The Ancient Quarrel between Philosophy and Poetry Revisited

Plato and the Greek Literary Tradition

Susan B. Levin

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ABBREVIATIONS AND TEXTS

Abbreviations

Aeschylus (Aesch.)

Ag.	*Agamemnon*
Cho.	*Libation Bearers*
Eum.	*Eumenides*
Pers.	*Persians*
PV	*Prometheus Bound*
Sept.	*Seven against Thebes*
Supp.	*Suppliants*

Aristotle (Arist.)

Cael.	*De Caelo*
DA	*De Anima*
EE	*Eudemian Ethics*
EN	*Nicomachean Ethics*
GA	*Generation of Animals*
HA	*History of Animals*
Metaph.	*Metaphysics*
Rhet.	*Rhetoric*
Top.	*Topics*

Euripides (Eur.)

Alc.	*Alcestis*
Andr.	*Andromache*
Bacch.	*Bacchae*
Cyc.	*Cyclops*
El.	*Electra*
HF	*Heracles*
Hec.	*Hecuba*
Hel.	*Helen*
Hipp.	*Hippolytus*
IA	*Iphigenia in Aulis*
IT	*Iphigenia in Tauris*
Med.	*Medea*
Or.	*Orestes*
Phoen.	*Phoenician Women*
Rhes.	*Rhesus*
Supp.	*Suppliants*
Tro.	*Trojan Women*

Herodotus (Hdt.)

Hesiod (Hes.)

Op.	*Works and Days*
Th.	*Theogony*

Homer (Hom.)

Il.	*Iliad*
Od.	*Odyssey*

Pindar (Pind.)

Isthm.	*Isthmian Odes*
Nem.	*Nemean Odes*
Ol.	*Olympian Odes*
Pyth.	*Pythian Odes*

Plato

Chrm.	*Charmides*
Cra.	*Cratylus*
Criti.	*Critias*
Euphr.	*Euthyphro*
Euthd.	*Euthydemus*
Grg.	*Gorgias*
La.	*Laches*
Leg.	*Laws*
Phd.	*Phaedo*
Phdr.	*Phaedrus*
Pol.	*Politicus*
Prm.	*Parmenides*
Prt.	*Protagoras*
Rep.	*Republic*
Soph.	*Sophist*
Symp.	*Symposium*
Tht.	*Theaetetus*
Tim.	*Timaeus*

Sophocles (Soph.)

Aj.	*Ajax*
El.	*Electra*
OC	*Oedipus at Colonus*
OT	*Oedipus Tyrannus*
Phil.	*Philoctetes*
Trach.	*Women of Trachis*

DK	H. Diels. [1951–1952] 1992. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker.* Ed. W. Kranz. Vols. 1–2. 6th ed. Reprint, Zurich: Weidmann.
LSJ	H.G. Liddell and R. Scott. 1940. A *Greek-English Lexicon.* 9th ed. Revised and augmented by H. S. Jones. With a revised supplement, 1996. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
N^2	A. Nauck, ed. 1889. *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta.* 2d ed. Leipzig: Teubner.
OCT	Oxford Classical Text

Texts

Citations of Plato, Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Herodotus are from the OCT editions. For volume 1 of Plato, I have used the 1995 edition of Duke, Hicken, Nicoll, Robinson, and Strachan. For authors other than those mentioned above, I have used the texts listed in the Bibliography.

Unless otherwise noted, translations of Plato are my own, and renderings of Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, the tragedians, and Herodotus are from the following sources, at times with modifications (publication details are provided in the Bibliography): *Iliad*, R. Lattimore; *Odyssey*, R. Fitzgerald or A. T. Murray; Hesiod, S. Lombardo or H. G. Evelyn-White; Pindar, F. J. Nisetich; tragedy, D. Grene and R. Lattimore, eds., *The Complete Greek Tragedies* (except that renderings of Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* are from R. Fitzgerald, and those of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* are either from *The Complete Greek Tragedies* or from P. Vellacott); Herodotus, A. de Sélincourt; and the Homeric hymns, A. N. Athanassakis. Unless otherwise indicated in the Bibliography, translations of French and German sources are my own.

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INTRODUCTION

Plato's middle dialogues have received an extraordinary amount of attention, and much work has been done to illuminate his engagement with other philosophers and the sophists as he articulates a range of doctrines therein.[1] Socrates, Parmenides, and Heraclitus are regularly identified as the key influences on Plato's theory of Forms. According to the standard account, Plato continues Socrates' quest—undertaken in opposition to the sophists—to articulate what objective standards in the arena of values consist in, and adds to this emphasis on values a strong concern with other entities, particularly those in the domain of mathematics. In addition, as Aristotle emphasizes, Plato departs from his teacher by insisting on the separate existence of the objective standards in question.[2] Moreover, he is in substantial accord with Parmenides' depiction of reality as a changeless whole, although Plato's insistence on the necessary existence of Forms in a range of cases evinces his refusal to endorse his predecessor's strict construction of the principle that what is, is one.[3] Finally, Plato takes up

1. As Kahn (1996, 44) points out, while the term "middle dialogues" originally referred to "the stylistically intermediate group," it is currently applied to the works of Plato's "middle period" delineated with regard to content (i.e., to those dialogues that introduce and articulate the theory of Forms). As my remarks in what follows make clear, by "middle dialogues" I have in mind those that are intermediate in the latter respect. The *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic* fit closely together as dialogues that present various facets of the theory of Forms; on the *Cratylus*' membership in this group of dialogues, see n. 4.

2. See *Phd.* 78d, 100b; *Symp.* 211b; *Rep.* 516b; *Prm.* 128e–129a, 129d, 130b–d. In Aristotle, see *EN* 1096b; *Metaph.* 987b, 1086b.

3. For Parmenides identified as "the most important single influence" on the theory of Forms, see Kahn 1996, 82. Curd (1998, 228–41) too stresses the centrality of Parmenides as a backdrop for Plato's account. She diverges from the dominant interpretation of Parmenides' monism, however, in claiming that his "arguments allow for a plurality of fundamental, predicationally unified entities that can be used to explain the world reported by the senses" (241).

Heraclitus' emphasis on the striking presence of change but restricts the applicability of that account to the spatiotemporal world, insisting that reality, or nature proper, is utterly free of mutation.

In the area of epistemology, Plato endorses Parmenides' contention that knowledge, or understanding, has an exalted status, but his way of positioning opinion solidly between it and ignorance (*Rep.* 476–480) makes clear that he is contesting Parmenides' insistence that all cognitive states besides knowledge are entirely without value. In addition, Plato's delineation of the role of sense-perception in recollection (*Phd.* 72–77) constitutes a refinement of accounts, offered by various Presocratic philosophers, that endorse perception's ultimate subordination to thought without stating clearly the role of each and how the two faculties interrelate. Moreover, the middle dialogues' description of what knowledge involves, and how it is acquired, poses a challenge to the sophistic view that the highest possible cognitive state is opinion.

Regarding ethics, the form and direction of Socrates' concern is a crucial inspiration to Plato, while sophistic relativism is targeted quite forcefully. In addition, certain Presocratics (above all, Democritus and Heraclitus) have a limited role as antecedents with respect to the general direction of Plato's theorizing. Commentators have recognized, moreover, that the Greek literary tradition, in particular Homer and tragedy, is a central target of Plato's treatment of human character in a discussion (*Rep.* 2–3, 10) that interweaves ethical and pedagogical issues. Aside from this recognition of Plato's concern with literature in the arena of values, interpreters have taken his pivotal antecedents and opponents as he develops key doctrines in the middle dialogues to be philosophical and sophistic.

Plato's salient interests in the middle dialogues, however, extend beyond these arenas to encompass topics in the domain of the philosophy of language. In fact, an examination of the middle dialogues reveals a strong concern with linguistic issues, in particular with the correctness of words or names (*orthotēs onomatōn*). This interest is prominent in the *Cratylus*, where Plato concentrates on etymology, rejecting the view that it is either a fruitful guide to essences or a linguistic counterpart to the right conception thereof; in the *Phaedo*, where, seeking a linguistic correlate to his account of reality centering on Forms, Plato turns to the eponymy, or "named-after," relation; and in *Republic* 5, where his view of reality leads Plato to occupy himself with the proper application of what one may call "functional terms" (e.g., "ruler," "parent").[4] In what follows, I investigate

4. With regard to chronology, I am in accord with those who place the *Cratylus* near the beginning of that group of dialogues comprising the *Symposium*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic*: for this view, see Kahn 1973, 1986; Ross 1955; Méridier 1931; von Arnim 1912. Although some have linked it with the *Theaetetus*, Luce (1964) and Calvert (1970) provide a range of grounds for adhering to the earlier date. Cf. Brandwood's study of Platonic chronology (1990), which groups the *Cratylus* with the *Phaedo* and *Symposium*, and Kahn 1996. With respect to thematic considerations, while final determinations are of course not possible, in my view Plato's handling of *orthotēs onomatōn*

all three discussions with the aim of supplementing familiar accounts of the key antecedents of Plato's reflections. I will argue, based on literary evidence and consideration of the dialogues, that Plato's engagement with this tradition in the middle period—when he articulates many of the theories for which he is best known—plays a more important role in his development than has been recognized.

Regarding the *Cratylus*' handling of *orthotēs onomatōn* qua etymologizing, interpreters' accounts of sources have focused on philosophers and sophists. In contrast to previous commentators, I maintain that Plato's most direct and prominent opponent with respect to etymologizing is in fact the Greek literary tradition of the eighth through fifth centuries.[5] My claim is not that other proposed sources (e.g., Heraclitus and Protagoras) are irrelevant to Plato's reflections in the dialogue but rather that they are not justifiably pinpointed as the most central targets of his critique. In order to ground this contention about literary practice, chapter 1 concentrates on authors' powerful interest, manifested in their recourse to etymology, in what they view as deep connections between elements of language and of reality. In their conduct of this activity, as we will see, they focus most often on showing how a wide range of proper names, once analyzed, disclose something salient about the natures of their individual bearers. This extensive survey of literary etymology, including the delineation of categories and subcategories into which authors' analyses fall, provides an indispensable basis for the consideration of Plato's critique of etymology in the *Cratylus*.

Based on literary evidence and what transpires in the dialogue itself, I contend in chapter 2 that the literary tradition is the etymological discussion's most direct and central opponent. The *Cratylus*' references to Protagoras and Prodicus, conjoined with their known interest in *orthotēs onomatōn*, have appeared to many to provide solid evidence for the claim that the dialogue bears the marks of a strong sophistic influence. Although this view of the sophists' impact may seem plausible at first glance, it does not survive scrutiny. Once one sees how Prodicus and Protagoras handled *orthotēs onomatōn*, and that Plato's interest takes a very different form, it becomes evident why sophistic reflections have only limited

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and metaphysical issues pertaining thereto, particularly as it involves the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo*, offers strong support to the earlier placement. It should be noted, however, that my thesis about Plato's relationship to the literary tradition does not depend on the outcome of the debate about chronology in the sense that the scope and depth of his engagement with it remain the same regardless of where one chooses to locate the *Cratylus*.

5. With respect to chronology in the case of Homer and Hesiod, I follow Kirk (1989, 6–7), who proposes a date for Homer in the middle to late eighth century and places Hesiod in the early seventh. The figures considered in the present study of etymology and eponymy are Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Herodotus. When exploring the use of functional terms, I concentrate on tragedy. "Literary tradition" is preferable to "poetry" as a way of referring specifically to Plato's sources in the cases of etymology and eponymy because the former rubric, but not the latter, allows for the inclusion of Herodotus.

bearing on the *Cratylus.* Having offered support to the view that Plato's recourse to the literary tradition is strongly evident there, I supplement my account of its centrality to his assessment of etymology by arguing that the *Cratylus* is not the only place where he evinces a concern with the way in which literary authors exploit the descriptive content of *onomata*. When discussing early education in *Republic* 2–3, Plato dwells extensively on the content of acceptable poetry. Most important for our purposes is the fact that he addresses explicitly the topic of names. Following an investigation of the *Cratylus'* ties to the literary tradition, I propose that if one considers its etymologies of individual deities' names in light of the *Republic*'s criteria for acceptable poetry, a highly significant pattern comes to light. In the final section of the chapter, I complete my discussion of the *Cratylus'* sources by commenting on candidates who found favor as Plato's inspiration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Having already discussed Prodicus and Protagoras due to Plato's mention of them when framing the *Cratylus'* inquiry into *orthotēs onomatōn*, at this juncture I consider a range of additional figures—above all, philosophers—suggesting why accounts that assign them a central place are also open to question.

Chapter 3 focuses on the *Cratylus'* philosophical concerns and outcome. In the early and middle dialogues, Plato is consistently occupied with two closely related questions: what entities can properly be said to be real (i.e., have natures), and who may justifiably be called *eudaimōn* (i.e., said to flourish)? Since one must practice certain *technai* in order to determine what is unqualifiedly real, and knowing what has this status is necessary for flourishing, one can understand Plato's qualifications for being *eudaimōn* only if one examines his views about *technē*. Plato's systematic critique of poetry in dialogues up to and including the *Republic* transpires in terms of challenges to its *technē* status. Early in the *Cratylus*, Plato "grants" the rank of *technē* to the practice of naming qua etymologizing. As in the *Gorgias*, however, where Plato investigates rhetoric, in this case too what purports at first to be a *technē* later turns out not to meet his strict criteria. In the *Cratylus*, the literary tradition provides Plato with crucial material employed in his challenge to the *technē* status of naming; by the time the dialogue draws to a close, however, Plato has rejected that tradition's methodology and its guiding assumptions. While interpreters have noted Plato's inclusion of a "craft analogy" early in the *Cratylus*, when the discussion turns briefly to shuttles, they have not recognized the crucial role played by the concept of *technē* in the dialogue as a whole. In this chapter I show how Plato frames and executes his challenge to the view that naming qua etymologizing qualifies as a *technē*.

Interpreters diverge substantially in their views not only about the *Cratylus'* sources but also regarding its content and significance. Some have doubted that the dialogue has a serious purpose and concluded that it is of only minor philosophical importance. Others, in contrast, attending to the opening portion of the *Cratylus* (383–390) and to Plato's handling of etymology or phonetic constitution, maintain that the dialogue advances a theory that one may treat as Plato's own. While I agree that Plato's intentions in the *Cratylus* are serious, in chap-

ter 3 I argue that they do not issue in the elaboration there of substantive positive views. Instead, after a lengthy inquiry, Plato renounces constructions of naturalness and appropriateness that have as their foundation the constitution of *onomata*. Although the dialogue has a largely critical focus, Plato offers clues to the direction of his positive theorizing. Discussion of these leads naturally to reflection on Plato's preferred approaches to *orthotēs onomatōn*. This is the focus of chapter 4, which examines the *Phaedo* and *Republic* 5. While the topic of the *Cratylus*' sources has received significant attention, the issue of antecedents has not been a locus of concern among interpreters of the *Phaedo* and *Republic* 5. With respect to the latter two cases, I argue that Plato's own theories of *orthotēs onomatōn* constitute revised versions of notions that figure importantly in literature.

In the *Phaedo*, Plato uses the framework of eponymy to explain how terms such as "just" and "beautiful" may properly apply both to Forms and to their participants in the spatiotemporal realm. Although commentators have seen the importance of eponymy to Plato's thought, they have not examined its antecedents. Based on the study of extant evidence, I contend that the literary tradition's handling of eponymy, which, like that of etymology, may be divided into numerous categories and subcategories, constitutes a heretofore unexplored precedent for the new, technical usage that correlates with Plato's view of reality. Most importantly, reflection on literary eponymy allows one to distinguish Plato's inheritance from those innovations that typify his employment of the device with a philosophical end in view.

In the second portion of this chapter, I turn to *Republic* 5, where Plato's theory of the assignment of sociopolitical and familial roles in the ideal community leads him to grant an important role to a revised version of a third linguistic device central to Greek literature. Plato attends seriously to the prescriptive use of terms like "mother" in tragedy and incorporates in the *Republic* the notion, stressed repeatedly by the poets, that biological ties are neither a sufficient nor even a necessary condition for the ascription of kinship bonds. In addition, like the tragedians, he distinguishes explicitly between being someone's relation in name only—that is, merely bearing the labels of kinship—and behaving in the way characteristic of one with a given role. Far from simply incorporating the tragedians' views wholesale, however, Plato's handling of functional terms in *Republic* 5 reflects key points of divergence from literary practice. Having investigated Plato's revised treatments of *orthotēs onomatōn* with respect to eponymy and the use of functional terms, I end chapter 4 with remarks on a possible tie between his constructions of these devices insofar as individuals correctly dubbed "rulers" are regarded as such based on their awareness that key terms have both primary and secondary referents (i.e., Forms and their participants, respectively).

From our perspective, according to which a wide range of disciplinary boundaries are assumed as a point of departure for inquiry—even if one proceeds to go beyond them—it may seem odd, even quite implausible, to claim that Plato

makes substantial use of a literary backdrop as he develops his own theories. Once one examines the situation from the vantage point that Plato would have had, however, this state of affairs appears much less remarkable. From this perspective, in fact, it would seem odd if Plato had ignored this group of influential authors even, indeed precisely, where their reflections were directly relevant to his own discussions.

Regarding the context in which Plato operates, the key point to stress is that he and his audience were familiar not only with the work of philosophers and sophists but also, and deeply so, with the constructions of literary figures. Marrou (1981, 25) emphasizes the preeminent role played by Homer, particularly the *Iliad*, in classical education.[6] Plato himself is quite clear on the matter of Homer's importance.[7] Over time, Hesiod, Pindar, and the tragedians Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were also recognized as influential educators.[8]

Plato's writings give eloquent testimony to the tremendous influence of the traditional literary education. As Marrou (1981, 118) observes, they illustrate "in a striking manner the extent to which Plato's personal cultivation had been fostered by and had profited from the traditional poetic education: quotations from Homer, the lyric poets, and the tragedians come spontaneously to his pen." In addition, Plato's discussions of literature in the *Republic* and *Laws* leave no doubt about the role this tradition played in Athenian education: the preface to his criticisms of poetry in *Republic* 2 reports as common knowledge the fact that literary study occupied a central position in the traditional curriculum (376e2–9); on its importance, the Athenian Stranger's remarks in the *Laws* (810e6–811a7; cf. 654a6–7) are also unequivocal.[9]

It is not merely some Athenian elite who had significant exposure to literature. The greatest of the dramatic festivals, the annual City (or Great) Dionysia

6. As Kirk (1989, 1) observes, "learning his poetry by heart was an essential part of ordinary education." On the topic of memorization, see the comments of Niceratus in Xenophon's *Symposium* (3.5).

7. See, e.g., *Rep.* 606e1–607a3. The poet's significance is also evident from the force of the *Republic*'s attacks on him, as well as from the great number of passages in the dialogues in which Plato either refers directly to Homer or clearly has him in view.

8. It is important to note that poets' writings had an educational impact in multiple contexts: on the one hand, the works of poets like Homer were introduced in primary schools; on the other hand and more generally, the influence of these authors and their writings pervaded Athenian culture, notably through the presentation of tragedies at the dramatic festivals. Regarding the genesis of the schools, see Marrou 1981, pt. 1, chap. 4.

9. On this issue, see also *Prt.* 324d7–326b6. In his attempts qua philosopher to propound what he takes to be the optimal curriculum, Plato is rivaled by Isocrates, who insists that his activity constitutes philosophy and that he is the genuine philosopher (*Antidosis* 270–71; cf. 285). Various comments of Isocrates, taken together, both acknowledge the pervasiveness of poetry and recommend its continued inclusion in general education. Like Plato, however, Isocrates advocates a course of selective exposure and study and offers his share of criticisms (for his attitude, see *Antidosis* 266–68; *To Demonicus* 51–52; *To Nicocles* 2–3, 13, 43–44, 48–50; *Busiris* 38–40; cf. *Panathenaicus* 17–34).

held in Athens, became important in the sixth century.[10] In the fifth and fourth centuries, this festival, along with the Country Dionysia and Lenaia, saw the performance of vast numbers of tragedies and comedies. In the fifth century, original tragedies presented in Athens could be reproduced subsequently at the Country Dionysia. During the fourth, repeat performances were allowed even at the City Dionysia, and eventually it was stipulated that a certain proportion of the festival would be occupied by the reproduction of classics from the writings of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Large portions of the Athenian population attended these dramatic productions, and full citizens on the deme register received a subsidy (*theōrikon*) from deme officials; this apparently covered not just the cost of the ticket but also helped citizens to meet other festival expenses.[11]

On the level of specific poets, Aeschylus enjoyed such popular acclaim that following his death the Athenian people passed a decree allowing the production of his plays to continue. Moreover, after the disastrous Sicilian expedition during the Peloponnesian War, some Athenian prisoners received food and water, and in certain instances their freedom, by reciting from memory excerpts from the plays of Euripides.[12] On the comedic front, Aristophanes' *Frogs* was so well received that it was performed a second time due to popular demand.[13]

In fact, the *Frogs* itself illustrates the degree of acquaintance with poetry that could be assumed even in the case of those ordinary Athenians who filled the

10. The traditional date of the first tragic performance is 534 B.C. under Thespis. My discussion of the dramatic festivals is based on Pickard-Cambridge 1988, chaps. 1, 2, 6; Parke 1977, pt. 1, chaps. 6, 7, 9. Pickard-Cambridge (1988, 58) ties the City Dionysia's achievement of importance to the policy of Pisistratus. He claims, in addition, that the *Didaskaliai* included in Diogenes Laertius' catalogue of Aristotle's writings "no doubt took its title from the official language of the festival. The poet was said διδάσκειν τραγῳδίαν or κωμῳδίαν" (1988, 71); this terminology highlights poets' educational role.

11. During the City Dionysia, a holiday was declared (prisoners were even released on bail for the occasion). Plato has harsh words for those "lovers of sights and sounds" who rush to attend all of the dramatic festivals (*Rep.* 475d); on the public's familiarity with dramatic performances, cf. Isocrates, *Panathenaicus* 168. The privilege of a seat of honor (*proedria*) was granted by the state, and certain portions of the theater were reserved (e.g., for the Council). Due to the festival's tremendous popularity—more Athenians and foreigners gathered in the city for this event than at any other time during the year—Athenian officials chose the festival as the setting for various important displays. In the fifth century, the City Dionysia was set as the date for delivery of the empire's tribute to Athens, and this tribute was actually displayed to the festival audience before the tragedies were performed; in addition, there was an event centering on orphans of those who had died in battle. In the fourth century, awards of golden crowns to politicians or other Athenian benefactors were announced at the new tragedies. Moreover, the public importance of the City Dionysia is suggested by the fact that directly following the event the Assembly held a meeting in the Dionysiac theater at which officials' conduct of the festival was evaluated. On citizens' role as chorus members, see Pickard-Cambridge 1988, 75–77.

12. In addition to Pickard-Cambridge 1988, 276, see Havelock 1986, 94.

13. The play was produced at the Lenaia in 405 B.C., where it took first prize. On the issue of its repetition, see Pickard-Cambridge 1988, 275.

comedic audience.[14] Aristophanes is quite aware of his own educational role and of tragedy's importance to the public.[15] In this play, he stages an Underworld contest between Aeschylus and Euripides, the goal being for each of the two poets to show why he is of the greatest potential benefit to his native Athens and hence should be permitted to depart from Hades in order to aid that city in its darkest hour. In his conduct of the dispute, which ends with preference being granted to Aeschylus as the superior educator, Aristophanes presupposes a more-than-generic familiarity with the compositions of both tragedians.[16] Regarding the *Frogs*' handling of tragedy, Jaeger (1945, 377) observes that the play, "written in the brief interval between the death of the two poets [Euripides and Sophocles] and the fall of Athens, is charged with a . . . tragic emotion. As the situation of Athens became more hopeless, and the pressure on the morale of her citizens increased to the breaking-point, they grew more eager for spiritual comfort and strength. Now at last we can see what tragedy meant to the Athenian people."

Based on such well-known facts about the content of Athenian education—viewed as occurring both outside and within the primary schools—one may assume that while they themselves are neither poets nor part of the poetic treatment of the issues in question, both Plato and his intended philosophical audience were quite familiar with this literature and the evolving, often mutually critical dialogue contained therein. This means that while Plato frequently makes explicit reference to poets, individually or in various collections, it is not necessary for him to do so when alluding to or drawing on them, just as it is not required that he mention other philosophers by name in order for his audience to be aware that he has their ideas in view. Our different perspective on disciplinary boundaries, combined with the fact that Plato's recourse to these sources is not always explicit, helps to explain why commentators so often overlook their full importance. Since they assume Plato's frequent engagement with philosophers and sophists, they regularly seek and find evidence of that concern even where it remains unstated. Democritus, for example, is never mentioned by name in the dialogues, but this has not prevented his being identified as an important Platonic opponent.[17] Be-

14. The likely date of the first comic performance is 486 B.C. (see Pickard-Cambridge 1988, 72; Parke 1977, 129). As Dover (1970, xiv) observes, "the paradox of comedy is that it was written for a mass audience by sophisticated poets with high technical standards."

15. On the atmosphere in which the *Frogs* was produced and the play's import, see Jaeger 1945, bk. 2, chap. 5.

16. Both the Chorus's reaction to the decision (1482–84) and Pluto's final instructions to the poet (1500–1503) stress Aeschylus' educational function.

17. See, e.g., Guthrie 1975, 37. To give another, less dramatic, example, although the *Republic* does not mention Parmenides, he has been treated as a central antecedent of the figures of the Sun, Line, and Cave in Books 6–7: according to Ferguson (1963, 191), the passage "is highly Parmenidean, and this fact is necessary to the understanding of it." In addition, as is frequently observed, *Republic* 5's treatment of knowledge and opinion (474–480) has a strong Parmenidean backdrop. On this Eleatic philosopher as a foundation for Diotima's "vision" in the *Symposium*, see Kahn 1996, 69. My remarks at the outset of the introduction include further examples.

cause interpreters do not expect a similar level of involvement with literary sources, however, they are less likely either to give explicit references their due or to discover evidence of a concern with them where such references are lacking. Study of the relevant literary material helps to place one in the position in which Plato's own audience found itself when confronted with his treatments of *orthotēs onomatōn*; that is to say, it provides one with crucial background which that philosophical audience would have appealed to without hesitation but which we, nearly two and a half millennia removed from that setting, generally do not consult.

There is a noteworthy paradox at work here. Firm boundaries between philosophy and science or philosophy and literature are not in place in Plato's time. Plato is concerned, particularly in the *Republic*, to defend some crucial distinctions between the latter two domains. Even as he works hard to forge what we would call "disciplinary" boundaries, however, Plato remains very much a part of his culture in the sense that, as I will argue regarding his philosophy of language, in formulating his theories he continues to find it just as natural to draw on literary sources as on philosophical and sophistic ones.

I should say a few words at this juncture about my own interpretive stance toward Plato. Commentators are paying increasing attention to the "literary" or "poetic" side of his thought and expression. Quite often this involves stressing what they view as the central role in Plato's writings of literary devices such as myths and allegories and using the fact that he wrote in dialogue form as a basis for challenging what commentators have labeled a "doctrinal" stance toward the interpretation of his writings.[18] The alternative methodology endorsed might be aporetic, or it might consist in the attempt, made frequently in recent work on Plato, to forge middle ground—a so-called third way—between doctrinal and aporetic stances.[19] The present study shares with the work of many recent interpreters a concern with Plato and the "poetic" or "literary." It underscores quite different manifestations of his interest, however, offering extensive support to the view that one may illustrate the scope and depth of Plato's engagement with literature while continuing to espouse a doctrinal approach, indeed, that attending to literary sources makes a crucial contribution to our understanding of his theories. As is the case when one focuses on Plato's concerns in other areas, so too with the relevant linguistic issues; one understands best what is distinctive in his theories if one sets them against the backdrop of the pertinent antecedents. As it happens, the most relevant backdrop with respect to *orthotēs onomatōn* is the literary tradition, hence my concern with that tradition in the context of pursuing a doctrinal methodology.

18. For recent accounts that emphasize such "literary" considerations, see Gordon 1999; Rutherford 1995; Gonzalez 1995; Sayre 1995; Press 1993; Arieti 1991; Griswold 1988.

19. This phrase appears in the title of the collection of essays edited by Gonzalez that was mentioned in the previous note. For his own latest attempts to articulate what adopting this approach involves, see Gonzalez 1998a, 1998b.

Having investigated Plato's handling of linguistic issues in the *Cratylus*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic* 5, I end the book with reflections on his famous critique of poetry in *Republic* 2–3 and 10. The *Cratylus*' critical strategy with respect to etymology, which centers on the concept of *technē*, suggests a need and provides a blueprint for a more comprehensive evaluation of poetry. As I will argue, while the former dialogue limits itself to one aspect of poetry's content (i.e., etymological analyses of *onomata* that are supposed to disclose their referents' natures), the latter challenges the *technē* status of poetry as such. Following an investigation of the ties between these two critiques and of philosophy's status as the preeminent *technē*, I conclude my treatment of the *Republic* with remarks on poetry's potential and on the relation envisioned by Plato between it and philosophy. Although Plato's insistence that poetry may have a role in his *polis* only if its benefit can be demonstrated might lead one to expect a strongly negative outcome to the *Republic*'s inquiry with respect to poetic praxis as a whole, I argue that his conclusions are in crucial respects positive. My interpretation of *Republic* 2–3 and 10 diverges both from the view of interpreters who claim that Plato excludes poetry from the community he envisions and from the position of those who contend that it remains but falls strictly in the domain of the "poet-philosopher." I claim instead that Plato reserves an important role for a distinct practice of poetry both in the project of attitude formation that is the focus of early education and in the broader communal context, where poetic compositions will be integral to a range of civic occasions. Thus, Plato's investigations of *orthotēs onomatōn* in the middle dialogues, conjoined with the *Republic*'s familiar critique of poets, offer strong support to the view that, in his reflections on language and institutional structures, as in his theorizing about reality and knowledge, Plato takes serious account of the most promising ideas and talents that his predecessors—regardless of their identity—have to offer. Plato is often seen as the source in Western thought of a dichotomy between philosophy and literature that is highly pernicious. As I suggest in the book's conclusion, if the interpretation defended here is on the right track, then this widespread view of his role is in need of revision.

1

LITERARY ETYMOLOGY

Writers in the literary tradition frequently articulate the descriptive content of *onomata*, largely proper names, by way of etymology.[1] Thus, for example, they trace "Apollo" to *apollumi* ("destroy") and "Hector" to *echō* ("protect"). Such analyses of *onomata* are thought to disclose something important about their referents' natures. Literary authors' reliance on etymology raises central issues involving the link between elements of language and of reality. In what follows, I explore literary practice in order to provide a basis for the examination of Plato's critique of etymologizing in the *Cratylus*.

Previous accounts of the dialogue's sources typically focus on various philosophers and sophists. One difficulty with such proposals is that, due to the general paucity of surviving evidence regarding the views of earlier philosophers and sophists, it remains unclear whether and to what extent various figures appealed to etymology in the manner at issue in the *Cratylus*. In addition, even where a certain amount of evidence exists, a failure to distinguish between multiple constructions of *orthotēs onomatōn*, or various types of "wordplay," has contributed to a tendency to assimilate others' activity more closely to Plato's practice than the existing relationship between their approaches justifies. The following survey is therefore essential because it makes clear that the literary tradition's recourse to etymology fits the bill as the most direct and central backdrop for the *Cratylus* with respect to the extent and character of appeals to etymology, as well as concerning the view of natures that grounds those appeals.

1. As Robinson (1969, 101) has observed, in the Greek notion of an *onoma* "there lay undistinguished at least five notions that are distinct now: the proper name, the name, the word, the noun, and the subject of predication." While literary etymology is not limited to proper names, these are its most central concern. In addition, as we will see, these *onomata* are most directly pertinent as the foundation for Plato's inquiry in the *Cratylus*.

When one investigates literary etymology, what is particularly striking is the wide range of criteria on the basis of which *onomata* are said to be assigned. First, names might be traced to something important involving the birth and early existence of their referents. Second, in numerous cases appellations are correlated with features or aspects of their referents, among them character traits and capacities. A third category comprises instances in which assignments are tied to actions. Fourth, *onomata* might be linked to significant effects that their referents have on mortals. Fifth, writers offer etymologies of names based on objects with which their bearers are associated. Sixth, a feature of the place from which someone hails may ground an appellation. In a seventh type of case, a natural, inanimate entity might receive its *onoma* based on an important individual with whom it is connected. An eighth category consists of instances in which writers' analyses of names underscore their referents' function in social or familial contexts. Ninth and finally, *onomata* may be traced to roles and special powers of the divine. The foregoing list conveys a sense of the diversity of factors to which literary authors appeal in drawing attention to the descriptive content of *onomata*. In what follows, I provide a detailed exploration of writers' use of these criteria.[2]

First, as noted, appellations might be derived from something important pertaining to an individual's birth and early life: more specifically, they may be traced to the manner or direct cause of an individual's genesis, an object with which the named individual is associated at birth, the place of an individual's birth, events prior to birth, or those occurring not long thereafter. With respect to the origin of individuals, Hesiod speaks of the deity whom gods and human beings call "Aphrodite," "since it was in foam she was nourished" (οὕνεκ' ἐν ἀφρῷ θρέφθη, *Th.* 197–98). In Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, the king of Argos identifies himself as Pelasgus, "son of Palaechthon earth-born" (τοῦ γηγενοῦς . . . Παλαίχθονος ἶνις, 250–51); by so doing, Pelasgus highlights the descriptive content of his father's name (cf. 253, χθόνα). Another pertinent case involves justice, which the literary tradition treats as a female deity: "In the fighting Orestes' hand was steered by the very daughter of Zeus: Right we call her, mortals who speak of her and name her well" (ἔθιγε δ' ἐν μάχαι χερὸς ἐτήτυμος Διὸς κόρα,

2. No one set of categories could do justice to the complexity of literary etymology; the divisions used here simply facilitate the organization of this material for present purposes. In the case of passages that might reasonably be categorized in multiple ways, I make what seems on balance to be the best choice. In addition, this survey is not intended to be exhaustive but simply to convey a sense of the prominence and range of literary authors' interest in etymologizing. I should note, moreover, that my interest here is not in the philological accuracy of writers' derivations but solely in the analyses that they proffer and the criteria on the basis of which connections between *onomata* are forged. Finally, and more generally, the book's investigation of literary treatments of *orthotēs onomatōn* includes the study, facilitated by the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (copyrighted by TLG and the Regents of the University of California), of passages in which *onoma* and related terms appear. With respect to literature, however, as in the case of Plato, my interest is in the relevant linguistic phenomena, by whatever terms they are introduced.

Δίκαν δέ νιν προσαγορεύομεν βροτοὶ τυχόντες καλῶς, Aesch. *Cho.* 948–51). Aeschylus traces the genesis of the name "Dike" to the fact that its referent is Zeus's daughter (Διὸς κόρα). Aeschylus' reference to her elsewhere as "Justice, Zeus's virgin daughter" (ἡ Διὸς παῖς παρθένος Δίκη, *Sept.* 662) underscores this same idea. Hesiod before him had spoken of the maiden as "virgin Justice, the daughter of Zeus" (ἡ παρθένος Δίκη, Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα, *Op.* 256); given the similarities between the formulations in *Seven against Thebes* and *Works and Days*, it is conceivable, even likely, that Aeschylus intentionally recalls Hesiod.[3] In another pertinent case, Aeschylus asserts that Io's son, Epaphus, received his name based on the manner of his engendering by Zeus (*PV* 850–51): specifically, the poet says that Epaphus came to be as a result of Zeus's touch (ἔφαψις) and that this mode of origin is reflected in his *onoma* (*Supp.* 40–48). Aeschylus reiterates this etymology later in the play, noting that "Zeus by touch begot a son" (Ζεύς γ' ἐφάπτωρ χειρὶ φιτύει γόνον, 313) and that Epaphus is "truly named from the laying on of hands" ("Επαφος, ἀληθῶς ῥυσίων ἐπώνυμος, 315).[4] In Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, in turn, the name of Parthenopaeus, Atalanta's child, is analyzed as "Son-of-a-maiden" (ἐπώνυμος τῆς πρόσθεν ἀδμήτης . . . γόνος, 1321–22).[5]

In a different type of case, objects with which individuals are linked at birth are the source of *onomata*, as when Hesiod reports that Poseidon lay with Medusa and that when Perseus cut off her head, a son emerged and was named "Chrysaor" on account of the golden sword (ἄορ χρύσειον) that he held as he sprang forth (*Th.* 280–83). In other instances, the place of an individual's birth grounds assignments. For example, Hesiod tells how gods and men call Aphrodite "Cyprogenes because she was born on the surf-line of Cyprus" (Κυπρογενέα δ', ὅτι γέντο περικλύστῳ ἐνὶ Κύπρῳ, *Th.* 199).[6] The poet also indicates that when Perseus cut off Medusa's head, the horse Pegasus leapt forth; he received this name due to his birth near the springs of Ocean (Ὠκεανοῦ παρὰ πηγάς) (*Th.* 280–83).

For events prior to birth as the source of assignments, one may consult Pindar, who recounts Heracles' prayer to Zeus that Telamon be granted a son, and his instruction to Telamon to name his son "Aias" for the eagle (*aietos*) sent by Zeus in answer to that prayer (*Isthm.* 6.49–53). Elsewhere, Herodotus asserts that the Spartan king Ariston's son was called "Demaratus" due to his birth following

3. Both writers treat Dike as one whose aid mortals might hope for and enlist. Her role as avenger is often stressed, as when the Chorus in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* says that Orestes was assisted by Zeus's daughter in gaining retribution for his father's death (948–51). Concerning Dike's function as avenger, see also Hes. *Op.* 213–73; Aesch. *Sept.* 662–73; Soph. *Aj.* 1389–92.

4. Tr. Smyth (1922), slightly modified. See also *Supp.* 535, where Zeus is addressed as ἔφαπτορ Ἰοῦς.

5. Euripides mentions that Parthenopaeus is Atalanta's son (Ἀταλάντης γόνος) and links the mother explicitly with Artemis (*Phoen.* 150–52); regarding the tie to Atalanta, see also *Phoen.* 1104–9.

6. See also Pind. *Pyth.* 4.216, where the poet calls Aphrodite Κυπρογένεια.

the prayer (*ara*) of the entire Spartan people (*dēmos*) that Ariston have a son (6.63.3). In both of these cases, others' hopes are the ultimate source of the appellations given: in the former instance, the eagle, represented in the name, functions as the symbol of a wish fulfilled, while in the latter, the name's semantic constitution reflects others' fervent hopes that its bearer be born.[7]

An *onoma* is traced to what transpires after birth in Pindar's remark that the infant child of Evadne and Apollo "lay hidden . . . , his delicate body bathed in the yellow and deep blue rays of violets (ἴα), from which his mother then named him Iamus, a name immortal forever" (*Ol.* 6.54–57).[8] Earlier in the ode, Pindar links the *onoma* to a different source when he notes that, following Evadne's abandonment of him, a pair of serpents fed the infant Iamus blameless venom (ἐθρέψαντο . . . ἀμεμφεῖ ἰῷ) (*Ol.* 6.45–47).[9] In another, quite famous, example, Oedipus is said to have received his name based on a misfortune that he suffered soon after birth:

> OEDIPUS: What ailed me when you took me in your arms?
>
> MESSENGER: In that your ankles (ποδῶν ἄρθρα) should be witnesses. . . . I loosed you; the tendons of your feet (ποδοῖν ἀκμάς) were pierced and fettered. . . . From this you got your present name. (Soph. *OT* 1031–36)

Elsewhere in the play Jocasta recalls that within three days of Oedipus' birth, "King Laius pierced his ankles and by the hands of others cast him forth upon a pathless hillside" (νιν ἄρθρα κεῖνος ἐνζεύξας ποδοῖν ἔρριψεν ἄλλων χερσὶν εἰς ἄβατον ὄρος, 718–19; see also 1349–50). In *Phoenician Women*, Euripides follows this treatment of the name (25–27, 801–5; cf. 41–44). Finally, Herodotus claims that when Eëtion's son grew up, he was named "Cypselus" on account of that object, namely, a chest (*kupselē*), which allowed him to survive an early danger (5.92ε1).

A second category of assignments is correlated with features or aspects of individuals or groups. Here *onomata* may be tied to a physical feature or related aspect of an individual (or common to a group of individuals), individuals' emotional states, bearers' attitudes and character traits, or their skills and capacities.

Regarding the first subcategory, Homer asserts that Scylla was named based on the sort of voice she has, namely, that of a newborn whelp (φωνὴ . . . σκύλακος νεογιλῆς) (*Od.* 12.85–87). Hesiod claims that Earth's progeny Brontes, Steropes, and Arges were nicknamed "Cyclopes" because they each had only one eye,

7. Since these assignments were made based on prebirth events and activities, they cannot of course involve the bearer directly. In neither case, however, do considerations involving the actual namer underlie the choice of *onomata*: in the former instance, Aias is named for Zeus's eagle, but Zeus himself does not make the assignment; in the latter case, the Spartan people as a group does not serve as namer, but rather the child's parents. I therefore group these passages with those in which the bearer's origin and early life are at issue.

8. Pindar also calls Evadne a "violet-braided girl" (παῖδα ἰόπλοκον, *Ol.* 6.30).

9. Nisetich (1980, 103) terms this "a kenning for honey."

which was set in the middle of their foreheads (Κύκλωπες δ' ὄνομ' ἦσαν ἐπώνυμον, οὕνεκ' ἄρα σφέων κυκλοτερὴς ὀφθαλμὸς ἔεις ἐνέκειτο μετώπῳ, *Th.* 144–45). In another pertinent case, Aeschylus' analysis of the name "Parthenopaeus" is based ultimately on the physical appearance of its bearer. In this connection, the messenger in *Seven against Thebes* tells of the warrior's oath that he will destroy Thebes and then of his appearance and demeanor (532–37); here the poet stresses that Parthenopaeus' youthful and attractive exterior is at odds with his ferocious attitude ("His spirit unlike his maiden name is savage," ὁ δ' ὠμόν, οὔ τι παρθένων ἐπώνυμον φρόνημα).[10]

Elsewhere individuals' emotional states ground assignments, as when Sophocles has Aias agonize as follows regarding the connection between his name and his current state of despair: "Agony. Who would have thought my name and fortune could square so well together! My name is Aias: agony is its meaning" (αἰαῖ· τίς ἄν ποτ' ᾤεθ' ὧδ' ἐπώνυμον τοὐμὸν ξυνοίσειν ὄνομα τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς; νῦν γὰρ πάρεστι καὶ δὶς αἰάζειν ἐμοί, *Aj.* 430–32).[11] In the *Bacchae*, Euripides alludes to the descriptive content of the name "Pentheus," that is, its derivation from *penthos* ("grief"): in the midst of a hostile exchange with Dionysus, Pentheus, having identified himself by name, is told by the god that he "shall repent that appellation" (508).

A third and quite popular subcategory is that involving bearers' attitudes and character traits. One may begin by consulting the *Iliad*, where Homer draws attention to the semantic constitution of the name "Thersites" (from *tharsos* [Aeolic *thersos*], here "rashness") by depicting its bearer's reckless attitude and conduct (2.212–64).[12] In the *Odyssey*, the poet observes that "Aias was truly lost among his long-oared ships. . . . He would have escaped his doom . . . had he not uttered a boastful word in great blindness of heart (μέγ' ἀάσθη)" (4.499–503).[13] Later in the poem, Homer singles out for mention the suitor named "Ctesippus," who is said to trust in his extraordinary wealth in the pursuit of Penelope (Κτήσιππος δ' ὄνομ' ἔσκε . . . ὃς δή τοι κτεάτεσσι πεποιθὼς θεσπεσίοισι μνάσκετ' Ὀδυσσῆος δὴν οἰχομένοιο δάμαρτα, 20.288–90).

The tragedians offer relevant etymologies of various individuals' names. For example, trying to persuade Philoctetes to join forces with the Greeks, Neoptolemus tells him that "it is a glorious heightening of gain (καλὴ γὰρ ἡ 'πίκτησις)," first

10. Although he does not refer directly to the bearer's *onoma*, Euripides too focuses on Parthenopaeus' appearance by having Adrastus depict the warrior as "the son of huntress Atalanta, Parthenopaeus, supreme in beauty" (ὁ τῆς κυναγοῦ δ' ἄλλος Ἀταλάντης γόνος παῖς Παρθενοπαῖος, εἶδος ἐξοχώτατος, *Supp.* 888–89). Regarding the present subcategory, cf. Hdt. 1.139.

11. Later in the play, Teucer says the following to the dead Aias about his own emotional state: "Oh, what a crop of anguish (ὅσας ἀνίας) you have sown for me in death!" (1005).

12. For discussion of the figure and *onoma*, see Nagy 1979, 259–62. See Kirk (1985, 138–39) on the significance of Thersites' standing in the *Iliad* as the only character for whom Homer omits both patronymic and city or area of origin.

13. This connection is repeated in line 509.

to be healed and then to achieve great fame for the conquest of Troy (Soph. *Phil.* 1344–47). Subsequently, Heracles gives a more specific account of what Philoctetes stands to gain, placing greater emphasis on the prospective material benefits (1413–33). While it is true that a desire for such advantages was widely shared, the former passage, in which the descriptive content of Philoctetes' own name is underscored, indicates that Sophocles envisions a specific relation between this individual and the trait in question. Interestingly, Euripides offers an etymology of the name "Aphrodite" that differs significantly from Hesiod's when he has Hecuba say that "all acts of human intemperance are Aphrodite, and the goddess is rightly called by this name since it begins with the word for folly" (τὰ μῶρα γὰρ πάντ' ἐστὶν Ἀφροδίτη βροτοῖς, καὶ τοὔνομ' ὀρθῶς ἀφροσύνης ἄρχει θεᾶς, *Tro.* 989–90).[14] In the *Bacchae*, in turn, Pentheus' mother, Agave, is asked by the Chorus whether she is proud (ἀγάλλῃ;, 1197). Elsewhere, Euripides highlights the descriptive content of the name "Dolon" by emphasizing the bearer's *dolos* ("cunning," "treachery," *Rhes.* 215; cf. 216–18). In this play, Euripides goes to great lengths to forge parallels between Dolon and Odysseus—a hero renowned for his cunning; one way in which he accomplishes this is by also associating Odysseus with *dolos*, using an adjective formed from the noun (for the phrase *dolios Odusseus*, see *Rhes.* 894). With respect to the present subcategory, one may consult, in addition, Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*, where Agamemnon says, with himself in mind, "I am the son of Atreus. Do you think he shrinks from your eye, Menelaus?" (μῶν τρέσας οὐκ ἀνακαλύψω βλέφαρον, Ἀτρέως γεγώς;, 321).[15]

Finally, individuals' skills and capacities ground assignments, as is evidenced by Odysseus' address to a man he has killed in battle ("Socus, son of wise Hippasus the breaker of horses"; ὦ Σῶχ', Ἱππάσου υἱὲ δαΐφρονος ἱπποδάμοιο, Hom. *Il.* 11.450). Regarding another name with *hippos* as a component, a messenger recounts the sudden panicking of Hippolytus' horses and their rider's skill in the handling of them (Eur. *Hipp.* 1218–20);[16] along these same lines, Adrastus says that Hippomedon had one goal, namely, "by skill in hunting, archery, and horsemanship (ἵπποις), to train himself for useful service to his city" (Eur. *Supp.* 885–87).[17]

Proteus and Psamathe originally named their daughter "Ido" based on her physical resemblance to her mother, but when she was older, "they changed her name to Theonoë, for she understands all things that are, all things to be, that

14. My translation; I follow Barlow (1986) in rendering τὰ μῶρα here as "acts of human intemperance."

15. Operative here, as in the case of Hector and his son, to be discussed below, is the assumption that a son's nature, at any rate when viewed as commendable, will reflect that of his father. Regarding this subcategory, see also Eur. *IA* 1402 (with 1410–11, 1422–23, 1595; cf. 1375–76) and Hdt. 7.231.

16. Regarding the linkage of Hippolytus with horses, see also 307–10, 582–83, 1131–34.

17. Tr. Vellacott (1972).

divination alone can tell" (καλοῦσιν αὐτὴν Θεονόην· τὰ θεῖα γὰρ τά τ' ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα πάντ' ἠπίστατο) (Eur. *Hel.* 8–14).[18] In a relevant instance from the *Odyssey*, Alcinous sends for "our minstrel, Demodocus, whom the god made lord of song, heart-easing" (θεῖον ἀοιδόν, Δημόδοκον· τῷ γάρ ῥα θεὸς πέρι δῶκεν ἀοιδὴν τέρπειν, 8.43–45); this analysis ties the name most directly to a special capacity divinely bestowed. Elsewhere, Euripides offers an etymology of the name "Thoas" based on the bearer's ability to move with tremendous speed (ὃς ὠκὺν πόδα τιθεὶς ἴσον πτεροῖς ἐς τοὔνομ' ἦλθε τόδε ποδωκείας χάριν, *IT* 32–33).

Both Hesiod and Aeschylus comment on the name "Prometheus." In the *Theogony*, Hesiod says that Clymene bore "clever Prometheus, full of various wiles" (Προμηθέα ποικίλον αἰολόμητιν, 510–11), and offers a prime example of Prometheus' cunning in the tale of his attempt to deceive Zeus when Prometheus divided a certain ox into portions (*Th.* 535–60); even though this incident put Zeus on his guard, Prometheus subsequently "outwitted him and stole the far-seen gleam of unwearying fire in a hollow fennel stalk" (565–67). In *Works and Days*, Zeus addresses Prometheus as "son of Iapetus, surpassing all in cunning (πάντων πέρι μήδεα εἰδώς)" (54). Additionally, in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, Cratus taunts Prometheus about the latter's name: "The gods named you wrongly when they called you Forethought; you yourself need Forethought to extricate yourself from this contrivance" (ψευδωνύμως σε δαίμονες Προμηθέα καλοῦσιν· αὐτὸν γάρ σε δεῖ προμηθίας, ὅτῳ τρόπῳ τῆσδ' ἐκκυλισθήσῃ τέχνης, 85–87).

Hesiod tells, moreover, how Epimetheus failed to recall the advice of his brother Prometheus never to accept a gift from Zeus but to return it lest it bring evil to mortals. Instead, he accepted the gift and only gained understanding after the evil had already transpired (*Op.* 83–89). Although Hesiod does not highlight explicitly the descriptive content of the name "Epimetheus" ("Afterthought") and the appropriateness of this *onoma* to its bearer, his account of Epimetheus' deficiency performs an equivalent function. Pindar too draws attention to the name's descriptive content, by using a synonymous adjective to characterize the bearer, namely, *opsinoos* ("late of thought," *Pyth.* 5.28; cf. Hes. *Th.* 511, where the term *hamartinoos* appears). In the same line, Pindar names Prophasis as Epimetheus' daughter; the semantic constitution of her name (which means "Excuse") is clearly based on that of her father's *onoma*.

Finally, upon his arrival on Ithaca, Odysseus asks his divine protector, Athena—who is then disguised as a mortal—whether he has in fact reached his island home. To this query, the goddess responds: "Always the same detachment! That is why I cannot fail you, in your evil fortune, coolheaded, quick, well-spoken as you are!" (αἰεί τοι τοιοῦτον ἐνὶ στήθεσσι νόημα· τῷ σε καὶ οὐ δύναμαι προλιπεῖν δύστηνον ἐόντα, οὕνεκ' ἐπητής ἐσσι καὶ ἀγχίνοος καὶ ἐχέφρων, Hom. *Od.* 13.330–32). Here Athena feels compelled to stick by Odysseus due to their shared intellectual gifts (the key terms being *noēma* and *anchinoos*). The

18. Her knowledge is also referred to at *Hel.* 317, 325–26, 530, 818–23.

goddess's capacity in this arena is prominent elsewhere, as when Hesiod attributes superlative intelligence both to her mother, Metis, and to Athena herself (*Th.* 886–96); in addition, both he and Pindar mention the birth of Athena from the head of Zeus (*Th.* 924 and *Ol.* 7.35–37, respectively).

As indicated above, a third category of etymologies comprises instances in which *onomata* are connected with actions. One relevant subdivision is a type of activity by which an individual or group is distinguished. The tragedians devote much attention to the name "Apollo," and their analyses frequently underscore the god's capacity for, even propensity toward, destructive action by linking his *onoma* to the verb *apollumi* ("destroy"). In a famous passage from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, for example, Cassandra bemoans her fate as follows: "Apollo, Apollo! Lord of the ways, my destroyer. You have undone me once again, and utterly" (ὤπολλον ὤπολλον, ἀγυιᾶτ', ἀπόλλων ἐμός· ἀπώλεσας γὰρ οὐ μόλις τὸ δεύτερον, 1080–82, with verbatim repetition of the first two lines at 1085–86). In Euripides' *Orestes*, Helen instructs Hermione to go to Clytemnestra's grave and to "implore her to be gracious to us all, to my husband and me and these poor children whom Apollo has destroyed (τοῖν τ' ἀθλίοιν τοῖνδ', οὓς ἀπώλεσεν θεός)" (119–21). Commenting subsequently on what he anticipates to be the fate of Orestes and Electra, the messenger remarks that "neither your high birth nor Apollo in his shrine at Delphi helped. No, Apollo has destroyed you both (οὐδ' ὁ Πύθιος τρίποδα καθίζων Φοῖβος, ἀλλ' ἀπώλεσεν)" (954–56).

Similarly, both Homer and Aeschylus associate Clytemnestra's name with the pernicious course of action she undertakes. In the *Odyssey*, Agamemnon's shade tells Odysseus how Κλυταιμνήστρη δολόμητις ("wily Clytemnestra") slaughtered Cassandra and recounts her disgraceful behavior toward him; he then notes that "there is nothing more dread or more shameless than a woman who puts into her heart such deeds, even as she too devised (ἐμήσατο) a monstrous thing, contriving death for her wedded husband" (11.421–30; see also μήσατο, 24.199). Similarly, in *Agamemnon* Cassandra expresses concern about the destructive intentions that Clytemnestra is harboring: "Ah, for shame, what can she purpose now (ἰὼ πόποι, τί ποτε μήδεται)? What is this new and huge stroke of atrocity she plans (μήδεται) within the house to beat down the beloved beyond hope of healing?" (1100–1103).

Both Aeschylus and Euripides highlight the descriptive content of the name "Polynices." In Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*, Amphiaraus calls Polynices by name, dwelling two times on the latter part (derived from *neikos*, which means "strife"; 577–79). Some lines later, Eteocles observes that Polynices is quite fittingly named, meaning that, true to his appellation (ἐπωνύμῳ κάρτα, 658), Polynices has turned out to be a cause of strife with reference to mortals and their affairs.[19] Euripides offers the same basic treatment of Polynices' name when

19. Subsequently, Aeschylus extends the descriptive content of Polynices' name to cover Eteocles as well: "They have earned their name too well and 'men of strife' they have perished

the poet has Eteocles speak to him as follows: "Leave this place; your name means 'quarrel' and our father named you well" (ἀληθῶς δ' ὄνομα Πολυνείκη πατὴρ ἔθετό σοι θείᾳ προνοίᾳ νεικέων ἐπώνυμον, *Phoen.* 636–37). Subsequently, Antigone addresses these words to her dead brother: "O Polynices, you followed your quarreling name (ἔφυς ἄρ' ἐπώνυμος)" (1493), reinforcing the point with a mention of "your strife which was more than strife" (1495).

In another relevant passage, Hesiod remarks that Hermes named a certain woman "Pandora, because all they who dwelt on Olympus gave each a gift, a plague to men who eat bread" (Πανδώρην, ὅτι πάντες Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες δῶρον ἐδώρησαν, πῆμ' ἀνδράσιν ἀλφηστῆσιν, *Op.* 81–82). Playing on the adjective *neon*, Sophocles has Odysseus ask Neoptolemus if he would "do some rash thing (τι νέον) now" (*Phil.* 1229); on this interpretation, the name means "Rash-warrior." In another noteworthy case, Aeschylus associates the name *Persai* ("Persians") with the verb *perthō* ("waste," "destroy"): Atossa reports that she has often been haunted by dreams since her son Xerxes "gathering his host had gone, his will to pillage (πέρσαι) Greece" (*Pers.* 177–78). By using *persai*, the aorist infinitive of *perthō*, Aeschylus makes the verb and name identical in spelling; interestingly, Aeschylus employs the vocative *Persai* only seven lines earlier (171), and the proximity of the two lines reinforces the etymology. Elsewhere, Hesiod tells how the Titans received their name on account of the fact that "they strained (τιταίνοντας) and did presumptuously a fearful deed" (*Th.* 209–10).

Finally, Helen's name constituted a popular object of investigation. In a memorable passage in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, one finds the Chorus musing as follows about the striking match between the descriptive content of Helen's *onoma* and the destructive outcome of a course of action involving her:

> Who is he that named you so
> appropriately in every way?
> Could it be some mind unseen
> in divination of your destiny
> shaping to the lips that name
> for the bride of spears and blood,
> Helen, which is death? For fittingly
> death of ships, death of men and cities
> from the bower's soft curtained
> and secluded luxury she sailed then,
> driven on the giant west wind.
>
> τίς ποτ' ὠνόμαζεν ὧδ'
> ἐς τὸ πᾶν ἐτητύμως,

through impious intent" (οἳ δῆτ' ὀρθῶς κατ' ἐπωνυμίαν καὶ πολυνεικεῖς ὤλοντ' ἀσεβεῖ διανοίᾳ, 829–31).

μή τις ὅντιν' οὐχ ὁρῶμεν προνοί-
αισι τοῦ πεπρωμένου
γλῶσσαν ἐν τύχαι νέμων,
τὰν δορίγαμβρον ἀμφινει-
κῆ θ' Ἑλέναν; ἐπεὶ πρεπόντως
ἑλένας ἕλανδρος ἑλέ-
πτολις ἐκ τῶν ἁβροτίμων
προκαλυμμάτων ἔπλευσεν
Ζεφύρου γίγαντος αὔρᾳ. (681–92)[20]

In interpreting Helen's name, Euripides uses *haireō* in the same sense as Aeschylus, stating that she was the cause that Greece captured and destroyed (εἷλε) Troy (*Andr.* 105–6).[21]

In the passage from *Agamemnon* involving Helen's *onoma*, the Chorus wonders who could have given a name so completely fitting.[22] The case of Helen, while far from unique in raising the issue of appropriateness, is unusual insofar as the father of the name's referent is none other than Zeus himself. Since Zeus knows past, present, and future, it is fully within his power to assign his daughter a name appropriate to the sort of individual she will become. One might argue, however, that this passage's meaning is somewhat ambiguous since the Chorus could have one of two things in mind: It might be asking, "Who in the world gave her this name?" where no specific candidate is envisioned. Alternatively, its message might be, "Who gave her this name? None other than Zeus." In assessing these possibilities, it is worth noting that the Chorus of Argive Elders begins by asking who could have given a name so wholly true, then raises the possibility that an invisible power is responsible for the assignment: specifically,

20. With regard to the prevailing view of Helen's *onoma*, it is worth noting the remarks of Gorgias in his *Encomium of Helen*: "The man who says rightly what ought to be said should also refute those who blame Helen, a woman about whom both the belief of those who have listened to poets and the message of her name, which has become a reminder of the calamities, have been in unison and unanimity" (τοῦ δ' αὐτοῦ ἀνδρὸς λέξαι τε τὸ δέον ὀρθῶς καὶ ἐλέγξαι τοὺς μεμφομένους Ἑλένην, γυναῖκα περὶ ἧς ὁμόφωνος καὶ ὁμόψυχος γέγονεν ἥ τε τῶν ποιητῶν ἀκουσάντων πίστις ἥ τε τοῦ ὀνόματος φήμη, ὃ τῶν συμφορῶν μνήμη γέγονεν, 2; the text and translation are those of MacDowell [1982]).

21. In a related case involving a river, Aeschylus underscores the fierce character of its activity (*PV* 718–21), remarking that this body of water, called "Hybristes," "well deserves its name" (ποταμὸν οὐ ψευδώνυμον, *PV* 717). Although a tie to *hubris* ("insolence") would normally lead to an assignment's placement with those privileging bearers' attitudes and character traits, I locate the current passage here due to its focus on the potentially destructive character of the river's activity, namely, the strength of its current. Regarding the present subcategory, cf. Eur. *Ion* 996–97, where the aegis of Athena gets its appellation "from how she rushed into the battle" (τόδ' ἔσχεν ὄνομα θεῶν ὅτ' ἦιξεν ἐς δόρυ); here an object closely associated with an individual gets its *onoma* from the manner in which that individual initiates a course of action in which the entity has a role.

22. In the ensuing discussion of this passage and of namers' supernatural inspiration, I am indebted to the suggestions of Kenneth Dover.

the Chorus wonders whether someone unseen (μή τις ὄντιν' οὐχ ὁρῶμεν) gave Helen this name based on that individual's foreknowledge of what was to be, and thus achieved success.[23] About the unseen namer Fraenkel (1950, 330) remarks: "We do not know whence his influence comes; it seems a case of one who operates φανεὶς ἀλάστωρ ἢ κακὸς δαίμων ποθέν (*Pers.* 354). πρόνοιαι τοῦ πεπρωμένου belong only to a god or a daimon."[24] What Fraenkel does not consider is the possibility that Zeus himself—as Helen's male parent—is envisioned by the poet as having assigned his daughter's *onoma*. I submit that Aeschylus' phrasing lends at least some plausibility to the claim that the Chorus is pointing to Zeus's role as namer.

