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**Words' semantic constitution as a guide to reality: The
"Cratylus" reconsidered**

Levin, Susan Barbara, Ph.D.

Stanford University, 1993

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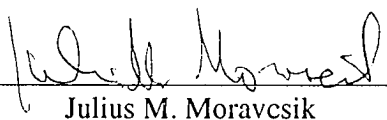
WORDS' SEMANTIC CONSTITUTION AS A GUIDE TO
REALITY: THE *CRA TYLUS* RECONSIDERED

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY,
THE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN HUMANITIES,
AND THE COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES
OF STANFORD UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
PHILOSOPHY AND HUMANITIES


By
Susan Levin
March 1993

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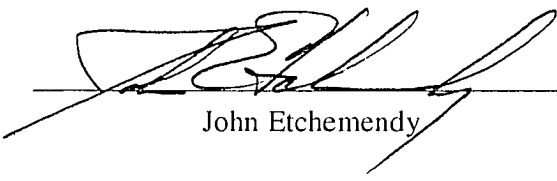
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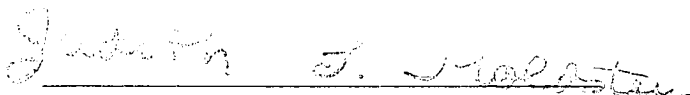
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Abstract

Accounts of the *Cratylus*' historical sources, which focus typically on philosophers and sophists, have yet to explain why etymology has such a pivotal role in the dialogue. Based on extant evidence one may treat Plato's discussion of etymology as a critical response to techniques and assumptions that were of central importance to a non-philosophical, literary tradition. Plato's initial positing of τέχνη status for naming, based on criteria advanced in the *Gorgias*, is followed by a sustained challenge thereto. Recognition of this dynamic goes a long way toward addressing scholars' persistent concern with the *Cratylus*' apparent lack of cohesion. Though the dialogue's emphasis is negative, at the end Plato offers hints of his own metaphysical theory and associated view of appropriateness in naming.

He develops these clues in the *Phaedo*, where the notions of naturalness and appropriateness are tied directly to Platonic metaphysics. The literary tradition's handling of eponymy constitutes a precedent for Plato's use of it to treat questions of appropriateness. Having rejected etymology in the *Cratylus*, in the *Phaedo* Plato revises eponymy based on his metaphysical theory. The most fundamental and closest links between the two dialogues do not rest on the use of Forms per se; they center instead on the notions of naturalness and appropriateness, whose treatment in the *Phaedo* is closely tied to Forms.

In the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, Plato concentrates on mutual relations between Forms. Connections between the *Cratylus* and these dialogues do not rest on a shared interest in διαίρεσις, which plays no significant role in the former. Instead, issues of naturalness and appropriateness link the *Cratylus* closely to writings in which διαίρεσις is a prominent methodology and the framework for Plato's handling of both concepts. This study depicts the *Cratylus* as playing an important role in the development of notions which are key to Platonic metaphysics and semantics in the middle and late dialogues. As a result, it permits the *Cratylus* to be incorporated differently and more solidly than before in the Platonic corpus as a whole.

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Introduction

The *Cratylus* revolves around the question of how words succeed in referring to entities. In this dialogue Plato approaches the issue by considering the basis on which ὀνόματα may be judged “appropriate” or “correct.”¹ His criticisms focus largely on a “natural-correctness” thesis according to which words’ semantic constitution, highlighted by etymology, reveals their referents’ natures. Since the ὀνόματα of individual entities figure importantly in these etymologies and it is assumed that these individuals have their own essential natures, the notion of individual natures plays an important role in Plato’s handling of etymology. To interpret the *Cratylus* successfully, one must be able to account for the etymological section which constitutes its lengthy centerpiece.

While long-standing controversy surrounds the interpretation of numerous Platonic dialogues, debate concerning the *Cratylus*’ sources and topics has been especially marked by the range of, and divergence between, competing orientations. With regard to the matter of historical sources, interpreters of the *Cratylus* generally emphasize Plato’s relation to various sophists and philosophers, most often Presocratics. Indeed, they are not wrong to do so since appeals to these sources, with regard to this and other dialogues, do help to explain and situate numerous Platonic concerns. However, in the course of research on the *Cratylus* I became dissatisfied with a wide range of interpretations proposing the following individuals as sources of the natural-correctness thesis: Prodicus; Protagoras; Antisthenes; Heraclitus; Heraclides Ponticus; Cratylus; and Euthyphro.² In several of these cases virtually nothing or little of a specific nature is known about what individuals’ views on the relevant topics might or might not have encompassed; nevertheless, instead of looking elsewhere scholars wishing to dissipate uncertainty have attempted to make far more of

¹ Depending on the context in which it is used, different translations of the term ὄνομα (pl. ὀνόματα)—including “word,” “proper name,” “general term,” and “kind name”—are warranted. I have in mind here judgments regarding the appropriateness of a given ὄνομα to its referent; in the case of etymology, these judgments are based on criteria involving semantic constitution or descriptive content. On the matter of dating, I accord with those commentators who situate the dialogue at or near the beginning of that group consisting of the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic*. (I return subsequently to the dating issue.)

² Based on what is known about Euthyphro, one cannot comfortably assign him to any of the familiar categories of philosopher, sophist, poet, or even priest. Euthyphro has been identified as the source of those analyses which target divine appellations (Adalbert Steiner, “Die Etymologien in Platons *Kratylos*”); on the pertinence of Euthyphro to the *Cratylus* inquiry see also Charles H. Kahn, “Language and Ontology in the *Cratylus*,” 156, and “Les mots et les formes dans le *Cratyle* de Platon,” 98-9.

such “sources” than surviving evidence justifies. This situation obtains, to varying extents, with regard to Euthyphro, Cratylus, Antisthenes, and Heraclides Ponticus. In the remaining instances—the sophists Prodicus and Protagoras, and the Presocratic philosopher Heraclitus—interpreters have somewhat more to go on in considering writers’ views. Here, however, scholars take what is extant and read in closer ties to Plato’s *Cratylus* inquiry than are justifiable; that is, they give this material a much stronger reading than its content warrants. With the sophists this happens when commentators do not take sufficient note of crucial differences between their and Plato’s treatments of ὀρθότης (“correctness”), and hence are led to closely assimilate approaches which in fact differ in crucial ways, as Plato himself is at pains to emphasize. With Heraclitus the basic difficulty lies in a failure to distinguish adequately between different types of word-play, only one of which is etymological in form as displayed by the *Cratylus* discussion.³ In fact, Heraclitus does not make substantial use of etymology. Furthermore, unlike that approach which Plato challenges, Heraclitus’ thought does not include a commitment to individual natures. Exclusive appeals to these individuals as Plato’s sources, and hence the targets of his critique, thus fail to explain *why* etymology has such a pivotal role in the *Cratylus*.

Scholars have long recognized that in treating ethical questions in the *Republic*, specifically the matter of character development in Books 2, 3, and 10, Plato views the poets as direct and central opponents. Hence the idea that he is capable of taking this attitude toward them is not new. However, commentators have not explored the possibility that in a quite different sphere, namely, his philosophy of language, Plato adopts this same stance toward the literary tradition.⁴ In fact, though they refer continually to philosophers and sophists, *Cratylus* scholars most often either do not mention the literary tradition at all, or make only passing reference to it. In certain instances, they evince somewhat more awareness of the literary tradition’s handling of etymology. Interestingly, however, no one to date has taken the further—and in my view crucial—step of exploring the possibility that this non-philosophical, literary tradition itself might be a direct and central opponent of the

³ For a concern on various levels with how sounds are combined (e.g., repetition of individual letters and words) see DK 1, 5, 15, 29, 31, 34, 36, 52, 53, 62, 72, 89, 90, 114, 121, and 124. For actual or potential word-play of various types see also DK 5 (μαϊνόμενοι and μαίνεσθαι), 25, 26, 28, 32, 48, 50, and 114 (ξὺν νόῳ and ξυνῶι).

⁴ The phrase “philosophy of language” is often used in the literature with reference to Plato. Plato does not actually have a detachable philosophy of language; he has conceptions of various aspects of language, but not anything like what one would call today a complete philosophy. I employ the phrase here for purposes of convenience, on the understanding that I have in mind those conceptions he does offer, viewed as a totality.

Cratylus discussion. In my view, it is both striking and surprising that this additional step has not yet been taken.

My research shows that it is precisely for the literary tradition that the analytic techniques and assumptions evinced at such length in the *Cratylus* do play a central role.⁵ This tradition makes abundant use of etymology to highlight the semantic constitution of ὀνόματα, largely proper names, in order to reveal bearers' natures; central here is the assumption of individual natures which grounds their analyses.⁶ In addition, authors make numerous assessments of the *appropriateness* of names to their bearers. Sophists and Presocratics themselves are not merely familiar with the literary tradition, they are indebted to that tradition and draw on it in their reflections; the sophists in particular appeal frequently to literature in their own handling of linguistic issues. In the *Cratylus*, however, Plato is not reacting indirectly to the literary tradition's exploration of linguistic questions through other sources, but directly to what he—*contra* other authors—views as significant in literary treatments of them. The interpretation developed in this study permits one to explain the etymological section of the *Cratylus* as a critical response to techniques and assumptions that were of central importance to the literary tradition of the eighth- through fifth-centuries B.C. In fact, as concerns its sources and topics, extant evidence supports the claim that the dialogue represents a major point of intersection in classical antiquity between the philosophical and literary traditions.⁷

Opinions regarding the *Cratylus*' content and philosophical import exhibit marked differences; in fact, they diverge even more than opinions concerning the dialogue's historical sources. Several commentators have questioned the *Cratylus*' seriousness of intent, and judged the work to be of only minor philosophical importance. Others, in turn, have heralded Plato's treatment of etymology or phonetic constitution as of particular philosophical significance, and concluded that Plato himself was making serious philosophical proposals. In fact, and closely related to this, various interpreters of the

⁵ For purposes of this study, I focus on Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*; Pindar's epinician odes; all the extant plays of the tragedians Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; and Herodotus' *Histories*. Though Herodotus wrote on historical topics, due to his presuppositions and approach one may consider him to be part of the relevant tradition.

⁶ This tradition does not of course 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. Rather, authors operate with a loose, non-technical notion according to which a particular individual, either mortal or divine, is widely recognized by a salient characteristic or power. Individual natures, thus construed, play a key role in the *Cratylus*.

⁷ In construing the dialogue as a main point of intersection between the philosophical and literary traditions, I am not claiming that it represents an amalgam of the two, but that it offers fundamental criticisms of both.

Cratylus have maintained that Plato offers a proposal for an ideal language, though there is significant disagreement regarding the content of the alleged suggestion. In what follows, I will argue that commentators are correct to emphasize the seriousness of Plato's intentions in the *Cratylus*, but that these intentions do not result in substantive positive proposals. More specifically, I will suggest that they have failed to recognize a key dynamic unifying the work, which involves Plato's initial positing of naming's τέχνη status along the lines of his *Gorgias* treatment of rhetoric, followed by a sustained challenge thereto; interpreted in this context, the *Cratylus* inquiry fails to support claims that Plato advances positive theories and proposals for an ideal language. In fact, the thrust of the *Cratylus* is negative: Having considered the matter at length, Plato *rejects* etymology as a way to treat questions of appropriateness, along with the notion that individual φύσεις exist and are fundamental. At the close of the dialogue, he offers only limited positive hints regarding his own stance on appropriateness and its genuine metaphysical foundation.

Plato develops these clues in the *Phaedo*. There he explores what he views as the dichotomy between reality and appearance—with the former as *explanans*—and the participation relation. Naturalness, which the *Cratylus* tied closely to individuals and to names' constitution, remains a key notion, but is construed here in light of Plato's Form-based metaphysical theory. Moreover, Plato embraces the framework of eponymy as the most suitable one for handling questions of appropriateness based on his metaphysical stance;⁸ hence questions of appropriateness remains important, but are treated in light of what Plato views as the proper conception of reality. Commentators' appeals to the standard historical sources in discussions of Plato's middle-period Theory of Forms, notably, Socrates, Heraclitus, and Parmenides, do not permit one to explain Platonic eponymy. The reason is that it is not for previous philosophers, but rather, once again, for a non-philosophical tradition that this semantic relation is important. My research supports the claim that the literary tradition's handling of eponymy offers a heretofore unrecognized precedent for Plato's own systematic use of it to treat appropriateness in the *Phaedo*. Hence, as concerns Plato's handling of fitness and ties to the literary tradition, the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo* are related substantially as negative to positive.

For the aforementioned reasons, I preface my discussion of Plato, which occupies parts 2 and 3 of the dissertation, with a sustained exploration of literary approaches to the

⁸ Eponymy involves the naming of one entity for or *after* another, e.g., naming the city called "Athens" after the goddess Athena; unlike etymology, the focus is not on the use of deep structural analyses to shed light on bearers' natures.

relevant issues (part 1). Consideration of this tradition, whose origins antedate those of philosophy, constitutes a presupposition for identifying the distinctly philosophical content of Plato's reflections; that is, it aids one in distinguishing between assumptions which are part of Plato's legacy and his own distinctive philosophical contributions to the topics in question.

Greek poets did not operate in an historical vacuum, nor did they fail to respond in their writings to others' creative endeavors. In fact, to a significant extent poets treat a shared set of topics; moreover, writers criticize and attempt to surpass one another in their handling of particular issues.⁹ Hence, within this mode of writing a kind of dialogue developed on a range of questions, one that preceded philosophical reflections on topics of interest to both traditions.

Long before the establishment of "primary" schools, Greeks had turned to poets for instruction. Henri-Irénée Marrou identifies the *Iliad* as "l'œuvre autour de laquelle [l'éducation grecque] va s'organiser."¹⁰ He emphasizes "le rôle de premier plan joué par Homère dans l'éducation classique," and notes that Greek literary education retained Homer as its "texte de base."¹¹ Along these same lines, Geoffrey S. Kirk observes that "learning his poetry by heart was an essential part of ordinary education."¹² Plato himself is quite clear on the matter of Homer's importance as educator (see *Republic* 606e1-607a3). The poet's significance is also evident, more generally, from the force of Plato's attacks on him in the *Republic*, as well as from the great number of passages in the dialogues where Plato either refers directly to Homer or clearly has him in view.¹³ Moreover—and quite importantly—Homer was far from the sole educator of Greece; rather, over time the collection of literary classics increased.¹⁴ Central among the other prominent educators are Hesiod, Pindar, and the three great tragedians Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.¹⁵

⁹ On poets' mutual criticism see, e.g., Hermann Diels, "Die Anfänge der Philologie bei den Griechen," 12.

¹⁰ *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité*, 15.

¹¹ *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité*, 25, 33.

¹² *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, 1. On the issue of memorization see the comments of Niceratus in Xenophon's *Symposium*: 'Ο πατήρ ὁ ἐπιμελούμενος ὅπως ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς γενοίμην, ἠνάγκασέ με πάντα τὰ Ὅμηρου ἔπη μαθεῖν· καὶ νῦν δυναίμην ἂν Ἰλιάδα ὅλην καὶ Ὀδύσσειαν ἀπὸ στόματος εἰπεῖν (3.5).

¹³ For combined recognition and criticism of Homer's authority by Presocratic philosophers see Xenophanes, DK 10, 11, and 12; Heraclitus, DK 42 and 56.

¹⁴ On this point see Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité*, 38.

¹⁵ On the controversial issue of dates for Homer and Hesiod see *The Cambridge History*. It is important to note at the outset 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 poets and their writings pervaded Athenian culture, a notable medium of such impact being the dramatic festivals (to be discussed below).

The sophists displayed a marked interest in literature, which provided extensive material for their arguments and critical reflections. According to Protagoras, the oldest sophist, the study of poetry constituted the most important dimension of education.¹⁶ In the fourth century, Plato's own writings give eloquent testimony to the tremendous influence of the traditional literary education; as Marrou notes, they illustrate "de manière éclatante combien la culture personnelle de Platon avait été nourrie et avait su profiter de l'enseignement traditionnel des poètes: la citation d'Homère, des lyriques, des tragiques, naît spontanément sous sa plume."¹⁷ In addition to this impact on Plato himself, which is quite pervasive, the discussions of literature in both the *Republic* and *Laws* leave no doubt regarding the central role this tradition played in the Athenian educational process. Those remarks which preface Plato's criticisms of poetry in Book 2 of the *Republic* report as common knowledge the fact that literary study occupied a central role in the traditional curriculum (376e2-9; cf. *Rep.* 521d13-e1); on its importance the Athenian Stranger's remarks in the *Laws* (810e6-811a7) are also unequivocal. In fact, Plato—all too aware of poets' centrality and tremendous impact—wishes to restrict sharply the types of poetic creations to which people could have access, and to bring his own multi-tiered curriculum into prominence (for Plato's criticisms of what he takes to be negative literary influences see Books 2, 3, and 10 of the *Republic*, and Book 7 of the *Laws*).¹⁸

In his attempts *qua* philosopher to propound what he took to be the optimal curriculum, Plato had a contemporary rival, namely, Isocrates, who insists that his activity constitutes philosophy and that he is a genuine philosopher (*Antidosis* 270-1, cf. 285). In contrast to Plato, Isocrates' main goal is the practical one of equipping ordinary Athenians to handle well both their private affairs and those of the state (*Antidosis* 285). As one might expect, his educational program reflects this sharp difference in emphasis. While Plato's advanced curriculum centers on mathematics and dialectic, Isocrates' school focuses on the

¹⁶ See *Prot.* 338e6-339a3.

¹⁷ *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité*, 118.

¹⁸ As the *Republic* makes clear, these restrictions are supposed to apply both to children (see Books 2 and 3) and to adults (see Book 10). On the issue of Plato's rivalry with the poets, in this case the tragedians, it is worth noting his observation that *πᾶσα οὖν ἡμῖν ἡ πολιτεία συνέστηκε μίμησις τοῦ καλλίστου καὶ ἀρίστου βίου, ὃ δὴ φαμεν ἡμεῖς γε ὄντως εἶναι τραγῳδίαν τὴν ἀληθεστάτην. ποιηταὶ μὲν οὖν ὑμεῖς, ποιηταὶ δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμὲν τῶν αὐτῶν, ὑμῖν ἀντίτεχνοί τε καὶ ἀνταγωνισταὶ τοῦ καλλίστου δράματος, ὃ δὴ νόμος ἀληθὴς μόνος ἀποτελεῖν πέφυκεν, ὥς ἡ παρ' ἡμῶν ἐστὶν ἐλπὶς* (*Laws* 817b3-c1, more generally 817a2-d8). Highlighting the educational crux of the dispute, Eric A. Havelock observes that Plato "was attacking the poets less for their poetry...than for the instruction which it had been their accepted role to provide. They had been the teachers of Greece....Greek literature had been poetic because the poetry had performed a social function, that of preserving the tradition by which the Greeks lived and instructing them in it....It was precisely this didactic function and the authority that went with it to which Plato objected" (*The Muse Learns to Write*, 8).

cultivation of expertise in speech (λόγος) (*Antidosis* 253-7, 274-6, 293-4); in Isocrates' view, training in rhetorical technique fosters practical understanding (*Antidosis* 277), and effective speech in turn reflects or mirrors an internal condition of insight (τοῦ φρονεῖν εὖ μέγιστον σημεῖον) (*Antidosis* 255). At least in part, this concern with rhetorical training reflects the demands of contemporary life since in the fourth century, as in a substantial portion of the fifth, individual security and success depended to a large extent on the ability to acquit oneself well verbally.¹⁹ Notwithstanding marked differences between the two, both Plato and Isocrates make clear that the study of poetry was central to traditional education, and neither wishes to remove it altogether from the general curriculum. Various comments of Isocrates, taken together, both acknowledge its pervasiveness and recommend its continued pursuit; like Plato, however, Isocrates advocates a course of selective exposure and study, and offers his share of criticisms (for Isocrates' attitude see *Antidosis*, 266-8; *To Demonicus*, 51-2, *To Nicocles*, 2-3, 13, 43-4, 48-9; *Busirus*, 38-40; and *Panathenaicus*, 17-34).²⁰

It is worth emphasizing that it is not merely some Athenian elite that had significant exposure to literature. In this connection one may note the existence and importance of Athenian dramatic festivals.²¹ The greatest of these, the annual City or Great Dionysia held in Athens, became important in the sixth-century B.C., and the traditional date of the first tragic performance is 534 under Thespis.²² In the fifth and fourth centuries, this festival, along with the annual Country Dionysia and Lenaia, saw the performance of vast numbers of tragedies and comedies.²³ In the fifth century, original tragedies presented at the City

¹⁹ Subsequent to 462 large popular juries heard cases, and litigants were required to speak on their own behalf (see George Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*, 27-8). This state of affairs "imposed on each litigant, and potentially on each Athenian citizen, a need to be an effective public speaker"; it was for this reason that all early rhetorical handbooks "were devoted to expounding the techniques of judicial oratory to prospective litigants" (Kennedy, *Art of Persuasion*, 28).

