates, by means of both a story (*μῦθος*) and an argument (*λόγος*), why virtue can be taught (320c8-328d2).

After this exposition, Socrates elicits from Protagoras the view that virtue is one thing with various parts that do not resemble each other (329c6-330b6). He then asks the following question:

T24. *Prot.* 330c1-7: *ἡ δικαιοσύνη πρᾶγμά τί ἐστιν ἢ οὐδὲν πρᾶγμα; ἐμοὶ μὲν γὰρ δοκεῖ· τί δὲ σοί;*
Κἀμοί, ἔφη.
Τί οὖν; εἴ τις ἔροιτο ἐμέ τε καὶ σέ· "Ὦ Πρωταγόρα τε καὶ Σώκρατες, εἴπετον δή μοι, τοῦτο τὸ πρᾶγμα ὃ ὠνομάσατε ἄρτι, ἡ δικαιοσύνη, αὐτὸ τοῦτο δίκαιόν ἐστιν ἢ ἄδικον;" ἐγὼ μὲν ἂν αὐτῷ ἀποκριναίμην ὅτι δίκαιον· σὺ δὲ τίν' ἂν ψῆφον θεῖο; τὴν αὐτὴν ἐμοὶ ἢ ἄλλην;
Τὴν αὐτήν, ἔφη.
["Is justice a thing or not a thing? For it seems to me, at least, that it is. What about you?"
"It seems so to me, too," he said.

[5] Cf. the major goal of the sincere response requirement in ch. 1.

"Well then, if someone asked me and you, 'Protagoras and Socrates, tell me, this thing that you were just now naming, justice, is this thing itself just or unjust?' I would answer him that it is just. But what vote would you cast? The same as me or a different one?"
"The same," he said.]

Socrates is clearly asking Protagoras for his own opinion. And in fact the use of the hypothetical questioner seems designed to remove any impression Protagoras might have that Socrates is confronting him in a hostile manner; this has the further likely result of inducing Protagoras to answer sincerely.[6]

This strategy appears to work, because when asked by Socrates whether holiness is just and justice is holy (331a6-b8), Protagoras is willing to disagree openly with Socrates:

T25. *Prot.* 331b8-d1: *Οὐ πάνυ μοι δοκεῖ, ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὕτως ἁπλοῦν εἶναι, ὥστε συγχωρῆσαι τήν τε δικαιοσύνην ὅσιον εἶναι καὶ τὴν ὁσιότητα δίκαιον, ἀλλά τί μοι δοκεῖ ἐν αὐτῷ διάφορον εἶναι. ἀλλὰ τί τοῦτο διαφέρει; ἔφη· εἰ γὰρ βούλει, ἔστω ἡμῖν καὶ δικαιοσύνη ὅσιον καὶ ὁσιότης δίκαιον.*
Μή μοι, ἦν δ'ἐγώ· οὐδὲν γὰρ δέομαι τὸ "εἰ βούλει" τοῦτο καὶ "εἴ σοι δοκεῖ" ἐλέγχεσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐμέ τε καὶ σέ· τὸ δ' "ἐμέ τε καὶ σέ" τοῦτο λέγω, οἰόμενος οὕτω τὸν λόγον βέλτιστ' ἂν ἐλέγχεσθαι, εἴ τις τὸ "εἰ" ἀφέλοι αὐτοῦ.
["It doesn't seem so simple to me, Socrates," he said, "that I would answer that justice is holy and holiness is just, but there seems to me to be a difference here. But what difference does it make?" he said. "If you wish, let justice be holy for us and let holiness be just."
"Don't give me that," I said. "For I don't need to test this 'if you wish' and 'if it seems right to you,' but rather me and you. I say 'me and you' in the belief that in this way the account is tested best, if someone keeps the 'if' out of it."]

Here Socrates first insists on Protagoras's sincerity, strongly reacting to Protagoras's apparent indifference concerning the question of sincerity. We should note, however, that even this demonstration of indifference to sincere response reveals that Protagoras assumes it as a principle of conversation – first he answers sincerely, then he expresses his willingness to give a different answer if Socrates wishes.

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[6] Though we should note that this same hypothetical method of questioning, at least for the time being, decreases the protreptic force of confronting an interlocutor with his own views. This is a much gentler method.

In Socrates' statement here of the sincere response requirement, he claims that he makes this requirement in order that he himself, Protagoras, and the view all get tested. Though we can accept this as one of the reasons for the requirement, Socrates' comments just before and just after this exchange seem to indicate that he is also trying to persuade Protagoras of his own point of view.

Just before the passage above, Socrates explains how he would answer his hypothetical questioner:

T26. *Prot.* 331b1-4: *ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ αὐτὸς ὑπέρ γε ἐμαυτοῦ φαίην ἂν καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην ὅσιον εἶναι καὶ τὴν ὁσιότητα δίκαιον καὶ ὑπὲρ σοῦ δέ, εἴ με ἐάφης, ταὐτὰ ἂν ταῦτα ἀποκρινοίμην [...].*
["For I myself would say on my own behalf both that justice is holy and that holiness is just, and I would answer these same things on your behalf if you let me [. . .]."]

Socrates clearly wants Protagoras to give the same answer that he himself has given. And immediately after Protagoras claims that justice and holiness are not the same, though they might "have some similarity" (*ὅμοιόν τι ἔχοντα*, 331e3), Socrates says:

T27. *Prot.* 331e4-332a1: *Καὶ ἐγὼ θαυμάσας εἶπον πρὸς αὐτόν· Ἦ γὰρ οὕτω σοι τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ ὅσιον πρὸς ἄλληλα ἔχει, ὥστε ὅμοιόν τι σμικρὸν ἔχειν ἀλλήλοις;*
Οὐ πάνυ, ἔφη, οὕτως, οὐ μέντοι οὐδὲ αὖ ὡς σύ μοι δοκεῖς οἴεσθαι.
[And I, in surprise, said to him, "Do the just and the holy seem to you to be related in such a way that they have some slight similarity to each other?"
"Not exactly like this," he said, "but also not how you seem to think they're related."]

The form of Socrates' question seems designed almost to coerce Protagoras into giving a particular answer. Socrates is not simply proceeding through his argument by taking as his premises whatever the interlocutor claims sincerely to believe. He had a particular argument in mind, based on certain answers which he expected or wanted Protagoras to provide. This interpretation is borne out by the fact that Socrates drops this line of reasoning precisely because of its failure to garner Protagoras's assent. Despite his claim that he changes his questions because Protagoras is getting upset (*δυσχερῶς*, 332a2), a

more likely explanation is that Protagoras will not agree to one of the premises of Socrates' argument.[7]

We soon get more evidence both that Socrates thinks that it is important to show that holiness and justice are the same, or at least very similar (and hence that he was trying to persuade Protagoras of this claim), and that he gives up that argument because he is at a loss how to convince Protagoras of the point. In his next argument, Socrates gets Protagoras to agree, "quite unwillingly" (*μάλ' ἀκόντως*, 333b4), that wisdom and temperance are one thing. He then continues:

T28. *Prot.* 333b5-6: *τὸ δὲ πρότερον αὖ ἐφάνη ἡμῖν ἡ δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἡ ὁσιότης σχεδόν τι ταὐτὸν ὄν.*
["And earlier it seemed to us that justice and holiness were nearly the same thing."]

Though he has, arguably, softened his own previous claim slightly (at 331b, that justice and holiness *are* the same), Socrates is still making a stronger statement than Protagoras agreed to earlier: Protagoras admitted a similarity between the two qualities, but not that they were "nearly the same thing."[8] Socrates seems to want to win this point even if he needs to use some slightly tricky methods to do it.[9]

If Socrates is to show Protagoras that Protagoras is wrong in his claim that the virtues are different from each other, he has to convince Protagoras of the point, which is

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[7] Cf. Robinson (1953) 9: "and if the answerer refuses to grant [Socrates] a premiss ([*Rep.* I] 348E) he keeps the conversation going somehow ([*Rep.* I] 348E-349B) until he has thought of another starting-point which the answerer will admit and which will serve to refute him."

[8] This inaccurate restatement of Protagoras's claim could be taken as evidence that Socrates does not consider sincere response to be as important as he sometimes says it is: why is sincerity necessary if Socrates sometimes misrepresents his interlocutors' views?

[9] It is noteworthy that Protagoras himself later concedes that "four of the virtues are pretty similar to each other" (349d3-4). But he seems to admit this not on account of sincerely believing it, but out of the belief that the concession will not damage his case overall, because he thinks that he can prove that courage is completely different from the other virtues, and therefore that the virtues are not all identical.

what he is trying to do here.[10] But he is clearly emphasizing the importance of gaining the interlocutor's assent: even if he does at one point take that assent to be stronger than it is in fact, that act only underlines how much Socrates believes he needs that assent.[11]

The emphasis on persuasion in the passage just discussed gives the impression that Socrates thinks he already has a better explanation of how the virtues are related than Protagoras has: why try to persuade someone of your view unless you think it is the correct one? After the long discussion of Simonides' poem, Socrates gives a sort of explanation for his behavior. He quotes Homer to the effect that two people perceive better than one.

T29. *Prot.* 348d3-e1: *"μοῦνος δ' εἴπερ τε νοήσῃ," αὐτίκα περιιὼν ζητεῖ ὅτῳ ἐπιδείξηται καὶ μεθ' ὅτου βεβαιώσηται, ἕως ἂν ἐντύχῃ. ὥσπερ καὶ ἐγὼ ἕνεκα τούτου σοὶ ἡδέως διαλέγομαι μᾶλλον ἢ ἄλλῳ τινί, ἡγούμενός σε βέλτιστ' ἂν ἐπισκέψασθαι καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων περὶ ὧν εἰκὸς σκοπεῖσθαι τὸν ἐπιεικῆ, καὶ δὴ καὶ περὶ ἀρετῆς.*
['And if someone perceives alone,' he immediately goes around and looks for someone to whom he can show it and with whom he can confirm it, until he finds him. Just as I for this reason gladly speak with you rather than anyone else, in the belief that you would best look into both those other matters which it is proper for a reasonable man to look into, and above all into virtue.]

What Socrates is implying here is that he has had this perception about virtue: namely that, though it may be made up of parts, all of the parts are the same.[12] Protagoras claims to be an expert in (or at least a teacher of) virtue, so Socrates finds his opinion important. Though Socrates here emphasizes the aspect of a 'search' (*σκέψιν καὶ ἐρωτᾶν καὶ ἀνακοινοῦσθαι*, 349a5), it is clear that he already has certain beliefs which he is trying to

[10] There is no sign here of Socrates claiming, as he does with Polus in the *Gorgias*, that Protagoras already agrees with him. What he is doing here seems much more like persuasion.
[11] This is what Benson (1987) 78-81 calls the "Doxastic Constraint."
[12] Of course, there is evidence that Socrates would not admit the idea of parts at all, but that, rather, he insists that the five virtues are just five different names for one thing.

get Protagoras to confirm. We might understand this as Socrates' attempt to get closer to the truth about virtue by gaining the assent of a self-professed expert on the topic.[13]

As Socrates' first demand for sincerity (T4/T25) led to an impasse in the conversation, the next time we find him insisting on sincerity it is as a result of a kind of impasse. In his attempt to demonstrate that wisdom is courage (*ἡ σοφία ἂν ἀνδρεία εἴη*, 350c4-5), Socrates tries to get Protagoras to admit that to live pleasantly is good (*τὸ μὲν ἄρα ἡδέως ζῆν ἀγαθόν*, 351b7-c1). Protagoras admits this claim only with the qualification that one take pleasure in fine things (*τοῖς καλοῖς [. . .] ἡδόμενος*, 351c1-2). This qualification is unacceptable to Socrates, so Protagoras suggests that they investigate the matter further (351e3-7). Socrates then compares himself to a doctor examining a patient, and questions Protagoras in the following way:

T30. *Prot.* 352a6-b4; 352c2-4: *θεασάμενος ὅτι οὕτως ἔχεις πρὸς τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ ἡδὺ ὡς φῄς, δέομαι τοιοῦτόν τι εἰπεῖν· "Ἰθι δή μοι, ὦ Πρωταγόρα, καὶ τόδε τῆς διανοίας ἀποκάλυψον· πῶς ἔχεις πρὸς ἐπιστήμην; πότερον καὶ τοῦτό σοι δοκεῖ ὥσπερ τοῖς πολλοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἢ ἄλλως; δοκεῖ δὲ τοῖς πολλοῖς περὶ ἐπιστήμης τοιοῦτόν τι, οὐκ ἰσχυρὸν οὐδ' ἡγεμονικὸν οὐδ' ἀρχικὸν εἶναι· [. . .]. περιελκομένης ὑπὸ τῶν ἄλλων ἁπάντων. ἆρ' οὖν καὶ σοὶ τοιοῦτόν τι περὶ αὐτῆς δοκεῖ, ἢ καλόν τε εἶναι ἡ ἐπιστήμη καὶ οἷον ἄρχειν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου [. . .];*
[Now that I've seen that you're like this concerning the good and the pleasant, as you say, I need to say something like the following: 'Come now, Protagoras, and reveal this part of your mind to me – how are you concerning knowledge? Does this seem to you even as it does to most people, or differently? Something like this seems right to most people concerning knowledge, that it is neither strong, nor commanding, nor ruling [. . .], getting dragged about by all the rest [i.e., temper, pleasure, pain, desire, and fear]. Well then, does such a claim concerning it seem right to you, or is knowledge fine and able to rule a person [. . .] ?]

The medical analogy makes it seem as though Socrates here insists on Protagoras's own opinion because that will aid Socrates in determining whether Protagoras is ailed by an incorrect view of knowledge.[14] If we push the analogy just slightly, we can see Socrates

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[13] Cf. Socrates' comments to Crito that we should only attend to the opinion of intelligent people (*Crito* 47a).

[14] This is slightly different from the role of the elenchus as a whole as described in *Sophist* 229e-230e. As Robinson (1953) 13 describes it, the nature of the elenchus "is illustrated by a comparison with medical

implying that if Protagoras holds the wrong view, then Socrates will be ready to treat him by persuading him of the correct view. It happens in this case that Protagoras holds what Socrates considers to be the correct view of knowledge, but Socrates goes ahead anyway to persuade the many that his own and Protagoras's view of knowledge is the correct one. The important point to notice, though, is that Socrates can only correctly diagnose his interlocutor's state of mind if that interlocutor responds sincerely.

By way of introducing his final argument for the identity of courage and wisdom, Socrates asks Protagoras to defend (*ἀπολογεῖσθαι*, 359a3) his claim that courage is quite different (*πάνυ πολὺ διαφέρειν*, 359b1) from the other virtues. They have the following exchange:

T31. *Prot.* 359c5-d1: *Πότερον οἱ μὲν δειλοὶ ἐπὶ τὰ θαρραλέα ἔρχονται, οἱ δὲ ἀνδρεῖοι ἐπὶ τὰ δεινά;*
Λέγεται δή, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὕτως ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.
Ἀληθῆ, ἔφην ἐγώ, λέγεις· ἀλλ' οὐ τοῦτο ἐρωτῶ, ἀλλὰ σὺ ἐπὶ τί φῂς ἴτας εἶναι τοὺς ἀνδρείους;
["Do cowards go toward things which are easily attempted, and courageous men toward fearsome things?"
"So it is said by most people, Socrates."
"True," I said. "But I'm not asking that, but rather what do *you* say men go towards when they are courageous?"]

Socrates demands that Protagoras defend his claim about courage with his own belief. The implication is that, if the belief is not his own, then the defense will be a defense not of Protagoras's beliefs but of those of the majority. On the other hand, if Socrates defeats the defense, he wants to ensure that he has defeated Protagoras's real position and shown him that he is in fact wrong. We might also draw a parallel to the *Crito*, where the opinion of the many is disparaged in comparison with the opinion of one intelligent

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purging, which brings out the doctrine that elenchus is not itself the instilling of knowledge, but an essential preliminary thereto, consisting in the removal of an all but complete bar to knowledge naturally present in man. This bar is the conceit that we already know [i.e., that we already have knowledge]."

(*σοφός*) person. This parallel further emphasizes that Socrates does consider Protagoras intelligent enough to discuss virtue with him.

As we have noticed, one of Socrates' dominant modes in his discussion with Protagoras is persuasion. He also refutes Protagoras's views on the unity of virtue, but the refutation itself almost seems more incidental than integral: it only occurs because, in the course of attempting to persuade Protagoras of his views, Socrates adopts the strategy of first refuting Protagoras's view, which was incompatible with Socrates': in an investigation of two mutually exclusive but exhaustive options, by refuting one you prove the other. In this context, the main role of the sincere response requirement is, first, to enable Socrates to target the argument to the interlocutor's actual beliefs, and second, to be able to know when the interlocutor has been persuaded. This is similar to the role of sincere response in a refutative argument, but here success is more difficult to attain. For though we may agree that Socrates does in fact refute Protagoras's view, we can hardly say that he persuades Protagoras of the truth of his own view.

Callicles

Callicles enters the conversation of the *Gorgias* after Socrates completes his demonstration to Polus that one should use rhetoric with the goal of being punished for one's own injustices and preventing one's enemy from being punished for his injustices (480b7-481b5). Concerning those claims, which Polus has called "extraordinary" (*ἄτοπα*, 480e1), Callicles asks Socrates whether he is "serious or joking" (*σπουδάζοντα ἢ παίζοντα*, 481c1), because he also finds them difficult to accept. Socrates explains how serious he

is (481c5-482c3), and Callicles then begins a long speech in which he criticizes Socrates' methods of argumentation (482c4-483a7) and the sort of philosophy in which Socrates participates (484c4-486d1), concluding with a presentation of his own view of justice (483a7-484c3).

Socrates proceeds to tell Callicles that in meeting up with him he has come upon a piece of good luck (*ἑρμαίῳ*, 487e3):

T32. *Gorg.* 486e5-6: *Εὖ οἶδ' ὅτι, ἄν μοι σὺ ὁμολογήσῃς περὶ ὧν ἡ ἐμὴ ψυχὴ δοξάζει, ταῦτ' ἤδη ἐστὶν αὐτὰ τἀληθῆ.*
["I know clearly that, if you agree with me about what my soul believes, these very things are certainly the truth."]

Callicles' three features which Socrates singles out as important for someone who is going to test him (*βασανίζειν*, 487a1, a4) about living correctly are his knowledge, goodwill, and frankness (*ἐπιστήμην τε καὶ εὔνοιαν καὶ παρρησίαν*, 487a3). He explains:

T33. *Gorg.* 487a3-b2: *ἐγὼ γὰρ πολλοῖς ἐντυγχάνω οἳ ἐμὲ οὐχ οἷοί τέ εἰσιν βασανίζειν διὰ τὸ μὴ σοφοὶ εἶναι ὥσπερ σύ· ἕτεροι δὲ σοφοὶ μέν εἰσιν, οὐκ ἐθέλουσιν δέ μοι λέγειν τὴν ἀλήθειαν διὰ τὸ μὴ κήδεσθαί μου ὥσπερ σύ· τὼ δὲ ξένω τώδε, Γοργίας τε καὶ Πῶλος, σοφὼ μὲν καὶ φίλω ἐστὸν ἐμώ, ἐνδεεστέρω δὲ παρρησίας καὶ αἰσχυντηροτέρω μᾶλλον τοῦ δέοντος·*
["For I meet many people who aren't able to test me because they're not smart, as you are. And others are smart, but they're not willing to tell me the truth because they're not concerned for me like you are. And these two foreigners, Gorgias and Polus, are smart, and they're my friends, but they're quite lacking in frankness and are more shy than they ought to be."]

Intelligence ensures that the interlocutor will understand the issues under debate and the premises and logic of the argument. Goodwill and frankness ensure that the interlocutor will answer sincerely.[15]

Socrates soon explains what he expects to gain from a discussion with someone who meets all three of these requirements:

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[15] These appear to be features of Socrates' ideal interlocutor, but he seems glad to talk to anyone about his favorite questions. Cf. Benson (1987) 79: "Nowhere does Socrates place any restrictions on the type of person with whom he is willing to perform an elenchus [. . .]. Any serious Greek speaker will do."

T34. *Gorg.* 487d7-e7: *ἔχει δὴ οὑτωσὶ δῆλον ὅτι τούτων πέρι νυνί· ἐάν τι σὺ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ὁμολογήσῃς μοι, βεβασανισμένον τοῦτ' ἤδη ἔσται ἱκανῶς ὑπ' ἐμοῦ τε καὶ σοῦ, καὶ οὐκέτι αὐτὸ δεήσει ἐπ' ἄλλην βάσανον ἀναφέρειν. οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποτε αὐτὸ συνεχώρησας σὺ οὔτε σοφίας ἐνδείᾳ οὔτ' αἰσχύνης περιουσίᾳ, οὐδ' αὖ ἀπατῶν ἐμὲ συγχωρήσαις ἄν· φίλος γάρ μοι εἶ, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸς φῄς. τῷ ὄντι οὖν ἡ ἐμὴ καὶ ἡ σὴ ὁμολογία τέλος ἤδη ἕξει τῆς ἀληθείας.*
["So, clearly, this is how it is now concerning these matters: if you agree with me at all in the argument, then this will have been sufficiently tested by me and you, and it will no longer be necessary to bring it to another touchstone. For you would never agree to it from lack of intelligence nor from excess of shame, so you would not agree with me dishonestly; because you're friendly towards me, as you yourself say. So, in fact, agreement between me and you will really have truth as its result."]

Socrates has three explicit goals in this discussion for which Callicles is well-suited: to test himself, to test the argument, and to discover the truth. The idea that Socrates is testing himself seems to be emphasized here more than in other dialogues.[16] But we should note that, though at one point Socrates says that he is getting tested (487a4), and at another point he says that the matter under discussion will have been tested (487e1-2), it is not clear that he means to distinguish those two processes.

In the same way, it is not clear what distinction, if any, Socrates is drawing between testing the argument and discovering the truth. If the account Socrates offers turns out to be true, then there is apparently no difference between the two processes: by testing the argument he discovers that it is true. But if the account is shown to be false, would Socrates consider that demonstration of falsehood to be itself a kind of truth, or would he require a correct account to take the place of the false one? He does not tell us.

But what is the specific role that Socrates attributes here to the sincerity requirement? By calling Callicles intelligent (*σοφοί*, 487a5), Socrates seems to imply either that he already possesses the truth about the nature of justice (though many

[16] Contrast *Prot.* 333c7-9, where Socrates says that he is mostly testing the argument, though perhaps he and Protagoras will be tested too. There testing the argument is primary, testing the people secondary. It may be significant that this passage comes immediately after Socrates agrees to debate the position of the majority rather than Protagoras's own views.

scholars might vehemently dispute this claim), or that he is smart enough to discover it in the course of the argument. In either case, the only way for Socrates to gain access to this knowledge (*ἐπιστήμην*, 487a3) is for Callicles honestly to reveal the contents of his mind to him. If he does not know that Callicles is being sincere, Socrates implies, he cannot know whether his own beliefs, which he claims to be trying to test, are correct.