What is of most fundamental interest regarding *Agamemnon* 681–92, however, is the reasoning process that one can trace in the Chorus's observations about the naming of Helen. "Success" is said to be achieved in this endeavor because the impact of Helen's actions has turned out to be precisely that predicted by the descriptive content of her *onoma*. In fact, according to the line of reasoning reflected in the passage, it is because the assignment fits the adult bearer so well that the Chorus is led to its initial musing about the name's source. That this is so becomes evident in what follows the long opening question (681–87), where the Chorus indicates its underlying motivation in making the inquiry at all (687–92); the phrase ἐπεὶ πρεπόντως ("For fittingly") is crucial because it serves to link the latter portion of the Chorus's remarks closely to the former and, more importantly, indicates a causal sequence moving from the second sentence to the query made at the outset.[25] It is to be expected that the Chorus would focus on Helen's nature since the appropriateness of her name can only be judged based on the sort of person she becomes. Because the assignment is fitting, yet was made at birth, one is led inevitably to speculate about a supernatural influence playing a role at this initial stage.

The case of Helen represents one of many in Greek literature in which the appropriateness of an *onoma* given at the time of its referent's genesis can be judged only at a later date, after the individual has reached maturity. The issue of supernatural guidance might seem especially relevant in a case like hers, in which the father is all-knowing Zeus, yet the reflective sequence observable in the Chorus's remarks can be generalized to cover other instances in which features and extensions of mature individuals match the descriptive content of names

23. Of course, if the name-giver is in fact invisible, this would place strong constraints on who else besides Zeus could play this role. It is important to emphasize, as Fraenkel (1950, 329) does in his commentary on *Agamemnon*, that μή is not used here to indicate that a negative response is anticipated; rather, "this gives the wrong tone to the question in this passage . . . where the asker of the question expects an affirmative answer or at least thinks it probable." Fraenkel also refers here to Soph. *OC* 1500–1503, where "the initial question is developed" in just the same way.

24. Cf. Neustadt (1929, 246), whom Fraenkel cites in connection with this point.

25. Fraenkel (1950, 331) says very little about this particular instance of πρεπόντως and does not mention ἐπεί at all.

that were assigned at birth. In fact, once one raises the issue of divine provenance in a single instance, it seems inevitable that one would wonder whether such a factor were at work in naming more generally. Moreover, insofar as it is the existence of consonance between name and nature that leads to certain assumptions about an assignment's divine origin, the ontological status of the namer (i.e., divine or mortal) is not of decisive importance. The idea that mortal parents may be viewed as subject to supernatural influences is brought out clearly in Euripides' *Phoenician Women*, where it is because the descriptive content of the name "Polynices" meshes so well with its bearer's nature that Eteocles claims Oedipus' assignment to stem from divine foreknowledge (ὄνομα . . . πατὴρ ἔθετό σοι θείᾳ προνοίᾳ, 636–37).[26]

Another subcategory of assignments in the third class, which ties *onomata* to actions, stresses an individual's or group's temporal relation to a particular course of action or to others engaged in a certain endeavor. Such a tie is emphasized, for example, when Homer presupposes the more standard interpretation of the name "Neoptolemus," according to which it means "New-warrior": during his Underworld visit, Odysseus informs Achilles that "in my own ship I brought him out from Scyros to join the Achaeans under arms" (*Od.* 11.508–9) and goes on to tell of Neoptolemus' value to them both in counsel and in battle (510–37). Sophocles assumes the same analysis of this name, as when Philoctetes replies as follows to Neoptolemus' comment that he is "at present bound from Troy": "From Troy? You did not sail with us to Troy at first" (*Phil.* 245–47; see also 70–73 and 348–51); in fact, the state of affairs reflected in the descriptive content of the name makes the play's action possible in the sense that it is only because Neoptolemus is not a member of the original group of warriors that he has a chance of forging a relationship with Philoctetes.[27] In another instance, Athena tells the sons of the seven warriors fighting against Thebes that throughout Hellas

26. Wyckoff's translation (1959) of lines 636–37 omits mention of the divine πρόνοια guiding the assignment; in my view, the idea of supernatural governance is crucial here, and its presence in the Greek should therefore be reflected in the translation.

27. For other cases in which names' semantic constitution is invested with a framing role, one may consult Pindar's third and seventh Nemean odes. As concerns *Nemean* 3, which commemorates Aristoclides' victory in the *pankration*, Nisetich (1980, 239) notes that "the two components of the victor's name, Aristo-kleidas, signify 'superiority' and 'glory.' The second element in the name (-kleidas) accounts for Pindar's identification of the Muse of this ode with Kleo ('Glorifier'). . . . Superiority and glory apply even more impressively to the victor's homeland, which quickly becomes the theme of the ode"; in the ode itself, see Pindar's remark that Aristoclides has "bathed this island [i.e., Aegina] in the speech of renown (εὐκλέϊ λόγῳ)" (68). Regarding *Nemean* 7, having observed that the victor and his father belong to the Euxenid clan, descendants of Euxenus, Nisetich states (1980, 259) that "the theme of friendship between Pindar and his patrons, and between his patrons and the gods, takes up a great deal of space" in the ode; he notes subsequently (261) that "*Nemean* 7 might be considered a full-scale treatment of the poet's role as the victor's friend or *xenos*." For relevant material in the ode itself, see lines 6–8, 61, 64–65, 86–89. On the centrality of *xenia* to Pindar's odes more generally, see Nisetich 1980, 46.

they will be called the "Epigoni"; this group receives its *onoma* based on its temporal relation to another collection of individuals, namely, their fathers, whose deaths they are to avenge upon reaching manhood (Eur. *Supp.* 1224–25).[28]

A third subdivision of the present category consists of instances in which authors' focus is on the role a place or individual has in someone's plan of action. One finds an interesting case of this type in Euripides' *Helen*, where Helen's name is linked implicitly with the verb *haireō* in the sense of "capture." At the close of that play, Castor tells her that where Hermes "first defined your place when he caught you up from Sparta . . . , stealing (κλέψας) you . . . , where the island stretches to guard Acte, shall your name be known as Helen (Ἑλένη), meaning Captive, for mankind hereafter; because you were stolen from your house" (1670–75). Instead of depicting Helen as a destructive influence, as he does in *Andromache*, Euripides stresses her role as an object of coercion. In another pertinent instance of this type, Herodotus states that a certain place received the name "Aphetae" because the Argonauts intended to make it their point of departure after drawing water for the ship (ἐνθεῦτεν γὰρ ἔμελλον ὑδρευσάμενοι ἐς τὸ πέλαγος ἀφήσειν) (7.193.2). The source of this assignment is unspecified (Herodotus says simply that ἐπὶ τούτου τῷ χώρῳ οὔνομα γέγονε Ἀφέται); nevertheless, the place comes to have this name based on the role it played as a launching point for the Argonauts in the context of their mission.

A fourth category includes cases in which the descriptive content of *onomata* stresses significant effects that their referents have on mortals. Thus, Apollo's capacity to induce fear in mortals is reflected in Aeschylus' derivation of the epithet "Phoebus" when Atossa, mother of Xerxes, says that "then to Phoebus' hearth I saw an eagle fleeing: dumb in dread I stood" (ὁρῶ δὲ φεύγοντ' αἰετὸν πρὸς ἐσχάραν Φοίβου, φόβῳ δ' ἄφθογγος ἐστάθην, *Pers.* 205–6). Furthermore, in a memorable passage Homer speaks of the impact that certain gates made of horn or ivory (κεράεσσι, ἐλέφαντι) have on human beings and their concerns: dreams coming through the latter gate deceive (ἐλεφαίρονται), while those passing through the gate of horn "bring true issues to pass" (ἔτυμα κραίνουσι) (*Od.* 19.562–67).

A fifth classification includes names that are tied to entities with which an individual or group is associated. These might be objects used in the performance of actions, as evidenced by Homer's observation that King Areïthous received the additional name "Club-wielder" (τὸν ἐπίκλησιν κορυνήτην) because he fought, not with a bow or spear, but with an iron club (σιδηρείῃ κορύνῃ) (*Il.* 7.138–41). In addition, the poet ties the name "Penelope" to πήνη ("woof") when he has her deceive the suitors by allegedly spinning a shroud for Laertes in the event of his death (Homer presents the tale at *Od.* 2.93–110; see also 19.137–56 and 24.128–48).[29] An assignment in this fifth category might also be tied to an

28. Pindar also uses the term Ἐπίγονοι (*Pyth.* 8.42).

29. According to West (Heubeck, West, and Hainsworth 1988, 103), it is possible that the story about Penelope's spinning activity arose from an imagined derivation of her name from πήνη +

article or type of clothing that an individual or group is said to wear, as when Homer tells how at dawn the nymph Calypso clothed herself and placed a veil (καλύπτρην) on her head (*Od.* 5.228–32).[30] In a second case falling in this subcategory, Herodotus mentions a certain people named for the black garments favored by its constituent individuals: "The Melanchlaeni all wear black cloaks—hence their name" (Μελάγχλαινοι δὲ εἵματα μὲν μέλανα φορέουσι πάντες, ἐπ' ὧν καὶ τὰς ἐπωνυμίας ἔχουσι, 4.107).

Sixth, an *onoma* may be assigned based on a characteristic of the place from which its bearer hails, as when Athena appears to Telemachus as "the son of wise Anchialus (Ἀγχιάλοιο . . . υἱός) . . . lord over the oar-loving Taphians" (Hom. *Od.* 1.180–81); the father's name is formed from ἀγχίαλος, which means "near the sea" in the case of cities and "sea-girt" in that of islands.[31] Alternatively, in a seventh type of case, the *onoma* of a natural, inanimate entity is traced to an important individual with whom it is linked. Illustrative of this approach is Prometheus' foretelling that Io will eventually pass through the channel of Maeotis, "and hereafter for all time mortals shall talk about your crossing, and they shall call the place for you Cow's-ford" (ἔσται δὲ θνητοῖς εἰσαεὶ λόγος μέγας τῆς σῆς πορείας, Βόσπορος δ' ἐπώνυμος κεκλήσεται, Aesch. *PV* 732–34).

As noted, an eighth category of analyses stresses the role an individual plays in a particular social or familial context. In a prominent instance of this type, both Homer and Euripides draw attention to the descriptive content of the names "Hector" and "Astyanax," as well as to the semantic ties between them. Homer's etymology of the former is most explicit in Andromache's use of the verb *echō* ("protect") when addressing her dead husband: "I think that our son will never come of age, for before then head to heel this city will be sacked, for you, its defender, are gone, you who guarded the city, and the grave wives, and the innocent children (ἦ γὰρ ὄλωλας ἐπίσκοπος, ὅς τέ μιν αὐτὴν ῥύσκευ, ἔχες δ' ἀλόχους κεδνὰς καὶ νήπια τέκνα)" (*Il.* 24.727–30). Hector's role as protector, reflected in his name, is also stressed in Priam's reference to Achilles' killing a few days earlier of his sole remaining son, "who guarded my city and people" (εἴρυτο . . . ἄστυ καὶ αὐτούς, 24.499). Elsewhere, Andromache speaks of Astyanax, "whom the Trojans have called lord of the city, since it was you [i.e., Hector] alone who defended the gates and the long walls" (ὃν Τρῶες ἐπίκλησιν καλέουσιν· οἶος γάρ σφιν ἔρυσο πύλας καὶ τείχεα μακρά, 22.506–7); emphasizing the same semantic and causal relationships, Homer says that while Hector called his son "Scamandrius," other people called him "Astyanax," "because Hector alone

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ὀλόπτω ("tear out") or λέπω ("strip off"). On the name's connection to πήνη and λώπη ("covering," "robe"), see Peradotto (1990, 107–8), who suggests that Penelope's *onoma* is "designed for the heroine of just such a story."

30. Cf. her association elsewhere in the poem with the notion of concealment: Calypso is said to have kept Odysseus back in her hollow caves (1.14–15), and Hermes' remarks emphasize how isolated her island is (5.99–102).

31. For these meanings of ἀγχίαλος, see LSJ.

protected Troy" (οἶος γὰρ ἐρύετο Ἴλιον Ἕκτωρ) (6.402–3).[32] In Euripides' *Trojan Women*, Andromache addresses Hector, now dead, as her defender (σᾶς δάμαρτος ἄλκαρ, 590). Moreover, Hecuba laments the fact that Astyanax was killed at such a young age when he might instead have reached adulthood and died fighting on behalf of his city, that is, when he might have performed the same civic function as his father (1168); shortly thereafter, the Chorus addresses Astyanax as "you who were once a great lord in my city" (μέγας ἐμοί ποτ' ὢν ἀνάκτωρ πόλεως, 1217). While the Chorus's direct reference is to Astyanax's former high status in Troy (*pot' ōn*), the noun *anaktōr* ("lord") cannot but link Astyanax with Hector by alluding to that protective role common potentially to father and son and encapsulated in both *onomata*.

One might conjecture that where the descriptive content of proper names is positive, namers' hopes combine with the magical idea of the *onoma* as nature-conferring to produce certain expectations for performance (examples of names given based on parental hopes include "Hector," "Astyanax," and "Theoclymenus"); in this sense, the name would provide the individual with a model for imitation.[33] It is only after individuals reach maturity that one can judge whether the relevant developments have occurred. Insofar as hopes and expectations—as reflected in names' descriptive content—are met, the view that the parents in question are supernaturally inspired finds support.[34] If one thinks of names, at least in part, as prophecies, then the idea is that one must wait some time before the truth or falsehood of their predictions can be established. At first glance, there might seem to be two incompatible ideas at work here: that of prediction based on supernatural awareness of how the adult bearer will turn out and that of the name's helping to shape the outcome in question. In fact, however, the clash is only apparent. The existence of individual natures, a belief in whose salience is prominent in literature, places constraints on capacities and achievements in particular cases. The idea is that successful namers are somehow able to anticipate what is possible for individuals in the cases of naming over which they exercise control and to aid in these individuals' development by singling out relevant features of them in the *onomata* that they assign.[35]

32. My translation.

33. With respect to the line of reasoning developed in this paragraph, I am grateful for the suggestions of Kenneth Dover. Regarding "Theoclymenus," see Eur. *Hel.* 8–10; this name was assigned to the son of Proteus and Psamathe based not only on the father's piety but also on the parents' hope that their son, once mature, would display that same attitude toward the gods. On the general topic, cf. the observation of Higbie (1995, 189) in her study of Homer that "the name given by characters to a child expresses the nature and qualities that the child is hoped to inherit from a parent, usually the father."

34. On the topic of supernatural influences on namers, see the earlier comments occasioned by Aesch. *Ag.* 681–92.

35. For an emphasis on the presence and salience of individual natures (referred to by *phusis* and *phuein*), see, e.g., Soph. *Aj.* 549, *OT* 674, *Phil.* 79, 874, 902, 1310; Eur. *Med.* 1343–45, *IA* 558, 930, 1411, *Hel.* 1003, *Ion* 240, 643, *Cyc.* 649, *Hipp.* 79, *Phoen.* 395, *Bacch.* 315, *Or.* 126.

In another case of a name describing an individual's social function, Herodotus mentions the Delphic oracle's instructing the Cyrenaeans to bring in someone from Mantinea to set things right for them; in answer to their request for an appropriate person, the Mantineans sent a man by the name of "Demonax" ("Leader-of-the-people") (4.161.2). A belief in the existence of deep connections between *onomata* and reality governs instances, such as this one, in which a name's descriptive content provides the basis for its bearer's involvement in a particular course of action. A later example from Herodotus (9.90–92) illustrates more vividly still the idea that names, due to their semantic constitution, may impact reality itself: Three Samians approached the Greek commanders with a message. One of their number, Hegesistratus (whose name means "Leader-of-the-army"), appealed to the commanders to rescue the Ionians from slavery. Leotychides asked his name and, upon discovering it, required the man to sail with the Greek fleet since Leotychides believed that the name would be a good omen (οἰωνὸν τὸ οὔνομα ποιεύμενος, 9.92.2). An *onoma* may, in addition, be used to refer to an individual's anticipated future social role, as when Herodotus mentions (4.155.2–3) a man who was renamed "Battus," *battos* being the Libyan word for *basileus* ("king"), and claims that the priestess at Delphi addressed him by this name because she knew that he would become a Libyan king.

Regarding the idea that a name's analysis may underscore the familial role of its referent, there are passages in *Oedipus at Colonus* which, if combined, suggest that Sophocles takes Antigone's name to mean "Instead-of/Like-a-son." The term *gonai* is used for "sons" (1192). Subsequently, Polynices, addressing Oedipus, refers to himself as "your son—or if I am not truly your son . . . at least I am called (καλούμενος) your son," and uses the preposition *anti* with reference to Antigone and Ismene (1323–26).[36] Oedipus proceeds to inform Polynices that Antigone and Ismene "have saved me, they are my support, and are not girls, but men, in faithfulness. As for you two [Polynices and Eteocles], you are no sons of mine!" (αἵδε μ' ἐκσῴζουσιν, αἵδ' ἐμαὶ τροφοί, αἵδ' ἄνδρες, οὐ γυναῖκες, ἐς τὸ συμπονεῖν· ὑμεῖς δ' ἀπ' ἄλλου κοὐκ ἐμοῦ πεφύκατον, 1367–69). Sophocles' application of the descriptive content of the name of one of two siblings to both individuals parallels Aeschylus' treatment of Polynices' name in *Seven against Thebes*, where, as we saw, he uses the descriptive content of that *onoma* to cover both the bearer and his brother, Eteocles.

Finally, *onomata* are tied to functions and special powers of the divine:[37] here a deity's name may be traced to an element over which its referent has control, to a special capacity of the individual, or to the pivotal role assumed by the referent on the cosmic plane. With regard to the first subcategory, Homer says that

36. One finds *anti* in the sense of "like" or "as good as" already in Homer, e.g., in *Il.* 9.116–17: ἀντί νυ πολλῶν λαῶν ἐστιν ἀνὴρ ὅν τε Ζεὺς κῆρι φιλήσῃ. See also *Od.* 1.70, 2.17, 3.414, 8.546.

37. In general, I reserve this category for functions and powers that mortals do not have, and passages that depict gods as having capacities that also belong to mortals, or doing things that mortals too can do, are placed in other categories.

Hera shed thick mist (*aēr*) around her horses (*Il.* 5.775–76); reinforcing this etymology, he associates the goddess with air again later in the work (14.282). In what may well be the same etymological move extrapolated one step further, Euripides has Helen say that Hera "made void the love that might have been for Paris and me and gave him, not me, but in my likeness fashioning a breathing image out of the sky's air (ὁμοιώσασ' ἐμοὶ εἴδωλον ἔμπνουν οὐρανοῦ ξυνθεῖσ' ἄπο), bestowed this on King Priam's son" (*Hel.* 32–35; cf. his connection of Hera with *aithēr* at 241–51).

On several occasions authors stress noteworthy capacities of individual deities. A special ability to avoid detection is at issue in Homer's treatment of Hades as the "Unseen-one": Athena put on the cap of Hades, "that stark Ares might not discern her" (μή μιν ἴδοι ὄβριμος Ἄρης) (*Il.* 5.844–45). Hoping to direct Apollo's tremendous power in a positive direction, and toward that end proposing the name's connection to the verb *luō* ("release"), Jocasta addresses him as follows: "I came as suppliant to you, Lycaean Apollo. . . . Grant us escape free (λύσιν τιν') of the curse" (Soph. *OT* 919–21). Elsewhere, a Euripidean Chorus asks Apollo to be Admetus' "redeemer from death" (λυτήριος ἐκ θανάτου, *Alc.* 224). Aeschylus traces the name "Ares" to the noun *ara* ("curse"): "A bitter and evil divider of possessions, Ares, who made their father's curse a thing of utter truth" (πικρὸς δ' ὁ χρημάτων κακὸς δατητὰς Ἄρης, ἀρὰν πατρῴαν τιθεὶς ἀλαθῆ, *Sept.* 944–46).[38] In a passage concerned with the capacity of one god to bring evil to another, Aeschylus (*PV* 910–11) associates Cronus' name with the verb *krainō* ("accomplish") when he has Prometheus say that "so shall at last the final consummation be brought about of Father Cronus' curse" (πατρὸς δ' ἀρὰ Κρόνου τότ' ἤδη παντελῶς κρανθήσεται) unless Zeus seeks and obtains Prometheus' aid.[39]

As mentioned above, the third subdivision of this category consists of assignments that stress the instrumental role that a divine individual or group plays in the cosmos. Notable in this regard is literary authors' frequent consideration of the two forms of Zeus's name, *Dis* and *Zeus*. Hesiod's invocation of the Muses at the outset of *Works and Days* links the form *Dis* (an old nominative for *Zeus*, found in the oblique cases) to the preposition *dia* ("through," "on account of"): "Muses . . . tell of Zeus (Δί') your father and chant his praise. Through him (ὅν τε διά) mortal men are famed or unfamed, sung or unsung alike, as great Zeus

38. In a passage with a very different emphasis, Hephaestus bemoans the fact that Aphrodite scorns him due to his physical deformity, claiming that she prefers Ares due to his attractiveness and soundness or swiftness of limb (οὕνεχ' ὁ καλός τε καὶ ἀρτίπος) (Hom. *Od.* 8.308–11). Although an etymological tie between *Arēs* and *artipos* is conceivable, it is more likely that the parallels here are on the phonetic plane.

39. For a different view, see Wecklein (1981, ad loc.), who treats the connection between *Kronos* and *krainō* as phonetic ("alliteration of κρ-") rather than etymological. Griffith (1983, ad loc.) does not note any sort of link, stating that "this 'father's curse' receives no further mention in the play; nor do we hear of it anywhere else in ancient literature. If this is the first that the audience has heard of it, then it seems rather a casual and pointless mention." That an etymological tie is being forged here was recognized by Kranz (1933, 289).

wills (Διὸς μεγάλοιο ἕκητι)" (1–4). Aeschylus too connects this form of the god's name with *dia* when he has the Chorus in *Agamemnon* identify Zeus as the ultimate source of the misfortunes of the House of Atreus: they happened "all through Zeus, Zeus, first cause, prime mover. For what thing is done by mortals without Zeus?" (διαὶ Διὸς παναιτίου πανεργέτα· τί γὰρ βροτοῖς ἄνευ Διὸς τελεῖται;, *Ag.* 1485–87). In *Isthmian* 3, in turn, Pindar ties the form *Zeus* to *zēn* ("to live"): "O Zeus (Ζεῦ), mortal man's prowess springs from you. His happiness abides (ζώει) longer when he reveres you" (4–5). Aeschylus underscores the same link in a reference to what "is in very truth the seed of life-giving Zeus" (φυσιζόου γένος . . . Ζηνός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς, *Supp.* 584–85).[40] Moreover, Euripides too stresses this tie when he has Apollo say that "Helen lives (ζῆν), for being born of Zeus (Ζηνὸς γὰρ οὖσαν), she could not die" (*Or.* 1635); here a direct causal connection is clearly indicated.[41]

In another pertinent case, the Chorus in Euripides' *Phoenician Women* mentions "the goddesses named together . . . Persephone and dear Demeter, who is ruler of all, and is Earth, nurse of all" (διώνυμοι θεαί, Περσέφασσα καὶ φίλα Δαμάτηρ θεά, πάντων ἄνασσα, πάντων δὲ Γᾶ τροφός, 683–86).[42] This remark indicates the derivation "Mother-Earth." Making the same proposal in the *Bacchae*, Tiresias notes that Demeter and Earth are said to be identical: "Mankind . . . possesses two supreme blessings. First of these is the goddess Demeter, or Earth—whichever name you choose to call her by (Δημήτηρ θεά—γῆ δ' ἐστίν, ὄνομα δ' ὁπότερον βούλῃ κάλει)" (274–76). Elsewhere, Euripides refers to Demeter as "the Mountain Mother of all the gods" (*Hel.* 1301–2; cf. 1320, 1340, 1356), observing that while she grieved over her lost daughter, "earth, green gone from her fields, would give food no more to mortals in the sown lands" (1327–28). Finally, according to Herodotus, the Pelasgians "called the gods by the Greek word *theoi*—'disposers'—because they had 'disposed' and arranged everything in due order, and assigned each thing to its proper division (κόσμῳ θέντες τὰ πάντα πρήγματα καὶ πάσας νομὰς εἶχον)" (2.52.1).

It is evident from the tremendous number and diversity of passages in which authors offer etymologies that they were quite concerned with the issue of connections between elements of language and those of reality; most often they concentrate on showing how proper names, once analyzed, reveal something important about their individual bearers' natures.[43] Literary writers employ a wide range of

40. Tr. Smyth (1922).

41. Finally, regarding Zeus's *onoma*, one may consult Aesch. *Ag.* 160–75, with the interpretation of Quincey 1963, 147–48.

42. My translation.

43. The literary tradition does not have a technical philosophical notion of individual natures according to which one seeks and employs a rigid set of necessary and sufficient conditions for making identifications. Authors operate instead with a loose, nontechnical notion according to which a particular individual, either mortal or divine, is widely recognized by a salient characteristic, power, or type of activity.

criteria in their speculations about the descriptive content of proper names and do not demonstrate an interest in being consistent or systematic: although certain standards, for instance, that criterion involving bearers' attitudes and character traits, are especially popular, authors do not regularly adopt a particular approach. Instead they proceed haphazardly, based on the requirements of a particular context.[44] Moreover, and quite importantly from Plato's perspective, they neither call the value of the approach itself into question nor express doubts about crucial assumptions underlying the enterprise: namely, that there are substantive connections between *onomata* and entities that etymological analysis reveals, and that natures belong first and foremost to individuals. In the *Cratylus*, as we will see, Plato employs the literary tradition's techniques and assumptions, with the ultimate goal of discrediting them. Neither there, nor elsewhere, does he espouse the view that one may achieve genuine insight by analyzing the constitution of *onomata*.

Appendix: Other Expressions of a Belief in Substantial Ties between *Onomata* and Elements of Reality

A belief in substantial connections between elements of language and of reality is evident in arenas besides that of etymology. In this appendix, I comment on the issue of changes in *onomata* for apotropaic purposes, the omission of *onomata* due to a fear of (or for) their referents, and the use of curse tablets (*defixiones*) as it bears on the theme of ties between names and their bearers. Greek literary texts illustrate a strong belief that substituting an *onoma* with positive connotations or descriptive content for one whose referent generates fear or superstition could help to counteract its power. This view is strikingly evident in authors' attitude toward and naming of what is on the left.[45]

In Greek literature, greater value and higher status is regularly assigned to what is located on the right. Oaths, for example, are sealed with the right hand, as when

44. Not only do different writers provide divergent etymologies of the same name, as in the case of Aphrodite (Hes. *Th.* 197–98; Eur. *Tro.* 989–90), but an individual author may himself offer distinct etymological analyses of a single *onoma*, as happens in Pindar's treatment of the name "Iamus" (*Ol.* 6.45–47, 54–57). In addition, a writer may offer multiple appellations for the same individual, providing an etymological treatment of each, as Hesiod does in the case of Aphrodite (*Th.* 197–98, 199).

45. Among Presocratic philosophers, a distinct preference for what is on the right is evident in Parmenides, as when the goddess greets him after his metaphorical transition from Night to Day by grasping his right hand (DK 1.22–23). Moreover, Parmenides' opposed valuations of right and left—positive and negative, respectively—are present in his embryology, according to which "on the right boys, on the left girls" (DK 17). Aristotle (GA 763b31–764a1) mentions Anaxagoras as among those who connect right with male and left with female in the process of generation. Concerning the favoring of right over left, one may also consult the Pythagorean Table of Opposites, which is preserved by Aristotle (*Metaph.* 986a22–26).

the nurse in Euripides' *Medea* says that "poor Medea is slighted, and cries aloud on the vows (ὅρκους) they made to each other, the right hands clasped in eternal promise (ἀνακαλεῖ δὲ δεξιᾶς πίστιν μεγίστην)" (20–22); later in the play, in fact, Medea reminds Jason of that earlier pledge—clinched with the right hand—which he has now broken (495–97).[46] In addition, feelings and attitudes, prominent among them affection and respect, are conveyed by touches of the right hand. Thus, Medea tells her children to welcome Jason by grasping his right hand (*Med.* 899) and later asks for their hands so that she might kiss them (1070). Elsewhere, Oedipus asks Theseus whether he might grasp his right hand as a sign of respect and gratitude for Theseus' kindness toward him (Soph. *OC* 1130).[47] Moreover, the right hand does the most central work in acts with religious import, as when Hecuba carries a golden goblet containing wine in her right hand in order that a drink-offering might be poured as Priam and the herald prepare to depart on the embassy to Achilles (Hom. *Il.* 24.284–85).[48] In war, in turn, being on the right wing of the army is considered to be more prestigious. This view is made explicit by Herodotus, who says that Callimachus led the right wing of the Athenian army at Marathon since it was customary in Athens at this time to bestow that honor on the War Archon (6.111.1).[49] In series, moreover, movement from left to right is preferred.

46. Elsewhere, Menelaus indicates his acceptance of a mutual oath (ἁγνὸν ὅρκον) between himself and Helen by instructing her to take his right hand (Eur. *Hel.* 835–38), and Heracles insists that Hyllus' promise to him be confirmed in the same way (Soph. *Trach.* 1181). For other relevant passages, see Hom. *Il.* 2.339–41, 4.155–59. Cf. Orestes' request to Pylades to seal his promise to build his tomb with the clasping of right hands (Eur. *IT* 701–2). In addition, pleas are made, at least in part, by touching the right hand of those whom one entreats, as when Iphigenia requests that the temple maidens demonstrate their loyalty by not revealing what they know (πρός σε δεξιᾶς σὲ καὶ σ' ἱκνοῦμαι, *IT* 1068–69). See also Eur. *IA* 909–10, where Clytemnestra entreats Achilles to preserve his own reputation by helping to save Iphigenia from death: "I beg you, by your beard, your right hand (πρός σε δεξιᾶς), and by your mother's name—cleanse your own name of this reproach." Regarding this type of case, cf. Eur. *Hec.* 342. For votes registered by the raising of the right hand, see Aesch. *Supp.* 607.

47. With respect to feelings and attitudes, one may also consult Eur. *IA* 679, 866; Hom. *Il.* 10.542; cf. Hom. *Od.* 1.121, where a stranger's right hand is grasped as a sign of welcome. Penelope recalls Odysseus' final words to her before his departure, which were preceded by his grasping of her right hand and wrist (*Od.* 18.258). Here the touch seems to be above all a gesture of affection, but on some level it also conveys a recognition of Penelope's sadness. One person may grasp another's hand for the primary purpose of acknowledging painful feelings and emotions that the latter is experiencing, where the touch aims to diminish the feeling or emotion in question. In the *Iliad*, for example, Achilles takes Priam by the right hand at the wrist so that he will not be fearful (24.672). Elsewhere, Alcestis' handmaid notes that "all the servants in the house were crying now in sorrow for their mistress. Then she gave her hand to each, and each one took it (ἡ δὲ δεξιὰν προύτειν' ἑκάστῳ)" (Eur. *Alc.* 192–94).

48. For the right hand's salience in the context of animal sacrifice, see Eur. *El.* 812; *Hel.* 1581. On the importance of the right-hand side in connection with the dedication of grain, see Eur. *IA* 1472. Elsewhere, Dionysus notes that real Bacchantes hold the wand in the right hand and raise it as they raise the right foot (Eur. *Bacch.* 941–44). Concerning the religious arena, cf. Hdt. 1.51.1, where the bowl of greater value is placed on the right side of the entrance to the temple at Delphi.

49. Regarding the organization of the Greek army at Plataea, see Hdt. 9.26.6–28.6.

This preference is demonstrated in the passing of a range of objects, among them wine cups (Eur. *Rhes.* 364) and lots, as when the lot of Aias is shown to other warriors (Hom. *Il.* 7.184).[50] Even the gods are said to observe this sequence (see *Il.* 1.597, where Hephaestus pours drinks for the other gods, moving from left to right).

In addition, bird signs are regularly interpreted as positive if the flight of the bird or birds is on or to the right, as when the heron Athena sends to Diomedes and Odysseus appears on the right near the path that they are taking (*Il.* 10.274). Later in the *Iliad,* Hecuba exhorts Priam to pray to Zeus "for a bird of omen . . . one seen to the right (δεξιόν), so that once your eyes have rested upon him you can trust in him and go to the ships of the fast-mounted Danaans" (24.292–95); all then rejoiced when, following Priam's request (310–13), a dark eagle "swept through the city appearing on the right hand" (319–20). In the *Odyssey,* Zeus sends a sign to Telemachus—who has just appealed to the god in a rebuke of the suitors—in the form of a pair of eagles which "dropped on the heads of the crowd . . . wielding their talons, tearing cheeks and throats; then veered away on the right hand through the city" (2.152–54). Telemachus receives another such sign of support later on, as he takes leave of Menelaus: "Even as he spoke, a beat of wings went skyward off to the right (δεξιὸς ὄρνις)—a mountain eagle, grappling a white goose in his talons, heavy prey hooked from a farmyard. Women and men-at-arms made hubbub, running up, as he flew over, but then he wheeled hard right (ἐγγύθεν δεξιός) before the horses—a sight that made the whole crowd cheer, with hearts lifting in joy" (15.160–65). For yet a third time, Telemachus receives divine support in the form of a positive bird sign "when a hawk, Apollo's courier, flew up on the right" (15.525–26).[51]

50. In another pertinent case, Odysseus, following Athena's instructions, "appealed to the suitors, one after another, going from left to right (ἐνδέξια), with open palm, as though his lifetime had been spent in beggary" (Hom. *Od.* 17.365–66). Antinous' subsequent instructions to the other suitors regarding attempts to string the bow of Odysseus incorporate the same preference (*Od.* 21.141–42).

51. Theoclymenus' interpretation underscores the sign's positive import: "A god spoke in this bird sign on the right. I knew it when I saw the hawk fly over us. There is no kinglier house than yours, Telemachus, here in the realm of Ithaca. Your family will be in power forever" (15.531–34). For other relevant passages, see Hom. *Il.* 13.821–23; *Od.* 24.311–13. Regarding divine omens, one may also consult *Il.* 2.353, where Nestor says that Zeus "flashed lightning on our right as a sign of favor"; *Il.* 9.236–37; Eur. *Phoen.* 1189–91.

Furthermore, positive descriptions of mental and physical gifts contain *dexiotēs* or *dexios* (on its own or in a compound), as when Herodotus mentions a wreath that "was granted to Themistocles . . . for his ability and skill (σοφίης . . . καὶ δεξιότητος)" (8.124.2). In the ninth Olympian ode, Pindar notes that the gods gave Epharmostus "sure hands, lithe limbs (δεξιόγυιον), the face and brow of power" (110–11). In *Isthmian* 5, Pindar says that "among pancratiasts, I praise Pytheas for having steered his brother's blows aright—he's clever with his hands (χερσὶ δεξιόν) and a match in wits" (59–61). Elsewhere, Herodotus states that "the Greeks have never been simpletons; for centuries past, they have been distinguished from other nations by superior wits" (ἐπεί γε ἀπεκρίθη ἐκ παλαιτέρου τοῦ βαρβάρου ἔθνεος τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐὸν καὶ δεξιώτερον καὶ εὐηθίης ἠλιθίου ἀπηλλαγμένον μᾶλλον, 1.60.3).

The foregoing discussion provides abundant evidence that the Greeks had a marked preference for what is located on the right or moves in that direction. Strongly implied in such passages is a negative judgment, relatively speaking, of what is on the left, and in fact writers make this assessment explicit. While, as we saw, bird signs on the right are viewed as auspicious, those on the left are regarded with trepidation. One notable example occurs in connection with the Trojans' attempt to set fire to the Greek ships: as the Trojans "were urgent to cross [the ditch], a bird sign had appeared to them, an eagle, flying high and holding to the left of the people (αἰετὸς ὑψιπέτης ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ λαὸν ἐέργων) and carrying in its talons a gigantic snake. . . . And the Trojans shivered with fear as they looked on the lithe snake lying in their midst, a portent of Zeus of the aegis" (Hom. *Il.* 12.200–209). Polydamas interprets the omen as portending a negative outcome to their project and enjoins Hector to desist (12.215–29; see especially his repetition of the fact of the eagle's "flying high and holding to the left [ἐπ' ἀριστερά] of the people," 219).[52] In the *Odyssey*, in turn, the suitors were plotting the death of Telemachus, "when from the left an eagle crossed high with a rockdove in his claws (αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀριστερὸς ἤλυθεν ὄρνις, αἰετὸς ὑψιπέτης, ἔχε δὲ τρήρωνα πέλειαν). Amphinomus got up. Said he, cutting them short: 'Friends, no luck lies in that plan for us, no luck, knifing the lad. Let's think of feasting'" (20.242–46).[53]

In order to counteract any negative effects associated with something's position on the left, writers may speak euphemistically, substituting *euōnumos* ("well-named" or "of good omen") for *aristeros*.[54] In a move that appears to have an apotropaic aim, Prometheus says, "The flights of crook-taloned birds I distinguished clearly—which ones are auspicious by nature, and which sinister" (γαμψωνύχων τε πτῆσιν οἰωνῶν σκεθρῶς διώρισ', οἵτινές τε δεξιοὶ φύσιν εὐωνύμους τε, Aesch. *PV* 488–90).[55] In another context, Antigone speaks of her

52. In his reply to Polydamas, Hector refuses explicitly to regulate his conduct according to the behavior of birds (12.237–40), but his failure to heed the bird sign that appeared on the left does not have a positive outcome.

53. Cf. Herodotus' discussion (2.30.1–2) of the "Deserters—a people whose name is *Asmach*, a word which would mean in Greek 'those who stand on the left hand (ἐξ ἀριστερῆς χειρός) of the king.' They were a body of men two hundred and forty thousand strong, of the Egyptian warrior class, who went over to the Ethiopians during the reign of Psammetichus."

54. Where the euphemistic replacement of terms is not at issue, *euōnumos* is used in a range of positive descriptions, especially of individuals (Hes. *Th.* 409; Pind. *Ol.* 2.7, *Pyth.* 11.58, *Nem.* 8.47) and cities (Pind. *Nem.* 4.19, 7.85, 11.20). The adjective is employed with reference to justice at Pind. *Nem.* 7.48.

55. Tr. Smyth (1922), with modifications. Grene ("which of them were in nature prosperous and lucky" [Benardete and Grene 1991]; "which of them were propitious or lucky by nature" [Lattimore, Benardete, and Grene 1956]) treats *dexios* and *euōnumos* as synonymous. It is doubtless true that for the Greeks what is *dexios* is *euōnumos*. However, the contrast between left and right is part of normal Greek usage and likely to be in play here, especially given the context in which the terms are used.

brothers as "stricken through the left sides (δι' εὐωνύμων τετυμμένοι), stricken indeed, through sides born of a common mother" (Aesch. *Sept.* 887–90). Elsewhere in Aeschylus, Danaus instructs his daughters to "prepare quickly white suppliant wreaths, sign of Zeus sacred, held in the left hand (ἔχουσαι διὰ χερῶν εὐωνύμων)" (*Supp.* 191–93). In Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*, in turn, the nurse tells how Deianira prepared to kill herself by uncovering "her whole side and her left arm" (πλευρὰν ἅπασαν ὠλένην τ' εὐώνυμον, 926). Herodotus uses *euōnumos* with *keras* on several occasions when speaking of the left wing of an army (see 6.111.1, 9.28.6, 9.46.3, 9.47); this euphemistic employment of *euōnumos* is not surprising given the belief, mentioned above, that a position on the right wing was viewed as more favorable.

A shift in *onoma* for apotropaic purposes also occurs in the case of the Eumenides. The Furies, as depicted by the tragedians, evoked great fear in mortals, and this fear is evident in mortals' approach to the naming of these deities.[56] In Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, Oedipus is told, regarding the spot where he sits, that "most dreadful are its divinities, most feared, daughters of darkness and mysterious earth" (αἱ γὰρ ἔμφοβοι θεαί σφ' ἔχουσι, Γῆς τε καὶ Σκότου κόραι, 39–40). Having asked under what name he should invoke them, he is informed that the people of Colonus prefer to address them as "Gentle All-seeing Ones" (τὰς πάνθ' ὁρώσας Εὐμενίδας, 42). The mortals in question assign them the name "Eumenides" based on their fear, that is to say, based on the attitude that they actually want these divinities to have toward them. This comes out clearly when the Chorus asks the deities, in effect, to be true to this assigned name with positive descriptive content: it tells Oedipus to repeat the prayer that "as we call them Eumenides, which means the gentle of heart, may they accept with gentleness (ἐξ εὐμενῶν) the suppliant and his wish" (486–87).[57]

In the cases discussed in what precedes, *onomata* whose referents are viewed as productive of fear may be changed for apotropaic purposes. One may also refrain from uttering certain *onomata* on the same or related grounds. *Oedipus at Colonus* illustrates clearly the point that fear of entities' power to harm can lead to the conscious suppression of a name: the Chorus speaks of the Furies as "those whom it's futile to fight, those whom we tremble to name" (127–29). The same

56. Regarding Hesiod's treatment of the Furies, see *Op.* 802–4; *Th.* 182–85, 472.

57. For the euphemistic name "Eumenides" employed on account of mortals' fear, see also Eur. *Or.* 37–38. On the general topic, one may consult, in addition, the observation of Burkert (1985, 181) that the ordinary individual's fear of the *daimōn* is indicated by "euphemistic talk about the 'other daimon' instead of the evil daimon." Pind. *Pyth.* 3.34 (δαίμων ἕτερος), mentioned by Burkert in this connection, offers a nice illustration of this point. For ἄλλη in the phrase ἄλλη μοῖρα ("another fate," Soph. *Aj.* 516) as euphemistic, see Young 1966. Regarding euphemistic terminology, cf. Nagy's treatment (1974, 260) of Clytemnestra's name, according to which "the name Κλυται-μήστρα . . . connotes that she is renowned for what she devised, with -μήστρα derived from the verb μήδομαι. Given the sinister connotations of this verb, the by-form Κλυται-μνήστρα may even be the result of tabu-deformation."

trepidation about the naming of these entities is underscored by Euripides in an exchange between Orestes and Menelaus following the latter's request for a description of the phantoms responsible for Orestes' madness (*Or.* 408–10):

> ORESTES: I seemed to see three women, black as night—
>
> MENELAUS: Say no more. I know the spirits you mean. I refuse to speak their name (ὀνομάσαι δ' οὐ βούλομαι).
>
> ORESTES: You are wise. They are awful.[58]

As previously discussed, it is precisely this fear that leads mortals to give the deities an *onoma* with positive semantic constitution, which encapsulates their hope that the name's referents will alter their behavior to correspond to the description in question.

Another pertinent example involves Penelope's reluctance to articulate the *onoma* of that city the journey to which, she thinks, led ultimately to Odysseus' death. This deep hesitation leads her to refer on several occasions to "evil Ilium, that is not to be named" (Κακοΐλιον οὐκ ὀνομαστήν, Hom. *Od.* 19.260, 19.597, 23.19).[59] According to Brown (1966, 199), "the name of Ilios is taboo and not to be mentioned; so it is evaded . . . by a modification (in this case, compounding) that leaves it recognizable, but avoids the ill-omened plain word."

In a related type of case, Herodotus declines to mention Osiris' name in connection with a certain activity performed in his honor (2.61.1), saying simply that "I have already mentioned the festival of Isis at Busiris: it is here that everybody—tens of thousands of men and women—when the sacrifice is over, beat their breasts: in whose honor, however, I do not feel it is proper for me to say (τὸν δὲ τύπτονται, οὔ μοι ὅσιόν ἐστι λέγειν)." He observes subsequently that when a corpse is brought to them, Egyptian embalmers display wooden models, varying in quality, of which "the best and most expensive kind is said to represent a being whose name I shrink from mentioning in this connection (εἶναι τοῦ οὐκ ὅσιον ποιεῦμαι τὸ οὔνομα ἐπὶ τοιούτῳ πρήγματι ὀνομάζειν)" (2.86.2). Elsewhere, Herodotus refers to that annual festival "on which the Egyptians beat themselves in honor of that deity whom I must not name in this connection" (2.132.2) and notes that "in Athena's precinct at Sais . . . is the tomb of one whose name I prefer not to mention in such a connection. . . . There is a stone-bordered lake nearby, circular in shape and about the size, I should say, of the lake called the Wheel on the island of Delos. It is on this lake that the Egyptians act by night in what they call their Mysteries the Passion of that being whose name I will not speak" (2.170.1–171.1).[60]

58. Cf. Orestes' reference elsewhere to these entities as αἱ ἀνώνυμοι θεαί (Eur. *IT* 944).

59. My translation.

60. For Herodotus' refusal to discuss the reason behind certain Egyptian religious practices, see 2.46.2, 47.2. The fact that Osiris is mentioned by name elsewhere in what Sélincourt (1972,

One may note, furthermore, the suppression of Odysseus' name in the *Odyssey* by those who wish to protect him. His *onoma* is connected repeatedly there with the verb *odussomai*.[61] As Austin (1972, 2) observes, "Homer insists on the pun, and our only doubt is whether to translate the name in the passive or active sense, Odysseus the man who suffers pain or inflicts pain, the Hated or the Hater." On the interpretation of Dimock (1956), Homer has both senses in mind since "odysseusing" and being "odysseused" are both integral to the construction of the hero's identity. On the basis of this interpretation, Dimock (1956, 57) proposes rendering his name as "Trouble," which may be viewed as having the virtue of ambiguity on account of its easy accommodation to both the passive and active senses of *odussomai*.[62]

Austin (1972) emphasizes the intimate connection between name and person in Homer, noting that "the name is the man in the *Odyssey*" (3). Brown (1966) construes Polyphemus' curse on Odysseus as "an instance of *the power of the name*" (195): by disclosing his *onoma*, Odysseus "makes it possible for Polyphemus to lay a curse on him" (196).[63] While it might often make sense for Odysseus himself to withhold his name out of a concern for his own security, what is noteworthy in the *Odyssey*, according to Austin (1972, 5), is that "Odysseus is blessed with friends who respect the name tabus as much as he. Those closest to him treat his name as a treasure which must be shielded from vulgar display, protecting the man by repressing the name." Of particular importance in this regard is 14.145–47, where Eumaeus says that he dreads to name Odysseus (τὸν . . . ἐγών . . . ὀνομάζειν αἰδέομαι) and calls him instead *ētheion*. On the interpretation of Austin (1972, 11–12), "Eumaios will not endanger the life of his master by calling him Odysseus, i.e., the sort of man who outwits or offends the highest deities on Olympos, but will name him the man of character (*ethos*), simply 'the

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153 n. 1) describes as his "public" capacity, as at 2.42.2 and 2.144.2, suggests that it is the context that determines whether it is appropriate to provide the god's *onoma*; in this regard, it is worth noting that Herodotus typically uses the phrase "in this connection" (ἐπὶ τοιούτῳ πρήγματι) when indicating that Osiris' name must be omitted (see 2.86.2, 132.2, 170.1).

61. For passages in the *Odyssey* that underscore the etymological connection, see 1.62, 5.339–40, 5.423, 19.275–76, 407–9.

62. This positive assessment is shared by Austin (1972, 3), who cites Dimock's rendering of the name approvingly.

63. As Brown (1966, 201) observes, since the name represents the person, it is crucial that Polyphemus repeat verbatim Odysseus' identification of himself: "He is pronouncing a formal curse which can be successful only if properly directed, and consequently he repeats the name and address exactly as Odysseus has given them." Regarding Odysseus' suppression and eventual provision of his name to the Phaeacians, see Webber 1989. On Webber's interpretation (13), "it is always a risk to tell one's name, but, where Odysseus once succumbed to temptation, he will now act with assurance, usurping the role of bard and taking control of his own *kleos*." Cf. Austin (1972, 5), who notes that "Odysseus had learned well his lesson; he reveals his name now only to assured friends."

good man.' Eumaios's conversation with the stranger is apotropaic first in avoiding the imperiled name, but then, when the name must be spoken, in deprecating any implications which the name conveys."[64]

As we saw in other examples, individuals may refrain from using certain *onomata* due to fear or reverence associated with their bearers. These emotions may be present even when terms' descriptive content is not at issue, as in the case of Osiris. With regard to Odysseus, the fear in question is in the first instance not for oneself but rather for the name's own referent. This apprehension on Odysseus' behalf is generated in no small part by what was believed to be the negative descriptive content of his *onoma*. While individuals, including Odysseus himself, may try to avoid any negative effects associated with the name by refraining from its use, Eumaeus' remarks at *Odyssey* 14.145–47 are interesting insofar as they appear to represent a move in the direction of what transpires in the case of the Eumenides, where a name with negative associations is replaced by a referring expression with a positive meaning in the hope that reality itself may be impacted thereby.

Regarding the matter of close ties between elements of language and of reality, for current purposes one may note, finally, the belief in the power of language generally and names specifically to impact reality that is manifested in the use of curses (*katadesmoi*, or *defixiones*). *Defixiones* first appear in Attica, Sicily, and Olbia in the fifth century B.C. and are dispersed throughout the Greco-Roman world by the second century A.D.[65] Their aim, in brief, is "to influence, by supernatural means, the actions or welfare of persons . . . against their will" (Jordan 1985, 151). *Defixiones* from the classical period consist typically of small sheets of lead, which are inscribed, folded, pierced with a bronze or iron nail, then deposited in chthonic sanctuaries or buried with the corpse of one who has come to an untimely end.[66] As Faraone (1991, 8) observes, a distinctive feature of Greek curses is that their authors' aim was to inhibit the performance of their targets rather than to destroy the individuals themselves.[67]

64. On the disclosure and concealment of Odysseus' name, see also Higbie 1995, 160–76, 190.

65. Faraone 1991, 3. Plato evinces a clear awareness of the existence of *katadesmoi* (see *Rep.* 364b–c; *Leg.* 933a–c); on the importance of the former passage, see Jordan 1988, 276–77. According to Jordan (1980, 227), *defixiones* remained in use until at least the sixth century A.D. (cf. Jordan 1988, 274).

66. This description is drawn from Faraone 1991, 3. As he observes (1991, 22 n. 5), sometimes one tablet was pierced with multiple nails; for examples, see Jordan 1985 (hereafter cited as SGD), 40, 41, 72 (numbers here and in subsequent references are to tablets in Jordan's list).

67. According to Faraone (1991, 26 n. 38), the aim of death or destruction is mentioned only quite rarely in early Greek curse tablets. *Defixiones* contain neither the names of those initiating the curses nor defenses of their actions; on this issue, see Versnel (1991, 62–63), who considers why they are anonymous (cf. his labeling of the provision of authors' names and justifications for their actions as "nontraditional" features of certain tablets [1991, 68]). On *defixiones* as not merely "a lower-class phenomenon," one may consult Faraone 1989, 156 (with n. 20); see also Faraone 1985, 153 (with n. 20) and Jordan 1988.

Faraone (1991) stresses the agonistic social context in which *defixiones* were produced. Since agonistic relationships were at issue for the Greeks in many arenas, it is not surprising that surviving evidence indicates the employment of curses by individuals with a range of particular aims. According to Faraone (1991, 10–11), with respect to their focus one may divide formulae into four basic types: commercial curses; those directed against athletes and other public performers, among them participants in theatrical contests; amatory curses, which Faraone subdivides into "separation" and "aphrodisiac" varieties; and curses centering on the judicial arena.[68] While some *defixiones* invoke one or more divinities associated with the Underworld, whose action is hoped for or anticipated, in other cases the individual preparing the curse relies on his own activity to make it efficacious.[69]

As observed, *defixiones* were used in competitive contexts, where the goal of the *defigens* was to impair the object's performance in the pertinent arena. As commentators have noted, extant tablets often target individuals' cognitive and linguistic capacities, bodily parts, technical expertise, and possessions.[70] The more specific objects of *defixiones* include the following, quite often in various combinations:[71] *glōtta*,[72] *cheires*,[73] *podes*,[74] *sōma*,[75] *psuchē*,[76] *nous*,[77] *thumos*,[78] *mnēmē*,[79] *praxeis*,[80]

68. On judicial curses as composed before, rather than after, the conclusion of trials, see Faraone 1991, 15, 29 n. 67. For discussion of the differences between this type of *defixio* and judicial prayers, see Versnel 1991. According to Faraone (1991, 16), with few exceptions the large group of published Greek judicial curses date from the classical and Hellenistic periods, and it is likely that all published Attic judicial curses belong to the former. On judicial curses as an early development, see also Faraone 1985, 153 (with n. 19), 154 (with n. 24); in his view (1985, 154), judicial curses and the civil courts developed simultaneously.

Commercial *defixiones* generally come from the classical and Hellenistic periods (Faraone 1991, 10), while those targeting athletes and other performers are generally not found prior to the second century A.D. (10–11). In contrast to aphrodisiac curses, which are strictly a late development, separation curses, though infrequent, are evenly distributed across time (11). Faraone (1991, 16, 30–31 n. 76) observes that well-known politicians and orators were often the targets of early Attic *defixiones*, where the curses' aims are either clearly judicial or left unstated.

69. On this topic, see Faraone 1991, 10.

70. On this subject, one may consult, e.g., Faraone 1989, 1991.

71. The following list of objects and examples is not intended to be exhaustive but rather to convey a sense of what is at issue in the relevant class of tablets.

72. Wünsch 1897 (hereafter DTA), 49–50, 52–54, 56, 61, 66, 68, 75, 79, 82, 84, 87–90, 94–98, 107; SGD 1, 46, 95, 99–100, 108.

73. DTA 52, 54, 60, 68, 86–87, 89–90, 93, 96–97.

74. DTA 60, 68, 80, 86–87, 89–90, 93, 96–97.

75. DTA 74, 93.

76. DTA 49–51, 56, 66, 74, 77, 79, 84, 86–87, 89, 93, 96–97, 107; SGD 1, 46, 107.

77. DTA 51, 59, 87, 89, 107. Cf. the wish expressed in DTA 65 that the curse's targets become *aphrones*.

78. DTA 51–53.

79. DTA 61.

80. DTA 56, 63, 100.

erga,[81] *ergasia*,[82] *ergastērion*,[83] *emporion*,[84] *technē*,[85] *organa*,[86] *phōnē*,[87] *logos*,[88] *epē*,[89] and *rhēmata*.[90]

Underscoring the connection between language and reality, Jevons (1908, 115) remarks that the *defigens* says what is inscribed "and drives a nail or nails through the leaden tablet bearing the words." Emphasizing the central role played by a conviction that language shapes reality, Strubbe (1991, 41) observes that "the force of a curse is based on a more general belief in the efficacy of the word," adding that this effect is enhanced "if the word is spoken by a person of higher status," for example, the dead, as was thought to occur when *defixiones* were placed in the graves of those who had died before their time (*aōroi*). Regarding the perceived capacity of language to impact reality, it is worth noting, in addition, evidence cited by Strubbe (1991, 42) that a curse could be viewed as having such force that it actually became a bad *daimōn*, namely, *Ara* ("Curse").[91]

While over time the texts inscribed on *defixiones* become increasingly complex—falling into the basic types previously delineated—most of the earliest Attic and Sicilian tablets consist exclusively of lists of *onomata*.[92] As Faraone observes (1985, 151), "by fixing the names of the victims with a nail, the *defigens* attempts to transfix his or her intended victims."[93] The inscription on the tablet of the

81. DTA 53, 56, 63–64, 69, 75, 77, 84, 95, 98, 104; SGD 15, 40, 46.
82. DTA 52, 68–71, 74–75, 86–87.
83. DTA 68, 71, 74–75, 84; SGD 124.
84. DTA 75.
85. DTA 73–74, 87.
86. DTA 73.
87. DTA 61.
88. DTA 94.
89. DTA 56, 84, 95, 98; SGD 40.
90. DTA 68, 93. Regarding the targets of *defixiones*, see also SGD 3, 11, 44, 51, 57, 69.
91. On the connection between speech and action, it is worth singling out one type of binding formula discussed by Faraone (1991), which he labels "similia similibus" (5). As explained by Tambiah (1973) in his account of "persuasive analogy," it centers on two objects viewed as having both similarities and differences and an attempt to transfer a feature of one object to another that lacks it (222–23). According to Tambiah (1973, 222), both a linguistic and a mental or physical act are required for "the full realization of the performance." Strubbe (1991)—whose focus is imprecations, mainly from Asia Minor, that are intended to protect graves—observes that "the force of the cursing word could be increased by a variety of rhetorical devices, such as repetition, rhythm, and the use of triplets. These phenomena are common to both 'magical' and 'religious' liturgy" (41). An investigation of surviving *defixiones* reveals a strong concern with rhetorical devices, including repetition and the transposition of letters in adjacent words.
92. Faraone 1991, 5; cf. Versnel 1991, 61. For numerous examples, see DTA 1–39; see also the list of Jordan (SGD), which includes tablets consisting of names. Faraone observes (1991, 10) that over three-fourths of published Greek *defixiones* either consist entirely of names or are so brief that they provide no clue to their specific aims. In his view (1991, 5), the gradual increase in literacy in the classical period helps to explain the fact that over time more of the spoken portion of the curse was inscribed on the tablet itself.
93. According to Faraone (1991, 4), it is not entirely clear whether individuals performed the binding rituals themselves or hired professionals to do so on their behalf; if the latter is the case,

target's name was conjoined with the utterance of a verb of binding.[94] These would seem to be individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for the curse's having a chance at success. Clearly, the name's inscription and piercing are crucial insofar as it is the *onoma* thus manipulated that establishes the correct target for the accompanying speech and ritual activity. Since in this context the name represents the person whose action or performance is to be impeded, the practice testifies to a strong belief in the existence of a substantial connection between *onomata* and their referents. One noteworthy tablet (DTA 57) was inscribed with the words: ὄνομ[α κατ]αδ(ῶ) καὶ τὴ[ν γ]λῶτ(τ)αν αὐτῶν καὶ αὐτόν ("I bind the name and tongue, that is, the individual himself").[95] Jevons (1908, 108) rightly observes that this remark provides strong confirmation of the deep tie that was believed to exist in this context between an *onoma* and its bearer. As he notes, moreover (1908, 107), it is not surprising that the name was used for the same purpose as a figurine representing the bearer since "the name is, if anything, even more intimately identified with the man than any likeness of him can be."[96]

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this would not be due to the necessity of specialized knowledge, since "the act of flattening out a soft piece of lead and then scratching a name into it certainly did not require much more effort or technical skill than inscribing a potsherd for a vote of ostracism."

94. On this point, see Faraone 1991, 4–5 (cf. 1985, 153 [with n. 21]).

95. I follow Jevons (1908, 108) in taking the καί as epexegetical, although he omits the tablet's mention of the victim's tongue. For the relevant use of the term *onoma*, see also SGD 23, 146. For other pertinent examples, one may consult Jevons 1908, 115.

96. In a variant of the type of binding that centers on the target's *onoma*, lead "voodoo dolls" were placed in boxes, with victims' names inscribed on the lids and sometimes on the dolls themselves (Faraone 1985, 151); on these figurines, see also Jordan 1988. According to Jordan (1988, 275), they were rare in classical Athens. While this form of binding carries the process one step further, insofar as it involves the construction of figures that were viewed as representations of the curses' objects, at its core it is a functional equivalent of the approach that centers on names.

2

ETYMOLOGY AND THE *CRATYLUS*' SOURCES

An Investigation of the Literary Tradition's Importance

1. Introduction

Any assessment of Plato's systematic philosophy must devote significant attention to his philosophy of language.[1] The dialogue in which Plato concentrates most intensively on linguistic issues is the *Cratylus*. In fact, Plato's *Cratylus* has interested those working in the areas of Greek philosophy and philosophy of language precisely because it is the first text in the Western philosophical tradition that offers a sustained treatment of such issues.[2]

The *Cratylus* poses certain problems regarding the basis on which *onomata* ("words" or "names") may be judged "appropriate" or "correct." Plato focuses largely on a thesis according to which names are assigned correctly if their semantic constitution, articulated by etymology, reveals their referents' natures. Since this is where his own emphasis lies, one cannot develop a defensible interpretation of the dialogue as a whole without taking the etymological section seriously into account. Despite its dominant presence, some have largely dismissed this portion of the *Cratylus*.[3] Even those who recognize the section's importance have not fully addressed the issue of why Plato makes an etymological approach to correctness the centerpiece of the dialogue.[4]

1. Strictly speaking, Plato has conceptions of various aspects of language but not what one would call today a complete philosophy. In using the phrase, I have in mind those conceptions he does offer, viewed as a totality.

2. On the dialogue's historical primacy, see Kretzmann 1967, 360; Pfeiffer 1968, 59.

3. For interpretations thus inclined, see Shorey 1933; Taylor 1960; Jowett 1892, vol. 1; Ryle 1966; Kirk 1951; Mackenzie 1986; Leky [1919] 1967.

4. Those who have emphasized its importance include Gaiser 1974, 25; Baxter 1992, 187; Ross 1955, 191; Luce 1964, 149; Benardete 1981, 127; Dalimier 1998, 17.

While long-standing controversy surrounds the interpretation of many Platonic dialogues, debate regarding the *Cratylus* has been especially marked by the range of, and divergence among, competing orientations.[5] With regard to historical sources, interpreters generally emphasize Plato's relation to various sophists and philosophers. Although reference to these sources often helps to situate Platonic concerns, explanations of the dialogue's etymological section that concentrate on these figures encounter numerous difficulties stemming from the paucity of extant evidence and the fact that such appeals are not adequately supported by the evidence that has survived.[6]

Given the problems associated with this search for Platonic antecedents, one might follow the lead of those commentators who largely dismiss questions of historical sources in order to concentrate on the dialogue's philosophical content and import. This focus is endorsed explicitly by Gaiser (1974, 11), who maintains that "the question about historical preconditions is fundamentally unproductive" and that "what [Plato] has in mind philosophically in a particular work emerges not from the historical background . . . but rather from the thinking that takes place in the dialogue itself." Similarly, Derbolav (1972), calling attention to the extreme difficulty of identifying the dialogue's sources (27, 31), stresses that "in fact the historical connections involving the *Cratylus* are . . . explored in detail nowhere in the book. . . . The author sees in this no deficiency, but rather an advantage from the standpoint of the investigation's concentration on the level of substance" (25). While the general attractiveness of making a virtue of "necessity" may seem obvious, in the case of the *Cratylus* historical and philosophical questions cannot be so neatly distinguished; rather, in order to estimate successfully the dialogue's philosophical content and innovation, one must achieve the fullest possible awareness of other similar inquiries.[7]

Although commentators have attended to a range of possible sources, most often they either do not mention Greek literature or make only isolated references to it. I submit that once one looks beyond those regularly identified as central opponents of the dialogue's etymological section and attends to literary

5. My treatment of the *Cratylus* in chapters 2–3 focuses on those points of contention that are directly relevant to the claims being made in this book. A comprehensive treatment of issues raised by the dialogue would be well beyond the scope of the present study.