²⁰ The last of these passages includes a promise, which went unfulfilled, to discuss at greater length the ties he believed to obtain between poetry and education.

²¹ Sir Arthur Pickard-Cambridge claims that the Διδασκαλία included in Diogenes Laertius' catalogue of Aristotle's writings "took its title from the official language of the festival. The poet was said διδάσκειν τραγῳδίαν or κωμῳδίαν" (*The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, 71; cf. 91); this terminology highlights poets' educational role. The following remarks on the dramatic festivals are based on Pickard-Cambridge, chs. 1, 2, and 6, and H. W. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians*, chs. 6, 7, and 9.

²² Pickard-Cambridge ties this achievement of import to the policy of Peisistratus (*The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, 58). 486 B.C. is the likely date of the first comic performance.

²³ The dramatic performances of the City Dionysia gave rise to those at the Country Dionysia and Lenaia. The Country Dionysia was a popular festival held at various sites throughout Attica; local theaters were built along the lines of Athens' Dionysiac theatre and used for tragic and comic performances. Prior to the introduction of Dionysus Eleuthereus and the establishment of the City Dionysia, a rudimentary form of dramatic contest took place in an area within Athens called the Lenaion; it is probable that the Lenaia was originally the primitive Athenian counterpart to the Country Dionysia. Although the City Dionysia came

Dionysia could be reproduced subsequently at the Country Dionysia; during the fourth century, repeat performances were allowed even at the former, and eventually it was stipulated that a certain proportion of the City Dionysia 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 or θεωρικόν from deme officials; this apparently covered not just the cost of the ticket, but also helped citizens to meet other festival expenses.²⁴

Due to the festival's tremendous popularity—more Athenians and foreigners gathered in the city for this event than at any other point 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 proclaimed 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 theatre at which officials' conduct of the festival was subject to evaluation.

On the level of specific poets, Aeschylus, for example, enjoyed such popular acclaim that following his death the Athenian people passed a decree giving permission for the continuous production of his plays. Moreover, indicating the extent of popular familiarity with Euripides, following the disastrous Sicilian expedition some Athenian prisoners of war received food and water, and in some instances their freedom, by reciting portions of Euripides which they knew by heart.²⁵ On the comedic front, Aristophanes' *Frogs* was so well-received that it was performed a second time due to popular demand.²⁶

to overshadow the Lenaia in the classical period, the latter still included performances of tragedies and comedies.

²⁴ During the City Dionysia a holiday was declared (prisoners were even released on bail!). Regarding the extreme popular appeal of these festivals, Plato has harsh words for those "lovers of sights and sounds" who rush to attend all the dramatic festivals, οὔτε τῶν κατὰ πόλεις οὔτε τῶν κατὰ κώμας ἀπολειπόμενοι (*Rep.* 475d). (On the public's familiarity with dramatic performances cf. Isoc. *Panath.* 168-9.) The privilege of a seat of honor (προεδρία) was granted by the state, and certain portions of the theatre were reserved (e.g., for the Council).

²⁵ In addition to Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, 276, see Havelock, *The Muse Learns to Write*, 94.

²⁶ The play was produced at the Lenaia in 405, where it took first prize.

In fact, the *Frogs* itself illustrates that degree of acquaintance with poetry which could be assumed even of those ordinary Athenians who filled the comedic audience.²⁷ Aristophanes is quite aware of his own educational role and of tragedy's importance to the Athenian public.²⁸ 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 and aid that city in its darkest hour. In his conduct of the dispute, which ends with preference granted to Aeschylus as the superior educator, Aristophanes presupposes a more than generic familiarity with the compositions of both tragedians.²⁹ Regarding the *Frogs*' handling of tragedy, Jaeger 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....We must...study it as the most authoritative piece of fifth-century evidence for the position of tragedy in the life of the polis.³⁰

The remarkable social role played by the Greek theatre in general is summed up well by Havelock: "The audience controls the artist insofar as he...has to compose in such a way that they can not only memorize what they have heard but also echo it in daily speech. The language of the Greek classic theatre not only entertained its society, it supported it."³¹

Based on such well-known facts about the content of Athenian education—viewed as occurring outside as well as in the primary schools—one can assume that while they themselves are neither poets nor part of the poetic treatment of the issues in question, both

²⁷ K. J. Dover observes that "the paradox of comedy is that it was written for a mass audience by sophisticated poets with high technical standards" (Aristophanes, *Clouds*, xiv).

²⁸ On the atmosphere in which the *Frogs* was produced and the play's import see Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, vol. 1, bk. 2, ch. 5.

²⁹ The Chorus' reaction to the decision emphasizes Aeschylus' educational role:

μακάριός γ' ἀνὴρ ἔχων
ξύνεσιν ἡκριβωμένην.
πάρα δὲ πολλοῖσιν μαθεῖν.
ὅδε γὰρ εὖ φρονεῖν δοκήσας
πάλιν ἄπεισιν οἴκαδ' αὖ (1482-6).

Pluto's final instructions to Aeschylus highlight his educational function as well:

ἄγε δὴ χαίρων Αἰσχύλε χώρει,
καὶ σῶζε πόλιν τὴν ἡμετέραν
γνώμας ἀγαθαῖς καὶ παιδεύσον
τοὺς ἀνοήτους· πολλοὶ δ' εἰσὶν (1500-3).

³⁰ *Paideia*, 377-8.

³¹ *The Muse Learns to Write*, 93. Here Havelock alludes to the general and profound educational impact of poets' writings on Athenian consciousness rather than to their role in the primary schools specifically.

Plato and his intended philosophical audience were quite familiar with this literature and the evolving, often 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. Study of the relevant literary material helps to place one in the position in which Plato's own fourth-century B.C. audience found itself when confronted with his treatment of the linguistic issues in question: it provides one with crucial background which that philosophical audience would have appealed to without hesitation, but which we, some two-and-a-half millennia removed from that setting, generally do not consult.

The ensuing investigation will take place in several stages. I first undertake to extract, organize and discuss, as neutrally as possible, those elements of this shared literary background which are most directly relevant to Plato's handling of problems in the philosophy of language. Following exploration of this material, I turn to the *Cratylus*, that dialogue which is expressly tied to this common body of knowledge. My reflections on the *Cratylus* will take the form of an analytical outline combined with a selective commentary. In the remainder of the dissertation, I suggest how discussions of the problematic in question outside that the *Cratylus*—in three key works from the middle and late periods—can be linked to that dialogue and, where relevant, to the literary tradition as well. In the middle period I concentrate on the *Phaedo*. Although that dialogue, unlike the *Cratylus*, does not make explicit reference to the literary tradition, it nevertheless reacts to and draws on that tradition's handling of eponymy. Moreover, the same two notions so important to the *Cratylus*, those of naturalness and appropriateness, continue to play a central role in Plato's reflections. I end the dissertation with reflections on two late dialogues, the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, in which these notions are key to Plato's description and use of the Method of Division (διαίρεσις). At this juncture, there are no longer strong grounds for thinking that Plato relies on or alludes to the literary tradition. It seems rather that his transformative work, vis-à-vis that tradition, occurs in the *Phaedo*. The stance developed there on metaphysical and semantic issues leads in turn to new problems which themselves fall quite outside of literary discourse. What remains constant at this late juncture is thus not a direct tie to poetic reflections, but instead that interest in naturalness and appropriateness which Plato takes over from poets and makes central to his middle-period reflections. In the balance of this preliminary section, I introduce in a more specific fashion the inquiry to follow.

Part 1 focuses on the literary tradition's approach to the relevant issues, most notably those of etymology, eponymy, and appropriateness (chapter 1 treats the former two, chapter 2 the third). It is evident from the tremendous number and diversity of contexts in which poets offer etymologies that they were quite concerned with the issue of natural connections between elements of language and reality; most often they focus on showing how various proper names, once analyzed, reveal something important about their individual bearers' natures. These writers employ a wide range of criteria in their speculations about the descriptive content of proper names, and do not demonstrate an interest in being consistent or systematic: although certain criteria are especially popular (e.g., that involving bearers' attitudes and character traits), authors do not regularly adopt a particular approach. In fact, they proceed haphazardly, based on the requirements of a particular context. Moreover, 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 ὀνόματα and entities which etymological analysis reveals, and that natures belong to individuals.

The literary tradition also makes considerable use of eponymy. Like the criteria on the basis of which writers produce etymologies, the eponymy relation breaks down into a wide range of categories and subcategories. While in some instances—notably those in which individuals give their names either to other individuals or to groups—one might anticipate that performance expectations and questions of nature transfer would emerge, they typically do not. In certain cases, as when Athena is spoken of as having given her name to the city of Athens, such factors do appear to be relevant; typically, though, the literary tradition evinces little express interest in the secondary or recipient entity, but seems largely content merely to make identifications of source. In general, poets do not attempt to arrive at or articulate those criteria—whatever they may be—which they take to ground the primary entity's superiority. Notably, in its use of ἐπώνυμος and related terms—as elsewhere—the literary tradition fails to distinguish in any clear-cut way between etymology and eponymy.

In preparation for the exploration of Plato's own approach, the literary tradition's handling of appropriateness constitutes the subject of chapter 2. With its completion a foundation will have been laid for the consideration of Plato's approach to the relevant issues. My research shows that writers in the literary tradition employ both etymology and eponymy to treat questions of names' appropriateness, but that due to their basic concerns

and assumptions they exhibit a preference for the former.³² In contrast, when Plato treats the issue of appropriateness it is eponymy, not etymology, that he feels best suits his metaphysical framework. Unlike the literary tradition, Plato distinguishes sharply between etymology and eponymy and offers diametrically opposed assessments of their value; although he devotes much of the *Cratylus* to contesting an etymology-based foundation of appropriateness, he does not, there or elsewhere, argue similarly against eponymy. Instead, I will suggest, he taps its unexploited potential. Having focused on that shared literary background against which both Plato and his audience operate, I turn in parts 2 and 3 to the Platonic corpus itself.

As noted, the *Cratylus* poses certain problems regarding the basis on which ὀνόματα may be deemed “appropriate” or “correct”; to provide an adequate interpretation of the dialogue, one must be able to account for its etymological centerpiece. Some commentators do not recognize the significance of this dominant section, while others see that it is important but are unable to explain it adequately. A central issue which previous interpreters have either not addressed, or handled unpersuasively—by restricting their focus to the views of certain philosophers and sophists—is *why* Plato makes an etymology-based approach to correctness the centerpiece of the dialogue. The interpretation I develop (part 2) permits one to explain the etymological section of the *Cratylus* as a critical response to the literary tradition’s highlighting of semantic constitution via etymology, and those assumptions guiding its praxis.

At the outset of the *Cratylus*, Plato “invests” the praxis of naming with τέχνη status, providing a laudatory description of the sort one would expect based on those criteria put forth in the *Gorgias* to distinguish τέχναι from ἐμπειρίαι. However, in what follows Plato dismantles every exalted claim he had Socrates make for this activity and its practitioners. As in the *Gorgias*, what is treated initially as a τέχνη later has that status challenged decisively. In the *Cratylus*, the literary tradition provides Plato with key material used in that challenge. At the same time, he undertakes a fundamental critique of the literary tradition’s own analytic techniques and the assumptions on which their use rests.

In my view, the sophists’ importance vis-à-vis the *Cratylus* has not been properly located. As noted, Plato and the sophists share a common literary heritage. Plato is

³² Although writers make no explicit statement on the issue, indirect support for some recognition of difference between etymology and eponymy may lie precisely in the relative paucity of judgments of appropriateness involving eponymy, contrasted with the plentiful instances of etymology-based assessments.

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, Plato bases his inquiry directly on the literary tradition's own techniques and assumptions. Contrary to what numerous commentators have assumed, the sophists do not constitute central Platonic opponents in the *Cratylus*, as they clearly do in the *Gorgias*; interpreters are led to this erroneous conclusion through their failure to recognize that these figures' influence is sharply curtailed by Plato's own remarks, and to distinguish adequately—when they do so at all—between different senses of “appropriateness” or “correctness.”³³ In the dialogue itself, Plato makes clear in numerous ways that the literary tradition grounds his own investigation.

The *Cratylus*' emphasis is negative. Following a protracted investigation, Plato *rejects* the linkage of reality and ὀνόματα evinced by the literary tradition's practice of etymology; specifically, he repudiates approaches to the notions of naturalness and appropriateness that link them to words' constitution. While its emphasis is largely negative, I see a limited positive result issuing from the dialogue. In judging the appropriateness of words' constitution, one need only invoke custom and convention, and for purposes of ordinary communication appeals to these sources are sufficient. This turn to convention applies to all ὀνόματα, including those designating Forms and other key elements of Plato's philosophical system; however, for philosophical purposes far more must be said though in the *Cratylus* itself there are only brief suggestions of what his own stance actually is. I take Plato's positive hints largely from the dialogue's close, where he introduces briefly the appearance-reality dichotomy and explanatory role given Forms, and raises in passing the matter of appropriateness with regard to his own metaphysical framework.

This interpretation of the *Cratylus*—which privileges the notions of naturalness and appropriateness, and treats the dialogue as a major point of intersection between two traditions—allows one to tie it differently and more closely than before to key middle and late dialogues (part 3). Chapter 4 touches on a range of issues, but highlights Plato's differing treatments of appropriateness in the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo*, and those basic metaphysical issues which are pivotal to such a discussion. The relation between the two

³³ Interpretations which appeal to the sophists are not completely wrong to the extent that a more general legacy is at issue; notably, Plato, like Protagoras and Prodicus, is interested in the correctness of words or names (ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων). The point being made here is that the sophists' importance is frequently and unjustifiably exaggerated.

dialogues is strongly complementary, with the *Phaedo* developing the *Cratylus*' hints of Plato's own stance. Forms play a limited role in the *Cratylus*. The most fundamental and closest links between it and the *Phaedo* do not rest on the use of Forms per se; they center instead on the notions of naturalness and appropriateness, whose treatment in the *Phaedo*—unlike the *Cratylus*—is solidly tied to Forms.

In the *Phaedo* Plato explores the reality-appearance dichotomy, with an explanatory role given to Forms, and the participation relation; in addition, he introduces a strong notion of “ontological naturalness” to replace that tied closely to words' constitution. Regarding the matter of appropriateness, the literary tradition's handling of the eponymy or “named-after” relation offers a previously unrecognized precedent for Plato's own systematic approach. Though Plato chooses the framework of eponymy to provide the semantics of the Form-particular (participant) relation, the literary tradition's handling of eponymy reflects a basic ontological symmetry which Plato finds untenable if the notion is to assume philosophical importance. This symmetry is exhibited by the centrality of the empirical world on both tiers of the relation, and by the fact that—depending on the context—the very same types of entity can assume a primary or secondary role. In contrast, Platonic eponymy rests on a fundamental ontological asymmetry between the two *relata*. In fact, the framework of eponymy lends an optimal structure to his reflections because it allows him to speak of naming a primary entity—one that is itself a nature—and of naming derivatively other entities that share the nature of the primary entity, but only partially.

Plato thus embraces the framework of eponymy, but transforms the relation based on his own ontological commitments; notably, the *Phaedo* provides both an extensive treatment of Forms and μετέχοντα, and Plato's only discussion of eponymy (with the exception of remarks much later in the *Parmenides* and *Timaeus* which simply recapitulate his *Phaedo* stance). In Plato's framework, Forms are the primary ὄνομα-bearers while appearances, veridically construed, bear their ὀνόματα derivatively. Although he continues to maintain that the correctness of words' constitution is assessed by appeal to convention, Plato insists that given the selection of certain ὀνόματα to designate Forms, μετέχοντα receive their appellations on non-conventional grounds. Metaphysically speaking, the latter entities are not self-sufficient, and semantic relations must reflect metaphysical ones; questions of fitness arise here when one considers the extent to which individual sensibles strive to be like those Forms in which they participate, and hence deserve to be “named after” them. In this chapter of the dissertation, I suggest how the interpretation of the *Cratylus* developed in this study allows one to link it differently and

more closely than before to the *Phaedo*, that critical work in which Plato unveils his innovative treatment of eponymy based on his own metaphysical theory.

Chapter 5 ties the *Cratylus* to the *Sophist* and *Politicus* by exploring Plato's treatment there of the notions of naturalness and appropriateness in connection with the Method of Division. While Plato's middle-period technical discussions concentrate on individual Forms and the Form-particular relation, in the late dialogues those discussions focus on mutual links between Forms. Questions of naturalness and appropriateness remain central to his metaphysics and associated view of naming, but in the *Sophist* and *Politicus* both notions are tied to conceptual "cuts" made in reality in the process of διαίρεσις. As in the middle period, naming is not itself a τέχνη, but remains integral to the practice of dialectic, the τέχνη *par excellence*. At this juncture, ὀνόματα are properly assigned only if they mark off natural unities. Characterizations of natures or "definitions" consist in λόγοι which are more or less revealing. Since particular ὀνόματα comprise these λόγοι, it is essential that terms marking off genuine kinds exist. However, individual ὀνόματα—whatever descriptive suggestions they may contain—do not *themselves* count as nature-revealing since they cannot illuminate relations between their referents and other Forms; without exception Plato operates with the view that only a λόγος uniquely specifying those Forms or concepts to which the *explanandum* is linked constitutes a disclosure, however limited, of the referent's nature. While individual terms' descriptive content may reflect some property of their referents, the issue of ὀνόματα and their semantic constitution is only seriously taken up once division has revealed a genuine unity, and Plato never identifies or conflates any information which ὀνόματα may provide with an answer to the pivotal τί ἐστὶ question. Thus, as in the middle dialogues, in the *Sophist* and *Politicus* as well Plato refuses to invest the constituency of ὀνόματα with the ability to disclose φύσεις.

Connections between the *Cratylus* and these two late dialogues do not rest on a shared interest in division; *contra* claims to this effect, διαίρεσις plays no significant role in the *Cratylus*.³⁴ As in the middle period, the most fundamental ties center on the notions of naturalness and appropriateness. It is thus not the notion of Forms or division itself that constitutes the closest links between the *Cratylus* and the other dialogue(s) in question, but notions which are treated extensively *in light of* Forms and division, respectively, in those

³⁴ In addition, links do not center on the problem of falsehood; the mere fact that in the *Cratylus*, as in the *Euthydemus*, falsehood is claimed to be impossible does not in itself justify assertions of a close kinship with the *Sophist*.

writings to which connections are made. Due to a shift in the locus of common ground, a single interpretation of the *Cratylus* can forge close ties to dialogues in both periods. This study allows one to see the *Cratylus* as playing a significant role in the development of concepts—those of naturalness and appropriateness—which are central to Platonic metaphysics and semantics in the middle and late dialogues; as a result, it permits the *Cratylus* to be incorporated differently and more solidly than before in the Platonic corpus as a whole.