This is what Socrates seems to be saying in his speech to Callicles. It is tempting, though, to think that Plato may intend us to understand a further reason for Callicles' aptness as Socrates' interlocutor: i.e., that his beliefs about the nature of justice are antithetical to Socrates'. As we read Socrates' speech to Callicles (486e5-488b6), it might seem that the best reason for Socrates to talk to Callicles about justice is that if he can convince someone so opposed to his views of the correctness of those same views, then they must really be true.[17] It is not clear, however, that Plato intends this impression. Callicles really is distinguished from Polus by his frankness, not by his beliefs. Polus calls Socrates' beliefs *ἄτοπα* (480e1), and Callicles says that they would cause human life to be turned upside-down (*ἡμῶν ὁ βίος ἀνατετραμμένος ἂν εἴη*, 481c3), so both of their views are antithetical to Socrates'. As Socrates points out, the difference between Polus and Callicles seems to be one of frankness.

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[17] This seems essentially to be the interpretation of Brickhouse and Smith (1994) 172-173; and Irwin (1979) 183 writes: "If Socrates' ethical doctrines can be defended not only to conventional and respectable people, but also to radical critics, they rely on something firmer than conventional prejudices." One might claim, as an objection to this explanation, that Socrates simply finds different prejudices with which Callicles does agree, e.g., that the smarter man is better (*τοὺς βελτίους καὶ κρείττους πότερον τοὺς φρονιμωτέρους λέγεις*, 489e7-8) or more courageous than other men.

There is the possibility that Socrates is being ironic in his claim that Callicles has the intelligence necessary to test him. This is Dodds' opinion.[18] He says (1959, 279), and Irwin (1979, 182) seems to agree, that irony is revealed in Socrates' comment to Callicles, "For you are sufficiently educated, as most Athenians would say." (*πεπαίδευσαί τε γὰρ ἱκανῶς, ὡς πολλοὶ ἂν φήσαιεν Ἀθηναίων*, 487b6-7) But it is not clear that this is ironic, and equivalent to saying, "At least most Athenians would say that you're well-educated (but what do they know?)."[19] And if it is ironic, the irony is aimed rather at what Athenians consider to be a good education than at Callicles' actual intellectual abilities. It is clear from his conversations with Protagoras and Gorgias that Socrates does not have much faith in the higher education of the day. But irony about his explanation of Callicles' intelligence does not necessarily imply irony about that intelligence itself.

If Socrates is being ironic in his statement about Callicles' intelligence, then he is lying when he says, "I meet many people who aren't able to test me because they're not as smart as you." If Socrates does not in fact consider Callicles to be distinguished by his intelligence, then, rather than being ironic, Socrates simply lies when he himself distinguishes Callicles in that very way. The point of irony is that you mean the exact opposite of what you say. If Socrates is being ironic here, what he really means is that Callicles is no better than anyone else as an interlocutor, at least in terms of intelligence.

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[18] Dodds (1959) 279: "That Socrates does not really credit Callicles with *ἐπιστήμη* (in the Socratic sense) is evident from 487b7: Callicles has enjoyed "*what many Athenians would call* a good education." [his italics] He refers to *Meno* 90b1 as a parallel.

[19] But Irwin (1979) 182 explains: "All he says is that Callicles would generally be thought to have a good education [...]. The reference to the Athenians' view shows that Socrates rejects Callicles' claim to have a really good education [...]." But in his translation ("You are educated adequately, many Athenians would say") Irwin leaves out the *ὡς*, thereby attributing the claim to the Athenians, rather than to Socrates, who in fact makes it.

He would also be openly mocking Callicles' intelligence, a rude and unwise tactic if he really wants to have a discussion with the man.[20] In addition, it makes good sense for Socrates to claim that talking to a smart person is more likely to lead to the truth than talking to an ignorant person.[21] Therefore Socrates seems sincere in his profession of Callicles' intelligence. Furthermore, if we say that Socrates' claim to search for the truth is ironic or insincere, it is a slippery slope to complete skepticism concerning Socrates' and Plato's views.

There are two further pieces of evidence for believing that Socrates is being honest when he claims that Callicles is smart enough to test him. One comes at a point in the dialogue where Socrates makes what Callicles considers to be a sophistical proof that pleasure and the good are different (495d-497a). Callicles complains, "I don't know what sort of clever arguments you're making" (*οὐκ οἶδ' ἅττα σοφίζῃ*, 497a6), and Socrates replies, "You know, but you're playing the simpleton" (*οἶσθα, ἀλλὰ ἀκκίζῃ*, 497a7).[22] Socrates is so confident of Callicles' intelligence that even when Callicles claims not to understand, Socrates insists that he really does. And finally, the last piece of evidence is the greater seriousness with which Socrates treats Callicles' views compared to Polus's claims. Socrates criticizes Polus's ability properly to take part in a conversation (448d1-449a2, 460c8-462a10, 471d3-472d4), mocks him with a pun on his name (463e1-2), and makes fun of his memory (466a6-8). He also bluntly claims that Polus believes exactly the opposite of what he says he believes (474b2-10). These statements reveal Socrates'

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[20] On the difficult question of Socratic irony, see e.g. Vlastos (1991) ch. 1; Nehamas (1998) ch. 1-3; Vasiliou (1998) and Vasiliou (2002b) .

[21] Again, cf. Socrates' comments to Crito (*Crito* 47a; n. 11 above). And as Benson (2000) 17 points out, one of Socrates' goals with the elenchus is "learning from those who are wise."

[22] See Dodds' note *ad loc.*

lack of respect both for Polus and for his understanding of the matter under discussion.[23] Despite this apparent low opinion of Polus, though, Socrates still claims in his argument with him that they have proven Socrates' point to be true.[24] In the conversation with Callicles, we see none of the mocking treatment which Polus receives.[25] Socrates does complain when he thinks that Callicles is not answering sincerely, but this desire to know Callicles' real beliefs reveals Socrates' respect for those beliefs. We should expect that, on account of his demonstrated higher opinion of Callicles than of Polus, Socrates would have even greater hopes to attain the truth in his conversation with the former. The contrast between Socrates' treatment of Polus and Callicles, respectively, reveals that, though he thinks Callicles is wrong, Socrates does respect his intelligence, and therefore he wants to know what Callicles sincerely believes.

Socrates states the sincerity requirement more strongly to Callicles when the latter first reveals his nonchalance about answering honestly:

T35. *Gorg.* 495a2-b3: *ΣΩ. ἀλλ' ἔτι καὶ νῦν λέγε πότερον φῂς εἶναι τὸ αὐτὸ ἡδὺ καὶ ἀγαθόν, ἢ εἶναί τι τῶν ἡδέων ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγαθόν;*
ΚΑΛ. Ἵνα δή μοι μὴ ἀνομολογούμενος ᾖ ὁ λόγος, ἐὰν ἕτερον φήσω εἶναι, τὸ αὐτό φημι εἶναι.
ΣΩ. Διαφθείρεις, ὦ Καλλίκλεις, τοὺς πρώτους λόγους, καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἔτι μετ' ἐμοῦ ἱκανῶς τὰ ὄντα ἐξετάζοις, εἴπερ παρὰ τὰ δοκοῦντα σαυτῷ ἐρεῖς.
ΚΑΛ. Καὶ γὰρ σύ, ὦ Σώκρατες.
ΣΩ. Οὐ τοίνυν ὀρθῶς ποιῶ οὔτ' ἐγώ, εἴπερ ποιῶ τοῦτο, οὔτε σύ.
[Soc. "But still, tell me now whether you say that pleasant and good are the same, or if there is something among pleasant things which is not good."
Call. "So that my argument not be inconsistent, if I say they're different, I say they're the same."
Soc. "Callicles, you're destroying the first argument, and you will no longer be adequately searching with me if you speak contrary to what seems right to you."
Call. "Even you do that, Socrates."
Soc. "Then I don't act correctly, if I do it, and neither do you."]

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[23] McTighe (1992) 279 makes a similar point about Socrates' treatment of Polus, but he contrasts it with Socrates' treatment of Gorgias rather than of Callicles.
[24] *Gorg.* 479e8: *Ὀυκοῦν ἀποδέδεικται ὅτι ἀληθῆ ἐλέγετο;*
[25] With the possible exception of 494b-e.

As in the *Protagoras*, Socrates has by this point in the dialogue revealed that he is trying to persuade Callicles of his point of view. Two pages earlier he said to Callicles:

T36. *Gorg.* 493e4-7: *δηλοῖ μὴν ὃ ἐγὼ βούλομαί σοι ἐνδειξάμενος, ἐάν πως οἷός τε ὦ, πεῖσαι μεταθέσθαι, ἀντὶ τοῦ ἁπλήστως καὶ ἀκολάστως ἔχοντος βίου τὸν κοσμίως καὶ τοῖς ἀεὶ παροῦσιν ἱκανῶς καὶ ἐξαρκούντως ἔχοντα βίον ἑλέσθαι.*
["He certainly reveals what I hope to demonstrate to you, if I can somehow, to persuade you to change your mind, instead of the insatiable and undisciplined life to choose the one which is orderly, and is adequate and sufficient with whatever it happens to have."]

Also as in the *Protagoras*, we have to understand the sincerity requirement here as playing a role in Socrates' explicit goal of persuading Callicles.

There is a clear shift in Socrates' justification of the requirement from the previous passage (T34) to this one. There he implied that his claims about justice were in doubt by saying that he wanted to test them. Now, however, he seems to have lost all doubt about his views and his goal no longer appears to be to test them but rather to persuade Callicles of their truth.[26] We seem to witness a two-part process. In the first part, Socrates tests his views by using them to refute Callicles. At a certain point, Socrates thinks that Callicles has been refuted and that his own view have been tested and confirmed to a significant degree. Thus begins the second stage: persuading the interlocutor to change his mind on the subject in question.[27] Socrates' own views no longer need much testing because Socrates feels relatively confident that they are correct. This is not to say that Socrates would deny that his views could still be refuted. Rather, he feels confident that they will not be, and therefore testing his views now takes a back seat to persuading the interlocutor. Thus there is no contradiction with T34, where

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[26] Cf. 494a3-5: "Do I persuade you at all, when I say these things, that the orderly life is better than the unrestrained life, or don't I persuade you?"

[27] Thus this conversation, at least, seems to confirm the claim of Benson (1987) 71-72 that the Socratic elenchus is an example of what he calls the "dialectical method" of argumentation, in which "both soundness and persuasion are necessary for [. . .] success."

Socrates appears to claim that his views will only be completely tested when Callicles agrees with him. Nevertheless there is a change in the focus of what Socrates tries to do in the course of his discussion with Callicles. This change may come about because Socrates has seen, in the intervening conversation, that Callicles does not understand the issues as well as Socrates thought he did, and Socrates has therefore decided that Callicles is not really able to test him adequately. Also, now that Callicles has been drawn into affirming a position of unrestrained hedonism, the question has changed slightly from what they were discussing at first (the just and the unjust) to the subject of hedonism. Socrates may feel more confidence in his beliefs concerning this new subset of the old question, and he changes his approach accordingly. This interpretation is supported by Socrates' statement about the completely hedonistic life: *Ἀλλὰ μὲν δὴ καὶ ὧν γε σὺ λέγεις δεινὸς ὁ βίος* ("But certainly the life of the people you're talking about is also fearsome." 492e7)[28]: he feels confident enough in his opinion to pronounce this judgement without first examining the question.

One might, alternately, claim that Socrates only *seems* to change his reasoning for requiring sincere assent. Under this interpretation Socrates would have been speaking ironically when he claimed that he expected Callicles to be able to test him, and only now, when he openly admits his desire to persuade Callicles, is Socrates himself being sincere. For the reasons stated above, I disagree with an ironic interpretation of Socrates' claims about Callicles' fitness as a touchstone. I do not see how we can take those comments as ironic without concluding that all of Socrates' statements about testing himself and his views are false.

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[28] I adopt Dodds' reading of *ὧν* for the *ὥς* of the mss.; Dodds (1959) 299-300

Socrates' next invocation of the sincere response requirement with Callicles comes shortly after the following exchange, in which Callicles reveals that he has been violating the rule:

T37. *Gorg.* 499a7-b8: *ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ὁμοίως γίγνεται κακὸς καὶ ἀγαθὸς τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἢ καὶ μᾶλλον ἀγαθὸς ὁ κακός; οὐ ταῦτα συμβαίνει καὶ τὰ πρότερα ἐκεῖνα, ἐάν τις ταὐτὰ φῇ ἡδέα τε καὶ ἀγαθὰ εἶναι; οὐ ταῦτα ἀνάγκη, ὦ Καλλίκλεις;*
ΚΑΛ. Πάλαι τοί σου ἀκροῶμαι, ὦ Σώκρατες, καθομολογῶν, ἐνθυμούμενος ὅτι, κἂν παίζων τίς σοι ἐνδῷ ὁτιοῦν, τούτου ἄσμενος ἔχῃ ὥσπερ τὰ μειράκια. ὡς δὴ σὺ οἴει ἐμὲ ἢ καὶ ἄλλον ὁντινοῦν ἀνθρώπων οὐχ ἡγεῖσθαι τὰς μὲν βελτίους ἡδονάς, τὰς δὲ χείρους.
[Soc. "Then doesn't the bad man become bad and good similarly to the good man, or even more good? Don't these things happen, and those earlier things, if someone says that the same things are both pleasant and good? Aren't these things necessary, Callicles?"
Call. "I have been listening to you for a long time, Socrates, completely agreeing, thinking that even if someone playfully concedes anything to you, you gladly hold onto it just like boys. As if you really think that I or any other person do not believe that some pleasures are better and others worse."]

Callicles here blatantly contradicts his earlier claim, explicitly avowed there as his sincere belief, that all pleasant things are good (494e9-495c2). Socrates notices this, and upbraids Callicles for deceiving him, but continues the conversation anyway with the following exhortation:

T38. *Gorg.* 500b5-c4: *καὶ πρὸς Φιλίου, ὦ Καλλίκλεις, μήτε αὐτὸς οἷόν δεῖν πρὸς ἐμὲ παίζειν μηδ' ὅτι ἂν τύχῃς παρὰ τὰ δοκοῦντα ἀποκρίνου, μήτ' αὖ τὰ παρ' ἐμοῦ οὕτως ἀποδέχου ὡς παίζοντος· ὁρᾷς γὰρ ὅτι περὶ τούτου ἡμῖν εἰσιν οἱ λόγοι, οὗ τί ἂν μᾶλλον σπουδάσειέ τις καὶ σμικρὸν νοῦν ἔχων ἄνθρωπος, ἢ τοῦτο, ὁντινα χρὴ τρόπον ζῆν [. . .].*
["And in the name of Zeus of Friendship, Callicles, don't think that you should joke with me, nor that you should answer whatever comes to mind, contrary to what seems right, nor again should you understand what I'm saying in this way, as though I'm playing. For you see that our words are about this – and what would a man with even a little sense be more serious about than this? – in what way one should live."]

Socrates has seen that he cannot trust Callicles to be sincere, even when Callicles claims to be so.[29] This "joking" (*παίζειν*) of Callicles' reveals that he does not (or, at least, he does not any longer) take the conversation seriously. Within the broader context of his

[29] Alternatively, we can interpret Callicles' claim to have been joking as his attempt to save face now that he sees that his earlier position is untenable. But see my interpretation of this passage in chapter 4.

attempt to persuade Callicles, Socrates here invokes the sincere response requirement as an element of a serious conversation about critical matters. Getting sincere responses from Callicles would at least indicate that he thinks Socrates' questions are important.

Socrates invokes the sincerity requirement for the last time after Callicles refuses to participate in further discussion with Socrates. This time, however, he invokes it for himself. Following Callicles' suggestion, Socrates agrees to complete the conversation by answering his own questions, with the following plea to all three interlocutors:

T39. *Gorg.* 505e6-506a5: *δίειμι μὲν οὖν τῷ λόγῳ ἐγὼ ὡς ἄν μοι δοκῇ ἔχειν· ἐὰν δέ τῳ ὑμῶν μὴ τὰ ὄντα δοκῶ ὁμολογεῖν ἐμαυτῷ, χρὴ ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι καὶ ἐλέγχειν. οὐδὲ γάρ τοι ἔγωγε εἰδὼς λέγω ἃ λέγω, ἀλλὰ ζητῶ κοινῇ μεθ' ὑμῶν, ὥστε, ἄν τι φαίνηται λέγων ὁ ἀμφισβητῶν ἐμοί, ἐγὼ πρῶτος συγχωρήσομαι.*
["Then *I* will go through the argument, how it seems *to me* to be. But if I seem to any of you to be agreeing with myself about things that aren't so, then you need to interrupt and test me. Because I don't say the things I say as one knowing them, but I'm seeking in common with you, so that if there appears to be anything in what the one arguing against me says, I will be the first to agree."]

Socrates is demonstrating that he follows his own requirement and that he is still trying, despite his failure with Callicles, to carry on a semblance of his ideal conversation. He wants to be able to claim that those present must agree with his conclusions if they do not debate any of his premises, but the lack of a willing interlocutor has reduced him to such measures. Nevertheless, Socrates is still trying to persuade Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles of the truth of his views.

In the *Gorgias*, as in the *Protagoras*, persuasion is one of the main goals which Socrates professes in his invocation of the sincere response requirement. But in this dialogue he also claims that it will help him discover the truth of the matter under discussion. In addition, he hopes to be able to test both himself and the argument, and he

uses the sincerity requirement as a way of emphasizing the seriousness of the present questions.

The Goals of the Sincere Response Requirement

As we have seen, the Socratic elenchus has a variety of goals and purposes which Socrates seems to think can only be achieved through requiring sincere responses from his interlocutors.[30] It is convenient to summarize these goals under the following headings (the order is meant to imply no priority among the respective goals):

1. Testing/refuting the interlocutor: Socrates' divine mission. Commentators generally describe the sincere response requirement as the most important element of the *ad hominem* nature of Socrates' elenctic method of inquiry. They tend to stress the goal of testing the interlocutor, Socrates' way of carrying out the command of the god by showing people that they do not have knowledge.[31] As we might expect, Socrates does not in general tell his interlocutor that his aim is to prove that the interlocutor does not really know what he thinks he knows. In the *Apology*, however, he makes it clear that this was one of the main goals of his conversations (see esp. *Apol.* 23a-b), and despite

[30] Vlastos (1994) 8-11 isolates three purposes in requiring sincere responses. Benson (2000) 17, in evaluating the goals not just of the sincerity requirement but of Socrates' elenctic method in general, identifies eight of them.

[31] See *Apol.* 23a-b. Irwin (1977) 40 writes: "Though [Socrates] has no knowledge, he is better off than his interlocutor; the elenchos exposes conflicts in an interlocutor's beliefs till they desert him and leave him confused." Vlastos (1994) 10 calls this the "therapeutic" aspect of the elenchus. Cf. Teloh (1986) 11; Brickhouse and Smith (1994) 11-14; Robinson (1953) 15, 17. I combine here under one heading what Benson (2000) 17 identifies as two distinct aims: (1) "testing or examining the knowledge or wisdom of those reputed (by themselves or others) to be wise," and (2) "showing those who are not wise their ignorance."

Socrates' silence on the matter in most dialogues,[32] scholars agree that Socrates' actions reveal that the description of his activity in the *Apology* is at least partly accurate. And we have in fact seen reasons to believe that Socrates thinks he is testing Hippias, Crito, Thrasymachus, and Protagoras in his respective conversations with them.

We might include under this heading Socrates' attempts (as we saw in his conversation with Crito) to test whether his interlocutor lives according to his sincere beliefs, what some scholars call (following *Laches* 187e6-188a2) 'testing lives rather than arguments.' If an interlocutor holds inconsistent beliefs, especially concerning the moral issues which Socrates most often discusses, how can he know the best way to live?[33]

2. Testing himself. With Protagoras and Callicles, Socrates actually claims to be testing himself.[34] Given that he is not the one undergoing elenctic questioning and being forced to give sincere responses, it is tempting to suspect that he only says this in order to draw Protagoras and Callicles into conversation, or keep them there. However, if we relate this claim to Socrates' attempts to reach the truth (see below), we can see how discovering the truth about the matter at hand would either confirm or refute his beliefs, thereby testing Socrates himself and his way of life. As I noted above, this claim is

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[32] In fact, he tells Gorgias (*Gorg.* 453c) that he is *only* testing the argument and *not* Gorgias. In the *Prot.* Socrates is more open about his motives, claiming the argument as his main target but admitting that he and Protagoras may also get tested (*Prot.* 333c). See also my analyses of the conversations with Hippias, Crito, and Thrasymachus above.

[33] Brisson (2001) 213-214 draws attention to *Gorg.*475d-e, where Socrates compares himself, as questioner, to a doctor, and tells Polus to answer him as he would a doctor: "Si, en effet, le malade cache quelque chose à son médecin, c'est sur lui que retomberont les conséquences et non sur le médecin. Une mauvaise réponse peut fausser le diagnostic et donc susciter une cure inappropriée ou même néfaste, le mort étant la conséquence ultime de l'absence de sincérité." Sincerity is necessary if Socrates' program of moral reform is to succeed. Cf. the parallel Socrates draws between medicine and the political craft, especially at *Gorg.* 464b-e and 521d-522a.

[34] This is identified by Benson (2000) 17 as the fifth goal of the elenchus: "examining oneself."

linked to the following one by Socrates' claim to Callicles (T34) that persuading him will be Socrates' greatest test.

3. Persuading the interlocutor. We have seen that Socrates makes it clear that he is trying to persuade Crito, Protagoras, and Callicles of the truth of his own beliefs.[35] This goal, of course, is closely linked to the testing of the interlocutor because one of the most common ways that Socrates refutes someone is by showing him that he really agrees with the contrary of what he thought he believed, and this newly revealed belief often appears to be what Socrates himself believes. But Socrates only knows he has persuaded an interlocutor if that interlocutor responds sincerely throughout. We might compare this goal to Teloh's claim that the *ad hominem* elenchus takes the first step toward the Socratic education of the interlocutor, which leads him to correct beliefs (1986, 1).

4. Emphasizing the seriousness of the inquiry. Socrates sometimes justifies his invocation of the sincere response requirement by claiming that he and his interlocutors are investigating some of the most important questions that people can ask (see Crito and Callicles above).[36]

5. Ensuring the responsiveness of the interlocutor. Socrates always prefers to question the opinions of people who are present (see Meno and Hippias above). Only in

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[35] Thus I disagree with Blank (1993) 429-430, who claims to follow Aristotle in placing Socratic conversation in the category of peirastic dialectic, where "[w]hat the questioner does or does not know or believe is totally irrelevant to the process." It is clear in the dialogues I mentioned that Socrates' beliefs do matter. Aristotle does not specifically place Socratic conversation under any of his four headings (*Soph. Elench.* 165a37-b12); and when he does mention Socrates (in the passage cited by Blank (1993) 429 n. 5, *Soph. Elench.* 183a37-b8), it is not clear that Aristotle is claiming that Socrates practiced peirastic dialectic.

[36] As Vlastos (1994) 9 puts it, Socrates wants "to test one's seriousness in the pursuit of truth. [. . .] [I]f one puts oneself on record as saying what one believes, one has given one's opinion the weight of one's life." This may be roughly equivalent to what Benson (2000) 17 describes as "exhorting others to philosophy."

this way can he be sure that he will get responses that reflect the sincere beliefs of the person whose views are being questioned.[37]

6. Stressing the importance of the individual. Socrates tells both Crito and Protagoras that he cares more about their opinions than about the opinions of the many. The important difference seems to be that he can subject an individual to the elenchus, but not a large group of people all at once.