6. The proviso about a scarcity of evidence applies to such individuals as Antisthenes, Cratylus, Heraclides Ponticus, and Euthyphro. In other cases, prominent among them Prodicus, Protagoras, and Heraclitus, one has somewhat more evidence to go on. Here, however, commentators assume closer ties to Plato's inquiry than are justifiable. Since Protagoras and Prodicus are those alleged sources most directly relevant in the immediate context of the dialogue, as Plato frames his inquiry into *orthotēs*, I concentrate on them in section 2. For comments on other proposed sources, including the Derveni papyrus, see section 3.

7. This statement does not represent a generalization about Plato's writings in their entirety; it does not apply, for example, to his handling of the appropriateness of *onomata* in the *Sophist* and *Politicus*. Regarding the pertinence of the source issue, the dialogues must be assessed individually.

practice, the provision of a lack of evidence as grounds for turning away from the source issue becomes decidedly less compelling. In fact, an investigation of the matter from this vantage point lends support to the view that the *Cratylus*, rather than functioning purely as a work in an insular philosophical tradition (with sophistic influences), represents a major locus of intersection between the ancient philosophical and literary traditions. In construing the dialogue as a main point of intersection between these traditions, I am not claiming that it represents an amalgam of the two, but instead that it offers fundamental criticisms of both.[8] Scholars have long recognized that when treating ethical questions in the *Republic*, specifically the topic of human character in Books 2–3 and 10, Plato views the poets as direct and central opponents. My claim here is that in what is ostensibly a quite different arena, namely, his philosophy of language, Plato adopts a strongly critical stance toward that tradition and views it as a key adversary.[9] Most specifically, in contrast to previous commentators, I argue that the etymological section of the *Cratylus* targets the literary tradition from Homer through Euripides.[10] My point, it should be emphasized, is not that the literary tradition is the only relevant backdrop for Plato's discussion but rather that extant source material supports a view of it as the section's most direct and prominent adversary with respect to etymological praxis.[11] It is undoubtedly the case

8. In my view, Plato's critique of the philosophical tradition here is primarily ontological. The present inquiry focuses largely on the literary tradition's pertinence since that tradition has received comparatively little attention from interpreters of the *Cratylus*.

9. As I will argue in chapter 5, there is far more common thematic and conceptual ground than one might anticipate between Plato's critiques of poetry in the *Cratylus* and *Republic*.

10. In discussing the *Cratylus*, when using the phrase "literary tradition" I have in mind Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*; Pindar's epinician odes; the extant plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; and Herodotus. For treatments of literary etymology from other points of view, see Wilson 1968; Looy 1975. For a discussion of *keklēsthai* and *kaleisthai* as used in Greek tragedy and by Plato, see Ruijgh 1976.

11. I thus cannot agree with the claim of Baxter (1992, 107, 127) that much of the time Plato's targets in the etymological section are "'second-leaguers.'" For comments that do not include mention of the literary tradition, or make only isolated references to it, see, e.g., Fowler 1926, 4; Taylor 1960, 77, 83 (with n. 1); Guthrie 1978, 16 (with n. 2), and 1971, 207 (with n. 2), 218; Kahn 1973, 155–56 (with nn. 5–6), 160 n. 12, and 1986, 98–99; Schmitz 1991, 47; Steinthal [1890] 1961, 81, 83–84. Luce (1969, 225) refers to Aesch. *PV* 85–86 and the epitaph of Eutychides and remarks in passing that "in the detailed etymologies of the *Cratylus* Plato operates with this traditional Greek conception of proper names, and . . . extends it also to cover general names." The phrase "operates with" is vague, and Luce refers to a "traditional Greek conception" and "traditional Greek view" (225) rather than to the literary tradition specifically. Pfeiffer (1968, 61) mentions but does not discuss the "task of ἐτυμολογία, familiar from Homeric times"; it thus remains unclear how Plato's inquiry is supposed to be related to these earlier reflections. Gaiser (1974, 51) recognizes that poets engaged in etymology but does not pursue the matter. Derbolav (1972) refers to a "chorus of poets and philosophers" who employed this procedure (34) and says that Plato stands in the tradition "of an etymological practice that was at least occasionally utilized by poets and philosophers" (69 n. 2); however, Derbolav neither identifies the members of this group nor specifies the pertinence of their remarks to the dialogue's interpretation. Diels (1910, 3–7) sees the relevance of

that having further evidence from various authors would allow one to formulate a more complete account of the *Cratylus*' sources in this regard. One must not, however, be led by the existence of gaps in what is available to neglect the comprehensive study of all pertinent material that has survived.

2. *Orthotēs Onomatōn*: The *Cratylus*' Engagement with Literary Practice

Back in 1867, Grote judged unacceptable the "modern discovery or hypothesis" that the sophists are the targets of Plato's investigation of the correctness of names, insisting on the absence of proof that either Prodicus or Protagoras was concerned with etymology (521).[12] Yet numerous scholars continue to espouse the view that Grote attacked. Kerferd (1981, 77), for example, asserts that the stance on *orthotēs* developed in the *Cratylus* represents "Plato's contribution to the problem which he inherited from the sophists," and Guthrie (1978, 4) believes it "a reasonable conclusion that Plato found Cratylus the Heraclitean a suitable character through which to criticize prevailing beliefs of the Sophists about the relationship between words and reality." Weingartner (1973), in turn, claims that Plato challenges the views of such "professional predecessors and contemporaries" as Protagoras (18) and asserts that "in all probability Plato uses the opportunity provided by the etymology section to poke fun at various other theorists of language of his own time and of the recent past. Perhaps the great Prodicus' fifty-drachma course is satirized more than we shall ever know" (40).

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poets, among others, to discussions of Greek etymology but does not single them out in his comments on the *Cratylus*, which focus instead on Heraclitus and later Heracliteans. Reeve (1998, xxxi) mentions examples of etymologizing in Greek tragedy but does not build on these observations in subsequent remarks on the dialogue's target, claiming instead (xxxii) that Plato employs etymologies "to criticize or parody specific individual thinkers who use etymological arguments in philosophy without showing any awareness of the problematic presuppositions of doing so." Méridier (1931) cites literary passages but believes (30) that the target of the dialogue's polemic is certain contemporary theories of language. Warburg (1929) evinces some awareness of certain poets' use of etymology, yet contends that the *Cratylus* targets Heraclides Ponticus. It is not evident, moreover, precisely what role Warburg views Greek literature specifically as having vis-à-vis the *Cratylus*; clarity on this point would require a systematic treatment of the literary tradition's techniques and assumptions from Homer onward. Although Baxter (1992) remarks on the literary tradition, he identifies it as merely one among numerous other likely or possible opponents of the etymological section. In addition to the fact that he treats only Homer and Aeschylus, Baxter tentatively associates certain of the *Cratylus*' etymologies with other sources although they can be linked clearly to poets, as when the *Hēra-aēr* derivation is tied to Empedocles (124, 125), and the *Dēmētēr-didousa hōs mētēr* analysis is linked to the Derveni papyrus specifically or Orphic "'scholars'" more generally (132).

12. For an emphasis on the lack of evidence to support the claim that Prodicus and Protagoras pursued etymology, see also Méridier 1931, 42–44.

In setting the stage for his treatment of etymology in the *Cratylus*, Plato refers to certain conventional authorities, most notably Prodicus and Protagoras, to whom *orthotēs onomatōn* was indeed a concern. Plato's mentions of the two sophists, combined with their known interest in this topic, may appear to constitute strong support for the claim that there is a central sophistic influence operating in the dialogue. This view of the sophists seems plausible, however, only as long as one does not distinguish clearly between different senses of the term *orthotēs* as it appears in the phrase *orthotēs onomatōn*.[13] Once one sees how Prodicus and Protagoras treated *orthotēs*, and that Plato's interest assumes a quite different form, it becomes evident why the two sophists are of only limited pertinence to the *Cratylus*. My contention is thus not that they are irrelevant thereto but rather that their importance vis-à-vis the dialogue has not been properly located. Plato and the sophists share a common literary heritage. Plato is dissatisfied with the way in which they utilize this material in their treatments of linguistic issues and undertakes his own exploration of the literary tradition. In so doing, he does not take sophistic treatments of correctness as his point of departure. Rather, as I will argue, Plato ties his inquiry directly to literary practice.

At the outset of the dialogue, Socrates mentions Prodicus, commenting on his own failure to attend the latter's thoroughgoing fifty-drachma *epideixis* "on the correctness of words" (περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος) (384b2–c1). The translation of Jowett (1892, vol. 1, "If I had not been poor . . .") actually gives poverty as the reason for Socrates' lack of attendance although it is not present in the Greek, which simply consists of a counterfactual statement with the protasis "If I had heard Prodicus' fifty-drachma *epideixis*" (εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐγὼ ἤδη ἠκηκόη παρὰ Προδίκου τὴν πεντηκοντάδραχμον ἐπίδειξιν);[14] Jowett's rendering thus fosters the misleading impression that the content of such an *epideixis* would be of direct relevance in the present context. Although Taylor (1960, 77 n. 2) rightly points out that Socrates' poverty is not the reason given for his lack of familiarity with this specialized treatment, he does not suggest what the actual ground might be.

13. One may underscore the same point in other terms by noting that since the ontological relation is one of genus to species, the strongest defenses of relationships will naturally occur at the species level. Furthermore, the mere invocation of a clash between "nature" and "convention" does not require that the content of the opposed views be sophistic in inspiration. Guthrie (1971, 55) describes *nomos* and *phusis* as "catch-words" of Greek reflection in the fifth and fourth centuries. For the suggestion that this opposition grounds the *Cratylus*' discussion, see Guthrie 1971, 208; Mackenzie 1986, 127; Pfeiffer 1968, 63; Taylor 1960, 77. On this issue, I concur with Robinson (1969, 111–16), who argues that one is not confronted here with simply another instance of the familiar *nomos-phusis* controversy and that the divergence involved is more than merely terminological.

14. Aristotle too refers to the fifty-drachma version (*Rhet.* 1415b15–17). As Guthrie (1971, 42 [with n. 1]) observes, there is some controversy over whether a single lecture or a series thereof was involved.

On Plato's own account in other dialogues, Prodicus' interest in the issue of correctness lay in making fine distinctions between terms with different yet closely related senses and occasionally in differentiating senses of a single term. In the *Protagoras*, for example, Prodicus is said to distinguish between the terms "impartial" and "undecided"; "debate" and "dispute"; "esteem" and "praise"; "enjoyment" and "pleasure"; and "will" and "desire" (337a–c, 340a–b).[15] In his view, the comprehension of words' meanings reflected in prevailing usage was often not sufficiently subtle. A superior understanding was possible, however, and would issue in corrections of deficient usage; this idea of the revision of ordinary practice emerges clearly in remarks attributed to him on the proper employment of the term *deinon* (*Prt.* 341a–b). Prodicus thus raised questions of meaning without reference to words' constitution. While his concern with words certainly fell under the rubric of "correctness," Prodicus' own treatment of *orthotēs* is strikingly different from Plato's, and this fact sheds light on Socrates' claim (*Cra.* 384b) not to have heard Prodicus' detailed *epideixis* on the subject; Plato's point, in my view, is that a consideration of Prodicus' own orientation is not relevant to the current enterprise. That Socrates has listened to the far more superficial one-drachma treatment (c1) is evidence of a limited, general point of common ground, insofar as Prodicus too was associated with the topic of correctness. Notably, however, even at this initial stage Plato indicates through what is said about Hermogenes' name (in 384c, which is based on 383b) that he conceives of *orthotēs* along the lines of descriptive content or semantic constitution, hence in a substantially different light from both Prodicus and, as we shall see, Protagoras.[16]

Protagoras was concerned with dividing *logos* into types. In this connection, he referred to inaccuracies in others' usage due to shortcomings in their understanding of the relevant distinctions. This occupation is stressed in Aristotle's *Po-*

15. One may consult, in addition, *Prt.* 358a–b, *Meno* 75e, *Euthd.* 277e–278a, *La.* 197b–d, *Chrm.* 163b–d; Arist. *Top.* II 112b. In the *Euthydemus* passage, one finds the comment that "according to Prodicus, one must learn, first and foremost, about the correctness of words (περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος)" (277e3–4). The content given by this sophist to the notion of correctness is made clear in the remarks immediately following, which treat different senses of *to manthanein*.

16. At 383b, Hermogenes conveys to Socrates the view of Cratylus that Hermogenes' name (which means "son of Hermes") is not properly assigned to him and expresses his own uncertainty regarding the interpretation of this pronouncement (384a). On Socrates' highly compressed account (384c), which I expand here to fill in the gaps, Cratylus means that Hermogenes is not fittingly tied to Hermes as the name suggests: Since the god brings luck to human beings, one would expect that those linked to him via their names would not be lacking in good fortune. Because Hermogenes falls distinctly short in this department, it is inappropriate for him to bear a name whose descriptive content suggests otherwise. Literary authors too offered judgments of names' inappropriateness. A prominent example, noted in chapter 1, is Cratus' insistence to Prometheus that "the gods named you wrongly when they called you Forethought (ψευδωνύμως σε δαίμονες Προμηθέα καλοῦσιν); you yourself *need* Forethought to extricate yourself from this contrivance" (Aesch. *PV* 85–87).

etics (1456b), where Protagoras is alleged to have faulted Homer for opening the *Iliad* with a command when the poet thought he was uttering a prayer.[17] Protagoras is also said to have divided nouns into three genders, prescribing adjustments in gender where fitting (see Aristophanes, *Clouds* 658–91; Aristotle, *Sophistici Elenchi* 173b). In the passage from *Sophistici Elenchi*, Aristotle reports Protagoras' insistence that the words for "wrath" (*mēnis*) and "helmet" (*pēlēx*), currently feminine in gender, be changed or corrected to the masculine.[18] Once again, these observations and prescriptions do not involve the treatment of words' constitution.

Protagoras, like Prodicus, is introduced early in the *Cratylus* (385e6), and on the strength of this and of his reputation for treating "correctness," one might conclude that he is of central relevance. Yet Protagoras is not mentioned in connection with an interest in *onomata* in general or *orthotēs* in particular; rather, Socrates invokes Protagoras' "man-measure" doctrine in his attempt to make a stubborn Hermogenes realize the ontological position to which he commits himself in espousing an extreme view on the matter of appropriateness (385e4–386d2). Protagoras is reintroduced as Socrates—at Hermogenes' request—prepares to undertake a sustained exploration of what the "correctness of words" consists in (390e6–391c9).[19] Here Protagoras is clearly associated with the issue of correctness (391c2–5). At this pivotal juncture, however, his own authority or relevance, along with that of sophists in general, is decisively rejected (391c–d). In contrast to the earlier comment about Prodicus (384b–c), poverty is actually mentioned: it is referred to as what prevents Hermogenes from consulting the sophists—specifically Protagoras—directly (391b9–c5). Yet Hermogenes proceeds to indicate that what ultimately and categorically precludes his turning to Protagoras is not a lack of means but his rejection of that sophist's construction of reality: following Socrates' "recommendation" that he learn Protagoras' view secondhand from Callias, his own brother, Hermogenes observes that it would be an odd thing indeed "if, not accepting at all the Truth of Protagoras, I were to treat what is said therein as being at all worthwhile" (391c7–9). Thus,

17. Having reported this objection, Aristotle judges it to be inappropriate. According to Protagoras, the study of poetry constitutes the most important dimension of education (*Prt.* 338e6–339a1); at issue is not the wholesale acceptance of poets' claims and assumptions but rather a capacity for the critical assessment thereof (for an emphasis on the ability to subject their remarks to evaluation, see 339a1–3).

18. Proposed grounds have included both the notion that the referents of these *onomata* are strongly associated with the male sex and a concern with morphological consistency (on this point, see Kerferd 1981, 69).

19. According to Silverman (1992, 44), already in 389–390 Plato operates with the view that a name's constitution is "irrelevant to its embodiment of the proper form of its nominatum": "The argument . . . suggests that names . . . are used by a name-giver as proxies for that item which he picks out via a definition" (43; see also 54). On my interpretation of the passage, Plato's point is not that it is irrelevant whether there is a match between words' semantic constitution and their referents' natures but that different sets of linguistic components can achieve that end.

poverty is not depicted in the case of either sophist as what prevents direct consultation of his stance on the correctness of *onomata*.

This rejection of the sophists' pertinence occurs precisely when Socrates, having established the apparent tenability of the "natural-correctness" thesis, seeks an appropriate point of departure for the inquiry into *orthotēs*.[20] This fact, combined with the preceding treatment of Prodicus and Protagoras, suggests that the sophists are not key to the enterprise as Plato conceives it. Where, then, does Socrates turn in seeking a foundation for what follows? Precisely to the literary tradition of the eighth through fifth centuries: Hermogenes' rejection prompts Socrates' response that he "must learn from Homer and the other poets" (391c10–d1).

Commentators regularly dismiss this comment by invoking the hostility expressed elsewhere by Plato toward the literary tradition. Thus Friedländer (1964, 204) says that following the rejection of Protagoras at 391c, Socrates "suggests that we can learn from Homer what he has to say about language; yet we know since the *Protagoras* that an exegesis of poetry does not yield knowledge." In a similar vein, Weingartner (1973, 38) dismisses Socrates' comment as invoking "a fine source of knowledge for the Plato who banned Homer from his Republic!"[21] The fact that Plato elsewhere rejects poets' creations as sources of knowledge does not in itself justify the assumption that the literary tradition could not serve as a foundation for his discussion in the *Cratylus*. That he takes this tradition quite seriously indeed is evident from the fact that the *Republic* devotes so much space to delineating where author and creation go awry. If Plato is capable of engaging the literary tradition once with this degree of earnestness, there is no obvious reason why he could not do so in other places. As one reflects on particular dialogues in this regard, the crucial consideration should be, not whether he has elsewhere challenged its authority, but whether it and the text in question supply evidence of a deep connection. While the *Cratylus* will ultimately reject the idea, prominent in literature, that etymologies of *onomata* disclose their individual referents' natures, dismissal of the literary tradition's pertinence at this juncture is premature: rather than signaling his own embrace of its approach, Plato is setting the stage for his argument that such a reliance on etymology and privileging of individual "natures" are fundamentally misguided.

Interpreters have sometimes gone even further, using *Cratylus* 391c–d as grounds for making speculative inferences about the content of sophistic inquiries. Kerferd (1981, 75) construes the passage as offering "sufficient grounds for us to conclude that in his work *On Truth* Protagoras had in fact discussed the rightness of names, and the natural way to read the passage is to suppose that Protagoras had himself in some sense and in some degree given expression to a

20. For this as the discussion's focus, see 391b4–5.

21. See also Méridier 1931, 15–16; Rumsey 1987, 392, 402 n. 16. Similarly, without considering the possibility that the passage has greater import, Jowett (1892, vol. 1, 260) remarks that, as in the *Republic*, Socrates makes an ironic appeal to Homer.

belief in the doctrine of natural rightness." According to Guthrie (1971, 206), Homer's identification as an authority provides support for the claim that the investigation of *orthoepeia* ("correct diction"), like that of the "correctness of words," probably encompassed reflection on words' natural appropriateness (for Plato's correlation of *orthoepeia* with Protagoras, see *Phdr.* 267c4–6). Such a construction of Plato's reference to Homer is puzzling given the fact that it is precisely Protagoras' authority that has just been rejected (391c). Moreover, far from dismissing literary sources, Hermogenes is keenly interesting in learning, first of all, what Homer—the literary tradition's oldest and most esteemed representative—had to say on the matter. The *Cratylus* offers a remarkable number of etymologies, and Baxter (1992, 163) is surely right to stress the degree to which the analyses themselves "remain Plato's creation." The key challenge confronting interpreters is to determine who provides the most crucial impetus to Plato's reflections. With regard to the making of this assessment, it is of essential import that his own exploration of *orthotēs* begins with an invocation of the literary tradition.

The initial objects of inquiry are Homeric instances of different *onomata* used by gods and humans with reference to the same entities (391d4–392b1). The assumption is that those appellations employed by the gods are correct. There are several passages in which Homer says that men give an entity one name, while the gods employ another (*Il.* 1.403–4, 2.811–14, 14.290–91, 20.73–74); Plato mentions all of these instances except the first. The issue of names' having a divine source first arises here, as Plato makes the transition to poets in grounding his approach to *orthotēs*.[22] To claim that particular assignments are superior just because they originate with divinities leaves no room for a sustained investigation of the sort that Plato wishes to pursue. While these instances serve to introduce Homer—and by extension the literary tradition more generally—as having treated correctness, it is the ensuing discussion of the names of Hector and his son that typifies the species of *orthotēs* of central concern to the *Cratylus*.[23]

In fact, Plato uses these *onomata*, which were salient objects of Homeric analysis, to underscore what is meant by *orthotēs* in the present context (392b–

22. In his subsequent discussion of names, Plato labels appeals to divine sources as one key excuse for an inability to offer accounts of *onomata* that are genuinely explanatory (426a). The appeal at 391d–392b is somewhat different, insofar as it involves two perspectives, mortal and divine, the latter of which is identified as superior. This dual perspective, albeit reconstituted, will reemerge at the close of the dialogue, where Plato contrasts a philosophical orientation toward fitness having Forms as its reference points with that inferior one, endorsed by ordinary mortals, which is criticized in what precedes.

23. According to Williams (1982, 84), although the first cases treated in the dialogue "are proper names . . . this is not the basic case, and the theory applies to general terms; indeed, it applies to proper names because it applies to general terms." Williams does not specify the perspective from which general terms qualify as the "basic case." For the tradition that grounds Plato's inquiry, proper names *are* basic. As Kahn (1973, 159) observes, while the *onomata* treated are not limited to proper names, "they remain throughout the typical or paradigm case."

393b; cf. 394b7–c1). The more insightful individuals, identified by Plato as the men of Troy, are alleged to have called the boy "Astyanax"; the less insightful, here Trojan women, are supposed to have employed the name "Scamandrius" (392c10–d3). Plato notes that the names "Astyanax" and "Hector" are very close in semantic constitution—"They mean nearly the same thing, both being names descriptive of a king," 393a6–7[24]—and connects the latter to the verb *echō* ("hold," "protect," 393b1). Hector's name, like that of his son, is treated as fittingly assigned, and Plato concludes that light has been shed on Homer's belief "about the correctness of words" (393b3–4).

In the *Iliad*, it is actually Hector who calls his son "Scamandrius," while others prefer the name "Astyanax," "since Hector alone guarded Troy" (6.402–3; see also 22.506–7 and 24.499–501). Homer's use of the term *epiklēsis* ("additional name," 22.506) to identify the status of "Astyanax" leaves no doubt that "Scamandrius" is the child's primary appellation. One can see why Plato would wish to reassign the name "Scamandrius" to a different source: attributing a preference for "Scamandrius" to Hector would indicate, as in Homer, that it is primary, and it would be odd indeed for the child's own parent to have made what Plato identifies here as the inferior assignment. It is essential that the name "Astyanax" be seen as superior since only it can be investigated readily by etymology. The only obvious treatment of "Scamandrius," in contrast, is via eponymy (i.e., the individual as named after the river Scamander); while Plato does not cite this eponymous derivation explicitly—which he need not do for his audience to be aware of it—one of the foregoing examples, taken from Homer, mentions the river twice by name (*Cra.* 391e–392a). Also key to the preference for "Astyanax" is the fact that this name accommodates itself to the ties in semantic constitution that Plato wishes to forge with "Hector." Plato's misidentification is doubtless intentional and concerns a well-known passage with which his audience would be familiar. The presence of this "mistake" supports the view that Plato is not merely repeating his literary sources but drawing on them for his own philosophical purposes.[25]

Having provided examples of Homer's handling of *onomata* and been assured by Hermogenes that he is on the right track, one by one Socrates subjects the names of members of the Mycenaean House of Atreus to etymological analysis: Orestes (394e), Agamemnon (395a–b), Atreus (395b–c), Pelops (395c–d), and

24. σχεδόν τι ταὐτὸν σημαίνει, βασιλικὰ ἀμφότερα εἶναι τὰ ὀνόματα.

25. In his comments on this passage, Fowler (1926, 37) refers only to *Il.* 22.506–7 and does not note Plato's misidentification of the source as Homer had given it earlier in the poem. Shorey (1933, 261) mentions 6.402–3 but not the shift in attribution. Méridier (1931, 16, 64), in turn, notes Plato's deviation from Homer but interprets it differently; on this issue, see also Rosenstock 1992, 400–402. One finds a similar move in the *Timaeus* (40e–41a), where Plato departs from Hesiod's genealogy. In this case too the relevant literary passage (*Th.* 116 ff.) would be known to Plato's audience. I am grateful to the late Wilbur Knorr for drawing my attention to this example from the *Timaeus*. See Reeve (1998, xxv–xxvi) for comments, from a different perspective, on Homer's pertinence to Plato's framing of the etymological inquiry.

Tantalus (395d–e). Finally, he turns to Zeus, the supreme Olympian deity, who was supposed by tradition to be Tantalus' father (395e–396b). While Agamemnon and Menelaus play important roles in the *Iliad*, they do so as Achaean warriors battling the Trojans and not as members of the House of Atreus per se; it is precisely among the Greek tragedians that the affairs of the royal house itself play a central role. These etymologies lend additional momentum and significance to Socrates' turn to the literary tradition. Moreover, in what follows, Hesiod is given prominence, Homer is cited repeatedly, and both the practice and the practitioners of tragedy are referred to.[26]

Plato's choice of *onomata* subject to etymological analysis further strengthens the *Cratylus'* ties to the literary tradition. Benardete (1981, 136) has claimed that "'Aphrodite' is the only [divine] name whose etymology is traditional." As will become clear, this is not the only case in which Plato incorporates inherited derivations. In the following illustrations involving divine *onomata*, I move from the relevant literary treatments to Plato's constructions.[27]

Both Homer and Euripides underscore the descriptive content of the names "Hector" and "Astyanax," along with the semantic relationship between those *onomata*. Thus, Andromache's comments to her dead husband include the verb *echō*: "I think that our son will never come of age, for before then head to heel this city will be sacked, for you, its defender, are gone, you who guarded the city, and the grave wives, and the innocent children (ἔχες δ' ἀλόχους κεδνὰς καὶ νήπια τέκνα)" (Hom. *Il*. 24.727–30; on Hector's protective role, reflected in his name, see also 24.499 and Eur. *Tro*. 590). The Trojans call Hector's son "Astyanax" ("Lord-of-the-city") on account of Hector's civic function (Hom. *Il*. 6.402–3, 22.506–7; Eur. *Tro*. 1168 with 1217). Plato gives a pivotal role to the names of Hector and his son insofar as he uses them to clarify his own construction of *orthotēs*. As we saw, Socrates underscores the closeness in semantic constitution of the names "Astyanax" and "Hector" and follows Homer in tying the latter to *echō*. Plato's correction of Homer through his elevation of "Astyanax" over "Scamandrius" is necessitated by the *Cratylus'* different agenda and illustrates Plato's willingness to adapt his literary sources to his own ends.

As noted in chapter 1, *Dis* and *Zeus*, the two forms of Zeus's name, were popular objects of literary reflection: authors trace *Dis* to the preposition *dia* (Hes. *Op*. 1–4; Aesch. *Ag*. 1485–87) and connect the form *Zeus* with the verb *zēn* (Pind.

26. For appearances of Hesiod's name, see 396c4, 397e5, 402b6, 406c7, 428a1. Regarding Homer, see 391c10, d2 (followed by quotations in 391e5–6, 392a5), 392b9, c10, d5, e4, 393a2, b3, 402a6, b4, 407a9, 408a4, 410c2, 417c8; for Homer quoted but not mentioned by name, see 407d8–9 (with Εὐθύφρονος in place of Τρώϊοι), 415a2, 428c4–5, d7–8. Concerning tragedy and tragic poets, see 408c–d, 425d5 (also worth noting in this regard are 414c5–6 [τραγῳδεῖν] and 418d4 [τετραγῳδημένον]).

27. Since I have already discussed literary authors' reflections on these names, my remarks here will be brief; for fuller discussion, see chapter 1.

Isthm. 3.4–5; Aesch. *Supp.* 584–85; Eur. *Or.* 1635).[28] In the *Cratylus* (395e–396b), Plato provides a single analysis encompassing both forms and derivations: on his account, Zeus is the god "through whom all living creatures always have life" (δι' ὃν ζῆν ἀεὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ζῶσιν ὑπάρχει, 396b1). Hence, his treatment of the god's *onoma* not only forges common ground with several poets regarding a particular etymology but also shows that Plato could beat the literary tradition at its own game—if only he were interested in playing![29] Thus, as in the case involving Hector and his son, here too Plato relates himself directly to his literary sources: whereas in the previous instance Plato's innovation consisted in the revision of Homer's assignments, here it involves a new synthesis of familiar elements. Grote (1867, 526) claims that no etymology offered in the dialogue "is more strange than that of Ζεὺς-Δία-Ζῆνα" and attempts to dissipate this alleged strangeness by citing its reproduction in *De Mundo* (401a13–15), a pseudo-Aristotelian treatise, and use by the Stoic Zeno (on the authority of Diogenes Laertius 7.147).[30] Yet references to later practice cannot diminish the supposed oddity of Plato's analysis. On the present interpretation, it is precisely recourse to etymologies previously offered by poets (i.e., Hesiod, Pindar, Aeschylus, and Euripides) that makes his approach intelligible.

Literary reflections on the name "Demeter" indicate the derivation "Mother-Earth." Thus, Euripides calls Demeter "the Mountain Mother of all the gods" (*Hel.* 1301–2; cf. 1320, 1340, and 1356), noting that while she grieved over her daughter, "earth, green gone from her fields, would give food no more to mortals in the sown lands" (1327–28; see also Eur. *Phoen.* 683–86, where Demeter is described as "Earth, nurse of all," and *Bacch.* 274–76). In the *Cratylus,* Plato adopts the same derivation, in a formulation that is particularly reminiscent of Euripides' *Helen*: "The goddess Demeter appears to have received her name from the fact that she gives food to mortals, thus providing for them like a mother" (Δημήτηρ μὲν φαίνεται κατὰ τὴν δόσιν τῆς ἐδωδῆς διδοῦσα ὡς μήτηρ "Δημήτηρ" κεκλῆσθαι, 404b8–9).

Homer's treatment of Hades as the "Unseen-one" (*Il.* 5.844–45) underscores the god's special capacity to avoid detection. In the *Cratylus*, Plato wishes to revise this analysis, replacing it with one that will not elicit mortals' fear. He begins by having Socrates make the following observation: "People seem to assume that the name 'Hades' is derived from the 'unseen' (ἀιδές), and due to their fear of this appellation they call the god 'Pluto' instead (φοβούμενοι τὸ ὄνομα "Πλούτωνα" καλοῦσιν αὐτόν)" (403a5–8). Having mentioned the traditional derivation of "Hades" from *aides,* Socrates proceeds to offer a different interpretation: "The name 'Hades,' Hermogenes, does not come from the 'unseen,' but is instead far more plausibly traced to the god's knowing (εἰδέναι) all fine things" (404b1–3).

28. On the tie between *Zeus* and *zēn*, cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 168–75 with Quincey 1963, 148.

29. For a recent argument that stresses the agonistic character of the etymological section as a whole but that does not treat the source issue in detail, see Barney 1998.

30. With regard to *De Mundo*, I have consulted the Budé edition of Lorimer (1933).

Aeschylus traces the name "Cronus" to the verb *krainō* ("accomplish"), as evidenced by Prometheus' remark that Cronus' curse will be consummated (*kranthēsetai*) unless Zeus solicits and receives Prometheus' aid (*PV* 910–11). Plato's analysis, which is to all appearances more complimentary, treats the name as signifying *koros*, "not as in 'child' but rather as in 'the pure and unmixed character of the mind itself'" (οὐ παῖδα, ἀλλὰ τὸ καθαρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκήρατον τοῦ νοῦ, *Cra.* 396b6–7).[31]

According to Herodotus (2.52.1), the Pelasgians used the Greek word *theoi* to refer to the gods because they had put everything in order (*kosmōi thentes ta panta prēgmata*). Herodotus claims, in addition, that initially the Pelasgians sacrificed and prayed to the gods without any distinction of appellation and that the names of individual gods were introduced only later into Greece from Egypt (2.52.1–2). On Plato's account (*Cra.* 397c–d), natural and heavenly bodies were the original deities and received the collective appellation *theoi* due to their being in perpetual motion: "People saw all of them always moving in a circle and, as it were, running (θέοντα), and due to these entities' characteristic nature of running (ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς φύσεως τῆς τοῦ θεῖν), they called them 'gods' (θεούς)" (397d2–5). The Olympians, when later introduced, were covered by the same group *onoma* (d5–6). While they differ in the specifics of their analyses, both Herodotus and Plato thus note an early stage of religious belief and practice when the term *theoi* was employed but the names of the familiar anthropomorphic deities were not yet in use.

As we saw in chapter 1, in literature a speaker may trace a divinity's name to an element over which its referent has control. Thus, Homer derives Hera's name from *aēr* (*Il.* 5.775–76, 14.282; see also Eur. *Hel.* 32–35 and 241–51). Notably, the derivation from *aēr* is one of two analyses of the goddess's name that Plato offers in the *Cratylus*: "Perhaps the legislator, engaging in astronomical speculation, and being at the same time rather cryptic, linked 'Hera' to 'air.' You might recognize this if you tacked the beginning of the name closely onto the end, as would happen if you repeated the name often in rapid succession" (ἴσως δὲ μετεωρολογῶν ὁ νομοθέτης τὸν ἀέρα "Ἥραν" ὠνόμασεν ἐπικρυπτόμενος, θεὶς τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐπὶ τελευτήν· γνοίης δ' ἄν, εἰ πολλάκις λέγοις τὸ τῆς Ἥρας ὄνομα, 404c2–5). While one might assume the "legislator" engaged in such thinking to be a philosopher of nature (see the speculation of Baxter [1992, 124, 125] about a connection to Empedocles), extant evidence thus allows one to identify the figure in question here as a poet.[32]

31. I omit here the words οὐδὲ πλησμονήν, which were added in angle brackets following παῖδα by the editors of the new OCT.

32. As Guthrie (1965, 144–46) notes, long-standing controversy surrounds the correlation of the divine names mentioned by Empedocles (DK 6) with the four elements. In the case of Hera, commentators diverge on the issue of whether the tie envisioned is to earth or to air; Guthrie himself prefers the latter interpretation (146). Seeking to buttress Guthrie's claim, Sprague (1972)

Literary treatments of the name "Apollo" often stress the god's role as the cause of destructive action by tying his *onoma* to the verb *apollumi* ("destroy"). In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Cassandra laments her fate as follows: "Apollo, Apollo! Lord of the ways, my destroyer. You have undone me once again, and utterly" (ὤπολλον ὤπολλον, ἀγυιᾶτ', ἀπόλλων ἐμός· ἀπώλεσας γὰρ οὐ μόλις τὸ δεύτερον, 1080–82; see also *Ag.* 1085–86 and Eur. *Or.* 119–21, 954–56).[33] Hoping to direct the god's power in a more salutary direction, Jocasta proposes the name's connection to the verb *luō* ("release," Soph. *OT* 919–21), and a Euripidean Chorus asks him to serve as Admetus' *lutērios* ("redeemer") from death (*Alc.* 224).

Forging a parallel with his earlier derivation of "Hades," Plato prefaces his own analysis with a reference to the belief, underscored in *Agamemnon* and *Orestes*, that the name "Apollo" has a negative signification: "In many people, the god's name generates fear, as indicating something dreadful" (*Cra.* 404e1–2). Having introduced this familiar view, Plato proceeds immediately to correct it. On his revised account, the name illuminates all of Apollo's positive capacities: indeed, "there is no single name better suited to express the four powers (δυνάμεις) of the god, as it captures and illuminates in some way those involving music, prophecy, medicine, and archery" (404e8–405a4). Plato's summary of the results of his own inquiry testifies once again to the depth and persistence of mortals' fear: "Some still maintain their suspicion that the name signifies destruction because they do not consider its actual import, which, as I was just now saying, consists in its capturing all of the capacities of the god: the one who is single (ἁπλοῦ), always-shooting (ἀεὶ βάλλοντος), purifying (ἀπολούοντος), and moving-together (ὁμοπολοῦντος)" (405e2–406a3). Interestingly, Plato's discussion of Apollo's role as purifier includes a compound of *luō* (*apoluōn*, 405b7; cf. *apoluseis*, b9), aligning itself thereby with the more positive emphasis of *Oedipus Tyrannus* (*lusis*, "deliverance") and *Alcestis* (*lutērios*, "redeemer").

Hesiod and Euripides offer radically different interpretations of the name "Aphrodite": while the former derives it from *aphros* ("foam," *Th.* 197–98), the latter traces it to *aphrosunē* ("folly," *Tro.* 989–90). In the *Cratylus* (406c–d), Plato opts explicitly for Hesiod's derivation: "Concerning Aphrodite there is no reason to take issue with Hesiod. One can instead simply agree that the goddess received her name due to her genesis from the foam" (περὶ δὲ 'Αφροδίτης οὐκ ἄξιον Ἡσιόδῳ ἀντιλέγειν, ἀλλὰ συγχωρεῖν ὅτι διὰ τὴν <ἐκ> τοῦ ἀφροῦ γένεσιν "'Αφροδίτη" ἐκλήθη).

Homer's explanation of Athena's allegiance to Odysseus (*Od.* 13.330–32) focuses on their common intellectual gifts, with the pivotal terms being *noēma*

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invokes *Cra.* 404c. While Plato's derivation of *Hēra* from *aēr* is pertinent to the discussion of Empedocles' assignments, more persuasive evidence that this is the right correlation is the fact of its existence prior to Empedocles' own reflections.

33. Mortals' fear of the god's destructive capacity is also reflected in Aeschylus' derivation of the epithet "Phoebus" from *phobos* (*Pers.* 205–6).

and *anchinoos* (for stress on her intelligence, see also Hes. *Th.* 886–96; cf. *Th.* 924 and Pind. *Ol.* 7.35–37). Notably, Plato ties the name "Athena" to the term *nous* (*Cra.* 407b2) and begins his analysis (407a–c) with a mention of Homer.

Aeschylus derives the name "Ares" from the noun *ara* ("curse," *Sept.* 944–46). Plato too treats the god's *onoma*, offering an analysis that moves along different lines: "Ares may receive his name, if you will, from his strength and courage or from his hardness and unalterability, which is the meaning of *arratos*" (Οὐκοῦν, εἰ μὲν βούλει, κατὰ τὸ ἄρρεν τε καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἀνδρεῖον "Ἄρης" ἂν εἴη· εἰ δ' αὖ κατὰ τὸ σκληρόν τε καὶ ἀμετάστροφον, ὃ δὴ "ἄρρατον" καλεῖται, *Cra.* 407d1–3).

As noted in chapter 1, the literary tradition treats justice as a female deity. Both Aeschylus (*Cho.* 948–51; *Sept.* 662) and Hesiod (*Op.* 256) trace the name "Dike" to the status of its bearer as Zeus's daughter (her *onoma* is a compressed version of *Dios kora*).[34] In etymologizing "justice," Plato refrains from personification and treats instead the terms *dikaiosunē* and *dikaion* (*Cra.* 412c–413d). While *dikaiosunē* is easily disposed of as *dikaiou sunesis* ("comprehension of the just," 412c7–8), *dikaion* is far more challenging: although a connection to *diaion* ("that which pierces") is generally accepted (412e3–413a1), on a more specific level constructions of justice diverge. According to Plato, at this point it becomes a matter of interpretation, and hence of disagreement, precisely how the referent of *dikaion* will be construed. Indeed, every thinker offering an account of the cosmos that privileged one or more "explainers"—for instance, air, fire, *to apeiron*, mind, love and strife—would have very definite views on this topic. I submit that Plato uses the analysis of *dikaion*, whose referent plays a crucial role in his own ontology, as a vehicle for suggesting that etymologies of terms' descriptive content cannot resolve disputes about *phuseis*. The existence of such pivotal defects will lead him to conclude, and state explicitly, at the end of the dialogue (438–440) that what is required is movement in the opposite direction, namely, from natures to *onomata*. The analysis of *dikaion* thus represents a crucial turning point in the discussion: by clearly marking the inadequacy of etymology from a philosophical perspective, Plato takes an important step in the direction of what will have become by the dialogue's end a bridge to his own theories of *orthotēs onomatōn*.

Turning briefly to the names of heroes, one may note that on the analysis provided at *Cratylus* 395c1 (*kata to atreston*), Atreus' name reflects his lack of fear—a derivation whose correctness is underscored by Socrates (c2). As Sansone (1996, 62) observes, Plato's source here may be Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*, where Agamemnon says, with himself in mind, "I am the son of Atreus. Do you think he shrinks from your eye, Menelaus?" (μῶν τρέσας οὐκ ἀνακαλύψω βλέφαρον, Ἀτρέως γεγώς;, 321). As previously observed, this comment, like authors' treatment of Hector and his son, reflects the assumption that a son's nature—at least when judged or imagined to be exemplary—will mirror that of his father.

34. On her role as avenger, see Aesch. *Cho.* 948–51, *Sept.* 662–73; Hes. *Op.* 213–73; Soph. *Aj.* 1389–92.

Plato's analysis of "Agamemnon" ("Admirable-for-remaining") emphasizes the hero's steadfastness (*Cra.* 395a5–7). On his interpretation, moreover, the name is properly assigned since its descriptive content succeeds in capturing Agamemnon's nature (395a5–b3). Euripides, in contrast, may imply the name's inappropriateness in *Iphigenia in Aulis,* where Menelaus is sharply critical of his brother for lacking resolve:

> You're crooked; always changing—
> this way, that way, back again. . . .
> Your shiftiness is a doubtful asset to your friends. . . .
> A man of principle should not change character
> as he grows great. When good fortune gives him power to
> help his friends, that's the time when
> most of all he ought to prove reliable.
> There's my first criticism, the point where I first found you treacherous. . . .
> Then, when Calchas bade you offer sacrifice to Artemis
> with your daughter's life, and promised us fair winds, then
> you were pleased,
> gladly undertook to kill her. . . .
> Now you change your mind. (332–63)

Regarding the possibility that a judgment of inappropriateness is suggested in this passage, it is noteworthy that Menelaus cites repeatedly his brother's changes and changeability, making emphatic use of *bebaios* ("firm," "steadfast") to underscore what Agamemnon is not (334, 347).

As I have argued, Plato's recourse to the literary tradition when exploring the descriptive content of *onomata* is strikingly evident in the *Cratylus.* Interestingly, the *Cratylus* is not the only place where Plato attends to the way in which names and their semantic constitution are exploited in a literary context. When Plato treats the topic of early education in *Republic* 2–3, he has much to say about the content of acceptable poetry. One stricture on which he insists is that poets' constructions not include material that fosters undesirable emotional responses, prominent among them fear and terror (386a–387c). Of special import vis-à-vis the *Cratylus* is the fact that Plato introduces explicitly the topic of names:

> We must do away with all those frightening and terrifying names that crop up here, names like Cocytus and Styx, ghost and wraith, and so on—all those names, in fact, that are designed to make everyone who hears them shudder (Κωκυτούς τε καὶ Στύγας καὶ ἐνέρους καὶ ἀλίβαντας, καὶ ἄλλα ὅσα τούτου τοῦ τύπου ὀνομαζόμενα φρίττειν δὴ ποιεῖ πάντας τοὺς ἀκούοντας). Though they may be of some use in another context, our worry is that this shivering might make our guardians too feverish and cowardly. (387b8–c5)[35]

35. I follow closely here the excellent rendering of Waterfield (1993) and endorse his omission of ὡς οἴεται in c2. Literature supplies good evidence of these names' effectiveness, as when

Whereas *onomata* with negative descriptive content, namely, those promoting undesirable attitudes and emotional responses, will be excluded from poetic compositions that are to be acceptable pedagogical tools, "names producing the opposite effect must be included in both prose and verse" (τὸν δὲ ἐναντίον τύπον τούτοις λεκτέον τε καὶ ποιητέον, 387c9). Thus, Plato precludes the use of names whose impact is deleterious, yet wishes to harness the power of names where it can aid in the promotion of his own educational goals.

In addition, early in the *Republic*'s discussion of acceptable poetry, Plato contends that

> god, since he is good, could not be responsible for everything (πάντων αἴτιος), as the populace asserts. Rather, for human beings he is the cause of few things, but of many not the cause. For, in our case, good things are far fewer than bad, and the good things we must assume to be the sole responsibility of god, while for the bad we must seek explanatory factors other than god (καὶ τῶν μὲν ἀγαθῶν οὐδένα ἄλλον αἰτιατέον, τῶν δὲ κακῶν ἄλλ' ἄττα δεῖ ζητεῖν τὰ αἴτια, ἀλλ' οὐ τὸν θεόν). (379c)

Plato's first stipulation regarding acceptable poetic compositions treating the gods is thus that those entities be depicted invariably as "responsible, not for all things, but solely for the good" (μὴ πάντων αἴτιον . . . ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀγαθῶν, 380c8–9).[36] Based on his subsequent remarks about names and their descriptive content (387b–c), one would expect Plato to favor analyses of familiar deities' *onomata* that did not allow a harmful impression of the nature of divinity to form.

Taking this important discussion in the *Republic* as a reference point, let us return to those derivations in the *Cratylus* that concern individual deities' natures and have literary counterparts. If one compares the two sets of etymologies in light of the criteria articulated in the *Republic*, Plato's analyses may be seen to follow a striking pattern.

Where the inherited analysis is neutral or positive—from that perspective endorsed in *Republic* 2–3—Plato follows the derivations offered by his predecessors. Thus, for example, Plato is content to embrace Euripides' analysis of Demeter's name (*Hel.* 1301–2, 1320, 1327–28, 1340, 1356; *Phoen.* 683–86; *Bacch.* 274–76), which emphasizes her role as nurturer of humanity. He also retains

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Hesiod refers to "fearsome Styx, a goddess loathsome to the immortals" (στυγερὴ θεὸς ἀθανάτοισι, δεινὴ Στύξ, *Th.* 775–76; my translation). See also Circe's foretelling that Odysseus will arrive finally at "the crumbling homes of Death. Here, toward the Sorrowing Water, run the streams of Wailing, out of Styx, and quenchless Burning (ἔνθα μὲν εἰς Ἀχέροντα Πυριφλεγέθων τε ῥέουσι Κώκυτός θ', ὃς δὴ Στυγὸς ὕδατός ἐστιν ἀπορρώξ)" (Hom. *Od.* 10.512–14). Regarding the Furies, whose treatment, as we saw in chapter 1, involves a name change to "Eumenides" for apotropaic purposes, see Soph. *OC* 39–43, 486–87.

36. Cf. 377e–378a, where, having dubbed tales of the gods' taking revenge on one another "lies," Plato then claims that, even if such tales were true, they should not be generally circulated.

Homer's stress on Athena's intellectual prowess. These analyses are advisedly preserved, in light of Plato's strictures at *Republic* 387b–c, due to their positive content and hence impact on their auditors. Moreover, in the *Cratylus*, Plato has a choice between two literary derivations of the name "Aphrodite" and opts explicitly for Hesiod's analysis, which, as we have seen, traces the goddess's name to *aphros* ("foam"). Since Euripides' derivation, in contrast, makes a serious character flaw (*aphrosunē*, "folly") integral to her nature, it would be objectionable from the *Republic*'s perspective. It is interesting to note in this connection the phrasing of Plato's endorsement of the former semantic breakdown: "In the case of Aphrodite, it is not worthwhile to challenge Hesiod (οὐκ ἄξιον Ἡσιόδῳ ἀντιλέγειν)" (406c7).[37] It is arguably the etymology's neutrality from the vantage point of those criteria set forth in the *Republic* that obviates the need for a confrontation. Finally, Homer's derivation of "Hera" from "air" is also morally neutral, and metaphysically benign or even positive (insofar as it indicates divine governance of the cosmos); hence, it too may be preserved without risk of harm.

Where, however, as is more frequently the case, literary etymologies violate the *Republic*'s criteria, Plato revises the derivations found in literature. Sometimes the distinction between retention and reconstitution, while crucial, is subtle, as in the pivotal case of Zeus. In literary etymologies, Zeus is described in precisely the inconsistent way that Plato sharply criticizes in the *Republic*. As he stresses there (379c–e), this god above all must be depicted as responsible, not for both good and evil, but rather solely for the former; Plato's examples of passages to be stricken thus include Homer's comment that "there are two urns that stand on the door-sill of Zeus. They are unlike for the gifts they bestow: an urn of evils, an urn of blessings" (*Il.* 24.527–28). Plato's procedure in the *Cratylus*, when understood against its literary backdrop, suggests how he would handle the etymological aspect of the problem. Zeus's name was an especially popular object of etymological analysis—not surprisingly, given his status as supreme Olympian.[38] As we have seen, literary derivations trace the two forms of the god's name to *zēn* and *dia*. While an author's account might underscore a positive effect or exercise of Zeus's power (see Apollo's comment in *Orestes*), one may also find the responsibility for evil placed squarely at his door, as when the Chorus in *Agamemnon* depicts the god as ultimately responsible for the disasters of the House of Atreus (1485–87). This attribution of a negative causal role to the

37. Insofar as Plato fails to endorse the derivation from *aphrosunē*, one might wish to view his reaction as involving revision. I consider a necessary condition for the presence of revision to be that Plato act on inherited material in a new way; because he endorses expressly an analysis provided by a figure in the literary tradition, I judge his handling of "Aphrodite" to involve retention. This criterion serves to distinguish the case of Aphrodite from that of Zeus, to be discussed below.

38. Underscoring Zeus's unique status among the gods, Burkert (1985, 131) notes that he "was the only god who could become an all-embracing god of the universe. The tragedians did not present him on stage, in contrast to Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Aphrodite, Hera, and Dionysos."

god, which is part and parcel of Aeschylus' etymology, is explicitly and strenuously prohibited by the *Republic*. Plato's consolidation of the analyses involving *zēn* and *dia* into a single derivation—which makes Zeus the one "through whom all creatures always have life" (*Cra*. 396b1)—thus has a twofold function. First, as we saw, it shows that he can top the poets' performance on the same linguistic terrain. More important from a philosophical perspective, while Plato works with the same two source *onomata* as literary derivations, his consolidation of them represents a crucial revision of literary practice. The key innovation here is that Plato's analysis, unlike those of the poets, stipulates what the god is responsible for: life itself, and *only* that. This move allows Plato to block causal attributions to the god of other phenomena—including evils such as befell the House of Atreus—for which the god might otherwise be deemed accountable. Since etymologies and depictions of the gods' characteristic activities are often tightly interwoven, it becomes crucial for names' semantic constitution to convey the right message. Early influences on the young are pivotal factors shaping the ways in and extent to which individuals realize their natures as human beings, and whatever opinions (*doxai*) are absorbed at this juncture typically become permanent fixtures of individual psyches (*Rep*. 377a–c, 378d–e). Thus, if the import of names is not the same as, or at least consistent with, that salutary message conveyed by other means, Plato's central pedagogical project of inculcating the proper attitudes and emotional responses in the young risks being utterly compromised.

Literary analyses of "Ares" (from *ara*) and "Cronus" (from *krainō*, but where *ara* too appears) emphasize the gods' role as the source of curses, which were not infrequently identified in literature as a means of achieving revenge. Notably, at *Republic* 377e–378b—a passage in which Cronus himself is mentioned—Plato insists that revenge not be depicted as a divine occupation. Interestingly, when Plato articulates the gods' natures via etymology in the *Cratylus*, in neither case does his account privilege the activity of cursing. Plato's own derivation of "Cronus"—it signifies *koros*, "as in 'the pure and unmixed character of the mind itself'" (396b6–7)—instantiates his frequent preference for analyses that emphasize the moral or intellectual assets of names' referents. This predilection is also evident in Plato's treatment of the name "Ares," which includes a mention of its referent's bravery (*to andreion*, 407d2). Literary analyses of "Dike," in turn, emphasize the deity's position as the daughter of Zeus; most central here is the fact that requests for vengeance figure prominently in poets' characterizations of her (see Hes. *Op*. 213–73; Aesch. *Cho*. 948–51, *Sept*. 662–73; Soph. *Aj*. 1389–92). Plato's treatment of the relevant terms (*dikaiosunē* and *dikaion*, 412c–413d), as we saw, moves in quite a different direction.

Plato stresses the fear generated by the names "Hades" and "Apollo" due to inherited analyses.[39] His strategy here is, first, to emphasize the existence of these

39. For Plato's emphasis on the fear elicited by names, see also his treatment of "Persephone" (404c–d).

derivations and their impact on mortals, then to derive the names from different sources so as to cancel out or erase this negative capability. Mortals' fear of Hades, which stems from the name's being traced to *aides*, leads them to call the god "Pluto" instead (403a [cf. 402d8]; for examples of this substitution, see Aesch. *PV* 806; Eur. *Alc.* 360, *HF* 808). This euphemistic *onoma* allots to its referent a role in the giving of the wealth (τὴν τοῦ πλούτου δόσιν, 403a4) that issues from the earth, hence its outcome with respect to the god is the substitution of a good function for bad. There was, one may recall, a separate deity named "Plutus" (Πλοῦτος), who was the son of Demeter and Iasion (see Hes. *Th.* 969–71; *Hymn to Demeter* 489).[40] On the foregoing literary and Platonic construction, Hades is thus made to share his function. Also prompted by fear, and euphemistic, is the substitution for "Hades" of alternative phrases that include the term "name" in one form or another, as in "the many-named son of Cronus" (Κρόνου πολυώνυμος υἱός, *Hymn to Demeter* 18). Plato's use of the locution "the other name" (τὸ ἕτερον ὄνομα, *Cra.* 402d8) thus recalls through instantiation this second technique.

From Plato's perspective, the alleged "solution" described above is thoroughly inadequate because it is itself entirely governed by that from which it is designed to escape. If anything, promoting linguistic replacements will intensify mortals' fear by serving as an eloquent reminder that the deity in question is one whose destructive nature and hold over them are so pronounced as to require an extreme response. A more satisfactory resolution of the problem would consist in the provision of an alternative breakdown of "Hades" that invested the *onoma* with positive descriptive content. Plato's own alternative (404b) highlights the god's superlative intellect: far from the name's being connected to the "unseen" (*aides*), it is derived from the god's knowledge of all admirable things (ἀπὸ τοῦ πάντα τὰ καλὰ εἰδέναι). In the *Republic*, Plato underscores the paramount concern of early education with the fostering of the right attitudes toward the admirable (*kalon*) and shameful (*aischron*) (401e–402a). From the vantage point of that discussion, the name "Hades," as construed at *Cratylus* 404b, would be a useful pedagogical tool insofar as it stressed the existence of a divine concern with—and hence the praiseworthiness of—what is fine as opposed to base.[41]

40. Citations of the *Hymn to Demeter* are from the edition of Richardson (1974).

41. That Plato finds this etymology of "Hades" more promising from a philosophical standpoint is also recognized by Barney (1998, 69–70) and Friedländer (1964, 207–8), who do not, however, note a connection to Greek literature or the *Republic*. Interestingly, Plato offers elsewhere an elevated interpretation of that Homeric derivation which the *Cratylus* rejects when he says that after death the invisible part of the soul goes off to the realm of Forms, that is, "to Hades in the true sense of that term" (εἰς Ἅιδου ὡς ἀληθῶς, *Phd.* 80d6–7). At most, this revised construction of the traditional derivation reinforces a point made on independent philosophical grounds and as such plays no essential role in the discussion. In both the *Cratylus* and the *Phaedo*, Plato's choice of derivation is thus based on the requirements of that context in which it is to play a role. Fowler (1926, 4) suggests that Plato's rejection in the *Cratylus* of an analysis of "Hades" which he accepts at *Phd.* 80d "may indicate that the [former] is the later of the two dialogues."

The locus classicus in Greek literature for the view of Apollo as destroyer is Cassandra's lament at *Agamemnon* 1080–82: "Apollo, Apollo! Lord of the ways, my destroyer. You have undone me once again, and utterly." Acknowledging the strong reaction generated by his *onoma*, Plato observes (*Cra.* 404e1–2) that "many people are seized with fear regarding the god's name because they believe that it reveals something dreadful (ὥς τι δεινὸν μηνύοντος)" (for an emphasis on mortals' fear, see also 404c5–7 and 405e2–406a1). Far from endorsing this negative view of the god, Plato concludes that people have serious misconceptions about his nature, which he attributes to their mistaken beliefs about the descriptive content of his name. A proper etymology should therefore supplant false opinions with true by replacing the offending source *onoma*—in this case the verb *apollumi*.[42] Having underscored the name's familiar negative impact, and his sharp divergence from this interpretation, Plato offers, as we saw, not one, but four alternative derivations. These, taken together, bring out what he identifies as the god's salient positive capacities (405d–406a). Interestingly, in the *Republic* (383a–c), Plato rejects Aeschylus' description of Apollo (frag. 350N^2) as the destroyer of Achilles: we will be furious, he asserts, with any poet who says this type of thing about the gods and will not permit such material to be used in education if the young are themselves to become divine to the extent possible for human beings. Plato's fourfold analysis in the *Cratylus* constitutes one prime, if ambitious, example of the sort of linguistic elevation of which the *Republic* would doubtless approve.

On the foregoing account, the *Cratylus* itself offers numerous examples of the correct literary practice sketched in *Republic* 2–3, in particular of the results of the remedial work on names involved therein. Where names' referents are traditional gods, it would be a problematic move indeed to replace these *onomata* with others. And in fact this extreme measure is nowhere advocated by Plato, who is concerned instead with shaping the right conception of their referents' "natures." To promote this end, familiar divine names must be traced where necessary to different sources—in particular, to terms whose referents are more positive in Plato's conception of moral and intellectual qualities—with the result that audiences' views of those entities' natures will be molded accordingly. Although from his perspective these entities do not have natures (*phuseis*) in the

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In my view, such an approach, which presupposes that Plato took individual derivations seriously in their own right and ignores the importance of context, places more weight on particular analyses than Plato's etymologizing in the *Cratylus* and elsewhere can sustain. For further discussion of Plato's use of etymology outside the *Cratylus*, see chapter 3, section 3.

42. Cf. Baxter (1992, 145), who notes that one may plausibly infer from this rejection of *apollumi* that "Plato calls into question the traditional picture of Apollo that emerges from myth and tragedy," adding that "here one can compare Plato's strictures in the *Republic* on the allegorical interpretation of the traditional stories of the gods: it is wrong and educationally damaging that the gods should be represented as quarrelling, wronging each other and so forth."

primary sense of that term, *phuseis* proper (namely, Forms) can be grasped only via reason, which is avowedly not, indeed cannot be, the direct target of early education (401e–402a).[43] While pedagogy does not, at this stage, itself target the intellect and hence does not introduce natures proper into the curriculum, its ultimate goal is to facilitate the understanding of Forms (above all, those pertaining to values and mathematics) in adults whose own natures suit them to its attainment. From the perspective of the *Cratylus*, familiar literary practice may be faulted for operating with a misguided view of what, first and foremost, is or has a nature and in the belief that etymologies can illuminate reality itself. The existence of a consistent pattern in the dialogue's retention and revision of literary etymologies of divine names is intriguing insofar as it may be taken to suggest that this tradition also fails to grasp adequately even those secondary natures, or "divinities," that are pivotal to its own constructions and are to figure prominently in the poetry incorporated in Plato's ideal community.[44]

Regarding the issue of ties between Platonic and literary etymology, one may note, finally, that the terminology used in the *Cratylus* to treat questions of appropriateness—principally the adverbs *orthōs*, *alēthōs*, *dikaiōs*, and *kalōs*—parallels in striking ways that employed by the literary tradition. This is especially true of *orthōs*, as used, for instance, in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* (829), Euripides' *Alcestis* (636) and *Trojan Women* (990), and Herodotus (4.59, *orthotata*). *Alēthōs* is found, for example, in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* (315) and Euripides' *Phoenician Women* (636). Terms with the same root as *dikaiōs* appear in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* (670, *pandikōs*) and in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris* (500, *dikaion* as adverbial accusative) and *Alcestis* (647, *endikōs*). *Kalōs* is found in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* (951).[45] The terminology employed by Plato to discuss *orthotēs onomatōn* would appear to have strong normative connotations. Since he regularly invokes the concept of *technē* in discussions of activities whose performance involves expertise of an elevated sort, the fact that Plato uses terms like *orthōs* and *dikaiōs* in the *Cratylus*' handling of fitness prompts one to consider whether his doing so indicates a belief that naming qua etymologizing qualifies as a practice of this caliber. It is to this issue, along with others involving the *Cratylus*' philosophical concerns and outcome, that the following chapter turns. Before we take up these matters, however, it is necessary to round out the discussion of Plato's sources by commenting on other candidates whom interpreters have proposed as foundational to his treatment of etymologizing.

43. Alternatively, one might make the point in terms of the "divine," the idea being that Forms, not the Olympian gods, bear divinity's true marks; on this issue, see p. 96 with n. 43.

44. See chapter 5 for a defense of the claim that poetry does have a role, albeit a carefully circumscribed one, in Plato's Republic.