Part 1

The Literary Tradition

Chapter 1

Naming in the Literary Tradition: Writers' Treatment of Etymology, Phonetic Constitution, and the Eponymy Relation

ETYMOLOGY¹

Writers in the literary tradition frequently highlight the descriptive content of ὀνόματα, largely proper names, by way of etymology. This use of etymological analysis is also central to Plato's procedure in the *Cratylus*. In fact, Plato indicates his indebtedness to that tradition in many ways in the dialogue, a central one being his use of Homer and proper names as a point of departure for his own etymological investigation of ὀνόματα. Moreover, in conducting his inquiry Plato does not simply employ the literary tradition's approach, but subjects it to fundamental criticism. For these reasons it is of central importance to determine just how this non-philosophical tradition handled etymology.

To one examining relevant passages from Homer's epics through Euripides' tragedies, what is striking is precisely the tremendous range of criteria on the basis of which ὀνόματα are supposed to have been assigned. For the purposes of this study I work with a basic twofold division: the first prong comprises all those instances in which the descriptive content of ὀνόματα is linked with significant factors concerning the bearer, and the second all those cases in which it is tied to considerations involving the namer.

Categories and examples of the former type are quite numerous. First, assignments might be traced back to something important pertaining to an individual's birth, including events before and soon after that point in time: this category may be further subdivided into appellations grounded on a) something directly linked with an individual's origin; b) an object with which the named individual is associated at birth; c) the place of an individual's birth; d) something occurring prior to birth; or e) something that takes place soon after birth.

¹ I mean here by "etymology" highlighting the semantic constitution of ὀνόματα in order to shed light on their referents' natures; in its use of etymology, the literary tradition typically focuses on proper names and their bearers.

Second, assignments might be correlated with features or aspects of individuals or groups. This category too divides into several subcategories: names given based on a) a physical feature or related aspect of an individual, or common to a group of individuals; b) an individual's emotional state; c) bearers' attitudes and character traits; or d) their skills and capacities. A third category comprises those instances in which ὀνόματα are assigned based on something pertaining to an individual or group's actions, or to the role an individual or group plays in someone else's plan of action.² The relevant subcategories are four in number, centering on a) the character of an individual or group's actions, or the undertaking of a certain type or course of action; b) a feature attending the performance of a particular action; c) an individual or group's temporal relation to a particular course of action, or to other individuals engaged in a certain course of action; and d) the role an individual or place plays in someone else's plan of action. Fourth, ὀνόματα might be given based on a significant effect which someone or something has on mortals.

Fifth, writers offer etymologies based on entities (animate or inanimate) with which an individual or group is associated: these might be a) entities used in the performance of actions or b) something which an individual or group of individuals is said to wear. Sixth, a characteristic of the place from which an individual hails may ground an assignment. Seventh, a natural, inanimate entity might receive its ὄνομα based on an important individual with whom it is linked. An eighth category comprises those instances in which writers' analyses of names privilege the role an individual plays in a particular social or familial context. Ninth and finally, ὀνόματα may be tied to functions and special powers of the divine: these comprise a) an element over which an individual has control; b) special capacities of individual deities; and c) the instrumental role an individual or group plays in the universe at large.³

² To facilitate presentation I may speak, as here, of the basis of assignments; specifically, of course, what I have in mind is the ground on which writers claim that assignments were made.

³ This last category is reserved for functions and powers that mortals do not have; if passages depict various gods as doing something that mortals too can do, e.g., act destructively, I place them in other categories. With regard to the framework in general, there are some passages which might reasonably be placed in one of two categories, depending on how they are interpreted. In such instances, I simply make what seems to me, on balance, to be the best choice. Ultimately, my aim is not to come up with a rigid and final system of classification, but to organize and illustrate the tremendous diversity of relevant criteria and examples. With regard to another aspect of methodology, and pertaining to pt. 1 as a whole, I neither attempt nor claim to note every relevant passage from the writings on which this study is based; however, I do believe that the documentation provided, which is quite extensive, is sufficient to warrant the conclusions I draw about the literary tradition's approach and the impact of the pertinent aspects of literary praxis on Plato. Finally, a few words about the procedure I followed to uncover the literary material cited in chs. 1-2: I began with a search of the Ibycus database, which turned up over seven hundred fifty instances of terms built on ονομ, ουνον, ωνον, ονυμ, and ωνυμ. Consideration of the passages in which this terminology appeared was accompanied by a study of the literary works in their entirety.

The second prong of the twofold division comprises those far less numerous instances in which something pertaining to the namer is identified as the ground of an assignment. The first category contains ὀνόματα tied to features or aspects of the namer: these might be a) physical or related aspects; b) emotional states; or c) attitudes or character traits. Second, ὀνόματα could be given based on a chance intersection of paths between the namer and named, which leads the former to make a particular assignment; or third, based on some object associated with the namer.

The foregoing catalogue—encompassing a basic twofold division, plus numerous categories and subcategories—conveys a sense of the tremendous diversity of factors which writers appeal to in highlighting the descriptive content of ὀνόματα. In what follows I fill in this basic framework by providing a detailed exploration of writers' use of these criteria.

As indicated, there is a tremendous range of cases in which significant considerations involving the bearer constitute the basis on which ὀνόματα are given.⁴ In several instances assignments may be traced to something of importance pertaining to an individual's birth, including events leading up to and soon following that point in time.⁵ Such assignments could be made based on something significant which is directly connected with an individual's origin. For instance, Hesiod speaks of the goddess whom gods and men call Ἀφροδίτην...οὔνεκ' ἐν ἀφρῷ θρέφθη (*Th.* 195-8). In what follows he claims that the maiden was also called φιλομμηδέα, ὅτι μηδέων ἐξεφαάνθη (*Th.* 200).⁶ Aeschylus observes that Δίκη received her name based on the fact that she is Zeus' daughter (*Cho.* 949), and in fact once compressed Διὸς κόρα yields Δίκη.⁷ In

⁴ It is worth remarking that in such cases the namer may be mortal or divine.

⁵ This category assumes special importance in connection with attempts, notably, by Homer and Hesiod, to offer explanations of important phenomena and states of affairs in terms of their origins. For a discussion of this explanatory pattern, see J. M. Moravcsik, "Appearance and Reality in Heraclitus' Philosophy"; Moravcsik dubs it "the productive model." It is important to distinguish between names given at birth or creation and those given *based on* considerations involving the bearer's genesis and early days. There are a tremendous number of instances of the former type; in many of these cases assignments are made based on factors which can only become relevant once the bearer reaches maturity. (In addition to names given at birth or creation, there are several instances of names changes, or additional names being assigned; in the case of human beings these additional names consist in nicknames, while in the case of the gods they involve epithets.)

⁶ Both the OCT and Loeb print φιλομμηδέα rather than φιλομμειδέα. An Homeric epithet of Aphrodite was φιλομμειδής ("laughter-loving"): see *Il.* 4.10, 20.40 and *Od.* 8.362. As Richmond Latimore has noted (*The "Iliad" of Homer*, 40), Homer even uses this epithet when the context makes its employment clearly inappropriate, as when φιλομμειδής Ἀφροδίτη gets comfort from her mother Dione following her wounding at Diomedes' hands (*Il.* 5.375). Hesiod, by substituting η for ει, is able to offer yet another name for the maiden, one that suits the requirements of context.

⁷ Elsewhere Aeschylus refers to her as ἡ Διὸς παῖς παρθένος Δίκη (*Th.* 662). Hesiod before him had spoken of the maiden as ἡ παρθένος Δίκη, Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα (*W.D.* 256). Given the similarities between

Aeschylus' *Suppliants* the king of Argos identifies himself as Pelasgus τοῦ γηγενοῦς...Παλαίχθονος ἱνίς (250-1); in so doing Pelasgus highlights the descriptive content of his father's name.⁸

Elsewhere Aeschylus focuses on the descriptive content of the name Ἐπαφος. In *Prometheus Bound* he asserts that Io's son Ἐπαφος received this appellation based on the manner of his engendering by Zeus (850-1). Specifically, Aeschylus says that Epaphus came to be as a result of Zeus' touch (ἔφαψις), and that this mode of origin is reflected in his name (*Supp.* 41ff.); the poet reiterates this etymology later in the play, noting that Ζεὺς γ' ἐφάπτωρ χειρὶ φιτῦει γόνον (313), and that Ἐπαφος is truly named from the laying on of hands (315).⁹ In *Oedipus at Colonus* Sophocles observes that Παρθενοπαῖος was captain of the sixth column of fighters, ἐπώνυμος τῆς πρόσθεν ἀδμήτης [χρόνῳ μητρὸς λοχευθείς, πιστὸς Ἀταλάντης] γόνος (1321-2); the name is here analyzed as "Son-of-a-maiden."¹⁰ In one interesting case an individual is named based on an object with which he is associated at birth: Hesiod reports that Poseidon lay with Medusa and that, when Perseus cut off her head, a son emerged and was named Χρυσάωρ on account of the golden blade (ἄορ χρύσειον) he held as he sprang forth (*Th.* 280-3).

In addition, individuals might be named based on their place of birth. Hesiod tells how gods and men call Aphrodite Κυπρογενέα δ', ὅτι γέντο περικλύστῳ ἐνὶ Κύπρῳ (*Th.* 199).¹¹ Hesiod also writes about Pegasus, a second product of Medusa's union with Poseidon. When Perseus cut off her head, the horse Πήγασος leapt forth; he got this name due to his birth near the springs of Ocean (Ὠκεανοῦ παρὰ πηγάς) (*Th.* 280-3). Elsewhere in the *Theogony* Hesiod calls Athena Τριτογένεια (924), and says that Zeus gave birth to her by way of his head on the banks of the river Triton (929l-m).¹²

Individuals also receive their names based on important events or activities taking place before birth. For instance, Pindar recounts Heracles' prayer to Zeus that Telamon be

the formulations in *Seven against Thebes* and *Works and Days*, it is possible that Aeschylus intentionally recalls Hesiod's treatment.

⁸ In what follows, hearkening back to his father's ὄνομα, he says that he is τῆσδε γῆς ἀρχηγέτης, ἐμοῦ δ' ἄνακτος εὐλόγως ἐπώνυμον γένος Πελασγῶν τήνδε καρποῦται χθόνα (251-3).

⁹ See also *Supp.* 535, where Zeus is addressed as ἔφαπτορ Ἰοῦς (OCT: ἔφαπτορ Askew: -άπτωρ M).

¹⁰ Material bracketed following the OCT. Euripides mentions that Parthenopaeus is Atalanta's son (Ἀταλάντης γόνος), and links the mother explicitly with Artemis (*Phoen.* 150-2); see also 1104-9.

¹¹ See also Pindar, *Pyth.* 4.216, where the poet calls Aphrodite Κυπρογένεια.

¹² Homer uses this epithet as well: see *Il.* 22.183 and *Od.* 3.378. The status of the Hesiod passage in which these lines fall is controversial. The OCT lists it under *Fragmenta Dubia*, 343, while the Loeb prints the passage based on its restoration by Peppmüller.

granted a son, and his instruction to Telamon to name his son Αἴας for the eagle (αἰετός) that Zeus sent in answer to that prayer (*Isth.* 6.53). Elsewhere Herodotus asserts that the Spartan king Ariston's son was called Δημάρητος due to his birth following the prayers of the entire Spartan people that Ariston have a son (*Hist.* 6.63). In both of these cases, others' hopes are the ultimate source of the names given. In the former instance the eagle functions as a symbol of a wish fulfilled, while in the latter the individual's name itself—specifically, its semantic constitution—reflects others' fervent hopes that he be born.¹³

Fifth and finally, ὀνόματα may be tied to occurrences soon after birth. For instance, Pindar says that the infant child of Evadna and Apollo “lay hidden...his delicate body bathed in the yellow and deep blue rays of violets (ῥα), from which his mother then named him Ἰάμος, a name immortal forever” (*Ol.* 6.54-7).¹⁴ Offering a second etymology, he tells how, following Evadna's abandonment of him, a pair of serpents fed the infant Iamos blameless venom (ἐθρέψαντο...ἀμεμφεῖ ἰῶ) (*Ol.* 6.45-7).¹⁵ The following exchange makes clear that, in Sophocles' view, Oedipus received his name based on a misfortune which 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” (*O.T.* 1032-6).¹⁶ Elsewhere in the play Jocasta recalls that before three days passed following Oedipus' birth Laius ἄρθρα...ἐνζεύξας ποδοῖν ἔρριπεν ἄλλων χερσὶν εἰς ἄβατον ὄρος (717-19) (see also 1349-50). In *Phoenician Women* Euripides follows this treatment of the name.¹⁷ Finally, Herodotus claims that when Eëtion's son grew up he was named Κύπελος based on that object, namely, a chest (κυψέλη) which allowed him to survive an early danger (*Hist.* 5.92ε).

The second category comprises those cases in which names are given based on features or aspects of individuals or groups. This category, like the previous one, can be divided into several subcategories. First, there are instances in which names are said to be given

¹³ Given that these assignments were made based on pre-birth events and activities they cannot of course involve the bearer directly. However, in neither case is it evident that considerations involving the actual namer underlie the ὀνόματα given: in the former instance Ajax is named for Zeus' eagle, but Zeus himself is not the namer; in the latter case the Spartan people as a group does not serve as namer, but rather the child's parents. Therefore I group these passages with those in which the bearer's origin and early life are at issue.

¹⁴ Unless otherwise noted, translations of Pindar are those of Frank J. Nisetich. Pindar also calls Evadna a “violet-braided girl” (παῖδα ἰόπλοκον) (*Ol.* 6.30).

¹⁵ Nisetich terms this “a kenning for honey” (*Pindar's Victory Songs*, 103).

¹⁶ David Grene's translation, slightly modified.

¹⁷ See 27, 42, and 801-5.

based on a physical feature or related aspect of an individual (or common to a group of individuals). For instance, Homer asserts that Σκύλλη was named based on the sort of voice she has, namely, that of a newborn whelp (φωνή...σκύλακος νεογιλῆς) (*Od.* 12.85-7). Hesiod claims that Earth's progeny Brontes, Steropes and Arges were surnamed Cyclopes because they had only one eye, which was set in the middle of their foreheads (Κύκλωπες δ' ὄνομ' ἦσαν ἐπώνυμον, οὐνεκ' ἄρα σφέων κυκλοτερῆς ὀφθαλμὸς ἔεις ἐνέκειτο μετώπῳ) (*Th.* 144-5). In another case, Pindar focuses on Βάττος (the ὄνομα means "Stammerer"), who was originally named Aristoteles. The poet says that the sound of his voice (with Apollo's aid) put to flight a pack of lions, which were frightened by his exotic accent (*Pyth.* 5.57-9), and mentions that Battus had gone to Delphi to ask the god to cure his stammer (δυσθρόου φωνᾶς...ποινά) (*Pyth.* 4.63).¹⁸

Elsewhere, Aeschylus analyzes the name Παρθενοπαῖος based ultimately on the bearer's physical appearance (i.e., "Maiden-faced"). In this connection the scout in *Seven against Thebes* tells of the warrior's oath that he will destroy Thebes, and then of his appearance and demeanor:

τόδ' αὐδ' αἰ μητρὸς ἐξ ὀρεσκόου
 βλάστημα καλλίπρωρον, ἀνδρόπαις ἀνὴρ·
 στείχει δ' ἴουλος ἄρτι διὰ παρηίδων
 ὥρας φουούσης, ταρφὺς ἀντέλλουσα θρίξ.
 ὁ δ' ὠμόν, οὐ τι παρθένων ἐπώνυμον
 φρόνημα, γοργὸν δ' ὄμμ' ἔχων, προσίσταται. (532-7)¹⁹

The poet here emphasizes that Parthenopaeus' youthful-looking exterior is at odds with his ferocious attitude.²⁰ Euripides too focuses on Parthenopaeus' appearance by highlighting his exceptional beauty: in *Suppliants* Adrastus depicts the warrior as ὁ τῆς κυναγοῦ δ' ἄλλος Ἀταλάντης γόνος παῖς Παρθενοπαῖος, εἶδος ἐξοχώτατος (888-9). In

¹⁸ Both names, Battus and Aristoteles, are mentioned in the ode; the nickname Βάττος was given based on the fact of the individual's stammer. Strictly speaking, this is a related but not clear case of the aforementioned type; cf. my mention of it in the following section on phonetic constitution.

¹⁹ Such the loud vaunt
 of this creature sprung of a mountain mother, handsome,
 something between man and boy.
 The beard is newly sprouting on his cheeks,
 the thick, upspringing hair of youth in its bloom.
 His spirit unlike his maiden name (Parthenopaeus: Maiden One) is savage,
 and with a grim regard he now advances. (tr. and comment by Grene)

²⁰ The poet does mention the "mountain-dwelling mother" who gave him birth, by way of indicating his origin; however, Aeschylus' emphasis differs from Sophocles' since the latter's analysis actually centers on the etymology "Son-of-a-maiden." As the case of Parthenopaeus illustrates, different writers sometimes provide varying etymologies of the same proper name. An individual author will himself occasionally offer different etymological analyses of the same name; this happens for instance in Pindar's treatment of the name "Iamos." A writer may also offer multiple appellations for the same individual, providing an etymological treatment of each, as Hesiod does in the case of Aphrodite.

addition, in a possible attempt at etymology with regard to Ares' name, Hephaestus bemoans the fact that Aphrodite scorns him based on his physical deformity: φιλέει δ' αἰδήλον "Ἀρηα, οὔνεχ' ὁ μὲν καλός τε καὶ ἀρτίπος (*Od.* 8.309-10). Finally, it is worth noting Herodotus' statement regarding Persian proper names, which is of some relevance to a treatment of this subcategory: τὰ οὐνόματά σφι ἔόντα ὅμοια τοῖσι σώμασι καὶ τῇ μεγαλοπρεπείῃ τελευτῶσι πάντα ἐς τὸν τὸ γράμμα, τὸ Δωριέες μὲν σὰν καλέουσι, Ἴωνες δὲ σίγμα. ἐς τοῦτο διζήμενος εὐρήσεις τελευτῶντα τῶν Περσέων τὰ οὐνόματα, οὐ τὰ μὲν, τὰ δὲ οὐ, ἀλλὰ πάντα ὁμοίως (*Hist.* 1.139).²¹

Second, an individual can receive a name based on his emotional state. For instance, Sophocles has Aἴας agonize as follows regarding the connection between his name and current state of despair: αἰαί· τίς ἄν ποτ' ᾤθ' ᾧδ' ἐπώνυμον τοῦμὸν ξυνοίσειν ὄνομα τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς; νῦν γὰρ πάρεστι καὶ δις αἰάζειν ἐμοί (*Aj.* 430-2).²² Elsewhere, Euripides alludes to the descriptive content of the name Πενθεύς, i.e., its derivation from πενθεῖν, in an indirect fashion: in the midst of a hostile exchange with Dionysus, Πενθεύς, having identified himself by name, is told by the god that ἐνδυστυγῆσαι τοῦνομ' ἐπιτήδειος εἶ (*Bacc.* 508).

A third and quite popular criterion in terms of which to highlight the descriptive content of proper names is that involving bearers' attitudes and character traits. For example, in the *Iliad* Homer draws attention to the semantic constitution of the name Θερσίτης by depicting its bearer's conduct (2.212ff.). In the *Odyssey*, the poet observes that "Aἴας was truly lost among his long-oared ships...and he would have escaped his doom...had he not uttered a boastful word in great blindness of heart (μέγ' ἀάσθη)" (*Od.* 4.499-503).²³ Later in the poem Homer mentions the suitor Ctesippus, who is said to trust in his boundless wealth in his pursuit of Penelope (Κτήσιππος δ' ὄνομ' ἔσκε...ὅς δὲ τοι κτεάτεσσι πεποιθὼς θεσπεσίοισι) (20.288-90). Hesiod, in turn, remarks that Πόντος'

²¹ "All their names, which express physical qualities or magnificence, end in the letter S (the Dorian 'san'). Inquiry will prove this in every case without exception." (Aubrey de Sélincourt's translation, slightly modified)

²² Later in the play Teucer says the following to the dead Ajax about his own emotional state: "Oh, what a crop of anguish (ὅσας ἀνίας) you have sown for me in death!" (*Aj.* 1005; John Moore's translation). In addition, it is possible that Odysseus' name is connected with others' emotional response to a situation involving him when Homer says that Laertes, Penelope and Telemachus mourned (ὀδύρονται) Ὀδυσσεύς' absence (for other conceivable links between his name and ὀδύρομαι or ὀδύνη see 4.740-1; 4.812; 9.415; and 18.203). On the other hand, these parallels may be restricted to the phonetic plane.