In addition to these six purposes and goals of the sincere response requirement, the existence of the seventh one that I have isolated by examining the individual passages where the requirement is invoked is debated by scholars:

7. Testing the* logos */ Discovering the truth about a question. In some passages, Socrates states or implies that conclusions which are reached through the sincere agreement of two interlocutors have a higher claim to truth than other kinds of statements. So at the end of his argument with Gorgias he says:

T40. *Gorg.* 460e8-461a7: *(. . .) ὀλίγον ὕστερον ἔλεγες ὅτι ὁ ῥήτωρ τῇ ῥητορικῇ κἂν ἀδίκως χρῷτο (. . .). ὕστερον δὲ ἡμῶν ἐπισκοπουμένων ὁρᾷς δὴ καὶ αὐτὸς ὅτι πάλιν αὖ ὁμολογεῖται τὸν ῥητορικὸν ἀδύνατον εἶναι ἀδίκως χρῆσθαι τῇ ῥητορικῇ καὶ ἐθέλειν ἀδικεῖν.*
["A little later you were saying that **[a]** the rhetor might even use rhetoric unjustly [. . .]. But later on, after we looked into the matter, you see for yourself that it is agreed on the contrary that **[b]** the rhetorical man is powerless to use rhetoric unjustly and to wish to do injustice."]

Socrates is careful to point out the differences in claims (a) and (b), using the contrast of 'a little later'/ 'later on' and 'you were saying'/ 'it is agreed', with the strong adversative *πάλιν αὖ* in between,[38] to emphasize that (b) has a higher claim to truth than (a).

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[37] Coventry (1990) 174-184, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance in Socratic dialectic of Socrates' responsiveness *to* the interlocutor.

[38] Dodds (1959) 221 writes about *πάλιν αὖ*, "this combination is regularly employed by Plato to emphasize a contradiction (*Prot.* 318e1, *Rep.* 507b6, etc.)."

The following passages from later in the *Gorgias* reveal more clearly the motivation of the claim to be seeking the truth:

T41. *Gorg.* 479e8: *Οὐκοῦν ἀποδέδεικται ὅτι ἀληθῆ ἐλέγετο;*
["Hasn't it been proven that true things were spoken?"]

T42. *Gorg.* 487e6-7: *τῷ ὄντι οὖν ἡ ἐμὴ καὶ ἡ σὴ ὁμολογία τέλος ἤδη ἕξει τῆς ἀληθείας.*
["Indeed, then, my agreement and yours will really possess our goal of the truth."[39]]

T43. *Gorg.* 489a4-6: *μὴ φθόνει μοι ἀποκρίνασθαι τοῦτο, Καλλίκλεις, ἵν', ἐάν μοι ὁμολογήσῃς, βεβαιώσωμαι ἤδη παρὰ σοῦ, ἅτε ἱκανοῦ ἀνδρὸς διαγνῶναι ὡμολογηκότος.*
["Don't refuse to answer this question for me, Callicles, so that, if you agree with me, I might now be confirmed by you, since a man capable of making distinctions [or 'decisions'] will have agreed with me."]

T44. *Gorg.* 508e6-509a4: *ταῦτα ἡμῖν ἄνω ἐκεῖ τοῖς πρόσθεν λόγοις οὕτω φανέντα, ὡς ἐγὼ λέγω, κατέχεται καὶ δέδεται, καὶ εἰ ἀγροικότερόν τι εἰπεῖν ἔστιν, σιδηροῖς καὶ ἀδαμαντίνοις λόγοις, ὡς γοῦν ἂν δόξειεν οὑτωσί, οὓς σὺ εἰ μὴ λύσεις ἢ σοῦ τις νεανικώτερος, οὐχ οἷόν τε ἄλλως λέγοντα ἢ ὡς ἐγὼ νῦν λέγω καλῶς λέγειν·*
["Those things before, which appeared this way to us earlier in the discussion, as I say, are held firm and bound – even if it is somewhat rude to say so – by iron and adamantine arguments; at least as it would appear so far. And if you or someone more energetic than you doesn't untie them, nobody who speaks other than I am now speaking can be speaking correctly."]

Vlastos (1994, 21), focusing especially on T41, discovers, in Socrates' attempt to find the truth by means of requiring sincere assent, what he calls " 'the problem of the elenchus': how is it that Socrates claims to have proved a thesis false when, in point of logic, all he has proved is that the thesis is inconsistent with the conjunction of agreed-upon premises for which no reason has been given in that argument?" In terms of the goals I listed above, why does Socrates claim to have achieved the truth when he appears only to have achieved the refutation of his interlocutor? Vlastos's formulation of the 'problem of the elenchus,' and his solution to it, cannot concern us here.[40] Let it suffice for us to say that

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[39] See Dodds' note on *τέλος* ad loc.; Dodds (1959) 283.
[40] His treatment of the elenchus is almost universally cited, but his conclusions are opposed by some scholars in details and by others more broadly. Hugh Benson has probably been the most consistent and vehement critic of Vlastos's position. For a sustained critique of and response to Vlastos's interpretation, see Benson (2000) ch. 3-4, 32-95, where he argues both "that if the 'problem of the Socratic elenchos'

Socrates at least sometimes claims that the sincere response requirement is one of the conditions that must be fulfilled in order for Socrates to be able to declare that his conclusions are true.[41]

Conclusion

As we can see, Socrates' reasons for invoking the sincere assent requirement are various. They also relate closely to some abiding Socratic and Platonic beliefs. Testing his interlocutors reveals Socrates' piety and his desire to carry out the god's commands. His wish to test himself seems to align with his story in the *Apology* (20d-23b) about investigating the claim of the oracle at Delphi that nobody was wiser than Socrates. His emphasis on the seriousness of his inquiry reveals his devotion to ethical questions and, along with his emphasis on the responsiveness of individual interlocutors, it helps lead him toward the goal of self-knowledge. His desire sometimes to persuade his interlocutors demonstrates Socrates' claim in the *Apology* to possess a kind of human wisdom: he has strong beliefs about what is right and wrong concerning certain questions, and he wants other people to live in what he believes is the correct manner. And his avowed attempts to discover the truth reveal that, though Socrates believed that

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arises in the early dialogues, then it cannot be solved," and that in fact "the problem does not arise" (56). But though he argues that individual Socratic arguments only "establish an inconsistency among his interlocutor's beliefs" (56), Benson nevertheless agrees that "[p]erhaps the ultimate aim of the Socratic method is the attainment of moral knowledge" (23). See also Polansky (1985) ; Scott (2002); and the thorough list of discussions cited by Benson (1989) 591, n.1.

[41] Nehamas (1998) 212-213, n. 18 objects to Vlastos's findings with the claim that stylistic evidence for dating the *Gorgias* later than most of the early dialogues suggests that the claims Socrates makes here concerning truth and knowledge are new, and should not be read back into other early dialogues as a constant Socratic position.

he (and everyone he talked to) did not yet know the truth concerning the questions he discussed, such knowledge was a goal of his philosophical discussion.[42]

In the fourth chapter I will discuss what happens in those parts of his conversations where Socrates' interlocutor violates the sincere response requirement and does not say what he really believes. Do any or all of the goals discovered in this chapter continue to be met despite the failure to abide by this rule? And are there other goals, so far unmentioned, which Plato introduces in these sections and which are better met by ignoring sincerity? First, however, it will be useful to look at some of the assumptions under which Socrates works in his conversations, and see what hints they can give us concerning Plato's treatment of interlocutors' sincerity and insincerity.

[42] Though see the warning in the previous note.

Chapter III: What Does Socrates Get From the Sincere Response Requirement? The Question of Belief

In the first two chapters I examined the nature and the role of the sincere response requirement in Plato's early dialogues, especially trying to discover the goals which Socrates hopes to achieve in those dialogues through his enforcement of the requirement. I chose the early dialogues because that is where sincerity, and the Socratic elenchus in general, plays its largest role. A broad change is noticeable in the nature of Socrates' conversations, from the elenctic and aporetic nature of the early dialogues to the didactic and discursive nature of the late ones [insert refs.]. In this chapter I would like to focus on the *Gorgias*, which is often considered a transitional dialogue, and examine how Plato there begins to cast into doubt aspects of Socrates' views and method which are closely related to his use of the sincere response requirement. I believe that my analysis supports the view of the *Gorgias* as a transitional dialogue, and I believe that Plato's use there of the sincerity requirement reveals some of the reasons for his shift away from both Socratic psychology and Socratic methodology.

Views of belief

In the *Gorgias*, Socrates makes the following surprising claim to Polus:

T45. *Gorg.* 474b2-8: *ΣΩ. ἐγὼ γὰρ δὴ οἶμαι καὶ ἐμὲ καὶ σὲ καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους τὸ ἀδικεῖν τοῦ ἀδικεῖσθαι κάκιον ἡγεῖσθαι καὶ τὸ μὴ διδόναι δίκην τοῦ διδόναι.*
ΠΩΛ. Ἐγὼ δέ γε οὔτ' ἐμὲ οὔτ' ἄλλον ἀνθρώπων οὐδένα. ἐπεὶ σὺ δέξαι' ἂν μᾶλλον ἀδικεῖσθαι ἢ ἀδικεῖν;
ΣΩ. Καὶ σύ γ' ἄν καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι πάντες.

[Soc. "For I think that you and I and other people believe that acting unjustly is worse than suffering injustice and that not paying the penalty is worse than paying it."
Pol. "And *I* think that neither I nor any other person thinks so. Would *you* rather accept suffering injustice than acting unjustly?"
Soc. "You would too, and so would everyone else."]

Socrates claims that Polus believes a proposition whose exact contrary Polus himself claims to believe. How are we to understand Socrates' claim?[1]

Following Vlastos (1994, 22-23), we might distinguish between "overt" and "covert" beliefs.[2] Overt beliefs are those which we consciously hold. For example, Polus overtly believes that suffering injustice is worse than committing injustice. Covert beliefs are those which are entailed by other beliefs (which may themselves be overt or covert), and would not be immediately avowed by the individual. So we could rephrase Socrates' claim above as: "I believe that you and I and everyone else either overtly or covertly believe that acting unjustly is worse than suffering injustice."[3]

Beversluis (2000, 53-55) rejects Vlastos's account, and claims that the concept of covert belief is inconsistent with Socratic epistemology. He also offers a thorough analysis of how belief should be understood (46-48).[4] However, he offers no alternative explanation of the passage in question. What does Socrates mean when he claims that Polus believes that suffering injustice is better that committing it? Does Socrates make any distinction between overt and covert beliefs?

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[1] Brickhouse and Smith (1994) 73-85 discuss this and related passages and their significance in Socratic psychology.
[2] Bailly (1999) 70 discusses the problem with similar language.
[3] If Vlastos is correct, it is not clear whether Socrates means to claim that he and Polus believe the proposition in the same way, or if he fails to distinguish the two kinds of belief merely for the sake of his argument.
[4] I am indebted to the work of Beversluis for bringing the importance of the question of belief to my attention, and for creating some of the framework within which I try to answer it; Beversluis (2000) esp. 46-57.

Before answering these questions, we need to complicate the picture with a related problem. In the course of his arguments, Socrates often gets his interlocutors to assent to propositions which they have, in all likelihood, never before entertained. So in the conversation with Polus, Socrates gets Polus to agree that "whenever one of two shameful things is more shameful, it will be more shameful by being greater either in pain or in badness" (*ὅταν δὲ δὴ δυοῖν αἰσχροῖν τὸ ἕτερον αἴσχιον ᾖ, ἤτοι λύπῃ ἢ κακῷ ὑπερβάλλον αἴσχιον ἔσται*, 475a8-b2). Though Polus has probably never entertained this proposition before, he thinks it is correct when he hears it, and so he assents. However, it is unlikely that Polus is as strongly attached to this belief as he is to his belief (previously stated) that committing injustice is better than suffering it. It is probable that he has made some important life decisions based on the latter belief, and equally improbable that he will begin to make decisions based on the former belief.[5] We might call the former, a belief which has not previously been consciously entertained, and which has not had the benefit of the test of experience, a *weak* belief. A *strong* belief, on the other hand, is in general consciously held and based on experience or indoctrination rather than being the result of other beliefs taken to their apparently logical conclusions.

There is another way in which a belief can be weak. This is if the interlocutor provisionally or reluctantly assents to a proposition. So when Socrates draws the conclusion that doing injustice is greater in badness than suffering injustice, Polus

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[5] Most of Socrates' interlocutors seem unlikely to change their ways of life despite being refuted by Socrates. Polemarchus in *Republic* I is a notable exception (cf. *Rep.* 335). As Beversluis (2000) 48 explains, "If you are reasonably to ascribe a belief that *p* to me, there must be some discernible connection between my belief that *p* and my past, present, and future behavior." And cf. Alcibiades' description of how his inability to refute Socrates' arguments fails to prevent him from ignoring those arguments as soon as he is away from Socrates (*Symp.* 215d-216d). Of course, Socrates did have a group of devotees, but we rarely see him refuting them, and it is not clear that they were not already disposed to agree with his ethical views and way of life.

answers, "Apparently" (ἔοικεν, 475c7). This is not wholehearted agreement. And when Socrates further concludes that Polus himself would rather suffer injustice than commit it, Polus answers, "So it seems" (φαίνεται, 475e5). It is hard to believe that having these 'beliefs' revealed to him is going to induce Polus to change his manner of living, which until now has presumably been based to some extent on the belief that doing injustice is better than suffering it. We might say that Polus appears to *weakly believe* that committing injustice is worse than suffering it, but that he *strongly believes* that suffering injustice is in fact worse.[6]

I have distinguished here between what I am calling weak and strong beliefs. Weak beliefs might be further characterized as not tending to guide the actions of the one holding them. One might assert these beliefs when one is pressed by a questioner, but one would not stake one's life on them. Strong beliefs, in contrast, do guide one's life. We might say that they make up one's world view. Cohen makes a distinction which is in some ways similar to mine[7]. What I call 'weak belief' is similar to what he simply calls 'belief.'[8] To contrast with belief, he uses the term 'acceptance' in a way roughly equivalent to my term 'strong belief.'[9] Most importantly, Cohen claims that one can believe that *p* without using that belief as a guide to action; only a proposition which one

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[6] As Daniel Devereux points out to me, for practical purposes we might equally say that Polus has no firm belief one way or the other, but that he is inclined to believe that suffering injustice is worse. As we will see, it is all the same to Socrates, who does not admit that Polus can have conflicting beliefs.

[7] Cohen (1992). Our accounts differ in some important ways.

[8] Cohen (1992a) 4: "First then, and very briefly, belief that *p* is a disposition, when one is attending to issues raised, or items referred to, by the proposition that *p*, normally to feel it true that *p* and false that *not-p*, whether or not one is willing to act, speak, or reason accordingly."

[9] Cohen (1992a) 4: "[T]o accept the proposition or rule of inference that *p* is to treat it as a given that *p*. More precisely, to accept that *p* is to have or adopt a policy of deeming, positing, or postulating that *p* – i.e. of including that proposition or rule among one's premisses for deciding what to do or think in a particular context, whether or not one feels it to be true that *p*." On this last point Cohen's 'acceptance' differs from my own 'strong belief.'

accepts can guide one's actions. Whichever terms we use, the Socratic dialogues are littered with examples of both weak and strong beliefs.[10] However, we must ask whether Socrates distinguishes between weak and strong, or between overt and covert beliefs, or between belief and acceptance.

Socrates' attitude toward belief is important because it determines the kinds of conclusions he thinks he can make based on somebody's sincere responses. As we have seen, Socrates assumes, and often requires, that his interlocutor say what he really believes. However, he nowhere makes a distinction between weak and strong beliefs.[11] Therefore he runs the risk (if we consider it a risk) of confounding different sorts of conclusions which might have significant differences with respect to his interlocutor's belief system. If I am correct to distinguish between different sorts of belief, and if I am correct that Socrates did not make such a distinction, that would be good grounds for questioning some of Socrates' conclusions.[12]

But there is a further, and arguably more important question: does *Plato* distinguish between weak and strong beliefs? It is now widely accepted that we cannot *assume* that there is no authorial distance between Plato and Socrates, nor that Socrates is

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[10] I have purposely left my definitions vague. My goal is not precisely to define grades of belief, but merely to show that such grades exist.

[11] See Benson (1987) 84, n. 16. And Penner (1996) 202 seems to acknowledge a lack of evidence that Socrates ever distinguishes between what Penner calls "cases of belief which are cases of weak conviction," on the one hand, and "stubborn beliefs, or fanatical beliefs," on the other hand.

[12] Beversluis (2000) 53 draws a similar conclusion when he claims that the only propositions that an interlocutor can be said to believe are the ones which "are expressive of antecedently formulated and sincerely held beliefs which he brought with him into the discussion and would have affirmed (or been disposed to affirm) before it." I disagree with limiting belief so strictly, at least as Socrates seems to use the concept, and I think it is fruitful to expand the concept's domain while demarcating, under one name, various degrees of belief. Furthermore his account of belief does not seem to allow for the genuine persuasion of an interlocutor, such as Socrates seems to achieve with Polemarchus in the *Republic*.

merely a mouthpiece for Plato's philosophical claims.[13] And in fact, as I hope to show in the next section, there are strong reasons to believe that Plato does in fact distance himself from Socrates on the question of belief, and that he calls into question some Socratic assumptions about the import of the sincere response requirement.[14]

The argument with Gorgias: a case study

In his conversation with Gorgias, Socrates gets Gorgias to assent at each step of the following argument (I only include the most significant premises):

(1) Gorgias would teach his students to know the just and unjust things when they learn to be rhetors (*Gorgias* 460a);

(2) the man who learns just things is just (460b);

(3) the just man does just things (460b);

(4) the just man will never want to commit an injustice (460c);

therefore,

(5) the rhetor never wants to do injustice (460c).

Socrates says that (5) contradicts what Gorgias had said earlier, when he claimed that it was not his responsibility if one of his students acted unjustly (457b-c). Gorgias now

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[13] See, e.g., Blondell (2002) ch. 1; Frede (1992b) ; Cooper (1997) xviii-xxv; Kahn (1996) 36-38, 57-58, 64-70; Clay (2000) 89-90; Bowen (1988) 59-63. Even those who argue that what Socrates says usually or always reflects Plato's positions tend nowadays to argue for such a view rather than assume it. See, e.g., Irwin (1995) 4-11; Kraut (1992) 25-30.

[14] On belief in the *Gorgias* see also Woolf (2000) 24-25, 28, who claims that "it is evidently the view of Socrates himself in the *Gorgias* that a commitment to contradictory beliefs *is* possible" (25), citing 482b6, where Socrates claims that Callicles might disagree with himself for his entire life. However he adds, significantly, that "the reason why Socrates thinks that such a position is possible is that he takes on board in this section of the *Gorgias* a complex psychology which recognizes that the positions we hold are not necessarily governed by adherence to logical rules" (25). He later adds: "With Polus, [. . .] it was taken for granted that one accepted a conclusion which was entailed by premises one assented to. In the section with Callicles this is no longer so" (28). Thus Woolf agrees with the position I argue for in Chapter IV (contra Cooper), that Socrates begins to adopt a new psychology in his conversation with Callicles.

agrees, on the contrary, that one who has learned rhetoric from Gorgias never wants to do injustice. What does Gorgias really believe?

Polus soon interrupts Socrates (461b) and claims that Gorgias was shamed into agreeing to (1), and that Gorgias does not really agree with that premise. We cannot say for certain whether he is correct, because Gorgias never tells us. Polus, with the benefit of hindsight, knows what Socrates is driving at when he asks whether the rhetor teaches just and unjust things. But Gorgias does not know this when he claims to teach exactly that in (1). As we find out, for Socrates, the question of whether someone teaches the just and unjust things has major implications. In his mind an affirmative response implies that such a person makes other people just. Gorgias certainly would not agree to this claim all at once, because he has just said that he does not make people just when he teaches them the rhetorical craft (457b-c). But though he agrees to a proposition which we have strong reason to think he does not believe (i.e., (5), above), it does not necessarily follow that he answers insincerely. He may understand the proposition differently from the way Socrates means it. As Irwin (1979, 125-126) points out, "Gorgias' intended concession [. . .] may be reasonable" in at least two related ways:

a. by 'knowing just and unjust things' Gorgias may mean 'recognizing' them, rather than understanding them in some 'deeper' sense;

b. "Gorgias does not promise to 'teach virtue' in the sense of making people virtuous. [...] He only promises to tell his pupils the sorts of things that are just and unjust."

Leaving aside Polus's claim of ashamed insincerity, I will work on the assumption that Gorgias does reply sincerely throughout his conversation with Socrates.[15] However, I would like to explore what 'sincerely' means here, and what its implications are for Socrates' claims at the end of the argument.

As their conversation gets underway, Gorgias starts out by answering Socrates' questions with essentially straightforward 'yes' and 'no' answers. He gives responses such as "no" (*οὔ*, 449e3), "certainly not" (*οὐ δῆτα*, 449e4), "yes" (*ναί*, 449e5), "necessarily" (*ἀνάγκη*, 450a2), "very much so" (*μάλιστα*, 450a4), and "certainly" (*πάνυ γε*, 450a6), all answers that indicate firm agreement or disagreement and reveal no hesitation. The first time he gives assent which seems uncertain is to the following proposition:

T46. *Gorg.* 450b1-3: *ΣΩ. ἑκάστη αὐτῶν περὶ λόγους ἐστὶν τούτους, οἳ τυγχάνουσιν ὄντες περὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα οὗ ἑκάστη ἐστὶν ἡ τέχνη.*
ΓΟΡ. φαίνεται.
[Soc. "Each craft is concerned with those words which have to do with the subject matter over which each craft is set."
Gor. "It appears so."[16]]

Socrates seems to recognize the hesitation on Gorgias's part, because he immediately asks him an open-ended question (i.e., not expecting a 'yes' or 'no' response) which gives Gorgias an opportunity to explain himself:

T47. *Gorg.* 450b3-c2: *ΣΩ. Τί οὖν δή ποτε τὰς ἄλλας τέχνας οὐ ῥητορικὰς καλεῖς, οὔσας περὶ λόγους, εἴπερ ταύτην ῥητορικὴν καλεῖς, ἣ ἂν ᾖ περὶ λόγους;*
ΓΟΡ. Ὅτι, ὦ Σώκρατες, τῶν μὲν ἄλλων τεχνῶν περὶ χειρουργίας τε καὶ τοιαύτας πράξεις ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν πᾶσά ἐστιν ἡ ἐπιστήμη, τῆς δὲ ῥητορικῆς οὐδέν ἐστιν τοιοῦτον χειρούργημα, ἀλλὰ

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[15] Kahn (1983) 79-83 thinks that Gorgias is ashamed, and responds insincerely here. Cooper (1999) 46-49, however, argues that shame plays no role in Gorgias's responses. I cannot find enough evidence in the text to make a confident judgement.

[16] For support of my translation of *φαίνεται* here as "it appears so," (rather than "it is evident or apparent") cf. Thrasymachus's almost identical responses in *Rep.* 342, where, after he replies *ὕυτως φαίνεται* (342b8) and *φαίνεται ὕυτως* (342c7) in the same stretch of conversation, Socrates reports that, in response to the culminating question, "he agreed then, but only very reluctantly" (342c10). Thrasymachus's responses of *φαίνεται* are indications of an increasing resistance to Socrates' line of reasoning, rather than agreements that Socrates is clearly correct.