45. In the *Cratylus*, see, e.g., *orthōs*: 392e2, 394e9, 395b3, c2, d4, 396a9, c3, 6, 397b7, c6, 398c3, 399c5, 400c4, 401c7, 404d4, 405c1, 406e1, 407a5, 409c6, 412e2, 413a5, 415d4, e2, 416d8; *dikaiōs*: 406c6 (*dikaiotat'*), 408b1, 409c1 (*dikaiotat'*), 410b7, c9, 418e2, 419d7 (*to dikaion*); *alēthōs*: 397e2, 400b6; and *kalōs*: 390d6, 396a1 (*pankalōs*), b8, 400b1, 401d7.

3. Other Proposed Sources of the *Cratylus*' Discussion of Etymology

As noted, the foregoing argument does not aim to show that the literary tradition is the only source of the etymological practice that is the centerpiece of the *Cratylus*. Rather, it introduces considerations in support of the view that, based on extant evidence, the literary tradition is the most direct and prominent opponent of Plato's critique of etymology. Since earlier discussions have devoted comparatively little concern to the literary tradition, this study concentrates on illuminating its importance and gives only limited attention to more familiar proposed sources. The preceding account indicates why interpretations giving a pivotal role to Prodicus and Protagoras are not convincing. In what follows, I comment on a range of other candidates, suggesting why discussions that assign them a central place are also open to question. Since many such challenges have already been posed by others, where pertinent I refer the reader to discussions in which salient considerations are introduced.

Virtually nothing is known about Cratylus other than what is said about him in Plato's dialogue. According to Steinthal ([1890] 1961, 82), one can use the dialogue as a source of information about the man behind the figure of Cratylus; it is "entirely probable," he contends, that Cratylus had turned Plato's attention toward etymology before Plato studied with Socrates (83). Wilamowitz (1959, 223) asserts confidently that Plato derived an interest in etymological practice from his association with Cratylus. In the view of Rijlaarsdam (1978, 10), "what Plato derides in the etymological section is the standpoint of Cratylus, according to which 'etymologizing' and 'philosophizing' are the same, and one can therefore gain access to the essence of things through the analysis of names"; despite this critical stance, "Cratylus' authority as an etymologist was so great that even Plato viewed his interpretations of names as probable" (183).[46] Derbolav (1972, 29–30 [with n. 5]) and Méridier (1931, 40) have noted various difficulties involved in correlating the historical Cratylus with that stance to which his name is linked in Plato's dialogue. Although, as Méridier points out, the dialogue's title might seem to support the view that Cratylus is Plato's target, "nothing allows one to affirm that Cratylus, so poorly known from other sources, engaged in etymologizing"; what is more, his conduct in the dialogue "gives the opposite impression." Méridier cites in this connection, for example, the fact that "Cratylus neither proposes nor discusses any etymology; he limits himself to accepting docilely the whole group of those offered by Socrates, and if he hastens to approve them, it is because he finds in certain ones confirmation of the flux-doctrine of Heraclitus." A recognition of Cratylus' absence during the framing and conduct of the etymological debate leads Heath (1888, 198) to make the following

46. Regarding the pertinence of Cratylus, see also Goldschmidt 1940, 93; Barwick 1957, 74; and, most recently, Sedley 1998, 146.

comment: "What kind of theory Cratylus would have propounded had he roused himself to the effort without the intervention of Socrates one does not know."

Casting a wider net, Jowett (1892, vol. 1, 253) claims that "had the treatise of Antisthenes upon words, or the speculations of Cratylus, or some other Heracleitean of the fourth century B.C., on the nature of language been preserved to us; or if we had lived at the time, and been 'rich enough to attend the fifty-drachma course of Prodicus' (384 B), we should have understood Plato better, and many points . . . would have been found . . . to have gone home to the sophists and grammarians of the day." Others too mention Antisthenes. Steiner (1916, 127–29), for instance, contends that he is the target of the etymologies in 411a–421c. Guthrie (1971) admits that it is hard to be sure what Antisthenes' teaching was (209), yet asserts that it resembles Cratylus' natural-correctness thesis (215) and that both Antisthenes and Plato's Cratylus believed *onomata* to have a "natural affinity" with their objects (219). Not discovering a substantive connection between any notion of natural affinity that might be attributed to Antisthenes and the particular form that concern takes in the *Cratylus*, Steinthal ([1890] 1961, 122–23) rightly rejects what he deems the speculative view that Antisthenes focused on etymologizing.[47]

While Antisthenes is said to have had some interest in *onomata*,[48] very little is known about what his view actually was. On the assumption that a connection between names and education is correctly attributed to him, there is no evidence that his more specific position is like that which governs the etymological section of the *Cratylus*. What is more, there are indications that his view of naming and natures would have diverged from that investigated by Plato. For one thing, Antisthenes' view of elements and what can be said thereof (on which see, e.g., Arist. *Metaph.* 1043b23–32; Steinthal [1890] 1961, 123) does not seem compatible with the *Cratylus*' idea that *onomata* are not basic (i.e., unanalyzable) units but instead—if properly traced to other linguistic items—themselves sources of insight into their referents' natures. With respect to the topic of natures, Antisthenes is alleged to have claimed that while, according to convention, there are many deities, by nature there is only one.[49] This position concerning natures is at odds with that explored in the *Cratylus*, according to which it is assumed that etymological analyses of divine *onomata*, if properly carried out, disclose

47. For challenges to the view that the *Cratylus* targets him, see also Méridier 1931, 44–45; Taylor 1960, 86 n. 1, 89 n. 1; Wilamowitz 1959, 223, 230; Levinson 1957, 31–32. Cf. Derbolav 1972, 31 n. 6: "Circular appears to us . . . to be an argument that, if it does not derive its picture of Antisthenes from anonymous Platonic doctrines, nevertheless enriches it thereby and with it demonstrates the identity of Cratylus with Antisthenes."

48. A work with the title Περὶ παιδείας ἢ ὀνομάτων is attributed to him (Diogenes Laertius 6.17), as is the statement ἀρχὴ παιδεύσεως ἡ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐπίσκεψις (Caizzi 1966, frag. 38). Steinthal ([1890] 1961, 124) expresses doubts about the latter attribution.

49. Caizzi 1966, frag. 39A.

their individual referents' *phuseis*. Moreover, Antisthenes is also supposed to have claimed that since god (*theos*) is not like anything else, one cannot learn about this being from any sort of image (*eikōn*).[50] If *onomata* are encompassed by the term *eikōn*, it would follow that etymologizing will not, in Antisthenes' view, yield insight into the nature of the one divinity. Again, such an assumption would be at odds with that underlying the practice investigated in the *Cratylus*, according to which etymologies do provide valuable guidance regarding deities' natures. Moreover, and quite importantly, the Cratylus of Plato's dialogue is strongly attached to the view that names are *eikones* of what they denote (431c–433c).

Warburg (1929) argues that the *Cratylus* is directed against Heraclides Ponticus, the fourth-century Academic philosopher, whom Warburg maintains combined etymologizing and Heracliteanism.[51] In his view, "among the etymologies transmitted under the name of Heraclides there are some that are in agreement, not only methodologically, but also substantially and literally with their counterparts in the *Cratylus*" (25–26).[52] Yet, as von Arnim (1929, 22) has observed, rather than discussing all parallel instances that he alleges to have discovered, Warburg treats only one case, the etymologies of *selēnē* in the *Cratylus* and Orion, concluding (Warburg 1929, 27) that Plato's derivation is related to Heraclides' "as variation to theme, that is to say, as something secondary to what is primary."[53] Such evidence is far too slim to serve as a foundation for Warburg's claim. In addition, Dahlmann (1929, 1674) maintains that the material in Orion to which Warburg appeals in support of his theory suggests that the Heraclides mentioned therein is an altogether different individual. Wehrli (1969, 117–19) has argued that Orion's source is in fact Heraclides Ponticus the Younger (a grammarian and student of Didymus), who was active during the first century A.D. More recently, Gottschalk (1980, 160–62) diverges somewhat from Wehrli on the level of specifics but offers further support, from a different angle, to the view that the Academic Heraclides is not the backdrop for Plato's *Cratylus*. The evidence provided by the foregoing scholars, taken together, seems to me to be decisive.

At *Cratylus* 396d, Socrates claims to have taken his inspiration from Euthyphro. While references such as this have led some to conclude that the historical figure is a key backdrop for the etymological discussion, in particular that section involving divine *onomata*,[54] as Baxter (1992, 108–13) has argued persuasively, the *Cratylus* does not support the view that Euthyphro has this role.

50. Caizzi 1966, frag. 40.

51. On the account of Gottschalk (1980, 5), Heraclides was an active member of the Academy at least from the latter half of the 360s until 339.

52. Cf. Thesleff (1982, 168–69), whose attempted defense of Warburg is, as Baxter notes (1992, 95 n. 59), unpersuasive.

53. For von Arnim's challenge to Warburg's thesis, see more generally 20–26.

54. See Barwick 1957, 73–74; Steiner 1916, 124–26. On Euthyphro's pertinence, cf. Levinson 1957, 36.

As Kahn (1997, 55) observes, nothing is known about Euthyphro aside from the information provided by Plato, and his name appears only in the *Euthyphro* and *Cratylus*.[55] In the former dialogue, Euthyphro is remarkably arrogant and emphasizes repeatedly his access to wisdom not available to ordinary people. There is no hint that this alleged wisdom is based on or otherwise linked to etymology; the idea is simply that special ties to the divine realm issue in privileged access to important truths. There are various reasons why Plato might introduce such a character into the *Cratylus'* discussion. The possibilities include a wish to distance himself from the inquiry into *orthotēs* in the form it takes in that dialogue;[56] an interest in dissipating any element of strangeness associated with the discussion's having Socrates as its leader;[57] and a desire to account for how Socrates could apprehend the esoteric matters of which he speaks. While one cannot be sure which, if any, of these grounds is most prominent, the third proposal finds some support in the fact that it meshes with the picture of Euthyphro gained from the earlier dialogue.[58] Some privileged understanding would indeed seem to undergird the production of that lengthy stream of derivations offered by Socrates. Additionally, in the *Cratylus'* discussion, Socrates makes a range of observations (e.g., about words' being highly compressed versions of lengthy phrases and about their having ancient or foreign origins) that would appear to testify to his possession of special insight. Cratylus' reference at 428c7–8 to Euthyphro "or some other Muse" suggests that he as an individual is not what is important from Plato's point of view.[59] Moreover, this particular formulation is noteworthy since it points to an analogy with the inspiration of poets and hence a tie to the literary tradition (see, e.g., Hom. *Il.* 1.1, 2.484, *Od.* 1.1–10; Hes. *Th.* 1, *Op.* 1); interestingly, Cratylus quotes Homer just prior to his mention of Euthyphro (428c4–5), and a little earlier (a1) Hermogenes mentions Hesiod. For a related passage, one may consult *Euthydemus* 275c–d, where Socrates says that he must, like the poets, invoke the Muses for help in completing the difficult task at hand.

When addressing the issue of individuals' status as targets of the *Cratylus'* discussion, one must distinguish between Plato's taking account of others' views by way of etymology and his targeting them specifically for their use of this device. Plato's etymologizing offers clear support to the view that he engages the liter-

55. Although one cannot prove beyond all doubt that the character in both places represents the same historical individual, the conclusion is quite plausible and will be assumed here; for justification of this view, see Baxter 1992, 108.

56. For emphasis on a motive involving detachment, one may consult the claim of Barney (1998, 73) that "the real function of the genre of inspiration is . . . to *distance* the contents presented from the figure of Socrates" (italics in original).

57. On this point, see Gaiser 1974, 19.

58. Such proposed grounds need not, of course, be mutually exclusive; my concern is to identify the factor that has the strongest textual support.

59. Cf. Méridier's appeal to this passage (1931, 42) to support the claim that "this mediocre seer and those in his circle are not the true object of his attacks."

ary tradition on *both* of these levels. Since I have already discussed this tradition's role on the latter plane, I note here that Plato engages it also in the former regard, as evidenced, for example, by his analysis of *hērōs* based on heroes' mode of genesis and role in literature as skillful speakers (398c–e); his first etymology of *psuchē,* which draws on the idea, prominent in Homer, that the soul is responsible for life (400a);[60] and the fact that his account of how Hesiod would etymologize the term *daimōn* has as its point of departure the poet's description of its referent (397e–398c). Moreover, as we saw, the pattern discernible in Plato's revised derivations of individual deities' names suggests a critical stance toward literary ideas about divinity. Evidence is lacking, in contrast, for the claim that Plato takes substantial account of both factors in the case of Anaxagoras, Democritus, and Heraclitus, supporting instead the view that the *Cratylus*' engagement with them pertains largely to the positions they espouse.

While the fact that Anaxagoras etymologizes *aithēr* (see Arist. *Cael.* 270b24–25) constitutes one link with the *Cratylus* on the etymological plane (though not in the content of the proffered analyses), there is no evidence in the surviving fragments of a substantial use of this device to illuminate natures. What is clearly in evidence, however, is Plato's engagement in the *Cratylus*, as in the *Phaedo*, with Anaxagoras' view of reality. Thus, Plato's second etymology of *psuchē* stresses the role as ordering principle given by Anaxagoras to mind and soul (400a–b), and his derivation of *selēnē* purports to show that Anaxagoras did not originate the view that the moon receives its light from the sun (see *Cra.* 409a–c and DK 18).[61] Still later, Plato introduces Anaxagoras' conception of mind in his treatment of *dikaion* (413a–d).[62] As Baxter (1992, 128–29) points out, Plato stresses here the limited efficacy of etymology: "even if everyone is agreed that δίκαιον is to be derived from διὰ ἰόν, there is nothing in the etymology itself which especially recommends νοῦς as what 'goes through'; it is an answer that will only convince Anaxagoreans." In assessing *Cratylus* 413, one cannot but think of Plato's critique of Anaxagoras and other Presocratic philosophers of nature in the *Phaedo*, particularly given the fact that in both dialogues Plato is concerned with what constitutes a genuine, rather than a merely specious, explainer (*to aition*).[63]

60. On *psuchē* in Homer as "the force which keeps the human being alive," see Snell [1953] 1982, 8. The term *psuchē* is used there only in what Nussbaum (1972, 3) calls "'negative contexts,'" namely, when its continued presence in the body is threatened or its ties thereto have already been severed.

61. A tie between mind and soul was certainly envisaged (ὅσα γε ψυχὴν ἔχει . . . πάντων νοῦς κρατεῖ, DK 12). As Aristotle observes, however (*DA* 404b1–6, 405a13–19), Anaxagoras was not as clear as he might have been regarding this connection.

62. Concerning Anaxagoras' view of mind, see DK 11–14. Aristotle underscores its special status for Anaxagoras as the *archē* of everything, alone in being simple (*haploun*), unmixed (*amigē*), and pure (*katharon*) (*DA* 405a15–17).

63. For this term, see *Cra.* 413a4–5; at *Phd.* 99b, Plato distinguishes between a genuine explainer and a mere necessary condition, or "that without which the explainer (τὸ αἴτιον) would not be an explainer (αἴτιον)." Regarding Anaxagoras' depiction in the *Phaedo*, cf. Baxter 1992, 129.

According to Baxter (1992, 157), in the *Cratylus* "Democritus' theories are being gently mocked using one of his own tricks, etymology." In his account of Democritus, however (156–60), Baxter does not always distinguish sufficiently between Plato's possible critique via etymology of Democritus' ideas and his engaging Democritus with a view toward his use of etymology per se. In fact, the evidence offered by Baxter pertains mainly to the former. Thus, he cites *hekousion* ("voluntary") and *anankē* ("necessity"), whose etymologies (420d–e), Sambursky (1959) argues, link Democritean and Pythagorean ideas. Insofar as Democritus is relevant to the derivation of *sophia* (412b), which emphasizes touch (*ephaptesthai*), his influence here too is described by Baxter (156–57) as operating on the level of doctrine. Based on this construction of *sophia*, Baxter speculates, in addition, that Plato's etymology of *phronēsis* (411d) "is referring to the same Democritean ideas" (157). With regard to etymology itself, the strongest connection is between *Cratylus* 414a (*gunē-gonē*) and DK 122a. DK 2 (*Tritogeneia hē Athēna*) identifies Athena with *phronēsis* because *to phronein* admits a threefold division. Allegory and etymology may, but need not, be combined; although one could translate the foregoing observation about Athena into an etymology of her name, Democritus himself does not undertake this. Hesiod too calls her "Tritogeneia," in a myth (*Th.* 886–98) that "allegorizes the three basic characteristics of . . . Athena: her prowess, her wisdom, and the masculinity of her virgin nature" (Morford and Lenardon 1995, 117–18); in addition, as we saw, Homer interprets the name "Athena" itself in terms of the goddess's intelligence. Regarding Democritus' possible role as backdrop for Plato's discussion, it is crucial to note, moreover, that while the words *agalmata phōnēenta* (DK 142) might appear to be suggestive, the fragment explicitly distinguishes this view of the gods' *onomata*, attributed to Democritus, from the *Cratylus*' construction of natural appropriateness (regarding the phrase's interpretation, see Guthrie 1965, 475–76).[64] In the view of Kahn (1973, 155–56), "if we had more information on Democritus' views, there are probably many puzzling passages in the *Cratylus* which would appear in a clearer light." While one cannot deny that this is so, the fact remains that based on surviving evidence a significant tie cannot be forged between him and Plato regarding etymology specifically. According to Proclus (DK 26), in Democritus' view *onomata* are correct by convention, not nature (τύχῃ ἄρα καὶ οὐ φύσει τὰ ὀνόματα); in this same fragment, Democritus, grouped with Aristotle, is said to accord with Hermogenes. This fact alone would arguably suffice to exclude Democritus as a central target of the *Cratylus*' natural-correctness thesis.

The *Cratylus* gives an important role to the doctrine of flux, to whose alleged preeminence a large number of etymologies are made to testify, thus making

64. On the account of Hirschle (1979), it is quite probable that the view of names as *agalmata* was not actually that of Democritus but came to be linked with him due to an error committed in haste by the student who took down the notes that have come down to us as Damascius' commentary on the *Philebus*. For the details of this argument, see Hirschle 1979, 63–65.

Heraclitus a noteworthy Platonic opponent on the level of ontology.[65] His proposed influence has been extended to the realm of naming by Marcovich (1967, 193), who suggests that "as far as the φύσει ὀρθότης τῶν ὀνομάτων is concerned, Heraclitus *might* have been the spiritual father of Plato's Cratylus."[66]

Having challenged the view that this figure may be assumed to represent Heraclitus' own stance, Kirk (1962, 119) asserts that "a much more cogent indication of the fact that for Heraclitus names bore some essential relation to objects, and were capable of revealing a truth about them which might not be otherwise obvious, is provided by the not uncommon instances of etymology in the tragedians and especially in Aeschylus." One cannot simply appeal to poets to ground the contention that *Heraclitus* held a particular view of the name-thing relation. Moreover, from the claim that Heraclitus and the tragedians believed in "some essential relation" between the two, it need not follow that this relation took just the same form for Heraclitus and the poets. Indeed, Kirk notes that while "for Heraclitus there is a real and essential connexion between the name and the thing named, . . . the nature of this connexion is not explored" (198). The following remarks offer support to the claim that Heraclitus did not investigate the ties in question. What remains unclear is whether this lack of exploration is simply a misleading impression generated by the fragmentary nature of surviving evidence, or whether Heraclitus himself was simply not interested in pressing the issue further than he does in the material available to us.

In modern discussions of ancient sources, terms like "wordplay" and "pun" are used to encompass numerous phenomena, and a failure to distinguish adequately between types of wordplay or punning has sometimes led commentators to posit closer ties between different authors' efforts than is justifiable based on the particular subject matter of their constructions. Moreover, the term "etymology" may be used loosely in such discussions, as though it too were a generic designation. While it may not always be easy to distinguish etymology per se from other forms of wordplay, I cannot agree with Barney (1998, 68) that it is "perhaps unnecessary" to make the attempt. In my view, progress in the investigation of ancient treatments of naming would be facilitated by a closer examination of the genus and species to which the evidence gives rise. The term "wordplay" will suffice as a generic designation as long as one keeps in mind that such "play" often issues from and reflects quite serious intentions. According to the parameters of the current inquiry, etymology, that is, the underscoring of derivations on the level of semantic constitution—as when *Hēra* is traced to *aēr*—represents

65. With regard to limits on flux's prominence in the etymologies, it is useful to keep in mind the observation of Heath (1888, 203) that it does not come to the fore until the discussion of *ta kala onomata*, which begins at 411a. My concern here is with Plato's interpretation of Heraclitus' stance. Consideration of the extent to which Plato's strong emphasis on the prevalence of flux in describing Heraclitus' view reflects the latter's own position would take one far afield in the present context.

66. See also Diels 1910, 3.

one prominent subdivision of this category. Other notable species include eponymy, judgments of fitness involving functional terms, stress on dual meanings of single terms, cases of synonymy, and the underscoring of parallels on the phonetic plane. While Plato inherits a state of affairs in which distinctions between these phenomena are not firmly in place, his own practice evinces a strong interest in taking the discussion to a new level. Key support for this claim is provided by the fact that Plato is unmistakably aware of sophistic constructions of *orthotēs* and at pains in the *Cratylus* to mark his approach off from them at the species level. Moreover, although the *Cratylus* introduces etymology, eponymy, and the use of functional terms, in its consideration of *orthotēs* it adheres firmly to the first of these—reserving for other occasions independent, individual discussion and assessment of the latter two devices; Plato's procedure indicates his keen interest in distinguishing notions that were not similarly differentiated by others, in this case the literary tradition.

A key question regarding those Heraclitean fragments in which etymological play has been suspected is whether the linguistic connections actually cross over into that arena or are limited instead to the phonetic plane. A crucial reason for uncertainty is that one typically cannot avail oneself here of the sorts of contextual indicators that are so useful in the analysis of literature.[67] While one cannot exclude the possibility that derivations are intended in certain fragments, such attributions of source, if intended, are not obvious. Consideration of surviving evidence does not rule out a Heraclitean concern with that type of derivation at issue in the etymological species of wordplay, but neither does the material offer confirmation of a marked interest in it. In what follows, I comment on DK 5, 15, 25, 23, 48, 28, 114, and 32.

According to DK 5, "They are purified in vain with blood, those polluted with blood, as if someone who stepped in mud should try to wash himself with mud. Anyone who noticed him doing this would think he was mad" (καθαίρονται δ' ἄλλωι αἵματι μιαινόμενοι οἷον εἴ τις εἰς πηλὸν ἐμβὰς πηλῶι ἀπονίζοιτο.

67. Regarding Heraclitus, cf. Dalimier 1998, 24–25. While in certain literary passages it is difficult if not impossible to determine whether the level of play involved is semantic or phonetic, in most instances a decision may be reached. To a significant extent this is because literature regularly provides a range of cues that signal the presence of a derivation rather than the mere existence of common ground on the phonetic plane. Such indications, offered either individually or in various combinations, include the relevant use of language of naming, where original assignments, name changes, or nicknames are involved (e.g., *pseudōnumōs* plus *kalousin*); terms such as *houneka*, which signal explicitly that an author is identifying the source of an assignment; and compression, in the sense that authors' remarks include the placement in close proximity to one another of a name and two *onomata* whose consolidation yields that name. For examples of passages that feature these cues, see Hom. *Od.* 19.407–9, 20.288–90; Hes. *Th.* 144–45, 195–98, 207–10, 281–83, *Op.* 80–82; Pind. *Ol.* 6.53–57, *Isthm.* 6.53; Aesch. *Sept.* 577–79 (with 658), *PV* 85–87, 732–34, *Cho.* 949–51; Soph. *OT* 1032–36, *OC* 486–87, *Aj.* 430–32; Eur. *Tro.* 989–90, *Ion* 661–63 (with 800–802, 830–31), *IT* 32–33, *Phoen.* 636–37 (with 1493), *Hel.* 8–14, 1301–2 (with 1320, 1327–28, 1340, 1356); Hdt. 2.52.1, 4.107, 5.92ε, 6.63.3, 7.193.2, 9.91–92.

μαίνεσθαι δ' ἂν δοκοίη, εἴ τις αὐτὸν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιφράσαιτο οὕτω ποιέοντα).[68] Here the term used to designate the state of mind of people who try to counteract religious pollution by engaging in the same type of activity that generated the condition is phonetically similar to that which denotes the condition they seek to remedy. It is thus not simply because these people are polluted (*miainomenoi*) that they would be judged as mad (*mainesthai*): Heraclitus' formulation, along with the comparison involving mud, makes this clear. If the connection had been direct, then one might have treated this fragment as similar to a passage in Pindar's second Pythian ode (90–92), where the poet says that the envious "pull (ἑλκόμενοι) on a line unwound to the limit until it snaps: a wound (ἕλκος) to their own heart before they compass their desires." In Pindar, in contrast to Heraclitus, the basis of connection is that of cause and effect since it is individuals' performing the action indicated by the participle that results in their suffering the injury signified by the noun. While the presence of this connection might lead one to consider whether a derivation of *helkos* was being suggested by Pindar, one has no comparable impetus to speculate about a possible etymology in the case of Heraclitus.[69] I must therefore concur with the judgment of Marcovich (1967, 460) that "an intended word-play . . . is not likely" here. More specifically, framing the point in light of the genus-species framework introduced above, I would suggest that there is a form of wordplay here, but that it is phonetic rather than semantic in nature.

DK 15 runs as follows: "If it were not Dionysus for whom they march in procession and chant the hymn to the phallus, their action would be most shameless. But Hades and Dionysus are the same, him for whom they rave and celebrate Lenaia" (εἰ μὴ Διονύσωι πομπὴν ἐποιοῦντο καὶ ὕμνεον ᾆισμα αἰδοίοισιν, ἀναιδέστατα εἴργαστ' ἄν· ὡυτὸς δὲ 'Αίδης καὶ Διόνυσος, ὅτεωι μαίνονται καὶ ληναΐζουσιν). What keeps activity that includes an entity whose *onoma* is a cognate of *aidōs* from being quite shameful is the identity of the god in whose celebration the activity is undertaken. As Craik (1993, 55) points out, a close connection between *aidōs* and *aidoia* was already assumed by Homer, who substitutes the former for the latter on two separate occasions (*Il.* 2.262, 22.75).[70] Heraclitus, unlike Homer, has no qualms about using the term *aidoia*. Indeed, he is concerned to make the point that if viewed in the correct light, the activity in question is not shameful. To all appearances, the province of Dionysus is life. Yet in Heraclitus' view those practices that allegedly celebrate the god, promi-

68. Unless otherwise noted, translations of Heraclitus are those of Kahn (1979).

69. I am suggesting, not that Pindar offers a derivation, but only that his formulation makes it more reasonable than in the case of Heraclitus for an interpreter to wonder, at least initially, whether an analysis was intended.

70. According to Richardson (1993, 114), "Homeric decorum generally avoids references to αἰδοῖα." Craik (1993, 55) observes that "in terms of linguistic usage, αἰδώς may be viewed as the natural reaction to the αἰδοῖα (and, of course, to people who are αἰδοῖοι), just as γελώς is to γελοῖα."

nent among them drunkenness and orgiastic conduct, are associated in crucial ways with death.[71] The intoxication prevalent during the Lenaia would dull people's rational faculty and as such be a distinctly negative event.[72] Intoxication is correlated with orgiastic conduct, which may result in generation. Although reproduction might appear to be a purely life-affirming act, it is also correlated with progenitors' diminution and ultimate demise (DK 20).[73] From this perspective, it might seem as though people's behavior with respect to Dionysus was irreverent: while the god represents life, their supposed acts of tribute evince a strong tie to death. Yet once one apprehends the close cosmic interrelationship between life and death—emphasized elsewhere (DK 88, 62) and personified here by the "identification" of Dionysus and Hades—people's conduct, far from being irreverent, or shameful (*anaidestata*), becomes both intelligible and perfectly appropriate.[74] With Robinson (1987, 87), I do not see that the etymological tie between Hades and *aides* is pertinent to the fragment's interpretation.

In DK 25, Heraclitus says that "greater deaths are allotted greater destinies" (μόροι μέζονες μέζονας μοίρας λαγχάνουσι). His repetition of mu and *mezōn* is an obvious instance of play on the phonetic level. The point of contention is the status of *moros* and *moira*. The phenomena are also related—without the provision of an etymology—in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, where Orestes tells Clytemnestra that "destiny has so wrought that this shall be your death" (τόνδε . . . Μοῖρ' ἐπόρσυνεν μόρον, 911). Heraclitus' treatment displays the reverse of that priority evident in Aeschylus: the tragedian makes fate dictate the mode of one's passing, but Heraclitus, in keeping with his greater stress on individual effort and responsibility (as, e.g., in DK 119), insists that one's destiny is shaped by how one dies. With regard to the linguistic plane, he is surely cognizant of the phonetic ties between *moros* and *moira*. Any interest in their relation as cognates takes the form of an assumption rather than a discovery.[75] While the absence of context here makes conclusive statements difficult, what Heraclitus says does not indicate that he is treating *moros* as the source-*onoma* of *moira*.

71. Cf. Robinson 1987, 86 n. 1: "Heraclitus is at pains to stress the frenzied and orgiastic (ie, 'Dionysiac') behaviour of the participants [in the Lenaia], not simply their drunkenness. But drunkenness . . . there undoubtedly was, and the assumption of its existence—and consequences—seems necessary for a complete understanding of Heraclitus' remarks."

72. In Heraclitus' view, "a man when drunk is led by a beardless boy, stumbling, not perceiving where he is going, having his soul moist" (DK 117). He maintains elsewhere that the dry soul is "wisest and best" (DK 118) and that "for souls it is death to become water" (DK 36).

73. Cf. Kahn (1979, 264), who observes that according to Heraclitus "the desire of men 'to live . . . and to leave children behind' is really a desire for their own death and replacement."

74. For emphasis on the point that here, as elsewhere, "the same" for Heraclitus does not mean "identical," see Robinson (1987, 86), who notes that "at best it suggests a doctrine of 'perspectival identity' (= *interconnectedness* of apparent opposites)."

75. Cf. the comment of Robinson (1987, 92) that the fragment "exploits the common etymological origin of the nouns *moros* . . . and *moira*."

DK 23, in turn, involves a conceptual link in the form of a contrast dependency: "If it were not for these things, they would not have known the name of Justice" (Δίκης ὄνομα οὐκ ἂν ᾔδεσαν, εἰ ταῦτα μὴ ἦν).[76] One may accept here the interpretation of Kahn (1979, 185), according to which "the conceptual dependence of justice upon the existence of injustice and legal disputes . . . is expressed not in terms of concepts but in terms of the name by which Justice is known. If there were no judgments and penalties, men could not know or understand the word *dikē* that denotes them. But then they would not know the name of Justice."

More relevant for current purposes is Heraclitus' famous observation (DK 48) that "the name of the bow is life, but its work is death" (τῶι τόξωι ὄνομα βίος, ἔργον δὲ θάνατος);[77] the same tie is emphasized in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* (931–33). Marcovich (1967, 192) takes this fragment to illustrate the fact that according to Heraclitus a name "reveals a great deal of the true φύσις of its object." I would suggest, in contrast, that Heraclitus capitalizes here on the fact that the words "life" (βίος) and "bow" (βιός) are identical in spelling to make a point most fundamentally about opposition between language and reality, or the effect the bow has on elements thereof. Rather than using this parallel as strong evidence of a belief in particular names' revelatory power, one might conclude from the fragment's content that a focus on linguistic connections obscures as much as, or perhaps even more than, it clarifies (this point is emphasized by the presence of *de*). On the formulation of Snell (1926, 369), "the name conveys . . . the opposite of what is essential." Even if one accepted a stronger tie here between the bow (βιός) and life (βίος) on the strength of other fragments treating life and death (DK 62, 88), there is no sign that Heraclitus wishes to *derive* the former *onoma* from the latter in the manner at issue in Plato's *Cratylus*.

In DK 28, Heraclitus says that "the great man is eminent in imagining things, and on this he hangs his reputation for knowing it all" (δοκέοντα ὁ δοκιμώτατος γινώσκει, φυλάσσει). Despite his having an elevated reputation, which would ostensibly correlate with a superiority over ordinary mortals regarding knowledge, in Heraclitus' view such an individual is not justifiably invested with this distinction. As Kahn (1979, 211) points out, here "the eminence of the man who enjoys public recognition and approval (*ho dokimōtatos*) is contrasted with the shabby credentials of what he himself recognizes and accepts: *dokeonta*, mere seeming or imagining." It is, of course, irrelevant to one's judgment about the possible existence of an etymology in this fragment that *dokimos* (superlative *dokimōtatos*) actually has *dechomai* as its root. What matters is only the views of Heraclitus and those whose judgment he is impugning. *If* Heraclitus is taking as his backdrop a common view that *dokimos* has this root, then he could be suggesting that *dokimōtatos* instead has *dokeō* as its source and for this reason is a

76. For an emphasis on contrast dependency, see also DK 111.
77. Tr. Marcovich (1967).

pejorative term, not a complimentary one. This derivation, if proffered, would be of interest vis-à-vis the *Cratylus*, yet the text of the fragment, while not ruling out this interpretation, also does not provide clear confirmation of it.

According to DK 114, speaking with intelligence necessitates the apprehension of what is common (i.e., the *logos*). Here the phonetic similarities in Heraclitus' twofold use of the dative (*xun noōi* and *xunōi*), along with the combined presence of *ischurizesthai* and *ischuroterōs*, reinforce the substantial claim being made in the remark that contains it: "If people are to speak with understanding, they must hold fast to what is shared by all, as a city holds to its law, and even more firmly" (ξὺν νόωι λέγοντας ἰσχυρίζεσθαι χρὴ τῶι ξυνῶι πάντων, ὅκωσπερ νόμωι πόλις, καὶ πολὺ ἰσχυροτέρως).[78] According to the etymological paradigm in literature and the *Cratylus*, *xunōi* would have to represent a consolidation of *xun noōi*. Yet the causal dependency here points in the other direction, insofar as it is individuals' proper mental focus on the *logos* that enables their speech to embody understanding. Thus, while this fragment, unlike DK 5, involves a causal relationship between referents of phonetically similar words, the very presence of this tie works against the idea that Heraclitus' statement involves etymology. Since I find no contextual cue suggesting that he offers an etymology, and a salient indication that the attribution of such a derivation would be implausible, I must agree with Kirk (Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983, 210 n. 2), who notes that while *xun noōi-xunōi* is an instance of wordplay, it does not constitute an example of "etymological periphrase."

It is worth mentioning, finally, DK 32: "The wise is one alone, unwilling and willing to be spoken of by the name of Zeus" (ἓν τὸ σοφὸν μοῦνον λέγεσθαι οὐκ· ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς ὄνομα). As Marcovich (1967, 445–46) and Kirk (1962, 392) have noted, the presence of an etymological tie to *zēn* is unlikely. Although this link, which has a strong presence in literature, cannot be ruled out, it would be a stretch to tie *hen to sophon* closely to the notions of life and death in the way required by this interpretation.

While literary authors resort frequently to etymology, and make substantial use of it to treat questions of names' appropriateness, study of the extant fragments does not offer obvious support to the claim that Heraclitus exhibits a marked interest in this particular device. In one's making of judgments about the presence or absence of derivations, context is all-important. As long as this context is lacking, inferences about what is missing in a given fragment must be made by interpreters (see, e.g., Kahn [1979, 185] on *adikia* in DK 23), perhaps erroneously. Although certain fragments are intriguing from the *Cratylus*' perspective, clear determinations of the level of wordplay are difficult, if not impossible, to make. Quite apart from this, militating strongly against Heraclitus as the inspiration for Plato's discussion of *orthotēs onomatōn* is individual natures'

78. Tr. Kahn (1979), modified to underscore the conditional force of the claim about understanding.

prominence in the *Cratylus* as what etymologies reveal.[79] I thus do not dispute the view that Heraclitus is a central Platonic opponent in the *Cratylus* but would maintain that, based on surviving evidence, he is demonstrably such only on the ontological plane, that is to say, with respect to the doctrine of flux that comes to prominence after the discussion of etymology is well under way.

I turn lastly to the Derveni papyrus, which was discovered in northern Greece in 1962.[80] According to Laks and Most (1997, 5), its author is the "spokesman" for a "sophisticated version of Orphism," in which "religious initiation takes the form of a rationalizing exegesis of the episodes of an Orphic theogony set into systematic relation with the episodes of a late 'Presocratic' kind of physical cosmology."[81] The text contained in the papyrus was composed around 400 B.C., and the Derveni copy had its genesis "some decades" thereafter (West 1983, 82).[82] The Derveni papyrus reflects the impact of several Presocratics, including Heraclitus, Anaxagoras, and Diogenes of Apollonia.[83] Yet, as Burkert notes, it exhibits no Platonic influences (1986, 4; 1968, 100), and it is unclear whether Plato was acquainted with it (1997, 174). The relevance of the papyrus has been emphasized by Baxter (1992), who argues that it "remains a prime candidate as a target of the *Cratylus*" (139).

The mere presence of a concern with linguistic issues is not in itself a basis for asserting anything more than a general link of the sort that is also present in other cases. As we saw with regard to the sophists, the key question is what relationship emerges once one moves to the level of specifics.[84] In elaborating his

79. Cf. Snell's observation that, far from endorsing the view that there are individual divine natures, Heraclitus "seeks the all-encompassing 'divine' and construes the divine as a unity" (1926, 374).

80. For discussion of the circumstances, see West 1983, 75–77; Funghi 1997, 25.

81. For an investigation of the role of allegory in the papyrus, see Laks 1997. Commentators diverge on the issue of whether Euthyphro might be the author of the papyrus. According to Kahn (1973, 156 n. 6), "It seems natural to suppose that Euthyphro . . . was known to be given to allegorical explanations of divine names in the style of the Derveni papyrus"; indeed, he "might even be its author" (see also Kahn 1986, 98–99, and 1997; Rosenstock 1992, 404 n. 18; Funghi 1997, 36; Tsantsanoglou 1997, 122 n. 54). In contrast, although Baxter (1992) believes that the Derveni papyrus "remains a prime candidate as a target of the *Cratylus*" (139), he regards the possibility that Euthyphro might be the writer in question as "far-fetched" (133).

82. On the date of ca. 400 for the text itself, see Henry 1986, 150; Burkert 1968, 100, and 1970, 443; West 1983, 77–82. Burkert (1983, 38) gives the approximate date as 400/380. In a fourth article a few years later, where Burkert argues that Stesimbrotus is the author, he suggests a range of 420–370 (1986, 4).

83. For discussion, see Burkert 1968, 1983.

84. As of this writing, there is no complete published edition of the papyrus. The following remarks about its content therefore have as their foundation the translation of Laks and Most (1997), the first version of which was checked by K. Tsantsanoglou, who also offered suggestions based on his supplements to the extant text (Laks and Most 1997, 9). My provisions of Greek beyond what is included in Laks and Most (10–22) are based on the text that appears in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 47 (1982) following p. 300. The translations and column numbers provided in the following remarks are those of Laks and Most.

own particular brand of Orphism, the Derveni author evinces a marked interest in the genesis and operation of the cosmos and in connections between language and reality. Most striking is the emphasis on the absence of distinctions where ordinary people regularly assume them to exist (for the underscoring of a gap between common and superior understanding, see col. XVIII; cf. col. XVII): on the formulation of Edwards (1991, 210), this sophisticated Orphic "will never see distinction where distinction can be avoided." Underscoring the same point with explicit reference to the divine, Tsantsanoglou (1997, 99) observes that the author of the papyrus "does not deny the existence of god, in the singular, whom he mentions in the second part of his book, but gods in the plural are referred to only in relation with other people's beliefs or practices." As Funghi (1997, 35) indicates, this god or divine principle that produces and governs the cosmos "is identified with Zeus, and other divinities or abstractions are denied except as his attributes."[85] Such formulations make it clear straightaway that the ontological foundation of the Derveni author's remarks is quite different from that view, pivotal to the *Cratylus*, according to which divine *onomata* have distinct referents and therefore natures, which are disclosed via analyses of their descriptive content.

While the unenlightened assume without question that each divine *onoma* has a distinct referent, the author of the papyrus insists that names such as "Uranus," "Cronus," and "Zeus" in fact pick out a single entity.[86] Moreover, in column XXIII he contends that "Ocean is the air and air is Zeus," and on a basis that is not made entirely clear (col. XVIII; cf. West 1997, 87), Moira and Zeus are the same.[87] In column XXI, in turn, "Heavenly Aphrodite and Zeus (and to aphrodise and to jump) and Persuasion and Harmony are established as name for the same god (τῶι αὐτῶι θεῶι ὄνομα κεῖται)." Elsewhere (col. XXII), the Derveni author states that Earth (*Gē* or *Gaia*), Mother (*Mētēr*), Rhea, Hera, Demeter, Deio, and Hestia are names for a single divine entity; Burkert (1986, 3) adds that "in this collection Leto too would fit easily." Finally, as Edwards (1991, 210) observes, the author contends (col. XXVI) that "such a locution as μη[τρ]ὸς ἑᾶς cannot signify 'his mother' (and thus imply a separation of masculine and feminine) but 'Mother of good things.' . . . The mothering god, no less than Zeus, is Mind."

In addition, the papyrus stresses equivalence of meaning in the case of verbs thought, again by the unenlightened, to differ in meaning. Its author's emphasis here is sharply opposed to that of Prodicus, who foregrounds differences of meaning between terms regularly thought to be interchangeable; while the two agree in distinguishing ordinary from sophisticated usage of a range of terms,

85. Cf. Merkelbach 1967, 21: "In the commentary, a doctrine is represented according to which 'Zeus' is the principle of all existing things. All gods are to be traced back to Zeus; all elements, and even their combining—which is called poetically 'Aphrodite'—are the same Zeus."

86. Col. XV states the identity of Cronus and Zeus. On Uranus' identity with Cronus, see Rusten's discussion of col. XIV (1985, 134–36).

87. On air and Zeus, see also cols. XVII and XIX.

they thus differ substantially in their conceptions of what is most characteristic of deficient practice. In column X, for example, the Derveni author first equates "saying" and "uttering" (τὸ αὐτὸν εἶναι τὸ λέγειν τε καὶ φωνεῖν), then "saying" and "teaching" (λέγειν δὲ καὶ διδάσκειν τὸ αὐτὸ δ[ύ]ναται).[88] Similarly, in column IX, as Rusten (1985, 128–29) observes, the text offers another threefold equivalence, namely, *lambanein* = *haptein* = *epikratein*. Elsewhere (col. XI), the author of the papyrus contends that "'proclaiming the oracle' and 'preventing harm' have the same meaning (χρῆσαι δὲ καὶ ἀρκέσαι ταὐτὸ [δύ]ναται)" and equates distrust with ignorance (col. V). In column XXI, in turn, he claims that *Peithō* = *peithein* since *eikein* = *peithein* (cf. Henry 1986, 157). I cannot agree with Baxter (1992, 133–34), who underscores what he views as the similarity between the text's provision of multiple *onomata* for the same referent and Plato's approach in the *Cratylus*. In my view, Baxter overemphasizes the parallel insofar as Plato considers instances in which the sorts of ontological distinctions denied in the papyrus (e.g., between deities) are assumed and stresses that the same nature can be described by different sets of linguistic components ("Hector," "Astyanax," and "Archepolis," e.g., are all appropriate names for one whose societal role is that of protector, 394b–c).

Where allegory is in evidence, etymology may, though need not, be found as well. While the latter does make an appearance, Kahn (1997, 61–62) notes rightly that etymologies in the *Cratylus*' sense are not a major presence in the papyrus: "The Derveni author does not in general practise etymology in the *Cratylus* manner, reconstructing the 'original' and more instructive form of a familiar word." The two cases in which direct comparisons are possible are, in his view, those of Cronus (col. XIV) and Demeter (col. XXII).

According to Kahn (1997, 62), while the Derveni analysis of the name "Demeter" ("Mother-Earth") is "banal," Plato's "seems by contrast deliberately far-fetched."[89] Baxter tentatively associates the *Cratylus*' derivation with the Derveni papyrus specifically or Orphic "scholars" more generally (1992, 132), although it can be tied clearly to Euripides.[90] Plato's analysis finds parallels both in literature and in the papyrus, but in its details it is closest to Euripides, in particular his relatively complex depiction in *Helen*, and may be viewed as simply a more explicit formulation of the idea at issue there. A connection exists between the *Cratylus* and the papyrus in the case of Cronus, insofar as both derivations include the term *nous*. On a more specific level, though, the two analyses diverge: whereas the Derveni author treats the divine principle at the cosmic stage in question as the Mind (*nous*) that strikes (*krouōn*) things against one another, on Plato's

88. See Rusten (1985, 131) for a reconstruction of the author's reasoning.

89. Although I concur that Plato's derivation is more elaborate, I cannot agree with the contention of Henry (1986, 158) that the *Cratylus*' explanation of the etymology is different.

90. Less plausibly, given the presence of tighter connections in other cases, Goldschmidt (1940, 125) links the *Cratylus*' derivation to Prodicus' famous remark (DK 5) that human beings tend to deify that which confers benefits upon them.

analysis the name signifies "the pure and unmixed character of the mind itself" (τὸ καθαρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκήρατον τοῦ νοῦ, *Cra.* 396b6–7). One may note, in addition, the Derveni author's statement, following his etymology of "Demeter" (col. XXII), that "she is called Deio too, because she was cut (ἐδηιώθη) during sexual intercourse."[91] In column XXI, moreover, the author observes that the cosmic principle was called "Harmony, because . . . she fitted together (ἥρμοσε) . . . to each of the things that are." Even Baxter (1992), who generally seeks to underscore the papyrus's connection to the *Cratylus'* inquiry, grants that in this case one may speak only in a qualified sense of etymology (132 n. 117).[92]

Although etymologies are not a major presence in the Derveni papyrus, one may tie it more closely to the *Cratylus* in this regard than to any other source discussed here apart from literature. Yet the foundation of Plato's inquiry diverges sharply from that of the papyrus. Its author distinguishes the superior understanding possessed by himself from that level of apprehension typical of most human beings. While they generally assume that each *onoma*—above all, one that is divine—has a separate referent, one with knowledge is aware that this is decidedly not the case: according to the Derveni author, far from being fundamental, individual divine natures do not even exist. From his perspective, literary authors would be pivotal, and highly influential, examples of those operating in the absence of understanding. Far from considering whether *onomata* like "Demeter" and "Zeus" have the same referent, poets assume distinctness and explore the individual natures of these and other deities via the descriptive content of their names.[93] Burkert (1970, 450) compares the Derveni author's linkage of cosmic genesis and naming with that of Hesiod ("In Hesiod . . . one finds in some situations new significant names"). More salient than the parallel, I submit, is the crucial difference in underlying conceptions of reality and of what names may be taken to disclose. Most importantly, it is precisely the literary perspective—according to which *onomata* have distinct referents, whose natures may be disclosed via etymology—that undergirds Plato's own inquiry in the *Cratylus*.

91. Since, as Tsantsanoglou (1997, 99) points out, "gods in the plural are referred to only in relation with other people's beliefs or practices," this statement cannot reflect the Derveni author's own allegiance to a view that would stipulate the involvement of multiple divinities.

92. The Derveni author's handling of Aphrodite and Peitho differs from that of Harmonia. In the former cases, the author's treatment of names moves through synonymous pairs of verbs, each of which contains one member that is obviously equivalent to the name in question. Thus, in the case of Aphrodite—i.e., Common Aphrodite, à la *Symp.* 180d–e, since Heavenly Aphrodite has a distinct standing in col. XXI—*meignunai* is the intermediary and equated with *aphrodisiazein*. Similarly, the divine principle was called "Persuasion, because the things that are yielded to one another; and 'yield' and 'persuade' are the same"; that is, as previously noted, *Peithō* = *peithein* because *eikein* = *peithein*. The author's assumption is that the proper name and verb in each case are interchangeable—with the former representing a personified version of the latter—and the author clarifies the basis of this equivalence through intermediate terms unrelated in descriptive content to the others.

93. In a related vein, the Derveni author "reproves the vulgar notion of succession among the gods" (Edwards 1991, 211), which plays such a pivotal role in Hesiod's *Theogony*.

3

THE STRUCTURE AND OUTCOME OF THE *CRATYLUS*' INQUIRY

1. Introduction

As we have seen, the literary tradition makes extensive use of etymology to articulate the semantic constitution of *onomata*, largely proper names, with the goal of shedding light on bearers' natures—the existence of which is assumed.[1] Moreover, authors make numerous judgments of the appropriateness of *onomata* to their referents. At the outset of the *Cratylus*, Plato "invests" naming qua etymologizing with *technē* status, providing a laudatory description of the sort one would expect based on those criteria put forth in the *Gorgias* to distinguish genuine *technai* from *empeiriai*. As the dialogue unfolds, however, Plato rejects the lofty claims he had Socrates make for this activity and its practitioners. As in the *Gorgias*, where Plato's focus is on rhetoric, here too what is identified at the outset as a *technē* later has that distinctive status challenged decisively. In the *Cratylus*, the literary tradition provides Plato with key material used in formulating this challenge; in the course of his investigation, however, Plato rejects that tradition's procedure, along with the chief assumption on which its use rests. Far from being limited in its pertinence to the dialogue's early analogy between shuttle construction and naming, the *technē* issue, construed in the manner indicated above, governs much of the discussion and is crucial to its unity.

Plato's critique of naming in the *Cratylus* is a central component of a larger project. With a view toward defending philosophy's claim to govern content and

1. As noted in chapter 1, this tradition does not have a technical philosophical notion of individual natures; instead, authors work with a loose, nontechnical notion according to which a mortal or divine individual is widely recognized by a salient characteristic, power, or kind of activity. Individual natures, thus construed, play a central role in the *Cratylus*; for the *phuseis* of mortal or divine individuals identified as the objects of etymological analysis, see, e.g., 394e8–11, 395a2–3, b2–8, d3–5, 396a2–b1.

priorities with respect to values, Plato must criticize poetry and sophistry or rhetoric, which promote conceptions of flourishing (*eudaimonia*) that he finds to be untenable. In the *Ion, Protagoras, Gorgias*, and *Republic*, the concept of *technē* plays a crucial role in Plato's attempts to show that they do not merit the esteem in which they are presently held and that, contrary to popular belief, philosophy is the most laudable practice of all. Phrased in terms of the concept of *technē*, Plato's goal is to show that the former are not *technai*, while the latter, in contrast, is the *technē* par excellence. His demonstration in the *Cratylus* that naming as practiced by the literary tradition is not a *technē* is integral to the project of showing that poetry itself, in which issues of naming figure prominently, does not have *technē* status. In this chapter I discuss the aspect of Plato's critique that involves the *Cratylus*. In chapter 5 I explore the *Republic*'s comprehensive challenge and its complementary relation to the *Cratylus*' discussion.

Opinions about the *Cratylus*' content and philosophical import are, like those about its sources, quite divergent. Some interpreters have questioned the dialogue's seriousness of intent and judged it to be of minimal philosophic significance. Taylor (1960), for example, labels the *Cratylus* a "minor Socratic dialogue" (75) that offers "a picture of Socrates in one of his more whimsical moods" (78). According to Fowler (1926, 4), it "cannot be said to be of great importance in the development of the Platonic system, as it treats of a special subject somewhat apart from general philosophic theory." Others, in contrast, focusing on the opening section of the *Cratylus* (383–390) and on Plato's treatment of etymology or phonetic constitution (i.e., *prōta onomata*), conclude that the dialogue makes serious philosophical proposals.[2] Such commentators rightly emphasize the seriousness of Plato's intentions in the *Cratylus*. As I will argue, however, these intentions do not result in the elaboration there of substantive positive proposals. Instead, following a protracted investigation, Plato rejects approaches to the notions of naturalness and appropriateness that are based on the constituency of *onomata*. Although the dialogue's emphasis is critical, Plato provides indications there of the direction that his positive theorizing will take. A discussion of those clues supplied in the final portion of the dialogue will offer a point of departure for the consideration of Plato's favored approaches to *orthotēs onomatōn* in the following chapter.

2. In using the phrase "phonetic constitution," I follow Schofield 1982. For interpretations privileging a supposed positive stance, which rely heavily on Plato's remarks in the first section of the dialogue, see Kretzmann 1971, 1967; Silverman 1992; Weingartner 1973; Kato 1986; Grote 1867. According to Grote (1867, 525), Plato advances the etymologies "as genuine illustrations of a theory of his own respecting names." Lorenz and Mittelstrass (1967) maintain that Plato is making "a proposal for a *rational reconstruction* of language" (13) and that "the quasi-etymologies in the *Cratylus* . . . are used as examples of how one should proceed when this programme is accepted" (10). Steinthal ([1890] 1961, 99, 108), in turn, suggests that Plato would have liked to institute a science (*Wissenschaft*) of etymology but felt incapable of so doing. For accounts that focus instead on Plato's discussion of phonetic constitution, see Jowett 1892, vol. 1, 259–62; Leky [1919] 1967, 54.

2. The *Technē* Issue in the *Cratylus*

Though commentators have remarked on Plato's use of a "craft analogy" in framing the *Cratylus*' discussion of naming, they have not recognized that his early remarks purport to establish a high rank for naming, that of *technē*, which will be systematically undermined in what follows; even those who include the term *technē* in their remarks have not identified the specific form assumed by Plato's concern, which links the *Cratylus* closely to the *Gorgias*.[3] As I argue in what follows, the *technē* issue, thus construed, governs a substantial portion of the *Cratylus* and makes a pivotal contribution to its unity.

In Plato's dialogues, the term *technē* is employed in broad, or nontechnical, and narrow senses. Instances of the broad meaning reflect ordinary usage, according to which the term applies to a heterogeneous group of activities thought to involve some type of expertise (i.e., in this context, use of the word is not based on a systematic inquiry into the nature of its referent).[4] When speaking more strictly, Plato employs a distinction between *technai* and *empeiriai* in order to differentiate what he takes to be quite disparate sets of activities.[5] Plato grants that in some sense both types of activities involve skill, but central to his project is careful attention to the issue of what being a genuine expert entails. When deployed for philosophical ends, the notion of *technē* thus becomes highly normative, and the appellation one that is properly applied to only a select group of practices.[6] Although central *technē* requirements are introduced quite early,[7] it is in the

3. Thus, in the view of Kato (1986, 59–63, 69), for example, Plato endorses the view that naming, or language generally, is a *technē*. Baxter (1992) broaches the subject of *technē* (45, 51), but his interpretation differs significantly from my own; notably, rather than Plato's discussion of phonetic constitution applying a methodology previously set forth (77), I would maintain that this section, like the one centering on etymology, treats a constitution-based approach to correctness that Plato finds untenable. Pfeiffer (1968, 57–65) comments on *epistēmai* and *technai* in his discussion of the *Cratylus*, yet does not identify the aforementioned dynamic at work therein.

4. The heterogeneity of ordinary usage is strikingly evident in a famous Aeschylean passage, where the god Prometheus is treated as the source of all human *technai* (*PV* 442–506). For Platonic examples of nontechnical usage, see *Symp.* 187e4–5, where cookery, dubbed an *empeiria* at *Grg.* 462d9–11, is identified as a *technē*; with regard to tragic poetry, whose *technē* status is denied at *Grg.* 502b–d, see *Symp.* 223d5; though *Grg.* 501e1–7 denies that harp-playing and flute-playing are *technai*, they are affirmed to be such at *Euthd.* 289c1–4 and *Prt.* 323a8–9, respectively; sophistry, grouped with *empeiriai* at *Grg.* 463b1–6, is called a *technē* at *Prt.* 316d3–4 and 317c1–2; and prior to its explicit classification as an *empeiria* at *Grg.* 462b–c, rhetoric is identified repeatedly as a *technē* (at 448c9 it is characterized by Polus as "the finest *technē* of all").

5. For the *Gorgias*' distinction between *empeiria* and *technē* as originating with Plato, see Capelle 1922, 262–65; Heinimann 1976, 144–45 (with n. 50). Cf. Allen (1994, 83), who notes that "the sharp line between experience and knowledge drawn [in the *Gorgias*] was an innovation."

6. The term *technē* is often translated "art" or "craft"; more accurate for Plato in this context would be something like "rational purposive discipline."

7. In the *Ion*, it is because rhapsodes and poets do not operate with understanding, and their disciplines lack genuine subject matters, that they are not viewed as practitioners of *technai*. For

Gorgias that Plato provides a systematic account of the criteria that distinguish genuine *technai* from pseudo-*technai*, or *empeiriai*. He presents there five conditions, of which the three most salient are as follows:

1. *Peri ti*, or "aboutness": The activity in question requires a genuine "subject matter." This subject matter includes both the Form(s) in question and a specification of that toward which activity is directed.[8]
2. Understanding: Those engaged in the pursuit must be in the proper cognitive state, that is, operate with *epistēmē* ("knowledge" or "understanding") rather than mere belief;[9] presupposed here is the existence of a small class of expert practitioners. One with understanding of a given subject matter will be able to provide a rational account (*logon didonai*) of those procedures that comprise the activity and their relevance to the end in question.
3. Goodness: As Moravcsik (1992, 15) observes, "the activity or its objects—or both—must be good or lead to what is good." Where human beings are involved, the idea is that the practice in question must be of genuine benefit to them, not simply cater to their whims and indiscriminate desires.[10]

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an emphasis on the understanding requirement, see 534b–d, 535b–d, 542a. At 535e, it becomes clear that Ion, though not *emphrōn*, is nevertheless quite capable of calculation regarding the effect he produces on the audience. The idea that one who has good means-ends reasoning skills may well lack genuine understanding is explored at far greater length in the *Republic*. Plato combines discussion of the two conditions at 537d–e, where he says that *technai* are distinguished from one another based on the fact that their practitioners have *epistēmē* of different subject matters (cf. 538a). He stresses the importance of the *peri ti* condition at the dialogue's end when Socrates says that, far from giving him a display of his *epistēmē* regarding Homer, Ion is unwilling to specify "which things you are clever about" (541e5–6). For an emphasis on this dialogue's importance to the understanding of Plato's conception of *technē*, see Kahn 1993.

8. While the *Gorgias* does not specify the ontological status of the entities in question, later dialogues make clear that Forms play this role. On the *Gorgias*' stance, see Moravcsik 1992, 20 (cf. 24): "Plato does not elaborate the criterion for genuineness in this dialogue, but from the treatment of rhetoric and the way it contrasts with mathematics and medicine, one gathers that genuine objects must have permanent and stable natures and must embody such characteristics as order and harmony."

9. At *Grg*. 454c–e, Plato draws a sharp contrast between *epistēmē* and *pistis*. As Dodds (1959, 206) has noted, the knowledge-belief distinction is first made formally by Plato in this exchange between Socrates and Gorgias. Subsequently, *doxa* becomes the standard term for opinion, and in the Divided Line (*Rep*. 509d–511e), *pistis* and *eikasia* are subdivisions of it. Plato considers what understanding involves, and how it is related to belief, at far greater length elsewhere; with respect to the distinction between *technai* and *empeiriai*, one may single out his systematic distinction between faculties and their proper objects at *Rep*. 475d–480a.

10. Woodruff (1990, 73) notes that while the *Gorgias* makes explicit the principle that a *technē* in the strict sense aims at the good, this is implied in earlier dialogues (he cites in this connection *La*. 185c–d and *Euphr*. 14e). A fourth *technē* condition involves teachability (and, by implication, learnability); in this formulation of the criterion, I follow Moravcsik (1992, 15). Finally, there is a fifth and less prominent requirement that the activity in question represent some capacity (*dunamis*).

In the *Gorgias* and *Cratylus*, Plato first appears to assume the *technē* status of rhetoric and naming, respectively, then undermines their claims to that status as the inquiries proceed. In both dialogues, the point of contention is whether the practice under investigation qualifies as a *technē* in the narrow sense of that term.[11]

At the outset of the *Cratylus*, Plato "asserts" that naming is a *technē* (388e). The term *to onomazein* is ambiguous in a way that *to kerkizein* (weaving) and *to trupan* (drilling) are not, since "naming," as such, encompasses both the construction of *onomata* and their use. According to the particular theory of name use investigated in the *Cratylus*, one decomposes *onomata* to determine what they describe; that is, one engages in "name decoding." This theory connects name use to name construction insofar as the criteria for names' proper employment must be part of the *telos* in the "artisan's" mind. In considering whether naming qualifies as a *technē*, Plato has in view construction conjoined with use as specified here.

That naming is alleged to be a highly normative enterprise is revealed not only by Plato's identification of it as a *technē* but also, more specifically, by his early invocation of the *nomothetēs* as *onoma* constructor, along with his presentation of the *dialektikos* as employing his knowledge of *ousiai* to determine whether the resulting products are properly constituted. Judgments of appropriateness are based on whether analyses of words' deep structure succeed in revealing the natures of their referents; in this context, as for the literary tradition, "correctness in assignment" (ὀρθῶς ἔχειν) is equivalent to "being in accord with [a referent's] nature" (κατὰ φύσιν εἶναι) (394e–395a). Since, according to the natural-correctness thesis, *onomata* are fit for use to the extent that there is a match between their descriptive content and the natures of their referents, and since the dialectician is the one who evaluates what is produced (390c2–11), one may conclude that the dialectician determines whether *onomata* are usable by judging in each case whether the aforementioned correlation obtains. Plato supplies here the expected cognitive underpinning for an activity of this caliber, vigorously denying any connection with mere belief (*doxa*). At this early juncture, Socrates concludes that if these and related contentions about the elevated status of the activity were well founded, it would hold an impressive rank indeed, qualifying as a *technē* in the narrow sense of that term. In what follows, however, Plato dismantles every one of the exalted claims he has "made" for the practice of naming; hence, as in the *Gorgias*, what purports initially to be a *technē* later has that status called into question.[12]

11. The view of the *Gorgias* assumed in this study, which emphasizes its ties to later dialogues, in this case the *Cratylus* and *Republic*, thus differs from that of Hall (1971, 202), according to whom the *Gorgias'* closest ties are "to the utilitarian ethic grounded on the knowledge and values of *techne* so characteristic of the early dialogues."