²³ I follow A. T. Murray's translation, with minor changes. This connection is repeated at *Aj.* 509.

eldest child Νηρεύς “is trusty (νημερτής)...and does not forget the laws of righteousness” (*Th.* 235-6).²⁴

Both Hesiod and Aeschylus comment on the name Προμηθεύς. 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 deception of Zeus when Prometheus divided a certain ox into portions (*Th.* 535-52). In *Works and Days*, Zeus addresses Προμηθεύς as follows: Ἰαπετιονίδη, πάντων πέρι μήδεα εἰδώς (54). Moreover, in *Prometheus Bound* Κράτος makes the following remark to Prometheus regarding the latter’s name: ψευδωνύμως σε δαίμονες Προμηθέα καλοῦσιν· αὐτὸν γάρ σε δεῖ προμηθείας, ὅτῳ τρόπῳ τῆσδ’ ἐκκυλισθήσῃ τέχνης (85-7). In addition, though Hesiod does not explicitly highlight the descriptive content of the name Ἐπιμηθεύς by way of etymology, his description of Epimetheus’ behavior performs an equivalent function. Hesiod tells how Epimetheus failed to recall Prometheus’ advice 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 (*W.D.* 83-9). Pindar too draws attention to the name’s descriptive content, by using a synonymous adjective to characterize the bearer, namely, ὀψίνοος (*Pyth.* 5.28). In the same line he names Πρόφασις as Epimetheus’ daughter; the descriptive content of her name is clearly based on that of her father’s ὄνομα.

The tragedians offer etymologies of several other individuals’ names. For example, trying to persuade Φιλοκτήτης to join forces with the Greeks, Neoptolemus tells him that “it is a glorious heightening of gain (καλὴ γὰρ ἡ ᾿πίκτησις),” first to be healed and then to gain great fame for the conquest of Troy (*Soph. Phil.* 1344-7).²⁵ Later in the play Heracles gives a more specific account of what Philoctetes stands to gain, putting greater emphasis on the prospective material benefits (1409ff.). 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 highlighted, indicates that Sophocles does envision a specific relation between this particular individual and the trait in question. Euripides offers an etymology of the name Ἀφροδίτη which differs significantly from that of Hesiod: in *Trojan Women* he has Hecuba say that τὰ μῶρα...πάντ’ ἐστὶν Ἀφροδίτη βροτοῖς, καὶ

²⁴ Tr. by Hugh G. Evelyn-White. Hesiod also mentions Νημερτής as one of the fifty daughters of Nereus and Doris (*Th.* 262).

²⁵ Tr. by Grene.

τοῦνομ' ὀρθῶς ἀφροσύνης ἄρχει θεᾶς (989-90). In the *Bacchae*, in turn, Pentheus' mother 'Αγαύη is asked by the Chorus whether she is proud (ἀγάλλη;) (1198).

Moreover, in *Iphigenia at Aulis* Euripides offers an etymology of the name Ἰφιγένεια. Based on her willingness to die, the Chorus tells the bearer that her nature is noble (τὸ μὲν σόν, ὦ νεᾶνι, γενναίως ἔχει) (1402). Iphigenia's nobility is commented on repeatedly in what follows: Achilles tells her γενναία...εἶ (1411) and γενναία...φρονεῖς (1422-3);²⁶ furthermore, Artemis accepts a mountain deer in place of the young woman, in order that her altar not be defiled by the destruction of a noble life (εὐγενεῖ φόνῳ) (1595). In a telling contrast, Euripides illustrates Iphigenia's superiority to Agamemnon with regard to nobility when Clytaemestra comments that he is behaving ignobly (ἀγεννῶς) in arranging to take his daughter's life by trickery (1457). Elsewhere, in *Rhesus* Euripides highlights the descriptive content of the name Δόλων by emphasizing the bearer's δόλος (215).²⁷ In this play Euripides goes to great lengths to forge parallels between Dolon and Odysseus. One way in which he accomplishes this is by also associating Odysseus with δόλος, using an adjective formed from the noun: the poet calls him δόλιος Ὀδυσσεύς (894).²⁸

Fourth and finally, in certain other passages writers offer etymologies based on a skill or capacity of an individual (and perhaps another type of animate entity). Odysseus' address to a man he has killed in battle reveals this connection: ὦ Σῶχ', Ἰπιάσου υἱὲ δαΐφρονος ἵπποδάμοιο... (*Il.* 11.450). Regarding another name with ἵππος as a component, a messenger recounts the sudden panicking of Hippolytus' horses, and their rider's general skill in their handling; καὶ δεσπότης μὲν ἱππικοῖσιν ἤθεσιν πολλὺς ξυνοικῶν ἦρπασ' ἠνίας χεροῖν... (*Hipp.* 1218-20). Along these same lines, Adrastus says that Ἰππομέδων had one purpose, namely, "by skill in hunting, archery, and horsemanship (ἵπποις), to train himself for useful service to his city" (*Eur. Supp.* 881-7).²⁹ While Proteus and Psamathe originally named their daughter Εἰδῶ based on her physical resemblance to her mother, when she was older καλοῦσιν αὐτὴν Θεονόην· τὰ θεῖα γὰρ τὰ τ' ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα πάντ' ἠπίστατο (*Hel.* 8-14).³⁰ In an Homeric instance Alcinous sends for the θεῖον ἀοιδόν, Δημόδοκον· τῷ γάρ ῥα θεὸς πέρι

²⁶ Regarding Iphigenia's nobility of character see also 1374ff. and 1561-2 though this terminology itself is not employed.

²⁷ Also relevant in this regard are lines 216-18.

²⁸ Moreover, in the *Odyssey* Homer may link the name Μέντης with the noun μένος; see 1.180-321, where Athena, having appeared to Telemachus in the guise of the man Μέντης, puts strength (μένος) in his heart when she departs.

²⁹ Tr. by Philip Vellacott.

³⁰ Her knowledge is also referred to at *Helen* 317, 325-6, 530, and 818-22.

δῶκεν ἀοιδὴν τέρπειν (*Od.* 8.43-5); here the name is linked with a special capacity divinely bestowed. Elsewhere, Euripides offers an etymology of the name Θόας based on the bearer's ability to move with tremendous speed: Iphigenia speaks of Θόας, king of Tauris, ὃς ὠκὺν πόδα τιθεὶς ἴσον πτεροῖς ἐς τοῦνομ' ἦλθε τόδε ποδωκείας χάριν (*Eur. I.T.* 32-3). In a possible case involving a plant, Homer tells how whoever ate the fruit of the lotus (λωτός) was bound to remain among the Lotus-eaters, λωτὸν ἐρεπτόμενοι...νόστου τε λαθέσθαι (*Od.* 9.94-7). It is at least conceivable that the lotus received its ὄνομα due to its capacity to make individuals forget their plans and intentions.³¹ Finally, there is a noteworthy passage in the *Odyssey* in which Athena's name may be associated with νόημα and νοῦς. Odysseus, upon his arrival on Ithaca, asks Athena whether he has in fact reached his island home, and the goddess responds by saying that αἰεὶ τοι τοιοῦτον ἐνὶ στήθεσσι νόημα· τῷ σε καὶ οὐ δύναμαι προλιπεῖν δύστηνον ἔοντα, οὔνεκ' ἐπητής ἐσσι καὶ ἀγχίνοος καὶ ἐχέφρων (13.330-2).³²

Physical characteristics and related features, emotional states, attitudes and character traits, and, finally, skills and capacities all pertain directly to the named individuals. In addition, ὀνόματα can be given based on certain extensions of persons. First, there is a large group of cases in which names are assigned based on something pertaining to an individual or group's actions, or to the role an individual or group plays in someone else's plan of action. This category can in turn be divided into four subcategories, the first and largest being that in which name-giving proceeds from the character of an individual or group's actions, or from the undertaking of a certain type or course of action. For instance, both Aeschylus and Euripides associate Apollo's name with the destructive character of his actions. In *Agamemnon*, a despairing Cassandra bemoans her fate: ὥπολλον ὥπολλον, ἀγυῖάτ', ἀπόλλων ἐμός· ἀπώλεσας γὰρ οὐ μόλις τὸ δεύτερον (*Ag.* 1080-2, with verbatim repetition of the first two lines at 1085-6).³³ In *Orestes*, Euripides has Helen refer τοῖν τ' ἀθλίωιν τοῖνδ', οὐς ἀπώλεσεν θεός (121);

³¹ Given the absence of strong phonetic parallels between the two, I do not wish to claim with any certainty that an etymology is being offered. If such an analysis were involved, it would qualify as one of the more fanciful type which Plato advances numerous times in the *Cratylus*.

³² This *Odyssey* passage assumes heightened interest based on Plato's own similar treatment of the name in *Cratylus* 407a-c. For the attribution of superlative intelligence to Athena see Hesiod, *Th.* 887-98, and regarding Athena's birth from Zeus' head see, e.g., *Th.* 924 and Pindar, *Ol.* 7.35-7.

³³ The OCT prints ὥπολλον here in 1080 and 1085, making reference to ἄπολλον in the apparatus; since it is clear that Cassandra is addressing Apollo here, nothing substantive hangs on one's choice (for ὥπολλον see also 1077). Apollo is invoked as a destructive power elsewhere in Aeschylus. In *Seven against Thebes* the Chorus instructs him (under the epithet Λύκειος) to "prove thyself a wolf unto the host of the foe, and requite groan for groan!" (145-7; tr. by Herbert Weir Smyth).

subsequently, the messenger notes in despair that οὐδ' ὁ Πύθιος τρίποδα καθίζων Φοῖβος, ἀλλ' ἀπώλεσεν (*Or.* 955-6).³⁴ Similarly, both Homer and Aeschylus associate Clytaemestra's name with the pernicious course of action she undertakes. In *Agamemnon* Cassandra expresses concern about the destructive intentions Κλυταιμνήστρα is harboring: ἰὼ πόποι, τί ποτε μήδεται; τί τόδε νέον ἄχος; μέγα, μέγ' ἐν δόμοισι τοῖσδε μήδεται κακόν, ἄφερτον φίλοισιν, δυσίατον (1100-3). Homer employs the same verb in depicting Clytaemestra's actions, as well as the noun μῆτις in characterizing her as a person: Agamemnon's ghost tells Odysseus how Κλυταιμνήστρη δολόμητις slaughtered Cassandra, and goes on to recount her monstrous behavior toward him; he then notes that οὐκ αἰνότερον καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο γυναικὸς ἢ τις δὴ τοιαῦτα μετὰ φρεσὶν ἔργα βάλλεται, "even as she too devised (ἐμήσατο) a monstrous thing, contriving death for her wedded husband" (*Od.* 11.422-30).³⁵

Helen's name constituted an especially popular object of investigation. In a memorable passage in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* one finds the Chorus musing as follows:

τίς ποτ' ὠνόμαζεν ᾧδ'
 ἐς τὸ πᾶν ἐτητύμως,
 μή τις ὄντιν' οὐχ ὀρώμεν προνοί-
 αῖσι τοῦ πεπρωμένου
 γλῶσσαν ἐν τύχαι νέμων,
 τὰν δορίγαμβρον ἀμφινει-
 κῇ θ' Ἑλέναν; ἐπεὶ πρεπόντως
 ἐλένας ἔλανδρος ἐλέ-
 πτολις ἐκ τῶν ἀβροτίμων
 προκαλυμμάτων ἔπλευσεν
 Ζεφύρου γίγαντος αὖραι. (681ff.)³⁶

³⁴ Euripides may perhaps connect Φοῖβος and φόνιος in a passage in which Orestes says that it was a black hour for Neoptolemus when φόνιον αἰτήσῃ δίκην ἄνακτα Φοῖβον (*Andr.* 1002-3); however, it is quite possible that the parallels here are restricted to the phonetic plane.

³⁵ Murray's translation.

³⁶ 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? 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. (tr. by Lattimore, with minor changes)

In this connection it is worth noting Gorgias' remarks about Helen's ὄνομα: τοῦ δ' αὐτοῦ ἀνδρὸς λέξαι τε τὸ δέον ὀρθῶς καὶ ἐλέγξαι τοὺς μεμφομένους Ἑλένην, γυναῖκα περὶ ἧς ὁμόφωνος καὶ ὁμόψυχος γέγονεν ἢ τε τῶν ποιητῶν ἀκουσάντων πίστις ἢ τε τοῦ ὀνόματος φήμη, ὃ τῶν συμφορῶν μνήμη γέγονεν (*Helen*, 2). "The man who says rightly what ought to be said should also refute those who blame

Euripides ties Helen's name to the verb αἰρέω, as does Aeschylus, but highlights two different meanings of the verb. In interpreting Helen's name in *Andromache*, Euripides uses αἰρέω in the same sense as Aeschylus had in *Agamemnon*; he states here that Ἑλένη was the cause that Greece "of a thousand ships" captured and destroyed (εἶλε) Troy (104-6).³⁷ In *Helen*, however, the poet connects the name not with the destructive character of Helen's actions, but with her reflections—i.e., those of the real Helen, not the εἰδωλον taken to Troy—on the course of action she might choose (ἐλομένη) in her despair (294). In *Iphigenia at Aulis* Euripides links Helen's name once again with the verb αἰρέω in the sense of "choose": regarding her marriage, Tyndareus δίδωσ' ἐλέσθαι θυγατρὶ μνηστήρων ἕνα....ἥ δ' εἴλεθ'...Μενέλαον (68-71).

In a well-known passage Hesiod remarks that Hermes named a certain woman Πανδώραν, ὅτι πάντες Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες δῶρον ἐδώρησαν, πῆμ' ἀνδράσιν ἀλφειστῆσιν (W.D. 80-2). In a perhaps lesser-known treatment of Neoptolemus' name Sophocles plays on the adjective νέον: Odysseus asks him if he would "do some rash thing (τι νέον) now" (*Phil.* 1229-30).³⁸ Elsewhere, Herodotus tells how, upon his return to Sparta, Aristodemus got the nickname ὁ τρέσας based on his alleged cowardly behavior in battle (*Hist.* 7.231). In a final passage worthy of note Aeschylus associates the name Πέρσαι with the verb πέρθειν ("waste," "destroy"): Atossa reports that she has been haunted by several dreams since her son Xerxes στείλας στρατὸν Ἰαόνων γῆν οἴχεται Πέρσαι θέλων (*Pers.* 176-8). By using the aorist infinitive Aeschylus makes the two words identical in spelling; interestingly enough, Aeschylus employs the vocative Πέρσαι only seven lines earlier (171), and the proximity of the two lines reinforces the etymology.³⁹

Second, there are two noteworthy cases in which ὀνόματα are correlated with a feature *attending* the performance of a particular action: Hesiod tells how "these sons...Heaven used to call Τιτηῆνας in reproach, for he said that they strained

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." (tr. by D. M. MacDowell)

³⁷ Helen labels her own name δυσκλέες (*Hel.* 66), and later πολύπονον (199).

³⁸ I adopt Grene's translation here.

³⁹ In a related case involving a river, Aeschylus highlights the descriptive content of the name Ὑβριστής based on the fierce character of the bearer's activity (*Prom.* 717-24). (One might wish instead to place this example in that category privileging bearers' attitudes and character traits. My reason for placing it here is simply that the passage focuses specifically on the potentially destructive character of the river's activity, namely the strength of its current.)

(τιταίνοντας) and did presumptuously a fearful deed” (*Th.* 207-10).⁴⁰ In the second instance Euripides claims that Athena’s αἰγίς τόδε ἔσχεν ὄνομα θεῶν ὅτ’ ἦιξεν ἐς δόρυ (*Ion* 996-7).⁴¹ Third, names might be assigned based on an individual or group’s temporal relation to a particular course of action, or to other individuals engaged in a certain course of action. It is in this connection that Homer offers the standard interpretation of the name Νεοπτόλεμος, according to which it means “New-warrior”: during his underworld visit Odysseus informs Achilles that αὐτὸς γάρ μιν ἐγὼ κοίλης ἐπὶ νηὸς εἵσης ἤγαγον ἐκ Σκύρου μετ’ ἐϋκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοῦς, and goes on to tell of Neoptolemus’ value to them both in counsel and in battle (*Od.* 11.508-18). Sophocles provides the same analysis of this ὄνομα (*Phil.* 245-7).⁴² In fact, the name’s descriptive content 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.⁴³ This investment of a name with an important framing role in a literary work via its descriptive content is found to varying extents elsewhere, as for example in certain of Pindar’s epinician odes.⁴⁴ In another instance Athena tells the sons of the seven warriors fighting against Thebes that they will be called throughout Hellas the Ἐπίγονοι. This group receives its name based on its temporal relation to another collection of individuals, namely, their fathers, who were engaged in a common enterprise (*Eur. Supp.* 1224-6).⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Tr. by Evelyn-White.

⁴¹ In this instance an object *used* by an individual gets its ὄνομα based on something attending that individual’s performance of a certain action.

⁴² See also *Phil.* 70-3 and 348-51.

⁴³ One might also point to a similar, though ultimately less central framing role played by the descriptive content of the name Φιλοκτήτης.

⁴⁴ For illustrations see *Nemean* 3 and 7. As concerns *Nemean* 3, which commemorates Aristokleidas’ victory in the pankration, Nisetich notes that “the two components of the victor’s name, Aristo-kleidas, signify ‘superiority’ and ‘glory.’ The second element in the name...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” (*Pindar’s Victory Songs*, 239). (See also Pindar’s remark that Aristokleidas has bathed Aegina εὐκλέϊ λόγῳ (68).) In his introduction to *Nemean* 7, Nisetich, having observed that the victor and his father belonged to the Euxenid clan, descendent of Euxenos, proceeds to note 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 (259). In conclusion he observes that “*Nemean* 7 might be considered a full-scale treatment of the poet’s role as the victor’s friend or *xenos*” (261); on the centrality of ξενία more generally see p. 46. In the ode itself Pindar notes that it is a god’s help that enabled Sogenes to triumph in the pentathlon (εὐδοξος αἰδέεται Σωγένης μετὰ πενταέθλοισι) (6-8). He tells the victor’s father that ξεινός εἶμι (61), and asserts subsequently that “an Achaean man, dwelling above the Ionian Sea will not reproach me...I trust in his friendship (προξενία πέποιθ’)” (64-5). The poet later claims that “if one man has any knowledge of another, he would say a loving-minded neighbor is a joy to value over all” (86-9).

⁴⁵ Pindar also uses the term Ἐπίγονοι (*Pyth.* 8.42).

Fourth and finally, a name might be given based on the role an individual plays in someone else's plan of action. One finds an interesting case of this type at the close of Euripides' *Helen*, in which Helen's name is linked implicitly with αἰρέω in the sense of "capture." There, Castor tells her that where Hermes "first defined your place when he caught you up from Sparta...stealing (κλέψας) you...shall your name be known as 'Ελένη, meaning Captive, for mankind hereafter," ἐπεὶ κλοπαίαν σ' ἐκ δόμων ἐδέξατο (1670-5).⁴⁶ Here, instead of depicting Helen as a destructive influence Euripides makes her an object of coercion. In another instance of the same type, Herodotus states that a certain place got the name of 'Αφέται because the Argonauts intended to make it their point of departure after watering the ship (ἐνθεῦτεν γὰρ ἔμελλον ὑδρευσάμενοι ἐς τὸ πέλαγος ἀφήσειν) (*Hist.* 7.193). The Argonauts themselves do not make the assignment; Herodotus says simply that τῷ χώρῳ οὖνομα γέγονε 'Αφέται. Nevertheless, the place comes to have this ὄνομα based on the role it played as a launching-off point for *them* in the context of their mission.