πᾶσα ἡ πρᾶξις καὶ ἡ κύρωσις διὰ λόγων ἐστίν. διὰ ταῦτ' ἐγὼ τὴν ῥητορικὴν τέχνην ἀξιῶ εἶναι περὶ λόγους, ὀρθῶς λέγων, ὡς ἐγώ φημι.
[Soc. "Then why don't you call the other crafts rhetorical, when they are about speech, since you call rhetorical any craft concerned with speech?"
Gor. "Because, Socrates, practically all the knowledge of the other crafts is about manual working and suchlike activities, but there is not such manual work in rhetoric; all its activity and its achievement is through speech. That is why I claim that the rhetorical craft is about speech, and claim it rightly, as I maintain."]

It is important to Socrates' argument that Gorgias agree with him here. How does Socrates formulate the argument which has led to this conclusion?

Weaving is concerned with the working (*ἐργασία*) of clothing; music is concerned with the production (*ποίησιν*) of melodies (449c9-d3); therefore, by analogy,

(1) rhetoric is about words / speech (*περὶ λόγους*, 449e1).

Then Socrates gets Gorgias to agree that rhetoric is not concerned with speech about diseases or the good condition of bodies, because there are other crafts concerned with those. This is stated as:

(2) Each craft is concerned with the speech which is concerned with the subject matter over which that craft is set (450b3).

We might think that Gorgias should not agree to this proposition, and that he should give an answer of the following sort: "Socrates, rhetoric is about words and speeches in general. It lays down certain guidelines for composing various types of speeches which could be concerned with any topic whatever. The medical craft does make people powerful at *understanding* the sick, as you suggest (450a2), but not at speaking about them.[17] A doctor will only be very good at speaking about the sick insofar as he has

[17] Even if we take the ability to teach one's skill to others as a hallmark of possessing a *techne* (cf. 449d1), this must be considered a secondary rather than primary characteristic. A doctor will be judged, first, on his skill at curing and caring for the sick; without that ability, he may be judged a good teacher of medicine, but not a good doctor. Socrates himself will soon define the doctor as the one who knows medical things – not as the one who can speak about them (460b3).

some rhetorical skill."[18] Gorgias's actual response of "so it appears" reveals that he is uneasy with Socrates' formulation, but he fails to show that it is incorrect.

Gorgias almost says what I suggest (T47): most crafts are only slightly concerned with words, and achieve most of their effect through manual work, just as the doctor achieves most of his effect through treatment and surgery. But Gorgias fails to put in the theoretical formulation which could stop Socrates' line of reasoning, claiming instead that rhetoric is special because it works only by means of speech. Socrates gets around this reformulation by naming other crafts which work only by means of speech, and then asks Gorgias, "The speech used by rhetoric is concerned with what thing?" (451d5) As I said above, Gorgias could have avoided this question altogether by saying 'no' at exactly the place where he first hesitates in his responses and instead answers "so it appears" (T46).

Gorgias answers Socrates' most recent question (i.e., "the speech used by rhetoric is concerned with what thing?" 451d5) by claiming that

(3) rhetoric is concerned with persuasion in court, and in crowds, and concerning just and unjust things (454b).

This is one of the premises with which Socrates eventually shows Gorgias to hold inconsistent beliefs. If Gorgias had not agreed to (2), he would not have proposed (3), having already insisted that rhetoric is a more general craft than that described in (3). It is only because Socrates rejects Gorgias's first answer (i.e., that rhetoric is about speech, 449e1) that Gorgias formulates (3) at all. It is important to notice that Gorgias himself proposes (3), rather than merely assenting to a question of Socrates', and he seems to

[18] Beversluis (2000) 296 makes a similar point.

agree with it wholeheartedly. In addition, (3) seems to be generally true insofar as, in fifth-century Athens, the rhetor mostly worked in front of crowds (in the assembly and in court) and often discussed which actions would be right and appropriate in various situations.[19]

Nevertheless, Gorgias gives us reason to believe that (3) is not a definition of rhetoric's essential qualities (as he understands them), because he later offers examples which do not fit the definition. In his speech concerning the power of rhetoric (456a-457c), Gorgias claims that rhetors succeed in persuading people what to do when there is a question concerning dockyards, city walls, and harbors (455d-456a). These are not matters of the just and the unjust, but rather of commerce and defense.[20] Similarly, even in court most of the rhetor's persuasion would not be concerning the just and the unjust, but rather about, e.g., what actually happened on the night of the crime.[21] Later Gorgias says that the rhetor is powerful at speaking against anyone "concerning whatever he wants" (457b1). Here he is not limiting the subject-matter of the rhetor's speeches in the way in which Socrates previously insisted (449d-451d). In addition, his claim of having persuaded the sick man to submit to treatment (456b) demonstrates that Gorgias does not

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[19] I would like to thank Daniel Devereux for emphasizing this point.

[20] Or, at least on the face of it they are questions of commerce and defense; anyone making the non-intuitive claim that they are really matters of the just and unjust bears the burden of proof, and unless Gorgias makes this latter claim we should not assume that it is what he means.

[21] Thus I disagree with Cooper (1999) 35, who claims, concerning (3): "Taken by itself and without worrying yet about further consequences, this is a perfectly reasonable admission for Gorgias to make, and not something we should feel that Plato has tendentiously made him say: if the orator is to persuade people about the justice or injustice of particular actions under review in a law court, he must surely be well informed in *some* special way about what counts as just and unjust, so as to draw on that knowledge in constructing his case." In general, the law says what is just and unjust. The jury only says whether the law has been broken, and by whom. In addition, Gorgias later makes a comment that reveals that he does not consider justice to be one of the items which he teaches when he teaches rhetoric: "I think that if someone did not happen to know them, he would learn those things from me as well." As I discuss below, Gorgias here reveals his belief that most people already know about the just and the unjust; he would only have to teach such things to the prospective rhetor *if* he did not already know them.

think that rhetoric is only effective in crowds, and it provides another example of the rhetor concerned with a matter outside of the question of the just and the unjust.[22] We can conclude that, though Gorgias states with apparent sincerity that rhetoric is the power of persuasion among crowds concerning just and unjust things, there are good reasons for thinking that this is not a full and accurate statement of his belief about the nature of rhetoric.

We find further evidence that (3) does not fully represent Gorgias's beliefs when we notice that Socrates' manner of questioning Gorgias suggests that he is pushing Gorgias to give a particular answer, and that Socrates is using unfair methods. The first example of such methods appears when Gorgias claims that rhetoric achieves everything by means of speech (450b-c). Socrates proceeds to claim that arithmetic, calculation, geometry, and checkers also achieve everything through speech (450d), and that if someone asked him what the arithmetical craft was, he would first answer that "it is one of those having power by means of speech" (451b). Only upon being questioned further, "Of those concerned with what?" (451b) would he answer, "concerning the odd and the even, and how many each happens to be" (451b).

I find Socrates' claims here to be incredible. I cannot believe that Socrates' first and natural response to the question "What is the arithmetical craft?" (*τίς ἔστιν ἡ ἀριθμετικὴ τέχνη;* 451b1) would be that it is one of those having their power through words. The implausibility of his claim becomes evident when we look at how Socrates

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[22] Gorgias is here claiming the ability of the rhetor to persuade on any subject at all, *pace* Cooper (1999) 35, who writes that "he is claiming a knowledge of good and bad – not any knowledge of health and medicine – that will enable him to get the patient to agree that it is best for him to submit." The only knowledge Gorgias claims here is knowledge of how to persuade people, in crowds or individually. It is the doctor who has decided which treatment is good. Gorgias is merely his instrument of persuasion. Cf. Beversluis (2000) 304-305.

demands that other people answer questions similar to the one he is here answering hypothetically. When Polus answers the question of which craft Gorgias practices by saying that it is the finest craft (448c), Socrates complains, "Nobody asked what sort of thing (*ποία τις*) Gorgias's craft was, but what thing (*τίς*)?" (448e6-7) Socrates seems to be complaining about the vagueness of Polus's answer.[23] Therefore, when Socrates provides a model of how to answer his question, it is reasonable to expect him to give a better answer than what Polus or Gorgias have given. But in fact he gives the same kind of answer as he claimed Gorgias had given (i.e., the sort which he previously rejected), which is why I believe that Socrates' answer is not fully sincere. If we take the questions about rhetoric and arithmetic to be requests for definitions, as they appear to be, then we would expect the desired answers to provide some kind of essential property of rhetoric and arithmetic, rather than what we might call (without aiming for philosophical rigor) accidental or incidental properties: what property (or properties) does rhetoric have which, if it lost it, it would no longer be rhetoric? Socrates' demand of Polus can be read in this way (448e). But his hypothetical first response about arithmetic does not answer such a question. Arithmetic was perhaps generally practiced in Athens orally, but it certainly could have been performed without words. It is Socrates' second answer which defines arithmetic: "it is one of those concerning the odd and the even, however many each of those happens to be" (451b3-4). There is no arithmetic without the odd and the even. And in fact Socrates tacitly acknowledges the insufficiency of his first answer

[23] As Irwin (1979) 112 notes, "Socrates contrasts saying what something is like, mentioning some feature of it, with defining it, saying what it is;" cf. the rest of his note *ad loc.* Socrates is similarly dissatisfied with Gorgias's answer when Gorgias merely claims that rhetoric is about speech (449e1). And cf. *Meno* 71b4, where Socrates makes the same complaint to Meno, and in a context where the search for a definition is more explicit.

when he has his hypothetical interlocutor ask the second question, presumably because the first answer was not enough.

On the other hand, Gorgias's original answer to the question about rhetoric is definitional. Rhetoric is "about speech" (*περὶ λόγους*, 449e1); without speech, there is no rhetoric. Speech is not only its medium (as with arithmetic), but also its subject matter. Socrates should be mostly satisfied with this answer, but he is not.[24] In fact, he implies that it is the wrong kind of answer, that it is not definitional, by misunderstanding Gorgias's definition and getting Gorgias to go along with his misunderstanding. I would claim that this misunderstanding is deliberate, and motivated by Socrates' desire for a specific answer from Gorgias, a particular answer which Socrates already has in mind and without which he will not be satisfied. We see Socrates leading Gorgias to this answer with his comments such as "I think you're saying this" and "I think you mean that" (cf. 450d1, e1-2, e8-9), "I can certainly guess what I think you mean" (453b8), and, when Gorgias finally gives the hoped-for answer (i.e., that rhetoric is persuasion in front of crowds, and about the just and unjust, 454b5-7), "I certainly guessed that you meant this persuasion and the one about these matters" (454b8-9). Though he claims the innocuous motive of trying to bring Gorgias's beliefs to their logical conclusions (cf. 454c), Socrates reveals by his method of questioning that he coerced Gorgias into giving

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[24] It might be objected that rhetoric is in fact essentially concerned with *persuasive* speech. I would make two points against such an objection: (1) the opening scene of the dialogue shows Gorgias just finishing a display speech (*ὀλίγον πρότερον ἐπεδείξατο*, 447a6), which was evidently meant more to please the audience than to persuade it. This is evidence that our interlocutors did not consider persuasion essential to rhetoric; (2) even when Gorgias agrees that rhetoric is concerned with persuasive speech, Socrates is *still* not satisfied, and questions Gorgias until the latter limits rhetoric to a stricter domain than the one in which he actually practices his occupation. I might add as a more general note that Gorgias was most famous and most influential because of his style, the ways in which he actually put words and phrases together, rather than for the persuasiveness of his speeches.

this last answer (454b5-7).[25] He encouraged certain kinds of answers, and he did not stop a line of questioning until he heard what he wanted to hear.

I should emphasize at this point that, despite my characterization of Socrates' methods as unfair, that does not mean that Gorgias does not sincerely believe every statement which he makes to Socrates. In fact, Socrates' methods here are quite effective at testing the interlocutor in a certain sense: the onlookers and the readers see that Gorgias is ineffective at defending some of the beliefs which he held coming in to the conversation, and that he is unable to perceive ahead of time where Socrates' line of reasoning is headed.[26] But Socrates is leading Gorgias away from his first, intuitive answers, and trying to guide his reasoning in a particular direction.[27]

Socrates' occasional insincerity in questioning is further demonstrated when he asks Gorgias about the rhetor's ability to persuade in front of a crowd. Socrates makes the following claim:

T47a. *Gorg.* 455b2-c2: *ὅταν περὶ ἰατρῶν αἱρέσεως ἢ τῇ πόλει σύλλογος ἢ περὶ ναυπηγῶν ἢ περὶ ἄλλου τινὸς δημιουργικοῦ ἔθνους, ἄλλο τι ἢ τότε ὁ ῥητορικὸς οὐ συμβουλεύσει; δῆλον γὰρ ὅτι ἐν ἑκάστῃ αἱρέσει τὸν τεχνικώτατον δεῖ αἱρεῖσθαι. οὐδ' ὅταν τειχῶν περὶ οἰκοδομήσεως ἢ λιμένων κατασκευῆς ἢ νεωρίων, ἀλλ' οἱ ἀρχιτέκτονες· οὐδ' αὖ ὅταν στρατηγῶν αἱρέσεως πέρι ἢ τάξεώς τινος πρὸς πολεμίους ἢ χωρίων καταλήψεως συμβουλὴ ᾖ, ἀλλ' οἱ στρατηγικοὶ τότε συμβουλεύσουσιν, οἱ ῥητορικοὶ δὲ οὔ·*
["Whenever the city has an assembly about a choice of doctors or shipbuilders, or about any other sort of craftsman, isn't it the case that the rhetor will not advise in that situation? For it is clear

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[25] *Pace* Irwin (1986) 57, who claims (concerning the *Crito*), "the interlocutor is not coerced, but simply required to abide by his agreements." I call Socrates' tactics coercive because he draws Gorgias along a particular line of reasoning (which Gorgias would not follow without Socrates' specific guidance) to a predetermined conclusion at which, evidence shows, Gorgias would not willingly arrive without Socrates' questions. Cf. also my discussion, in Chapter II, of *Prot.* 331b-332a (T26 and T27), where Socrates tries to coerce Protagoras in a similar manner.

[26] It is notable that Gorgias's best defense of his view of rhetoric comes in his long speech describing its power (456a-457c). Part of Plato's point seems to be to show that the great rhetorician is a poor dialectician.

[27] It might be argued that Socrates does in fact get Gorgias to provide a more accurate and informative account of rhetoric than he first gave. But as I am trying to show, such increased specificity only comes at the expense of excluding aspects of rhetoric that we have good reason to believe Gorgias would include in practice.

that in each selection you have to choose the most skilled.[28] And he won't advise when there's an assembly about the building of city walls or the provisioning of harbors or dockyards, but builders will. Nor when counsel is taken concerning the selection of generals or the stationing of troops against the enemy or the seizure of positions, but the experts in generalship will advise then, not those in rhetoric."]

The first thing that Gorgias does when Socrates is done speaking is contradict these claims by saying that Themistocles and Pericles, not craftsmen, advised the Athenians on the aforementioned projects, and that rhetors prevail whenever such questions arise (455d8-456a3). Socrates immediately agrees with Gorgias, saying that he himself heard Pericles advising about the middle wall, and adding that it is this power of the rhetor that has so long (*πάλαι*) amazed him (455e4-6, 456a4-6). He thereby contradicts his own earlier claim that such advice was not given by rhetors.[29] In the absence of any indication that Gorgias's brief comments persuade Socrates to change his mind, we must conclude that either Socrates was being insincere when he first described the situation, or he is being insincere now when he not only agrees with Gorgias's contradictory formulation, but adds that it is exactly that power of rhetoric (whose existence he had just effectively denied) that has been driving him to question Gorgias. Why the insincerity in Socrates' method?

We should note, first, that Socrates is not naively asking questions in an attempt to learn from Gorgias what rhetoric is. As we soon find out from his discussion with Polus, Socrates has pre-formed views about rhetoric, namely that it is a knack for a kind of flattery, rather than a craft (462b-466a).[30] We might expect, then, to find Socrates, in

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[28] See Dodds' note *ad loc.*

[29] As Beversluis (2000) 298 observes, "Socrates' response is surprising."

[30] In fact, Socrates dishonestly loads the dice right at the beginning of the conversation, when he asks Gorgias which craft (*τίνος τέχνης*, 449a3-4) he has knowledge of. Socrates knows (or at least strongly suspects) that Gorgias will answer "rhetoric." But he does not think that rhetoric is a craft at all. If he wanted to be straightforward, Socrates would ask Gorgias what he has Chaerophon ask him at the outset:

his conversation with Gorgias, trying to show Gorgias that Socrates' view of rhetoric is the correct one: i.e., that rhetoric is not a craft.[31] One possible way to do this would be to show that, though the rhetor claims to be the expert in advising on the just and the unjust, the city only listens to experts when making decisions, and there is in fact no specific question on which the rhetor could be called an expert. To put it another way, every question before the assembly which could arguably be said to be concerned with justice and injustice is about a decision that must be made about a concrete situation. For example, though the question of whether to build the middle wall could also be phrased as, "Is it just to build the middle wall?", in his description of such a situation (455b-c), Socrates claims that the city would consult a wall-builder concerning such a matter, rather than a rhetor. He does the same with questions of generalship. We can see how Socrates could easily expand this list to include every civic matter which would come before the assembly – each one has its own expert.[32] In this way Socrates could show that the rhetor is the expert in no civic matter, and that the city does not listen to him in

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Who he is (447d1). When Gorgias answered that he was a rhetor, Socrates could then ask what rhetoric is. If Gorgias said it was a *techne*, Socrates could proceed to argue that it is no *techne* at all. As it is, however, because they go through the entire dialogue on the assumption that rhetoric is a *techne* (rather than examining that question at the beginning), Socrates imports into the discussion all of his assumptions about what features a *techne* has, and he refutes Gorgias partly on the basis of these (debatable) features. On the Socratic conception of *techne*, cf. Brickhouse and Smith (1994) 5-7.

[31] One might argue that Socrates is first trying to discover Gorgias's conception before he decides whether to refute it. But, presumably, the purpose of such discovery would be either to learn from Gorgias or to refute him. As we see in the conversation with Polus, Socrates already thinks that rhetoric is not a craft (at least as Gorgias practices it). So why does he not disagree with Gorgias as soon as it becomes clear that Gorgias does think that rhetoric is a craft?

[32] It is interesting that Socrates clearly does not follow such a line in the *Protagoras*, where he distinguishes between technical questions (e.g., the building of ships and buildings, 319b), in which Athenians only listen to experts, and questions of running the city (*τι περὶ τῶν τῆς πόλεως διοικήσεως*, 319c8-d1), where anyone can speak his mind. If he did make such a distinction in the *Gorgias*, it appears that Gorgias would correct him and claim that in fact the city listens to the rhetor in every matter.

any matter.[33] However, Gorgias stops this line of reasoning by getting Socrates to admit (essentially) that he misrepresented the situation: in fact the city listens to the rhetor in all such matters, rather than to the appropriate craftsman.[34]

Gorgias goes on to claim that the teacher of rhetoric should not be held responsible if his student acts unjustly (457a-c). Socrates notices this claim, and proceeds to argue for its opposite, namely that, because he knows the just and the unjust, the rhetor would never commit injustice (459c-461a; see my further discussion of this argument below). It is clear, however, that Socrates does not believe that the rhetor would never commit injustice, because he soon says that rhetoric is "shameful" and "bad" (*ἀισχρὸν*; *κακὰ*; 463d4).[35] Why, then, does he get Gorgias to assent to such a claim? His goal, I believe, is to generate this contradiction in order to get Gorgias to go back and re-examine his claims about rhetoric. Socrates' point is what he has been implying all along – that rhetoric is not the craft of the just and the unjust, but rather a knack for persuading the ignorant about such matters. Assent on this point would clear Gorgias of contradiction, and be in accord with Socrates' real beliefs about rhetoric. Unfortunately, Polus interrupts the conversation before we can see where Socrates would have led it, but the evidence points in this direction.

I have spent so much space discussing Socrates' methods in his conversation with Gorgias because I believe that my analysis of those methods lends strong support to my claim that Socrates is not eliciting Gorgias's complete beliefs about rhetoric when

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[33] Socrates soon makes a similar point, when he argues that rhetors are not expert in any craft, but only know how to persuade ignorant crowds (459a-c).
[34] A conclusion which seems to contradict the *Protagoras* in significant ways; see n. 32 above.
[35] And when the final conclusion with Gorgias is reached, Polus immediately asks Socrates, "Do you really believe that rhetoric is just like you are now saying?" (461b3-4)

Gorgias offers definition (3) above (454b) as a description of it. Socrates drives him to this answer, partly by disallowing Gorgias's earlier answer and partly by guiding the line of reasoning by his use of particular questions.

Socrates seems tacitly to acknowledge that his methods may be viewed as not eliciting Gorgias's actual beliefs, because in an effort to find out what Gorgias really believes he asks him specifically "whether the rhetor is the same way about the just and the unjust, the fine and the shameful, and the good and the bad as about the healthy and the other things which the other crafts are about," (459d1-3); and the corollary: if a student comes to Gorgias not knowing those things just mentioned, "will you, the teacher of rhetoric, teach none of these things to the one who comes to you – for it's not your job – but among the many you will make him seem to know such things when he doesn't, and seem to be good when he's not?" (459e3-6) We should note again that Socrates seems sincerely to be trying to find out what Gorgias believes. At the same time, though, he phrases the question as an unattractive disjunction that limits the possible answers to fewer than Gorgias could conceivably offer:

Either (i) a student of rhetoric *must* know or learn the just and unjust, fine and shameful, good and bad,

or (ii) he *must* learn to seem to know them though he does not know them, and to seem to be good though he is not good.[36]

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[36] As Irwin (1979) and Dodds (1959) both note *ad loc.*, the second part of this statement already assumes the Socratic belief that to know what is good is to be good. Socrates does this stealthily, by having Gorgias reject the inverse of the claim. By denying the linked proposition that the rhetor will *seem* to know the good and *seem* to be good, Gorgias implies that the rhetor will *really* know the good and *really* be good. This is a non-intuitive claim, and it is unfair of Socrates to assume its truth without first arguing for it and gaining Gorgias's explicit assent. And as Kahn (1983) 83 notes, "an affirmation of [(ii)], although sincere, even true, and logically compatible with the plea of non-responsibility, would be socially and politically disastrous for Gorgias."

What we might think is the best answer, and what Polus apparently thinks Gorgias should have answered, could be phrased as follows:

(iii) It is helpful for the student of rhetoric to be familiar with society's standards of the just and unjust, fine and shameful, good and bad, but he does not need to *be* just, fine, and good in order to be an effective rhetor.

And Gorgias might add, "But most people in Athenian society learn such things as they grow up, and in fact I don't see how one could function in our society without knowing such things, especially someone with the resources and ambition to become a rhetor. *But I suppose if someone came who didn't already know such things, I would teach them that too.*" And in fact the last sentence is almost exactly what Gorgias does answer.

It is again important to notice that, though Socrates has phrased his question unfairly,[37] he once more asks Gorgias, in order to make sure he understands him correctly:

T48. *Gorg.* 460a5-b1: *ΣΩ. Ἔχε δή· καλῶς γὰρ λέγεις. ἐάνπερ ῥητορικὸν σύ τινα ποιήσῃς, ἀνάγκη αὐτὸν εἰδέναι τὰ δίκαια καὶ τὰ ἄδικα ἤτοι πρότερόν γε ἢ ὕστερον μαθόντα παρὰ σοῦ. ΓΟΡ. Πάνυ γε.*
[Soc. "Okay, hold it, for you're speaking well. If you ever make anyone a rhetor, he must know the just and the unjust things, either previously, or else later, learning them from you."
Gor. "Certainly."]