12. The hypothetical character of the discussion goes unremarked by those who treat what is said early on as representing Plato's own stance. In the view of Kretzmann (1971), 390d–e is a summary of "the allegorical presentation of Plato's general theory" (130), which according to Plato is "an established truth and *not a mere hypothesis*" (133, italics mine). For other examples, see Anagnostopoulos 1973, 329–30; Kahn 1973, 166 n. 18.

Plato evaluates naming's claim to *technē* status in the course of his assessment of the natural-correctness thesis. Before Plato can investigate the *technē* issue, he must therefore indicate what he means by *orthotēs*. In order to do this, as we saw, Plato recurs to literary methodology and its assumption about the primacy of individual natures (391b–397a). Following the specification of how he construes *orthotēs*, which completes the foundation for his inquiry into naming's *technē* status, in the course of the investigation Plato finds cause to reject this assumption and procedure.[13]

As noted, a central condition on *technai* is that practitioners operate with knowledge or understanding rather than mere belief. Since fulfillment of the "understanding requirement" presupposes the existence of expert practitioners, a single *technē* condition is involved. Also crucial is the *peri ti*, or "subject-matter," condition. These two criteria are most prominent in the *Cratylus*, but as the earlier discussion of etymology based on the *Republic* suggested, the goodness criterion too plays an important role in Plato's inquiry. Further treatment of this requirement will, however, be reserved for chapter 5, which gives an important place to the relationship between the *Cratylus* and *Republic*. For the purpose of illustrating how the *Cratylus*' challenge to naming's *technē* status unfolds, I concentrate in what follows on the understanding and subject-matter conditions.

In the spirit of literary practice, the *nomothetēs*, connected here and elsewhere with the normative enterprise of giving laws, becomes also a word-giver (*onomathetēs*) based on a linguistic ploy (388e–389a).[14] In the course of Plato's investigation of naming's *technē* status, the *nomothetēs* is shown to be a mere construct that was introduced of necessity in the dialogue's early description of word formation as a normative endeavor. Having initially depicted a single individual as responsible for production, in what follows Plato vacillates in his statements concerning just whom he envisions as having played that role, and with what degree of success. Thus, Plato depicts the constructors of *onomata* as "astronomers and idle talkers" (μετεωρολόγοι τινὲς καὶ ἀδολέσχαι, 401b8–9) and likens them pejoratively to many of the current "so-called wise men" (411b6). Elsewhere, he attributes the invention of one term (*sōma*) to the Orphic poets (400c4–5).[15] What is most significant is not, as Demand (1975, 108) has claimed, that Plato "often departs from the notion of a single Nomothetes to speak of a

13. While the literary tradition operates unsystematically and without conscious reflection on its methodology, Plato draws on its assumption and procedure quite consciously, with the ultimate goal of discrediting them.

14. This familiar role for the *nomothetēs* is, naturally, prevalent in the *Laws*. See also *Rep.* 427a4, 462a4, 530c5, 538d8, 564c1, 599e2; *Pol.* 294e9, 305b5, c2, 309d1.

15. Concerning the Pythagorean and Orphic backdrop for the *Cratylus*' ideas about *sōma*, see Ferwerda (1985, 279), who argues that Plato "deliberately exaggerates the esoteric aspect of their doctrines by implying that the Pythagoreans consider the body as the tomb (and not the sign) of the soul and that the Orphics say that the soul is in the body *as in a prison*."

plurality of namegivers" but rather that, following his initial characterization (388e–390e), Plato's valuation of those with this function shifts dramatically for the worse, and at key points he speaks of them as belonging to different classes of individuals. This is the crucial move since it involves the dissolution of the initial link between the promulgator of norms and constructor of *onomata*.[16]

Despite the pivotal role played by the dialectician in the enterprise of naming as initially described, the term *dialektikos* is used only three times in the *Cratylus*; of these, only the two early instances are pertinent.[17] Providing a standard characterization, Socrates asks Hermogenes whether the dialectician is the one with expertise in question and answer (390c10–11; cf. *Rep.* 534d–e). In a passage of greater importance for current purposes, the dialectician is portrayed as the one directing and supervising the activity of the *nomothetēs* (390d5–7). The authority of *technē* practitioners—and of the dialectician most of all—derives from their grasp of *ousiai*. Guided by this awareness, the dialectician's activity is norm governed in the strictest possible sense; hence, it seems appropriate for Plato to invoke this figure at the outset, when the haphazard character of the naming enterprise has yet to be revealed. Despite the great fanfare with which the dialectician is introduced, however, Plato quite abruptly ceases talking about him. If the dialectician's activity were in fact central in the way initially suggested, Plato would be expected, even compelled, to provide him with a more sustained presence in the dialogue. A genuine *technē*, as characterized in the *Gorgias* and elsewhere, cannot have random practitioners—on a cognitive and motivational par with rhetoricians, who are criticized in the *Gorgias*—but only those meeting very stringent requirements. Plato's treatment of the legislator, supplemented by that of the dialectician, shows that naming qua etymologizing has no practitioners of the requisite caliber and hence plays an important role in his challenge to its *technē* status.

As might be expected—since meeting the understanding requirement presupposes the existence of a class of experts, which dissolves in the course of the inquiry—the cognitive ground of the naming process shifts quite dramatically. At the outset of the *Cratylus*, Plato repudiates the idea that *doxa* directs the enterprise of constructing and evaluating *onomata* (387a). On several occasions, Plato utilizes the verb *epistamai* (see, e.g., 389d, 393e). Moreover, he emphasizes Socrates' *sophia* at diverse points in the inquiry (as, e.g., at 396c, 401e, 410e). While Plato continually insists that activities are to be performed in the way naturally appropriate to them and not based merely on individuals' own beliefs, it becomes increasingly clear that it is actually belief rather than knowledge that governs the practice of naming at issue in the *Cratylus*.

16. On the fate of the *nomothetēs*, cf. Derbolav 1972, 63: "Once the insight is reached that coming up with the correct word is not mainly an achievement of construction but is rather above all a matter of having the right conception of reality, word formation is deprived of its emphatic character and the Nomothetes loses the aura of a lawgiver."

17. The third (at 398d6–7) occurs in a facetious reference to heroes as dialecticians.

In fact, Plato's remarks on the governance of *doxa* become progressively more general in scope. First, he states that insofar as Homer's views are under consideration, what has been grasped is the poet's belief (*doxa*) "about the correctness of words" (393b3–4); at issue here is the *doxa* of a single individual. Subsequently, Plato observes that by analyzing divine names one gains awareness only of the human *doxa* that produced those *onomata* (401a4–6). Rather than simply governing one individual's approach to naming, here belief is identified as the source of an entire class of assignments, one, moreover, of particular importance to the literary tradition.[18] Still later, Plato concludes that those first assigning all classes of *onomata* did so based on a particular belief (*doxa*) they held about the character of reality (411b–c). Notably, this comment introduces his discussion of "fine names" (*ta kala onomata*), which includes numerous terms whose referents are of central philosophical importance. Since, in Plato's view, *doxa* cannot grant one access to reality, it is surely not coincidental that his final—and global—generalization about the cognitive basis of earlier attempts at naming occurs at this juncture: if belief lacks this capability, then surely no product to which its employment gives rise will be able to yield understanding.

As previously noted, one with understanding of a given subject matter must be able to offer a *logos* of those procedures comprising the activity and their relevance to the end in question. In the case of naming, the key questions are: what methodology is followed in the construction of words, and how does it promote the goal of creating *onomata* that disclose natures? In the *Cratylus*, the genesis of *onomata* presently in use is attributed to chance, divinities, foreign origin, and change over time that produces deviations from an unrecoverable original.[19] In such cases, mere identifications of source—however vague—substitute for rational accounts of procedures. Plato insists that the genuine expert (*technikos*, 426a7) must be able to provide the requisite *logos*, and he labels the latter three sources noted above (divinities, foreign origin, and change over time) as mere excuses (*ekduseis*) for an inability to do so (426a1–4). The *logon didonai* requirement is also at issue early on when Plato takes steps to ground such an account in his remarks on Form-based construction (389–390); in what follows, however, he indicates the marked disparity between such a description and any process of naming yet undertaken. In the *Gorgias*, rhetoric's occupation with the production of pleasure makes it impossible for its practitioners to account rationally for their activity, and this shortcoming plays an important role in Plato's denial of its *technē* status (464e2–465a7). Plato's emphasis in the *Cratylus* on the fact that

18. Kahn (1973, 157) identifies this point as "the decisive shift." Although this extension is certainly important, in the dialogue's broader context it constitutes simply the second stage in a three-stage progression. Gaiser (1974, 65) omits mention of stage 1.

19. Regarding divine origin, see 391d–392b, 416c (the *dianoia* of gods or human beings, or both), 438c. Concerning names' foreign source, see 409d–410b, 416a; worth noting, moreover, is 421c–d, where mention is made of both foreign origin and deviation from an unrecoverable native original. On chance (*tuchē*) as source, see 394e9, 395e5.

practitioners of naming cannot exhibit any "understanding" they might have in a *logos* reinforces his contention that they in fact lack knowledge altogether; the result is a significant blow to the contention that naming is a *technē*.[20]

Regarding the subject-matter condition, Plato concludes that previous *onoma* construction focused ultimately on the realm of appearance, with no appeal to the Form of Name or to natures, properly construed.[21] He makes clear that particular needs, beliefs, fears, and desires—whether individual or collective—provide motives or occasions for naming and that acts of production occur with the empirical world in view. These factors, taken together, determine what results from efforts at construction. Yet this is precisely the sort of activity to which Plato denies *technē* status in his treatment of shuttle construction (389a5–b4), where he stresses that construction undertaken with anything other than Forms in mind categorically disqualifies any pretension of the activity in question to the rank of *technē* narrowly construed, leaving it capable of *technē* status only in a generic and undistinguished sense.

One may also assess the situation from the vantage point of products' employment. Indeed, since the constructor's supposed task is to produce *onomata* with a view toward their use to reveal natures, one must evaluate them to see how well they achieve this end. In the etymological section, it becomes evident that, whether one treats proper names or general terms, each analysis is merely aspectual and reflects the interpreter's own biases.[22] *Onomata* themselves are, moreover, subject to change.[23] The important topic of individual names' ultimate lack of utility in the disclosure of natures will receive additional treatment in the following sections of this chapter.

Despite such wide-ranging criticisms, for some time Plato persists in his simulated adherence to incompatible claims. Most notably, he continues to insist that the analysis of words' constitution is nature revealing (428e1–3) long after the ground of the naming process has been identified as mere belief (411b–c). One of these claims must be renounced: Plato's lengthy investigation of naming, which illustrates its failure to meet those *technē* conditions presented in the *Gorgias*,

20. Interestingly, the alleged *technai* of rhetoric and naming are mentioned together (425a4–5) in a passage leading up to Plato's remarks on the *logon didonai* requirement (425d–426b).

21. While some have viewed Plato as positing multiple Forms of Shuttle, and hence of Name, on my interpretation the text best supports the claim that there is a single Form of Shuttle that is implemented in different ways in particular cases. For the Form of Bed (*Rep.* 596) described as "an idealized functional property," or that which "provides the functional aim," see Moravcsik 1992, 67. On the present interpretation, the Form of Name plays an analogous role in the relevant linguistic arena.

22. Examples are found at 395b2–c2, 399d2–400b7, 400b8–c10 (where explicit mention is made of the fact that various interpretations are possible), 401b1–e1, 402d11–403a3, 403a5–404b4, 404d8–406a3, 406b1–6, and 412a1–4 conjoined with 437a2–8 (where Plato offers contrasting analyses of *epistēmē*).

23. See 414b–e (where the point of departure is an analysis of the term *technē*), 418a–419b, 420a–b.

paves the way for his rejection of the former contention at the close of the dialogue (438–440). Having completed his account of this practice's fundamental shortcomings, Plato cannot but reach a negative conclusion regarding its *technē* status, hence also its allegedly close ties to dialectic.[24]

3. Nature and Convention: The *Cratylus*' Resolution

While the *technē* issue has been of relatively little concern to interpreters, much attention has been devoted to Plato's stand on the nature-convention dispute that shapes and permeates the *Cratylus*' discussion. It is not possible, in my view, to give a simple answer to the question of what his own position actually is. Rather, as I will suggest, in order to do justice to the complexity of Plato's deliberations, one must offer two distinct responses to this query.

Plato's treatment of the term *sklērotēs* ("hardness") and the *onomata* of numbers (434c–435c) signals his embrace of the "conventional" pole of the *Cratylus*' nature-convention dichotomy; that is, he maintains that one judges the correctness of words' constitution by appeal to custom (*ethos*) and convention (*sunthēkē*). At the outset of the dialogue, Plato mentions two alternatives to natural correctness, which he has Hermogenes conflate (384c–385e, especially 385d–e). On one view, any *onoma* that anyone assigns to any entity is, simply by virtue of that fact, an appropriate one for that entity. According to the other, correctness is determined by reference to the practices of particular linguistic communities, for instance, *poleis*. The distinction is thus between a relativistic conception, which does not assume agreement, and one based on convention. On the present interpretation, Plato espouses the second of these alternatives.[25]

The example of *sklērotēs* makes clear that the issue for Plato is not the revision of words' present constitution. The point of contention is the fact that lambda "signifies the opposite of hardness" (τὸ ἐναντίον δηλοῖ σκληρότητος, 434d7–8). When Cratylus suggests that the lambda might be replaced by a rho (434d12), this proposed change is rejected by Socrates as unnecessary since the presence of letters representing opposites in no way inhibits communication. The possibility of success in this endeavor does not depend on terms' descriptive content revealing—however imperfectly—the natures of their referents. Rather, it is based

24. This outcome pertains exclusively to naming as here construed. Plato never involves anyone besides the philosopher, in contrast, when making his own innovative proposals about *orthotēs onomatōn* in the *Phaedo* and *Republic* 5. This exclusivity of function remains intact even in the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, where, in connection with the Method of Division (*diairesis*), the construction and excision of terms assume a position of some importance.

25. For a different view, according to which the outcome of Socrates' early discussion with Hermogenes is the rejection of conventionalism, see Barney 1997.

ultimately on the fact that certain combinations of letters are sanctioned by convention as the *onomata* of particular entities; that is, signification (*dēlōma*, 435b2) is accomplished by such combinations of like and unlike letters as *happen to be* established. Plato focuses on the presence of letters representing opposites because this indicates most clearly that likeness is inessential. Additional support for this conclusion about convention's governing role lies in the fact that the word *sklērotēs* also contains letters that are irrelevant, and as such undesirable, from the perspective of likeness (consider the letters eta and omicron as analyzed at 427c).[26]

Plato turns next to the *onomata* of numbers: "Or, if you like," Socrates says to Cratylus, "consider the case of number. How do you think that you could get names bearing a likeness relation to each number unless you allowed agreement and convention to have authority over the correctness of *onomata*? (πόθεν οἴει ἕξειν ὀνόματα ὅμοια ἑνὶ ἑκάστῳ τῶν ἀριθμῶν ἐπενεγκεῖν, ἐὰν μὴ ἐᾷς τι τὴν σὴν ὁμολογίαν καὶ συνθήκην κῦρος ἔχειν τῶν ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος πέρι;)" (435b6–c2). This second example reinforces Plato's claim about convention's governing role. While one might wish to contend that the presence of *ti* ("some") in b8 suggests a limited conclusion with respect to terms' constitution, namely, that Plato is circumscribing the range of convention's application, this view is called into question by the particular example chosen: the *onomata* of numbers do not presently indicate by likeness, and as Schofield (1982) has observed, they could be made to point toward essences only if complete authority were given to convention.[27] Plato's claim is thus not that convention makes a limited contribution to fitness when the constitution of *onomata* is at issue but instead that correctness is determined thereby. Moreover, since entities in the realm of mathematics and of values constitute the core group of Platonic Forms, his choice of example to reinforce the point about convention is surely not coincidental.[28]

Yet Socrates then seems to praise the desirability of a likeness-based approach to fitness (435c2–d1). Anagnostopoulos (1972, 736) uses this passage to support the view that "Plato prefer[s] a language consisting of natural names" (cf. 1973, 332), and Baxter (1992, 186) cites 435c2–3 in support of the claim that Plato "believed in the desirability of a language that was as mimetic as possible." In the view of Schofield (1982, 80 [with n. 6]), in contrast, Socrates' remarks at 435c2–d1 are meant ironically. Such "praise" would be unsurprising, even expected, based

26. On the constitution of *sklērotēs*, see Anagnostopoulos 1972, 732 (with n. 44).

27. "If the names of *numbers* are to disclose by resemblance their essences, then such disclosure can *only* be effected by a positive use of convention. For example, we can disclose the differences between 1, 2 and 3 through their names only by some purely conventional device such as giving the name of 1 one syllable, that of 2 two syllables, that of 3 three; and it will have to be agreed by convention that they are designed to signify *numbers* in the first place. This is the one place in the dialogue where we glimpse the idea that representation is not a natural relationship, but is itself subject to convention" (Schofield 1982, 79).

28. Notably, while mathematics is in the foreground here, values take center stage in Plato's closing remarks about *onomata* and reality (438–440).

on Socrates' earlier "partisanship" of the natural-correctness theory. Even as he offers this seeming encomium, in fact, Plato signals his own reservations. In this regard, Schofield (80 n. 6) notes Plato's "emphatic reiteration of κατὰ τὸ δύνατον ('so far as is possible . . . ,' '*if* it were possible . . .')" (435c3 and 7, respectively). Another relevant indication is Plato's use of *isōs* ("probably," "perhaps"; c7) in the latter, conditional, remark about possibility. Further reflection, moreover, reinforces the view that this "expression" of residual attraction is insincere.

Indisputably, having the right ontology is, according to Plato, a necessary condition for making proper determinations of terms' correctness. Would it be, however, a sufficient foundation for a constitution-based approach to fitness? The analyses of letters (426–427) privilege empirical considerations (e.g., what is involved in or attends human sound production), which cannot be used to specify the nature of abstract entities. Unless one could somehow produce another basis for the account of letters, this consideration is decisive straightaway. Moreover, even if one did succeed in offering an alternative foundation, that is, one not privileging empirical phenomena, agreement would still undergird conclusions about which sounds revealed which elements or aspects of reality (i.e., were "naturally" correct). This need not be regarded as an anachronistic observation: if one accepts Schofield's interpretation (1982, 79) of the case of number, then Plato is quite aware that assignments dubbed "natural" in this way would actually be governed by convention. Etymology, in turn, provides a satisfactory framework for determinations of fitness only if analyses of words' semantic constitution yield insight into their referents' natures. While those who had the right ontology would not need to rely on or seek "instruction" therein from words' descriptive content, individuals who, lacking this knowledge, turned to words' constitution for guidance would simply find confirmation there of that view of reality which they had brought to the enterprise. Either way, individual words' semantic constitution does not itself reveal the natures of their *denotata*. Plato's use of dual etymologies of *epistēmē* (412a and 437a) to illustrate the fact that words are ambiguous (*amphibolon*, 437a3) makes this point strikingly clear: it cannot be a matter of coincidence that he selects this term to underscore the inadequacy of etymology as a source of understanding![29] One might strive to "eradicate" indeterminacy, once again through fiat, by declaring which semantic breakdown of individual terms is correct—in the case of *epistēmē*, for instance, that according to which the soul stops at things (*histēsin . . . epi tois pragmasi*, 437a4–5). This "solution" via pronouncement, however, is not available to a

29. For a different interpretation of the two analyses, see Sedley 1998, 151. In his view, the objection that *onomata* can be interpreted so as to mean any number of things depending on one's agenda would not likely "impress Plato much" (144). He cites as support for this claim 414d–e, which involves the addition and subtraction of words' components. While the passage indicates that these changes may promote variation in analyses of an *onoma* over time, it does not address the point that even if no shift occurs, interpreters can still decompose a word in multiple, even contradictory, ways, especially if they are granted the sort of latitude that Socrates increasingly allows himself as the etymological inquiry proceeds.

genuine naturalist. The point here is not that *onomata* specifically, and *logoi* generally, are not useful to one who is, or would be, a philosopher. They are, indeed, crucial avenues through which the exploration and articulation of reality take place. As Plato stresses in the *Theaetetus*, even thought must be understood on the model of dialogue, namely, as a kind of conversation that occurs within the mind itself (189e–190a). As media of inquiry and of the presentation of results, *onomata* and *logoi* obviously have descriptive capabilities. This is a far cry, however, from a stance according to which the descriptive *content* of individual *onomata* itself grants insight.[30]

The distinction between the *Cratylus* and other dialogues as regards etymology does not lie in its prominence in the former and total absence in the latter. Plato offers etymologies elsewhere, though their presence serves a function quite different from that associated with the natural-correctness thesis. Qua a literary device present in philosophical discourse, such derivations belong to the same genre as Platonic myths and allegories, but they differ sharply from them at the species level. Most importantly, literary devices like those myths at the end of the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic* both reinforce or recapitulate points made elsewhere in these dialogues and treat important ideas that are arguably not amenable to discursive formulations. Thus, for example, the myth offered in the *Phaedo* (107c–115a) both reprises observations previously made about reality and appearance and makes points about the soul's judgment that would be conveyed far less successfully by other means.[31] Regarding etymologies, in contrast, one

30. According to Gonzalez (1998a, chap. 3), although the *Cratylus* rejects the idea that etymologies yield insight into *phuseis*, for Plato "a name is natural insofar as its use reveals the true nature of the thing signified" (92; cf. 87, 89, 90). It is not evident precisely how, according to Gonzalez, individual *onomata* could be nature revealing in a nonetymological sense. This unclarity about the content of Gonzalez's view stems, at least in part, from the fact that he moves without distinction between the level of names specifically and that of language more generally. Concerning the latter see, e.g., his comment (93) that the *Cratylus* "provides us with the insight that language, as presupposing in its function the existence of stable natures, can be used in such a way as to make these natures manifest." Since the *Cratylus* concentrates on the plane of *onomata*, and since Plato is well aware of the distinction between the level of individual names and that of language more generally, saying that language can be employed to this end is not obviously the same as saying that *onomata* can accomplish it.

31. While I concur with McCabe (1992) that the myths are incomplete on their own, I cannot agree that they function as challenges to central claims made in the arguments, Plato's goal being to compel us to weigh the opposing views. According to Elias (1984, 36), "the myths are Plato's poetry, designed not only to escape the criticisms levelled at the other poets but in the manner of their telling to supply the defence he has called for" (cf. 238). On his interpretation, myths assume the role of "axioms" in Plato's philosophical system because he recognizes that dialectic "cannot attain its goals by demonstrating the truth of first premisses" (37). Poetry in the form of myths will thus be required not only by people who are less than fully dominated by reason but also by philosopher-rulers themselves (37–38). Elias does not, in my view, distinguish adequately between poetry proper and poetic devices or argue convincingly that this much philosophical weight must be given to the latter. For a critique of the view that Plato's defense of poetry takes the form described by Elias, see Kraut 1987.

may agree with Méridier (1931, 18–19), who, having noted their employment outside the *Cratylus*, stresses that one has no reason to infer from their presence in that dialogue or elsewhere that Plato was making serious philosophical use of the procedure. At best, Plato's playful associations outside the *Cratylus* serve in the first of those capacities noted above, namely, to reinforce points made by him on independent grounds. When explaining the origin of the simplest form of *polis* in the *Republic*, for example, Plato focuses on the issue of need. Human beings have more needs than they can meet individually. From the fact that many people (*polloi*) must therefore come together to ensure that all needs are met arises the name *polis* as the designation of their community (369c). The etymology, which is grasped properly only in its surrounding philosophical context, privileges nothing of import that Plato's exposition does not otherwise bring to light. The function of this analysis, like that of "Hades" in the *Phaedo* (see chap. 2, n. 41), is to lend emphasis to a point that Plato wishes to make relying on other considerations. In contrast to central myths and allegories, such etymologies, while arguably of merit as literary flourishes, are treated as inessential to the conduct of philosophy. Not surprisingly, then, as Plato's differing analyses of "Hades" in the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo* make clear, far from trying to revamp the practice of etymology so that analyses succeed in being naturally correct, he simply allows contextual factors to guide his choice of source-*onomata*.[32]

Plato's discussion of nature and convention at *Cratylus* 434c–435c is regularly assumed to apply only at the level of terms' constitution. As we saw, on this issue Plato comes down firmly on the side of convention. This does not, however, exhaust the scope of application of his remarks at that point in the dialogue. In my view, Plato is operating on two distinct levels. This, I believe, explains a curious fact about the passage, namely, that while the content of the examples chosen illustrates the view that convention has the role specified above, Plato's remarks include qualified formulations. Thus, Plato's discussion of the letters comprising *sklērotēs* leads him to conclude that convention determines a name's correctness (435a8) since like and unlike letters, combined in whatever way they happen to be by custom and convention, do the job of signification (435a8–10). Distinguishing custom (*ethos*) from convention (*sunthēkē*) will do no good, since one can simply rephrase the point to be that custom, not likeness, determines

32. Plato's handling of *erōs* moves along similar lines: for relevant passages, see *Cra.* 420a–b; *Phdr.* 238c. For differing analyses of *himeros* ("desire"), see *Cra.* 419e–420a; *Phdr.* 251c (cf. 255c). By giving his audience unmistakable interpretive cues, Plato avoids that scenario, deplored in the *Cratylus*, in which people simply project their own assumptions onto their constructions of words' descriptive content and hence find automatic confirmation there of whatever beliefs, however defective, they already happen to hold. As I have observed elsewhere (see Levin 2000, 283 n. 6), one indication that Plato is not entirely serious in Socrates' second *logos* is that he treats etymology as evidence in the "argument" about *mania* (*Phdr.* 244b–d; τόδε μὴν ἄξιον ἐπιμαρτύρασθαι, b6) although he rejects the view that etymological analyses have independent philosophical value in the *Cratylus* (434–440). For further discussion of ties between the *Phaedrus* and *Cratylus*, see Levin 2000, 283–84.

the correctness of terms' constitution (a10–b2), and *that*, Plato reiterates, "signifies by both like and unlike" (b2–3). Yet instead of closing the discussion of *sklērotēs* on this note, as one would expect, Socrates ends by saying that we must therefore suppose convention and custom to contribute something (*ti sumballesthai*) to the disclosure of meaning (435b5–6). Similarly, despite the import of the number example, Plato interprets it to show that "some authority" (*ti kuros*) must be granted to convention (435b8–c1). Rather than signifying a partial allegiance to naturalism with respect to the constitution of *onomata*, such qualifications suggest that, even as Plato rejects the pertinence of "nature" when one judges the fitness of terms' constitution, he leaves room for the possibility that it could operate on some other level.[33] The *Cratylus*' scope is thus limited, insofar as it concentrates on just one dimension, albeit a crucial one, of what underlies or is involved in determinations of fitness. Yet Plato's hint at 435b–c that what he has said thus far does not constitute the whole story of how nature and convention stack up against one another, even interrelate, is picked up, as we will see, in the dialogue's closing remarks (438–440). These considerations, taken together, indicate that Plato has not yet exhausted the topics of nature and convention insofar as the two concepts pertain to judgments of terms' fitness.

4. The Dialogue's Conclusion

In the *Cratylus*, terms denoting key elements of Plato's philosophical system are subject to the same type of analysis as other *onomata*: central among them are *psuchē* (399d–400b), *phronēsis* (411d),[34] *noēsis* (411d–e), *sōphrosunē* (411e–412a), *epistēmē* (412a, 437a),[35] *sophia* (412b), *agathon* (412c), *dikaiosunē* (412c), *dikaion* (412c–413d), *andreia* (413e–414a),[36] *technē* (414b–c), *aretē* (415c–e),[37] *kalon*

33. Cf. Silverman 1992, 64–65: "Convention contributes something to the correctness of names. This implies that nature also contributes. However, the force of this argument . . . suggests that nature is not to be parsed as Cratylean likeness."

34. With regard to *phronēsis* outside the *Cratylus*, see, e.g., *Rep.* 433b8, where the term appears in place of *sophia* in Plato's list of the four excellences (*aretai*) (b8–c1). For *phronēsis* in the sense of theoretical understanding, see *Phd.* 66e3, 68a2, 7, 69a10, b3–4, 76c12, 79d7, 114c8 (cf. Gallop [1975] 1988, 102). For *phronēsis*, *epistēmē*, and *sophia* as synonymous, see *Symp.* 202a2–9.

35. *Epistēmē* is precisely what turns out to be lacking in the practitioners of what is alleged at the outset to be a *technē*. Interestingly, the noun itself is not used in the dialogue with reference to these individuals; Plato reserves for it the role of illustrating words' deep-seated ambiguity.

36. Plato's treatment here of *andreia* completes the core list of *aretai* of interest to him (the others being *sōphrosunē*, *sophia*, and *dikaiosunē*); these are the four he handles in the *Republic*. Agathon mentions the same four in his encomium of *Erōs* at *Symp.* 196b–e though they are not discussed there based on Plato's own views; for observations on Agathon's misinterpretation of each *aretē*, see Nehamas and Woodruff 1989, 34–35.

37. According to Benardete (1981, 138), "the thirteen names from 'courage' to 'virtue' form a group," in which "'art' [*technē*] and 'device' [*mēchanē*] are intrusive elements." In my view, *technē* in particular is not "intrusive" insofar as there is for Plato a necessary correlation between one's

(416b–d), *erōs* (420a–b), *alētheia* (421b), *on* and *ousia* (421b–c).[38] Moreover, Plato treats the term *hēdonē* (419b7–c1), which cannot receive here the sustained consideration provided in the *Gorgias*. Last but not least, he subjects the term *onoma* itself to analysis (421a7–b1), which is noteworthy given the fact that it is precisely *onomata* whose distinction as "naturally correct" is at issue in the *Cratylus*. From within this framework, Plato has no dependable means of privileging the aforementioned terms and their referents in the way he believes they deserve.[39]

This structure also provides no reliable way for Plato to draw the proper distinctions between certain *onomata* analyzed in the *Cratylus*, specifically of course their referents, where the referents in question form contrasts playing important roles in his metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and moral psychology. I have in mind, for instance, the dichotomy between *sōma* and *psuchē* (399d1–400c10), of which he makes so much elsewhere—it underlies the classificatory scheme of the *Gorgias* and has a central role in the *Phaedo*—as well as that between *aretē* and *kakia* (415a9–e2). Also relevant here is the contrast between *kalon* and *aischron* (416a10–d11), which is central to the *Symposium*, and that involving *alētheia* and *pseudos* (421b1–7).[40] In addition, Plato's etymological discussion includes the terms *epithumia* and *thumos* (419d8–e2), which figure importantly, and are distinguished, in Book 4 of the *Republic* (439e–440a).[41] Even more notable is the fact that Plato provides the terms of the contrast between *epistēmē, noēsis, phronēsis*, and *sophia*, on the one hand, and *doxa*, on the other—a dichotomy essential to his epistemological reflections in the *Republic* and several other dialogues.[42] Central here are terms denoting concepts and distinctions that play crucial roles in the *Phaedo, Republic*, and *Symposium* and that, in many cases,

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conception of the best life, as reflected in the caliber of those activities (*praxeis*) in which one engages, and how one is situated with respect to virtue and vice (for the analysis of *kakia*, see 415b). While the precise nature of that relation does not emerge here in the context of etymological inquiry, Plato's combination of analyses reflects his conviction that the issues are related.

38. One key measure of the futility, even danger, of this approach is found in the etymology conflating *einai* and *ienai*, according to which "*on* and *ousia* are *ion* with the iota removed. This accords with the truth, for being signifies going, and not-being (*ouk on*)—as some even name it—not-going (*ouk ion*)" (421b7–c2).

39. The fact that the group of *onomata* containing virtually all of these terms is situated last in Plato's sequence of analyses is indicative of their referents' importance from his perspective. The formation of this group, however, is merely a preliminary stage in a process that aims to provide an account of those entities' natures and relations, and that account cannot be provided by analyses of terms' descriptive content.

40. See also *Rep.* 475e9, where Plato states explicitly that *kalon* and *aischron* are opposites.

41. There Plato labels the lowest element of the soul *to epithumētikon* ("the appetitive," 439e5; cf. d6–8) and uses the noun *epithumia* to represent appetite in a general contrast with the soul's spirited aspect (440a5–6). He also maintains that each of the three elements has its own desires (*epithumiai*) (580d8).

42. Plato treats the term *doxa* at 420b7–9.

are subject there to sustained philosophical analysis. As noted above, it is surely not coincidental that *epistēmē* is the term Plato employs to deliver the coup de grâce to the etymological approach to fitness. Since the claim under scrutiny is that etymological analysis yields understanding, it is quite significant that utilizing the procedure provides no dependable guidance as to what the nature of understanding itself actually is.

Although it is ultimately convention that explains the correctness of terms' constitution, one's application of terms to entities will be fundamentally misguided if one is not aware of what does have a natural foundation. In Plato's view, before addressing the topic of *orthotēs* one must consider which entities are fundamental and which derivative. In the closing pages of the *Cratylus* (438–440), he addresses most directly the question of what having a "nature" involves. Plato's *ousiai* comprise neither mortal or divine individuals nor particulars generally. From his perspective, nothing that is not unchanging and unchangeable—and therefore nothing that is native to the sensible realm or to the world of capricious, changing gods—can properly be said to have a nature and hence to be worthy of investigation in its own right (439c7–440d4).[43] Plato contrasts here "the beautiful itself and good itself and each existent with this status" (αὐτὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἓν ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων οὕτω)—about which Socrates is said to have frequent dreams—with "some beautiful face or another of such things" (πρόσωπόν τι καλὸν ἤ τι τῶν τοιούτων) (439c8–d4). This mention of the reality-appearance dichotomy calls to mind those numerous passages treating the distinction in the *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Symposium*, where language of "nature" (*phusis*) is used explicitly of Forms.[44] Plato notes, in addition, reality's function as *explanans* (*Cra.* 439a–440d).

43. This is not to say, of course, that Forms as Plato depicts them share no attributes with divine individuals as treated by the literary tradition; for example, neither type of being is subject to perishing. In addition, both taking as a backdrop and departing from this familiar conception of divinity, he applies the term "divine" (*theion*) to the realm of Forms (*Phd.* 80b1). Apropos of the claim about particular entities' lacking natures of their own, a few words are in order about the *Phaedo*'s handling of fire and snow (103–106); for illustrative purposes, I concentrate on the former. While fire is expressly identified as a Form in the *Timaeus* (51b8), it is not clear from what Plato says in the *Phaedo* whether he yet considers it to be a Form rather than some other type of natural unit. Even if fire turns out not to be a Form, however, it is still a property of some sort. Moreover, the properties of fire and heat are necessarily related. In a given case, the connection is as follows: Of any x such that x is fire, x is hot. One has here an instance of class subsumption, whereby the class of fiery things is a subset of the class of hot things. On neither interpretation, then, can any particular fire be said to have a nature. For an argument that the fire and snow of the *Phaedo* are the ordinary physical entities, see Nehamas 1973, 482–90.

44. For a different interpretation of *Cra.* 439c–440d, see Irwin 1977a, 2; cf. Dalimier 1998, 56–60. I cannot agree with Luce's use of Plato's mention of dreaming (*oneirōttein*, 439c7) to support the claim that the *Cratylus* presents the theory of Forms at a distinctly earlier stage than do the *Phaedo* and *Republic* (1965, 25–27). Gaiser's alternative interpretation (1974, 53) seems to me to be the correct one: "Thereby is the weight of this thesis not diminished; the idea is rather that its foundation is not articulated here." On the reference to dreaming, cf. Méridier 1931, 136–37; Baxter 1992, 177.

In addition to sketching his conception of reality, Plato hints at his own approach to the issue of correctness. First, he issues an exhortation:

> Let us seek that beauty itself, not whether some face is beautiful, or any other of such things, since all these things seem to be in flux. But don't we assert that the Form of Beauty always remains just as it is? (439d3–6)[45]
>
> Αὐτὸ . . . ἐκεῖνο σκεψώμεθα, μὴ εἰ πρόσωπόν τί ἐστιν καλὸν ἤ τι τῶν τοιούτων, καὶ δοκεῖ ταῦτα πάντα ῥεῖν· ἀλλ' αὐτό, φῶμεν, τὸ καλὸν οὐ τοιοῦτον ἀεί ἐστιν οἷόν ἐστιν;

Then, immediately following this remark on the proper orientation, he issues a contrasting statement about individual sensibles:

> Can we appropriately call something "beauty" if that thing is always withdrawing, . . . or is it not in fact necessary that at the very same moment we speak of it, it straightaway changes into something else and withdraws, and in no way remains in the same state? (439d8–11)
>
> Ἆρ' οὖν οἷόν τε προσειπεῖν αὐτὸ ὀρθῶς, εἰ ἀεὶ ὑπεξέρχεται, . . . ἢ ἀνάγκη ἅμα ἡμῶν λεγόντων ἄλλο αὐτὸ εὐθὺς γίγνεσθαι καὶ ὑπεξιέναι καὶ μηκέτι οὕτως ἔχειν;

Plato suggests that individual sensibles' ontological deficiency precludes their being properly (i.e., unqualifiedly) spoken of as "beautiful." His statement at 439d8–11, interpreted against the backdrop of d3–6, implies that one cannot make judgments of fitness of the same type about Forms and particulars. These final comments move in the direction of an alternative theory of appropriateness insofar as they point both to the existence of a hierarchy in the application of certain *onomata* and to the important role of ontological considerations in any given judgment of correctness.[46] Although what Plato says here could serve as the germ of, or point of departure for, a positive account of fitness, it is itself a far cry from the presentation of such a theory.

Having merely broached the subject of appropriateness from his own philosophical perspective, he turns in the dialogue's final lines to the matter of knowledge and requirements on its proper objects. Plato merely sketches his metaphysical theory in the *Cratylus*: he invokes the reality-appearance dichotomy without treating it at length and does not introduce the notion of participation, which is central to his treatment of appropriateness. While I concur with Silverman (1992) that Plato aims to show how a given *onoma* can refer primarily to a Form and derivatively to its participants, I therefore cannot agree with his claim that "the key to the [*Cratylus*] is to see that it is directed at answering how a given name can

45. As Kahn (1996, 365) points out, this contrast between the Form of Beauty and a beautiful face calls to mind *Symp*. 211a.

46. While I do not concur with those who find a full-fledged positive stance in the *Cratylus*, I thus also cannot endorse the contention of Steinthal ([1890] 1961, 112) and Schaarschmidt (1865, 344) that the dialogue's outcome is wholly negative.

be both an ὄνομα and an eponym" (27). In my view, with the exception of Plato's remarks at 439d, a concern with this twofold application of terms emerges, not in the *Cratylus*, but rather in the *Phaedo*, to which I turn in chapter 4.[47]

Although the *Cratylus*' own emphasis is largely critical—insofar as it contests inadequate conceptions of naturalness and appropriateness—it thus serves as a crucial locus of Plato's theorizing; as such, it is far from having an isolated position in his corpus, as some commentators have maintained.[48] Most important for present purposes, it is one of three middle dialogues that treat issues in the domain of *orthotēs onomatōn* against a literary backdrop. As I will argue in the following chapter, while the *Cratylus* denies the value to philosophical semantics of its literary antecedents, in the *Phaedo* and *Republic* 5 Plato develops his own conceptions of eponymy and the use of functional terms, respectively, with their literary background in view. Early in the *Cratylus*, Plato alludes to eponymy (in his repeated mention of "Scamander" near his discussion of "Scamandrius") and treats briefly a key functional term, namely, *basileus* ("king," 393–394). Here, however, this is as far as his consideration of these notions extends. When, in contrast, Plato explores what he takes to be more fruitful approaches to the handling of correctness, these other frameworks take center stage. Chapters 2–4, taken together, thus offer a fuller picture than before of the scope and depth of Plato's engagement with literature in the development of his views about *orthotēs onomatōn*—the central arena in which his concern with the philosophy of language manifests itself in those middle dialogues that articulate the theory of Forms. Moreover, as we will see, there is no indication in the *Phaedo* or *Republic* that by turning away from etymology, and toward eponymy and the application of functional terms, Plato is settling for second-best. On the contrary, these frameworks, suitably revamped, are presented as optimal contexts in which one may treat questions of appropriateness given the metaphysics sketched in the *Cratylus* and elaborated in these other dialogues.[49]

47. Cf. Kahn's remark (1973, 175–76) that "the *Cratylus* never mentions participation, and the fuller ontological framework of Plato's theory of names is merely hinted at," though, in my view, this hint does not consist simply in Plato's "mention of the dialectician as the user and judge of names" (176 n. 29). As I argue in chapter 4, far from embodying opposed stances (Schaarschmidt 1865, 346–47) or being unconnected in their philosophical content (Bostock 1986, 160), the two dialogues' relation is strongly complementary. In stressing the *Cratylus*' link to the *Phaedo* with respect to *orthotēs onomatōn*, I differ from Kahn (1996), who groups the *Cratylus* with the *Symposium* and *Phaedo* in terms of its date of composition, yet ties it most directly to the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* with respect to its treatment of naming and other themes (364; cf. 366).

48. For the *Cratylus* as occupying such a position, see Fowler 1926, 4; Jowett 1892, vol. 1, 254; Wilamowitz 1959, 224.

49. For yet another manifestation of Plato's concern with *orthotēs*, one may consult the *Sophist* and *Politicus*. Notably, even here, where *onoma* construction is described as one of the dialectician's responsibilities, issues of constitution never govern the selection of *onomata* in the way required by that "model" alleged by some to be developed in the *Cratylus*. Exploration of Plato's view in the *Sophist* and *Politicus* would take one well beyond the scope of the current project. For brief remarks on his handling of appropriateness therein, see Levin 1995, 112–13.

4

CONCEPTIONS OF APPROPRIATENESS

Plato's Revision of Literary Usage in the Phaedo *and* Republic 5

1. Pouring New Wine into Old Skins: Reflections on Literary and Platonic Eponymy

1.1. Introduction

While the *Cratylus* targets what Plato views as a faulty approach to *orthotēs*, the *Phaedo* presents his own theory of the basis on which *onomata* are correctly assigned to their referents. As has long been recognized, this account centers on the eponymy, or "named-after," relation. Thus, at a crucial point in the dialogue, Plato notes that Forms exist and that "the other things, participating in them, are named after the Forms themselves" (τούτων τἆλλα μεταλαμβάνοντα αὐτῶν τούτων τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἴσχειν, 102b2–3). Subsequently, he articulates a general and fundamental contrast between things that have opposites, which are named after those opposites (ἐπονομάζοντες αὐτὰ τῇ ἐκείνων ἐπωνυμίᾳ), and "those opposites themselves from whose inherence in them the things named receive their appellations (ἔχει τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν)" (103b6–c1).

The framework of eponymy plays a central role in Plato's reflections at this juncture because it provides the semantic correlate to the notion of participation, which is itself crucial to his metaphysical theory. Platonic eponymy underscores dependencies. In so doing, as we will see, it does far more than bring out mere historical linguistic ties between *onomata*. Rather, it both reflects and draws attention to ontological and valuational dependencies involving Forms and members of the pertinent classes of entities in the spatiotemporal realm. As in the case of etymology, so too with eponymy, Plato is quite concerned with the issue of whether, and under what conditions, *onomata* are properly assigned to their referents. While, as I have argued, Plato rejects etymology as a fruitful way of approaching questions of appropriateness in a philosophical context, his attitude toward eponymy is quite different. In the latter, Plato finds a semantic notion

that, if properly interpreted, is well suited to mirror in linguistic terms the dependent relationship that he believes to obtain between entities in the familiar world and Forms—the exploration of which relationship is of pivotal concern to him in the middle dialogues.

Although commentators have recognized the important role played by eponymy in the context of Plato's thought, they have not analyzed its historical sources in order to clarify what is distinctive about his approach.[1] As previously noted, Socrates, Parmenides, and Heraclitus are regularly identified as the key philosophical sources of Plato's middle-period theory of Forms. While all three help to shape the development of Platonic metaphysics and evince some interest in issues of naming, none invokes eponymy as a solution to those linguistic problems he does identify.[2] This semantic relation is important, not for Plato's philosophical predecessors, but instead for the literary tradition.[3] Literary authors' handling of the eponymy relation offers a heretofore unexplored precedent for Plato's own systematic treatment of eponymy and his use of it to ground judgments of appropriateness.[4] An examination of literary eponymy will make it possible to separate inherited presuppositions from those innovations that characterize the *Phaedo*'s new, technical use of the device.[5] As the quotations from

1. For a recent emphasis on its importance, see Kahn 1996, 353.

2. Concerning Parmenides and the topic of naming, see DK 8.17, 36–39, 53–54; 9; 19. The Diels-Kranz edition does not include in the fragments of Parmenides that quotation from Plato (*Tht.* 180e) for whose authenticity Cornford (1935) has argued. On this issue see McKirahan (1994, 157 [with n. 13]), who places the remark among the fragments, interpreting it to mean that "the *correct* name for the one existing thing is 'to be.'" For discussion of Heraclitus, see chapter 2, section 3. Socrates' interest with regard to naming lies in determining whether or not what others dub *F* (e.g., courageous or pious) actually is such (concerning this interest, see *La.* 197e; *Chrm.* 175b; *Euphr.* 6d–e). I endorse the view, which is widely shared, that early Plato is our most reliable source regarding Socrates' philosophical views. For emphasis on the *Apology*'s value as a check on assessments of how far Plato may be trusted, see Vlastos 1971, 3–4. Since I take the aforementioned concern to be evident in the *Apology*, I consider myself to have adequate justification for attributing it to the historical individual.

3. The present survey of literary eponymy, like that of etymology, encompasses Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*; Pindar's epinician odes; the extant plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; and Herodotus.

4. For interpretations of the *Phaedo* that neither take account of the literary tradition's importance nor explore, more generally, the historical sources of Platonic eponymy, see Gallop [1975] 1988; Bostock 1986; Bluck 1955; Hackforth 1955; Robin 1926; Burnet 1911; Guthrie 1975, 324–65; Friedländer 1969, 35–62, 471–77; Taylor 1960, 174–208; Jowett 1892, vol. 2, 157–266; Grote 1867, 152–205. For brief, general remarks about historical background, which do not mention the literary tradition, see Bestor 1978, 196–97.

5. I concentrate on the *Phaedo* because that is where Plato presents his version of eponymy and indicates most clearly its importance. Whereas the literary tradition makes considerable use of etymology and eponymy without distinguishing between the two in a direct or clear-cut way, Plato distinguishes sharply between them and offers different assessments of their philosophical value: in the *Cratylus*, as we have seen, he criticizes the literary tradition's use of etymology to treat questions of appropriateness and denies its philosophical worth; in the *Phaedo*, in contrast, he endorses for philosophical use a revised version of eponymy. Thus, the two dialogues' thematic

literary texts provided below make clear, this study concentrates on the phenomenon of literary eponymy, by whatever terms it is introduced, rather than simply on writers' use of *epōnumos*, *epōnumia*, and *eponomazein*. In particular, I consider how one might organize and describe literary practice, with special attention to those aspects of it on which Plato builds and with which he takes issue. In light of this exploration of literary eponymy, I then turn to Plato's handling of this semantic notion in the *Phaedo*, commenting also as necessary on the metaphysical foundation of his approach.

1.2. Eponymy in the Literary Tradition

Before embarking on a discussion of literary eponymy, it will be useful to consider briefly the relationship between it and literary etymology. Both involve tracing one *onoma* back to another which is taken to be its source. In the case of etymology, names often provide standards against which their bearers are judged. Included here are assignments tied to features or aspects of individuals, notably their attitudes and character traits or skills and capacities. Relevant in this connection are, for example, the analyses of "Ctesippus" (Hom. *Od.* 20.288–90), "Philoctetes" (Soph. *Phil.* 1344–47; cf. 1413–33), "Aphrodite" (Eur. *Tro.* 989–90), "Dolon" (Eur. *Rhes.* 215; cf. 216–18), "Theonoë" (Eur. *Hel.* 8–14), "Demodocus" (*Od.* 8.43–45), "Thoas" (Eur. *IT* 32–33), and "Prometheus" (Hes. *Th.* 510–11 [with the illustration in 535–60], *Op.* 54; Aesch. *PV* 85–87). As we saw in earlier chapters, *onomata* are properly assigned if they disclose or describe bearers' natures, and determinations of names' appropriateness are based on analyses of their descriptive content. In contrast, in cases of eponymy, which are often treated as commemorative, names do not function as standards to the same extent or in the same way. While in certain instances one may imagine that questions of "nature transfer" are relevant, as when leaders give their names to peoples, this is typically not something that comes to the fore. Moreover, where one entity is said to be appropriately "named after" another, this occurs without the introduction of the issue of semantic constitution. A final point is that in the case of etymology the primary terms themselves are not subject in turn to analysis. Similarly, with regard to eponymy, where the source terms are usually proper names, the derivation of those *onomata* is generally not explored. Interestingly, where the primary terms are analyzed, this transpires via etymology, as when the name "Ion," whose bearer is supposed to have given his name to the Ionians (Hdt. 7.94, 8.44.2; Eur. *Ion* 1581–88), is itself subjected to etymological analysis (*Ion* 661–

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relation is strongly complementary: though Plato offers limited clues there to his own stance, mainly the *Cratylus* clears the ground for those metaphysical and semantic theories developed in the *Phaedo*. The *Phaedo*'s relation to the *Cratylus*, where the literary tradition's pertinence is more readily apparent, is strong evidence in favor of its pertinence with regard to eponymy.

63, 802, 830–31). Similarly, the name "Athena," whose referent is treated as the eponymous deity of Athens (Soph. *OC* 107–8; Eur. *Ion* 8–9, 29–30, 1555–56), is also etymologized (Hom. *Od.* 13.330–32).

Literary authors' use of eponymy breaks down into numerous categories and subcategories.[6] The first and most popular category comprises instances in which individuals give their names to a wide range of entities. These might be other individuals, for instance, a male relative, as when Pindar claims that Strepsiades was named for his maternal uncle (μάτρωΐ θ' ὁμωνύμῳ δέδωκε κοινὸν θάλος, *Isthm.* 7.24) and that Opous was named for his mother's father (*Ol.* 9.63–64; ἰσώνυμος is used). Underscoring the same type of relationship, Eteocles tells Creon that he will send the latter's son Menoeceus, "the boy who has your father's name" (σοῦ πατρὸς αὐτεπώνυμον), to get Tiresias (Eur. *Phoen.* 769). According to Herodotus, in turn, Cleisthenes got his name from his grandfather, Cleisthenes of Sicyon (ἔχων τὸ οὔνομα ἀπὸ τοῦ μητροπάτορος τοῦ Σικυωνίου, 6.131.1; see also 5.69.1), and Bubares and Gygaea had a son who was "named Amyntas after his maternal grandfather" (ἔχων τὸ οὔνομα τοῦ μητροπάτορος, 8.136.1). Elsewhere, Aeschylus reports that Phoebus was named after the Titan Phoebe (*Eum.* 8), while Herodotus remarks that Hippocrates named his son "Pisistratus" after Nestor's son (5.65.4) and that Cimon's son Miltiades got his name "from Miltiades the founder of the settlement in the Chersonese" (ἀπὸ τοῦ οἰκιστέω τῆς Χερσονήσου Μιλτιάδεω, 6.103.4). Still other examples are found at Homer, *Odyssey* 18.5–7; Euripides, *Heracles* 31; Herodotus 1.188.1, 3.55.2, and 6.131.2.[7]

Often groups of individuals are in the recipient position, as when Homer says that Erichthonius, son of Dardanus, begat "Tros, who was lord of the Trojans" (Τρῶα . . . Τρώεσσιν ἄνακτα, *Il.* 20.230). Elsewhere, Aeschylus claims that the Pelasgians were named after their king Pelasgus (*Supp.* 250–53), and Herodotus reports that the descendants of Targitaus' three sons, taken as a group, were named "Scoloti" after one of their kings (τοῦ βασιλέος ἐπωνυμίην) (Hdt. 4.6.2). Dissenting opinions about the origin of the name Πέρσαι are expressed at Aeschylus, *Persians* 80[8] and Herodotus 7.61.3 conjoined with 7.150.2. Moreover, both Herodotus and Euripides identify Ion as the source of the name "Ionians." According to the former, when the Pelasgians occupied what is now called Greece, the Athenians—a Pelasgian people—were called "Cranai." In Cecrops' reign, they came to be called "Cecropidae." When Erechtheus came to power, they changed their name to "Athenians," and upon Ion's becoming general, they

6. These categories do not do justice to the rich and meaningful use of eponymy in literature. They are intended simply to facilitate the organization of this substantial body of material with a view toward the themes under discussion in the present study.

7. With respect to Hdt. 3.55.2, I have in mind at this juncture Archias' being named for his grandfather. I consider the name "Samius," also treated at 3.55.2, below.

8. If line 146, whose authenticity has been challenged, e.g., by Robertson (1924, 110) and Broadhead (1960, 67), were in fact genuine, it would be pertinent here.

assumed the title of "Ionians" (8.44.2; see also 7.94). Euripides says that Ion's grandchildren will be called "Ionians" based on the name of their grandfather (*Ion* 1581–88). For other relevant cases, one may consult Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus* 58–65; Euripides, *Ion* 1575–78, 1590–94;[9] Herodotus 2.42.5, 4.149.1, 5.66.2, 5.68.2, 7.11.4 (a people and their land named after the conqueror Pelops), and 8.44.2.[10]

In addition, individuals give their *onomata* to places or parcels of land. Thus, Castor instructs Orestes to found a city that will take its name from him (ἐπώνυμος δὲ σοῦ πόλις κεκλήσεται, Eur. *El.* 1275), and a parcel of land is called after Apis, who had previously rid it of certain plagues (Aesch. *Supp.* 260–61). Elsewhere, Bacchus is said to have given his name to a parcel of land (τᾶσδ' ἐπώνυμον γᾶς) (Soph. *OT* 209–11), and Herodotus identifies Archander, son of Phthius, as the source of "Archandropolis" (2.98.2). Regarding the connection between Athena and Athens, Burkert (1985, 139) notes that "whether the goddess is named after the city or the city after the goddess is an ancient dispute. Since *-ene* is a typical place-name suffix . . . the goddess most probably takes her name from the city." Such linguistic arguments notwithstanding, on several occasions Athena is associated with Athens as primary name-bearer to *nominatum* (Soph. *OC* 107–8; Eur. *Ion* 8–9, 29–30, 1555–56). Pindar, in turn, treats several parcels of land as having eponymous nymphs: Thebes (*Isthm.* 3, 7–8), Aegina (*Pyth.* 8; *Nem.* 7–8; *Isthm.* 8), Libya (*Pyth.* 4, 9), and Rhodes (*Ol.* 7). With regard to this subcategory, one may also consult Homer, *Iliad* 20.215–17, 231–32; Pindar, *Olympian* 7.73–76; Euripides, *Ion* 74–75, *Orestes* 1646–47, *Andromache* 17–20; and Herodotus 4.45.2–4 (vis-à-vis this passage, which pertains to the threefold division of the earth into Europe, Asia, and Libya, cf. Pind. *Pyth.* 9.5–8, 55–58, 68–69).[11]

Furthermore, sometimes natural inanimate entities (e.g., bodies of water) are in the recipient position. For instance, Aeschylus foretells that the inlet of the sea to which Io is driven "shall be called Ionian, a memorial to all men of your journeying" (Ἰόνιος κεκλήσεται, τῆς σῆς πορείας μνῆμα τοῖς πᾶσιν βροτοῖς, *PV* 840–41), and Pindar remarks that Heracles "called [the hill at Olympia] Cronus' Hill, for in former times . . . it had lain beneath deep drifts of snow, without a name (νώνυμνος)" (*Ol.* 10.49–51; cf. *Ol.* 5.19). Also relevant here are Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 689–90 and *Prometheus Bound* 299–300. Finally, the recipient entities may be human constructions or practices, as when Herodotus comments that "the Delphians call this gold and silver that Gyges sent the Gygean Treasure, after the treasure's donor (ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀναθέντος ἐπωνυμίην)" (1.14.3),[12]

9. On balance, it seems preferable to place these two passages from the *Ion* here rather than in that subcategory in which parcels of land are the recipient entities.

10. While the preceding citation of 8.44.2 involved Ion as eponym, this reference pertains to Cecrops as primary *onoma*-bearer. For additional passages from Herodotus, see 1.7.3 (cf. 7.74.1), 1.94.5–7, 1.171.5–6, 1.173.3 (cf. 7.92), 7.62.1, 7.90–91.

11. For additional relevant cases, see Hdt. 4.148.2–4, 6.47.1, 7.178.2.

12. My translation.

and Electra refers to a feast named for Agamemnon (Soph. *El.* 282–85). Other examples of this type are found at Pindar, *Pythian* 11.5–6; Euripides, *Hippolytus* 31–33 and *Orestes* 1008.

A second category consists of instances in which natural inanimate entities (e.g., rivers) give their *onomata* to various types of entities. These might be individuals, as when Homer notes that Telamonian Aias killed "Simoeisius . . . whom once his mother descending from Ida bore beside the banks of Simoeis when she had followed her father and mother to tend the sheepflocks. Therefore they called him Simoeisius" (Σιμοείσιον, ὅν ποτε μήτηρ Ἴδηθεν κατιοῦσα παρ' ὄχθῃσιν Σιμόεντος γείνατ', ἐπεί ῥα τοκεῦσιν ἅμ' ἕσπετο μῆλα ἰδέσθαι· τοὔνεκά μιν κάλεον Σιμοείσιον, Il. 4.474–77). Groups may be the recipients of *onomata*, as in Herodotus' report that the people living around the mountain called "Atlas" were named "Atlantes" after it (ἐπὶ τούτου τοῦ ὄρεος οἱ ἄνθρωποι οὗτοι ἐπώνυμοι ἐγένοντο, 4.184.3–4); with regard to this subcategory, one may also consult Herodotus 7.75.2. Natural inanimate entities themselves may also play this role. To cite just one example, Herodotus mentions the city Aegae on the Crathis, which is never dry, "from which the Italian river Crathis has its name" (ἀπ' ὅτευ ὁ ἐν Ἰταλίῃ ποταμὸς τὸ οὔνομα ἔσχε, 1.145).[13] In addition, places or parcels of land are names' recipients, as when Pindar mentions a city called after neighboring Mount Aetna (τοῦ ἐπωνυμίαν πόλιν, *Pyth.* 1.30–32).[14]

A third category consists of instances in which places or parcels of land are in the primary role. Here the *nominata* may themselves be places. In this regard, one may consult Euripides' *Helen*, where Teucer informs Helen of Apollo's prophecy that he will found "and name New Salamis from my island home" (ὄνομα νησιωτικὸν Σαλαμῖνα θέμενον τῆς ἐκεῖ χάριν πάτρας, 149–50). In one notable instance, a kind of horse is said to be called "Nisaean" because it comes "from the great Nisaean plain in Media, where horses of unusual size are produced" (ἔστι πεδίον μέγα τῆς Μηδικῆς τῷ οὔνομά ἐστι Νήσαιον. τοὺς ὦν δὴ ἵππους τοὺς μεγάλους φέρει τὸ πεδίον τοῦτο, Hdt. 7.40.3). The recipient entities might be, in addition, natural inanimate entities; in this connection, the town Therma on the gulf is said to have given that gulf its name (Hdt. 7.121.1). Moreover, individuals receive their appellations from places associated with noteworthy events, as when Archias reports to Herodotus that "his father had been called Samius" (τῷ πατρὶ ἔφη Σάμιον τοὔνομα τεθῆναι) to commemorate the heroic death of Archias' grandfather in Samos (3.55.2); for another pertinent example, see Hesiod, *Theogony* 198. Human constructions too could get their *onomata* on this basis. Along these lines, Athena tells Orestes to name the temple he will build at Halae after Tauris (ἐπώνυμον γῆς Ταυρικῆς, Eur. *IT* 1454) to immortalize his sufferings and eventual deliverance. One may round out this discussion of categories by mentioning that, fourthly, a parcel of land might be named for a

13. My translation. For other relevant cases, see Hdt. 4.52.1, 7.58.3, 9.51.1–2.

14. With respect to this subcategory, see also Hdt. 4.198.1.

people. Relevant here is Herodotus' report that Darius gave those Barcaeans taken as slaves a village in Bactria to inhabit, to which they gave the name "Barca" (οἱ δὲ τῇ κώμῃ ταύτῃ οὔνομα ἔθεντο Βάρκην, 4.204).

In addition to their use of eponymy per se, and as in the case of etymology, writers offer eponymy-based assessments of names' correctness. Thus, Pelasgus, for example, comments on the appropriateness of his people's name: "I am Pelasgus, founder of this land, and son of Palaechthon earth-born. The Pelasgians are fittingly named after me their leader (ἐμοῦ ἄνακτος εὐλόγως ἐπώνυμον), and reap the fruits of this earth" (Aesch. *Supp.* 250–53). In another case, Herodotus mentions a river called "Hypanis" that has its source in Scythia in a great lake that "is called—very properly (ὀρθῶς)—the Mother of Hypanis" (4.52.1). Here the primary entity, a body of water, gets its own *onoma* from another such body that issues from it. Elsewhere, Herodotus wonders "why three distinct women's names [Libya, Asia, and Europa] should have been given to what is in reality a single landmass (μιῇ ἐούσῃ γῇ)" (4.45.2). The clear implication is that, in his view, there is only one genuine entity available for naming. Given that fact, the allocation of three names—based on an artificial division of this landmass—is simply inappropriate. In an instance involving the acquisition of a nickname, Homer tells of a certain beggar who arrived at Odysseus' home: "Arnaeus was his name, for this name his honored mother had given him at his birth (ἐκ γενετῆς); but Irus all the young men called him, because (οὕνεκ') he used to run on errands when anyone bade him" (*Od.* 18.5–7).[15] In cases of name changes and the acquisition of nicknames, one is justified in raising the matter of fitness since it is precisely because the new or additional appellation is appropriate that it is introduced at all. This individual is named "Irus" after the female deity Iris, the divine messenger of Olympus. He would have been incapable of serving as messenger, and hence of meriting this *onoma*, at birth or during his early life; rather, the nickname is applied to him based on his current performance of a type of action with marked parallels to that of the primary name-bearer.