There are also several passages in which ὀνόματα are assigned based on a significant effect which the referent (animate or inanimate) has on mortals. Both Aeschylus and Euripides highlight the descriptive content of the name Πολυνείκης. In Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* Amphiarus calls Polyneices by name, dwelling two times on the latter part (577-9). Some lines later Eteocles observes that Polyneices is quite fittingly named, meaning that, true to his appellation—ἐπώνυμῳ κάρτα—Polyneices has turned out to be a cause of strife with reference to mortals and their affairs (658). Subsequently Aeschylus extends the descriptive content of Polyneices' name to cover Eteocles as well: οἷ δὴτ' ὀρθῶς κατ' ἐπωνυμίαν καὶ πολυνεικεῖς ὄλοντ' ἀσεβεῖ διανοίᾳ (829-31). Euripides offers the same basic treatment of Polyneices' name: in *Phoenician Women* Eteocles tells Polyneices that ἀληθῶς δ' ὄνομα Πολυνείκη πατήρ ἔθετό σοι θεία προνοία νεϊκέων ἐπώνυμον (636-7). Subsequently Antigone addresses the dead Polyneices as follows: ὦ Πολύνεικες, ἔφνυ ἄρ' ἐπώνυμος (1493).⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Tr. by Lattimore.

⁴⁷ Finally, Antigone calls the dead Polyneices φίλτατον ὄνομα ἐμοί (*Phoen.* 1702). Here ὄνομα seems to function as a synonym for "person"; this reading is strengthened by the fact that Antigone had previously commented unfavorably on the name's descriptive content (which is negative in character) by offering a judgment of desert. Cf. Rudolf Hirzel, who comments that it cannot be "der ein böses Omen in sich tragende Name...der ihr so lieb ist, sondern nur die Person seines Trägers" (*Der Name*, 11-12). Concerning such substitutions, he offers the following observation: "Besonders stark tritt aber doch der Zusammenhang zwischen Eigennamen und Wesen beim Menschen hervor, wenn 'Name' geradezu für 'Person' gebraucht wird" (11). Hirzel provides a very suggestive treatment of names spanning several languages and time periods. While there are numerous points of common ground, his project is far more general in scope than my own; he does not, as I do, concentrate exclusively on Greek names and consider specific criteria on the

Elsewhere, with reference to Apollo, Xerxes' mother Atossa says that ὀρῶ...φεύγοντ' αἰετὸν πρὸς ἐσχάραν Φοίβου, φόβωι δ' ἄφθογγος ἐστάθην (*Pers.* 205-6). Furthermore, in one memorable passage Homer speaks of the impact which certain gates made of horn and ivory (κεράεσσι, ἐλέφαντι) have on human beings and their concerns: dreams coming through the latter gate deceive (ἐλεφαίρονται), while those coming through the gate of horn "bring true issues to pass" (ἔτυμα κραίνουσι) (*Od.* 19.562-7).⁴⁸

In other instances writers offer etymologies based on objects (animate or inanimate) with which an individual or group is associated. The object in question may be one used in the performance of certain actions, as is the case with Homer's observation that King Areithous received the additional name of "mace-man" (τὸν ἐπὶ κλησιν κορυνήτην) because he fought with an iron mace (σιδηρεῖη κορύνῃ) (*Il.* 7.138-41). The poet also ties the name Πηνελόπεια to an object linked with an important course of action undertaken by the bearer (the connection is with πῆνη/πηνίον): he shows Penelope deceiving the suitors by allegedly spinning a shroud for Laertes in the event of his death

basis of which those particular ὀνόματα are offered. Furthermore, in considering the Greeks his focus is broader than mine both with regard to time period encompassed and to the level of concern with historical naming patterns. In contrast, my interest is in the Greek literary tradition during a very specific period, namely the eighth through fifth centuries B.C.

With regard to ties between name and person it is also worth noting that there is a sense in which physical death need not bring with it wholesale extinction; cf. Hirzel, who notes that only when "auch der Name vergeht, ist das ganze Wesen des Menschen vernichtet" (17). It is not only living individuals who have ὀνόματα. The term can also be used with reference to those who have passed away; in those contexts ὄνομα has the sense of "reputation," as for instance when Agamemnon's ψυχὴ, having spoken of the magnificent prizes warriors contended for in honoring the dead Achilles, informs the latter that ὥς σὺ μὲν οὐδὲ θανὼν ὄνομ' ὤλεσας, ἀλλὰ τοι αἰεὶ πάντας ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους κλέος ἔσσεται ἐσθλόν (*Od.* 24.93-4). Similarly, Pindar speaks of one's ἀρετὴ (tr. here by Nisetich as "renown") as ἐπὶ καὶ θανάτῳ φάρμακον κάλλιστον (*Pyth.* 4.186-7). Elsewhere Creon laments the death of his son: ἐμός τε γὰρ παῖς γῆς ὄλωλ' ὑπερθανὼν, τοῦνομα λαβὼν γενναῖον, ἀνιάρων δ' ἐμοί (*Phoen.* 1313-14). Megara observes that while others possess the wealth (οὐσία) of the dead Heracles, she and his sons still possess his ὄνομα (*Her.* 336-8). The adjective (ἀ)νώνυμος is often used as its negative counterpart, as for instance when the Chorus in Aeschylus' *Persians*, echoing Xerxes' observation that the leaders of the Persian host are gone, affirms: βεβᾶσιν, οἳ νώνυμοι (1003). This same terminology, used to refer to an individual or group's fame (or lack thereof), may of course also be employed with reference to living individuals.

⁴⁸ Tr. by Murray. Herodotus, in turn, tells how Theras' son received the nickname Οἰόλυκος based on his father's remark that, having departed on an expedition, he would be leaving his son behind like "a sheep among wolves (οἷν ἐν λύκοις)" (*Hist.* 4.149). This remark is based on Theras' fear that his departure would have the result of placing his son in jeopardy, and leads to the general assignment of the nickname based on a consolidation of the phrase which Theras was said to have uttered. This passage does not fit the model according to which an individual's name is based on the effect which that same individual produces. This assignment is made based on a speculative remark the bearer's father makes regarding the dangerous consequences of his son's remaining behind once he departs. To the extent that this ὄνομα is constructed based on an anticipated effect of the bearer's *failure* to act in a certain way, i.e., join Theras on the expedition, it should be considered a somewhat related case of the aforementioned mode of analysis.

(for Homer's presentation of the tale see *Od.* 2.93ff.; 19.137ff.; and 24.128ff.).⁴⁹ Moreover, Euripides links Hippolytus with horses on several occasions (*Hipp.* 307; 581-2; 1131-4; 1166-8).⁵⁰ A name might also be analyzed based on an object which an individual or group of individuals is said to wear. For example, Homer tells how at Dawn, the nymph Καλυψώ clothed herself, and placed a veil (καλύπτρην) on her head (*Od.* 5.228-32).⁵¹ In a second case Herodotus mentions a certain people named for the black garments worn by its constituent individuals: Μελάγχλαινοι δὲ εἵματα μὲν μέλανα φορέουσι πάντες, ἐπ' ὧν καὶ τὰς ἐπωνυμίας ἔχουσι (*Hist.* 4.107).

An ὄνομα may also be assigned based on a characteristic of the place from which its bearer hails, as in the *Odyssey* when Athena appears to Telemachus as "the son of wise Anchialus (Ἀγχιάλοιο...υἱός)...lord over the oar-loving Taphians" (1.180-1).⁵² Alternatively, a natural inanimate entity might receive its ὄνομα based on its connection to an important individual: illustrative of this approach is Prometheus' foretelling that Io will eventually pass through the channel of Maeotis, ἔσται δὲ θνητοῖς εἰσαεὶ λόγος μέγας τῆς σῆς πορείας, Βόσπορος δ' ἐπώνυμος κεκλήσεται (*Prom.* 732-4).⁵³

Far more plentiful are cases in which an individual's name is interpreted based on the role that individual plays in a particular social or familial context. In this connection, the names "Hector" and "Astyanax" are quite popular with Homer and Euripides, both of whom draw attention not only to the descriptive content of each individual name, but also to the semantic links between the two ὀνόματα.⁵⁴ Concerning Ἑκτώρ as Troy's defender or guardian, there is a notable *Iliad* passage in which Andromache uses a form of ἔχω in addressing her dead husband: ἦ γὰρ ὄλωλας ἐπίσκοπος, ὅς τέ μιν αὐτὴν ῥύσκει, ἔχεις δ' ἀλόχους κεδνὰς καὶ νήπια τέκνα (24.729-30). In another *Iliad* passage Andromache refers to her Ἀστυάναξ, ὃν Τρῶες ἐπὶ κλησὶν καλέουσιν· οἷος

⁴⁹ In a possible further twist she reports that she weaves a skein of wiles (ἐγὼ δὲ δόλους πολυπτεύω) (*Od.* 19.137); note also the π that begins the verb.

⁵⁰ Here there is no mention of the individual's skill with horses, which is why these passages are classified separately from lines 1218-20.

⁵¹ Cf. her association elsewhere with the notion of concealment: Calypso is said to have kept Odysseus back in her hollow caves (1.14-15); Hermes' remarks emphasize how isolated her island is (5.99-102).

⁵² Tr. by Murray. The father's name is formed from ἀγχιάλος, meaning "near the sea" in the case of cities, and "sea-girt" in the case of islands (see Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 16).

⁵³ Commenting on this etymology, N. Wecklein says that "the derivation...is wrong. At any rate the Thracian Bosphorus, which, even more universally than the Cimmerian, was believed to owe its name to Io's passage, really received its name from the goddess Ἑκάτη Φωσφόρος (dialectic Βοσπόρος), who was there worshipped" (*Prometheus Bound*, 110).

⁵⁴ These names constitute striking instances of assignments made based on parental hopes for the adult progeny.

γάρ σφιν ἔρυσσεν [i.e., Hector] πύλας καὶ τείχεα μακρά (22.506-7).⁵⁵ Moreover, in Euripides' *Trojan Women* Andromache addresses the dead Ἑκτώρ as her defender (σῶς δάμαρτος ἄλκαρ) (590). Subsequently, Hecuba laments the fact that Astyanax was killed at such a young age by the Argives when he might instead have reached adulthood and died fighting on behalf of his city, i.e., performed the same civic function as his father (1168); as though to reinforce that common function, which is encapsulated in the two ὀνόματα, while Astyanax's body is prepared for burial the Chorus mentions *Hector* as μέγας ἐμοί ποτ' ὦν ἀνάκτωρ πόλεως (1217). Regarding Hector's brother, whose attraction to Helen had resulted in disaster, Euripides says that Paris of Ida was the name he received in Troy, but that Priam gave him the additional name of Ἀλέξανδρος ("defender of men") (*I.A.* 1287-94). In another case of a name describing a man's social function, Herodotus mentions the oracle instructing the Cyrenaeans to call in someone from Mantinea in Arcadia to set things right for them: on this occasion οἱ Μαντινέες ἔδοσαν ἄνδρα τῶν ἀστῶν δοκιμώτατον, τῷ οὖνομα ἦν Δημῶναξ (4.161).

In addition, there are certain passages in *Oedipus at Colonus* which if combined suggest that Sophocles takes Antigone's name to mean "Instead-of/Like-a-son." The term γοναί is used for "sons" (1192). Subsequently Polyneices tells Oedipus that "I'm your son, or, if not...at least I'm called (καλούμενος) your son," and uses the preposition ἀντί with reference to Antigone and Ismene (1323-6).⁵⁶ Oedipus proceeds to inform Polyneices that Antigone and Ismene αἶδε μ' ἐκσφύζουσιν, αἶδ' ἐμαὶ τροφοί, αἶδ' ἄνδρες, οὐ γυναικες, ἐς τὸ συμπονεῖν· ὑμεῖς δ' ἀπ' ἄλλου κοῦκ ἐμοῦ πεφύκατον (1367-9) (for the Creon of *Antigone*, in contrast, such a substitution would be unthinkable). Sophocles' application of the descriptive content of one of two sibling's names to both individuals parallels Aeschylus' treatment of Polyneices' name in *Seven against Thebes*, where, as mentioned previously, he uses the descriptive content of that ὄνομα to cover both the bearer and his brother Eteocles. Moreover, it is interesting to note how Herodotus' treatment of the name "Battus" differs from that of Pindar. Herodotus says that the man was renamed Βάττος, βάττος being the Libyan word for βασιλεύς, and claims that the Priestess at Delphi addressed him by this name because she knew that he would become a Libyan king (*Hist.* 4.155).

⁵⁵ See also 6.403 (where Homer says that while Hector called his son Scamandrius, other men called him Astyanax, οἷος γὰρ ἐρύετο Ἴλιον Ἑκτώρ) and 24.499-501.

⁵⁶ One finds ἀντί in the sense of "like" or "as good as" already in Homer, as for instance in *Il.* 9.116-17: ἀντί νυ πολλῶν λαῶν ἐστὶν ἀνὴρ. See also *Od.* 1.70; 2.17; 3.414; and 8.546.

Finally, writers interpret names based on functions and special powers of the divine. This category can in turn be divided into three subcategories. First, an individual's name might be analyzed based on an element over which that individual has control. This is the case with Homer's linkage of Hera with air: the poet says that she sheds thick mist (ἀήρ) about her horses (*Il.* 5.775-6). As if to reinforce the etymology, he associates Hera with air again later in the work (14.277ff.).⁵⁷ Second, an individual deity's name might be interpreted based on a special ability or capacity possessed by that individual. A special ability to avoid detection is the ground of Homer's treatment of Hades as the "Unseen-one": Athena put on the cap of Hades, μή μιν ἴδοι ὄβριμος Ἄρης (*Il.* 5.844-5). In *Oedipus Tyrannus* Sophocles has Jocasta address Apollo as follows: "I came as suppliant to you, ὦ Λύκει' Ἀπολλων...grant us escape free (λύσιν τιν') of the curse" (919-21).⁵⁸ Elsewhere, a citizen of Pherae asks Apollo to be Admetus' redeemer (λυτήριος) from death (*Alc.* 221-5).⁵⁹ Aeschylus offers an etymology of the name Ἄρης, linking it with ἄρα: πικρὸς δὲ χρημάτων κακὸς δατητὰς Ἄρης, ἄρὰν πατρώαν τιθεὶς ἀλαθῇ (*Th.* 944-6).⁶⁰ In one passage concerned solely with the capacity of one god to bring evil to another, Prometheus associates Cronus' name with the verb κραίνω, saying that πατρὸς δ' ἄρὰ Κρόνου τότ' ἤδη παντελῶς κρανθήσεται unless Zeus seeks and obtains Prometheus' aid (*Prom.* 910-15).⁶¹

Third, an individual or group's name might be given based on the instrumental role that individual or collective plays in the universe at large. It is in this connection that Zeus' name was an especially popular object of etymological analysis. Regarding Zeus' unique status among the gods, Walter Burkert notes that he was the only one "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."⁶² Hesiod's invocation to the Muses at the outset of his *Works and Days* ties one form of the god's

⁵⁷ In addition, Euripides connects Hera with οὐρανός at *Hel.* 31ff., and with αἰθήρ at *Hel.* 243ff.

⁵⁸ Tr. by Grene.

⁵⁹ It is interesting to note here that one of the four etymologies of Apollo's name offered by Plato in the *Cratylus* is based on a compound of λύω.

⁶⁰ Cf. Walther Kranz, *Stasimon*, 288.

⁶¹ *Stasimon*, 289.

⁶² *Greek Religion*, 131. Burkert also mentions the contrast in intelligibility between divine and human names: "Most ordinary Greek men and women...have names which are quite perspicuous." In contrast, "the names of the Greek gods are almost all impenetrable. Not even for Zeus could the Greeks find the correct etymology" (182), i.e., that tracing it back to its root "in the Greek *eudia*, fair weather. Zeus is therefore the Sky Father, the luminous day sky" (126). As is evident from what follows, writers in the literary tradition have their own ideas about how the name should be analyzed.

name, Δίς, to the preposition διὰ:⁶³ Μοῦσαι...Δί' ἐννέπετε...ὄν τε διὰ βροτοὶ ἄνδρες ὁμῶς ἄφατοί τε φατοί τε, ῥητοί τ' ἄρρητοί τε Διὸς μέγαλοιο ἔκητι (1-4). Aeschylus too privileges this connection when the Chorus in his *Agamemnon* identifies Zeus as the ultimate source of the misfortunes of the House of Atreus: ἰὼ ἱή, διὰ Διὸς παναιτίου πανεργέτα· τί γὰρ βροτοῖς ἄνευ Διὸς τελεῖται; (*Ag.* 1485-7). In *Isthmian* 3, in contrast, Pindar ties the form Ζεύς to ζῆν ("life"): Ζεῦ, μεγάλα δ' ἀρεταὶ θνατοῖς ἔπονται ἐκ σέθεν· ζῶει δὲ μάσσων ὄλβος ὀπιζομένων... (4-5).⁶⁴ Aeschylus highlights the same link in a reference to what "is in very truth the seed of life-giving Zeus" (φυσιζόου γένος...Ζηνός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς) (*Supp.* 584-5).⁶⁵ Euripides also connects the two in a passage in which Apollo, speaking about Helen, says that Ζηνὸς γὰρ οὖσαν ζῆν νιν ἄφθιτον χρεῶν (*Or.* 1635); here a direct causal connection is suggested.

Finally, there is the well-known Aeschylian passage that treats the issue of finding the right name for Zeus:

Ζεὺς ὅστις ποτ' ἐστίν, εἰ τόδ' αὖ-
τῷ φίλον κεκλημένῳ,
τοῦτό νιν προσεννέπω·
οὐκ ἔχω προσεικάσαι
πάντ' ἐπισταθμώμενος
πλὴν Διός, εἰ τὸ μάταν ἀπὸ φροντίδος ἄχθος
χρὴ βαλεῖν ἐτητύμως·
οὐδ' ὅστις πάροιθεν ἦν μέγας,
παμμάχῳ θράσει βρύων,
οὐδὲ λέξεται πρὶν ὦν·
ὅς δ' ἔπειτ' ἔφω, τρια-
κτῆρος οἴχεται τυχών·
Ζῆνα δὲ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων
τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν. (*Ag.* 160-75)⁶⁶

⁶³ This form of the god's name is found in the oblique cases.

⁶⁴ Nisetich does not mention this connection in his introduction to the ode.

⁶⁵ Tr. by Smyth.

⁶⁶ Zeus: whatever he may be, if this name
pleases him in invocation,
thus I call upon him.
I have pondered everything
yet I cannot find a way,
only Zeus, to cast this dead weight of ignorance
finally from out my brain.
He who in time long ago was great,
throbbing with gigantic strength,
shall be as if he never were, unspoken.
He who followed him has found
his master, and is gone.

J. H. Quincey offers an intriguing interpretation of the passage according to which it contains a twofold etymological analysis. He notes that initially the name Ζεύς is accepted (160-2): “The subject is then divided into two parts; the strophe deals with Δία, the antistrophe with Ζῆνα. The two solutions are presented in emphatic position at the beginning of the corresponding lines 165 and 174, where the change from trochees to ‘mantic’ dactyls emphasizes that the solution comes only by prophetic insight.”⁶⁷ He stresses that “Διός 165 is *not* the god but the name” and advocates restoration of δικάειν to the text from the Hesychius lemma, saying in conclusion that “Zeus was the throwing god, and since *Cho.* 949 gives us Δίκα=ἐτήτυμος Διὸς κόρα, Aeschylus’ etymological grouping seems to be Δία, δικάειν, δίκη.”⁶⁸ In turn, in the antistrophe the Chorus realizes, “with a flash of insight, that Zeus is the living god, Ζῆνα ζῆν.”⁶⁹

With regard to another deity, in the *Bacchae* Euripides notes that Demeter and earth are said to be identical: Δημήτηρ θεά—γῆ δ’ ἐστίν, ὄνομα δ’ ὁπότερον βούλῃ κάλει (275-6). This suggests the etymology of “Mother-earth.” He seems to make the same proposal in *Phoenician Women*, when the Chorus mentions the διώνυμοι θεαί, Περσέφασσα καὶ φίλα Δαμάτηρ θεά, πάντων ἄνασσα, πάντων δὲ Γᾶ τροφός (683-6). Lastly, Herodotus offers an etymology of the term θεοί itself, claiming that divinities received this group appellation because κόσμῳ θέντες τὰ πάντα πράγματα καὶ πάσας νομὰς εἶχον (*Hist.* 2.52).