Here Gorgias gives strong assent to a very strongly worded statement of the position. The reason Socrates wants to get the statement worded so clearly is that we have earlier evidence that Gorgias does not really believe what he is about to agree to.

This evidence comes in Gorgias's speech explaining the power of rhetoric (456a-457c). There he says that rhetoric should be used "just like every other kind of

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[37] See previous note.

competition" (456c8): if students use their training for unjust purposes, we should not blame their teachers:

T49. *Gorg.* 456e2-4; 457b5-c1*: ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γὰρ παρέδοσαν ἐπὶ τῷ δικαίως χρῆσθαι τούτοις πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους καὶ τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας, ἀμυνομένους, μὴ ὑπάρχοντας· [. . .] ἐὰν δὲ οἶμαι ῥητορικὸς γενόμενός τις κᾆτα ταύτῃ τῇ δυνάμει καὶ τῇ τέχνῃ ἀδικῇ, οὐ τὸν διδάξαντα δεῖ μισεῖν τε καὶ ἐκβάλλειν ἐκ τῶν πόλεων. ἐκεῖνος μὲν γὰρ ἐπὶ δικαίᾳ χρείᾳ παρέδωκεν, ὁ δ' ἐναντίως χρῆται.*[38]

["for they handed down these crafts for people to use them justly, against enemies and those who commit injustice, for people who are defending themselves, not for those who begin aggressions. [. . .] But I think if someone becomes a rhetor and commits an injustice with this ability and skill, we shouldn't hate his teacher and throw *him* out of the city. For he handed on the knowledge for a just use, but that man is using it in the opposite way."]

Gorgias is here expressing what we might consider to be his strongly-held view that it is not the responsibility of the teacher of rhetoric to make his students just. And it is precisely this claim, as Socrates points out (460e-461a), that Gorgias later contradicts when he agrees that he might teach his students just things, and that knowing just things makes one a just person. But let us look more closely at the later argument where Gorgias contradicts himself.

Gorgias agrees without hesitation that the one who knows matters pertaining to carpentry (*τὰ τεκτονικά*, 460b1) is a carpenter, the one who knows musical things (*τὰ μουσικά*, 460b2) is a musician, and the one who knows medical things (*τὰ ἰατρικά*, 460b3) is a doctor; when asked these questions by Socrates, he responds with unqualified assent (*πάνυ γε* and *ναί*, 460b1-3). When Socrates then asks him whether "according to this argument, therefore, the one knowing just things is also just" (460b6-7), Gorgias answers, "Definitely, I suppose" (460b7), which seems to be an odd expression of qualified enthusiasm, if such a thing is possible. As Socrates begins to draw the conclusions that

[38] I have adopted Dodds' reading of *δικαίᾳ* for *δικαίου* in 457c1; see his note *ad loc.*

follow from this admission, Gorgias shows hesitant assent twice more, to the following questions:

T50. *Gorg.* 460c1-2: *ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ἀνάγκη τὸν ῥητορικὸν δίκαιον εἶναι, τὸν δὲ δίκαιον βούλεσθαι δίκαια πράττειν;*
ΓΟΡ. Φαίνεταί γε.
[Soc. "Then isn't it necessary for the rhetor to be just, and for the just man to want to do just things?
Gor. "It appears so."]

T51. *Gorg.* 460c5-6: *ΣΩ. Οὐδέποτε ἄρα βουλήσεται ὁ ῥητορικὸς ἀδικεῖν.*
ΓΟΡ. Οὐ φαίνεταί γε.
[Soc. "Then the rhetor will never want to do injustice."
Gor. "It appears not."]

We can contrast Gorgias's lack of certainty in his answers to these questions (along with the *οἶμαι* of 460a3 and the *φαίνεται* of 450b3) with the confidence with which he gives his own description of the power of rhetoric – the very description that he is now contradicting. We should observe of course that Gorgias may be emphasizing the tentativeness of his assent here at the end of the argument because he sees that he is contradicting what he said earlier; it may not at all imply that he has any reservations about the logical validity of the conclusions based on what has been agreed. On the other hand, Gorgias may have real reservations about the conclusions Socrates is drawing here. He may have a growing sense of unease as he realizes the implications of his admission that knowing just things makes one a just person. In addition, he may consider himself to be a just man, but may know from experience that sometimes even he wants to do unjust things; but he overcomes that desire and performs the just deed instead. Similarly, he probably knows of many rhetors who not only want to do injustice, but often do it in

fact.[39] These would both be good reasons for him to hesitate to assent to Socrates' claims here. Nevertheless he does assent; as it turns out he never explains why he hesitates, and Socrates never asks..

As we can see from the way he draws his conclusion, Socrates reveals no concern for possible differences in the various degrees of assent with which Gorgias answers his questions. To put it into my earlier terminology, it makes no difference to Socrates whether Gorgias expresses weak or strong assent: all assent is equal for the sake of his argument. Plato, however, does not appear to accept this attitude uncritically, and gives many indications that Socrates is not eliciting Gorgias's full and sincere beliefs. In a long speech, Gorgias makes statements which are later contradicted by the argument which Socrates leads him through. In addition, we see Socrates using tactics which give the impression that he is trying to guide Gorgias to a specific conclusion, rather than just determine what Gorgias really believes. Then Plato has Gorgias give qualified (rather than unqualified) assent to some of the most damaging (and most debatable) premises of the argument, and to its conclusion. This seems to be a way of drawing our attention to exactly those premises where the greatest doubt lies (e.g., (1) anyone learning rhetoric from Gorgias will learn the just and unjust things (460a3); and (2) anyone who knows just things is just (460b7-c2)). This attention is emphasized by Polus's comment (and Callicles' later reiteration of it) about Gorgias being shamed into his answer. Aside from having Socrates himself say so, it is hard to imagine how Plato could draw Socrates' conclusions into question more clearly. First, the interlocutor only reluctantly assents to some of the premises and to the conclusions. Second, both of the other people present

[39] Indeed, Gorgias implies that even his students may sometimes be found guilty of injustice, when he makes the caveat in T49, above.

claim that he was not answering sincerely. Third, Socrates himself agrees that Gorgias is not sincere enough (487b).[40] And finally, despite the objections of the others, the argument never gets revisited to test whether it can withstand these objections. Taken individually, none of these features would necessarily be very significant. But when we bring them all together, we can see that Plato is giving the reader clear indications that he should not be satisfied with this argument.[41]

There are two separate aspects of the argument which need to be distinguished here. First there is the actual propositional content of the argument, which concludes with the proposition that the rhetor never wants to do injustice. Second there is the form of the argument, and the assumptions which underlie Socrates' conduct of it. It is these latter with which I am concerned here (though, as we will see, the two aspects are related in important ways).

As I have said, Plato gives rather clear indications that he is dissatisfied with Socrates' argument with Gorgias, that there are steps in the argument which are open to question. One aspect of the argument which might trouble him is Socrates' implication (which he later voices clearly and strongly with Polus) that he has shown that Gorgias

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[40] As I noted above (n. 15), Cooper (1999) 46-49 argues that Gorgias is not shamed into answering insincerely, and that Socrates does not later agree that Gorgias was in fact ashamed, but that this was merely Polus's diagnosis. See also Irwin (1986) 71 n. 30. But for my argument all that matters is that there exist an expressed doubt about whether Gorgias was answering sincerely. The question is never answered decisively, but Polus's indictment of shame and Socrates' later mention of the charge (and simultaneous failure to deny it) can only tend to induce doubt in the reader.

[41] Cooper (1999) 50, focusing more on philosophical rather than dramatic aspects of Socrates' conversation with Polus, comes to a similar conclusion: "we are led back to the defects that we already saw clearly signaled by the way Plato constructs Socrates' exposition of [the] argument and by the adverse comparisons between it and other arguments in other dialogues for similar conclusions. And that reinforces what we have already found credible, that the outcome, for the reader, of Socrates' discussion with Gorgias is not at all a recommendation to focus on Socrates' arguments in order to discover their truth, but instead a recommendation to question deeply their presuppositions. The author is encouraging us to discover for ourselves, if we can, a better account of the moral knowledge that Socrates seems to work with, and a better account of how such knowledge necessarily motivates fine actions than Socrates seems to envision."

believes exactly the opposite of what Gorgias has earlier expressed as his belief; *viz.*, concerning the question of whether the teacher of rhetoric is responsible for making his students just. I have argued that Socrates feels entitled to draw such a conclusion because of his failure to distinguish between at least two different types of belief. However, for Socrates and Plato, there is a greater problem for Socrates' views of belief than their arguable inability fully to describe the apparent psychological complexity of Gorgias's belief system. This is the difficulties that these views of belief present for other aspects of Socratic psychology.

The denial of *akrasia* and the critique of the *Gorgias*

In the *Meno*, Socrates argues that we never desire (ἐπιθυμεῖν) what we believe (οἴεσθαι) to be bad for us (*Meno* 77b-78b). In the *Protagoras* he goes further and claims that we always do what we think (οἴεσθαι) is best for us (*Prot.* 358b-d). This is his famous denial of *akrasia*, or weakness of will.[42] The point seems to be that at any

[42] We should not confuse this position with the strong statement of Socratic intellectualism that knowledge is sufficient for virtue. On *akrasia* see Penner (1992) 128-129, who calls it "the intellectualist theory of desire. According to this theory, all desires to do something are rational desires, in that they always automatically adjust to the agent's beliefs about what is the best means to their ultimate end. [. . .] In fact, on this view the *only* way to influence my conduct is to change my opinion as to what is best." Devereux (1995) 388-389 argues to the contrary that in fact Socrates does admit the existence of non-rational desired. But it seems to me that, though Socrates in a way admits that a person can be overcome by pleasure, he only makes this admission in the midst of an argument where he maintains that pleasure is the good. In other words, he claims here that all desire for pleasure *is* rational desire. Though the appearances of such desires may mislead us, that does not make them irrational. I also disagree with Carone (2001) 143, who claims that "Socrates is not denying in the *Protagoras* that an individual can follow what only appears to be good through ἔρως or any other emotion, but rather that this is compatible with the presence of knowledge. Nor does he seem to be denying that emotions could rule a person [. . .]." Socrates' entire point is that the majority is wrong to claim that people do what they know is wrong on account of emotions (352b). As he explains, the experience they are describing is not "being overcome by pleasure" (ἡδονῆς ἡττᾶσθαι, 357c7), but rather "ignorance" (ἀμαθία, 357d1), and that those who err with regard to pleasures and pains err on account of a lack of knowledge or of measurement (357d3-7). He quite deliberately leaves emotions out of

moment we will choose the course of action that seems best for us overall. However, without knowledge, we sometimes choose incorrectly; i.e., we do what we believe is best, though in fact it is not. Socrates seems to envision a situation something like the following: Helen identifies two distinct pleasures, good health and candy bars. Her view toward health may be relatively constant; i.e., she always sees it as providing a constant level of pleasure. Her view of candy bars, however, varies. When the candy bar is far away, and she is not hungry, the ill effects it will have on her health in the future lead her to believe that eating a candy bar will cause an overall loss of pleasure. But when she is hungry, and the candy bar is near, she believes that the immediate pleasure of eating the candy bar outweighs any ill effects it may have on her health. The way Socrates explains purported cases of *akrasia* is by claiming that they result from ignorance (*Prot.* 357c-e). When we perform an action which does not lead to the maximum overall pleasure, it is because we measured the pleasure incorrectly. If we had knowledge, we would always know which action would lead to maximum pleasure. Without knowledge we are misled by the proximity and distance of various pleasures and pains. Knowledge is firm and infallible; belief (Socrates implies), by contrast, is susceptible to misleading appearances. But he never says that we can hold two contradictory beliefs at the same time; i.e., Helen

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his account, because he believes they play no role in decision-making. I should emphasize (*pace* Devereux (1995) 388-389) Socrates' denial that pleasure ever overcomes us, though people often speak that way. Pleasure never 'overcomes' us, because that implies that there could be a conflict between pleasure and right action. But in fact Socrates' denial of *akrasia* here relies on hedonism (*Prot.* 353c-356c; see Irwin (1995) 83-84): everything we do is for the sake of pleasure. When we err, it is not from being overcome by pleasure, but rather from mismeasuring our greatest overall pleasure. By the same token, it does not really make sense to speak of knowledge 'overcoming' pleasure; such an expression implies a conflict where none exists. Thus when Socrates claim that knowledge "rules over pleasure" (*κρατεῖν [. . .] ἡδονῆς*, 357c3), he does not mean that there is a conflict between knowledge and pleasure, but merely that knowledge never errs with regard to pleasure. Cf. Brickhouse and Smith (1994) 91-97; Vlastos (1991) 99-101.

does not simultaneously believe that the candy bar is good to eat and bad to eat. And at any moment, we do what we believe is best.[43]

But in the conversation with Gorgias, Plato shows us a man who seems to believe two contradictory statements at the same time: that the rhetor can act unjustly, and that he cannot act unjustly. More relevantly, later in the same dialogue we see Polus believing that those who commit injustice are happier if they do not pay for their crimes (473b); but by the end of their conversation, Socrates seems to think that he has shown that Polus really believes (*ἡγεῖσθαι*) the opposite claim, i.e., that those who commit injustice are happier if they do pay for their crimes (479c-480b). Plato makes it rather clear that Polus does not think he believes Socrates' claims (cf. 480e1-2), even though it has been elenctically proven to him, and though he disputes no point of logic in Socrates' arguments. According to Socrates, then, to the same extent that Polus always formerly acted on the belief that it is better not to get punished for acting unjustly, he will from this time forward always act on the belief that it is better to pay for one's injustices, because that is what he sincerely agrees is best.[44] Yet when reading the *Gorgias* it is difficult to agree with Socrates, and all indications lead us to believe that Polus will continue to act as he has in the past.[45]

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[43] Cf. Devereux (1995) 393; Penner (1996) 199-207.

[44] At the beginning of the *Protagoras* we find more support for the claim that someone cannot help but act in accordance with even newly-acquired beliefs. Before going to talk to Protagoras, Socrates explains to his young friend Hippocrates why they need to examine Protagoras before Hippocrates goes to the famous sophist as his student. When you buy food, Socrates explains, you can take it home and get an expert's advice on whether to eat it; "but it's not possible to take learning (*μαθήματα*) away in a separate vessel. Rather you have to pay the fee and take the learning (*τὸ μάθημα*) in the soul itself, and once you've learned, you go away, whether you've been harmed or helped" (314b1-4). The assumption behind Socrates' warning seems to be that doctrines accepted by the soul guide that soul's actions until they are replaced by other doctrines. That is, you are harmed by bad teachings because they induce conduct harmful to your life.

[45] Thus I believe I disagree with Woolf (2000) 23 n. 34, who claims that "Polus (unlike Callicles) is ultimately willing to be bound by the canons of reason." In conversation, Polus is willing to be bound; but

This situation reveals two problems. One is that Socrates' conception of belief is insufficiently complex accurately to describe human psychology. Polus claims that he believes **A**, but Socrates claims that be believes **not-A**; in a sense, they are both right. We might say that he strongly believes **A** and weakly believes **not-A**. One can imagine a situation in which Polus would simultaneously believe a particular action to be best for him and not to be best for him.[46] Socrates offers no explanation of what would happen in such a situation. He seems to think that elenctically-instilled beliefs permanently displace any other previously-held beliefs which contradict them.[47] As we have seen, though, the *Gorgias* gives us reason to believe that he is wrong. Plato seems to recognize this shortcoming in Socrates' psychology, first by indicating that Socrates does not accurately elicit Gorgias' beliefs about rhetoric, and then more explicitly with the debate between Polus and Socrates concerning what Polus really believes.

Socrates' apparent failure to change Polus's behavior also indicates a problem with his method. The essentially logical format of the elenchus seems to rely on Socratic psychology: Socrates assumes that if he rationally proves a proposition to someone, that person will henceforth always form the beliefs which will guide his actions in accordance with that proposition.[48] But once it is admitted that the person can simultaneously hold a

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in action such willingness may be of no avail. Woolf (22-24) sees Polus as a success for Socrates, but I see him as a failure.

[46] Woolf (2000) 2-6 makes a similar argument concerning Callicles: that Plato is consciously depicting a person who can hold contradictory beliefs simultaneously.

[47] In fact, in the conversation with Polus, Socrates tells Polus that Polus would prefer to suffer injustice rather than commit it (*δέξαι' ἂν μᾶλλον ἀδικεῖσθαι ἢ ἀδικεῖν*, 474b6-8), despite Polus's denials.

[48] This point will bear some emphasis. It goes along with Socrates' belief that by eliciting sincere responses he is testing lives. When he asks what people believe about various questions, he discovers the beliefs that have guided their actions thus far in their lives. Therefore if Socrates can get his interlocutor to disavow that previously guiding belief and sincerely accept another in its place, then, as long as the respondent is really answering sincerely, Socrates believes that the person will act in accord with this new belief.

contrary belief, the elenchus loses its power rationally to compel interlocutors to act in a certain way.[49] Plato seems to realize this failure too, because there is no indication that Polus (though he has been logically refuted) will act in accord with what Socrates has proven to him.

Conclusion

I believe that by foregrounding these problems in the first two conversations of the *Gorgias*, Plato is hinting at a crisis for the sincere response requirement as well as for the elenchus of which it forms an essential part. Evidence indicates that both Gorgias and Polus respond sincerely throughout their conversations with Socrates.[50] Nevertheless, this sincerity does not achieve the persuasion which seems to be such an important goal for Socrates. Seeing Plato draw attention to the ineffectiveness of the sincere response requirement gives us reason to believe that he might discard the requirement in the latter part of the dialogue. As we will see in the next chapter, this is exactly what happens in Socrates' conversation with Callicles.

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[49] As Woolf (2000) 28 puts it, "there may be more [. . .] involved in belief than the elenchus is equipped to deal with. Other psychological factors are in play."

[50] That is, if we discount the claims that they answer from shame, as Cooper (1999) 46-49 argues we ought to do; see n. 15 above.

Chapter IV: The Abandonment of Sincerity in the *Gorgias* and *Republic*

I argued in Chapter III that Plato uses the first two conversations of the *Gorgias* partly to cast into doubt certain interconnected aspects of the psychology and methodology of the early dialogues. In this chapter I will argue that in Socrates' conversation with Callicles Plato begins to offer solutions to those problems of psychology and methodology, and that one of the solutions is to drop strict adherence to the sincere response requirement. We can find some of the reasons for this change in the dialogue itself. But it will also be helpful to look at the *Republic*, first because the conversation with Thrasymachus in Book 1 (especially when contrasted with the rest of the work) reemphasizes many of the points of the conversation with Callicles in the *Gorgias*, but also because the *Republic* offers a thorough formulation of new philosophical views – views which cause Plato to abandon some of the most characteristically Socratic elements of the methodology of the early dialogues. This analysis will in general support a developmentalist account that considers the *Gorgias* to be transitional to Plato's middle period as it is most fully represented by the *Republic*.[1]

The conversation with Callicles

Callicles is perhaps Socrates' least tractable interlocutor of all those found in Plato's dialogues, of any period.[2] He never admits to being refuted by Socrates, and he

[1] By "middle period" I mean the dialogues in Vlastos's Group II: *Cratylus*, *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, *Republic* 2-10, *Phaedrus*, *Parmenides*, and *Theaetetus*; Vlastos (1991) 47, *pace* Kahn (1996) 46-47, who puts *Cratylus*, *Phaedo*, and *Symposium* into the early period.

[2] With the possible exception of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, but in different ways.

repeatedly mocks Socrates' efforts at a philosophical conversation.[3] Moreover, he is one of only three interlocutors with whom the sincere response requirement is broken.[4] There is debate, however, over when Callicles begins to be insincere, so it will be useful to discuss the question in some detail.

The conversation between Callicles and Socrates begins as a discussion of justice, with Callicles claiming that justice by law (*νόμῳ*, 483c7) is the rule of the weaker, and a shameful thing, while justice according to nature (*κατὰ φύσιν*, 483c2) is for "the stronger to rule the weaker and have more" (*τὸν κρείττω τοῦ ἥττονος ἄρχειν καὶ πλέον ἔχειν*, 483d5-6); as he puts it, "this is the fine and the just" (484a1-2). After Socrates briefly questions Callicles about what it means to be stronger, he asks whether such a man would be temperate (*σώφρονα ὄντα*, 491d11-12). This question inspires Callicles to disparage temperance and praise hedonism vigorously: he claims that one ought to allow one's appetites to grow as large as possible (491e5-492c8). The subsequent discussion of hedonism forms the bulk of Socrates' elenctic encounter with Callicles.

In an apparent attempt to see how far Callicles is willing to go in his hedonism, Socrates asks him whether he means being able to satisfy large hungers and thirsts (494b7-c1). Callicles agrees, and adds that he also means "all the other appetites" (*καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἐπιθυμίας*, 494c2). Socrates then asks whether Callicles would include scratching among the appetites (or pleasures), and whether the person who gets to itch and scratch all his life would be happy (494c6-8). This question triggers the following exchange:

T52. *Gorg.* 494d1-8: *ΚΑΛ. Ὡς ἄτοπος εἶ, ὦ Σώκρατες, καὶ ἀτεχνῶς δημηγόρος.*

[3] See Beversluis (2000) 339; Dodds (1959) 14; Kahn (1996) 136; Cooper (1999) 51-52.
[4] The other two are Thrasymachus and Protagoras.

ΣΩ. Τοιγάρτοι, ὦ Καλλίκλεις, Πῶλον μὲν καὶ Γοργίαν καὶ ἐξέπληξα καὶ αἰσχύνεσθαι ἐποίησα, σὺ δὲ οὐ μὴ ἐκπλαγῇς οὐδὲ μὴ αἰσχυνθῇς· ἀνδρεῖος γὰρ εἶ. ἀλλ' ἀποκρίνου μόνον.
ΚΑΛ. Φημὶ τοίνυν καὶ τὸν κνώμενον ἡδέως ἂν βιῶναι.
ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν εἴπερ ἡδέως, καὶ εὐδαιμόνως;
ΚΑΛ. Πάνυ γε.
[Call: How extraordinary you are, Socrates, and a regular mob-orator![5]
Soc: Yes, Callicles, and I therefore astounded Polus and Gorgias and made them feel ashamed. But you wouldn't be astounded or ashamed, because you're brave. But just answer me.
Call: Then I say that even the scratcher would live pleasantly.
Soc: Then if he lived pleasantly he would also live happily?
Call: Absolutely.

Not satisfied with this concession, Socrates goes even further to ask if Callicles would dare to say that even the life of the passive homosexual (*ὁ τῶν κιναίδων βίος*, 494e4) is happy as long as it is full of pleasure.[6] Callicles responds with disgust, asking, "Aren't you ashamed, Socrates, to lead the conversation to such matters?"[7]

Callicles' reactions to Socrates' questions about the scratcher and the *kinaidos* reveal already at this point that he considers such pleasures to be base.[8] They differ from hunger and thirst in some way not specified at the moment.[9] Socrates notices Callicles' distress at such questions, and they have the following revealing discussion:

T53. *Gorg.* 495a2-c2: *ΣΩ. ἀλλ' ἔτι καὶ νῦν λέγε πότερον φῂς εἶναι τὸ αὐτὸ ἡδὺ καὶ ἀγαθόν, ἢ εἶναί τι τῶν ἡδέων ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγαθόν;*
ΚΑΛ. Ἵνα δή μοι μὴ ἀνομολογούμενος ᾖ ὁ λόγος, ἐὰν ἕτερον φήσω εἶναι, τὸ αὐτό φημι εἶναι.