Judgments of desert may also be strongly implied, as when Oedipus invokes Athens in prayer: "Hear me, Athens, city named for great Athena, honored above all cities in the world!" (Soph. *OC* 107–8). Similarly, in the opening speech of Euripides' *Ion*, Hermes refers to events that transpired in Athens and mentions "the famous city of the Greeks called after Pallas of the Golden Spear" (8–9); later reiterating a positive valuation of Athens, Hermes reports Apollo's request to Creusa to take their newborn child "to the earth-born people of glorious Athens" (29–30).[16] Moreover, the Chorus in Aeschylus' *Persians* refers to Xerxes as "the peer of the gods, one whose race is sprung from gold (χρυσονόμου

15. This passage bears similarities to Aesch. *Eum.* 8.

16. As the play draws to a close, Athena announces herself as "the one who gave her name to your land (ἐπώνυμος σῆς χθονός)" (1555; my translation).

γενεᾶς)” (80);[17] the poet refers here to the hero Perseus, who was conceived following Zeus's approach to Danae in a shower of gold.[18] Strictly speaking, the implied judgment of desert pertains not to the Persians as a group but to an individual Persian. Nevertheless, Xerxes is no ordinary Persian but his people's supreme leader and representative.

In the unsystematic usage of literary eponymy, there is wide variation in the identity of primary and recipient entities, which include mortal individuals and groups, natural inanimate entities like rivers, and human constructions like temples. Although, with rare exceptions, the primary referent is singular, the primary and secondary referents may be singular or plural. In addition, there are no determinate criteria governing which types of entities can serve in each capacity and which sorts may be paired with one another. The same type of entity, for instance, a mortal individual or group of such individuals, can serve in different contexts in either a primary or a recipient capacity. Thus, groups are often named after individuals (the Ionians after Ion, the Persians after Perseus, and so on); a group may also be in the primary role, however, as when it gives its name to a parcel of land (see Hdt. 4.204, where a village is named “Barca” after the Barcaeans). While the literary tradition often uses eponymy to make identifications of source, it chooses as source the element that appears salient in a given context and is not concerned to achieve a scientific understanding of the natures of the entities in question.[19]

1.3. Platonic Eponymy and Its Metaphysical Backdrop

The framework of eponymy is potentially useful to Plato because it parallels, in general terms, the structure of his metaphysics; that is, it accommodates two referents in a relation of primary to secondary. In order to make it philosophically viable, however, Plato must institute key revisions of the literary tradition's approach. Since Plato's reconstitution of eponymy is necessitated by his metaphysics, before addressing questions of semantics I must comment briefly on his theory.[20]

At the heart of the metaphysics of Plato's middle dialogues is a dichotomy between reality (namely, the totality of Forms) and appearance. Forms, which exist separately from the spatiotemporal realm (*Phd.* 78d, 100b; *Symp.* 211b;

17. Tr. Smyth (1922), slightly modified.

18. Regarding *Pers.* 146, see n. 8 above.

19. Greek authors' focus on identifications of source in their use of eponymy fits in, generally speaking, with attempts by poets like Homer and Hesiod to offer explanations of important phenomena and states of affairs in terms of their origins. Julius Moravcsik labels this approach the “productive model”; for discussion of this and other explanatory patterns in Greek thought, see Moravcsik 1991.

20. For sustained discussion of a range of issues in Platonic metaphysics, see Ross 1953; Allen 1965b; Malcolm 1991; Moravcsik 1992.

Rep. 516b), serve as "explainers" (*aitiai*) with regard to pertinent entities in the realm of appearance.[21]

In contrast to Parmenides, who viewed appearances as categorically fallacious, for Plato they need deceive us only if we construe them as the sole existents. While the Eleatic philosopher had distinguished between what is and what is not, admitting no middle ground between these extremes, Platonic metaphysics carves out a place for that which is between (*metaxu*) "what is absolutely and what in no way is" (τοῦ εἰλικρινῶς ὄντος τε καὶ τοῦ πάντως μὴ ὄντος, *Rep*. 478d6–7).

Having acknowledged the existence of those intermediate entities that in his view constitute the domain of appearance, Plato introduces the concept of "participation" to connect them to what is real. By speaking of participation, Plato wants to convey the idea that entities belonging to the relevant classes in the spatiotemporal realm have the properties in question (e.g., justice and equality), but always with some qualification. In the *Phaedo*, he introduces participation by insisting that "if anything else is beautiful besides the Form of Beauty, there is no ground on which it can be beautiful save by participating in that Form. And the same principle applies in all other such cases. Do you agree to a ground of this kind?" (εἴ τί ἐστιν ἄλλο καλὸν πλὴν αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, οὐδὲ δι' ἓν ἄλλο καλὸν εἶναι ἢ διότι μετέχει ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ· καὶ πάντα δὴ οὕτως λέγω. τῇ τοιᾷδε αἰτίᾳ συγχωρεῖς;, 100c4–7). Here Plato provides as the ground (*aitia*) of any other entity's being beautiful its participation in the Form of Beauty and states that one can treat all other relevant cases on this model. Following remarks on the Large and Small (100e–101b), Plato turns to arithmetic operations and considers what the proper explanation would be of why the result is 2 when 1 and 1 are added. He advocates resolution of this and related questions by appeal to the general principle that there is no other way in which each thing comes to be "than by sharing in that specific nature in which it participates" (ἢ μετασχὸν τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας ἑκάστου οὗ ἂν μετάσχῃ, 101c3–4). Although Plato uses the unmodified participle γιγνόμενον ("comes to be," c3), context shows that the appropriate qualification is assumed; that is, here—and more generally—he is asking, not how something comes to be from nothing at all, but how each thing comes to assume a certain range of attributes.

This reference to "a certain range of attributes" raises the issue of the scope of the theory of Forms and hence of Platonic eponymy. The ultimate metaphysical foundation of any argument that eponymy constituted a general theory of predication would be the assumption of Forms for all common nouns and adjectives. This stance is, however, problematic. In the *Phaedo*, Plato under-

21. On Forms' separateness, see also *Prm*. 129d7–8 and 130b–d, where the term *chōris* appears on multiple occasions, and 128e6–129a1 (*auto kath' hauto*). Notably, Aristotle identifies separation as what distinguishes Platonic Forms from the objects of Socratic inquiry (*EN* 1096b; *Metaph*. 987b, 1086b). Key passages from the *Phaedo* involving the reality-appearance dichotomy and Forms' role as explainers include 74d–e, 78d–e, and 79c–d.

scores particulars' inevitably deficient embodiment of those properties whose instantiation ties them to Forms (see especially 74d–e). The concept of deficiency is also prominent in the *Symposium* (210e–212a) and *Republic* (particularly Books 5–7). In the *Republic,* moreover, Plato distinguishes explicitly between judgments of objects like fingers, which may be made adequately via perception (*aisthēsis*), and assessments of properties like smallness that necessitate the existence of Forms to which the intellect (*noēsis*) may appeal (523–524). Plato thus recognizes a class of properties in discussions of whose possession it is not fitting to speak of deficient or qualified embodiments, and hence of Forms: Something either is, or is not, a finger. While one may need to adjust one's vantage point (e.g., move closer to the object in question) in order to make this determination, the perceptual viewpoint from which a firm judgment can be made is in principle achievable.[22] Where qualified embodiments are at issue, in contrast, there must be Forms to serve as the reference points of reason's assessments.

Despite the presence of such textual evidence, some commentators, relying heavily on *Republic* 596a6–7, have concluded that Plato espoused a theory of universals along the lines of Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore.[23] In this famous passage from the dialogue's final book, Plato says that "we are accustomed to posit a single Form corresponding to each multiplicity to which we apply the same name" (εἶδος γάρ πού τι ἓν ἕκαστον εἰώθαμεν τίθεσθαι περὶ ἕκαστα τὰ πολλά, οἷς ταὐτὸν ὄνομα ἐπιφέρομεν). *Republic* 596a is the only place where Plato makes a statement of this type. Although Annas (1981, 227) grants that "the reference to 'usual way' and 'we are accustomed' suggests some background of which we have no further notice," she endorses a broad interpretation of the passage. In her view (228), this construction, which puts Plato's remark here at odds with his restrictive statements about Forms elsewhere in the middle dialogues, is nevertheless "more in tune with the other oddities of Book 10." As Moravcsik (1992, 66) has argued, however, Plato has in view here his own customary method, and reflection on that approach gives one good reason to think that while the realm of Forms is expanded to include instances in which those entities are idealized functional properties, he does not endorse a general account.[24] Moravcsik concludes (1992, 68) that Plato's arguments in the *Phaedo, Symposium,* and *Republic* yield Forms corresponding to "the sciences of ethics, dialectic, mathematics, geometry, music, and medicine," along with "the pro-

22. Cf. the *Parmenides*' denial (130c–d) that one may speak of Forms in the case of entities such as mud, hair, and dirt, which are clearly amenable to treatment along the lines of finger.

23. For a prominent example, see Ross 1953. Notably, Russell himself (1988, 91) construes Forms along the lines of his universals (for his own stance, see Russell 1971, 1988). On the topic of universals and particulars, see also Moore, Stout, and Hicks 1923.

24. According to Smith (1917), recourse to grammatical considerations in the analysis of *Rep.* 596a6–7, in particular of the relative clause (οἷς ταὐτὸν ὄνομα ἐπιφέρομεν) in a7, supports the view that Plato is not offering information here about the scope of the theory of Forms.

duction and understanding of artifacts."[25] If one accepts this view of the doctrine's scope, which finds strong support in these three dialogues taken as a group, it becomes clear that, far from constituting a general account of predication, the semantic correlate of Plato's doctrine of Forms covers only a limited subset of cases in which Moore and Russell invoke universals and instantiation.

I round out these brief remarks on Plato's metaphysics by stressing that the concept of "nature," in whose treatment he diverges both from literature and from Presocratic natural science, plays an essential role in his theory. What is natural for Plato is a certain articulation of reality into objective and theoretically important unities, which are granted the status of Forms; the key is to identify elements whose interrelations yield that order and harmony which he construes as paradigmatic (the most central cases of this being entities in the realm of mathematics and of values). Articulations of the spatiotemporal domain, in contrast, are natural only in a derivative sense, based on the relations its constituent entities bear to the Forms in question. The *Phaedo* offers direct linguistic testament to the centrality of naturalness, as when Plato emphasizes that the opposite itself can never become opposite to itself, "neither that in us nor that in nature" (οὔτε τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν οὔτε τὸ ἐν τῇ φύσει, 103b5). The opposite "in nature" is none other than the Form itself.[26] Elsewhere in that dialogue, he invokes "the true earth" (ἡ γῆ αὐτή), plus the superior quality of what issues from and belongs to it, as an allegory for the realm of Forms and the qualitatively higher status of its constituent entities (109a–114c; for occurrences of the terms *phusis* and *phuein* in this section of the dialogue, see 109e5, 110a3, d3–4, 111a2, c4, e6, 113d1).

In the *Symposium*, moreover, Plato states that the lover who completes the ascent will encounter something astonishingly beautiful in its nature (τι θαυμαστὸν τὴν φύσιν καλόν, 210e4–5).[27] The *Republic* too provides salient linguistic evidence, as when Plato asserts that "it is in the nature of the genuine lover of learning to strive for access to reality. A person of this type does not remain intent on the multiple individual sensibles that are the objects of belief but progresses,

25. The status of natural kinds is difficult to sort out. As previously observed (chap. 3, n. 43), it is not evident whether the *Phaedo* acknowledges Forms for fire and snow. The *Timaeus* does admit Forms in the case of some natural kinds. If one views the *Phaedo*'s position as unclear, then one's conclusion about when Plato definitely recognizes Forms of this type will hinge on one's dating of the *Timaeus*.

26. For the phrase "in nature" (ἐν τῇ φύσει) used with reference to the domain of Forms, see also *Rep.* 597b6, 598a1. On "nature" in the *Phaedo*, cf. 103e9–104b4, where Plato uses *phuein* twice when speaking of necessary relations between Forms, the idea being that some Forms necessarily have other Forms as attributes. Plato need not apply this line of reasoning directly to the relation between Oddness itself and its own participants in the spatiotemporal arena because the relevant conclusions are obvious based on what he has already said about individual Forms, for example, *auto to ison* ("the equal itself"). What Plato instead has to argue for is that one may explain certain necessary relations between Forms themselves in an analogous manner.

27. This use of *phusis* contrasts sharply with Euripides' linkage of Polynices' name and nature via the verb *phuein* (*Phoen.* 1493), which reflects that rival view of "nature" targeted in the *Cratylus*.

without becoming disheartened or desisting, until he gains access to that which is truly the nature of each thing (πρὶν αὐτοῦ ὃ ἔστιν ἑκάστου τῆς φύσεως ἅψασθαι)" (490a8–b3). Subsequently, Plato maintains that those sketching the constitution of the just city must look "toward what is by nature just (τὸ φύσει δίκαιον) and beautiful and moderate and all such things" (501b2–3); *to phusei dikaion* serves here as a locution interchangeable with *auto to dikaion*. Elsewhere, Plato speaks of the need for prospective philosophers to become skilled in calculation (*logistikē*); they must pursue it, not as dilettantes, but so as to catch a glimpse "in thought of the nature of numbers (τῆς τῶν ἀριθμῶν φύσεως)" (525c2–3). In what follows, he refers to calculation as leading the soul upward and compelling it to discourse about numbers themselves (περὶ αὐτῶν τῶν ἀριθμῶν) (525d5–7); "numbers themselves" (αὐτοὶ οἱ ἀριθμοί) are of course among Platonic *ousiai* and are synonymous with "the nature of numbers" (ἡ τῶν ἀριθμῶν φύσις). Such linguistic evidence documents Plato's correlation of *phusis* first and foremost with immutable essences.

Plato's metaphysical picture raises a new and important semantic question: what is the connection between the employment of a term (e.g., "equal") with reference to a Form and its use as an ingredient in a series of complex predicates (e.g., "equal in length," "equal to one person but not to another")? Putting the question in a slightly different way, how is one to represent the semantics of the Form-participant relation? For this purpose, neither synonymy nor homonymy will do. Synonymy, according to which the term "equal," for example, would apply in the same manner both to the Form and to pairs of sticks in the spatiotemporal realm, is inadequate because it provides no way to represent the derivative status of the second application of the term. Homonymy, in turn, would involve equivocation and leave one with no way to represent any connection at all between the two usages. A third device is thus required to show that the usages, though not identical, are related and, moreover, that they are connected in such a way that the second application is derived from the first. For this purpose, Plato selects a device intermediate between synonymy and homonymy, namely, eponymy. These distinctions, it should be emphasized, are ultimately conceptual rather than terminological since, as the discussion of literary eponymy made clear, the notions in question may be given linguistic expression in multiple ways.[28]

Literary and Platonic eponymy both involve two *relata*, with priority given to that entity viewed as primary. Plato's conception of reality, however, leads him

28. Aristotle inherits the semantic relation of eponymy from Plato and modifies it to suit his own philosophical purposes. *Pros hen legesthai*, or "focal meaning" (following Owen 1986b), which functions as eponymy's successor, is viewed by Aristotle as accommodating a wider range of ties between primary and secondary referents and as providing a better semantic correlate to his ontology. Regarding focal meaning, see *EE* 1236a16–22; *EN* 1096b26–29; *Metaph.* 1003a33–b6, 1030a29–30, 1060b31–1061a10. For a helpful recent discussion, one may consult Ward 1995. On the question of whether Aristotle's account of the nutritive soul (*DA* 2.3) involves the type of priority at issue in focal meaning, see Ward 1996.

to institute strict requirements on the identity of primary and secondary entities; these requirements are different from those of the literary tradition and different for entities in each of the two Platonic roles. The two types of entities must be on separate planes of existence, and there is an absolute prohibition on those in one class serving in the alternative capacity. Moreover, the primary entity must always be singular, and those entities named after it must be at least potentially a plurality. In a marked departure from the literary tradition, Plato specifies and discusses the kinds of priority enjoyed by the primary entity, or Form—viz., ontological, natural, explanatory, and logical; its primacy rests above all on ontological grounds. These specifications, in turn, yield a set of conditions under which one may properly apply that entity's *onoma* to a certain class of recipients. The framework of eponymy lends an optimal structure to Plato's reflections because it allows him to speak of naming a primary entity and of naming derivatively other entities that share the nature of the former, but only partially.[29] In its basic structure, Plato's approach most closely resembles those cases of literary eponymy in which a single individual gives his name to a group of individuals. However, this type of case, like the others, is ultimately unacceptable to Plato as a model for philosophical usage because both the primary and recipient entities are native to or wrongly aligned with a single plane of existence, namely, the empirical world; since the primary entity is misidentified, one cannot assign it the requisite priority.[30] In addition, the recipient entities in question are groups of mortals, specifically, peoples, hence merely a subset of particulars in Plato's sense.

In contrast to literary practice, Platonic eponymy rests on an explicit and fundamental ontological asymmetry between the two *relata*. *Phaedo* 103e3–7 illustrates Plato's view of appropriateness when Forms themselves are at issue: "It is always appropriate for the Form itself to have its own *onoma* applied to it, without regard to time. It must surely always be fitting for Oddness to be in possession of the *onoma* that we are now employing to designate it" (αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος ἀξιοῦσθαι τοῦ αὑτοῦ ὀνόματος εἰς τὸν ἀεὶ χρόνον. . . . τὸ . . . περιττὸν ἀεί που δεῖ τούτου τοῦ ὀνόματος τυγχάνειν ὅπερ νῦν λέγομεν). It is always appropriate to call the Form, *to peritton*, or "the odd," "odd" in an unqualified way. To explain what undergirds this judgment from a metaphysical perspective, one must

29. For the latter application of terms as "derivative," cf. Code 1986, 427.

30. A distinction between nontechnical and philosophical usage is necessary here. Plato is not saying that the city of Athens, for example, really gets that name based on an ontological relation it bears to a Form rather than, say, from the goddess Athena. He is simply not interested in providing revised standards for or eliminating such nonphilosophical uses of eponymy. Support for this view is provided by the fact that Plato never criticizes nontechnical usage and by his employment of it even after his introduction of a revised version of eponymy (as, e.g., at *Leg.* 626d3–5, where he presents the familiar derivation of "Athens" from "Athena"). Plato's efforts at the revision of conventional usage are directed solely toward that range of cases in which a term's primary referent must be separate from the spatiotemporal realm; for those cases, no literary precedent may serve directly as a model.

invoke the characteristic, being *F* in an unqualified way, that distinguishes a given Form from its own participants. It is crucial to note, moreover, that Forms could not be characterized in this manner unless they possessed those features (e.g., being unchangeable and imperishable) that, taken together, distinguish elements of reality from those of appearance.[31] While eponymy, in the strictest sense, covers the derivative assignment, the two assessments of correctness are not detachable in Plato, as they are in literature. As previously noted, when literary authors wish to address the fitness of a primary referent's appellation, as in the cases of Ion and Athena, they invoke a different notion, namely, etymology. The two analyses, moreover, are not correlated in a dependence relation such that the fitness of the eponymous derivation is made to hinge on the outcome of the etymology: one need not, for example, hold up one's judgment about whether the Ionians are named properly after Ion until one investigates separately whether the name "Ion" is fittingly assigned to its bearer (i.e., whether the name's descriptive content discloses the nature of its referent). In the case of Plato, in contrast, it is because particular entities in our world sustain the requisite ontological dependence on entities whose own *onomata* single them out in a unique manner that the secondary designations at issue in eponymy are possible. For this reason, one may view the primary designation as pertinent to, or encompassed by, the framework of eponymy on Plato's construction.

Plato first discusses the naming of particulars in the Affinity Argument, when he refers to each class of individual sensibles as *homōnumon* with the relevant Form (*Phd.* 78e2). As has been recognized, though Plato here uses *homōnumos* rather than *epōnumos* or a related term (i.e., *epōnumia* or *eponomazein*), he has the phenomenon of eponymy in view.[32] Notably, the literary tradition also uses *homōnumos* to single out the phenomenon of eponymy, as when Pindar mentions that Strepsiades the Isthmian victor got his name from his maternal uncle (*Isthm.* 7.24). In such cases, whether or not individuals are *homōnumoi* is a matter

31. Regarding Forms' characteristics, see Moravcsik 1992, 69–81. I offer a sketch of Moravcsik's framework below.

32. See, e.g., Gallop ([1975] 1988, ad loc.) and the contention of Cherniss (1962, 178 n. 102) that the particular "is ὁμώνυμον τῷ εἴδει . . . because it has its name and nature *derivatively* from the idea." For relevant instances of *homōnumos* in later dialogues, see *Tim.* 52a4–5 (τὸ ὁμώνυμον ὅμοιόν τε ἐκείνῳ) and *Prm.* 133d2–3 (τὰ παρ' ἡμῖν ταῦτα ὁμώνυμα ὄντα ἐκείνοις). Cf. Aristotle's use of this adjective in describing Plato's theory at *Metaph.* 987b7–10 (adopting Jaeger's text); his comments reaffirm that, according to Plato, it is due to their participation in Forms that *aisthēta* share their appellations, are in fact named after them. (Strictly speaking, all entities called *aisthēta* by Plato are not perceptible since the relevant class includes prevailing conventions, notably, about values. For present purposes, I follow Plato's own usage, with the understanding that the class in question includes entities that are not directly accessible by way of the senses.)

Conversely, it is also worth observing that Plato uses *epōnumos*, *epōnumia*, and *eponomazein* in multiple contexts. With regard to nontechnical usage, see n. 30 above. In addition, in numerous cases Plato follows the literary tradition in employing this terminology in connection with etymologies: see, e.g., *Cra.* 395b6, 397d4–5, 398c1, 400b2, 401d3, 403a5, 404b2, 406a6, 409c7, 412c5,

of choice or agency. While Plato accords with the literary tradition at 78e2 in his use of terminology, he differs fundamentally from it in the reason given for the designation, that is, in his insistence that the selection of those entities designated as *homōnuma* with a given Form never depends on individual choice, whether mortal or divine, but solely on whether the secondary referents stand in the ontologically proper relation to that Form. I therefore cannot agree with Owen (1986a, 171), who criticizes Cherniss's claim (1962, 178 n. 102) that the particular "is ὁμώνυμον τῷ εἴδει . . . because it has its name and nature *derivatively* from the idea" by observing that *homōnumos* may be used—as at *Republic* 330b2–3 (ὁ πάππος τε καὶ ὁμώνυμος)—"of an ancestor *from* whom the name is derived." Even where this happens in literary and Platonic instances of ordinary eponymy, the relevant nonsemantic dependency is never in doubt; in such cases, the term's grammatical function is of secondary importance, and *homōnumos* must be interpreted in light of this dependency. Moreover, appeals to ordinary practice cannot serve, in themselves, as evidence against a particular view of Plato's use of the relevant terminology and concept of eponymy in connection with the theory of Forms.

In all cases of eponymy, both literary and Platonic, the semantic relation between the primary and secondary referents presupposes, and is based on, a nonsemantic, independently specifiable link between them. In literary eponymy, the nature of that association varies widely and depends solely on the context. It may be familial in nature; for instance, male progeny are often named for their grandfathers or other male relatives (see, e.g., Pind. *Isth.* 7.24, *Ol.* 9.63–64; Hdt. 6.131.1 [cf. 5.69.1], 8.136.1). Elsewhere, the connection between entities is spatial or geographical, as when a town lends its name to the gulf on which it is located (Hdt. 7.121.1) and a kind of horse gets its *onoma* from that of the plain which is its geographical source (Hdt. 7.40.3).[33] Literary authors might also focus on the commemoration of an ordeal endured (Aesch. *PV* 840–41; Eur. *IT* 1454). Sometimes an assignment is honorific, as when a treasure is named after its donor (Hdt. 1.14.3) and a body of land is named for an *iatromantis* who had once served as its benefactor (Aesch. *Supp.* 260–61). The foregoing list of categories may generate an appearance of well-ordered diversity in the literary evidence. In point of fact, however, distinctions between categories are often not clear-cut, as is evident from the many instances in which multiple factors are salient. For example, protective and honorific associations may intersect, as in the complex relation-

413e2, 415b5, d3, 416b11, d8, 417c9; *Phdr.* 238c3, 244c8; *Leg.* 821b9. He employs it, moreover, in connection with *diairesis* (see, e.g., *Soph.* 225c3, d4, 229d6, 267b2; *Pol.* 263d1) and with regard to the virtue-virtues relationship (*Leg.* 963c5–d7, with *epōnomasamen* at d6). Such uses are not relevant to the present argument, which concentrates on the semantics of the Form-participant relation, where the term's primary referent exists apart from the spatiotemporal world, and all of its secondary referents are native to that realm.

33. For other relevant cases, see Hdt. 4.52.1, 4.184.3–4.

ship between Athens and Athena (Soph. *OC* 107–8; Eur. *Ion* 8–9, 29–30, 1555–56). Elsewhere, political and honorific associations are interwoven (Hom. *Il.* 20.230; Aesch. *Supp.* 250–53), as are geographical and commemorative ties (*Il.* 4.474–77). In one noteworthy case, Archias reports that his father was named "Samius" to commemorate the heroic death of Archias' grandfather in Samos (Hdt. 3.55.2); here familial, honorific, and geographical associations converge.

In sharp contrast to the literary tradition, Plato uses one basic nonsemantic relationship, that of participation, to undergird eponymy. Since that ontological relation provides the foundation for eponymy, it is not surprising that he takes up the eponymy relation most directly in connection with his treatment of participation. Plato moves from the participation relation to that of eponymy with the agreement of those present that the Forms exist and that "the other things, participating in them, are named after the Forms themselves" (τούτων τἆλλα μεταλαμβάνοντα αὐτῶν τούτων τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἴσχειν, *Phd.* 102b2–3). This passage highlights the fact that it is due to their participation in Forms that individual sensibles are named after them (note the participle's causal force).[34] Plato returns to these issues a little later. Speaking generally, he sums up the contrast as one between things that have opposites, which are named after those opposites, and "those opposites themselves from whose inherence in them the things named receive their appellations"; that is, Plato emphasizes that while the earlier discussion was about τῶν ἐχόντων τὰ ἐναντία . . . ἐπονομάζοντες αὐτὰ τῇ ἐκείνων ἐπωνυμίᾳ, now it concerns ἐκείνων αὐτῶν ὧν ἐνόντων ἔχει τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν τὰ ὀνομαζόμενα (103b6–c1). Here Plato raises the same metaphysical and linguistic questions as he had in the earlier passage; b8 contains language of inherence rather than that of participation because there he considers the Form-particular relation from the point of view of Forms rather than that of individual sensibles.

The twin issues of self-attribution (or self-exemplification) and the Third Man Argument (TMA), along with the immense controversy surrounding them, fall largely outside the scope of the current project.[35] My comments on these topics will be, therefore, quite brief and selective.[36] Some, including Allen (1965a, 45–47) and Bestor (1978), have claimed that one may invoke eponymy to block the regress at issue in the TMA. On this interpretation, *onomata* when applied to

34. For this same use of the participle, see *Prm.* 130e5–6: δοκεῖ σοι, ὡς φῄς, εἶναι εἴδη ἄττα, ὧν τάδε τὰ ἄλλα μεταλαμβάνοντα τὰς ἐπωνυμίας αὐτῶν ἴσχειν. Cf. 133d1–2 (on the assumption, which I endorse, that the passage does not deal with immanent characteristics): ὧν ἡμεῖς μετέχοντες εἶναι ἕκαστα ἐπονομαζόμεθα.

35. For the term "self-exemplification" regarded as preferable to "self-predication," see Malcolm (1991, 1 [with n. 4]), who indicates that in favoring it he follows Moravcsik (1976, 14). For the term "self-attribution," see Moravcsik 1992, 138.

36. For a sample of views on self-exemplification and the TMA, see Vlastos 1965a, 1965b, 1969, 1981; Malcolm 1981, 1985, 1991; Moravcsik 1963, 1992; Nehamas 1979; Bestor 1978; Meinwald 1991. For additional references, see the bibliography of Malcolm 1991.

Forms serve as proper names, such that "to say that *F*-ness is *F* is to state an identity" (Allen 1965a, 46).[37] While the precise details of Plato's stance are not transparent, what is clear, I believe, is that Forms' *onomata* cannot operate in this way. The central reason for the inadequacy of this view is that, according to Plato, terms such as *kalon* have descriptive force when applied, not only to Forms' participants, but also to Forms themselves. Thus, in the *Symposium*, Plato depicts the Form of Beauty (*auto to kalon*) as "astonishingly beautiful in its nature" (210e4–5; cf. 211b2, where Plato contrasts it with "all the other beautiful things," τὰ . . . ἄλλα πάντα καλά). In the same vein, in the *Phaedo*, he claims that "if anything else is beautiful besides the Form of Beauty (πλὴν αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν), the only way in which it can be beautiful is by participating in that Form" (100c4–6).

This feature is far from being a minor element of Plato's theory. As Moravcsik (1992, 69–81) has argued, the middle dialogues invest Forms with three types of characteristics: those, for instance, imperishability, that they share with other entities like souls; those distinguishing Forms as a class from other kinds of entities, for example, being such that other things can partake of them; and, finally, that characteristic which marks off individual Forms from one another, namely, being unqualifiedly what their participants are only with restrictions. Although, as Moravcsik observes, Plato takes the pressure off this final characteristic in later dialogues' handling of individuation (1992, 138, 169), in the middle period its role is pivotal. Also central is Forms' explanatory role vis-à-vis classes of entities in the spatiotemporal realm: they are to account specifically for these entities' qualified embodiment of properties such as beauty and justice (see, e.g., *Phd.* 100c, e), and it is quite difficult to see how they could accomplish this unless Plato held the view of Forms' natures reflected in the above comments from the *Phaedo* (100c4–6) and *Symposium* (210e4–5, 211b2).

Another point of contention is whether the Form is or has the nature in question (or, perhaps, at once both is and has it). Plato uses the terms *phusis* and *phuein* in two central ways in his discussions of reality. He employs *phusis*, first, to denote the domain of Forms in its entirety (*Phd.* 103b5; *Rep.* 597b6, 598a1). Plato's usage reflects his view that this sphere, rather than the familiar world whose operations were often the focus of earlier philosophers' attention, constitutes nature proper. Plato employs the term *phusis*, in addition, with reference to those individual Forms that comprise the "world" viewed by him as truly natural. A central opponent here is the view, prominent in the literary tradition, that natures are associated first and foremost with individuals, that is, with certain constituents of, or entities closely tied to, the spatiotemporal world. Thus, he says that the Form of Beauty is "astonishingly beautiful in or by its very nature" (θαυμαστὸν τὴν φύσιν καλόν, *Symp.* 210e4–5) and that the ideal city's founders must concentrate on "what is by nature just and beautiful and moderate and all such things" (τὸ φύσει δίκαιον καὶ καλὸν καὶ σῶφρον καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα,

37. For an argument that the regress cannot be blocked via this route, see Malcolm 1981, 287.

Rep. 501b2–3). It is hard to determine from such remarks whether the Form is or has the nature at issue (or both). Two passages from the *Republic* might be interpreted to indicate a commitment to the view that, at the very least, the Form is a nature: that in which he speaks of the philosopher's access to what "is truly the nature of each thing" (490a8–b3), and that where he insists that philosophers-to-be pursue calculation in order to glimpse in thought "the nature of numbers" (ἡ τῶν ἀριθμῶν φύσις, 525c2–3), an expression synonymous with "numbers themselves" (αὐτοὶ οἱ ἀριθμοί, d5–7). These remarks, however, while suggestive, do not permit a firm resolution of the controversy about the *phuseis* of individual Forms.

I therefore conclude that the terms in question (e.g., *kalon* and *dikaion*) apply in some way that is descriptive to the Forms, but that the precise character of their descriptive force cannot be specified. When speaking of description, it is crucial to distinguish between descriptive content and descriptive force. The claim being attributed to Plato in the present investigation is not that analyses of individual terms' descriptive content disclose their referents' natures. As I argued in chapter 3, this approach does not fare well in the *Cratylus*. The point is rather that the term *kalon* does not merely pick the Form out, as my name does me, but gives one valuable guidance about what it is to be that entity.

We are now in a position, finally, to complete our answer to the question of whether Plato embraces nature or convention, or some combination of the two, as pertinent to judgments of fitness. As we saw in the previous chapter, the *Cratylus* endorses convention as the basis of correctness when terms' constitution is at issue. Yet, as noted there, this conclusion does not exhaust the scope of what is presupposed by or involved in the making of such assessments. Above all, one must have the right conception of reality, that is, the correct view of what is or has a nature (*phusis*) in the primary sense. As the *Cratylus* makes clear, Plato does not view natures as belonging in the first instance to mortal or divine individuals (e.g., Atreus or Apollo). While the end of the dialogue points one in the direction of Plato's favored conception (438–440), the elaboration of this stance is reserved for the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic*. In particular, Plato's use of the term *phusis* in all three dialogues foregrounds the fact that his own conception of "nature," which underlies correct assessments of terms' application, differs radically from that view challenged in the *Cratylus*. One may note, finally, a refinement of the *Cratylus*' picture with respect to names. In the *Phaedo*, as in the *Cratylus*, Plato adheres to the view that the constitution of *onomata*, even those such as *kalon* whose primary referents are Forms, is appropriate based on convention. Once the phrase *auto to kalon* ("the beautiful itself") is chosen to designate the Form, however, it is not simply a matter of convention that its participants, which are the term's secondary referents, are called *ta kala*. Combining the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo*, one thus ends up with a framework consisting of the following three variables: the identification of those entities that have the status of Forms, which is, ac-

cording to Plato, in no way governed by convention; judgments of fitness with regard to the constitution of individual terms, which are the province of *ethos* and *sunthēkē*; and the designation of a Form's participants once that Form is labeled in a particular way, which is not merely a matter of convention since the linguistic tie forged by the assignment is intended to reflect a metaphysical connection between the *relata*.

1.4. *Conclusion*

In the *Phaedo*, as we have seen, eponymy is important because it provides a framework within which Plato can present his theory of terms' proper employment, which is based on his metaphysics and involves fundamental revision of conventional usage of the *onomata* in question.[38] That eponymy remains an important notion for Plato is evidenced by its presence, not only in the *Phaedo*, but also in later dialogues, namely, the *Parmenides* and *Timaeus*, when he wishes to characterize the different ways in which terms apply to Forms and participants. Indeed, the issue of how one may characterize the semantic relation between, for example, "two" as the name of a number and "two" as it appears as an ingredient in complex predicates has continued to occupy philosophers, notable among them Gottlob Frege.[39]

Eponymy as discussed by Plato applies solely to relations involving Forms and their participants in the spatiotemporal realm. When Plato attempts in later dialogues to address objections to his middle-period metaphysics, prominent among them the Third Man Argument of the *Parmenides*, he shifts the focus of his technical discussions to mutual connections between Forms.[40] To describe

38. Regarding conventional usage, human beings are seriously deceived if, when hearing the term *kalon*, they are unable to distinguish between qualified and unqualified applications of it, an incapacity exhibited strikingly by "the lovers of sights and sounds" of *Republic* 5. On this confusion with regard to *kalon*, cf. Hippias' response to Socrates' query (τί ἐστι τοῦτο τὸ καλόν;) and the ensuing discussion between them in the *Hippias Major* (287d ff.). On the question of the dialogue's authenticity, see the sustained defense by Woodruff (1982a) and the case for non-Platonic authorship in Kahn 1985 (cf. 1996, 182).

39. On the secondary use of terms in Frege, see, e.g., Frege 1950, 59. The more general concern of Frege (1950) is to identify numbers as objects so that one can talk about them without having to add any common noun (aside from "number") to supply a principle of individuation. Hence, notwithstanding the existence of important differences in their views, both Plato and Frege clearly distinguish primary and secondary uses of a key range of terms.

40. Plato sometimes wishes to emphasize the sharp difference between Forms and particulars, at other times their relatedness. Perhaps he saw that his theory required both perspectives or dimensions but could not determine how to retain them adequately within the confines of a single account. What is clear is that Plato develops the theory of Forms in later dialogues so as to stress those entities' interconnections. Whether this was because he thought that the original theory was correct but could not see how to develop a compelling argument to buttress his intuition on this score, or because he worried that his argument as it stood was vulnerable to the TMA, is difficult if not impossible to determine.

these ties he introduces another notion of partaking. The semantics of that relation falls outside the scope of the present inquiry.[41]

What I hope to have shown here is that although Plato rejects decisively literary antecedents which he views as philosophically unpromising, he does not hesitate to embrace notions that do have potential. As I have argued, in his philosophy of language Plato in fact does both. In the *Cratylus*, he criticizes the literary tradition's use of etymology. Moreover, Plato's disbelief in the philosophical value of an attempt at its reconstruction is evident both in the fundamental nature of his challenge to literary practice and in the fact that what hints he does provide at the close of the dialogue of the form his own theory will assume point in quite a different direction. The *Cratylus*' engagement with the literary tradition thus terminates in Plato's rejection of one manifestation of its handling of fitness. In the *Phaedo*, in contrast, where Plato seeks a framework in which to express his own insights about *orthotēs onomatōn*, he singles out a second key device prominent in literature, namely, eponymy, and adapts it to suit his metaphysics centering on Forms and participants.[42] Eponymy is a central semantic notion for Plato; literary uses of it, however, antedate Plato specifically and the philosophical tradition generally. While in many cases we may understand Platonic doctrines against the backdrop of earlier philosophical and sophistic inquiries, we can best appreciate what is distinctive about Platonic eponymy by reflecting on its literary antecedent.

In the remainder of this chapter, I turn to *Republic* 5, where, for a third time, Plato treats the issue of appropriateness against a literary backdrop. While *Republic* 5 is closely linked for this reason both to the *Cratylus* and to the *Phaedo*, it has special ties to the latter insofar as here Plato once again gives serious weight to his literary predecessors in the context of formulating his own position. In this case, as we will see, Plato's theory of the proper allocation of sociopolitical and familial roles leads him to assign an important philosophical position to a revamped construction of yet another linguistic device prominent in literature.

41. Plato does not use eponymy to provide the semantics of relations between abstract entities. One who wished to claim that the ingredients of this extension are present in his writings might focus on considerations such as the following: Plato's introduction of a notion of partaking to cover links between abstract entities (see *Soph.* 251d ff.); comments like those at *Phd.* 100c4–7 (quoted earlier, p. 107), where the words *ti allo* (c4) arguably encompass not only *ta kala* but also any relevant Forms besides *auto to kalon* that are suitably related to it; and Plato's use of *eponomazein* in the *Laws* in a discussion of the connection between virtue and individual virtues (963c5–d7).

42. I am in accord with the claim of White (1976, 131) that the *Cratylus* does not have an isolated position in the Platonic corpus. White sharply deemphasizes the existence of ties between the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo*, dating the *Cratylus* after the *Phaedrus* and linking it closely to that dialogue on thematic grounds (1976, chaps. 3, 5–6). While White grants that stylistic considerations favor an earlier date, he contends that evidence regarding content points solidly in the other direction (148 n. 1). As the foregoing investigation makes clear, in my view there are much stronger thematic grounds for favoring close ties between the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo* than White acknowledges.

2. Functional Terms: Literary Usage and Plato's Revision Thereof

2.1. *Introduction*

In his discussion of the procreation and rearing of children in *Republic* 5, Plato asserts that

> a man will call all children born in the tenth or seventh month after he became a bridegroom his sons (if they are male) or daughters (if they are female), and all of them will call him father.[43] He will call their children his grandchildren, and they, in turn, will call the members of the group to which he belongs grandfathers and grandmothers. Moreover, they will call those offspring born at the time when their mothers and fathers were producing children their sisters and brothers. The result will be that of which we spoke, namely, that the relevant groups avoid sexual relations with one another. (461d2–e2)

> ἀφ' ἧς ἂν ἡμέρας τις αὐτῶν νυμφίος γένηται, μετ' ἐκείνην δεκάτῳ μηνὶ καὶ ἑβδόμῳ δὴ ἃ ἂν γένηται ἔκγονα, ταῦτα πάντα προσερεῖ τὰ μὲν ἄρρενα ὑεῖς, τὰ δὲ θήλεα θυγατέρας, καὶ ἐκεῖνα ἐκεῖνον πατέρα, καὶ οὕτω δὴ τὰ τούτων ἔκγονα παίδων παῖδας, καὶ ἐκεῖν' αὖ ἐκείνους πάππους τε καὶ τηθάς, τὰ δ' ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ χρόνῳ γεγονότα, ἐν ᾧ αἱ μητέρες καὶ οἱ πατέρες αὐτῶν ἐγέννων, ἀδελφάς τε καὶ ἀδελφούς, ὥστε, ὃ νυνδὴ ἐλέγομεν, ἀλλήλων μὴ ἅπτεσθαι.

The following discussion of Plato's view of the family sets it against the backdrop of literary reflections for the purpose of illustrating both where he aligns himself with them and where the realization of his philosophical purposes necessitates his breaking new ground. In contrast to the discussions of etymology and eponymy—which gave attention to Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, the three tragedians, and Herodotus—here I focus exclusively on tragedy.[44]

2.2. *Familial Roles and Responsibilities: Literary Treatments of Appropriateness*

In addition to raising questions of appropriateness in connection with etymology and eponymy, the literary tradition does so with respect to functional terms like "mother" and "son." In the case of what I am calling "functional terms,"

43. Regarding gestation periods, cf. Arist. *GA* 772b8–10; *HA* 584a36–b15. On the numerological ideas about pregnancy and childbirth expressed in Greek medical writings, see Lloyd 1987, 259–64.

44. For discussion of this difficult section of *Republic* 5, see, e.g., Adam 1902, vol. 1, 292–315; Grube 1927; Cornford 1941, 155–68; Rankin 1965; Bloom 1991, 384–88; Halliwell 1993a, 155–82. For consideration of changes in Plato's recommendations concerning marriage between the *Republic* and *Laws*, see Fortenbaugh 1975.

the primary meaning of an *onoma* derives from what its denotation does (thus, e.g., the central meaning of the term "son" may be traced to the filial duties associated with its referent).[45] In the context of tragedy, where such *onomata* often have normative force, the existence of biological connections is not sufficient or even required for terms' proper employment. As the following discussion makes clear, one considers instead whether an individual performs the duties implied by the term in question.

On several occasions, characters in tragedy question the appropriateness of calling certain individuals "mother" and "father." Speculating about the source of a lock of hair found at Agamemnon's tomb, Electra says: "Nor yet in truth did she shear it from her head—she the murderess, my own mother, who toward her children has taken to herself a godless spirit ill-according with the name of mother" (οὐδὲ μήν νιν ἡ κτανοῦσ' ἐκείρατο, ἐμή γε μήτηρ, οὐδαμῶς ἐπώνυμον φρόνημα παισὶ δύσθεον πεπαμένη, Aesch. *Cho.* 189–91).[46] Having admitted the dubious appropriateness of using the term "mother" with reference to Clytemnestra—in light of her murder of Agamemnon and affair with Aegisthus—Electra offers as possible alternatives "this woman who sleeps with him" (ταύτῃ τῷδε συγκοιμωμένῃ, Soph. *El.* 274) and "mistress" (δεσπότις, 597). Subsequently, when addressing what she takes to be Orestes' ashes, Electra drives home the point that Clytemnestra's attitude and conduct entail her forfeiture of the consideration owed one who does in fact merit the appellation (1145–56).[47] Finally, Electra insists to Orestes himself that "she is called my mother—but like a mother in nothing" (μήτηρ καλεῖται· μητρὶ δ' οὐδὲν ἐξισοῖ, 1194); here the discrepancy between appellation, on the one hand, and conduct or attitude, on the other, is most explicitly formulated.[48]

Deianira provides another target for the same charges. Mincing no words, Hyllus maintains that Deianira's murderous conduct toward Heracles has destroyed her entitlement to the respect and consideration ordinarily due one's mother (Soph. *Trach.* 807–12). In remarks calling to mind those of Electra, Hyllus exclaims: "Why should she maintain the pointless dignity of the name of mother when she acts in no way like a mother?" (ὄγκον . . . ἄλλως ὀνόματος τί δεῖ τρέφειν μητρῷον, ἥτις μηδὲν ὡς τεκοῦσα δρᾷ;, 817–18). Seconding Hyllus' assessment, Heracles pleads with his son to deliver Deianira to him for retribu-

45. The purpose of this brief description is not to single out functional terms uniquely but rather to set them apart from cases (e.g., those of rocks, stars, and triangles) in which terms' referents have functions without the roles in question being by definition attached to them.

46. Tr. Smyth (1926), slightly modified. Lattimore (Lattimore, Benardete, and Grene 1953) translates as follows: "*She* never could have cut it, she who murdered him and is my mother, but no mother in her heart which has assumed God's hate and hates her children." I prefer Smyth's rendering of these lines since it brings out the pivotal linguistic dimension of Electra's criticism.

47. See especially Electra's reference to her as "mother, no mother" (μήτηρ ἀμήτωρ, 1154).

48. Euripides, in turn, makes Clytemnestra the target of an implied judgment of non-desert with respect to her status as "mother" (see *Or.* 557–59, 585–86).

tion and provides an alternative description of her (1064–67). Taken in sum, the foregoing remarks about Clytemnestra and Deianira indicate that being someone's mother in the biological sense is not sufficient to generate an entitlement to be addressed by the appellation in question; rather, one's character and actions provide the definitive criterion in light of which judgments of fitness are made.

Admetus, in turn, reproaches both his parents at once for their failure to offer themselves up to die in his place. Since it is Alcestis who volunteers to perform this fatal act of substitution, Admetus concludes that he should be called instead her child and support in old age (γηροτρόφος) (Eur. *Alc.* 636–49, 666–68).[49] Admetus indicates in no uncertain terms his disposition on the matter of desert and at least voices reservations about his actual parentage; his remarks suggest that the two planes are closely related and that it is his dissatisfaction with the conduct of his "parents" that leads to this two-pronged condemnation of them. Admetus' expressed doubts about his parentage do not reflect genuine concerns on the biological plane; rather, his substantive complaints all involve his parents' failure to meet what he views as their obligations toward him as their son.[50] The core of Admetus' reproach is that if his mother and father truly deserved their respective functional appellations, or collectively the title of "parents," one of them would choose to die in his stead; since his wife, Alcestis, makes the sacrifice that Admetus believes to be their responsibility, he concludes that it is she—rather than they—to whom the appellation "parent" is appropriate.[51] Admetus retaliates in kind, contending that while he has fulfilled his own filial duties up to that point, he will do so no longer (658–66). In sum, then, in Admetus' view his parents' failure to act in what he construes as the appropriate manner toward him qua son deprives them categorically of the entitlement to be called "parents" and of the right to expect his fulfillment of any of those responsibilities previously linked with his role as "son." This case is particularly noteworthy for its introduction of the idea that one who has a nonbiological kinship relation to the speaker may nevertheless be entitled to an appellation denoting biological ties based, once again, on considerations of attitude and behavior.

Elsewhere, discussion centers on the terms "daughter" and "son." Aeschylus criticizes Helen via a judgment of appropriateness based on an etymological

49. The term γηροτρόφος appears in line 668. Notably, Admetus deliberately avoids as far as possible using the term "mother" (see 637–39, 661); where it does appear (638), it is in a phrase (ἡ κεκλημένη μήτηρ) that includes a qualification.

50. For discussion of this issue, see Griffith 1978. In all literary cases discussed in this section of the chapter, the speaker believes that his or her judgments and demands are reasonable, but clearly distinctions can be drawn between various cases in this respect.

51. The fact of their advanced age is pertinent here (see 634–35, 648–50, 669–72); that is, it is not clear that Admetus is claiming that his parents, at any age, must offer their lives up to save his. What is indisputable, however, is Admetus' insistence that his aged parents' refusal to act as he thinks obligatory deprives them henceforth of the right to receive the filial respect due one's parents, or indeed to be called "parents" at all.

analysis of her name (*Ag.* 681–92). He does not raise the issue of paternity, being content to use etymology to get his point across; in fact, far from questioning Helen's status as Zeus's daughter, one might view the Chorus as alluding to his possible role as namer of his progeny. Euripides takes a different tack when he has Andromache question the appropriateness of calling Helen the "daughter" of Zeus (*Tro.* 766–71). With regard to the term "son," Heracles informs Hyllus that he has a duty to ease his father's plight by building a pyre and burning the body, lest he forfeit his entitlement to be called the "son" of Heracles (Soph. *Trach.* 1199–1205). Moreover, acknowledging a possible disparity between *onoma* and entitlement, Polynices tells Oedipus that "I'm your son, or, if not, . . . at least I'm called (καλούμενος) your son" (Soph. *OC* 1323–24); also relevant here is Oedipus' remark that Antigone and Ismene "have saved me, they are my support, and are not girls, but men, in faithfulness. As for you two, you are no sons of mine!" (μ' ἐκσῴζουσιν, αἵδ' ἐμαὶ τροφοί, αἵδ' ἄνδρες, οὐ γυναῖκες, ἐς τὸ συμπονεῖν· ὑμεῖς δ' ἀπ' ἄλλου κοὐκ ἐμοῦ πεφύκατον, 1367–69).[52]

While biological mothers' entitlement to the appellation of "mother" may be called sharply into question, the process can also work in reverse; that is, an individual's conduct may provide an otherwise nonexistent justification for calling her "mother." In Euripides' *Ion*, the priestess at Delphi is said to have raised Ion from infancy: "And so she took the child and reared him, not knowing who his mother was, or that Apollo was his father; while the child has never known his parents" (τρέφει δέ νιν λαβοῦσα, τὸν σπείραντα δὲ οὐκ οἶδε Φοῖβον οὐδὲ μητέρ' ἧς ἔφυ, ὁ παῖς τε τοὺς τεκόντας οὐκ ἐπίσταται, 49–51). Ion greets her with χαῖρ', ὦ φίλη μοι μῆτερ, οὐ τεκοῦσά περ, at which the priestess expresses her pleasure (1324–25). Moreover, she bids him good-bye as follows: "And now farewell. I kiss you as my son" (καὶ χαῖρ'· ἴσον γάρ σ' ὡς τεκοῦσ' ἀσπάζομαι, 1363). The participle in line 1324 has clear concessive force (οὐ τεκοῦσά περ); hence, the import of Ion's remark is that although the priestess is not his biological parent, she deserves to be greeted as "mother" based on her treatment of him. In the priestess's parting remark (1363), in turn, *hōs* combines with *ison* to suggest, not that in her view their relationship loosely approximates that of mother and son while necessarily falling short, but rather that in all essentials the connection between them has achieved that status. While both Ion and the priestess readily acknowledge the absence of a biological tie, their remarks show that the priestess's attitude and conduct generate a justification for her being called by the appellation of "mother." This case shows that, far from being sufficient to ground judgments of fitness involving functional terms, neither biological nor other kinship ties between "relatives" are even required.[53]

52. The former translation is mine, the latter that of Fitzgerald (1941).

53. With respect to judgments of appropriateness involving the term "father," Ion claims that Apollo's attitude and behavior toward him justify his use of that *onoma* with reference to the god (136–40). Notably, Ion offers this praise without realizing that Apollo actually is his father (109–11). In fact, we know already from Hermes that Apollo's intention is to advance Ion's cause while concealing his own paternity (69–73).

2.3. *Plato's Revamping of Literary Practice in Light of His Conception of the Ideal* Polis

As previously noted, early in the *Cratylus* Plato discusses one functional term, "king" (βασιλεύς, 393–394), only to refrain from treating *onomata* of this type in the long inquiry that follows. In the *Republic*'s handling of appropriateness, in contrast, this type of term takes center stage. Plato, like the poets, distinguishes sharply between the descriptive and prescriptive levels in the application of functional terms. He takes quite seriously the prescriptive or normative use of these terms in tragedy and incorporates the idea, emphasized repeatedly there, that biological connections are not ultimately decisive when the goal is to determine who may properly be said to be mutually "related" as, for example, mother and daughter.[54] Most specifically, he accepts the idea that biological ties are neither a sufficient nor even a necessary condition for the ascription of kinship ties in the case of those guardians and their progeny who will populate the ideal state. Plato is not content merely to specify that children born to guardians will be taken over by officials chosen for this task (460b7–8), since this arrangement is compatible, at least in principle, with parents' still having some relationship with progeny they know to be their own. Plato insists that this recognition itself must not occur, prescribing that "no parent will know his own offspring, nor will any child know its parent" (μήτε γονέα ἔκγονον εἰδέναι τὸν αὑτοῦ μήτε παῖδα γονέα, 457d2–3). He adds that when nursing mothers are brought to the crèche in which their infants have been placed, the presiding officials "will go to great lengths to ensure that they do not learn who their own children are" (πᾶσαν μηχανὴν μηχανώμενοι ὅπως μηδεμία τὸ αὑτῆς αἰσθήσεται, 460c9–d1). As Plato stresses at 461d–e, kinship distinctions in his ideal state are to be based, not on biological ties, but instead on those conventions established by its founders.[55]

Like the tragedians, moreover, Plato distinguishes explicitly between being someone's kin in name only and performing the actions characteristic of one with a given role:

> As legislator, will you stipulate merely that they use the relevant kinship terms, or will you insist that they also do all the things that are implied by those terms? For example, must they show to those designated as their fathers the same respect, solicitude, and obedience currently due to parents? Won't they be held in low esteem by gods and humans if they do anything less, since they will have acted against the dictates of piety and justice? (463c9–d6)

> πότερον αὐτοῖς τὰ ὀνόματα μόνον οἰκεῖα νομοθετήσεις, ἢ καὶ τὰς πράξεις πάσας κατὰ τὰ ὀνόματα πράττειν, περί τε τοὺς πατέρας, ὅσα νόμος περὶ πατέρας αἰδοῦς

54. Here one may cite a common thread, namely, a marked deemphasis on biology, running through Plato's treatment both of the family and of women's nature and possible role in the ideal *polis*.

55. Cf. Bloom (1991, 385) for an emphasis on the conventional foundation of the family.

τε πέρι καὶ κηδεμονίας καὶ τοῦ ὑπήκοον δεῖν εἶναι τῶν γονέων, ἢ μήτε πρὸς θεῶν μήτε πρὸς ἀνθρώπων αὐτῷ ἄμεινον ἔσεσθαι, ὡς οὔτε ὅσια οὔτε δίκαια πράττοντος ἄν, εἰ ἄλλα πράττοι ἢ ταῦτα;

Following the tragic poets, Plato assumes that it is possible—and in crucial instances desirable—for people who lack biological connections to one another nevertheless to establish and sustain a whole series of kinship relations (463c–e).[56]

Even as Plato builds in crucial ways on literary practice, he also diverges from it in key respects. Above all, one may cite the metaphysical foundation of his discussion, which ultimately governs all of the *Republic*'s major innovations. Most briefly put, the connections are as follows: The ground of everything, once again, is Plato's conviction that Forms constitute natures (*phuseis*) proper. Using his view of reality as a foundation, Plato divides human nature into types, evaluating each based on its capacity to apprehend these natures. Those individuals judged most favorably are in the best position, due to their understanding, to inject order into the realm of Forms' participants. If they are to be motivated and prepared for this undertaking, through their upbringing and education it must become "second nature" to them to view the state as though it were a single, living organism and to treat the "health," namely, the order and unity, of that entity as their paramount concern. This can happen only if they are not distracted by private concerns, whether these be emotional attachments or worries about the accumulation and loss of wealth. As Plato argues in *Republic* 5 prior to his discussion of kinship ties, both women and men can serve as philosopher-rulers and, more generally, as guardians.[57] In his view, members of both sexes are best able to perform their social functions if marriage and procreation are regulated so as to promote a social and political unity that is far more than the mere sum of its parts.[58] Hence, having started with the theory of Forms, one arrives eventually at those prescriptions formulated at *Republic* 461d–e.

In addition, while one may extract generalizations about poets' views from their remarks about functional terms and their referents, these generalizations are not offered by poets themselves, who remain content to analyze the phenomena on a case-by-case basis. Plato's metaphysical framework not only lends his

56. Plato and the poets differ, however, in their views about the composition of the two groups and in their reasons for making assignments to them. For Plato, the crucial distinction is between guardians and producers, since his proposal in *Republic* 5 does not include the latter.

57. For a recent defense of this claim about women's role as philosopher-rulers, see Levin 1996b.

58. For Plato's emphasis on the close relation between the first and second "waves" discussed in *Republic* 5, see 457c–d. The community (*koinōnia*) of wives and children among the guardians is identified as a crucial cause of unity in the *polis* (464a); as Vlastos (1995b, 136) has argued, the fact that Plato mentions women, but not men, in this context does not support the view that men and women belong to one another in different senses.

inquiry a systematic character absent from poets' reflections but also constitutes the backdrop and justification for all of his proposals. Furthermore, in contrast to tragedy, which concentrates on kinship relations, Plato's theory emphasizes a close connection between the treatment of social roles—most notably ruling—and matters of kinship; hence, his assessments of fitness occur with respect to both sets of functional terms.

It is worth noting, finally, that there may be a link between Plato's treatments of eponymy and the application of functional terms insofar as those properly called "rulers" are viewed as such due to their awareness that a key range of terms have primary and secondary referents. In *Republic* 5, Plato lays great weight on the distinction between philosopher-rulers and those *philodoxoi* (480a) who are merely enamored of appearances:

> I distinguish accordingly those about whom you were just now speaking, the lovers of spectacles, lovers of crafts, and practical people, from those who are the actual focus of our argument and who alone merit the appellation "philosophers." (476a9–b2; cf. 480a)
>
> Ταύτῃ τοίνυν . . . διαιρῶ, χωρὶς μὲν οὓς νυνδὴ ἔλεγες φιλοθεάμονάς τε καὶ φιλοτέχνους καὶ πρακτικούς, καὶ χωρὶς αὖ περὶ ὧν ὁ λόγος, οὓς μόνους ἄν τις ὀρθῶς προσείποι φιλοσόφους.

He then identifies the philosopher as

> the one who believes that there is something beautiful in itself and can discern both it and the things that participate in it, never mistaking its participants for it or it for its participants. (476c9–d3)
>
> ὁ . . . ἡγούμενός τέ τι αὐτὸ καλὸν καὶ δυνάμενος καθορᾶν καὶ αὐτὸ καὶ τὰ ἐκείνου μετέχοντα, καὶ οὔτε τὰ μετέχοντα αὐτὸ οὔτε αὐτὸ τὰ μετέχοντα ἡγούμενος.

To solidify this division between philosophers and all others, Plato articulates a systematic distinction between faculties and their proper objects, emphasizing that, unlike Forms themselves, participants in Forms (i.e., the objects of opinion) are both *F* and not-*F* because they always partake (*hexetai*) qualifiedly of the characteristics in question (479a–b). As previously discussed, Plato introduces eponymy in the *Phaedo* explicitly to provide the semantics of the Form-participant relation, making clear there that philosophers—as the only ones with knowledge of Forms—will be the sole individuals who understand that terms referring to Forms have a twofold application and hence how to make it properly. Thus, not only does *Republic* 5 introduce a new dimension in Plato's discussion of appropriateness against a literary backdrop, but it may also take Plato's reaction to literary sources one step further by underscoring an essential relation between his own two revised constructions of literary practice.

3. Conclusion

The foregoing inquiry stresses Plato's engagement with literary sources in three central areas—etymology, eponymy, and the use of functional terms—as he develops his philosophy of language, alongside the theory of Forms, in the middle dialogues. As we have seen, this recourse to literary precedents issues, in both the *Phaedo* and *Republic*, in revamped versions of notions prominent in literature. While Plato finds it most fruitful to rely on philosophical sources in the articulation of his theory of Forms, I hope to have shown that when it comes to crucial developments in his philosophy of language, it is above all to literary sources that he turns. By bringing the latter debt to the fore, this study supplements earlier accounts of the historical sources of Plato's theories. In particular, by exhibiting his threefold concern with literature in the development of his philosophy of language, it indicates that Plato's occupation with this antecedent is far more extensive and thoroughgoing than previously recognized.

In the final chapter, I turn again to the *Republic*, concentrating this time on Plato's most frequently discussed treatment of literary sources, namely, that provided in Books 2–3 and 10. I maintain that—notwithstanding appearances to the contrary generated by his sharp critique—Plato retains an important place for the well-educated poet in his Republic. As I will argue, this account both fits the text best and accords with Plato's own practice, in theorizing about aspects of language, of acknowledging poets' contributions as warranted by their merit.

5

THE QUARREL BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND POETRY

A Reexamination of Poetry's Role in Plato's Republic

1. Introduction

Plato's opposition to poetry in his treatment of human character in *Republic* 2–3 and 10 has prompted extensive scholarly debate. Prominent topics of inquiry have included the link between the dialogue's early and late reflections, discussions of which often center on the concept of *mimēsis*, and the question of what function Plato ultimately reserves for poetry.[1] Commentators have also treated the connections between Plato's account of poetry in the *Republic* and views of it expressed in other dialogues, particularly the *Apology*, *Ion*, *Meno*, *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and *Laws*.[2] What has received far less attention, however, is the role played by the *Cratylus* in Plato's critique of the literary tradition, and hence the relation between his handling of poets there and in the *Republic*.