As mentioned, there is another set of instances in which considerations involving the namer constitute the basis on which ὀνόματα are assigned. Such ὀνόματα might be given based on various features or aspects of the namer. This category divides in turn into various subcategories. First, the assignment could be grounded on a physical or related aspect of the namer. An example of this type of case is found at the outset of Euripides’ *Helen*, where the poet says that when she was born Proteus and Psamathe named their daughter Εἰδῶ, τὸ μητρὸς ἀγλάνισμα (8-11). Second, a name might be given based on the namer’s emotional state. One finds a prominent instance of this in an *Odyssey* passage in which Odysseus’ grandfather Autolycus indicates the basis on which he assigned his grandson’s ὄνομα: πολλοῖσιν γὰρ ἐγὼ γε ὀδυσσάμενος τόδ’ ἰκάνω...τῷ δ’

Cry aloud without fear the victory of Zeus,
you will not have failed the truth. (tr. by Lattimore)

⁶⁷ “Etymologica,” 147.

⁶⁸ “Etymologica,” 148.

⁶⁹ “Etymologica,” 148.

‘Ὀδυσεὺς ὄνομ’ ἔστω ἐπώνυμον (19.407-9).⁷⁰ In another case, which centers on the acquisition of a nickname, Cleopatra’s parents came to call their daughter “Alcyone” due to the mother Marpessa’s grief at being snatched away by Apollo: ‘Ἀλκυόνην καλέεσκον ἐπώνυμον, οὐνεκ’ ἄρ’ αὐτῆς μήτηρ ἀλκυόνος πολυπενθέος οἶτον ἔχουσα κλαίειν ὃ μιν ἐκάεργος ἀνήρπασε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων (Il. 9.561-4).⁷¹

Third, a name might be given based on an attitude or character trait of the namer. For example, Herodotus says that Cleisthenes changed the names of the Dorian tribes so as to make fools of the Sicyonians, i.e., based on his contemptuous attitude toward them. The names were derived from the words for “donkey” and “pig,” with the endings changed. While he named his own tribe the Ἀρχέλαοι, ἀπὸ τῆς ἐωυτοῦ ἀρχῆς, he named the others Ὑᾶται, Ὀνεᾶται, and Χοιρεᾶται (Hist. 5.68). In another instance Euripides says that the son of Proteus and Psamathe was named Θεοκλύμενος based on his father’s piety (Hel. 8-10).⁷²

The Furies, as depicted by the tragedians, evoked great fear in mortals; this is evident from their approach to the naming of these deities. In *Oedipus at Colonus* Oedipus is told, regarding the spot where he sits, that 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 τὰς πάνθ’ ὀρώσας Εὐμενίδας (42).⁷³ The mortals in question assign them the name Εὐμενίδες based on

⁷⁰ There are other passages in which the same verb is used with reference to Odysseus. These cases involve others’ anger toward Odysseus himself: Odysseus is singled out as the object of Zeus’ wrath (τί νύ οἱ τόσον ὠδύσσαο, Ζεῦ;) (1.62); Ino asks Odysseus, τίπτε τοι ὦδε Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων ὠδύσατ’ ἐκπάγλως, ὅτι τοι κακὰ πολλὰ φυτεύει; (5.339-40); Odysseus indicates that he knows ὥς μοι ὀδῶδυσται κλυτὸς ἐννοσίγαιος (5.423); Odysseus tells Penelope (who does not as yet know his true identity) that ὀδύσαντο γὰρ αὐτῷ Ζεὺς τε καὶ Ἥλιος because his comrades had slain the king of Helios (19.275-6; om. in some MSS).

⁷¹ Strictly speaking the mother, whose grief leads to the additional assignment, is of course one of two namers. On this interpretation αὐτῆς refers to the daughter, and μιν to her mother Marpessa. Murray prints αὐτῇ rather than αὐτῆς, and takes the μιν as referring to Cleopatra rather than to Marpessa, as is evident from his translation: “The mother herself...wept because Apollo that worketh afar had snatched her child away.” One point in support of the former reading is that the halcyon is known to cry when separated from its mate; on this reading Homer has a direct analogy in view. (I owe this observation to Andrea Nightingale.)

⁷² The bracketed words ὅτι δὴ θεοὺς σέβων βίον διήνεγκ’ are rejected by Nauck (concerning the approach to naming evinced by this passage cf. Plato, *Crat.* 397a-c). The case of Theoclymenus is actually rather more complex than Euripides’ remark suggests since presumably the name was not given merely based on the father’s attitude, but also based on the parents’ hopes that their son, once mature, would display that same piety. Insofar as the name is given based on a wish regarding the son’s nature, it could be accommodated in the first of the two basic categories as well, i.e., that in which appellations are given based on important considerations involving the bearer.

⁷³ Lines 122ff. also show mortals’ fear of these deities: one trembles to name them due to their power to harm.

their fear, that is, based on the attitude they actually *want* these divinities to have toward them. This comes out clearly when the Chorus in effect asks them to be true to this assigned name with positive descriptive content: it tells Oedipus to repeat the prayer that “as we call them Εὐμενίδας, which means the gentle of heart, may they accept with gentleness (ἐξ εὐμενῶν) the suppliant and his wish” (486-7).⁷⁴ One sees the same trepidation and reluctance to name the deities in Euripides’ plays: In *Orestes* Electra says ὀνομάζειν γὰρ αἰδοῦμαι θεὰς εὐμενίδας, αἱ τόνδ’ ἐξαμιλλῶνται φόβῳ (37-8).⁷⁵ Subsequently, Menelaus and Orestes are quite disinclined to name them (408-10). Along these same lines the Furies are elsewhere referred to as αἱ ἀνώνυμοι θεαί (*I.T.* 944).⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Tr. by Robert Fitzgerald.

⁷⁵ Interestingly, in telling his visitor (the disguised Odysseus) about his absent master Odysseus, the swineherd Eumaeus remarks: τὸν μὲν ἐγὼν, ὃ ξεῖνε, καὶ οὐ παρεόντ’ ὀνομάζειν αἰδέομαι (*Od.* 14.145-6).

⁷⁶ There are other instances of euphemistic language. For instance, Burkert says that the ordinary individual’s fear of the δαίμων is indicated by “euphemistic talk about the ‘other daimon’ instead of the evil daimon” (*Greek Religion*, 181). A passage in Pindar’s third *Pythian* ode, mentioned by Burkert in this connection, illustrates the point nicely: regarding Apollo’s arranged destruction of Coronis the poet says that δαίμων δ’ ἕτερος ἐς κακὸν τρέψαις ἐδαμάσσατό νιν, καὶ γειτόνων πολλοὶ ἐταῦρον, ἀμᾶ δ’ ἔφθαρεν (34-6). (Nisetich’s rendering of δαίμων ἕτερος as “an evil power” does not convey the fear of naming involved here, but rather masks it (*Pindar’s Victory Songs*, 170).)

In connection with the giving of euphemistic ὀνόματα it is also worth noting authors’ substitution of εὐώνυμος for ἀρίστερος as the adjective meaning “left,” presumably on similar grounds, namely, out of fear of the referent’s power. In the case of εὐώνυμος this fear would be generated specifically based on what is characterized as *being positioned* on the left: for instance, in *Prometheus Bound* Prometheus says that γαμψωνύχων τε πτήσιν οἰωνῶν σκεθρῶς διώρισ’, οὔτινές τε δεξιῶι φύσιν εὐωνύμους τε (488-90). The context makes clear that it is what occupies that position is considered unfavorable or threatening. Conversely, the positive character of what is on the right is mentioned also by Homer: as Telemachus, taking leave of Menelaus, expresses his fervent desire that Odysseus be at home when returns to Ithaca,

ἐπέτατο δεξιὸς ὄρνις,
αἰετὸς ἀργὴν χῆνα φέρων ὀνύχεσσι πέλωρον,
ἡμερον ἐξ αὐλῆς· οἱ δ’ ἰύζοντες ἔποντο
ἄνδρες ἠδὲ γυναῖκες· ὁ δὲ σφισιν ἐγγύθεν ἐλθὼν
δεξιὸς ἦϊξε πρόσθ’ ἵππων· οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες
γῆθησαν, καὶ πᾶσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θυμὸς ἰάνθη (*Od.* 15.160-5).

a bird flew by on the right,
an eagle, bearing in his talons a great, white goose, a
tame fowl from the yard, and men and women
followed shouting. But the eagle drew near to them,
and darted off to the right in front of the horses;
and they were glad as they saw it, and the hearts in
the breasts of all were cheered. (tr. by Murray)

Similarly, as Telemachus raises the issue of Zeus’ punishment of the suitors, a hawk later flies by on the right; this leads Theoclymenus to inform him that οὐ τοι ἄνευ θεοῦ ἔτατο δεξιὸς ὄρνις· ἔγνω γάρ μιν ἐσάντα ἰδὼν οἰωνὸν ἑόντα. ὑμετέρου δ’ οὐκ ἔστι γένεος βασιλεύτερον ἄλλο ἐν δῆμῳ Ἰθάκης, ἀλλ’ ὑμεῖς καρτεροὶ αἰεὶ (*Od.* 15.531-4). At the close of the poem, Odysseus—before identifying himself as such to Laertes—tells him that he last saw Odysseus several years ago; moreover, ἡ τέ οἱ ἐσθλοὶ ἔσαν ὄρνιθες. In addition, one votes, for example, with the right hand, as when Danaus tells his daughters that the Argives acted in a decisive fashion, πανδημίαι γὰρ χερσὶ δεξιωνύμοις ἔφριξεν αἰθὴρ

In addition, an ὄνομα might be assigned based on a chance intersection of paths between the namer and the recipient individual.⁷⁷ In *Ion*, Xuthus tells Ἴων that he is receiving this name because he was the first one Xuthus encountered as he left (ἐξιόντι μοι) Apollo's shrine (661-3). This analysis is later reiterated when the Chorus leader states that Xuthus called him Ἴων, ἐπέπερ πρῶτος ἦντησεν πατρί (802); subsequently, it is

τόνδε κραινόντων λόγον, ἡμᾶς μετοικεῖν τῆσδε γῆς ἐλευθέρους... (Aesch. *Supp.* 607-9). Moreover, when Medea reproaches Jason for violating his oath to her, she says that

ὄρκων δὲ φρούδη πίστις, οὐδ' ἔχω μαθεῖν
εἰ θεοὺς νομίζεις τοὺς τότε οὐκ ἄρχειν ἔτι
ἢ καινὰ κείσθαι θέσμι' ἀνθρώποις τὰ νῦν,
ἐπεὶ σύνοισθ' αἰεὶ εἰς ἔμ' οὐκ εὖορκος ὦν.
φεῦ δεξιὰ χεῖρ, ἧς σὺ πόλλ' ἐλαμβάνον,
καὶ τῶνδε γονάτων, ὥς μάτην κεχρώισμεθα
κακοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός, ἐλπίδων δ' ἡμάρτομεν (*Med.* 492-8).

faith in your word has gone. Indeed, I cannot tell
Whether you think the gods whose names you swore by then
Have ceased to rule and that new standards are set up,
Since you must know you have broken your word to me.
O my right hand, and the knees which you often clasped
in supplication, how senselessly I am treated

By this bad man, and how my hopes have missed their mark! (tr. by Rex Warner)

(On the topic of the right-left distinction, one may also note the fact that 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: καὶ με θεὰ πρόφρων ὑπεδέξατο, χεῖρα δὲ χειρὶ δεξιτερῇν ἔλεν (Fr. 1, 22-3). Moreover, Parmenides' opposed valuations of right and left—positive and negative, respectively—are evident in his embryology, according to which δεξιτεροῖσιν μὲν κούρους, λαιοῖσι δὲ κούρας... (Fr. 17). Anaxagoras too correlated right with male and left with female in the process of reproduction; in that process the male provided the seed, the female merely the space (τόπος) for it (cf. Aesch. *Eum.* 657-61). He associated seed from the right testis, and the right-hand side of the womb, with the creation of male progeny, and seed from the left testis plus location in the left-hand side of the womb with the female (Aristotle, *De generatione animalium*, 4.1.)

Εὐώνυμος in the sense of "left" occurs on several other occasions in the literary tradition: for instance, Danaus instructs his daughters to hold their suppliant boughs in their left hands (ἔχουσαι διὰ χειρῶν εὐωνύμων) when asking for refuge (Aesch. *Supp.* 191ff.); in *Seven against Thebes* the Chorus observes that both Polyneices and Eteocles were smitten through their left sides (δι' εὐωνύμων τετυμμένοι) (887); and Deianira's left side and arm are referred to (Soph. *Tr.* 925-6). Herodotus makes several references to the left wing of an army (τὸ εὐώνυμον κέρας) (see 6.111, 9.28, 9.46, 9.48), and uses εὐώνυμος to mean "left" in the sense of "west" (see for instance 1.72). Εὐώνυμος is also employed in the literal sense of "well-named," as for example in Pindar's mention of feet in praising the speed of two victors (*Nem.* 8.47), and his reference to justice as "named in loveliness" (εὐώνυμον δίκαν) (*Nem.* 7.48).

Δυσώνυμος is also used, as at *Ajax* 914 where the phrase δυσώνυμος Αἴας appears; this reference assumes special relevance given that earlier in the play Sophocles highlights the descriptive content of the hero's name. See in addition *O.C.* 528, where the poet refers to Oedipus' δυσώνυμα λέκτρα. With regard to the issue of a reluctance to name, it is interesting that three times in the *Odyssey* Penelope makes reference to "ill-fated Troy, not to be named" (Κακοῖλιον οὐκ ὀνομαστήν) (19.260, 19.597, and 23.19). Finally, Herodotus declines to mention Osiris' name in connection with a certain activity performed in his honor (see 2.61). As concerns the omission of Osiris' ὄνομα see also 2.86; there Herodotus, discussing the Egyptian practice of mummification, says that embalmers first produce samples in wood, of which the best and most expensive is said εἶναι τοῦ οὐκ ὅσιον ποιεῖσθαι τὸ οὖνομα ἐπὶ τοιοῦτω πρήγματι ὀνομάζειν.

⁷⁷ Hirzel, somewhat more generally, mentions "ein zufälliger Umstand (τύχη)" as "namenschöpferisch" in this instance (87).

said that καὶνὸν δὲ τοῦνομ' ἀνὰ χρόνον πεπλασμένον Ἴων, ἰόντι δῆθεν ὅτι συνήντετο (830-1).⁷⁸ Third and finally, an individual might receive his or her ὄνομα based on some object associated with the namer. In this connection Sophocles has Ajax tell his son Εὐρυσάκης that he was named for the shield (σάκος) which Ajax now gives to him (Aj. 574-6).

Over and above the wide range of cases falling in those categories and subcategories treated in what precedes, it is interesting to note that sometimes a particular ὄνομα will give rise to a set of statements or story which takes on a life of its own. For instance, in the *Bacchae* Euripides offers an explanation of how the tale arose that Zeus bore Dionysus by way of his thigh. Zeus gave an ether-formed Dionysus as hostage (ὄμηρον) to Hera. Over time “men garbled the word (ὄνομα μεταστήσαντες) and said that Dionysus had been sewn into the thigh of Zeus (ἐν μηρῷ Διός).”⁷⁹ Whereas, what actually happened was that Zeus gave Hera a dummy as hostage for her son (ὠμήρευσε) (288ff.). In another case Herodotus makes reference to a well-known story built around the descriptive content of the name Κύνω, which belonged to the woman who, with her husband, took care of the boy who was to become Cyrus. Once returned to Cambyses’ palace he sang her praises: οἱ δὲ τοκέες παραλαβόντες τὸ οὔνομα τοῦτο, ἵνα θειοτέρως δοκέῃ τοῖσι Πέρσησι περιεῖναι σφι ὁ παῖς, κατέβαλον φάτιν ὡς ἐκκείμενον Κῦρον κύων ἐξέθρεψε. ἐνθεῦτεν μὲν ἡ φάτις αὕτη κεχώρηκε (1.122).⁸⁰

In still another instance, also found in Herodotus, it appears as though the writer draws conclusions about the nature of the hippopotamus based on its name, which he gives as ἵππος ποτάμιος (2.71): in this passage Herodotus claims that it τετράπουν ἐστί, δίχηλον, ὀπλαῖ βοός, σιμόν, λοφιὴν ἔχον ἵππου, χαυλιόδοντας φαῖνον, οὐρὴν ἵππου καὶ φωνήν, μέγαθος ὅσον τε βοῦς ὁ μέγιστος.⁸¹ How could he arrive at precisely this characterization unless he were operating on the assumption that one is perfectly justified in making statements about an entity based on the constitution of its ὄνομα? Finally, Herodotus reports a case in which the descriptive content of an ὄνομα, rather than serving merely as the foundation for a set of statements, provides the basis for its bearer’s involvement in a particular course of action: Three Samians approached the

⁷⁸ del. by Dindorf.

⁷⁹ William Arrowsmith’s translation, slightly modified.

⁸⁰ “The name Cyno—‘Bitch’—suggested to his parents a way of creating a legend amongst the Persians about the miraculous preservation of their son; so they put it about that a bitch had found him abandoned in the mountains and had suckled him. That was the origin of the well-known tale.” (tr. by de Séincourt)

⁸¹ I owe this example to Sir Kenneth Dover.

Greek commanders with a message. One of their number, Ἡγησίστρατος, 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 ποιούμενος) (9.91-2).⁸²

CONCLUSION

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 natural connections between bits of language and reality; most often they concentrate on showing how proper names, once analyzed, reveal something important about their individual bearers. These writers employ a wide range of criteria in their speculations about the descriptive content of proper names, and do not demonstrate an interest in being consistent or systematic: although certain criteria, e.g., the criterion involving bearers' attitudes and character traits, are especially popular, authors do not regularly adopt a particular approach. In fact, they proceed haphazardly, based on the requirements of a particular context; moreover, 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 ὀνόματα and entities which etymological analysis reveals, and that natures belong to individuals.⁸³

⁸² On proper names as ominous see also Euripides' *Helen*, where Menelaus comments on Theonoë's name: χρηστήριον μὲν τοῦνομ'· ὅ τι δὲ δρᾶ φράσον (822). On the issue of a man's name possibly influencing his fate in a negative way Herodotus speaks elsewhere of the Persians who, having capturing a ship from Troezen, selected and sacrificed the best-looking fighting man on board: διαδέξιον ποιούμενοι τὸν εἶλον τῶν Ἑλλήνων πρῶτον καὶ κάλλιστον. τῷ δὲ σφαγιασθέντι τούτῳ οὔνομα ἦν Λέων· τάχα δ' ἂν τι καὶ τοῦ οὐνόματος ἐπαύροίτο (*Hist.* 7.180). (In another case of a man bearing the name of an animal Herodotus tells how Cleomenes expresses his hostility by exploiting the descriptive content of the name Κριός, which belonged to an especially conspicuous Aeginetan opponent. As he was leaving the island, Cleomenes, having discovered the name, offers the following response: "Ἦδη νῦν καταχαλκοῦ, ὦ κριέ, τὰ κέρα, ὡς συνοισόμενος μεγάλῳ κακῷ (6.50).)