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[5] See Dodds *ad loc.*

[6] As Kahn (1996) 136 notes about being a *κίναιδος*, "Attic law apparently treats this as equivalent to male prostitution, and sufficient to deprive the guilty party of his citizenship rights. The politically ambitious Callicles, who admires the manly virtues, cannot seriously describe the life of the *kinaidos* as fortunate or happy (*eudaimōn*), as Socrates challenges him to do; he can only call shame on Socrates (*ouk aischron?*) for bringing the argument to this point!"

[7] *Οὐκ αἰσχύνῃ εἰς τοιαῦτα ἄγων, ὦ Σώκρατες, τοὺς λόγους;* 494e7-8.

[8] As Dodds (1959) 305 notes, Callicles is "perceptibly shaken." Kahn (1996) 136-137 seems to think that Callicles would be ashamed to take part in such pleasures because of his political ambitions (see note 6, above). I do not think that shame or politics play a role in Callicles' reaction: he really does just find the questions distasteful.

[9] Thus already here Callicles does not seem to believe sincerely in unrestrained hedonism, *pace* Irwin (1986) 69, who argues that, later on , "[w]hen the inconsistency in his views is pointed out, Callicles pretends that he was not serious in his previous endorsement of hedonism (499b), though Socrates took great pains to make sure that he was." Cf. Beversluis (2000) 350, who claims, "But Callicles does not believe this [i.e., that the scratcher is happy] at all. That is why he becomes indignant, calling the proposition absurd and again accusing Socrates of being a mob-orator."

ΣΩ. Διαφθείρεις, ὦ Καλλίκλεις, τοὺς πρώτους λόγους, καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἔτι μετ' ἐμοῦ ἱκανῶς τὰ ὄντα ἐξετάζοις, εἴπερ παρὰ τὰ δοκοῦντα σαυτῷ ἐρεῖς.
ΚΑΛ. Καὶ γὰρ σύ, ὦ Σώκρατες.
ΣΩ. Οὐ τοίνυν ὀρθῶς ποιῶ οὔτ' ἐγώ, εἴπερ ποιῶ τοῦτο, οὔτε σύ. ἀλλ', ὦ μακάριε, ἄθρει μὴ οὐ τοῦτο ἦ τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ πάντως χαίρειν· ταῦτά τε γὰρ τὰ νυνδὴ αἰνιχθέντα πολλὰ καὶ αἰσχρὰ φαίνεται συμβαίνοντα, εἰ τοῦτο οὕτως ἔχει, καὶ ἄλλα πολλά.
ΚΑΛ. Ὡς σύ γε οἴει, ὦ Σώκρατες.
ΣΩ. Σὺ δὲ τῷ ὄντι, ὦ Καλλίκλεις, ταῦτα ἰσχυρίζῃ;
ΚΑΛ. Ἔγωγε.
ΣΩ. Ἐπιχειρῶμεν ἄρα τῷ λόγῳ ὡς σοῦ σπουδάζοντος;
ΚΑΛ. Πάνυ γε σφόδρα.
[Soc: But even now tell me whether you say that pleasant and good are the same, or whether there is some pleasure which isn't good?
Call: So that my argument isn't inconsistent if I say they're different, I'll say they're the same.
Soc: Callicles, you're ruining the first argument, and you would no longer be adequately seeking the truth with me if you speak contrary to your belief.
Call: I do it, and you do it too, Socrates.
Soc: Then I don't act correctly if I do this, and neither do you. But dear man, consider that this is not the good, enjoyment under all circumstances, for these many shameful consequences just now hinted at come to pass, if this is the case, and many others besides.
Call: That's what you think, Socrates.
Soc: Then do you really insist on this, Callicles?
Call: I do.
Soc: Then should we attempt the discussion as though you're serious?
Call: Absolutely.]

This passage is important because it shows that Callicles feels no need to be sincere. He explicitly states that he is only claiming that all pleasures are good in order that his position be consistent. His initial reaction to Socrates' questions gives us reason to believe that he does not sincerely endorse unrestrained hedonism.[10] Callicles then admits to answering insincerely and accuses Socrates of doing the same thing. He never expresses regret at his insincerity, and he never promises that he will be sincere from now on. The talk about "insisting" (*ἰσχυρίζῃ*, 495b8) and "being serious" (*σοῦ σπουδάζοντος*, 495c1) must be understood in this context. Callicles is trying to win an argument, or at least avoid losing one. Though he does not believe that all pleasures are the same, the idea that they might be shocks Socrates. Callicles might therefore think that Socrates

[10] His shock at Socrates' question in T52 is comparable to his reaction to Socrates' claims at the end of his conversation with Polus (481b6-c4): Callicles can hardly believe that Socrates is making such suggestions.

would have a difficult time trying to refute such an outrageous claim.[11] He is not concerned with sincerity, so he insists on the formulation which seems the most difficult to refute, even though he does not completely believe it.[12] Thus it is here that Callicles first violates the sincere response requirement, where Socrates most vehemently insists on it.[13]

Socrates proceeds to make an argument showing that the pleasant and the good are different, thereby refuting Callicles' position. Callicles is clearly upset, and refuses to answer Socrates' concluding question, at which point Gorgias intervenes:

T54. *Gorg.* 497b3-c2: *ΚΑΛ. Οὐκ οἶδα ὅτι λέγεις.*
ΓΟΡ. Μηδαμῶς, ὦ Καλλίκλεις, ἀλλ' ἀποκρίνου καὶ ἡμῶν ἕνεκα, ἵνα περανθῶσιν οἱ λόγοι.
ΚΑΛ. Ἀλλ' ἀεὶ τοιοῦτός ἐστιν Σωκράτης, ὦ Γοργία· σμικρὰ καὶ ὀλίγου ἄξια ἀνερωτᾷ καὶ ἐξελέγχει.
ΓΟΡ. Ἀλλὰ τί σοὶ διαφέρει; πάντως οὐ σὴ αὕτη ἡ τιμή, ὦ Καλλίκλεις· ἀλλ' ὑπόσχες Σωκράτει ἐξελέγξαι ὅπως ἂν βούληται.
ΚΑΛ. Ἐρώτα δὴ σὺ τὰ σμικρά τε καὶ στενὰ ταῦτα, ἐπείπερ Γοργίᾳ δοκεῖ οὕτως.
[Call: (to Socrates:) I don't know what you're saying.
Gorg: Don't do that Callicles, but answer, even if it's just for our sake, so that the argument might get finished.
Call: But Socrates is always like this, Gorgias – he's always asking petty, worthless things, and making refutations.
Gorg: But what does it matter to you? It's not at all your place to put a value on it.[14] But give Socrates a chance to test them however he wishes.
Call: (to Socrates:) Then go ahead and ask your petty little questions, since Gorgias thinks it's best this way.]

By refusing to answer, Callicles tacitly admits that he has been refuted. Gorgias then emphasizes to him that he should not mind being refuted, and should not take the

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[11] Such an inference would make sense coming as it does on the heels of Socrates' outrageous claims which Polus ultimately found impossible to refute. Also relevant is Socrates' comment at *Rep.* I, 348d-e, that Thrasymachus will be difficult to refute because he seems to be operating on a different set of assumptions than most people.
[12] As Kahn (1996) 136 observes, "Callicles for the sake of consistency maintains the identity of pleasure and the good."
[13] As Beversluis (2000) 354 explains, Callicles "feign[s] sincere assent with the full cooperation of Socrates who again knows perfectly well from Callicles' previous remarks that this is not what he really believes."
[14] I here follow Dodds *ad loc.*, where he rejects two alternate translations: "the penalty for this does not fall on you," and "your reputation is not at stake." As I take it, the translation I have printed means, "This is important to Socrates, and not to you, so you ought to go along with what he wants to do."

refutation personally, but should continue the discussion for the sake of the onlookers. Gorgias just wants the discussion to continue (presumably to a conclusion), and he does not seem concerned whether Callicles is sincere. Since Callicles only continues the conversation for Gorgias's sake, it is reasonable to assume that he will continue to make no special effort to be sincere. From this point on, we should expect Callicles generally to give the responses that Socrates hopes for rather than for him to answer what he really believes.

It becomes clear at the beginning of the next argument that Socrates himself knows that Callicles is not answering sincerely:

T55. *Gorg.* 497d8-9: *Ἐὰν δὲ βούλῃ, καὶ τῇδε ἐπίσκεψαι· οἶμαι γάρ σοι οὐδὲ ταύτῃ ὁμολογεῖσθαι. ἄθρει δέ·*
[But if you wish, look at it in this way too; for I don't think you agree with this either. But consider.]

Socrates realizes that Callicles is only agreeing for the sake of argument; nevertheless he wants Callicles to continue to answer, even under these circumstances.

Socrates then proceeds through another argument for the claim that the pleasant is not the same as the good (497e-499b). The argument, roughly sketched, is as follows:

1. Good and bad men have the same amount of pleasure (497e6-498c5);
2. People are good by the presence of good things, and bad by the presence of bad things (498d2-4);
3. From (2), good men have more good things than bad men, and bed men have more bad things than good men (498d4-e2);
4. If the pleasant were the same as the good, (1)-(3) would lead to a contradiction, since then bad men, by having as many good things (=pleasures) as good men, would be as good as good men.

When the argument is completed, Callicles responds:

T56. *Gorg.* 499b4-8: *Πάλαι τοί σου ἀκροῶμαι, ὦ Σώκρατες, καθομολογῶν, ἐνθυμούμενος ὅτι, κἂν παίζων τίς σοι ἐνδῷ ὁτιοῦν, τούτου ἅσμενος ἔχῃ ὥσπερ τὰ μειράκια. ὡς δὴ σὺ οἴει ἐμὲ ἢ καὶ ἄλλον ὁντινοῦν ἀνθρώπων οὐχ ἡγεῖσθαι τὰς μὲν βελτίους ἡδονάς, τὰς δὲ χείρους.*
[I've been listening to you for a long time, Socrates, assenting, and thinking about how, even if someone playfully grants anything to you, you gladly cling to it, just like young boys do. As though you really think that I or any other person does not believe that some pleasures are better and others worse.]

This passage clinches the claim that Callicles was not sincere in his earlier avowal of unrestrained hedonism (494c-495c). There, as I argued, his reactions betrayed his belief that the pleasures of scratching and passive homosexuality are somehow baser than eating and drinking. Here he explicitly asserts that some pleasures are worse than others. There, and in subsequent passages, Callicles revealed that he is not concerned with being sincere. He asserted a belief in unrestrained hedonism because he thought it would help him win the argument, though he simultaneously admitted his insincerity. Here he changes his position because he thinks it will win him the argument, or at least save him from an embarrassing admission of having been refuted. Only now he *is* being sincere, as he reveals by claiming that everyone believes that some pleasures are better than others. Though the opinion of everyone holds no weight with Socrates, it is reasonable to assume that Callicles does believe that the fact of everyone believing a proposition is strong evidence for its truth.[15] Here he implies that it would be odd for him not to believe the proposition, because everybody believes it. Therefore he seems sincere in his disavowal of unrestrained hedonism.

The implication is that Callicles' beliefs have not really been refuted, for Socrates' two refutations (495c-499b) were, strictly speaking, refutations of unrestrained

[15] Cf. Callicles' incredulity when Socrates concludes his discussion with Polus with a claim that 'nobody' would believe, and how he identifies himself there with people in general (481b-c).

hedonism.[16] If Callicles insisted that brave and wise men enjoyed pleasures that were somehow better than the pleasures of stupid and cowardly men (a position which, as we have seen, he may in fact endorse), then he could assert that their better pleasures put them higher overall on the scale of pleasure, and therefore of goodness. In this case Socrates' refutation would not work.[17]

When Callicles changes his position here by claiming that some pleasures are better than others, we see a clear change in Socrates' tone. He chastises Callicles for deceiving him, and continues:

T57. *Gorg.* 499c2-6: *καίτοι οὐκ ᾤμην γε κατ' ἀρχὰς ὑπὸ σοῦ ἑκόντος εἶναι ἐξαπατηθήσεσθαι, ὡς ὄντος φίλου· νῦν δὲ ἐψεύσθην, καὶ ὡς ἔοικεν ἀνάγκη μοι κατὰ τὸν παλαιὸν λόγον τὸ παρὸν εὖ ποιεῖν καὶ τοῦτο δέχεσθαι τὸ διδόμενον παρὰ σοῦ.*
[And I didn't think, at first, that I would be deliberately deceived by you, since you were a friend. But now my expectation was falsified, and it seems that I have to "make the best of what I've got," according to the old expression, and accept what you've given me.]

Socrates here reveals that he has essentially given up even trying to enforce the sincere response requirement with Callicles. Where he had vehemently objected to the hints of insincerity on Callicles' part (495a-c), Socrates now seems resigned to taking whatever answers Callicles gives him.

At the same time as Socrates stops insisting on sincerity, Callicles becomes a much more cooperative interlocutor. He does not again strenuously contradict Socrates' claims, and for the most part assents without objection to all of Socrates' questions. In fact, within two pages of Socrates' "accepting what he's given," Callicles assents easily

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[16] Cf. Beversluis (2000) 357.

[17] Thus I disagree with Irwin (1979) 206: "Callicles [. . .] has been beaten [i.e., when he says that some pleasures are better and others worse (499b)]. For he has not vindicated his rejection of temperance if his unrestricted hedonism is not accepted; as Socrates will show, his admission of good and bad pleasures conflicts with the central part of his previous arguments." But Callicles could stand by both his rejection of temperance and a restricted hedonism if he claimed that it is his bravery and wisdom which cause the better man to pursue and achieve better pleasures, rather than the presence in him of any temperance. Cf. Cooper (1999) 73.

to a series of questions and adds, "I'm agreeing in order for your discussion to be finished and so that I might please Gorgias here."[18] Socrates makes no objection to the role Callicles has explicitly adopted of agreeing to everything Socrates says, and in fact Socrates does not even discuss the matter here, but simply asks Callicles the next question. In fact Socrates makes it easier for Callicles to be his 'yes'-man: after asking Callicles two more yes-or-no questions, he asks an open-ended question about which pursuits produce pleasure in a crowd:

T58. *Gorg.* 501d7-9: *Ἔχεις οὖν εἰπεῖν αἵτινές εἰσιν αἱ ἐπιτηδεύσεις αἱ τοῦτο ποιοῦσαι; μᾶλλον δέ, εἰ βούλει, ἐμοῦ ἐρωτῶντος, ἣ μὲν ἄν σοι δοκῇ τούτων εἶναι, φάθι, ἣ δ' ἂν μή, μὴ φάθι.*
[Then can you tell me which are the pursuits which accomplish this? Or rather, if you wish, let me ask, and whichever one you think is among these, say so, and whichever one isn't, say no.]

By explicitly restricting the conversation to yes-or-no questions, aware that Callicles is going to answer all such questions affirmatively, Socrates is clearly signaling to the audience that this is *his* argument. The discussion has become, in a way, Socrates' display speech, or at least a kind of philosophical monologue.[19]

Indeed, Callicles eventually tires even of being Socrates' compliant interlocutor, and for several pages (506c-509c) Socrates answers his own questions, before pulling Callicles back in as his respondent. As the dialogue continues, Socrates gives two more long speeches (511c-513c, 517b-519d) before ending the conversation with a myth about what happens to just and unjust souls after death (523a-527e). The myth is in some ways a last-ditch effort to persuade Callicles "to live and die practicing justice and the rest of

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[18] *συγχωρῶ ἵνα σοι καὶ περανθῇ ὁ λόγος καὶ Γοργίᾳ τῷδε χαρίσωμαι* (501c7-8).
[19] Thus I agree with Cooper (1999) 73, who writes that Callicles "is merely helping Socrates to go ahead with the exposition of his own ideal of life, and his arguments for it. The indications are, then, that from 499c onward Socrates is not in fact examining and refuting Callicles' views at all, but explaining and arguing directly for his own." And as Beversluis (2000) 358 describes the role of Callicles, "since Socrates has been feeding him premises all along, he might as well assert them himself and abandon the charade of a 'joint' search. Which he subsequently does."

virtue" (527e3-5), and therefore it is a tacit admission on Socrates' part that he has not rationally persuaded Callicles, by means of the elenchus, that justice is to be preferred to injustice.[20]

The effect of abandoning the sincere response requirement

In Chapter II, I outlined the following seven goals that Socrates seems to have in mind when invoking the sincere response requirement:

- testing or refuting the interlocutor
- testing himself
- persuading the interlocutor
- emphasizing the seriousness of the inquiry
- ensuring the responsiveness of the interlocutor
- stressing the importance of the individual
- discovering the truth about a question

It is easy to see that Callicles' refusal to obey the sincere response requirement is a major reason that most of these goals are not met in Socrates' conversation with Callicles.

First, as we saw above, Socrates never refutes the version of hedonism which Callicles seems really to hold. He refutes unrestrained hedonism, but, if my interpretation is correct, it is only Callicles' insincerity which allows him to assert that view in the first place. On the other hand, Socrates does, in a sense, test and refute

[20] It is also important to notice here, as Daniel Devereux points out to me, that Socrates' attempts at persuasion are, here at the end of the dialogue, no longer restricted to Callicles: "So let us follow this [*logos*], and call on others [to follow it]" (527e5-6). The argument's target has broadened to a wider audience.

Callicles, since Callicles never presents and defends a coherent version of hedonism. This does not mean that Callicles' hedonism is not correct or defensible, but rather that Callicles himself is unable to defend it in a dialectical conversation with Socrates. He does not point out the weaknesses or the (arguable) misrepresentations in Socrates' refutation of hedonism. By the same standard, Socrates fails to test himself in his conversation with Callicles. Callicles first becomes insincere and then becomes an absolutely compliant interlocutor. In the first case, Socrates does test his beliefs against a view, but it is (arguably) not the strongest view against which he might test them. If he thoroughly refuted a view which Callicles sincerely held, that would be a stronger basis for believing that his own view (and his ability to defend it) had been tested. Later in the dialogue, when Callicles assents to all of Socrates' questions, it is clear that Socrates is not being tested. He is just presenting an argument and having somebody uncritically accept every step of it.[21] Broadly speaking, then, neither Callicles nor Socrates gets tested in the course of their conversation.

Socrates also fails (though, notably, he never stops trying) to persuade Callicles of the truth of Socrates' own views. If my analysis above is correct, Callicles never even sincerely admits that Socrates' arguments bear logical weight, never mind the question of Callicles being persuaded actually to adopt these views.

Although Socrates does strongly emphasize to Callicles the seriousness of the questions which they are considering (see, e.g., 500c), that seriousness is conspicuously wasted on Callicles, who answers sincerely or insincerely as personal whim and the exigencies of the conversation dictate. On the other hand, the contrast between Callicles'

[21] This does not mean that Socrates' argument would not be plausible and convincing to most people. But most people cannot test him here, in this dialogue. Only Callicles can do that, and he fails.

apparent lack of concern for the issues and Socrates' vehement protestations of their importance emphasizes Socrates' own seriousness even more. In addition, we should not be misled into thinking that Callicles' insincerity means that he thinks the discussion they are having is trivial. On the contrary, in what seems to be without question a heartfelt speech, Callicles exhorts Socrates to abandon philosophy (with the implication that he should take up rhetoric instead; 482c-486c), and he reiterates this advice near the end of the dialogue, where the exhortation has become a warning (521c). Nevertheless, the overall effect of Callicles' refusal to be consistently sincere is that it downplays the importance of the questions under debate.

Callicles' responsiveness also becomes an issue when he stops answering sincerely. The goal of responsiveness is inspired by a wish on Socrates' behalf to have one person with one set of beliefs with whom he can hold a discussion. Callicles undermines this wish by acting, effectively, as multiple interlocutors. Sometimes he is the Callicles of unrestrained hedonism; sometimes he is the Callicles who thinks that some pleasures are better than others; and sometimes he is the Callicles who believes everything that Socrates believes.[22] Therefore he does not function as an interlocutor with even a *prima facie* consistent set of beliefs, and Socrates' attempts to treat him as such are doomed to fail. In the same way, there turns out to be no reason for Socrates to insist on speaking to one person rather than to the many because Callicles does not respond as an individual interlocutor is supposed to. Socrates might as well be addressing the many, because, as things are, he is not directly engaging the sincere beliefs of Callicles. Callicles, just like a crowd, seems immune to the elenchus.

[22] Cf. Woolf (2000) 2-6, who claims that we can identify two contrary positions that Callicles holds simultaneously in the *Gorgias*.

As I noted in Chapter II, Socrates, at the beginning of his discussion with Callicles, claims that if Callicles agrees with him, then he will know that he possesses the truth (T34, 486e5-6; cf. 487e6-7). It might seem, then, that because Callicles does not ultimately agree with Socrates' conclusions, Socrates cannot in the end claim that his beliefs are true. Otherwise he would have been deceiving Callicles when he claimed that the truth of his beliefs depended on Callicles' agreement. Nevertheless we do find Socrates claiming again, late in his discussion with Callicles, that his conclusions are "held firm and bound [. . .] by iron and adamantine arguments" (T44, 508e6-509a2).[23] What are we to make of this claim?

This passage is different from the earlier ones in one important way. Earlier, Socrates phrased his claims with the implication that his own views were being tested, and that they needed Callicles' agreement in order to be proven true. Here, however, the burden of proof shifts:

> And if you or someone more energetic that you doesn't untie them, nobody who speaks other than I am now speaking can be speaking correctly. (509a2-4)

Now it is up to Callicles to refute Socrates and show that his conclusions are not true. As I noted above, Callicles has been refuted in the sense that he has shown himself unable to defend his views in dialectical discussion with Socrates. That does not mean his views are indefensible. Nevertheless, Socrates takes himself to have refuted hedonism, effectively ignoring Callicles' unsuitability as an interlocutor.

I do not claim to understand why Socrates claims that he has discovered the truth. As I noted earlier, this question is still being vigorously debated by scholars.[24] But I do

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[23] And at the beginning of the same speech he specifically claims that his conclusions are true (507c8-9).
[24] See ch. II, nn. 40-41.

think it is clear that Socrates has changed his standard of proof in the course of his discussion with Callicles. In this later passage (T44) he seems to have come to the realization that there can be conversations that do not fulfill his normal requirements (specifically the sincere response requirement), but that these conversations are not thereby necessarily devoid of valid philosophical conclusions. Socrates knows that Callicles has not been answering sincerely, but his faith in his conclusions is in no way weakened. Of course, Socrates nowhere makes this claim explicit. But if my interpretation of his conversation with Callicles is correct, it is the best way to understand Socrates' claims at T44.

It seems, then, that Callicles' refusal to obey the sincere response requirement does not prevent Socrates from being able to claim that his arguments discover the truth, or at least that they provide adequate support for claiming that his views are true. Nevertheless, most of the rest of his goals in making the requirement are severely undermined. One must imagine that Plato was only willing to abandon those goals, which sometimes seem so important to Socrates, if he thought that he was gaining even more than he was giving up. Was he right?