As indicated in chapter 2, accounts of the *Cratylus*' sources that emphasize sophists and philosophers are problematic due to the paucity of extant evidence and to the fact that such appeals are not clearly supported by the material that has survived. As I argued in chapters 2–3, an investigation of literary practice, combined with textual cues offered in the *Cratylus* itself, supports the conclusion that this tradition is Plato's most direct and prominent target with regard to etymologizing. For the purposes of the current chapter, which underscores ties between his critiques of poetry in the *Cratylus* and *Republic*, the most salient

1. Regarding the concept of *mimēsis* in the fifth century, see Else 1958; on the range of meanings of "imitation" in Plato, one may consult McKeon 1936. For arguments that the accounts in Books 2–3 and 10 are ultimately compatible, see, e.g., Tate 1928, 1932, 1938; Griswold 1981; Belfiore 1984; Reeve 1988, 220–31; Ferrari 1989; Asmis 1992. For a discussion that emphasizes a deep split in Plato's thought about poetry in the *Republic*, see Annas 1982.

2. For discussion of these other dialogues, see Collingwood 1925; Tate 1928; Grube [1968] 1995; Schaper 1968; Ferrari 1989; Asmis 1992; Murray 1992.

consideration involving the former is its denial of the rank of *technē* to the literary practice of naming qua etymologizing due to its inability to meet the *Gorgias'* criteria.

Far from limiting his critique of poetry's failure to qualify as a *technē* to its treatment of naming, Plato argues, most concertedly in the *Republic*, that poetry itself does not meet the *Gorgias'* requirements. By so doing, he poses a direct challenge to the familiar pre-Platonic assumption that its creators are the practitioners of a *technē*.[3] While interpreters have discussed at length the *Republic*'s objections to poets, especially in the arena of values, they have not done full justice to the pivotal role of the *technē* framework in grounding its entire critique. Comparative discussion of the *Cratylus* and *Republic* with an emphasis on this framework reveals that the same conceptual threads govern Plato's sustained critiques of poetry in what appear initially to be quite different arenas, namely, philosophy of language and ethics. The inquiry thus offers further support to the view, defended in previous chapters, that Plato's exposition of the theory of Forms and related doctrines pivotal to his version of philosophy has as a close counterpart a systematic engagement with this rival "authority."

In addition to developing a multifaceted critique of poetry, Plato argues, above all in *Republic* 5–7, that philosophy is the preeminent *technē* and that for this reason the direction of education belongs properly to it. Plato situates his positive characterization of philosophy against the backdrop of his negative account of rival occupations; in his view, the praise of philosophy and demonstration of its rivals' inadequacies are essential and complementary aspects of a single project.[4] The position to be defended here thus differs from that of Hall (1971, 204), according to which the *Republic*'s "relation of the philosopher rulers' 'craft' to the world of forms and the idea of the good . . . distinguish[es] statesmanship from the realm of *technai*." In my view, the cementing of this relation, above all to the Good, is precisely what allows philosophy to meet in a superlative manner those conditions on *technai* elaborated in the *Gorgias*.[5]

Following a discussion of philosophy's status, I consider what role remains for poetry in Plato's ideal community. The account presented here differs both from those that make philosophy and poetry the job of a single practitioner and

3. Regarding this assumption, see Murray 1996, 8; 1981, 98–99.

4. On the reciprocal connections between the critical and positive aspects of Plato's reflections, cf. Nussbaum 1986; Janaway 1995; Nightingale 1995. Based on the framework and discussion of the *Gorgias* and on Plato's remarks elsewhere (e.g., the *Protagoras* and *Republic*), one can develop a similar account of his challenge to the *technē* status of rhetoric and sophistry. The elaboration of this challenge, however, is a topic for another occasion.

5. Hall (1971, 215–16) maintains that the *Gorgias* introduces "a transcendent ordering principle" that "foreshadows the *Republic*'s form of the good." While the *Gorgias* does look ahead to the *Republic*'s handling of goodness, I cannot agree with Hall's broader claim in the article that the *Gorgias* is already moving away from the *technē* model, a process that Hall believes is completed in the *Republic*.

from those that construe Plato as expelling poetry proper from his Republic. While Plato rejects the view that poets are authorities in the sphere of pedagogy, denying thereby that poetry could be a *technē* even under ideal conditions, he admits the possibility that gifted practitioners, if themselves properly educated, may benefit the state by generating creations that will be suitable for the young. Although the pedagogical function of poetry is limited to children, poetic compositions will, in addition, play a civic role on a range of public occasions. Plato thus "wins" for philosophy the quarrel (*diaphora*) between it and poetry by arguing, against tradition, that philosophy should be the teacher of adults and hence supplant poetry in this way as the educator of Greece.[6] He establishes philosophy's dominance, in addition, by contending that its practitioners should be the ultimate arbiters of the content and form of acceptable poetic compositions. The interpretation developed here foregrounds the complexity of Plato's attitude by stressing that although much is at stake for him in the conduct and outcome of the *diaphora* between philosophy and poetry, he is nevertheless unwilling to bar poetry from the ideal *polis* if this exclusion would deprive it of a potential benefactor.

2. Poetry and the Concept of *Technē*: The *Cratylus* Briefly Revisited

The *Cratylus* focuses on one aspect of the content of poetry, namely, etymological analyses of *onomata* that are supposed to disclose their referents' natures. Plato's critique emphasizes that literary practitioners operate with belief, not insight, and that their conception of "nature" (*phusis*) is fundamentally mistaken. With respect to the latter, Plato rejects poets' assumption that individuals (e.g., Helen and Zeus)—whose names are subject most often to etymological analysis—may be said to have natures in any direct or primary sense.

Because the understanding and subject-matter conditions are most prominent in the *Cratylus*' challenge to the *technē* status of naming qua etymologizing, my discussion in chapter 3 of Plato's denial of this rank to literary practice concentrated on them.[7] Yet insofar as etymologies may be used to promote desired emotional reactions, the goodness condition would be quite pertinent as well.[8] Audiences' affective responses could indeed be shaped or enhanced by

6. For an argument that what Plato dubs a "long-standing quarrel" between philosophy and poetry (*Rep.* 607b) was actually initiated by him, see Nightingale 1995, chap. 2; on this issue, cf. Murray 1996, 231. For a different view, see Gould 1990.

7. For discussion of the understanding and subject-matter conditions with respect to the *Cratylus*, see chapter 3, section 2.

8. For a different view, which emphasizes the *Cratylus*' positive contribution to Plato's theory of what art is, see Golden 1975, 121–22. Although Plato concentrates in the *Gorgias* on showing that rhetoric is a mere *empeiria*, he extends the results of that inquiry explicitly to tragedy, focusing thereby

appeals to names' descriptive content—a fact that Plato underscores in the *Cratylus*. As we have seen, literary authors capitalize on this susceptibility in their treatment of divine names such as "Apollo," which is traced to *apollumi* ("destroy").[9] Productive of similar effects is writers' handling of many other *onomata*, among them "Pentheus," which is tied to *penthos* ("grief"), and "Helen," which is derived from *helein* ("to destroy") in that famous passage from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (681–92) discussed in chapter 1.[10] Putting the point in terms of the *Republic*'s articulation of the soul or mind (*psuchē*), one may say that these and similar constructions, which promote extreme feelings (e.g., powerful anger and grief) condemned by the dialogue, foster the development of the spirited element at reason's expense.[11]

The presence of a concern with the goodness condition would, in addition, help to make intelligible Plato's repeated emphasis in the *Cratylus* on the possibility that words, and analyses thereof, can be manipulated to suit whatever agenda the creator or user happens to have. The goodness condition is relevant, moreover, insofar as those who follow names in their quest to understand reality will be deceived, and thus come to harm, because they fail to identify and gain proper access to those abstract entities, namely, Forms (*eidē*), whose apprehension is the foundation of human flourishing.[12] In fact, appeal to a concern with the issue of benefit helps to explain why the *Cratylus* focuses so extensively on etymology—a state of affairs that has prompted some to question whether the

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on the goodness condition (502c–d; cf. *Rep.* 601b). Regarding the claim's scope of application, it is worth noting that in the *Republic* Homer is called the leader of the tragedians (598d); cf. 605c, where he is identified as a maker of tragedy. On the reasons Plato and Aristotle viewed Homer in this light, see Verdenius 1970, 212 n. 25.

9. Concerning "Apollo," see Aesch. *Ag.* 1080–82, 1085–86; see also Eur. *Or.* 119–21 and 954–56. With respect to Greek tragedy, cf. Stanford (1983, 102), who states that "paronomasia could be profoundly serious and pathetic in antiquity," noting that its emotional impact is most powerful when based on a proper name. Regarding tragic poets' efforts to evoke and reinforce the emotions of *eleos* and *phobos*, see Verdenius 1983, 50–51. For Plato's stress on the fear elicited by names, one may consult his treatments of "Hades" (403a, 404b), "Persephone" (404c–d), and "Apollo" (405d–406a; cf. 404c5–7 and d8–e2). As he emphasizes in the *Republic*, names with negative descriptive content are actually "designed to make everyone who hears them shudder" (387c; tr. Waterfield [1993]).

10. On Helen's name, cf. Eur. *Andr.* 105–6. Regarding "Pentheus," see Eur. *Bacch.* 508; cf. 1244.

11. On strong anger as a key feature of the tragic hero, see Gould 1990, chaps. 15, 17–20. While Plato's tripartite division of the soul into the rational, spirited, and appetitive aspects is not presented until Book 4, he emphasizes in Book 3 that poetry must not include strong expressions of emotions such as fear and grief. For the claim that Plato assumes a "standpoint of perfection" in his assessment of emotions in Books 2–3, see Nussbaum 1986, 157–58.

12. One will also be deceived if one does not realize that a key range of terms have primary and secondary referents, namely, Forms and their participants, and that every relevant entity in the spatiotemporal realm is an instance of the latter type; this point emerges above all in the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic*. For discussion of the *Phaedo*, see chapter 4. In the *Symposium*, one may consult 210a–212a. Regarding the *Republic*, see, e.g., Plato's contrast between the lover of spectacles and the philosopher (476–480) and his comments in connection with the Cave (515b–c) on the prevalent error of assuming that entities in the realm of appearance are terms' exclusive, hence genuine, *nominata*.

discussion has a serious purpose.[13] Even interpreters who grant Plato's earnestness there have given voice to frustration, as when Elias (1984, 67) contends that at times "the [dialogue's] reader is likely to bemoan the recurrent flogging of a dead horse, above all in the etymologies, where a few examples quite adequately illustrate the point, and a couple of hundred are hardly needed." While I agree that Plato's intent in this portion of the *Cratylus* is serious, I also believe that the length of his investigation is integral to its message. If Plato's intent were to show only that those he targets lack understanding and associate natures in the primary sense with the wrong type of entity, he could easily have made these points without producing such a lengthy catalogue of analyses. That the list is so extensive, and spans so many different types of entities—all of which play a crucial role in human life, albeit from varying points of view—suggests that Plato has a broader aim in mind.[14] I propose that his goal, at least in part, is to emphasize how harmful it is to one's well-being (i.e., the condition of one's *psuchē*) to approach the cosmic and human domains through the lens of etymology.

3. The *Republic*'s Challenge to Poetry's *Technē* Status

Various commentators, among them Collingwood (1958, 18–19), have claimed that Plato actually grants poetry the rank of *technē*.[15] According to Hartland-Swann (1951, 11), Plato subscribes, not only in the *Republic*, but already in the

13. While I do not mean to exclude all humor or irony here, I do not believe that explanations with this emphasis provide an adequate justification for the section's length and scope.

14. The foundation of Plato's inquiry is the investigation of divine and heroic names. Having dealt extensively with these names, Plato moves on to *onomata* of other types of entities. Prominent in 408d–410e are terms designating elements (e.g., fire), which are granted various types of priority by Presocratics and are central to explanations of what they view as problematic. At issue in 411a–421c are so-called fine names (*kala onomata*) (411a2, a8–b1). This class includes a range of terms whose referents are of great importance to Plato in the areas of ethics, psychology, epistemology, and metaphysics. Key here is the fact that Plato includes terms denoting entities that he takes to have the highest ontological status and to enjoy natural, logical, and explanatory priority as well (*agathon*, *dikaion*, and *kalon*).

15. Having ascribed to Plato and Aristotle the assumption "that poetry . . . was a kind of craft," Collingwood proceeds to label that type of theory "a vulgar error" (1958, 18–19). In his treatment of the artist as a *technitēs*, Grey (1952) relies heavily on the *Sophist*, which, in my view, should not be invoked here since that late dialogue relaxes the *Gorgias*' standards on what qualifies as a *technē* (as evidenced, e.g., by its claim that sophistry has this rank), without, however, altering the fundamental bases of Plato's critique. Moreover, while I concur with the emphasis of Schaper (1968) on Plato's denial to poetry of the rank of *technē*, I cannot agree with her further claim (31–32) that this challenge to its status is merely indirect. For a discussion that notes Plato's denial to poetry of the rank of *technē*, concentrating thereby on its failure to meet what I call the "understanding condition," one may consult Woodruff 1982b. For the *technē* issue as central to Plato's handling of poetry, see Janaway (1995), whose investigation concentrates on the *Ion*, *Gorgias*,

Gorgias (502) to the theory that poetry has this status. I maintain, in contrast, that while the *Cratylus* deals with one portion of poetry's content via the *technē* framework, the *Republic* rejects the *technē* status of poetry as such. Although aspects of Plato's critique are familiar from other dialogues, the *Republic*'s comprehensive challenge necessitates their adaptation and supplementation.

Plato's critical account of poetry in the *Republic* attends repeatedly to the goodness, understanding, and subject-matter conditions on *technai*. The goodness requirement emerges as prominent already in Book 1, where Plato stresses that the activity of each *technē* has as its sole aim to do what is best (*to beltiston*) for its objects (347a1–3).[16] Turning in subsequent books to poetry, Plato gives frequent expression to the view that its creators aim to produce pleasure in the audience without a concern for what is beneficial. Tackling the problem on a specific level, he maintains that passages in the writings of Homer and other poets that promote a fear of death will be expunged, not because they are not pleasing (*hēdea*) to the audience, but because they do not benefit those who are to become guardians (387b2–5). Lines that describe heroes as indulging too much in food and drink will also be deleted: while they do indeed yield pleasure (*hēdonē*) in their hearers, they fail to promote the development of *sōphrosunē* (389e–390a). Plato's concern, most generally put, is that if familiar epic or lyric poetry is admitted into the city, pleasure (*hēdonē*) and pain (*lupē*) will govern it rather than a concern for what is best (607a).[17] Reflection on existing poetic constructions, whose effect on human character he views as deeply problematic, leads Plato to conclude that if poets of the familiar sort requested admission to the ideal state, they would be acknowledged as "sacred and marvelous and pleasant (*hēdun*)" but refused entrance for the sake of the city's well-being (*ōphelias heneka*) (398a–b; cf. 397d). Any poet who is to gain admission would have to show that his poetry "is not only pleasant (*hēdeia*) but also beneficial (*ōphelimē*)" to the community (607d). *If* poets' capacity to promote the good can be demonstrated, they will be admitted into the ideal *polis*. Failing that, regardless of how much gratification they produce, they must be excluded in order to prevent them from having a negative impact on its well-being.

In *Republic* 2–3, Plato indicts poets for harming others by treating as beneficial that damaging state of affairs in which one has a reputation for morality but is actually immoral. Here Plato traces poets' failure to meet the goodness criterion to their shortcomings with respect to the understanding and subject-matter (*peri ti*) conditions. Thus, he states (363e–364c) that, according to poets, licen-

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Hippias Major, *Republic*, and selected later dialogues; while our arguments accord in their distinction between narrow and broad senses of *technē* (Janaway 1995, 47, 51), and in their contention that the *Gorgias* and *Republic* deny *technē* status in the former sense to poetry, they exhibit significant differences in their structure, emphases, and details.

16. For the context, see 346d5–347a1. Other relevant passages are 342b4–e11 and 345b9–e2.

17. Concerning the dichotomy between the pleasant and the good insofar as it involves poets, see also 493c–d.

tiousness and injustice are only disgraceful in opinion (*doxēi*) and by convention (*nomōi*), implying that poets promote this view because they lack understanding and the right conception of what is natural (*phusei*). Shortly thereafter, Plato attributes poets' promotion of a defective conception of flourishing to their preference for appearance (*to dokein*) over reality (365b–c).

Republic 5, which presents a systematic distinction between knowledge and belief, above all by differentiating their objects, builds on that division articulated previously in the *Gorgias* (454). Books 6 and 10, which presuppose the careful analysis of Book 5, comment most directly on how poets fare with regard to their level of cognition. In Book 6, Plato stresses the prevalence of moral deficiency by likening the populace to a powerful beast (493) and links together poets and sophists with respect to their destructive impact (c–d). A negative effect on the public is inevitable as long as these "strange teachers" (c7–8) operate with and beget mere opinions regarding values.[18] Plato supports his criticism of practitioners' cognitive state by stressing individuals' inability to exhibit their alleged wisdom in a *logos* of the procedures they employ and their relevance to the end in question (493b–c).[19] Regarding the subject-matter requirement, Plato's repeated contrasts earlier in Book 6 between the activity of the few that is directed toward Forms and the activity of the multitude that centers on participants (484b–e, 485a–b, 490a–b) provide the foundation for the beast analogy. That the analogy is followed immediately by the repetition of this contrast (493e–494a)—which itself begins with Plato's request that one bear in mind what has just transpired (493e2)—suggests that specialists' failure to transcend appearance promotes the audience's obsession with its manifold permutations.

In Book 10, Plato concentrates on poets, repeatedly emphasizing their lack of insight (598d–602b). While some say that poets know all *technai* (598d–e), Plato insists that they know none. One cannot reasonably hold them to account the way one would doctors and generals when they discuss medicine and generalship, respectively. One must, however, hold poets responsible for the negative impact of their constructions where the issue is virtue and vice, since it is on poets' handling of such topics that their claim to excellence rests. Although poets allege to have mastery of these subjects, in fact they lack knowledge of them altogether (600e–601b). Generating only products "three removes from reality" (597e), poets deceive—and thereby corrupt—the audience by manipulating words (*onomata*) and phrases (*rhēmata*) to create false impressions of expertise.[20] Further discussion of Book 10, which deepens Plato's critique of poetry with respect to all three *technē* conditions, will be provided in section 6.

18. Regarding Plato's critical stance toward the production of beliefs by nonphilosophers, cf. 496a.

19. For an emphasis on the importance of being able to provide a rational account (*logon didonai*) that exhibits one's understanding, see also 533c and 534b.

20. On poets' deceptive use of *onomata* and *rhēmata*, see 601a–b.

The *Republic*'s negative assessments of poets with reference to the understanding and subject-matter requirements are familiar from the *Ion* and *Cratylus* and supplement in crucial ways those offered in the latter.[21] Both the *Ion* and the *Cratylus* stress poets' lack of understanding. The *Ion* not only emphasizes the fact that poets operate without knowledge but actually treats the absence of *nous* as a necessary condition for creative practice (534b).[22] In addition, and in contrast to the *Republic*, the *Ion*'s investigation stresses a contrast between knowledge and divine dispensation rather than one between knowledge and belief—which may be true or false, and true for quite different reasons.[23] The *Cratylus*, in turn, as we saw, condemns poets for their lack of understanding as evinced by their attempts at naming, which are judged to be products solely of opinion. Although one can certainly apply more generally Plato's basic criticism there that poets operate with mere belief rather than knowledge, one must consult the *Republic* for that more general treatment, along with a sustained exploration of the relation between the two cognitive states.

The *Republic*'s fundamental objection to poets with respect to the subject-matter condition is that they are occupied not with ethical realities themselves, for example, the nature of justice or courage, but with semblances (or semblances of images) thereof.[24] This objection is similar in type to that developed in the *Cratylus* but is significantly broader in scope. The common ground lies in the fact that in both cases Plato criticizes poets for having the wrong conception of *phusis*, one that makes particular entities fundamental and often exemplary. Regarding the issue of scope, while the *Cratylus* focuses on mortal and divine individuals—which is to be expected since literary etymologies are largely of proper names—the *Republic*'s critique of poets is formulated with respect to a much broader range of participants in the relevant Forms: here the entities in question include not only individuals possessed of agency but also actions (e.g., those alleged to manifest bravery or self-mastery) and institutions (e.g., the practice and social role of the hero as described by Homer).[25] Plato's point here is

21. See Janaway (1995, 16; 1992) for a different view of the *Ion*, according to which Plato does not deny, but rather assumes, the existence of a poetic *technē*.

22. The *Ion* does not specify what operating with understanding would amount to. What Plato does say is that knowledge is *of* a determinate and clearly circumscribed subject matter, whose ontological status is not specified. He also identifies one consequence of having knowledge, namely, that one can exert oneself to extend the sphere of one's expertise.

23. With respect to the different grounds of *doxa*, see *Rep.* 429b-430b, where Plato distinguishes true belief produced by education from that generated by any other source.

24. For a challenge to the familiar view that paintings and poems are metaphysically distinct from those objects that creators represent through their activity, see Belfiore 1981, 120 (with n. 19). In her view (120), a painting of a bed "is qualitatively rather than metaphysically different from the bed we use, for it is made by an incompetent individual who is capable of understanding and imitating only apparent beauty."

25. While the *Cratylus* itself, particularly the conclusion, emphasizes the broad scope of Plato's concern, it is in the *Republic* that the account is generalized explicitly with reference to poets.

that, notwithstanding poets' captivating descriptions of entities of these types, none of them may be taken as fundamental or paradigmatic.

Finally, both the *Cratylus* and the *Republic* evince a concern with the goodness condition. In the *Cratylus*, this worry—which is not totally explicit—centers on the potentially destructive impact of names with negative descriptive content and, more generally, on how harmful it is to the welfare of one's soul to use etymologies as vehicles for apprehending "reality." The *Republic*'s concern with poetry's impact is, in contrast, quite direct. As we saw in chapter 2, Plato forges here a strong link with ground covered in the *Cratylus* by emphasizing the destructive potential of names with negative semantic constitution and by noting that the incorporation of *onomata* with positive descriptive content in revised poetic compositions could be a fruitful pedagogical tool (*Rep.* 387b–c). In addition to the fact that its concern with the goodness criterion is fully explicit, the *Republic* differs from the *Cratylus* insofar as Plato's efforts in the former are directed toward poets' constructions in their entirety and hence yield a conclusion that applies to their practice as a whole. The conclusion to draw from the *Republic*'s thoroughgoing critique of poetry is not that virtue itself is not the province of a genuine *technē*. It is indeed the domain of a *technē*, but that *technē* is philosophy rather than poetry.

4. Plato's Defense of Philosophy as the *Technē* Par Excellence

Plato's most concerted attempt to depict philosophy as being at the top of the hierarchy of *technai* comes in *Republic* 5–7.[26] There he makes clear that it not only satisfies all the conditions set forth in the *Gorgias* but meets them to the fullest possible extent. Based on his exploration of the subject matter of philosophy, the cognitive state of its practitioners, and their superlative ability to meet the goodness requirement, Plato concludes that philosophy is the preeminent *technē*.

Much controversy surrounds the role of *technē* in Plato's theorizing about philosophy. A key point of contention is how one should interpret the craft analogy presented in early dialogues such as the *Laches* and *Charmides*. Should one construe the argument to be that *aretē* ("virtue," or "excellence") itself is a *technē*?[27] Might the connection between *technē* and virtue be intended more loosely, such that while the comparison gives some positive content to a moral theory, difficulties and disanalogies are evident even at this early juncture?[28] Or,

26. On philosophy as having this position, cf. Kato 1986, 47, 72, 77.

27. See Irwin (1977b, 7), according to whom Socrates "argues that a virtue is simply craft-knowledge." Warren (1989) prefaces his case for the view that the *Republic* depicts ruling as a *technē* by claiming (101) that, strictly speaking, "the craft argument is not an analogy at all but is an expression of Plato's conviction that knowledge is virtue."

28. Regarding this position, see, e.g., Vlastos 1995a; Gould 1955; Schofield 1979; O'Brien 1967.

in contrast, is the craft analogy used to criticize, refute, and exhort, with the knowledge involved in virtue to be construed as nontechnical?[29] Since Plato's early use of the craft analogy has been thoroughly discussed by others, and the current study concentrates on subsequent dialogues, this issue will not occupy us here. For present purposes, I simply note my adherence to the view that while this analogy sheds some light on how virtue should be understood, there are difficulties with it, which stem from unresolved questions about the relation of *technai* to the good and their restriction to particular domains in a way that is not entirely appropriate to virtue.[30] Such difficulties are not, I believe, irremediable. In contrast to Gould (1955), I suggest that Plato's later reconstruction of *technē* avoids just these problems.[31]

Most relevant for current purposes is the fact that those who grant positive import to the early dialogues' *technē* analogy disagree about what happens subsequently. Some commentators argue that Plato, having seen clearly and taken to heart the inadequacies of the craft analogy, is prompted to reject it.[32] Others

29. For this view of the analogy, see Roochnik 1996, 125 (cf. 1986, 303, 307; 1990, 187–88, 193); concerning the nontechnical status of knowledge, see Roochnik 1996 (cf. 1990, 93, 190–91). The claim that the knowledge in question is nontechnical is also endorsed by Gonzalez (1998a, chap. 2), who cites Roochnik's interpretation of the analogy's function approvingly (294 n. 47). Central to the question of how the argument should be construed is the matter of the relation between *technē* and instrumentality. Irwin (1977b) argues that in the early dialogues virtue is construed as merely instrumental to happiness, and therefore as lacking in intrinsic value; see also his more recent affirmation that "an instrumental view of virtue and happiness . . . fits the dialogues best" (1995, 76). For challenges to the instrumentalist thesis, see Vlastos 1995a, 131; Taylor 1979, 599; Zeyl 1982; Nussbaum 1986, 97–98; Lesses 1986; Penner 1992, 149–50 n. 14; Parry 1996, 101–4. There is disagreement, in addition, regarding the extent to which Socrates breaks new ground in turning to the craft analogy. Gould (1955, 31 n. 3) opposes his own emphasis to that of Robinson (1953, 206) by claiming that Socrates "*creates* the analogy" (cf. 33); cf. Irwin (1977b, 289 n. 20), who contends that "the connection between virtue and craft is not at all intuitive to Greeks." On the argument of Kube (1969), there is continuity between the *technē* analogy used by the Platonic Socrates and earlier Greek ideas; see O'Brien (1967, chap. 2) for the contention that an existing view of politics and virtue as a *technē* is a major source of Socrates' and Plato's "ethical intellectualism." On pre-Platonic usage of the term *technē*, see also Schaerer 1930; Roochnik 1996.

30. For discussion of issues involving the goodness and domain of *technai*, see Gould 1955, chap. 2. Roochnik (1996) emphasizes difficulties with the *technē* model that center on the goodness and subject-matter conditions, but he differs from Gould in believing that the dialogues' model with respect to virtue is always nontechnical.

31. Regarding the subject-matter criterion, see Hogan (1977), who argues, contra Gould, that the *Charmides* does not disclose problems with the analogy per se but instead illustrates the dialectical impasse that prevails as long as the nature of the object in question remains unspecified. For critical discussion of Gould on the issue of what has been called (e.g., by Roochnik 1996, 30) "value-neutrality," see Tiles 1984, 51–54. Like Gould, Roochnik (1996; 1990, 190) maintains that *technai* are inherently value-neutral.

32. See, e.g., Irwin 1977b, 203: Plato "denies that moral knowledge is a craft prescribing instrumental means to a previously desired goal" (cf. 248); Irwin notes subsequently that in the middle dialogues "moral knowledge is *epistēmē*, but not *technē*" (289 n. 19). For further discussion of the *Republic* and a renewed defense of the view that Plato rejects the craft analogy, see Irwin 1995.

contend that Plato retains a positive role for the concept of *technē* while introducing revisions that address those difficulties associated with the early dialogues' construction of it.[33] In what follows, I defend my own position, which may be described as a version of the latter stance.[34]

On this issue, cf. Collingwood (1958, 18), who interprets *Rep.* 330d–336a as demonstrating that justice is not a *technē*, and the claim of Cross and Woozley (1964, 13) that Socrates' argument against Polemarchus at *Rep.* 333–334 "shows why it is a mistake to regard justice as being a skill at all." Although on balance Hall (1971) seems to belong in the group of those who claim that Plato gives up the craft analogy (216; cf. 205), his comments sometimes suggest instead a distinction within the realm of *technai*, as when he claims that in the *Republic* "statecraft is not one among many *technai* but in some significant respects unique" (214). Woodruff (1990) attributes special importance to the *Meno*'s recollection theory, and distinction between knowledge and true belief, arguing that "a consequence of these developments is that the *technē*-model for knowledge is abandoned, for here Socrates considers a sort of knowledge that is always present in the knower, and so never taught" (81). In my view, Plato's introduction of the recollection theory need not, indeed does not, jeopardize an activity's capacity to meet the learnability/teachability condition on *technai*; instead, one simply requires a model of the content, goals, and means of teaching that corresponds to this new conception of learning. Plato, I believe, offers precisely this in the *Republic*.

33. For emphasis on the positive role of the concept of *technē* in Plato's mature moral theory and treatment of the philosopher-ruler, see Sprague 1976; Parry 1983, 1996; O'Brien 1967; Kato 1986; Kube 1969; cf. Nussbaum 1986 (esp. 237, 290–91) and Wild 1946. One may consult Warren (1989) for the view, based above all on the arguments of *Republic* 1, that ruling is the "mastercraft." Thayer (1969) emphasizes the positive role of *technē* in Plato's philosophy, but his contention that "the *polis*" is the preeminent *technē* in the *Republic* (259, 260) is insufficiently precise. Bambrough (1971) sees continuity between Socrates and Plato in the view that the focus of inquiry, virtue or statesmanship, is itself a *technē*; according to Bambrough, by depicting statesmanship as "prescriptive" rather than "instrumental," Plato tries unsuccessfully to address the difficulty that qua *technē* practitioner the statesman would formulate means not ends (201–2). For an argument that Plato, having seen the craft analogy's fruitful application to Socratic ethics, uses it in the *Timaeus* as a model for natural science, see Graham 1991.

It is not entirely clear which of the two camps Reeve (1988) fits into. While he stresses that Plato rejects the craft analogy (see, e.g., xii, 8, 19)—leading Roochnik (1996, 5 n. 14) to identify him as a "discontinuist"—there are indications that Reeve does attribute a positive role to *technē* in Plato's mature theorizing. Thus, for example, having claimed (23) that Plato "does not abandon [Socrates], or his theories; he transforms them," he contends that philosopher-rulers practice a craft, indeed, qualify as "master craftsmen" (84–89). That Reeve views Plato as distinguishing levels of crafts receives support from Reeve's distinction (88) between the "ordinary craftsman" and an "extraordinary" one, which is followed by the assertion (89) that Plato's description (596b12–d1) of the extraordinary craftsman "fits the philosopher-king like a glove." Since philosophers—who are unique in having genuine knowledge "about virtue, and what kind of life is best" (Reeve 1988, 90)—are said to practice a craft, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Reeve is at least a qualified advocate of continuity.

With respect to *technē*, cf. Kahn (1996), who stresses the importance of this concept to Plato's theorizing about morality and politics in dialogues up through the *Republic* in the context of defending "the essential unity of Plato's thought" (xvii). Contesting the dominant view, Kahn argues that Plato's early and middle dialogues do not provide evidence of "a distinct Socratic period" (39), manifesting instead a single Platonic vision that is gradually articulated.

34. The account of philosophy to be sketched here diverges sharply not only from the stance of those who claim that Plato gives up the *technē* framework but also from the position of Roochnik

In the early and middle dialogues, Plato distinguishes repeatedly between seeking merely to produce pleasure in others via flattery and truly promoting the good of those toward whom one's activity is directed. Plato's argument in the *Republic* bases philosophers' distinctive capacity to promote their own and others' welfare on their apprehension of the highest element of reality, namely, the Form of the Good.[35] In Plato's view, nothing imperfect (*ateles*), that is, nothing that is not both unchanging and unchangeable, provides an entirely firm reference point for either thought or action (504c). Prior to his discussion of the Good, Plato insists that it is best for philosophers to rule in the community because only they truly understand the elements of reality and their interconnections. Philosophers assimilate themselves to the harmony that they have glimpsed among these entities (500b8–d1), and this apprehension and resulting accord within enables them to foster harmony without, once again taking as the foundation of their activity Forms, particularly values, and their interrelations (500d, 501b-e). Having established firmly this causal relation between the apprehension of perfect objects and the securing of benefit, Plato introduces the capstone of his theory, namely, the Form of the Good—the ultimate object of aspiration—which lies at the top of the hierarchy of Forms (see 504d–509d, 517b–c, 518c–d).[36] While all human beings want to promote what they view as good, particularly for themselves (505d–e; cf. 521a), only the apprehension of this Form allows one to come as close to perfection in the structuring of self and community as is possible for anything tinged with mortality (see especially 505a–506b, 509b, 514a–521a). Philosophers' apprehension of the Good thus allows them to maximize the presence in the spatiotemporal realm of what is genuinely bene-

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(1996), who, as previously noted, maintains that the dialogues never seriously propound the craft analogy. Roochnik focuses on the early dialogues but maintains that "if in [*Republic*] 1 and his early works Plato was pointing to a conception of nontechnical moral knowledge, it becomes increasingly likely that in his middle works he also eschewed a technical moral theory" (146; cf. 133). This view of the middle dialogues need not follow, and indeed might be less persuasive—a priori at any rate—to one who embraced a doctrinal approach to Plato's writings that attended to the development of his theories over time. Roochnik's treatment of the early dialogues stresses the interdependence of (dialogue) form and content, and his remarks on the figure of the "ship-of-state" in *Republic* 6 (149–50) make clear that, were he to offer an account of *Republic* 2–10, it would underscore this relationship. A key assumption on which Roochnik operates is that the form of Plato's discussions tells against their content's being doctrinal. If one does not accept this assumed connection, however, then Roochnik's "nontechnical" interpretation is deprived of a key source of its support. For critical discussion of Roochnik's approach from a different perspective, see Weiss 1998.

35. Cf. Sprague (1976, 99), according to whom a vision of the Good grounds the *Republic*'s distinction between "legitimate and illegitimate second-order arts."

36. This claim is not intended to apply to all stages of Plato's reflection on Forms. The identity of those Forms or kinds lying at the top of Plato's classification does in fact undergo some variation. Most notably, in the *Sophist* he gives primacy to the five *megista genē*. It is from the perspective of a concern with values that Plato situates the Good above all other *eidē*.

ficial.[37] Practitioners of other *technai*, in turn, operate under the supervision of the philosopher insofar as they require the latter's expertise in order to determine whether the goodness requirement is being met to the highest degree possible within their own domains of expertise.[38] Although there is a special relationship between the Good and other ethical Forms, more generally Plato views order and harmony as marks of goodness (for his assignment to the Good of far wider than ethical significance, see 508e–509a).[39] The concept of goodness is thus pertinent to such disciplines as astronomy, which studies the ordered movement of celestial bodies. There is a close connection, moreover, between the cosmic and human planes insofar as the proper study of disciplines like astronomy helps to create order and harmony within the human soul.

In the *Republic*, Plato emphasizes not only that *technai* are markedly superior to *empeiriai* but also that *technai* themselves are situated hierarchically with reference to one another (see Plato's pointed distinction at 533b between philosophy and "all the other *technai*" and his contrasting of philosophy to "the other *technai*" at 495d). As the Divided Line makes clear, the second tier of *technai* is typified by mathematical activity, which involves the direction of one's attention toward *eidē*, with, however, those Forms' being explored indirectly (i.e., via particulars like diagrams) rather than firsthand. Plato's praise of it in Books 6 and 7 is qualified: insofar as mathematical practice is concerned ultimately with Forms, it is to be lauded, while due to its reliance on particulars and unquestioning use of hypotheses, it is rightly subject to criticism.[40] Above it is that activity

37. Much controversy surrounds the question of whether it is in philosopher-rulers' interest to divide their time between philosophizing and ruling rather than devoting themselves exclusively to the former activity. On this issue see, e.g., Kraut 1973, 1992, 1993; White 1979, 1986; Annas 1981, 259–71; Cooper 1977; Irwin 1977b, 236–37, 242–43 (with 337–38 n. 61), 267–68, and 1995, chap. 18; Reeve 1988, 200–203. In my view, ruling does not detract from the well-being of these individuals. As Kraut (1992, 328–29) observes, "one's highest good is not always served by purely contemplating the Forms; rather, one's highest good is to establish and maintain a certain imitative relationship with the Forms, a relationship that is strained or ruptured when one fails to do one's fair share in a just community."

38. On the philosopher's role as overseer, cf. Kato 1986, 23, 47, 76. In the view of Sprague (1976, 92), the "first-order" arts are introduced as "steppingstones to the good and the good *then* descends to make them truly useful." According to Kahn (1996, 209), "the Good itself . . . must be the object . . . for the art of the philosopher-kings. And such knowledge will be useful precisely because, in the hands of the rulers, it will guide the right use of the workings and products of all the other arts."

39. On these features as signs of goodness, see also Kraut 1992, 323.

40. There are various ways of construing the difference between stages 3 and 4 of the Divided Line. On the interpretation adopted here, the difference is not one of objects but rather of methodology, insofar as the entities studied by mathematics are also at issue on the highest level. Another stance would involve viewing the objects of stage 3 as mathematical entities, intermediate between particulars and Forms. Ross (1953, 65) presents a third option, according to which "the objects of διάνοια are not the 'intermediates' but are simply the mathematical Ideas, and those of νοῦς the other Ideas" (see also Robinson 1953, 195). Although this is an interesting suggestion, in my view Plato's handling of the Line and his comments elsewhere, e.g., in the Recollection

which Plato views as constitutive of philosophy. Here one proceeds solely via Forms, and all movement from particulars to Forms is viewed as merely preparatory (for a description of this type of activity, see 511b–c; cf. 533b–d).

According to the Line, while the inquiries of mathematicians and philosophers both involve Forms, only the latter have immediate access to those entities combined with a systematic understanding of how they interconnect. This comprehensive understanding is based ultimately on that knowledge of the Good which sets the philosopher apart from everyone else. Hence, philosophy differs most fundamentally from other *technai* with respect to its subject matter because it alone has the Form of the Good as part of its domain. Since it is the apprehension of this Form that allows one to have the most direct and complete access possible to other *eidē*, along with full knowledge of their interrelations, its being an element of philosophy's domain ultimately explains why philosophy has Forms as its subject matter in the strictest possible sense.[41]

While *Republic* 5 elaborates the distinction between knowledge and belief made by Plato in the *Gorgias*, it does not specify how *technai* such as geometry are to be accommodated in terms of this dichotomy. This omission stems presumably from the fact that Plato is beginning his detailed exploration of how philosophers differ, cognitively speaking, from everyone else.[42] In his presenta-

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Argument of the *Phaedo* (72e–77a), support the contention that the philosopher's activity involves Forms for both mathematical and value concepts. While Robinson grants that "Plato probably held that the objects now studied by mathematical method could be successfully studied dialectically" (1953, 200), in my opinion a stronger claim about the actual domain of dialectical inquiry is justified.

41. Although, as commentators have observed, the Form of the Good is not mentioned expressly in the Line, it need not follow that it is irrelevant thereto. According to Fogelin (1971, 378), the Good has no place whatsoever there. I would stress, in contrast, that even if the Good has special features that distinguish it from other Forms, it still belongs to the domain of *eidē* and therefore shares central characteristics with other members of that group (e.g., being abstract, timeless, and such that entities in the spatiotemporal realm can participate in it). In addition, as Robinson (1953, 159) observes, the Line assigns a unique position in human knowledge to the *anhupotheton* (510b7, 511b6), and there is evidence to support the conclusion that this entity is none other than the Good (for justification of this inference, see Robinson 1953, 159–60).

42. At first glance, that portion of *Republic* 5 in which Plato makes his remarks about women's equality does not appear to be tied closely to what follows. In the view of Grube (1974, 111), the first two-thirds of the book "deal with subjects which have been omitted or but lightly touched upon in founding the city, while the last third begins the description of the Platonic philosopher, his wisdom and his methods, which continues through the next two books" (cf. Cornford 1941, 144, xii; Halliwell 1993a, 3–5). If, however, one understands the discussion of women in terms of its role in Plato's defense of philosophy as the *technē* par excellence, the structure of *Republic* 5 ceases to be problematic. As previously emphasized, the understanding requirement on *technai* presupposes the existence—and delineation—of a small class of expert practitioners. In Plato's assessments of activities' claims to the rank of *technē*, discussions of these aspects of the understanding condition go hand in hand and are mutually reinforcing. For example, in the *Cratylus*, which denies *technē* status to naming qua etymologizing, Plato's handling of the understanding

tion of the Line (509d–511e), Plato claims that *dianoia* ("reasoning") is intermediate between opinion and understanding (*noēsis*, a term used interchangeably with *epistēmē*; for the latter, see 533e–534a). Like *noēsis*, *dianoia* is directed toward Forms, but its access to those entities is mediated rather than direct. When Plato draws a general contrast between the visible and intelligible realms, which are symbolized by the halves of the Line, he refers to the bottom two segments collectively as *doxa* and to the top two as *noēsis* (533e–534a). When he speaks with the highest level of precision, however, a distinction within each half—most notably the upper one—comes to the fore. The cognitive framework represented by the Line makes clear that practitioners of *technai* that occupy the tier below philosophy—"geometry, arithmetic, and so forth" (510c)—achieve something short of full understanding. With regard to the understanding requirement, the philosopher thus surpasses not only those who practice *empeiriai* but also all other *technē* practitioners.[43]

In my view, Plato resolves the difficulty with the *technē* analogy that involves virtue's lack of a clearly delimited subject matter (along the lines, say, of medicine or astronomy) by clarifying and refining the connection between virtue and *technē*. While the *Laches* and *Charmides* are concerned ultimately with the "What is *F*-ness?" question, the investigations of virtue themselves focus, often interchangeably, on qualities, people, and activities. The question of whether virtue is a *technē* in fact centers most directly, not on qualities, but rather on praxis. Insofar as the latter is the focus of inquiry, the early dialogues find no proposed candidate for its subject matter to be adequate.[44] A full articulation of the relation between virtue and *technē* would presuppose in the treatment of this issue a clear division of qualities from activities of the sort that is not offered at this early juncture. In the *Republic*, Plato cements the distinction between qualities and an activity or way of life by delineating the latter as a *technē*, namely, philosophy, and the former, construed as Forms, as the core objects around which

condition comprises his argument both that the activity lacks practitioners of the requisite caliber and that those who have undertaken naming to date have operated based solely on *doxa*. *Republic* 5 also treats these two complementary aspects of the understanding condition: the last section, which presents a systematic distinction between knowledge and belief, addresses the issue of what cognitive state distinguishes the philosopher, while the earlier portion, which contains Plato's discussion of women, helps to specify the range of human beings who may count as expert practitioners of philosophy under ideal circumstances. It is thus far from coincidental that Plato presents his insights about women, which pertain directly to the issue of who may possess this highest form of expertise, as a prelude to detailed remarks on the cognitive state in which that expertise is manifested. On this interpretation, *Republic* 5 is a unity in a far stronger sense than is captured by interpretations that treat the book as merely transitional. If one calls to mind here Aristotle's discussion of substantial unity in *Metaphysics* Z.17, one might say that Book 5 is like the syllable rather than the heap (1041b11–33).

43. On Book 10's presentation of artifact construction, see section 5.

44. For discussion of the *Charmides*, see Hogan 1977.

that life is built. What is more, Plato's construction of goodness makes it possible for philosophers to maintain virtue as their special province while also apprehending the goals and domains of other *technai*, particularly insofar as the qualities of order and harmony pertain thereto.[45] Plato's conception thus shows clearly how philosophers' understanding can be focused on the domain of virtue yet consist, at the same time, of a vision that is all-encompassing.

Plato's revised construction of *technē* also addresses successfully the worry, which is especially prominent in *Republic* 1 and in the *Hippias Minor*, that expertise can just as easily be used to promote bad as good. One might think that the provision of benefit is ensured by the fact that the *Gorgias*' framework gives a crucial role to the goodness requirement. Actually, however, while the goodness criterion captures Plato's insistence on barring the provision of harm—whether due to malice or to culpable ignorance—from the realm of *technai*, it does not itself explain how this exclusion is possible. What ultimately guarantees *technē* practitioners' promotion of goodness in the spatiotemporal realm is the fact that philosophers have direct cognitive access to the paramount object of understanding, namely, the Good itself. This apprehension, in turn, prompts them to act directly on the spatiotemporal domain so as to maximize the presence of goodness within it, and to advise practitioners of other *technai* on how the goodness condition can be met most completely and effectively within their own areas of specialization.[46] Although it might seem questionable or problematic that philosophers' apprehension of goodness could benefit, say, the astronomer, Plato's strong connection of goodness to order and harmony makes this link seem natural indeed.

The foregoing discussion of the *Republic*'s treatment of poetry and philosophy takes as its lens the concept of *technē*. In particular, it shows how in that dialogue Plato both denies *technē* status in the narrow sense to the entire practice of poetry and argues that philosophy is itself the *technē* par excellence. The depth of Plato's concern with the goodness criterion is manifest in the *Republic*'s sustained attempt to demonstrate that philosophy, along with those institutions established and monitored by its practitioners, is of greatest benefit to human beings. Since Plato's praise of philosophy and denunciations of its rivals transpire alongside one another, one might anticipate—rightly—that his challenges to the latter would emphasize their shortcomings with respect to this condition. The account presented here, and expanded in section 6, suggests that Plato's treatment of poetry follows that of philosophy in another respect as well; namely, just as his defense of philosophy makes paramount its unique standing with respect to the criteria involving subject matter and understanding, so too, con-

45. The connection between goodness and order is adumbrated in the *Gorgias*, where Plato insists that a soul is in good condition to the extent that it manifests structure (*taxis*) and order (*kosmos*) (*Grg.* 503d–507c, esp. 504b and 506d–e).

46. Regarding the former point, cf. Parry 1996, 148–50.

versely, at bottom Plato's critique of poetry is for its failure to meet these two requirements.

Not only does this inquiry help answer the question of how Plato views the relation between poetry and philosophy under current conditions, it also places at least some general constraints on any future connection that might obtain between them. Above all, we know that a valid association is possible only if poetry's benefit to its hearers, and hence its contribution to human flourishing, can be demonstrated. While one might think that the specifics of poetry's fate will simply fall out predictably, and with a wholly negative outcome, from what precedes, in fact the discussion is not yet complete. In particular, it is worth addressing directly and in some detail the question of what future relation Plato envisions between poetry and philosophy. The result will be a more positive view of poetry's potential role in the ideal *polis* than the preceding emphasis on his critique of it might lead one to suspect.

5. A *Technē* of Poetry? The Status of Revised Literary Practice

As noted, Plato allows that there is a place for poetry in his Republic to the extent that it can be shown to promote the optimal functioning of individuals and hence the community. Defenses of poetry along these lines—whether offered in verse by poets themselves or in prose by others—will be looked upon with favor because "we gain if it turns out to be not only pleasurable but also beneficial" (607e1–2). The point of contention is whether and how poetry can be helpful in the struggle to be good (608b), including the question of whether it can do so by meeting Plato's central requirements on *technai*. I suggest that poetry can indeed be of use in this struggle even if it is not, and cannot be, itself a *technē*.[47]

The most promising approach for one who wanted to defend the claim that a revamped practice of poetry achieved the rank of *technē* would be to argue that it was analogous in the relevant ways to carpentry as described in *Republic* 10. In my view, however, this line of reasoning does not yield the conclusion that poetry is a *technē* in the strict sense that is delineated in the *Gorgias*.

Republic 7 includes at the bottom of its classification of *technai* those "directed toward generation and manufacture," 533b.[48] Although Plato does not spell out here what his criteria are for placing artifact production (e.g., bed-making) on the lowest tier of this hierarchy, one may infer the assignment's foundation from what he says elsewhere.

47. Cf. Woodruff (1982b, 150 n. 12), who maintains that although Plato "entertains the idea that a good and skillful rhetoric could be developed (in the *Phaedrus*), he holds out no such hopes for poetry."

48. I adopt here Waterfield's translation (1993).

Bed-makers lack, not only knowledge, but also *dianoia* (i.e., the cognitive state of mathematicians according to the Divided Line). As *Republic* 10 makes clear, they operate instead with true belief (596b with 601c–602a). Practitioners of carpentry thus fail to satisfy the *Gorgias*' "understanding condition," even on that looser construction according to which it may be met by *dianoia*—a state that falls short of insight, yet is distinctly superior to belief. The *Gorgias* places much weight on the requirement that *technē* practitioners have understanding rather than mere belief, and under ordinary conditions, an activity's failure to meet it would suffice to exclude it from the realm of *technai* narrowly construed. In the *Republic,* however, Plato tells us that bed-making and other relevant types of artifact production do make the grade.

Practices like bed-making qualify as *technai* above all because they have *eidē* as their objects, fulfilling thereby the subject-matter condition. Yet the fact that true belief is sufficient here for activity involving *ideai* should alert us to the strong possibility that we are dealing with entities that are not strictly on a par with those central cases of Forms delineated in the *Phaedo* (for Plato's focus there on entities in the realm of mathematics and of values, see, e.g., 75c–d): any access to those Forms, as we have seen, requires at a bare minimum *dianoia*—and the apprehension that it makes possible is merely indirect.

Plato's only explicit remarks in the middle dialogues about some Forms' having an elevated position relative to others occur in *Republic* 6 and 7, where he introduces the claim that the Good lies at the pinnacle of his classification.[49] While Plato does not address directly the issue of whether there are distinctions of level among the remaining Forms, there are indications that the *eidē* involved in artifact production reside on a lower tier than does the core group of Forms familiar from the *Phaedo.*

In the *Peri Ideōn*'s "Arguments from the Sciences," Aristotle contends, ostensibly, that Plato's account commits him to the existence of more Forms than Plato himself actually wants; most specifically, Aristotle seems to argue that Plato's theory has the result—unwelcome to the latter—that artifact production too will have to proceed with Forms (e.g., that of Bed) in view.[50] Yet it is regularly assumed that *Republic* 10 in particular introduces such Forms.[51] Interpreters are therefore left with a puzzle, but one that is, I believe, ultimately only apparent. If one examines those passages in the middle dialogues that appeal to Forms, one sees that Plato's emphasis on and arguments for their existence involve multiple types of considerations. A recognition of what one may call, following

49. See 504d–509d (esp. 508b–509b), 517b–c, 518c–d. I have in mind here divisions that go beyond that of genus-species, a prominent example of the latter being the *Meno*'s distinction between virtue and particular virtues.

50. On *Peri Ideōn* 1 as a treatment of Plato, see Fine 1993, 34–43. The present discussion is based on the text and translation of Fine 1993, chap. 1.

51. As is often observed, Forms for artifacts are discussed only twice in the middle dialogues (*Cra.* 389–390; *Rep.* 596–598).

Fine (1993, 57), "the compresence of opposites" in certain entities native to our world leads Plato to conclude that the reference points in question (e.g., the natures of justice and courage) must be separate from the spatiotemporal realm.[52] When Plato speaks of reference points in the case of artifacts, in contrast, his claim is not that their existence is necessitated by the compresence of opposites (beds, in this respect like fingers, are not both *F* and not-*F*; see *Rep.* 598a7–10 and Fine 1993, 118). Instead, Plato treats them as "organizing principles" (Annas 1976, 161) or "functional specifications" (Moravcsik 1992, 66–68) to which practitioners of crafts may appeal as they undertake the process of construction. Of course, distinct arguments generating different groups of *eidē* might still conclude that the entities in question shared, qua *ideai*, all the same properties. On the persuasive account of Fine (1993, 86), what Aristotle actually claims in the *Peri Ideōn* is not that Plato admits no *eidē* in the case of artifacts but rather that these entities are not supposed by him to share all the characteristics of the core types of Forms delineated in the *Phaedo*. Most notably, as she observes (1993, 87), even in *Republic* 10 there is no suggestion that those *eidē* toward which craft activity is directed "are everlasting or separate" (cf. Annas 1976, 161).[53] Regarding the issue of separation, it is revealing that Plato does not use the locution *auto kath' hauto* in his comments on artifact production although in the central cases of Forms he is at pains to stress just this feature of them (for prominent occurrences of this phrase, see *Phd.* 78d6, 100b6; *Symp.* 211b1; *Rep.* 516b5).[54]

Artifact production is unique insofar as it constitutes the only case in dialogues up to and including the *Republic* in which any sort of belief is treated as sufficient for activity involving *eidē* (i.e., there is no other indication in these writings that *doxa* is an acceptable cognitive state for *technē* practitioners on Plato's strict construction of that type of activity). That this state of affairs would be nonexistent or at least quite exceptional is entirely to be expected: Plato's point in introducing the understanding criterion was, after all, to set *technai* apart from *empeiriai* by underscoring that a cognitive state qualitatively higher than that of

52. According to Fine (1993, 61), the middle dialogues evince no clear commitment to separation, although "separation fits well with the tenor" of those dialogues. In my view, the middle dialogues do evince such a commitment. For a defense of this position, see Vlastos (1987), who maintains that in Plato and in Aristotle's discussion of Plato the same metaphysical claim is expressed by "The forms exist 'themselves by themselves'" and "The forms exist 'separately'" (187).

53. For further defense of the claim that Plato is sometimes not inclined to invest these entities with all of the characteristics that Aristotle views as belonging to the central cases of Forms, see Fine 1993, 86–87.

54. I cannot agree with the claim of Vlastos (1987, 190 n. 11) that Plato's abbreviated expression at *Cra.* 386e3 is equivalent in meaning. In my view, Plato's concern in this passage is to stress that when we make determinations about things, it is not sufficient for us to rely on our private opinions. As Fine (1993, 86) points out, the entities at issue here "are not said to be perfect or non-sensible, key features that distinguish Platonic from Socratic forms." What is more, what Plato says in the *Cratylus* does not rule out the possibility that shuttle construction could transpire with undamaged particular shuttles in view (cf. Fine 1993, 293 n. 33).

belief was required for those activities viewed by him as being of greatest value and importance.[55] Carpentry as described in *Republic* 10 thus has a peculiar status: on the one hand, insofar as it involves Forms, it merits inclusion in the ranks of *technai*; on the other, the identity of the Forms involved and the cognitive state of carpentry's practitioners explain why, insofar as it belongs to that group, it has a distinctly lower status vis-à-vis other *technai*.

The key question for current purposes is whether the practice of poetry, if revised, could be a *technē* on a par with carpentry. The main obstacle to its elevation to *technē* status might seem to be the fact that, as Plato states on numerous occasions, poets are divinely inspired, by which he means "possessed" in a very strong sense of that term.[56] While poets operating on this basis may, and indeed do, produce beliefs in the audience on the topics of which they speak—notable examples being virtue and vice—one might think that, in Plato's view, the fact that poets were inspired or possessed (*enthousiastikoi*) somehow precluded their operating with belief as they engaged in the process of creation. If this is so, that is, if they cannot be assigned a definite position on Plato's belief-knowledge continuum—even if it is, to begin with, a very unfavorable one—then it is hard to see how their cognitive state could possibly improve in the way and to the extent required to permit poetry to be a *technē* along the lines of carpentry.

In fact, however, Plato's description of poets as passive instruments of the divine does not constitute the obstacle in question. For one thing, there is a serious question of whether such talk is to be taken at face value. Woodruff (1982b, 150 n. 17), for example, maintains that "no plainly nonironical passage tells the radical inspiration story. . . . Plato never has Socrates speak sincerely of poetic inspiration . . . no doubt because Plato knew that what Socrates had to say about inspiration was not strictly true."[57] According to Tigerstedt (1969, 70), Plato transforms poetical inspiration into possession because endorsing the traditional model would involve accepting the truth of inspired utterances, thus making it impossible to subject poets to the requisite control.[58] Plato's goal, Tigerstedt concludes, is to "neutralize the evil effects of the common belief in their inspira-

55. As previously noted, Plato's sharp contrast at *Grg.* 454c–e between *epistēmē* and *pistis* constitutes the first formal appearance in the dialogues of the knowledge-belief distinction. The contrast is subsequently elaborated, and *doxa* becomes the standard term for opinion.

56. This view is prominent in the *Ion* (533d–535a, 535e–536d), *Apology* (22a–c), *Meno* (99c–d), and *Phaedrus* (245a). Regarding Plato's status as innovator in treating the poet as possessed, frenzied, and passive, see Tigerstedt 1969, 1970; Woodruff 1982b; Murray 1992. As Murray observes, Plato differs most strikingly from his predecessors in his contention that "inspiration is incompatible with *technē*" (34; cf. Murray 1981, 99–100).

57. On Plato's lack of commitment to the literal truth of the inspiration story, see also Woodruff 1983, 8–9. Cf. Tigerstedt (1969), whom Woodruff (1982b) too cites in this connection. For a different view, see Annas (1982, 20), who maintains that when Plato "describes the poet as a divinely inspired being . . . we should take this seriously."

58. As noted, e.g., by Murray (1992, 35), "in the early Greek poets, the divine origin of poetry is used to guarantee its truth and quality."

tion, without openly attacking it" (72). Building on Tigerstedt's account, Woodruff (1982b, 146–47) argues persuasively that Plato has in fact two reasons for telling "this particular falsehood" about the source of poets' creations: first, "Plato's false account of poetic experience is a *reductio ad absurdum*" of claims made for poets' authority on the grounds that they are inspired; second, "for all its irony, [the story] has true consequences," especially regarding poets' lack of knowledge of how to compose and of the subject matter of their compositions.

It is important to recall, in addition, that Plato does not always characterize poets' state of mind in terms of inspiration. As emphasized in what precedes, both the *Cratylus* and the *Republic* fault poets for operating with mere belief rather than with understanding. In fact, as Griswold (1981, 149–50) has noted, "nowhere in the *Republic* does Socrates mention the poet's claim to inspiration; indeed, that claim is pointedly omitted in the passages in which Socrates talks about the beginnings of the *Iliad* (392e2–393a5)." What is more, Griswold maintains, "Socrates implicitly denies the validity of that claim throughout the *Republic*" (150).[59] This state of affairs takes on added significance given the fact that the *Republic* contains Plato's most thoroughgoing critical treatment of poetry. It is indeed quite difficult to see how Plato could conduct his critique, there and in the *Cratylus*, in the framework of *technē*—whose requirement on practitioners' cognitive state presupposes a contrast between belief and knowledge—unless he viewed poets' condition as describable in terms of this dichotomy.[60] It is worth observing, finally, that even in the *Ion*—whose image of the chain links rhapsode and poet closely due to their being divinely inspired—Plato depicts inspiration and a form of belief or reasoning as quite compatible.[61] Most notably, Ion—who is characterized repeatedly as speaking as he does about Homer due to divine dispensation—makes clear that when he speaks he operates based on beliefs he has about the goal toward which he strives and is able to use means-ends reasoning to bring about the fullest possible realization of his *telos* (535e). From the *Ion* through the *Republic*, Plato's most general objection to poets, cognitively speaking, is that they lack knowledge.[62]

59. On the absence of references to inspiration in the *Republic*, see also Murray 1992, 39; Janaway 1995, 162. According to Halliwell (1993b, 4), "inspiration never bulks large in, and is indeed usually altogether absent from, Plato's mature treatments of poetry. There is no trace of it in *Rep.* 10." For a different view, see Greene (1918, 17), according to whom "Plato at all periods of his life attributes inspiration to the poets in utter seriousness." Cf. Lodge (1953, 168), who underscores the centrality of inspiration throughout the corpus ("That the artist is somehow 'inspired,' is nowhere, even remotely, challenged"); while Lodge provides numerous textual citations in support of his view (188 nn. 6–8), he does not cite the *Republic* despite the fact that his book treats that dialogue extensively.

60. On *doxa* as Plato's label for the poet's image of reality, see Havelock 1963, chap. 13.

61. For an argument that the *Ion* views the activities of poet and rhapsode as parallel, one may consult Murray 1992, 28–29. For poets as the actual target of the dialogue, see Woodruff (1983, 10), according to whom "the danger Plato sees in the rhapsodes lies not in *their* prestige but in that of the poets they represent."

62. Cf. Murray 1992, 46.

Plato's more specific account of their cognitive state focuses alternately on divine possession and a form of belief, but when he speaks nonironically about their condition, he concentrates on the latter.

Acceptable poetic activity, unlike the praxis of carpenters, will not involve *eidē*. It is clear from Plato's discussions in the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic* that grasping Forms in the realm of values requires nothing short of understanding. If poets actually did have knowledge of virtue and vice, hence qualifying as *technē* practitioners, they would be none other than philosophers.[63] Contra Tate (1928, 1932, 1938), however, there is reason to think that Plato does not wish to make poetry and philosophy the task of a single group of practitioners even under ideal conditions.[64] Making philosophers also serve as poets would violate the Principle of Specialization on which the *Republic* places so much weight.[65] Notably, this principle is invoked in *Republic* 2 when Socrates says that the state's founders, who already have distinct responsibilities of their own, are not also to assume the task of composing stories (379a): "their job is to know the patterns according to which poets must construct their tales and from which their work must not be allowed to diverge."[66] Here one may draw a contrast between the activities of naming and poetry: while the former may be placed naturally by Plato in the purview of the philosopher, since it is in fact an integral part of philosophical practice, the composition of poetry is a distinct activity that does not fall in a similarly direct way within the province of *philosophia*. Moreover, interpreting Plato to hold that there could in principle be a distinct practice of

63. See *Phdr.* 278b–d, where Plato emphasizes that if Homer and other poets had knowledge and could provide the requisite *logos* justifying what they had written, the term *philosophoi* would properly be applied to them.