⁸³ On the subject of ties between elements of language and reality, it is worth noting that Euripides draws several contrasts between them (often using the terminology ὄνομα vs. ἔργον), which might be considered in some very limited sense a precursor of Plato's exploration of ways in which the connection between fragments of language and reality can be problematic or discrepant. For instance, in *The Trojan Women* Hecuba comments that she functions as Astyanax's healer, ὄνομ' ἔχουσα, τάργα δ' οὐ (1233); in *The Phoenician Women* Eteocles remarks that εἰ πᾶσι ταῦτόν καλὸν ἔφν σοφόν θ' ἅμα, οὐκ ἦν ἂν ἀμφίλεκτος ἀνθρώποις ἔρις· νῦν δ' οὐθ' ὅμοιον οὐδὲν οὐτ' ἴσον βροτοῖς, πλὴν ὀνόμασαι· τὸ δ' ἔργον οὐκ ἔστιν τόδε (499-502) (cf. Plato, *Soph.* 218c1-3). (Herodotus makes a somewhat similar distinction between between what is nominally and actually the case, noting that ἡ στρατηλασίη ἡ βασιλέος οὔνομα μὲν εἶχε ὡς ἐπ' Ἀθήνας ἐλαύνει, κατίετο δὲ ἐς πᾶσαν τὴν Ἑλλάδα (7.138).) Although Euripides does at least acknowledge that fragments of language do not merely reflect existing states of affairs, his treatment of this issue remains unsystematic in character, as does his highlighting of the descriptive content of ὀνόματα by way of etymology.

Particular assignments or types of assignments may be more or less random, yet even in those cases in which a particular trait of the named individual grounds an appellation one is still quite far removed from “nature-based” naming in any sense acceptable to Plato.⁸⁴ Moreover, as was seen, depending on the requirements of a particular context, or variations in individuals’ views, authors can and do offer varying etymologies of the same ὄνομα; this happens not only in the works of different writers, but also within those of a single individual. In such cases, how can one who operates solely within this framework and on the basis of its assumptions possibly decide which interpretation is the correct one? From Plato’s perspective, in order to treat the issue of fitness satisfactorily one requires the correct ontology. Yet, even if one were to approach the process of etymological analysis with the right metaphysical theory, in Plato’s view one still cannot rule out indeterminacy to the requisite extent. In the *Cratylus* 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 ὀνόματα.

PHONETIC CONSTITUTION

While the etymological analyses that Plato offers in the *Cratylus* have a clear-cut precedent in the literary tradition, examination of the relevant material indicates that its handling of “phonetic constitution” has similarities to, but is not an obvious precedent for, Plato’s own treatment of πρῶτα ὀνόματα.⁸⁵ That being said, authors in the literary tradition do evince various types of concern with sound and spelling. Of greatest pertinence to the *Cratylus* are concentrations of particular or similar sounds in contexts in which authors highlight substantive links between the manner of their vocalization and an important feature of, or factor involving, the entity under discussion; writers also display an interest in sound in several other ways, of which I provide some indication in what follows. In the *Cratylus*, the nature-based view grounded on phonetic constitution is second in order both of presentation and of importance to that based on semantic considerations; my briefer treatment of literary praxis in this area is thus consonant with Plato’s own priorities.

There are several passages in which authors correlate sounds and elements of reality in a way somewhat analogous to Plato’s own treatment in the *Cratylus*. A striking passage in

⁸⁴ Plato’s stance will be treated at length in chs. 3-5.

⁸⁵ I will follow Malcolm Schofield (“The dénouement of the *Cratylus*”) in referring to the second approach to natural-correctness introduced in the *Cratylus* as that based on “phonetic constitution.”

this connection occurs in Pindar's first *Pythian* ode. There, as Nisetich notes, Pindar uses a full twenty-one plosive consonants (π, β, and φ) "to suggest the bursting and hissing of [Mt. Aetna's] activity. In addition, there are fourteen guttural consonants, 'K's' and 'G's', to punctuate the explosion with a suggestion of internal rumbling, belching, and crackling." This passage represents, in Nisetich's words, "an acoustic *tour de force*."⁸⁶ This can only be appreciated through Pindar's own words:

τᾶς ἐρεΰγονται μὲν ἀπλάτου πυρὸς ἀγνόταται
ἐκ μυχῶν παγαί· ποταμοὶ δ' ἀμέραισιν
μὲν προχέοντι ῥόον καπνοῦ
αἴθων'· ἄλλ' ἐν ὄρφναισιν πέτρας
φοίνισσα κυλινδομένα φλόξ ἐς βαθεῖ-
αν φέρει πόντου πλάκα σὺν πατάγῳ.
κεῖνο δ' Ἀφαιστοιο κρουνοὺς ἐρπετόν
δεινотάτους ἀναπέμπει· τέρας μὲν
θαυμάσιον προσιδέσθαι,
θαῦμα δὲ καὶ παρεόντων ἀκοῦσαι. (21-6)⁸⁷

In this ode Pindar employs these consonants in high concentrations in order to mimic "the sound of the awesome event he is describing."⁸⁸ What is of particular interest from the point of view of the *Cratylus* is that φ, one consonant used to imitate Mt. Aetna's "burning and hissing," is grouped by Plato with other letters (ψ, σ, ζ) whose pronunciation involves a great expenditure of breath (427a). This represents a point of common ground between the two. Euripides' *Medea* contains a passage in which Medea's remarks to Jason are loaded with instances of precisely these four consonants—σ, φ, ζ, and ψ; indeed, the manner of their vocalization—especially that of σ and ψ—fits in quite well with the angry tenor of her reproaches:⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Pindar's *Victory Songs*, 63.

⁸⁷ Within her secret depths
pure springs of unapproachable fire
erupt—her rivers in daytime pour forth
billows of glaring smoke,
while at night the blood-red
rolling blaze whirls boulders crashing
onto the flat plain of the sea.
It is the monster beneath,
spewing torrents of fire—
a wondrous portent to behold,

a wonder even to hear of from those present. (tr. by Nisetich, slightly modified)

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 63. In certain other passages π, β, and φ are employed where sorrow, anguish, or despair is expressed: πόνος πόνῳ πόνον φέρει. πᾶ πᾶ πᾶ γὰρ οὐκ ἔβαν ἐγώ; (*Aj.* 866-8); see also *Aj.* 1112, *Soph. El.* 209-10 and 504-5. Elsewhere π is used in a way that calls to mind the pounding of the surf; see *Hes. Th.* 109 (108-10 bracketed by Solmsen) and *Prom.* 89.

⁸⁹ In addition, if one were to factor in all instances of π and β, which Pindar uses (along with φ) so effectively in *Pythian* 1, this total would rise markedly.

ἦλθες πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ἦλθες ἔχθιστος γεγώς...
οὔτοι θράσος τόδ' ἐστὶν οὐδ' εὐτολμία,
φίλους κακῶς δράσαντ' ἐναντίον βλέπειν,
ἀλλ' ἡ μεγίστη τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις νόσων
πασῶν, ἀναίδει'. εὖ δ' ἐποίησας μολῶν·
ἐγὼ τε γὰρ λέξασα κουφισθήσομαι
ψυχὴν κακῶς σὲ καὶ σὺ λυπήσῃ κλύων....
ἔσωσά σ', ὥς ἴσασιν Ἑλλήνων ὅσοι
ταῦτόν συνεισέβησαν Ἀργῶιον σκάφος,
πεμφθέντα τάϋρων πυρπνόων ἐπιστάτην
ζεύγλαισι καὶ σπεροῦντα θανάσιμον γύην·
δράκοντά θ', ὃς παγχρυσὸν ἀμπέχων δέρος
σπείραις ἔσωιζε πολυπλόκοις ἄπνοος ὦν,
κτείνασ' ἀνέσχον σοὶ φάος σωτήριον.
αὐτὴ δὲ πατέρα καὶ δόμους προδοῦσ' ἐμοῦς...
ἰκόμην σὺν σοί, πρόθυμος μᾶλλον ἢ σοφώτερα. (467-85)⁹⁰

Although Plato mentions neither κ nor γ in his discussion of phonetic constitution in the *Cratylus*, it is interesting to note that in the *Pythian* 1 passage treated above they are used to imitate seething, etc., which can be associated in some sense with anger.⁹¹ And in fact, elsewhere one finds a combination of χ's, κ's and γ's—in conjunction with an implied etymological connection between Ἥρη and αἰρέω—used by Homer in the depiction of Hera's anger: χόλος δέ μιν ἄγριος ἦρει· Ἥρη δ' οὐκ ἔχαδε στῆθος χόλον... (*Il.* 4.23-4).⁹² Elsewhere, an angry Menelaus reproaches Helen with having left him of her own free will, χῆ Κύπρις κόμπου χάριν λόγοις ἐνεῖται (*Tr.* 1038-9). Concentrations of these letters can also be associated more generally with “evil.” For instance, Sophocles has Oedipus' prayer to the Eumenides mention certain “oracles of evil” (ἐξέχρη⁹³ κακά)

⁹⁰ You have come, you, my worst enemy, have come to me!
It is not an example of overconfidence
Or of boldness thus to look your friends in the face,
Friends you have injured—no, it is the worst of all
Human diseases, shamelessness. But you did well
To come, for I can speak ill of you and lighten
My heart, and you will suffer while you are listening....
I saved your life, and every Greek knows I saved it,
Who was a shipmate of yours aboard the Argos,
When you were sent to control the bulls that breathed fire
And yoked them, and when you would sow that deadly field.
Also that snake, who encircled with his many folds
The Golden Fleece and guarded it and never slept,
I killed, and so gave you the safety of the light.
And I myself betrayed my father and my home...

[And] came with you...showing more willingness to help than wisdom. (tr. by Warner)

⁹¹ That is, if one were to engage in a measure of personification with regard to Mt. Aetna, one might describe its activity as an expression of anger.

⁹² Regarding the expression of anger by a deity via these consonants see also *I.T.* 1261-3.

⁹³ from ἐκχράω.

given him by Apollo (*O.C.* 87). Similarly, the Chorus in *The Trojan Women* says that Helen speaks *καλῶς κακοῦργος οὔσα* (967-8); and Orestes condemns the Trojan War by noting that *κακῆς γυναικὸς χάριν ἄχαριν ἀπώλετο* (*I.T.* 566). These consonants may be connected with the evil to which one is subject in the form of pain and suffering, as when Helen observes that her gifts from Κύπρις brought her *πολὺ...δάκρυον· ἄχεά τ' ἄχεσι, δάκρυα δάκρυσιν* (*Hel.* 363-6). It is also worth mentioning a passage in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* in which Oedipus employs a full twelve τ's in a brief yet powerful reproach to Teiresias: responding to the latter's remark that the truth of his remarks will serve as his protection, Oedipus insists that *σοὶ δὲ τοῦτ' οὐκ ἔστ', ἐπεὶ τυφλὸς τὰ τ' ὦτα τόν τε νοῦν τὰ τ' ὄμματ' εἶ* (*O.T.* 370-1).⁹⁴

Although these writers do not enunciate views on links between phonemes and elements of reality, several of the aforementioned passages indicate *some* tendency to correlate certain consonants with external phenomena based on connections between the way in which the sounds in question are vocalized and important features of, or factors involving, those entities under discussion. As mentioned, there are many passages in which guttural consonants are associated with expressions of hostility and references to various evils; if their vocalization is considered to involve a certain harshness, or other disagreeable features, then here too a similar connection may perhaps be envisioned. In addition, it is worth noting another case treated by Pindar, in which an individual originally named Aristoteles is said to have later received the name Βάττος (i.e., “Stammerer”) based on his suffering from that particular speech impediment. In *Pythian* 5 Pindar says that the sound of this individual's voice, with Apollo's aid, put to flight a pack of lions, which were frightened by his exotic accent. In *Pythian* 4 Pindar mentions that Battus went to Delphi to ask the god to remedy his stammer (*δυσθρόου φωνᾶς...ποινά*) (63-4); it is interesting that certain of the term *βαττος*' constituents, namely β and τ, might be considered of special relevance to the malady whose sufferer it designates.

A sensitivity to sound, and hence repetition of various phonemes, occurs on a wide range of levels in the literary tradition from Homer through Euripides. In addition to cases in which a range of individual letters appear with great frequency—for reasons ranging from the ostensibly aesthetic to the substantive—authors many times utilize the technique of repetition with regard to clusters of two or more letters. These groupings occur in a minimum of two words, and involve no apparent interest in etymology: see for instance

⁹⁴ These lines were drawn to my attention in this connection by Sir Kenneth Dover, who suggests that one could think of the letter τ in this context as an expression of hammer blows.

ἀλλεξέμεν ἀλλήλοισιν (*Il.* 3.9) and Δύσπαρι, εἶδος ἄριστε (*Il.* 3.39). Repetition may also involve similar-sounding combinations of letters in cases where authors' hinting at etymological import is doubtful or nonexistent: see for example the γιγαν/γηγεν combination at *Phoen.* 128, or the σκοπ/σκοτ linkage at *Cho.* 816-17. Groupings of both identical and similar-sounding phonemes constitute a very effective way of lending poetry a marked flowing quality.⁹⁵

With regard to the issue of identical or similar phonetic groupings it is worth noting that Helen's name—associated for etymological purposes with αἰρέω—is linked several times with other verbs with which it has certain phonetic parallels. For instance, in the *Odyssey* Eumaeus says that Odysseus ᾔλεθ'—ὡς ᾠφέλλ' Ἐλένης ἀπὸ φῦλον ὀλέσθαι πρόχνη, ἐπεὶ πολλῶν ἀνδρῶν ὑπὸ γούνατ' ἔλυσε (14.68-9). Aeschylus employs the proper name in conjunction with the verb ὀλλυμι when the Chorus of Argive elders addresses Ἐλένη as μία τὰς πολλάς, τὰς πάνυ πολλάς ψυχὰς ὀλέσας ὑπὸ Τροίας (*Ag.* 1456-8). In addition, on several occasions Euripides makes the same connection (see *Hel.* 384-5, 674; *Hec.* 265-6; and *Rh.* 910-12).⁹⁶ He also associates the name Ἐλένη with the aorist of ἔρχομαι; for example, Helen observes that people believe τὴν ὑπ' Ἰλίου... Ἐλένην Μενέλεω μ' ἐλθεῖν μέτα (*Hel.* 288-9).⁹⁷ (For other instances of links between Helen's name and the aorist tense of this verb see *Hel.* 582; *I.T.* 440-1, 521-2; and *Eur. El.* 1280-1.) Finally, as concerns similar-sounding groups of phonemes Helen's name is linked with the adjective Ἑλληνίς: immediately after Helen identifies herself as "Hellene" (Ἑλληνίς), Menelaus observes that Ἐλένη σ' ὁμοίαν δὴ μάλιστ' εἶδον (*Hel.* 562-3). The presence of such cases suggests that the border between the phonetic and semantic planes is not wholly fixed in character.

Sometimes entire words are repeated, differing from one another only with regard to case or part of speech: examples include ἄχεα ἄχεσι δάκρυα δάκρυσιν (*Hel.* 365-6); ἄφιλα παρ' ἀφίλοις (*Aj.* 618); πόνος πόνω πόνον (*Aj.* 866); σμυγερόν σμυγερώς (*Phil.* 166); ἄρρητ' ἄρρητων (*O.T.* 465); ἐκ ἄλγους ἄλγος (*Phoen.* 371); ἴσους ἴσοισι (*Phoen.* 750); and ἄδικος ἄδικα (*Or.* 162). Other times words are repeated, differing only (or virtually only) in that in one instance the privative is used: see for instance χάριν

⁹⁵ In addition, Homer's τελ/Τηλ linkage in Book 4 of the *Odyssey* may be restricted to the phonetic plane, or perhaps involve a suggestion of etymological import. There Antinous, expressing his rage and dissatisfaction at Telemachus' successful departure for Pylos, exclaims: "ὦ πόποι, ἦ μέγα ἔργον ὑπερφιάλως ἐτελέσθη Τηλεμάχῳ ὁδὸς ἥδε· φάμεν δέ οἱ οὐ τελέεσθαι (663-4).

⁹⁶ On the first two occasions Helen herself is speaking.

⁹⁷ Here the ελ combination is also present in Menelaus' name.

ἄχαριν (*I.T.* 566); μήτηρ ἀμήτωρ (*Soph. El.* 1154);⁹⁸ ὕπνος ἄυπνος (*Phil.* 847); and δεσμὸν ἄδεσμον (*Eur. Supp.* 32). There are also several cases of complete repetition: πᾶ πᾶ πᾶ (*Aj.* 867-8; see also 912); αἴλινον αἴλινον (*Aj.* 627); ἔλαχεν ἔλαχεν (*Hel.* 214); ἔφερεν ἔφερεν (*Phoen.* 1568); and δυσελένας δυσελένας (*Or.* 1387).⁹⁹

In one passage involving a request to Zeus to undertake a particular course of action, Euripides lets an exclamation identical in spelling to a proper name stand in for that ὄνομα: the Chorus in his *Suppliants* introduces its plea to Zeus to save Argos as follows: ἰὼ Ζεῦ, τᾶς παλαιομάτορος παιδογόνε πόριος Ἰνάχου... (628-9). In this context the exclamation ἰὼ functions in place of the proper name Ἰώ, based simply on the identical spelling of the two ὀνόματα. In another instance a title of Dionysus is derived from a certain combination of sounds, i.e., a cry issued by his followers: The Chorus of Asian Bacchae in Euripides' *Bacchae* exclaims that ὁ δ' ἔξαρχος Βρόμιος, εὐοῖ (140-1). Several lines later the Chorus forges the link: μέλπετε...εὔια τὸν εὔιον ἀγαλλόμεναι θεόν... (155ff.); subsequently the god is called Εὔιος (566 and 579). Sophocles also makes the connection. In *Women of Trachis* the Chorus exclaims: ἰδοὺ μ' ἀναταράσσει, εὐοῖ, ὁ κισσὸς ἄρτι Βακχίαν ὑποστρέφων ἄμιλλαν (218-20). Elsewhere a Sophoclean Chorus invokes Dionysus as follows: τὸν χρυσομίτραν τε κικλήσκω, τᾶσδ' ἐπώνυμον γᾶς, οἰνῶπα Βάκχον, εὔιον Μαινάδων ὁμόστολον... (*O.T.* 209-12).

In certain instances authors associate words in such a way that the main or only obvious connection between them appears to be that based on similarities in phonetic constitution; however, as suggested, there are also cases that appear to be on, or even to cross, the border between the phonetic and semantic planes. One interesting case is poets' association of λαός and λᾶας. Having recounted the death of Niobe's children, Homer says that οὐδέ τις ἦεν κατθάψαι, λαοὺς δὲ λίθους ποίησε Κρονίων (*Il.* 24.610-11); he refers to the connection in an indirect way, by using λίθος instead of λᾶας, and offers no suggestion that the link between the two words is based on any considerations other than those involving phonetic constitution. Pindar too links these words, and he also uses λίθος rather than λᾶας in presenting the connection. About this choice of words Nisetich says that "Pindar only alludes to the pun, as if it were too undignified to be incorporated

⁹⁸ In this case, unlike the others cited here, the two terms belong to different parts of speech (the former being a noun, the latter a privative adjective).

⁹⁹ Moreover, Lattimore observes with reference to Homer that repetition can occur within the text on levels ranging from that of a "word group of less than a line which forms a metrical unit," through individual lines and groups of a few lines, to entire passages (*The "Iliad" of Homer*, 38-9).

into his ode" (76): what the poet says is that Pyrrha and Deukalion κτισσάσθαι λίθινον γόνον· λαοὶ δ' ὀνόμασθεν (*Ol.* 9.45-6). What is most interesting in the present context is that Pindar goes one step further than Homer and offers an etymology based on similarities in spelling; he resolves the precedence issue by noting that the progeny received the aforementioned appellation due to considerations involving their origin.¹⁰⁰ In this instance, in contrast to Homer's account, a direct causal connection seems to be involved: the progeny were called λαοί on account of their stony constituency. Pindar, unlike his predecessor, makes a clear transition to the plane of semantic constitution.