What Plato gains by abandoning the sincere response requirement

I believe that there are two general types of goals that Plato has in mind when he has Socrates give up the sincere response requirement. The first type is a broad methodological purpose that cuts across individual doctrines and fields of philosophical inquiry. The second concerns specific problems that I believe Plato began to see in the

matter of how Socratic method worked in the light of Socratic psychology. I introduced such problems in Chapter III, and will return to them at greater length below.

Among the former purpose might be classed two rather general philosophical goals that I would like to suggest Plato has in mind when dropping the sincere response requirement. The first is to allow Socrates to confront interlocutors who have views that are incompatible with Socrates' views, or, alternately, to be allowed to show Socrates refuting views that none of his interlocutors might sincerely believe. So, for example, Callicles evinces a wish, as early as 497b, to withdraw from the conversation, and it is only Gorgias's assurance (and Socrates' tacit acceptance) that he does not have to respond sincerely that persuades Callicles to continue answering (497b-c, and cf. 501c). Several pages later, Callicles is much more insistent on ending the discussion, so Socrates answers his own questions until he can draw Callicles back into the conversation. If Socrates were strictly enforcing the sincere response requirement with Callicles, the conversation probably would have ended at 497b. But by dropping the requirement, Socrates has the opportunity to argue further against hedonism and rhetoric and for the usefulness of justice. In addition, because Callicles first defends a strong version of hedonism that he does not really believe, Socrates is able to refute one more competing theory.[25] Plato seems to be trying to broaden the relevance of Socrates' conversations so

[25] We may see the same thing happening in Socrates' insistence to Protagoras that they examine the view of the many that knowledge is weak, although it is clear that neither Socrates nor Protagoras endorses that view; see *Prot.* 352b-353b; and see also 332b. Concerning the latter passage, Irwin (1993) 9 explains Plato's reasoning as follows: "He does not want to appear to be dismissing a view that is a serious challenge to Socrates' position, simply on the ground that it does not fit the moral outlook of Socrates and his current interlocutor."

that they will respond to the views of a wider audience.[26] And as Irwin (1993, 13) adds, "Socrates wants to examine the merits of a view rather than the interlocutor's willingness to maintain it or his skill in defending it."

A second reason for Plato to abandon the sincerity requirement is evident in the *Gorgias*. The elenchus, of which the sincere response requirement is an integral part, dominates the Socratic dialogues. Socrates does occasionally make speeches (e.g., when the Laws speak in the *Crito*, or when he interprets Simonides' poem in the *Protagoras*), but they are rare. Almost all of Socrates' talking takes place as part of a conversation, and most of those conversations are elenctic. In the middle and late dialogues, however, though conversation is still the normal mode of investigation, the elenctic immediacy of the conversations tends to fade, and speeches and philosophical exposition become more prevalent. We may see the *Gorgias*, with its several speeches by Socrates and the myth at the end, as being a step in Plato's progress in his method of presenting philosophy.[27] However, though these two reasons provide a general motivation for Plato to change the sort of dialogues that he depicts in his writings, I believe that we can point to a more immediate cause.

The conflict in Socrates' method

Socrates' elenctic method meshes beautifully with the psychology of the early dialogues. According to his denial of *akrasia*, everyone always does what he thinks best

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[26] So Irwin (1993) 13: "Socrates does not always regard the sincere assent of the interlocutor as a sufficient reason for accepting a controversial Socratic claim; he wants to give a more broadly-based defence of Socrates' main views."

[27] Cf. Irwin (1979) 6. But though he agrees with this reading of the *Gorgias*, he warns: "This difference from the shorter dialogues [that the Gorgias demonstrates] should not be over-stressed."

for himself.[28] In his elenctic form of conversation, Socrates insists that interlocutors only answer with their sincere beliefs, thereby guaranteeing (to his mind at least) that any conclusions reached in the course of these conversations would also be his interlocutors' sincere beliefs. Under Socrates' psychology, the elenchus is a powerful tool for moral reform.[29] Once Socrates is done with an interlocutor, and the interlocutor has acquired new, correct beliefs, or has become conscious of his real beliefs (e.g., that acting justly is always beneficial to the actor), he cannot help but act in accordance with them.[30]

As I explained in Chapter III, Socrates' psychology seems to assume a single form of belief. When a person considers a proposition, he either believes it or does not believe it. In the *Gorgias*, Plato gives us good reason to think that he is calling into question Socrates' view of belief. If we look more closely at Socrates' conversation with Callicles, we may find the beginnings of Plato's attempt to explain the apparent conflicts of belief that he illustrates in the depictions of Gorgias and Polus.

Plato drops various hints, during Socrates' conversation with Callicles, that Socrates' explanation of human decision-making is deficient. Unfortunately, scholars disagree about what exactly Plato is trying to tell the reader. On one side, Terence Irwin draws attention to Socrates' story, which he heard from "some wise man" (493a1-2), that mentions "this part of the soul in which the appetites are" (*τῆς δὲ ψυχῆς τοῦτο ἐν ᾧ αἱ ἐπιθυμίαι εἰσὶ*, 493a3-4). Irwin (1995, 114) claims that "Socrates recognizes two parts of

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[28] See my discussion of *akrasia* in chapter III.

[29] Thus we might extend the observations of Coventry (1990) 174-184, who argues that Socrates is responsive to the peculiarities of his interlocutors. Such responsiveness is important because Socrates is trying to convince that interlocutor to live virtuously.

[30] I believe that this perfect fit between Socrates' method and the denial of *akrasia* is an argument against those who would claim that Socrates does not really endorse the denial of *akrasia* in the *Protagoras*. Cf. Kahn (1996) 224-243, and Shields (2001) 140. If he has no knowledge to teach them (as he always claims), and if having discussions according to his method will not reform them, then what does he think he is doing in his conversations?

the soul and says that one part consists of appetites that make it unruly and insatiable." He also draws attention to passages where Socrates talks of "ruling oneself" (491d8-e1), and of the healthy soul having a certain order (504a7-d3, 505a2-b12), and explains that "Socrates seems to argue that justice and health are analogous because each requires the orderly arrangement of potentially conflicting elements in the soul" (1995, 116). If we pursue both of these suggestions, we might conclude that in the second half of the *Gorgias* Plato has Socrates change his psychology. He would abandon the apparently unitary, intellectualist conception of the soul, under which we always do what we think is best and *akrasia* is impossible,[31] and adopt a conception of a soul with at least two parts, one being Socrates' traditional rational part with beliefs about what is best for the agent, and the other being the appetitive part, with drives that will sometimes conflict with the reasoned wishes of the rational part.[32] With this view of the soul, it would presumably be possible for the appetites to overpower the rational part, and an agent could perform an action which he rationally believed was not in his best interest.[33] The only way to prevent such a situation from arising would be to instill a certain psychic order in the soul (what Socrates calls "justice and temperance," *δικαιοσύνη τε καὶ σωφροσύνη*, 504d3), whereby the appetites would remain under the control of the rational part.

On this reading of the dialogue, Socrates abandons the psychology which makes the elenchus such an effective tool of moral reform. If the soul has two parts, of the sort

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[31] The view that he seems to maintain in the conversation with Polus; cf. *Gorg.* 367-368, and Cooper (1999) 58-59.

[32] As Penner (1992) 129 explains, "What Plato speaks of as the rational part of the soul is the entire soul by Socrates' lights."

[33] Cf. Penner (1992) 129. In Socratic psychology, we do not see the idea that there is a rational part that gets *overwhelmed* by pleasure or desire. Rather, it is misled, by the proximity of pleasure or pain, into performing the action which in fact does not lead to greatest overall pleasure. On this view, it is a failure of intelligence that leads to vice.

outlined above, then it would be possible for someone to assent sincerely to all of Socrates' claims about justice and encounter a situation in which he had true belief about what he should do in that situation, and yet still not act in accordance with that belief. The explanation would be that the appetitive part of his soul overruled the rational part – a phenomenon that could not occur in Socratic psychology. Such a model would provide a version of my suggestion (in Chapter III) of weak and strong beliefs. We might understand Plato, in the *Gorgias*, to be positing "rational" and "irrational" beliefs, or "beliefs" (which are always rational) and "appetites" (which are irrational, and sometimes conflict with beliefs), in order to explain how Polus could sincerely agree that it is better to be treated unjustly than to act unjustly, yet give no signs of a willingness to act on such a belief: his decision-making process may be overcome by the appetitive part of his soul.[34]

Once the psychology on which the sincere response requirement depends is given up, one can see why Plato might have Socrates drop the requirement. The moral urgency of rationally convincing the interlocutor has disappeared; even if Socrates does get Callicles to agree sincerely to every step of his argument, he now sees that such agreement does not guarantee virtuous action on Callicles' part.[35] As a result, non-rational persuasion suddenly assumes a position of importance in Socrates' dialectical arsenal if he wishes to encourage people to live virtuously. In fact we can see Socrates

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[34] Woolf (2000) 32 makes a similar point, but emphasizes the effect of love on one's belief system: "the way one directs one's love is not something that is seen here to be determinable by appeal to logical principle. Rather, it is the way one directs one's love which determines whether or not one will adhere to logical principles. Once it is recognized that factors such as where one's love is directed may govern the structure of one's beliefs, then to achieve psychic harmony even at the level of belief (that is, logical consistency) will require the employment of methods that appeal to more than, or other than, logical principles."

[35] It does not even guarantee that he will act correctly when he makes an accurate judgement concerning the right thing to do in a given situation.

use this strategy late in the dialogue, just after he has re-presented his conception of what rhetoric is like:

T59. *Gorg.* 513c3-d1: *ΚΑΛ. Οὐκ οἶδ' ὅντινά μοι τρόπον δοκεῖς εὖ λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες, πέπονθα δὲ τὸ τῶν πολλῶν πάθος· οὐ πάνυ σοι πείθομαι.*
ΣΩ. Ὁ δήμου γὰρ ἔρως, ὦ Καλλίκλεις, ἐνὼν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ τῇ σῇ ἀντιστατεῖ μοι· ἀλλ' ἐὰν πολλάκις καὶ βέλτιον ταὐτὰ ταῦτα διασκοπώμεθα, πεισθήσῃ.[36]
[Call: In a certain way, Socrates, you seem to me to be speaking well; but I've had the same experience as most people: I'm really not persuaded by you.
Soc: That's because love of the *demos* in your soul is opposing me, Callicles. But if we look into these same matters often, and better, you'll be persuaded.]

As Dodds (1959, 352) interprets it, "[w]e may take this remark and Socrates' comment on it as expressing Plato's recognition that basic moral attitudes are commonly determined by psychological, not logical reasons."[37] Three points are worth noticing here. One is that Socrates attributes Callicles' failure to be convinced to his love of the *demos*.[38] Under the old Socratic psychology, such an emotional factor would not seem to matter to Callicles' rational persuasion: once Callicles saw the truth about justice, the love of the *demos* would just fall away as a useless and harmful attitude.[39] Second, Socrates claims that Callicles will be persuaded if they examine these matters "often and better." But, on one hand, Socrates has already claimed that his proofs are of "adamant

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[36] I adopt Dodds' reading here; see his note *ad loc.*
[37] He also explains: "Callicles finds Socrates' arguments more logical than convincing. Socrates attributes this to emotional resistance;" Dodds (1959) 351. Irwin (1979) 233 disagrees, claiming that "[t]hough Callicles is still not entirely convinced, Socrates does not suggest (contrary to Dodds) that he is unreachable by rational argument. Though Socrates has previously suggested that Callicles' desires may be disordered (505c), and mentions here the misguided 'love' [. . .] that prevents him from being convinced, he still insists that rational persuasion can make Callicles re-direct his desires." Presumably, under Irwin's interpretation, "better" (*βέλτιον*, 513c8) would mean "with Callicles answering sincerely," since that is a condition for the Socratic method to succeed in rational persuasion. But then why does Socrates explicitly allow Callicles to break the sincere response requirement, and continue the conversation for almost thirty pages more (apparently trying very hard, in the course of those pages, to persuade Callicles of the benefits of the just life), if he realizes at 495 (or 499 at the latest) that he will not be able to persuade Callicles?
[38] Technically, of course, Socrates could here be citing Callicles' love of the young man, Demos. But context seems to make it clear that he has the citizen body of Athens in mind here.
[39] Or, to put it another way, once he was persuaded by Socrates that the goods resulting from just acts were greater than the goods resulting from flattering the Athenian people, he would henceforth act based on that belief. Which does not mean that Callicles could not still err in his judgements of greatest overall good, just that his standards of good would be changed by his agreement with Socrates.

and iron" (508e-509a): how could he be thinking of improving them logically? And on the other hand, why should rational persuasion of a Socratic soul take more than one attempt, as long as everyone follows the rules of the elenchus? The third point to notice about this passage is that it comes in the midst of Socrates trying to persuade Callicles in ways foreign to his typical method, including answering his own questions, making long speeches, and reciting myths. He is clearly trying to persuade Callicles, here in the latter part of the dialogue, by using the sorts of means that this passage implies are necessary.

This reason for dropping the sincere response requirement (i.e., that purely rational conversation loses its moral urgency under this new psychology) seems to rely on the view that Socrates is adopting a new psychology in the *Gorgias*. However, John Cooper (1999, 57-63) has recently challenged Irwin's interpretation of such a change. First, he challenges Irwin's reading of Socrates' story about the wise man who talked about the 'parts' of the soul. According to Cooper, Socrates merely cites this view, and does not necessarily endorse all of its details.[40] Cooper also argues that the self-control implied by "ruling oneself" is not a new kind of self-control indicating a change from normal Socratic psychology. On the contrary, it is the same type of control that wisdom

[40] "Plato has Socrates here cite and then apply for his own purposes what some other person has said. As often in Plato, this device serves clearly to distance Socrates from at least the details of what he brings into the discussion by its means – to make it clear that the reader is not to attribute too precisely to Socrates himself what he is reporting, or to think him committed to its truth. Here it serves further to allow Plato to show that Socrates has seen the implication in what Callicles has been saying, that appetites are only one type of desire, and that reason's (or, for Callicles, bravery's) forces come from somewhere else in our psychic makeup – without making Socrates confront that supposition head on, either to accept or to reject it. And in fact [. . .] Socrates leaves this aspect of the 'wise man's' admonition undeveloped when he goes on later in this passage to explain in his own way its moral burden. [. . .] Having reported the wise man's remarks he leaves this psychological analysis entirely aside;" Cooper (1999) 63.

has always wielded: when someone learns what is good for him, any appetite that conflicts with this knowledge just goes away.[41]

Cooper mentions, in addition, that if Socrates adopts this new psychology in his conversation with Callicles (i.e., one involving parts of the soul and the possibility of *akrasia*), it would directly contradict the psychology he assumes (and argues for) in his conversation with Polus, where he denies *akrasia*, as he does in the *Protagoras*: if Plato were depicting such a drastic change in Socrates' psychology, he would bring it more directly to the reader's attention (1999, 58-59). He also argues that, by making Socrates so inconsistent in the course of a dialogue, "Plato would then be mocking Socrates' central requirement in philosophizing, a rigid adherence to logical consistency."[42] He concludes that anyone adopting a view based on Irwin's indications, as I have done above, "will have a difficult, not to say impossible, task in constructing a coherent overall interpretation of this dialogue on that basis" (1999, 60).

Though Cooper's arguments against seeing a change in Socrates' psychology in the course of the *Gorgias* are strong (though not, I would maintain, conclusive[43]), I would argue in one respect against his claims about consistency. As I have noted, Socrates' preferred method of communication is by means of question-and-answer dialogue: he

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[41] As Cooper (1999) 62 explains, "In the life [Socrates] is envisaging, such an appetite could not arise: all the appetites are restrained, so to speak, in advance. So when he refers to his orderly life as led by a "self-controlled" person (sōphrōn, 493d7), he simply means one whose appetites are restrained and disciplined in the described way – in advance, not by applying some force to control an unruly appetite that arises even after such discipline has done its work."

[42] He continues: "Is he presenting Socrates, then, as so inattentive to the consequences of his own admissions or so dull-witted or flighty that he does not notice what he is doing? That would be to undermine the basis of Plato's own abiding admiration and indeed heroization of Socrates as the very model of the passionately committed philosopher leading the philosophical life with full devotion to philosophical values – even if Plato may have come to doubt the adequacy of some of his theoretical ideas and his procedures in argument;" Cooper (1999) 59-60.

[43] For example, Woolf (2000) 24-32 also argues that Socrates' view of belief changes in the course of the dialogue.

generally avoids listening to speeches or making them himself. In the *Protagoras* he roundly criticizes Protagoras for going off on a long speech that he (Socrates) cannot follow (*Prot.* 334c-d). A debate ensues concerning what kind of discussion they should have, and Socrates threatens to leave unless they stick to the question-and-answer format and avoid speechifying; he explains, "I thought that coming together and having a conversation with each other was different from making speeches."[44] This debate, I should add, is sparked by Protagoras's making a speech of approximately one-half of a Stephanus page in length (334a3-c6). At the beginning of the *Gorgias* Socrates reaffirms that his favorite type of conversation is question-and-answer. First he criticizes Polus for having practiced rhetoric rather than dialogue (*διαλέγεσθαι*, 448d10); then he explains to Gorgias what sort of conversation he would like to have:

T60. *Gorg.* 449b4-8: *Ἆρ' οὖν ἐθελήσαις ἄν, ὦ Γοργία, ὥσπερ νῦν διαλεγόμεθα, διατελέσαι τὸ μὲν ἐρωτῶν, τὸ δ' ἀποκρινόμενος, τὸ δὲ μῆκος τῶν λόγων τοῦτο, οἷον καὶ Πῶλος ἤρξατο, εἰς αὖθις ἀποθέσθαι; ἀλλ' ὅπερ ὑπισχνῇ, μὴ ψεύσῃ, ἀλλὰ ἐθέλησον κατὰ βραχὺ τὸ ἐρωτώμενον ἀποκρίνεσθαι.*
[Then would you be willing, Gorgias, to continue conversing just as we are now, first asking, then answering, and to leave for another time this kind of lengthy speech of the sort that Polus began? Don't go back on what you promised, but agree to answer briefly what you're asked.]

This passage indicates that here at the beginning of the *Gorgias* Socrates is operating with the same conversational ideals he outlines in the *Protagoras*.

Despite this reassertion of his principle, though, we see Socrates himself turn to making long speeches in the latter part of the dialogue. Socrates makes three speeches (at 507b-509c, 511c-513c, and 517b-519d), each at least two pages long, which is about four times as long as Protagoras's half-page speech. In addition, Socrates ends the dialogue with a five-page myth. Is this not a violation of his own conversational ideal, so

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[44] *χωρὶς γὰρ ἔγωγ' ᾤμην εἶναι τὸ συνεῖναί τε ἀλλήλοις διαλεγομένους καὶ τὸ δημηγορεῖν*, 336b1-3.

prominently advertised at the beginning of the dialogue? Of course, as we have noted, part of the reason for Socrates' speechifying is Callicles' failure to act as a proper interlocutor. But then, if the dialogic form of conversation is so important to Socrates, why does he not simply end the conversation, as he seems ready to do in the *Protagoras*? As I have been trying to show, Socrates' method does seem to change midway through the *Gorgias*, and it is a noteworthy event, because method is such an integral part of philosophizing for Socrates. It is strange for Socrates, without fanfare, to give up a central feature of the elenchus which he has previously so vehemently defended. Nevertheless it happens in the middle of a dialogue, and this paper is an attempt to understand why. In the same way, then, I do not find it so incredible to see Socrates' psychological views change midway through the dialogue. It is noteworthy, and it demands explanation, but I believe such an explanation might be found.

Despite my disagreement with this one aspect of Cooper's interpretation, however, I find his understanding of the dialogue to be almost as plausible as the alternative I outlined above. As Cooper (1999, 74) sees it, though Socrates does not change his views on psychology in the *Gorgias*, Plato uses Callicles to present an alternative conception of human motivation, a conception which "Socratic views about moral psychology and virtue do not suffice to [refute] in a philosophically satisfying way." Callicles defends a life whose basic motivations are supplied by appetites, while Socrates clings to his conception of a rational soul whose every action aims at the good. As Cooper (1999, 74) puts it, "We get some clear indications where further work needs to be done – on the question whether there are human desires and impulses to action that do not derive ultimately from the person's ideas about what would be good for them to

do."[45] If we combine Cooper's reading of the dialogue with my interpretation of the abandonment of the sincere response requirement, we can create one coherent interpretation. I would go farther, perhaps, than Cooper does, and claim that, though Socrates might maintain his old psychology in the *Gorgias*, Plato definitely abandons it. This is signaled by his abandoning those aspects of Socrates' method that assume Socratic psychology. Though Socrates may assert the same old psychology, his method of conducting a philosophical conversation no longer operates on those same assumptions. Socrates' psychology may remain the same, but Plato's psychology has changed.

My understanding of the sincere response requirement, then, has the advantage of being compatible with two conflicting interpretations of the *Gorgias*. To summarize my view up to this point: by the time that he wrote the *Gorgias*, Plato was dissatisfied with the Socratic psychology laid out most clearly in the *Protagoras*. Specifically, he no longer thought that the beliefs we will sincerely avow in philosophical discussion are enough, all alone, always to determine our behavior. It is not clear that he had decided in his own mind, when he wrote the *Gorgias*, what was wrong with Socrates' views. There are some indications, especially in Socrates' conversations with Gorgias and Polus, that Plato thought Socrates' conception of belief was too narrow. There are other indications that he began to think that the soul has non-rational parts (perhaps appetites?) that can sometimes conflict with rational desires in motivating us. Or perhaps Plato did not yet

[45] He continues, "perhaps through reflection on the phenomenon of *akrasia* (weakness of will), Plato has come to think that even the Socratic assumption that everyone wants happiness or his overall good more than he wants anything else is not a sufficient guarantee that we will be led actually to live the best life merely through [. . .] intellectual understanding of our good [. . .]. If some desires [. . .] float free from our ideas about our good, then even if we *rationally* want our overall good more than anything else, all lower-ranked desires will not always be ineffective against such rational evaluations, even when those evaluations are robustly maintained in opposition to them;" Cooper (1999) 75.

have anything so specific in view. He may have just observed that Socrates could not effectively refute the form of hedonism represented by (though not argued for by) Callicles. Whatever his motivation, Plato realized, when he abandoned the Socratic psychology, that he also needed to abandon those aspects of Socrates' method which relied on those same psychological assumptions for their effectiveness. Most prominent among these was the sincere assent requirement.[46]

It is worth noting at this point that I am offering a decidedly developmentalist interpretation of the *Gorgias*. As we have seen, my view relies on the claim that there is a distinctly intellectualist Socratic psychology, most clearly described in the *Protagoras*, that denies the existence of *akrasia*. This is the view that Plato rejects in the course of *Gorgias*. On the level of methodology, the early dialogues in general provide the model from which Plato distances himself in the *Gorgias*, where he begins to question the elenctic method and to show Socrates adopting other methods of doing philosophy. But as we have seen, the *Gorgias* itself does little to offer a view of human psychology that improves on Socrates' own. There are hints of such a trend, certainly; but little more. What we need in order to complete the developmental account is another dialogue, one that reveals Plato's decisive rejection of Socratic psychology at the same time that it clearly drops the elenctic Socrates for a more cooperative and doctrinal figure. The *Republic* fits this description perfectly.