64. Several other commentators have attempted to consolidate the two functions. Lodge (1953, 91–92 n. 40, 154), for example, speaks of the philosopher-artist whose poetry reinforces shared values. According to Greene (1918, 75), Plato "recognized . . . that the poet might express eternal forms, and so far as he did so, he became a philosopher. In some such way Plato imagined that the ancient conflict between philosophy and poetry might cease." On this topic, cf. Rutherford 1995, 237 n. 90; Adam 1902, vol. 1, 168, and vol. 2, 393. I suggest below that, insofar as the conflict between philosophy and poetry "ceases," it does so not because the poet becomes a philosopher, or vice versa. As we will see, in addressing this issue it is crucial that one distinguish between poetry per se and the use of poetic devices (prominent examples of the latter being myths, similes, analogies, and allegories). For emphasis on the point that the best poetry will not be created with Forms in view, see also Ferrari 1989, 122; Nehamas 1982, 59–60; Asmis 1992, 358. Regarding Plotinus' divergence from Plato, see *Enneads* 5.8.1 and 2.9.16, along with the discussion of Rich (1960); on Rich's formulation (236), for Plotinus "art will still be, in a sense, a μίμησις but a μίμησις that dispenses altogether with a sensible pattern and works straight from the Idea."

65. In using the term "Principle of Specialization," I follow Annas (1981, 73). As introduced in *Republic* 2, it is a principle according to which different people have natural aptitudes for different types of jobs, and individuals should pursue those occupations for which they are suited "by nature" (*kata phusin*) (370a–c); a refined version of it is the core of Plato's conception of justice in *Republic* 4.

66. For a different view of the import of this passage, see Nettleship 1937, 82.

poetry that benefits the state, with its own group of practitioners, fits best with his repeated emphasis on the special genius of a poet like Homer insofar as such remarks strongly suggest that an individual on this or a comparable level has a gift not found in others.[67]

Although poets are not themselves the practitioners of a *technē*, they can offer crucial assistance to philosophers in the performance of their educational function. Book 10 makes a central contribution to Plato's account of acceptable poetry by spelling out what cognitive state creators must be in to generate the compositions judged admissible in Book 3, as well as how this state is situated with respect both to poets' present condition and to that of those who are to assess their constructions. In the final book of the *Republic*, we discover that in order for poets to create edifying characters in a consistent and compelling manner, they must have true belief (*orthē doxa*) about the topics—above all, flourishing, virtue, and vice—to which their constructions pertain. However, merely having *orthē doxa*, regardless of its source, is not sufficient. As in the case of the auxiliaries (*epikouroi*), the crucial distinction regarding poets is between those who have beliefs, even true ones, which lack the stability of opinions acquired through *paideia*, and those having that *orthē doxa* whose source is education.[68]

Cognitively speaking, the latter type of poet is on a par with the carpenter. While there is common ground between carpentry and poetry from an epistemological perspective, on the level of objects the activities diverge insofar as the former, but not the latter, involves *eidē*. In fact, poets' closest counterpart overall is the auxiliaries, who also have, not insight, but rather true, stable beliefs about what is and is not to be feared.[69] Auxiliaries' awareness, which does not stem from the apprehension of Forms, is nevertheless treated by Plato as an adequate foundation for the successful performance of their duties. I suggest that, similarly, creators of acceptable poetry will have true beliefs, inculcated via education, about what one should and should not grieve over, be angry about, and so on; where emotions like grief are appropriate, poets will have stable opinions about what constitutes a moderate response. They will, moreover, have *orthē doxa* about what constitute legitimate objects and expressions of desires (e.g., those for food and drink). Poets' cognitive state will yield reasonably consistent judgments about instances of the relevant properties (e.g., justice and self-control). As long as someone connected

67. With respect to Homer's talent, see, e.g., *Rep*. 595b–c, 598d, 606e–607a, 607c–d; *Ion* 530b; *Leg*. 680c. Plato states, moreover, that he praises many things in Homer (*Rep*. 383a; cf. 389e). For Plato's use of the term *euphuōs* to underscore the superlative natural capacity that will be required of acceptable poets, see *Rep*. 401c4.

68. See 429b–430b for Plato's depiction of the auxiliaries as operating with stable, true belief about what is and is not to be feared, hence being as consistent as one without knowledge can in acting courageously. For emphasis on the role of true belief as the epistemological basis of a revised practice of poetry, see also Asmis 1992, 358; Hall 1974.

69. For a recent account of the auxiliaries' values that stresses the stability of their beliefs, see Kamtekar 1998.

to the enterprise has genuine understanding, and hence is able to remove any errors and inconsistencies from poets' constructions before they assume their final form, one may be assured that the process will have its desired outcome. The mere fact of poets' having stable, true beliefs does not, of course, ensure their ability to channel what is grasped into compelling characterizations. This is where the talent of select poets comes in. Practitioners of the highest caliber have an aptitude for translating their beliefs into characters that can take a powerful hold on the imagination. One might object that Plato's polemic against poetry suggested that it could be of use to the state only if its practitioners operated with understanding. However, while Plato emphasizes the necessity of achieving knowledge when the sole alternative presented for the poet is operating with beliefs that are largely false, or with haphazard combinations of true and false opinions, his view cannot be that only activities qualifying as *technai* benefit the state since auxiliaries—who have true belief, instilled via education, about courage—obviously play a central positive role in the ideal *polis*. In the final section of this chapter, I explore more fully the scope and content of poets' assigned role in Plato's community by discussing his treatment of early education in Books 2–3, then turning to the account of poetry offered in the *Republic*'s final book.

6. Poetry's Function in the Ideal *Polis*

As Plato emphasizes in his treatment of early education in *Republic* 2–3, one has a unique opportunity to shape individuals' development when they are young (for the beginning as pivotal, see 377a–b, 378d–e, 395d). The influence one has, which is inevitably momentous, can be negative or positive: everything hinges on the content and medium of the message. Given poets' status as authorities in the areas of religion and values, Plato is especially concerned to assess the merit of their present contributions. Although the material found in poetic creations is sometimes salutary, often this is not the case.[70] In the ideal community, he insists, the young must not be permitted to hear chance stories constructed by chance teachers, thus absorbing into their souls opinions (*doxai*) frequently opposed to those that they should hold once they reach adulthood (377b). Plato is so convinced of the destructive potential of faulty poetic characterizations that he would rather have children exposed to no poetry at all than allow them to hear, as in his own time, unexpurgated verses.

Yet, as others have observed, far from rejecting the value to early education of all poetry, he recognizes its constructive potential and outlines how one might harness it.[71] Plato establishes guidelines that will allow one to determine what is

70. For positive remarks, see 383a, 389e, 390d, 441b, 468c–469a, 501b, 516d.

71. For this acknowledgment of poetry's role, one may consult, e.g., Janaway 1995, 11, 103–4; Ferrari 1989, 109; Nehamas 1982, 52, and 1988, 214. See also Collingwood (1925, 164), according

said well, and what not, in order that the latter type of material might be expunged and children's souls shaped appropriately by more satisfactory compositions (377b–c). Poets are to be faulted above all for their depictions of divinities and heroes (377d–e). Plato is especially concerned to exclude characterizations of the divine, particularly Zeus, as the source of evil, and depictions of gods and heroes as overcome by feeling or desire. Acceptable creations, he stresses, will treat the gods as sources only of the good and characterize gods and heroes as dismissing or responding moderately to what would ordinarily evoke extreme emotional and appetitive responses.

The compositions to which the young will be exposed are those that foster their attraction to what is fine and their repulsion by what is shameful (401e–402a). Since at this stage reason has yet to develop, and hence cannot be targeted directly, satisfactory poetry helps to create promising conditions for its optimal emergence: once the right attitudes are formed, reason, as and when it develops, will reinforce them by enabling individuals to provide *logoi* justifying their preferences and aversions.[72] Role models have a pivotal influence on the formation of attitudes and other dimensions of character. In Plato's view, one models oneself on, thus becoming like, that to which one is drawn. The best possible "role models" for human beings are the Forms themselves (500b–d).[73] Long before one can emulate the Forms, however, one needs virtuous people to serve as guides. Yet before one can make effective use of human guides, one is, indeed should be, introduced to admirable figures in the poetry that one begins to hear at a very young age. The salient point here is that acceptable poetry exposes people to desirable role models prior to the point at which they can judge reliably between possible candidates in their own physical environment and choose to emulate those that are genuinely good. If literary influences on children are positive, at a later stage of their cognitive and affective development individuals will then gravitate naturally toward—and hence "imitate"—the right sort of person. With regard to its form, the poetry heard by children will consist not only

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to whom "art . . . remains the great educative power by which the young guardians are to be trained." Plato's description of the three groups in his society, which is sketchy in crucial respects, devotes little attention to the producer class. The *Republic*'s early curriculum is said to be aimed at the guardians, who are later subdivided into rulers and auxiliaries. Plato does not address directly the issue of what portion of this education, if any, children in his third class will receive. On this topic, see Reeve 1988, 186–91, 309–10 nn. 5–8; Cornford 1941, 63–64, 154 n. 1.

72. In my view, the text does not support the assertion of Cooke (1999, 40), for which she cites no evidence, that once reason develops, "the guardian may change his mind about what is noble, for better or worse. Thus the early education does not make later criticism impossible. Criticism is not emphasized early on because the guardian is not capable. But later, when he is capable, his views of what is *kalon* are open to change."

73. Plato's conception, which identifies Forms as the paramount objects of emulation, thus involves the renunciation of a view of ethics as mere role modeling in any familiar sense of that term.

of pure narrative but also of narrative effected by *mimēsis* (on permissible objects of imitation, see 396c–e). Although such *mimēsis* must not dominate poets' creations, it will nevertheless play a crucial role in children's education by helping to make good people attractive to the young as role models.[74] Under optimal conditions, poets' genius at the construction and interweaving of the two types of narrative will lead to the creation of characters that can take a powerful, positive hold on children's imaginations, with the result that they are drawn to those figures leading exemplary lives and repelled with equal fervor by their opposites.

The relation between the *Republic*'s early discussion of poetry and Plato's treatment of it in the dialogue's final book has been, and remains, highly contested. According to several interpreters, there is sharp discontinuity between the two. Thus, Plato's handling of poetry in Book 10 has been described as an "appendix" (Cornford 1941, 321), an "afterthought" (Else 1972, 40), and a "digression" that is "disconnected from the rest of the *Republic*" (Nettleship 1937, 340).[75] In the view of Annas (1982), "the split in Plato's thought is radical," such that "any attempt to harmonize books 3 and 10 must be deeply misconceived" (22, see also 12–13; cf. Annas 1981, 336, 343).[76] I hope to show that Plato's presentations are, not merely consistent, but strongly complementary: with its traditional role as the core of pedagogy in the forefront of his mind, in *Republic* 10 he launches a renewed attack on traditional poetry in light of the metaphysical, psychological, and epistemological theories of the intervening books.[77] As I will argue, moreover, while Book 10 refines in various respects Plato's earlier critique of poetry, the scope of what he targets remains the same as it was in Books 2–3. *Republic* 607a—where he seems to admit only "hymns to the gods and praises of good

74. As Plato emphasizes repeatedly, attitude formation, rather than, say, the assimilation of information, is the central goal of early education; on this point, cf. Annas 1981, 86.

75. Cf. Adam 1902, vol. 2, 384.

76. See also Urmson (1982, 128–29), who maintains that "we can represent the argument of book 10 as resuming that of book 3 only by doing gross violence to one or the other or both." According to Rowe (1997, 440), in Book 10 "the point that poetry could, ideally, contribute to the good life . . . is now set aside, in favour of all-out attack."

77. In attributing this level of sophistication to Plato's handling of poetry in *Republic* 10, I thus differ from Annas (1981, 335), who describes the book itself as an "excrescence" and maintains that the "level of philosophical argument" there falls markedly below that achieved in the rest of the dialogue. For Book 10 as discussing poetry in light of theories on these topics presented in Books 4–9, see Nehamas (1988, 214) and Ferrari (1989, 120), although my approach differs from theirs by virtue of its focus on the *technē* framework. In his earlier discussion of *Republic* 10, Nehamas (1982, 51; cf. 53) contends that it fits mainly with Plato's treatment in Books 8–9 of how the unity of soul and city may be undermined. For *Republic* 10 as criticizing poets in light of the ontology and psychology of *Republic* 4–9, see Kato (1986, 66–69), according to whom, however, Plato reserves a place for poetry in his hierarchy of *technai* (70). While I share the view of Rutherford (1995, 211) that *Republic* 10 deepens Plato's challenge, I cannot agree with his claim (211; cf. 230) that in *Republic* 2–3 "little more is done than produce a sample anthology of unsatisfactory passages." In developing my argument regarding Plato's critique of poetry in *Republic* 10, I have benefited from discussion of the issues with Julius Moravcsik.

people"—is a famous, indeed notorious, stumbling block for those who want to claim that the two discussions can be harmonized. I contend that 607a, and Book 10 more generally, concentrates on poetry's civic role, which must be kept distinct from that pedagogical function previously assigned to it in the context of early education. On the account to be defended here, Book 10 reinforces a position that was already indicated by Plato's remarks earlier in the *Republic*, namely, that poetry's pedagogical role will be limited to children's education, and poetry conforming to Plato's strictures about subject matter in Books 2–3 will play a unifying social role on occasions of special importance to the community.[78]

Plato opens Book 10 by having Socrates affirm that "it is above all the issue of poetry that convinces me that we were quite right to found our city along the lines we did." In response to Glaucon's query as to what in particular he has in mind, Socrates singles out their categorical refusal to admit any "mimetic poetry" (Τὸ μηδαμῇ παραδέχεσθαι αὐτῆς ὅση μιμητική, 595a5). As Murray (1996, 186) observes, "this statement appears to conflict with the earlier discussion in book 3 . . . where mimetic poetry was not in fact completely banned from the ideal state." She claims, further (187), that "there is nothing to indicate that the phrase ὅση μιμητική here should be restricted to poetry which imitates the wrong kind of objects." While I agree with Murray that there is an initial appearance of conflict between Books 3 and 10, I cannot endorse her claim about a lack of evidence for this limitation on the scope of what is attacked.

What is noteworthy about the introduction to *Republic* 10 is that Plato clearly takes himself to be reaffirming his earlier conclusion (this position is reinforced by the verbal echo involving παραδέχεσθαι at a5; cf. 397d2 and Murray 1996, 186). As Book 10's account of poetry draws to a close, moreover, Plato emphasizes (607b) that he is reiterating the conclusion about what is to be excluded that he had previously reached. Given that Plato does not merely begin Book 10 by underscoring this point but repeats it near the end of his second go-round with poetry—indeed, just after his mention of "hymns to the gods and praises of good people" (607a4)—one should take what he says quite seriously and conclude that he is simply wrong only if there is no way to interpret *Republic* 10 as reinforcing what precedes. I suggest that Plato endorses here the same restric-

78. For a different view, see Annas (1982), according to whom *Republic* 10 indicates that "in spite of book 3 Plato cannot be considered the advocate of 'civic poetry'" (23), and the poetry admitted at 607a is "insignificant" (27–28 n. 47). On the view of Nehamas (1982, 69), the poetry allowed by 607a seems "negligible and tailor-made for special occasions." While I concur with the latter portion of Nehamas' remark, I cannot agree with his characterization of what is admitted as trivial. On the connection between 607a and the civic choruses established in Book 2 of the *Laws*, see Ferrari 1989, 141. According to Janaway (1995, 131) in remarks on *Rep.* 607a, "Plato wanders in his description of the poetry he criticizes." On the present interpretation, the target of Plato's critique remains constant. The shift, insofar as it occurs, is in his identification of what poetry is to be admitted; even here, however, I would not be inclined to describe Plato as "wandering," since the difference in emphasis is deliberate—reflecting his concern with poetry's distinct audiences and purposes.

tions on poetry's content that were described in Book 3, but that he is concerned now to provide a fuller account of why the poetry in question is not genuinely beneficial and must therefore be barred from his Republic. As before, Plato's systematic critique transpires in the framework of *technē*. Concerned to dispute poetry's pedagogical and ethical preeminence, he deepens his investigation of poetry in light of this framework. Once again, Plato's comments encompass the goodness, subject-matter, and understanding conditions. This final challenge to its traditional prominence shows most clearly just how unqualified familiar poetry is to serve as the source of values and priorities at either the communal or the individual level.

Book 10 sounds repeatedly the refrain—quite familiar from earlier books of the *Republic* and previous dialogues—that traditional poets are panderers par excellence. Now, however, Plato is more precise about what in us the poet panders to. Plato's characterization of familiar poetry's destructive impact has more weight when offered in light of his treatment of the mind in Books 4–9. Based on his discussion of the soul's tripartite structure and possible tensions among its elements, we now see clearly that and how, in Plato's view, this poetry strengthens what is less worthwhile in us at reason's expense.[79] Moreover, if we have accepted his account of justice as guaranteeing psychic harmony, and the analogy between justice and health that ends Book 4 (444–445), we will realize that poetry can make a strong contribution to the establishment of that "diseased" condition of soul which devalues—and in the limiting case of tyranny renders valueless—the life on which we are currently embarked.[80] As of Book 9, Plato has at his disposal, in addition, a distinction between the pleasures of reason and those of the soul's other aspects (for each element of the soul said to have its

79. Plato reaffirms the existence of intrapsychic tensions at 603c–d. There is controversy over whether Plato's treatment of the *psuchē* in Book 10 clashes significantly with the tripartite conception defended in Book 4. As my remarks in the present chapter make clear, I do not believe that there is such a conflict.

80. In Book 4, Plato argues that the soul is just when each aspect of it performs its own task (441d–e; cf. 443c9–d1). He adds that

> having first attained to self-mastery and beautiful order within himself and having harmonized these three principles, the notes or intervals of three terms quite literally the lowest, the highest, and the mean, and all others there may be between them, and having linked and bound all three together and made of himself a unit, one person instead of many, self-controlled and in unison, an individual should then and then only turn to practice if he find aught to do in either the getting of wealth or the tendance of the body or it may be in political action or private business—in all such doings, believing and naming the just and honorable action to be that which preserves and helps to produce this condition of soul, and wisdom the science that presides over such conduct. (443d4–e7; tr. Shorey [1930] 1937, slightly modified)

It is often claimed that Plato equates justice with psychic harmony, but strictly speaking, as Annas (1981, 132) has noted, "justice is the state that ensures psychic harmony rather than being identical with it."

own desires and pleasures, see 580d–581c). While neither the poetry Plato condemns nor that which he favors targets reason directly, in the case of children the latter type of composition may now be seen to engage what is not inherently rational, namely, spirit and appetite, in such a way as to facilitate adults' governance by the pleasures of reason to the extent possible based on the type of nature possessed by the individuals in question.

As before, Plato explains poetry's current failure to confer benefit in terms of its shortcomings with respect to subject matter and the cognitive state of its practitioners. Regarding the *peri ti* condition, he now criticizes poetry in light of his treatment of Forms and their participants (*metechonta*) in Books 5–7. Pivotal here is Plato's identification of Forms as the ultimate reference points of both judgment and action, and his strong distinction within the realm of appearance between its inferior and superior constituents. Indeed, one may infer that this contrast was a prime impetus to Plato's composition of the *Republic* itself insofar as the dialogue defends an account of superlative instances of properties such as justice (e.g., institutions) that is decidedly at odds with existing valuations. One's awareness that a contrast within the domain of appearance helps to motivate the *Republic* in its entirety emerges fully, of course, only after one has read at least to the end of Book 7. On a more specific level, Plato stresses in Book 5 that *aisthēta* include the conventions of the many about values (479d); since these conventions, along with philosophers' conceptions, are participants in Forms, the relevant distinction is between *metechonta* of greater and lesser merit (i.e., approximation to the truth). In addition, a distinction within the realm of appearance is made quite explicitly in the Line, where Plato sets the objects of opinion apart from those of *eikasia*. From this fine-grained perspective, he is able to say in Book 10 that familiar poetic creations belong, not simply to the realm of appearance—which is, after all, inevitable—but that they constitute decidedly inferior inhabitants thereof. The analogy with painting (596–598) helps one to see clearly how low, according to Plato, the ontological status of unrevised compositions actually is.

Pertinent with respect to the understanding condition is Plato's systematic distinction between knowledge and belief (474–480)—one that privileges their differing objects—along with his later refinement of that dichotomy.[81] Regarding these subsequent developments, correlated with the Line's distinction within the realm of appearance is a characterization of superior and inferior vantage points vis-à-vis inhabitants of that domain according to which the latter perspective is dubbed *eikasia*. *Eikasia* recurs in the Cave, being treated there as the cognitive state predominant in the populace. As Nettleship (1937, 347) observes, in *Republic* 10 Plato draws on his earlier introduction of *eikasia*, treating poets—

81. For a challenge to the standard interpretation of this passage—according to which Plato endorses the view that knowledge is directed only toward Forms and belief solely toward *aisthēta*—see Fine 1978.

who pander to the masses—as operating in that condition. Commenting on Plato's handling of *eikasia* in Books 6 and 7, Annas (1981, 255–56) points out that it is not immediately obvious how, or even whether, Plato's accounts of this cognitive state in the Line and Cave can be reconciled: whereas the former appears to depict *eikasia* as a comparative rarity, the latter, which allots it to all of the Cave's prisoners—who are supposed to represent the unenlightened masses—treats it as the norm. One attempt at harmonization, mentioned by Annas (1981, 255), would "admit that *eikasia* in both Line and Cave means simply looking at shadows, and . . . urge that what needs expansion is the notion of *looking at shadows*." As she observes, however, this solution does not yield a picture of *eikasia* as having just the same scope in both cases.

The Line offers a fourfold classification of human cognitive states, the superior pair of which involve the intelligible realm and the inferior duo the sensible. Plato connects the lowest of the four, *eikasia*, with objects of a similar caliber (i.e., "shadows, reflections . . . and so forth," 510a). Yet because the Line's focus is on the intelligible realm—in particular, on the different orientations toward Forms represented by the segments of the figure's upper half—Plato does not elaborate there the connection between *eikasia* and that toward which its attention is directed. In contrast to Nettleship, who ties Book 10's handling of poetry to the Line's presentation of *eikasia*, I maintain that the strongest connection is to Plato's handling of it in the Cave.[82] What governs the Line's brief introduction of *eikasia* is an emphasis on the inferior status of its objects. The Cave retains this feature of the Line's presentation but also underscores the fact that the behavior of those in this cognitive state is utterly indiscriminate: people operating in this condition simply assume that everything that presents itself to them is, not only real, but unqualifiedly so. Indeed, a recognition of the existence of a strong correlation between *eikasia* and the absence of reflectiveness may be, at least in part, what leads Plato to broaden its scope in the Cave.

The most salient parallels between the Cave and Book 10's handling of poetry lie in the strongly pessimistic attitude expressed toward human beings' typical level of cognitive activity and in the fact that on both occasions Plato's explicit concern is with pedagogy.[83] *Republic* 10 offers a distinct refinement of his remarks in the figure of the Line, aligning itself thereby with the Cave, insofar as it specifies the close relationship between the status of people's attitudes and that of the objects with which they are concerned. In addition, this final book develops further Plato's stance in the Cave by applying it to the activity of poets. Thus,

82. Else (1972, 38–39) mentions the Cave in his discussion of *Republic* 10 but claims that the latter is tied directly, not to it, but rather to the *Sophist*. Else takes this as one source of support for his contention (56) that the treatment of poetry in *Republic* 10 postdates the *Sophist*.

83. Notably, Plato's introduction to the Cave (514a) stresses that his paramount concern is with the effects of proper education and its absence; in Book 10, see 599d, 600c, 606e. Plato's judgment of the poet's audience (i.e., the populace) is quite harsh, of course, not only in the Cave and Book 10 but also in his earlier description (Book 5) of the lovers of sights and sounds.

Plato leads into his treatment of poetic *mimēsis* by observing that "mimetic activity is capable of producing everything because it has only slight contact with each thing, and what it has access to is a mere simulacrum" (598b).[84] Moreover, while the Cave presents shadows and those entities whose shadows they are as being accessible at distinct stages of cognitive activity (515c–d), in Book 10 Plato stresses their contemporaneous presence by having Socrates clarify that "I am speaking, not about anything difficult, but rather about a state of affairs that can be easily generated. The fastest way of doing so, I suppose, would be to get ahold of a mirror and carry it with you everywhere. You will then quickly find yourself able to make all the things just mentioned, including the sun and heavenly bodies, the earth, yourself, other animals, plants, and inanimate objects" (596d–e). These remarks, which help to set up Plato's discussion of poetic activity, convey most vividly of all the indiscriminate character of the activity targeted by him. Finally, while Plato's handling of the dynamic of slavery and liberation in the Cave might be taken to suggest that people are somehow constrained by forces beyond them to take what are merely shadows to constitute reality, his talk of the mirror in Book 10 is noteworthy insofar as it underscores his view that the lack of selectivity involved is by no means wholly involuntary.

Plato might have made—and elsewhere does offer—his criticism of familiar poets in terms of belief, namely, by speaking, not of *eikasia*, but rather of random combinations of false opinions with those that happen to be true. In the present context, however, Plato's use of a term other than *doxa* to characterize the poet's level of cognition—which is in keeping with the overall tone and purpose of the discussion—allows him to foreground the qualitative difference between this creator's mental condition, on the one hand, and that of auxiliaries, along with Book 3's "austere" poet (398a–b), on the other. Most significantly, Plato's terminology reflects his view that the cognitive state of those who dispense and accept indiscriminately misconceptions about the matters of greatest import is qualitatively different from that of individuals who have true beliefs, instilled via education, about these topics. If there is such a stark contrast between these states, then, strictly speaking, they should have different *onomata*.

As I have suggested, compared with that in Books 2–3, Plato's critique of poetry in Book 10 is deeper in key respects. The outcome of this further treatment of poetry via the *technē* framework is that Plato has an even stronger basis than before for his denial of its entitlement to this status and hence for his rejection of its claim to ethical and pedagogical authority. A sharpened challenge need not, however, issue in an enlargement of one's critical focus. In contrast to Murray (1996), I maintain that in Book 10 Plato in fact targets the same poetry that he had previously rejected. Book 3 admits the restrained poet and excludes the one who panders: although the latter is far more pleasing, the former is the only one capable of benefiting individuals and the community (398a–b). While Book 10

84. I adopt here Halliwell's rendering of *eidōlon* as "mere simulacrum."

may seem initially to attack additional poetry, Plato stresses that he is targeting once again the practitioner who acts in an indiscriminate manner due to his paramount concern with catering to whatever preferences and aversions his audience, namely, the populace, happens to have.

Those who maintain that what *Republic* 10 targets is broader in scope opt for an interpretation of *mimēsis* according to which now, in contrast to Book 3, all poetry involving it is encompassed by Plato's critique. In my view, his constructions of *mimēsis* in the two books are quite compatible in the sense of leading to the exclusion of the same class of compositions.[85] Tate (1928, 1932) attempts to reconcile Plato's treatments of *mimēsis* in Books 3 and 10 by attributing to him a distinction between good and bad senses, or kinds, of imitation. With Nehamas (1982, 49–50), I maintain, in contrast, that the crucial distinction for Plato involves the objects of activity. Although Book 10 seems initially to dismiss all poetry incorporating *mimēsis*, I suggest that Plato's subsequent emphasis on pleasure (605–607) casts doubt on this conclusion.[86] In fact, in a noteworthy passage, Plato provides an extended formulation (607c4–5) of what he wishes to exclude, of which his phrase at 595a may be viewed as a compressed version: Halliwell, who rightly identifies the construction as involving a hendiadys (1993b, ad loc.), renders the expression as "poetic mimesis designed for pleasure" (ἡ πρὸς ἡδονὴν ποιητικὴ καὶ ἡ μίμησις).[87] This remark is complemented by Plato's indication at 604e that in Book 10—as before—not all *mimēsis* is encompassed by his attack: in this passage Plato distinguishes the typical objects of poetic depictions, which are his target, from representations of figures whose conduct is reasonable and hence moderate; *mimēsis* of the latter objects, while dubbed more challenging, is nevertheless treated as both desirable and possible. These comments, taken together, support the present interpretation, according to which the nonpandering *mimēsis* of good objects permitted in Book 3 is not included as a target of Plato's subsequent challenge.

One must consider, however, whether—as has often been thought—the view that *Republic* 2–3 and 10 reach the same conclusion about what is to be excluded is challenged by Plato's famous insistence near the end of the latter discussion that he will admit into the ideal city only "hymns to the gods and praises of good people" (ὕμνους θεοῖς καὶ ἐγκώμια τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς, 607a4).[88] It is indisputable

85. For this stance, see also Asmis 1992, 350; Ferrari 1989, 125; Belfiore 1984, 126–28. Cf. Janaway 1995, 126: "The sense of the term *mimēsis* changes between Book 3 and Book 10 without losing its reference to the same kinds of poetry."

86. In this lengthy passage, Plato makes clear use of Book 9's insistence on the existence of pleasures of reason and their fundamentally superior caliber.

87. For an earlier instance of hendiadys in Book 10, see 595b9 and Halliwell 1993b, ad loc.

88. As an explanation of the fact that only in *Republic* 10 does Plato turn explicitly to the question of acceptable poetry that depicts human beings—as distinct from divinities and heroes—one may wish to invoke his earlier comment (392c1–4) that one can specify what is permitted in their case only after the discussion has revealed the nature of justice and demonstrated its benefit

that, according to Plato, the compositions favored here constitute a decidedly higher subset of entities in the domain of appearance—that is, they instantiate more fully and reliably the relevant properties, notably "fineness" (*to kalon*)—than those generated by existing poets.[89] Instead of praising whatever happens to gratify the populace, these compositions will laud only figures and actions that are genuinely worthy of this treatment.

Plato's remark at 607a does indeed present a difficulty if he is interpreted to claim that the only poetic compositions now acceptable to him are those belonging to the genres of hymn and encomium as typically construed with regard to their form. One way of challenging this interpretation of the passage would be to argue that one need not regard Plato as subscribing therein to narrow generic constraints on the form of acceptable compositions, that one may in fact treat the passage as itself repeating the view of acceptable poetry expressed elsewhere in the *Republic*. From this perspective, it would be important to keep in mind that the poetry admitted in Book 3—constructed in the "unmixed" style that represents those who are good (397d)—will not be familiar in the sense of fitting neatly into any existing genre. To cite Plato's favorite example, namely, Homer, while he admits that there is good to be found in this poet's creations, the compositions described by Plato would not simply be revised epics. The very fact that the *Republic* so fundamentally criticizes existing generic boundaries, and does not hesitate to violate traditional distinctions in offering its own recommendations, might make one reluctant to assume that

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to those who possess this quality regardless of whether they appear to have it. On this issue, see Gould (1990, 29 n. 1) and Reeve (1988, 222), according to whom "the imitative poetry under discussion in Book 10 is about *human beings* and their actions or activities"; having quoted Plato's remarks at 603c4–9, Reeve concludes (222) that "the discussion of poetry in Book 10 fills the lacuna in the earlier discussion, and occurs at the logically appropriate point in the overall argument." For the denial of a connection to 392c, see Adam 1902, vol. 2, 384.

89. On this characteristic of superior poetic compositions, see Plato's earlier claim that one must seek creators whose natures qualify them to manifest beauty (*to kalon*) and grace in their work (401c). He wants the influence of fine works (*ta kala erga*) to be absorbed, thus guiding the young without their notice to likeness and harmony *tōi kalōi logōi* (c–d); in his view, in fact, the culmination of *mousikē* is *ta tou kalou erōtika* (403c). The best condition for a human being is being admirable (*kalon*) in soul and body (402d), especially the former; cf. his later comment that virtue itself is a kind of beauty of soul (*kallos psuchēs*, 444d–e). As Book 3 makes clear, "fine" poetry helps one's soul to move in the direction of acquiring this beauty. Although Book 5's lovers of sights and sounds—who run from one dramatic festival to another—are concerned in *some* sense with beauty, they are typically absorbed by quite inferior manifestations thereof; cf. Plato's comment in Book 10 (602b) that the poetic imitator will depict what seems beautiful to the ignorant multitude. In Book 6, Plato describes the Form of the Good as more beautiful (*kallion*) than knowledge and truth (508e). It thus turns out that though both philosophers and the lovers of sights and sounds are occupied with beauty, the objects of their ultimate concern are fundamentally different in ontological status and, therefore, value. As indicated above, in the ideal community, poets' constructions will no longer reinforce people's occupation with wholly inadequate manifestations of this crucial property.

only a narrow (i.e., conventional) interpretation of a term like "encomium" is plausible.

Regarding Platonic methodology, Andrea Nightingale's discussion (1995, chap. 3) of Plato's critique of the prose encomium is instructive. According to Nightingale (93), while Plato is interested in rhetoric as a whole, he is especially worried about rhetoric of praise. Notably, she emphasizes the importance to Plato of "the discourse of praise that is not packaged in a formal speech or composition" (104; more generally, 104–6); as she stresses (108), his concern is with its pedagogical and ethical import, not its form (i.e., aesthetic status). One might be tempted to make the same point with regard to poetry, observing, for example, that in the *Republic* Plato's occupation with informal provisions is evidenced by his keen interest in challenging that extravagant praise of Achilles embedded in the *Iliad.*[90] In fact, Plato's target in the dialogues seems to be quite general, encompassing, to borrow Nightingale's phrase, all "ignorant conferrals of praise" (1995, 120)—whether they be formal or informal, offered in prose or in verse.[91] If the encomia criticized by Plato are so multifarious, would one expect him to revert to a narrow focus when making his own recommendations, especially when his own discussion in Book 3 tells against this view, and when he states twice in Book 10 that he is simply reaffirming his earlier position? While this may not be the outcome one anticipates, I suggest that this is in fact what happens at 607a.

In the dialogues, Plato uses the verb *encōmiazō* in broad and narrow senses. In the *Republic,* it appears on numerous occasions, being employed both where he criticizes the misguided use of language of praise and where his focus is on what it is acceptable or desirable to laud.[92] The verb's looser meaning is in the foreground, as when Plato employs it in remarks that bear on the dialogue's aim of lauding justice (358d2, 363d5, 367d7, 589b8); in critical observations on the transition from an "oligarchic" to a "democratic" psychic constitution (560e4);

90. For strong emphasis placed on the status of Achilles, see Murray 1996, 156: "Part of P.'s purpose in constructing his educational programme is to replace Achilles as a role model for the young with that of the philosopher as the highest human type."

91. Nightingale uses this phrase (in the singular) when commenting on Alcibiades' encomium of Socrates, which she interprets as a "caveat" against the bestowal of praise in ignorance of the true character of that toward which one's eulogy is directed. According to Nightingale, Plato's multiple critiques of encomiastic discourse have two central aims: "First, to show how the rhetoric of praise that pervades classical Athens can damage individuals and, indeed, the city as a whole. And second, to demonstrate the antithesis between praise discourse and the language of the philosopher" (131). In fact, those features identified by Nightingale as lying at the core of Plato's critique of encomiastic rhetoric—whether formal or informal—are the same as those offered in the *Republic* with regard to poetic compositions: What is praised may *be* in reality good (e.g., 397d) or bad (e.g., 568b). Where the objects are bad, the conferral of praise signals its provider's lack of awareness and causes harm both to individuals and to the community. Notably, in Book 10, Plato rejects poets' familiar provisions of praise as not issuing from those in a position to confer it reflectively (599b). Philosophers, in contrast to poets, will dispense praise and blame as these are merited by the objects of their attention.

92. See 358d2, 363d5, 367d7, 560e4, 568b3, 581c10, 583d8, 589b8, 599b7.

when observing that those in pain praise the mere freedom from this condition as the highest pleasure (583d8); and to make the point that individuals leading the three types of lives he delineates—namely, those devoted to wisdom, honor, and gain—all commend their mode of existence as the most pleasurable (581c10). The noun *encōmion* appears only once in the *Republic*, at 607a4. While Plato's use of the verb in the dialogue certainly does not rule out the possibility that the noun at 607a is to be interpreted along similar lines, making a direct inference from the prominence in the *Republic* of the verb's broader meaning to the noun's meaning at 607a would be problematic.

Reflection on occurrences of *encōmion* outside the *Republic* shows that it is used consistently along standard lines (see, e.g., *Ion* 534c3; *Prt.* 326a2; *Symp.* 177b1, 194d6; *Leg.* 822b5, 7, 958e9). On one noteworthy occasion, however, following his remarks in praise of *erōs* in the *Symposium*—which depart substantially from the familiar style—Socrates tells Phaedrus that "you may call this speech my encomium of *erōs*, if you like; if you would prefer not to use this term, call it whatever you wish" (τοῦτον . . . τὸν λόγον . . . εἰ μὲν βούλει, ὡς ἐγκώμιον εἰς Ἔρωτα νόμισον εἰσῆσθαι, εἰ δέ, ὅτι καὶ ὅπῃ χαίρεις ὀνομάζων, τοῦτο ὀνόμαζε, 212b8–c3). This comment indicates that the form of a composition is quite salient, at least from a certain perspective, when it comes to answering the question of whether the term *encōmion* is properly applied to it. What cannot be determined is whether Plato's inclusion of Socrates' speech alongside the preceding compositions, combined with his observation at 212b8–c3, signals his own willingness to apply this term to constructions that fall outside the traditional range yet meet his strict criteria with respect to content. In the absence of further evidence, one therefore lacks a basis for concluding with any assurance that Plato intends to include compositions departing significantly from the traditional form among those *encōmia* mentioned at *Republic* 607a.

This impression of Plato's focus in 607a is confirmed when we turn to the case of *humnoi*. In the dialogues, Plato sometimes employs the verb *humneō* with a broader meaning (see, e.g., *Prt.* 317a6, 343b3; *Rep.* 364a1, 463d7; *Tht.* 176a1; *Tim.* 47b4; *Criti.* 118b3). This is not the case, however, with the noun *humnos*. In addition, one finds no passage that plays a role for the term *humnos* that is comparable, with respect to its possible suggestiveness, to *Symposium* 212b–c in the case of *encōmia*. Moreover, and quite significantly, in the *Republic* itself the noun *humnos* is found twice aside from 607a4, on both occasions with what is clearly a narrow meaning (459e6, 468d9). Such evidence, combined with the fact that Plato's expression at 607a4 singles out the gods as the focus of the compositions in question, strongly supports a conventional interpretation of the form of the *humnoi* mentioned there.[93] The presence of *kai* in a coordinating role

93. Notably, in *Republic* 2 he uses the verb *humneō* with *theoi* as the direct object (372b7–8) in a discussion of the "city of pigs" in which compositions that are traditional with respect to their form are unmistakably at issue.

(ὕμνους θεοῖς καὶ ἐγκώμια τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς) provides a clear indication that the terms *humnoi* and *encōmia* are to be interpreted along the same lines with regard to their scope of application. Thus, even if one wanted to leave open the possibility, following an investigation of *encōmia*, that it admitted a broader construction at 607a, the fact that this option is not available in the case of *humnoi* would preclude one's offering such an interpretation of Plato's expression.

If the *encōmia* and *humnoi* at issue in 607a are to be construed along familiar generic lines, then the most defensible position is that the compositions referred to there are not the same, with regard to their form, as those singled out as acceptable in Book 3. It need not follow, however, that Plato is being inconsistent or that his position has changed after all such that his condemnation now encompasses more poetry than before. One may, of course, wish to opt for one of these positions. Another possibility, however, is that his comment about admissible poetry is made with a different audience and purpose in mind. Since, as we have seen, Plato insists in Book 10 that the poetry targeted by his critique remains the same, and one finds good evidence there to support that view, it seems reasonable to seek an interpretation of 607a that is not at odds with this position. Only if such a construction turns out to be indefensible should one conclude that Plato's discussion incorporates a flaw on the level that would be at issue if 607a clashed in such a striking and serious way with his claims elsewhere in Book 10. In what follows, I offer support to the view that Plato's focus in Book 10 is on adults and on poetry's potential role, not in pedagogy—as it was in his reflections on children in Books 2–3—but instead in the fostering of civic unity.[94] On the view presented here, it thus turns out that one who wishes to challenge the coherence of the *Republic*'s handling of poetry cannot place a heavy reliance on 607a to accomplish that task.

Plato's discussion of eponymy in the *Phaedo* and treatments of the Method of Division (*diairesis*) in the *Sophist* and *Politicus* leave no doubt that naming, insofar as it involves the connection between *onomata* and natures, will be accomplished by the philosopher. Under ideal circumstances, poets, supervised by philosophers, will utilize that inquiry's results. Poets will be prohibited from exploiting the resources of language to promote undesirable attitudes and emotional responses or based on the wrong conception of *phusis*. They will, however, be actively encouraged to use these resources to produce the correct set of attitudes and responses via poems that are composites of simple narration and *mimēsis*, above all of good men acting "steadfastly and intelligently" (ἀσφαλῶς τε καὶ ἐμφρόνως, 396d1). In this ideal collaborative setting, poets will construct *onomata*—especially proper names of outstanding characters—with positive descriptive content, incorporating them in their tales to the extent that philosophers judge their so doing to be helpful in educating the young.[95] That Plato

94. For *Republic* 10 as concentrating on adults, cf. Nehamas 1982.

95. That is, insofar as the inclusion of such *onomata*—whose semantic breakdown would need to be readily apparent—is thought to contribute in particular cases to the ultimate goal of focusing

envisions such a role for these authors and *onomata* is evident in *Republic* 3, where he rejects the use of names whose negative descriptive content is designed to instill incapacitating fear but insists that names of the opposite type be employed in speech and poetry (387c). More generally, poets' education, supplemented by guidelines received from the philosopher, will aid them in producing the desired result (namely, vivid and engaging portraits of suitable role models) with greater reliability, and under the philosopher's watchful eye, any remaining infelicities can be excised before the poetry reaches youthful ears. Under this description, poets—qua early educators—thus serve as "auxiliaries" of a kind, in the unique way permitted by their gift, by helping philosopher-rulers to achieve and sustain the flourishing of the *polis*.[96]

In contrast, as *Republic* 7's treatment of the advanced curriculum makes clear, when it comes to individuals' transition to understanding Forms, and to the solidification of that understanding, poetry proper is not involved. As Plato observes (498b), while they are children, individuals should pursue an education and culture appropriate to youth. As their souls approach maturity, however, the exercises assigned to people should be altered to reflect their new cognitive state and capabilities. Already in Book 6, Plato indicates the necessity of considering *paideia* again (502e–503a), this time for the purpose of describing those areas of inquiry that will constitute the advanced curriculum. The existence of a break in continuity regarding the content of the two curricula is underscored in Book 7 (522a2–b1), where Plato stresses that the earlier studies, in contrast to those with which he is now concerned, do not generate *epistēmē*. The question now is, which studies *do* promote and issue in understanding? In what follows (522b–541b), Plato identifies and describes the relevant activities, and the general time frame within which each should be pursued. These studies, in contrast to early *paideia*, target reason directly (527d–e, 532c; cf. 534b); as such, they complement the latter, which helps to pave the way for them. In sharp contrast to those comparatively abbreviated time periods familiar to us, Plato's advanced course of study takes individuals well into adulthood—up to the age of fifty or so—at which point a select few apprehend the Good (540a).

As Plato's own practice in the *Republic* illustrates, instead of resorting to poetry per se to promote and solidify understanding, philosophers will employ literary devices such as myths and allegories where relevant. Unlike poems,

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individuals' attention on the relevant abstract entities. Poets must not, of course, entertain or convey any illusion that their constructions reveal individual natures, whose status as fundamental is rejected in the *Cratylus*. As previously emphasized, all determinations of correctness involving primary entities and their *onomata* will be made by the philosopher.

96. One might wonder whether this function, in theory open to poetry, could be assumed by it in practice. In the view of Annas (1982, 23), a talent stemming from the divine could not be harnessed to Plato's pedagogical ends. If, as emphasized in what precedes, Plato's talk of poets' inspiration is not to be taken at face value, then this sort of objection loses at least some of its force.

these must be constructed by philosophers themselves since they presuppose and complement insights presented through rational argumentation. Hence, in this case, unlike that of poetry proper, practitioners must operate with *epistēmē* rather than *orthē doxa*. That *dianoia* too, as described in the Line, will be inadequate for this task is evident from Plato's emphasis on the directness of apprehension that sets philosophers' cognitive state apart from that of other *technē* practitioners.

On the foregoing interpretation, Plato retains a place for the poetic in two distinct senses: one makes it the unique province of the philosopher; the other, of the poet who is assisted by the philosopher. Given this twofold use of the concept of the poetic, solutions to the problem of Plato's attitude toward poetry that center on talk of the "poet-philosopher" are potentially misleading if intended to suggest that, in the ideal *polis*, all that may be called "poetic" must be accomplished by philosophy. As I have argued, this is not in fact the case.

Philosophers themselves will have no need of poetry. Yet one might think that, based on the parameters of his own thinking, Plato should allocate a pedagogical role to it in the lives of nonphilosopher adults, in particular those belonging to the producer class. He does not do this, however. What he does instead is make clear at various points in the *Republic* that poetry whose content is positive is one of many tools that philosopher-rulers may use to reinforce civic unity (see 372b, 459e–460a, 468d; cf. 465d–e and 540b–c).[97] Thus, in articulating Plato's view of poetry in the dialogue as a whole, one must distinguish carefully between compositions (e.g., praises of heroic conduct) intended for the community at large and constructions designed for pedagogical purposes—namely, to promote the formation of the right attitudes and attraction to good role models—which would be tailored specifically to children and heard exclusively by them.[98]

While Books 2–3 focus on children, in whom the capacity to reason has not yet developed, there are clear indications that Book 10 concentrates on adults. At 602c, Plato asks, with respect to which aspect of the soul does poetry

97. As the interpretation of 607a offered here indicates, I cannot agree with Else (1972, 52 n. 79), according to whom Plato does not give a clear indication in the *Republic* of the context in which the hymns and encomia of 607a4 will be relevant; notably, Else's own references to Platonic examples from the two genres (52–53) do not include any of the passages cited here. For mention of the first three passages cited above in connection with remarks on 607a, see also Halliwell 1993b, 153; Murray 1996, 229. On the interpretation of Murray (1996, 185), which differs substantially from my own, in *Republic* 10 Plato's hostility to poetry is "treated in a far more trenchant manner than in the earlier books. There P. was concerned to reform existing poetry through censorship, and was primarily interested in the effects of poetry on the young, whereas now his aim is to remove poetry from Greek culture altogether (607a3–5)"; cf. Murphy 1967, 224.

98. While I am in accord with the claim of White (1979) that *Rep.* 607a and the dialogue's earlier discussion do not clash with respect to the identity of the poetry that the ideal state will admit, I cannot agree that Plato's focus at the two junctures is on precisely the same class of compositions (257, 259).

have its power (*dunamis*)? In what follows (602c–603a), he draws a sharp contrast between its rational and inferior aspects. It is obvious, he maintains, that familiar poetry targets and strengthens what is inherently irrational at reason's expense (604d–605c; for a general statement regarding poetry's cultivation of feeling and desire, see 606d).[99] That adults are his focus at this juncture is evident from his concern to stress that exposure to poetry with problematic content typically results in the degeneration of the minds (*lōbē tēs dianoias*) of the individuals in question (595a–b); this degeneration consists in reason's being overcome by the irrational aspects of the soul, namely, emotion and appetite (606c–d).[100] Plato discusses at length (603e–604d) the case of the grieving man who has experienced the loss of someone or something dear to him, for example, his son. On an occasion of this sort, Plato says, reason encourages him to resist capitulating to his grief, while the feeling itself (*auto to pathos*) struggles to take control (604a10–b1). Giving way to grief in such instances prevents us from making effective use of our reason to determine just what has happened and where we should go from there, encouraging us instead to conduct ourselves like children (604c; on the topic of grief, see also 605c–606b, and regarding the laughable, see 606c). Notably, Plato identifies as his gravest concern the possibility that even superior individuals, namely, those in whom reason already has a fairly strong presence—but not a solid or fully developed one, as in the case of philosopher-rulers—will be conquered in this way (605c).[101] This emphasis on the degeneration of adults' souls provides one with essential guidance regarding the context in which to interpret his remark about acceptable forms of poetic composition at 607a, which appears to limit poetry to a narrowly circumscribed civic role. Plato's prescription there does not supersede that offered in Book 3 (396c–e). Rather, it supplements what he says earlier by stating explicitly what was already apparent, with respect to those who are approaching or have reached maturity, in the intervening books. As evidence of the strong continuity between *Republic* 10 and what transpires earlier in the dialogue, one may point to the notable omission from the advanced curriculum of poetry per se, combined with the fact that Plato's examples prior to Book 10 of viable compositions to which the *polis* at large will be exposed fall quite nicely under the rubric of 607a.

With regard to the structure of the *Republic*'s bipartite discussion of poetry, I thus venture the following conclusions. The most central criteria that Plato offers for the content of viable poetry in Books 2–3 are that it must depict the gods as

99. In articulating his position on this issue, Plato refers back explicitly to the Principle of Conflict, of which he had made heavy use in *Republic* 4 when arguing for the tripartite structure of the soul (603d; see also 604b, which is strongly reminiscent of 436b8–c1). The phrase "Principle of Conflict" is drawn from Annas 1981, 137.

100. Regarding 595a–b, cf. Nehamas 1982, 72 n. 19.

101. On the existence of exceptional cases, cf. 606b5–7.

responsible solely for the good and that mortals and divinities who are to serve as exemplars for budding and full-fledged members of the community must not be depicted as subject to strong desire and emotion. Plato's point here is that any poetry that fails to conform to these restrictions will be excluded straightaway from his ideal community (on the general scope of his strictures regarding the content of poetry, see 378c–d, 383c, 386a, 387b). In Books 2–3, Plato spells out what follows from the existence of these constraints with respect to poetry in its pedagogical role. This early discussion does not address directly the question of what other function, if any, poetry might have in his community. In Book 10, Plato treats this topic explicitly, underscoring the fact that the same restrictions on poetry's subject matter are in place and considering what follows from their existence with regard to the broader civic role that poetry may perform. Since Plato has already established in Books 2–3 the necessary conditions that poetry must meet with regard to its content in order to be eligible for inclusion in the state in any capacity whatsoever, and has reiterated in Book 10 his adherence to the position articulated there about what will not make the grade, what remains is for him to state the form of those compositions that are to play a role in the marking of important civic occasions, notable among them ceremonies honoring those who acquit themselves well in battle and those who have governed the community with integrity and effectiveness.

Undeniably, Plato's insistence that poets may serve only as elementary educators, and even then only under ideal conditions, constitutes a significant demotion insofar as, according to tradition, they were the instructors of adults (Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1054–55).[102] On Plato's model, as developed above all in the *Republic*, it is philosophers, not poets, who play the latter role. In this way, and by functioning as the community's ultimate authority regarding the content and form of admissible constructions, philosophy clearly supersedes poetry as the educator of Greece. Poetry's role, however, while clearly circumscribed, is far from negligible since, as Plato himself notes repeatedly, early influences on the young make a—even the—crucial difference to the kinds of adults they become, in particular, to the way in and extent to which they realize their natures. Moreover, as we saw, the community at large will be the audience for poetic

102. There is disagreement over how *tois men gar paidarioisin esti didaskalos hostis phrazei* should be interpreted. Dover (1993, 324) favors "'boys have a teacher who explains (things to them)'" over "'anyone who speaks to boys is (*ipso facto*) their teacher.'" Stanford (1963, 165) and Lattimore (1969, 68) also prefer the former interpretation, but Murray (1916, 78) endorses the latter. The outcome of this debate is not relevant to the project at hand since, on either interpretation, the point about the stage at which poets make their contribution remains the same. For an impassioned defense of the salience of art, particularly literature, that is prompted by Plato's criticisms, see Murdoch 1977, 76–89; with respect to pedagogy, she contends (86) that "art is far and away the most educational thing we have, far more so than its rivals, philosophy and theology and science." For positive remarks, directed against Plato, on the value of literature for adults, see also Gould 1990.

constructions that help to mark important civic occasions. The foregoing account of the *Cratylus* and *Republic* serves as a powerful reminder of how central the quarrel with poetry is for Plato and how determined he is to triumph. At the same time, this discussion—conjoined with the investigation of the poetic backdrop for Plato's own theories about *orthotēs onomatōn*—underscores the fact that he does not wish to do so at any cost, above all at the price of denying the ideal *polis* the contributions of a potential benefactor.

CONCLUSION

Plato's ultimate stance toward poetry, or art generally, has often been seen as extraordinarily harsh. Thus Schaper (1968, 54) writes that he "had to condemn the whole of poetry because it claimed the very status he was trying to deny it"; if in fact exposure to poets generates "the kind of frenzy and unreflective identification which Plato outlined, then they must go. . . . To measure art by the standard of knowledge—or, for that matter, by the standards of anything else—is always to find it wanting." In the view of Murphy (1967, 224), *Republic* 10 "deals especially with the claim of art to teach and to impose ideals, but it cannot fairly be said that Plato would have tolerated it in his chosen city if the claim were renounced and it had remained in its own province." According to Murdoch (1977, 43), in turn, for Plato "art is pleasure-seeking self-satisfied pseudo-analysis and pseudo-enlightenment. . . . Nature educates us, art does not." In Plato's view, Murdoch continues (1977, 65), it "is playful in a sinister sense, full of . . . a spiteful amused acceptance of evil, and through buffoonery and mockery weakens moral discrimination. . . . Art is sophistry, at best an ironic *mimesis* whose fake 'truthfulness' is a subtle enemy of virtue."

If interpreted along these lines, Plato comes to be seen as the source in Western thought of a dichotomy between philosophy and literature that is at best undesirable and at worst highly pernicious. In the opinion of Murdoch (1977, 81–82), the "ancient quarrel" that was Plato's legacy to the West has long endured, such that only "comparatively recently" have philosophers turned to literature in ways that evince a serious recognition of its pertinence to their concerns.[1] On Danto's formulation in the essay "The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art," in which he comments on the *Republic*'s handling of literature, Plato wishes us to "accept a picture of the world in which the place of art is outside it. And

1. Murdoch's own focus here is on moral philosophy.

since Plato's theory of art *is* his philosophy, and since philosophy down the ages has consisted in placing codicils to the platonic testament, philosophy itself may just be the disenfranchisement of art" (1986, 7).[2] Danto's own avowed aim (1986, xv) is to undertake the "reenfranchisement" of art against Plato's strictures. More recently still, Edmundson (1995), who cites Danto's interpretation of Plato approvingly (7), contends that "literary criticism in the West begins with the wish that literature disappear. . . . For to Plato poetry is a deception. . . . When he conceives his Utopia, Plato banishes the poet outside its walls. . . . Is there any other kind of intellectual inquiry that originates in a wish to do away with its object?" (1). Returning to this issue a little later, Edmundson asserts that literary criticism starts "with the conviction, expressed by the greatest of philosophers . . . that poetry is a harmful diversion, best repudiated in the self and cast from the state. Effective literary criticism ever after attempts to defend poetry against this heaping Platonic insult" (7).

Although one may not agree with the specifics of Plato's account regarding the ties between philosophy and literature, his view nonetheless represents a substantial achievement. While Plato is critical of the Greek literary tradition, he pays it the tribute of taking it, where relevant, as an important locus of ideas. I have argued in what precedes that in order to understand the unfolding of Plato's approach to key issues in the philosophy of language, one must view it against the backdrop of literary activity. Plato's own ideas about reality and language influence his reactions to his literary sources. Upon reflection, Plato concludes that linguistic devices prominent in literature may be employed in two ways: Certain ones can be used to advantage in the conduct of philosophy. Where a literary device is not employable in philosophy, Plato believes that it is nevertheless instructive to indicate why one may not justifiably invoke it in that context.

As we saw in the investigation of the *Cratylus* in chapter 2, earlier commentators have been reluctant to take at face value Socrates' comment at 391c10–d1 that Hermogenes must learn about *orthotēs onomatōn* qua etymologizing "from Homer and the other poets." Interpreters' dismissal of this observation regularly involves their noting the hostility that Plato voices elsewhere toward the literary tradition, notably in the *Republic*. I have argued that the consultation of literary evidence is essential to the interpretation of what Plato has to say in the *Cratylus*, that in fact this tradition serves as his most direct and central opponent there with respect to etymologizing. In the most general way, etymology is after something promising, from Plato's perspective, insofar as it involves a strong concern with questions of appropriateness and a firm belief that there are powerful connections between elements of language and those of reality. It goes wrong, however, in the manner in which it expresses these commitments. According to Plato, the literary tradition's practice of etymology goes astray by virtue of its adherence to the view that the descriptive content of *onomata*, if rightly analyzed, it-

2. On Plato's uncompromising harshness toward art, see also Danto 1986, 6, 9, 194.

self discloses the *phuseis* of their referents and can therefore be used as a vital source of insight into those natures. The dominant assumption of this activity, that natures belong first and foremost to individuals, is also deeply problematic on his accounting.

While the *Cratylus* concentrates largely on debunking etymology as a tool by which one may gain genuine access to reality, it also points in the direction of a more profitable orientation toward *orthotēs onomatōn*. As I have argued, Plato's remarks at the close of the dialogue (438–440) pave the way for further, positive reflections about appropriateness that have the theory of Forms as their reference point and foundation. When Plato seeks constructions of *orthotēs onomatōn* that are more fruitful from the vantage point of his construction of reality, in the sense of meshing tightly therewith, devices other than etymology take center stage. As we saw in chapter 4, Plato's own theories about *orthotēs onomatōn* in the *Phaedo* and *Republic* 5 constitute revised versions of approaches that figure prominently in the literary tradition. Seeking linguistic tools to reflect and reinforce his account of natures, in the *Phaedo* Plato embraces eponymy, while in *Republic* 5 he concentrates on analyses of functional terms. The fact that Plato turns to literary sources when seeking effective tools for the conveyance of his views on linguistic issues is unmistakable evidence of his willingness, not simply to engage deeply with them in the role of critic, but also to embrace those antecedents, where appropriate, as the origin of ideas that are themselves worth endorsing.

If, as many have asserted, the *Republic*'s famous discussion of poets culminates in their expulsion from the ideal *polis*, then the claims made here about Plato's views concerning *orthotēs onomatōn* would not harmonize with his own conclusion in that pivotal discussion. In fact, Plato's position in *Republic* 2–3 and 10 fits well with the attitude toward literary sources that is exhibited in his discussions of *orthotēs onomatōn*. As I argued in chapter 5, in his delineation of the ideal *polis*, multiple considerations, among them a recognition of the talent of select individuals, prompt Plato to enlist poets as allies in the promotion of human flourishing with respect both to early education and to the fostering of unity on a range of civic occasions. Thus, in addition to including revised versions of devices prominent in literary sources among his own theories, Plato grants that poetry per se has a role in that sound educational program without which his community could not emerge and in reinforcing the solidarity of the *polis* itself.

Although etymology does not, indeed cannot, become for Plato a tool of philosophical theorizing, a philosophically motivated concern with the descriptive content of *onomata* is evident in the *Republic*'s discussion of early education. As Plato indicates there, with a view toward fostering children's education poets will invoke names' semantic constitution in ways that reinforce the positive depiction of desirable role models in their compositions. Moreover, as we saw in chapter 2, the *Cratylus*' etymologies of divine names themselves reflect the *Republic*'s strictures about the characterization of divinities generally and

names' descriptive content specifically. The two discussions thus sustain a complementary relationship: the *Republic* insists that names having a salutary impact on children's attitudes be included in poetic compositions, and the *Cratylus*' etymologies of divine *onomata* provide examples of what the right approach to these names involves. Hence, the *Cratylus*—if viewed in light of the *Republic*—turns out to supply material that may be used, if in a limited way, to address Plato's concern with the negative impact of exposure to etymologies on individuals' well-being.

Some of those who have not concurred with what is alleged to be Plato's extremely harsh assessment of literature have concluded that the only way to defend it from his condemnation is to diverge sharply from his approach to the cognitive state, domain, and activity of its practitioners. Other supporters of poetry have suggested that at least certain of the ingredients on the basis of which a defense could be constructed (notably, *mimēsis* and inspiration) are available—though of course not developed as required—in Plato's writings.[3] To the extent that one accepts the account of Plato's own practice and theories offered in the present study, one will be forced to reconsider the nature of his role in the Western tradition with respect to the division between philosophy and literature.

Murdoch protests (1977, 77), against Plato, that "surely great art points in the direction of the good and is at least more valuable to the moralist as an auxiliary than dangerous as an enemy." I hope to have shown that one need not abandon—or even transform—Plato to get a defense of literature's potential value to philosophy in salient arenas going.[4] What must not be forgotten, above all, is the open-minded stance that Plato displays toward sources of ideas. Plato's attitude and methodology as characterized in this study in fact instantiate his own message in the *Phaedrus* (275b–c), where Socrates chides his interlocutor, from whom the dialogue takes its name, for paying heed to the identity of a speaker rather than caring solely about the truth-content of what is said.[5] While, on a specific level, Plato's project as it involves literary sources differs from those of contemporary philosophers, his general stance reflects more common ground with present work than has been recognized. Underscoring Plato's attitude and approach to his sources in the manner undertaken here serves as a reminder of the fact that, far from serving merely as an adversary and target for those seeking fruitful ways in which philosophy can benefit from appeals to literature, his work represents an important precedent for inquiry in this area.

3. As a contemporary example of this type, one may cite Schaper 1968, 55: "Defending art against the Platonic charges . . . means defending it with weapons which Plato thought of [in the *Ion*], though did not himself use." On this general way of supporting poetry in antiquity and thereafter, see the discussions and bibliographical references in Murray 1996, 24–32; Halliwell 1993b, 13–16, 25–27 nn. 20–31.

4. For recent emphasis on the importance of literature to reflection on, and discourse about, human values and flourishing, see Nussbaum 1990, 1995; Williams 1993.

5. Cf. Woodruff's citing of this passage (1998, 524) in remarks on Plato's quotation of poets.

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