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[46] We might wonder, at this point, why the *Gorgias* (which, on my view, depicts Plato's rejection of the sincerity requirement) shows Socrates so vehemently insisting that Callicles answer sincerely. My explanation is that it becomes that much more notable when, despite his lip service to the requirement, Socrates nevertheless effectively ignores it in his conversation with Callicles (cf. Beversluis (2000) 343, 353-354, 356-358, and passim). This disjunction between what Socrates says and what he does makes the reader wonder what Plato's real attitude is toward the sincere response requirement.

Psychology and method in the *Republic*

There are two general features of the *Republic* which make it look like a self-conscious development in Plato's thought, from the early dialogues and through the *Gorgias*. First there is the way that Book 1 recalls many of the issues that we saw getting raised in the *Gorgias*. But then the *Republic* goes beyond the *Gorgias* to offer the sort of viable alternatives that the *Gorgias* hints at but lacks: Books 2 through 10 reveal Socrates wielding a new, discursive and constructive philosophical method, and at the same time offering an explanation of human psychology which is more complex than the view of the *Protagoras* because it posits non-rational sources of human motivation. I would like to discuss briefly each of these aspects of the *Republic*.

Let us begin by noting some more or less superficial similarities between the *Gorgias* and *Republic* 1. Most immediately apparent is the three-interlocutor structure shared by the two dialogues. In both, each interlocutor who enters the conversation speaks with Socrates for a longer period of time than the one before him.[47] In each dialogue, an older, respectable, arguably morally complacent figure gives way to a young figure with an excess of dialectical eagerness, and successive interlocutors offer successively greater dialectical challenges for Socrates, with each dialogue culminating in a vigorous interlocutor whose main difficulty for Socrates is that he does not accept one of Socrates' basic assumptions about the virtues, and about justice in particular.[48] In the *Gorgias*, elenctic dialogue gradually gives way to longer speeches by Socrates in

[47] In the *Gorgias*, Gorgias talks with Socrates from page 449 to 460, Polus from 461 to 480, and Callicles from 481 to 522; in *Rep.* 1, Cephalus talks with Socrates from page 328 to 331, Polemarchus from 331 to 336, and Thrasymachus from 336 to 354.

[48] Thrasymachus does not accept that justice is good and injustice is bad (*Rep.* 1, 343b-344c); Callicles does not accept that doing injustice is more shameful than suffering it (*Gorg.* 482d-483c).

which he begins to lay out positive philosophical positions. Similarly, the elenctic first book of the *Republic* gives way to the long and thorough positive exposition of Books 2 through 10. Each dialogue ends with an emotionally powerful eschatological myth purporting to describe what happens to just and unjust souls in the after-life. Both dialogues are, to a large extent, concerned with the nature of justice, and its effects on both the soul and the *polis*. Though none of these similarities may seem terribly significant in itself,[49] when taken together they give the unmistakable impression that one dialogue is deliberately recalling to mind and referring to the other.

When we look specifically at *Republic* 1, there is one feature in particular which stands out as relevant to our present inquiry: it is the only place besides the *Gorgias* where we see a clear and simple violation of the sincere response requirement.[50] Without discussing Socrates' conversation with Thrasymachus in detail, I would like to outline the treatment that these two interlocutors afford the requirement.

The first unmistakable sign we see that the sincere response requirement is being violated comes after Thrasymachus baldly admits that he places injustice along with virtue and wisdom, and justice with their opposites.[51] Socrates explains that Thrasymachus will be difficult to refute because he does not even accept that justice is a virtue, as most people do. Then they have the following exchange:

T61. *Rep.* 1, 349a4-b2: *Ἀλλ' οὐ μέντοι, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἀποκνητέον γε τῷ λόγῳ ἐπεξελθεῖν σκοπούμενον, ἕως ἄν σε ὑπολαμβάνω λέγειν ἅπερ διανοῇ. ἐμοὶ γὰρ δοκεῖς σύ, ὦ Θρασύμαχε, ἀτεχνῶς νῦν οὐ σκώπτειν, ἀλλὰ τὰ δοκοῦντα περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας λέγειν.*

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[49] For example, other dialogues have multiple interlocutors, and myths, and discussions of justice.

[50] The *Protagoras* is the third dialogue with a violation of the requirement, but I consider what happens there to be qualitatively different from what happens in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*, and in some ways more complicated, because Socrates insists that Protagoras not answer what he really believes, over Protagoras's protestations. For a discussion of the sincerity requirement in the *Protagoras*, see Irwin (1993).

[51] *ἐν ἀρετῆς καὶ σοφίας τιθεῖς μέρει τὴν ἀδικίαν, τὴν δὲ δικαιοσύνην ἐν τοῖς ἐναντίοις*, 348e2-3.

Τί δέ σοι, ἔφη, τοῦτο διαφέρει, εἴτε μοι δοκεῖ εἴτε μή, ἀλλ' οὐ τὸν λόγον ἐλέγχεις;
Οὐδέν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ. ἀλλὰ τόδε μοι πειρῶ ἔτι πρὸς τούτοις ἀποκρίνασθαι·
["But nevertheless," I said, "we must not shrink from going through and examining the argument, as long as I take you to be saying what you think; for you appear to me, Thrasymachus, as though you're really not joking now, but saying what seems to you to be true."[52]
"What does it matter to you," he said, "whether or not it seems right to me? Aren't you refuting the argument?"
"It makes no difference," I said. "But try to answer that question, in addition to these ones."]

We already see Thrasymachus questioning the relevance of the sincere response requirement and Socrates agreeing to continue the conversation despite the interlocutor's attitude.

This passage prepares us for the more explicit revelation that follows soon after: Socrates asks Thrasymachus whether he remembers that they said that injustice is strong:

T61a. *Rep.* 1, 350d9-e10: *Μέμνημαι, ἔφη· ἀλλ' ἔμοιγε οὐδὲ ἃ νῦν λέγεις ἀρέσκει, καὶ ἔχω περὶ αὐτῶν λέγειν. εἰ οὖν λέγοιμι, εὖ οἶδ' ὅτι δημηγορεῖν ἄν με φαίης. ἢ οὖν ἔα με εἰπεῖν ὅσα βούλομαι, ἤ, εἰ βούλει ἐρωτᾶν, ἐρώτα· ἐγὼ δέ σοι, ὥσπερ ταῖς γραυσὶν ταῖς τοὺς μύθους λεγούσαις, "εἶεν" ἐρῶ καὶ κατανεύσομαι καὶ ἀνανεύσομαι.*
Μηδαμῶς, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, παρά γε τὴν σαυτοῦ δόξαν.
Ὥστε σοί, ἔφη, ἀρέσκειν, ἐπειδήπερ οὐκ ἐᾷς λέγειν. καίτοι τί ἄλλο βούλει;
Οὐδὲν μὰ Δία, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἀλλ' εἴπερ τοῦτο ποιήσεις, ποίει· ἐγὼ δὲ ἐρωτήσω.
Ἐρώτα δή.
["I remember," he said. "But what you're saying now doesn't satisfy me, and there's something I can say about these matters. But I know that if I talk, you'll say that I'm making speeches. So either let me say as much as I wish, or if you want to question me, ask away. And, just like one says to old ladies when they tell their stories, I'll say to you, 'Okay,' and nod and shake my head."
"Don't answer," I said, "contrary to your own opinion."
"I'll answer to please you," he said, "since you don't let me speak. Anyway, what else do you want?"
"Nothing else, by Zeus," I said. "But if you're going to do this, do it. And I'll do the asking."
"Ask away."]

Thrasymachus explicitly claims here that he is only going to answer in order to please Socrates, who weakly opposes the idea but then accepts it. Thrasymachus reiterates his

[52] Or, as Adam (1900) ad loc. would have it, "saying what you think about the truth."

desire to please Socrates and the onlookers four times in the rest of Book 1.[53] Just as in the *Gorgias*, then, this interlocutor remains unconvinced by Socrates' arguments.

There is also a philosophical similarity between *Republic* 1 and the *Gorgias*, a hint, in both, of the psychological views Plato has adopted that have necessitated the abandonment of the sincere response requirement.[54] In the *Gorgias*, Socrates talks about the soul being healthy, in a way analogous to a healthy body, when it has a certain arrangement and order (*τάξεώς τε καὶ κόσμου τινός*, 504b5), and he calls this state justice and temperance (*δικαιοσύνη τε καὶ σωφροσύνη*, 504d3). In the same passage he talks of the unjust man as being unable to control his appetites (505b). In *Republic* 1, Socrates speaks of injustice in the following terms:

T62. *Rep.* 1, 352a5-8: *Καὶ ἐν ἑνὶ δὴ οἶμαι ἐνοῦσα ταὐτὰ ταῦτα ποιήσει ἅπερ πέφυκεν ἐργάζεσθαι· πρῶτον μὲν ἀδύνατον αὐτὸν πράττειν ποιήσει στασιάζοντα καὶ οὐχ ὁμονοοῦντα αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ, ἔπειτα ἐχθρὸν καὶ ἑαυτῷ καὶ τοῖς δικαίοις·*
[And when it's present in one person, I think it will do the same things that it is naturally wont to accomplish. First it will make him unable to act, at strife with himself and not of one mind; then it will make him hateful to himself and to people who are just.]

Though neither passage explicitly mentions parts of the soul, some such conception is clearly implied by expressions such as "arrangement," "order," "strife," and "not of one mind." The idea that justice requires a certain order in the soul suggests that there is a non-rational component to correct action, precisely the view, as I claim, that inspires the rejection of the sincere response requirement.[55]

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[53] 351c6, 351d7, 352b3-4, 354a12-13.
[54] I would like to thank Daniel Devereux for pointing out this correspondence to me.
[55] Of course, Cooper (1999) 58 would object that the "arrangement and order" of the *Gorgias* is consistent with Socratic psychology: "Socrates has in mind simply a life that has not allowed appetites to grow and become pressing, one that is 'restrained' in precisely the way that Callicles used that word in his own presentation of his life-ideal. The 'orderly' life schedules and keeps the appetites within the bounds of reason, so that when an 'appetite' arises (or begins to arise) and you judge that fulfillment is inappropriate, you simply cease altogether from that desire: there is no question of the need for a further strength of soul, opposing it to some other, more powerful impulse or desire so as to prevent it from prevailing." Even

There is strong evidence, then, that one of the functions of *Republic* 1 is to recall the *Gorgias* to the mind of the reader. Plato seems to be purposely imitating (to a certain extent) the structure of the *Gorgias*, its interlocutors, some of the doctrines introduced or suggested by the other dialogue, and its method of rejecting the sincere response requirement. As we will see, however, the *Republic* develops beyond the *Gorgias*, both by describing a coherent view of human psychology to replace Socratic intellectualism, and by displaying a new sort of philosophical discussion that permanently leaves behind one of the most characteristic features of the Socratic method – the sincerity requirement.

The psychology of the *Republic*

In Book 4 of the *Republic*, Plato explicitly distinguishes three separate parts of the soul (*Rep.* 4, 436-441). Socrates opens the discussion with the question to be answered, wondering about various sorts of human activities:

T63. *Rep.* 4, 436a8-b2: *Τόδε δὲ ἤδη χαλεπόν, εἰ τῷ αὐτῷ τούτῳ ἕκαστα πράττομεν ἢ τρισὶν οὖσιν ἄλλο ἄλλῳ· μανθάνομεν μὲν ἑτέρῳ, θυμούμεθα δὲ ἄλλῳ τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν, ἐπιθυμοῦμεν δ' αὖ τρίτῳ τινὶ τῶν περὶ τὴν τροφήν τε καὶ γέννησιν ἡδονῶν καὶ ὅσα τούτων ἀδελφά, ἢ ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ καθ' ἕκαστον αὐτῶν πράττομεν, ὅταν ὁρμήσωμεν.*
[But this is hard [to understand], whether we perform each action with the very same part, or whether there are three parts and we perform different actions with different parts: we understand with one, and get angry with another of the parts in us, then with the third part we desire the pleasures concerned with nourishment and reproduction and whichever ones are related to these; or do we act, with respect to each of them, with one entire soul whenever we start to do something?]

From this passage it seems clear that Plato conceives of two sorts of psychology: either the soul consists of distinct parts that manage distinct forms of behavior, or all behaviors

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under this view, though, we can still claim that the *Republic* is recalling the *Gorgias* and preparing us for the parts of the soul doctrine of the later books.

are governed by one part. Plato's implication appears to be that the latter is the Socratic psychology (for, before the *Gorgias*, Socrates never even hints at parts of the soul), and that the one part of this soul is rational.[56]

Socrates soon offers a simple argument against this 'Socratic' psychology:

T64. *Rep.* 4, 436b8-c1: *Δῆλον ὅτι ταὐτὸν τἀναντία ποιεῖν ἢ πάσχειν κατὰ ταὐτόν γε καὶ πρὸς ταὐτὸν οὐκ ἐθελήσει ἅμα, ὥστε ἄν που εὑρίσκωμεν ἐν αὐτοῖς ταῦτα γιγνόμενα, εἰσόμεθα ὅτι οὐ ταὐτὸν ἦν ἀλλὰ πλείω.*
[It is clear that the same thing will not wish to do or suffer opposite things with the same part and with regard to the same thing at the same time, so that if we find these things happening in them anywhere, we'll know that it wasn't the same thing but many.]

Socrates then gets Glaucon to agree that sometimes a person wants to drink and does not want to drink at the same time (439c), thereby demonstrating that there must be at least two different parts of the soul in conflict with each other.[57] He proceeds to describe an instance of *akrasia*, the very existence of which is denied in the *Protagoras*:

T65. *Rep.* 4, 440a8-b2: *πολλαχοῦ αἰσθανόμεθα, ὅταν βιάζωνταί τινα παρὰ τὸν λογισμὸν ἐπιθυμίαι, λοιδοροῦντά τε αὐτὸν καὶ θυμούμενον τῷ βιαζομένῳ ἐν αὐτῷ.*
[[. . .] we often notice, whenever appetites compel someone contrary to his reason, he criticizes himself and gets angry at that part of himself which is compelling him.]

By acknowledging and giving a reason for such a phenomenon, Plato offers one explanation of how (for example) Polus could on the one hand agree that suffering injustice is better than committing it, yet on the other hand give no indication that he would actually act in accordance with this belief. If such a choice ever actually presented itself (i.e., whether to suffer or commit injustice), it seems that either the appetitive or the spirited part of his soul would conflict with the rational part, which would be telling him

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[56] For, as I argued in Chapter III, though Socrates talks in the *Protagoras* about how pleasures can mislead us, they can only do so if we misjudge their quantity on account of their proximity or distance; i.e., any such mistake is still rational.

[57] So here Socrates describes a situation in which a person wants to do two different things at the same time, whereas in the *Protagoras* he would presumably claim that the person wants to do different things at different times: e.g., first he wants to drink, then he does not want to drink, then (when the water is gone) he wants to drink again and regrets not having drunk.

to suffer injustice. In the *Republic*, then, Plato explains a psychological phenomenon whose existence he hints at in the *Gorgias*.

The method of the *Republic*

Rather than attempt a thorough discussion of the differences between the method of philosophical discussion in the latter books of the *Republic* and that shared by the first book of the *Republic* and the early Socratic dialogues, I will focus on two passages which I find to be emblematic of the two different methods.

In *Republic* 1, after Thrasymachus's views about justice and injustice have become clear, Socrates asks Glaucon how they might persuade Thrasymachus that the life of justice is more profitable (*λυσιτελέστερον*, 347e7) than the life of injustice:

T66. *Rep.* 1, 348a7-b9: *Ἂν μὲν τοίνυν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἀντικατατείναντες λέγωμεν αὐτῷ λόγον παρὰ λόγον, ὅσα αὖ ἀγαθὰ ἔχει τὸ δίκαιον εἶναι, καὶ αὖθις οὗτος, καὶ ἄλλον ἡμεῖς, ἀριθμεῖν δεήσει τἀγαθὰ καὶ μετρεῖν ὅσα ἑκάτεροι ἐν ἑκατέρῳ λέγομεν, καὶ ἤδη δικαστῶν τινων τῶν διακρινούντων δεησόμεθα· ἂν δὲ ὥσπερ ἄρτι ἀνομολογούμενοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους σκοπῶμεν, ἅμα αὐτοί τε δικασταὶ καὶ ῥήτορες ἐσόμεθα.*
Πάνυ μὲν οὖν, ἔφη.
Ὁποτέρως οὖν σοι, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἀρέσκει.
Οὕτως, ἔφη.
Ἴθι δή, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὦ Θρασύμαχε, ἀπόκριναι ἡμῖν ἐξ ἀρχῆς.
["Well then," I said, "if we talk to him, spreading out an argument in contrast, argument versus argument, saying how many good things justice has, then he speaks, and we make another argument, we'll have to count up the good things and measure how many each of us has mentioned for each kind of life, and then we'll need judges to decide. But if we investigate by agreeing with each other, as we've been doing, we ourselves will be judges and advocates at the same time."
"Absolutely," [Glaucon] said.
"Then which ever way pleases you," I said.
"The latter," he said.
"Come then, Thrasymachus," I said. "Answer us from the beginning."

Here the speech-making method of discussion, which Socrates so thoroughly criticizes in the *Protagoras* (334c-338e) and also avoids in the *Gorgias* (447c, 448d, 449b-c), is still

being explicitly avoided by Socrates, with preference given to what we can recognize, broadly, as the elenctic method – testing each other as you discuss a question. This passage aligns *Republic* 1 with the early dialogues with respect to methodology.

When we get to Book 2, however, the preference shifts to the method rejected in Book 1. Glaucon and Adeimantus ask whether Socrates wants to seem to have persuaded them that justice is better than injustice, or whether he wants truly to have persuaded them (357a4-b2). The two of them proceed to list the benefits traditionally ascribed to the unjust and the just life, respectively, and to explain what kind of argument they want from Socrates:

T67. *Rep.* 2, 367e1-5: *μὴ οὖν ἡμῖν ἐνδείξῃ μόνον τῷ λόγῳ ὅτι δικαιοσύνη ἀδικίας κρεῖττον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τί ποιοῦσα ἑκατέρα τὸν ἔχοντα αὐτὴ δι' αὑτήν, ἐάντε λανθάνῃ ἐάντε μὴ θεούς τε καὶ ἀνθρώπους, ἡ μὲν ἀγαθόν, ἡ δὲ κακόν ἐστι.*
[So don't just show us in your argument that justice is superior to injustice, but [show us] what each one is, itself by itself (whether or not it's hidden from gods and men), the one doing good to the person who has it, the other doing bad.]

Socrates goes on to explain (367e-368b) that he thought he had already shown that justice is better than injustice (i.e., in his conversation with Thrasymachus), but that he will make another attempt.

Glaucon and Adeimantus are dissatisfied with the sort of argument used in the conversation with Thrasymachus in Book 1.[58] They enumerate the benefits of injustice, then ask Socrates to give a better kind of argument for the claim that justice is really superior. Socrates goes on, in the next eight books, to make a thorough defense of justice. Though his defense is not just an enumeration of the benefits of justice, it is easy

[58] As Blondell (2002) 192-193 explains, the brothers "challenge not only the arguments of Book I, but the efficacy of the elenctic Sokrates' [sic] general approach as a means of discovering and teaching moral truth. [. . .] That they find Sokrates' refutation inadequate poses serious questions about the efficacy of his methods. That they adopt Thrasymachos' own method – the long rhetorical discourse – suggests that Sokrates' rejection of such techniques was at best premature."

to see how this method parallels the one rejected in Book 1: Glaucon first explains why injustice is superior, then Socrates explains why justice is better, and in the end (we imagine) they decide who wins. Plato seems to be trying to draw attention to the change in argumentative method that occurs in Book 2.[59]

One more important difference between the method of Book 1 and that of the rest of the *Republic* is the way that the interlocutor's sincerity is treated in the two parts. Though the sincere response requirement is violated in Book 1, and Socrates does not enforce it, he at least makes a show of invoking it with Thrasymachus. This lets us know that we are observing an elenctic dialogue, no matter how far from the ideal it wanders. In Book 2, though, it is clear that Glaucon and Adeimantus do not believe that injustice is superior to justice, although they defend that position (cf. 367a-b, 368a-b).[60] They *want* Socrates to defend justice. So here, beginning in Book 2, we see Socrates doing what he never does in the early dialogues: preaching to the converted. There will be no refutation of Glaucon and Adeimantus, merely of their arguments.[61] The goal is not merely to convince a skeptical interlocutor, but to create a broad and solid philosophical argument that will be able to persuade large numbers of people, no matter their

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[59] Of course, Plato does not reject Socratic methods wholesale. The rest of the *Republic* is still a conversation, and Glaucon and Adeimantus still have a role in determining its course. Nevertheless we are no longer witnessing the Socratic elenchus.

[60] Blondell (2002) 190: "There is a sharp contrast here with the usual sincerity requirement of the elenctic Sokrates. [. . .] Plato's brothers [. . .] are committed to the argument, but not to the views under scrutiny. And Adam (1900) I:71, commenting on Glaucon's language in his defense of injustice, writes that he "is most careful throughout the whole of this section to disclaim responsibility for the views he advocates."

[61] Contrast the conversation with Callicles, where he himself gets refuted, but his position (arguably) does not.

philosophical preconceptions. The transformation that has occurred in the method of the early dialogues is stark and obvious.[62]

Conclusion

For Socrates and Plato, the way in which one conducts philosophy is in some respects as important as the philosophy itself: it is not good enough to have philosophic thoughts; one must also live a philosophic life. The Socrates of the early dialogues is overwhelmingly concerned with moral questions, and wants his fellow Athenians to live better lives. He also has a conception of a unitary, rational soul. His practice of insisting on sincerity from his interlocutors makes perfect sense, in light of his psychology, for his program of moral reform: when people agree that Socrates is right, they will henceforth behave as he does.

I hope to have demonstrated in this paper that the *Gorgias* shows Plato abandoning some of Socrates' specific views and methods. Socrates' psychology, and the method that reflects it, are both coming to seem inadequate to Plato. He leaves clues of the alternatives that he will adopt, but does not make them explicit. The *Gorgias* is thus a pivotal dialogue in Plato's career, and the changes it shows him going through seem irreversible – he will never be the same philosopher again. By the time he wrote the *Republic*, Plato had a fully developed alternative to Socratic psychology and methodology. To be sure, he retained important aspects of both. But he notably

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[62] Cross and Woozley (1964) 62 observe a further difference: "it is striking, in contrast to the Socratic method of Book I, that now it is Glaucon who asks the questions, and that it is Socrates who offers answers to them." For other descriptions of the difference between Book 1 and the rest of the *Republic*, see Annas (1981) 16-17, 59; Blondell (2002) 193-199; Irwin (1995) 169-170.

abandoned the unitary conception of the soul, the denial of *akrasia*, and the sincere response requirement that went along with them. The *Republic* is therefore a culmination of the transformation hinted at in the *Gorgias*.

In focusing on the sincere response requirement, I necessarily passed over in silence many aspects of Socrates' method. In addition, I barely hinted at the methods that Plato later adopts in his search for philosophical truth. But I hope that my investigation has shown how fruitful it can be to approach Plato's dialogues from what are often considered to be distinct fields of inquiry: method and doctrine. For Plato, the two were inseparable, and we need to study them hand in hand.

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