Pindar capitalizes on other parallels between words with regard to their phonetic constitution, as when he associates the participle ἐλκόμενοι and the noun ἔλκος in making an observation on the fate of excessively acquisitive people. In *Pythian* 2 he says that the envious "pull (ἐλκόμενοι) on a line unwound to the limit until it snaps: a wound (ἔλκος) to their own heart before they compass their desires" (90-2). Nisetich asserts that the parallel in spelling "is purely fortuitous from a linguistic point of view. Pindar, however, is serious about such coincidences: he believes that they express causality" (70-1). Here the basis of connection is in some way that of cause and effect since it is precisely individuals' performing the action indicated by the participle that results in their suffering the injury signified by the noun. Elsewhere, in an ode honoring an Aeginetan victor Pindar asserts that χρῆ δ' ἀπ' Ἀθανᾶν τέκτον' ἀθληταῖσιν ἔμμεν (*Nem.* 5.49); this judgment appears to be grounded on parallels in spelling between the two ὀνόματα.¹⁰¹ Since spelling similarities are said to exist between the word for *objects* of the trainer's skill and the place of origin of the trainer himself, the nature of the causal chain, if one exists, is unclear.

Similarly, Euripides appears to connect Δόλων with δόμος based only on spelling similarities (while, as noted, for purposes of etymological analysis he links the name with δόλος). Euripides hints at a Δόλων/δόμος connection on two separate occasions: on the first Hector says that ἐπώνυμος μὲν κάρτα φιλόπολις Δόλων· πατὴρ δὲ καὶ πρὶν εὐκλεᾶ δόμον... (*Rh.* 158-9); later, in preparation for his reconnaissance mission Δόλων says that he will go to his own halls (ἐς δόμους) to change clothes (201). In this instance no causal or other significant basis of connection is evident. Elsewhere, Sophocles appears to link Κρέων and χρεία based on parallels in sound and spelling, when Κρέων asks

¹⁰⁰ How can one who is concerned only with spelling similarities determine which of two ὀνόματα takes precedence? As soon as one gives some indication of which ὄνομα is primary, the level of discussion shifts.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Nisetich, 250.

Odysseus what the latter wants from him: καὶ τοῦ με χρείας ᾧδε λιπαρεῖς τυχεῖν; (*O.T.* 1435). Several lines later Κρέων concludes that ἔν' ἔσταμεν χρείας ἄμεινον ἐκμαθεῖν τί δραστήον (1442-3). No special connection seems to be envisioned here since in the former case Κρέων is viewed as a potential fulfiller of *others'* needs, while in the latter the term χρεία is used with reference to general circumstances of need. Along somewhat similar lines Medea tells Jason that Κρέων would not drive her away without paying for it: πρὸς ταῦτα καὶ λέαιναν, εἰ βούλῃ, κάλει...τῆς σῆς γὰρ ὡς χρῆν καρδίας ἀνθηψάμην (*Eur. Med.* 1356-60). One possible—and in the present context quite interesting—interpretation of Medea's statement would involve the claim that her actions, *like Creon's*, are based on considerations of felt necessity. If this reading were correct, it would support the claim that here, in contrast to the previous two, the issue of semantic constitution is pertinent.¹⁰² Finally, it appears that Homer, in recounting Odysseus' deception of Polyphemus, associates the pronoun μή τις and the noun μῆτις based simply on phonetic criteria (*Od.* 9.410-14). Here considerations of sound and spelling lead the poet to link the pronoun with a character trait of that pronoun's referent.¹⁰³

CONCLUSION

The evidence presented here gives an indication of the various approaches which authors in the literary tradition take to the issue of “phonetic constitution.” Writers do not pursue their interest in sound with the self-consciousness one finds in etymological analyses; more specifically, they do not reflect directly and consciously on the relation between particular sounds and elements of reality. However, one should not dismiss the procedure *merely* as a poetic device of no relevance to the investigation at hand; one might rather say that there is a continuum between what appears to be a simple concern with mellifluousness, on the one hand, and unequivocal highlightings of descriptive content, on the other. That there is a middle range of cases in which clear ascriptions are difficult to make is illustrated, for example, by writers' linking of Helen's name with the verbs ὄλλυμι and ἔρχομαι, and

¹⁰² I neither support nor reject this interpretation, believing that the text does not permit one to reach a definite conclusion; in any case, it certainly does not exclude the reading offered here. Warner's translation “I too, as I had to...” gives the suggestion that such a link is envisioned, but would require a καί positioned in such a way as to give clear justification for it.

¹⁰³ The progression is interesting (*Od.* 9.366-414): the proper name Οὔτις comes from οὔτις; the other Cyclopes use the equivalent μή τις in formulating a conditional, which Homer, in turn, links with μῆτις. Euripides has Odysseus employ the same Οὔτις trick in the *Cyclops* (548-9 and 672f.).

Homer's linkage of the name Τηλέμαχος and the verb τελέω. Such evidence suggests that—at least in certain respects—it is difficult if not impossible to draw a precise boundary between the two expressions of linguistic interest.

Of special relevance from Plato's point of view in the *Cratylus* are those cases in which the manner of vocalization of particular phonemes can be correlated with significant features of, or factors involving, the entity under discussion. However, despite such points of common ground, there remain crucial differences between writers in the literary tradition and Plato with regard to their treatment of "phonetic constitution": the latter offers explicit analyses of certain letters, and applies these analyses in remarks on individual words; he also arrives via generalization at an approach to a certain *type* of word (i.e., πρῶτα ὀνόματα). Given the form which Plato's own interest assumes, the material presented suggests that these authors' orientation, while similar in various ways to Plato's own, does not provide a genuine precedent for the latter's handling of πρῶτα ὀνόματα.

THE EPONYMY RELATION¹⁰⁴

Writers evince a concern with substantive connections between elements of language and components of the external world both in their use of etymology and in their employment of individual phonemes whose vocalization is linked in some important way with the entity under discussion. In the *Cratylus*, Plato condemns both modes of gaining access to reality though he focuses predominantly on the former. In contrast, the literary tradition's treatment of the eponymy relation is a key precedent for what Plato develops into a systematic theory in the *Phaedo*. In its use of ἐπώνυμος and related terms, the literary tradition never distinguishes clearly between etymology and eponymy; in what follows I focus on the numerous pertinent instances of this terminology, plus additional passages in which the eponymy relation is expressed in other terms (e.g., through the use of ὁμώνυμος).

Like the criteria on the basis of which writers produce etymologies, the eponymy relation breaks down into several categories and subcategories. The first basic category includes cases in which individuals give their names to a wide range of entities: a) other individuals; b) groups of individuals; c) places or parcels of land; d) natural inanimate entities (e.g., bodies of water); and e) human constructions or practices. A second basic

¹⁰⁴ The eponymy relation involves the naming of one entity for or after another, e.g., naming the people called "Ionians" after an individual named "Ion"; unlike etymology, the focus is not on the use of deep structural analyses to reveal bearers' natures.

category consists of instances in which natural inanimate entities (e.g., ποταμοί) give their ὀνόματα to various types of entity: a) individuals; b) peoples; c) other natural inanimate entities; and d) places or bodies of land. Third, there is a category accommodating those instances in which places or parcels of land are in the primary role, and the *nominata* are a) themselves places; b) animals; or c) natural inanimate entities. Moreover, d) individuals and e) human constructions may receive their ὀνόματα from places associated with noteworthy events. Fourth, a parcel of land may be named for a people.

There are numerous instances of eponymy involving one individual named for or after another. Several times, writers in the literary tradition tell how a infant boy is named for his grandfather or another male relative: Pindar claims that Opous was named for his mother's father (*Ol.* 9.63-4; ἰσώνυμος is used); in Euripides' *Phoenician Women*, Eteocles tells Creon that he will send the latter's son Menoeceus, σοῦ πατρός ἀντεπώνυμον, to get Teiresias (769); Herodotus says both that Cleisthenes of Sicyon got his name ἀπὸ τοῦ μητροπάτορος τοῦ Σικυνώνιου (*Hist.* 6.131, see also 5.69) and that the Persian Bubares and Alexander's sister Gygaea had a son named Amyntas, ἔχων τὸ οὔνομα τοῦ μητροπάτορος (8.136); and Pindar asserts that Strepsiades was named for his maternal uncle (*Isth.* 7.24; ὁμώνυμος is used). Herodotus remarks that Hippocrates named his son Pisistratus after Nestor's son of that name (*Hist.* 5.65), and that Cimon's son Miltiades got his name ἀπὸ τοῦ οἰκιστέω τῆς Χερσονήσου Μιλτιάδεω (6.103). Elsewhere, Aeschylus reports that Phoebus was named after the Titan Phoebe (*Eum.* 6-7). In a somewhat parallel case involving a nickname, the beggar Arnaeus received the appellation Ἴπος because he would run errands when anyone asked him to do so; he is thus named after Iris, the divine messenger of Olympus, based on his performance of an analogous function in a particular social setting (*Od.* 18.5-7).¹⁰⁵ If the named-after relation as employed in such cases is supposed to reflect namers' hopes for their progeny, and the belief that the cultivation of certain achievements is fostered thereby, writers give no clear indication of this.

There are also several cases in which groups of people are named after individuals. First, a people might be named after its leader or general. For instance, Homer says that Erichthonius [son of Dardanus] begat Τρῶα... Τρώεσσιν ἄνακτα (*Il.* 20.230). Elsewhere Aeschylus claims that the Pelasgi were named after their king Pelasgus (*Supp.*

¹⁰⁵ For additional cases falling in this subcategory see Eur. *Her.* 31; *Her. Hist.* 1.188, 3.55, and 6.131 (cited above in connection with two individuals named "Cleisthenes," here with regard to two sets of individuals named "Megacles" and "Agarista").

250-3), and Herodotus reports that the descendants of Targiteus' three sons, taken as a group, were named "Scolotoi" after their king (*Hist.* 4.6). Both Herodotus and Euripides insist that Ion gave his name to a group of people. According to the former, when the Pelasgians occupied what is now called Greece the Athenians—a Pelasgian people—were called Kranai. In Cecrops' reign they came to be called Cecropidae. When Erechtheus came to power they became Athenians; and upon Xuthus' son Ion's becoming general they assumed the title of Ionians (*Hist.* 8.44; see also 7.94). Euripides says that Ion's grandchildren will receive the name "Ionians" based on that of their grandfather (*Ion* 1581-8).

Second, groups may get their names from various heroes. For instance, Sophocles tells how the hero Colonus gave his ὄνομα to a group of people (*O.C.* 58-65). Herodotus, in turn, says that Cleisthenes increased the number of Athenian tribes from four to ten, ἀπαλλάξας τὰς ἐπωνυμίας. They had previously been named after Ion's four sons; Cleisthenes named the new tribes after other heroes (all Athenian with the exception of Ajax) (*Hist.* 5.66). As was seen, authors sometimes disagree on what constitutes the correct etymology of a particular ὄνομα; in addition, with regard to the eponymy relation, there is dissent among them regarding the identity of the individual who gave his name to the Persians. Aeschylus says that Perseus gave his name to the whole Persian race (*Pers.* 80).¹⁰⁶ Moreover, the poet's remarks suggest that the ideas of nature transfer and performance implications may well be at work: he tells how Xerxes ἐπὶ πᾶσαν χθόνα ποιμανόριον θεῖον ἐλαύνει διχόθεν, πεζονόμοις ἔκ τε θαλάσσης ἐχυροῖσι πεποιθὼς στυφελοῖς ἐφέταις, χρυσονόμου γενεᾶς ἰσόθεος φῶς (75-80). Xerxes is depicted in this grand fashion due to his descent from Perseus.

In contrast, as Herodotus tells the story, long ago the Greeks called the Persians "Cephenes," though they were known to themselves and their neighbors as Artaei. It was only after Perseus, on a visit to Cepheus, married his daughter and had a son called "Perses" that the Persians received their current name (7.61). Elsewhere Herodotus reports what a messenger sent by Xerxes to Argos was supposed to have said upon his arrival: "King Xerxes has a message for you. We Persians believe that we are descended from Perses, whose father was Danae's son Perseus, and whose mother was Andromeda the

¹⁰⁶ If line 146, whose authenticity has been challenged by Schütz and Robertson, were in fact genuine, it would be pertinent here. As noted in the section on etymology, Aeschylus also associates the name "Persians" with the verb πέρθειν (*Pers.* 178); this shows that Aeschylus does not commit himself to a particular way of analyzing the name, i.e., he does not choose between interpretations based on etymology and eponymy.

daughter of Cepheus" (7.150).¹⁰⁷ Herodotus remarks that he cannot say with certainty whether or not this messenger was really sent. Third, it may happen that a people is named for a god. Along these lines, Herodotus insists that the Ammonians were named for Zeus (the Egyptian name for Zeus is "Amun") (*Hist.* 2.42).¹⁰⁸

In addition, there are numerous instances in which individuals give their names to bodies or parcels of land. For instance, Aeneas tells how Zeus at first begat Δάρδανος, who κτίσσε δὲ Δαρδανίην, ἐπεὶ οὐ πω Ἴλιος ἱρὴ ἐν πεδίῳ πεπόλιστο, πόλις μερόπων ἀνθρώπων... (*Hom. Il.* 20.215-17). In what follows he remarks that Τρωὸς δ' αὖ τρεῖς παῖδες ἀμύμονες ἐξεγένοντο, one of whom was Ἴλος (20.231-2).¹⁰⁹ Aeschylus notes that a certain parcel of land is named for an individual (Ἄπις) who had previously rid that land of certain plagues: αὐτῆς δὲ χώρας Ἀπίας πέδον τόδε πάλαι κέκληται φωτὸς ἱατροῦ χάριν (*Supp.* 260-1). In Euripides' *Ion*, Hermes foretells that Apollo Ἴωνα δ' αὐτὸν, κτίστορ' Ἀσιάδος χθονός, ὄνομα κεκλησθαι θήσεται καθ' Ἑλλάδα (74-5). Elsewhere, Apollo instructs Orestes to leave Argos and abide in Parrhasia for one year, and tells him that following his departure the Arcadians will name the place Oresteion in memory of his exile there (*Eur. Or.* 1646-7); in the same poet's *Electra*, Castor instructs Orestes to found a city which will take its name from him (ἐπώνυμος δὲ σοῦ πόλις κεκλησεται) (1275). In yet another instance, Andromache comments that Phthia is her new home, the place where Θέτις once lived with Peleus apart from men; for this reason the Thessalians call it Θετίδειον (*Eur. Andr.* 17-20).

Herodotus too notes several cases of the relevant type. He mentions the πόλις called Archandropolis which seems to him to be named after Archander son of Phthius (*Hist.* 2.98). In addition, Herodotus indicates his puzzlement as to why three different women's names were given to what is actually a single land mass. He notes the prevailing Greek assumption that Libya was named after a native woman, and that Asia was named after

¹⁰⁷ Tr. by de Sélincourt.

¹⁰⁸ For additional cases falling in this subcategory see *Eur. Ion* 1575-8, 1590-4 (on balance it seems preferable to place these two passages here rather than in that subcategory in which parcels of land are in the recipient position); *Her. Hist.* 1.7 (cf. 7.74), 1.94, 1.171, 1.173 (cf. 7.92), 4.149, 5.68, 7.11 (a people and their land named after the conqueror Pelops), 7.62, 7.90-1, and 8.44 (in this instance Cecrops, not Ion, is in the primary role).

There is a noteworthy parallel between those literary-tradition cases involving individuals giving their names to groups and Plato's own handling of eponymy in the *Phaedo*: the former involve a single individual giving his name to a group of individuals, while in Plato's case it is precisely a *single* entity, namely a Form, that gives its name to a *group* of individual sensibles. That being said, the differences are numerous and striking. Central among them is the fact that in Plato's framework the two parties are native to fundamentally different planes of reality; whereas, in the literary tradition the individuals and groups in question are viewed as belonging to, or improperly aligned with, the empirical world.

¹⁰⁹ For Ἴλιος as a synonym for Troy see, e.g., *Il.* 1.71, 15.66, 15.71, and 20.216.

Prometheus' wife; as for Europe, he says that one cannot determine where it got its name unless one claims that it comes from the Tyrian woman Europa (4.45) (with regard to the threefold division of the earth into Europe, Asia, and Libya, cf. Pindar, *Pyth.* 9.5-8).¹¹⁰

As concerns cases in which a deity is in the primary role, Bacchus is said to have given his name to a parcel of land (τῶσδ' ἐπώνυμον γῶς) (Soph. *O.T.* 209-11). Moreover, on several occasions the goddess Athena is associated with Athens as primary name-bearer to *nominatum*. Regarding this connection between Athena and Athens, Burkert 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."¹¹¹ Such linguistic arguments notwithstanding, writers in the literary tradition claim on several occasions that Athena gave her name to the city of Athens. For instance, Oedipus addresses Athens as the "city named for great Athena, Honored above all cities in the world!" (Soph. *O.C.* 107-8).¹¹² Elsewhere Hermes refers to "the famous Greek city named for Pallas of the golden spear" (Eur. *Ion* 8-9, cf. 29-30), and later in the same play Euripides has Athena herself state that the city of Athens got its name from her (1555-6). In such cases one cannot help but conclude that clear implications for—and expectations of—greatness follow from the assignment.¹¹³

Fourth, natural inanimate entities may be named after individuals. In this connection, Pindar remarks that Heracles "called [the hill at Olympia] Kronos' Hill, for in former times...it had lain beneath deep drifts of snow, without a name (νώνυμος)" (*Ol.* 10.49-51, cf. *Ol.* 5.19). Moreover, drawing on Io's name, Aeschylus foretells that the inlet of the sea which Io is driven to will be called Ἴόνιος...τῆς σῆς πορείας μνήμα τοῖς πᾶσιν βροτοῖς (*Prom.* 840-1).¹¹⁴ Fifth and lastly, individuals may give their names to certain human constructions, as when Pindar reports that Apollo named a temple of his the "Ismenion" after the son given him by the nymph Melea (*Pyth.* 11.5-6), and Herodotus

¹¹⁰ For additional relevant cases see Pind. *Ol.* 7.73-6; Her. *Hist.* 4.148, 6.47, and 7.178. Moreover, Pindar indicates on several occasions that parcels of land have their eponymous nymphs. For example, he treats Aigina both as a nymph (*Ol.* 9) and mother of Aiakos (*Nem.* 7-8, *Isth.* 8), and as the island to which she gave her name (*Nem.* 3-5). In *Pythian* 8, the poet depicts her explicitly as the nymph who gave the island its name: he addresses her as Αἰγίνα φίλα μήτηρ (98) and asks her to help Aigina gain its freedom. Theba and Thebes receive the same treatment: Theba is mentioned as Aigina's sister (*Isth.* 8), and Thebes as the Boiotian city (*Isth.* 4). Pindar also depicts Theba explicitly as the nymph who gave Thebes its name (*Isth.* 3 and 7). In *Pythian* 9, Pindar depicts the nymph Kyrana as the one who gave the city of Cyrene its name; in that same ode, Libya is treated both as a parcel of land and as that land's eponymous nymph (in *Pythian* 4 she is depicted as Epaphus' daughter). With regard to Rhodes see *Ol.* 7.

¹¹¹ *Greek Religion*, 139.

¹¹² Tr. by Fitzgerald.

¹¹³ Of course, strictly speaking these can only be attached to the *people* of the city thus named.

¹¹⁴ Also falling in this subcategory are Aesch. *Eum.* 689-90 and *Prom.* 299-300.

comments that “the Delphians call this gold and silver which Gyges sent the Gygean Treasure, after the donor’s name (ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀναθέντος ἐπωνυμίην) (*Hist.* 1.14) (with regard to human constructions see also Eur. *Hipp.* 32-3).¹¹⁵ As concerns human practices, a feast is named for Agamemnon (Soph. *El.* 282-5), and a banquet for Thyestes (τὰ ἐπώνυμα δεῖπνα Θυέστου) (Eur. *Or.* 1008).

The second category of assignments comprises those instances in which natural inanimate entities give their ὀνόματα to various types of entity. These might be individuals, as when Homer notes that Telamonian Ajax killed Σιμοείσιον, ὃν ποτε μήτηρ Ἰδῆθεν κατιοῦσα παρ’ ὄχθησιν Σιμόεντος γείνατ’, ἐπεὶ ῥα τοκεῦσιν ἄμ’ ἔσπετο μῆλα ἰσέσθαι· τοῦνεκά μιν κάλεον Σιμοείσιον (*Il.* 4.474-7). On other occasions, the recipient entities are peoples. In this connection, Herodotus reports that the people living around the mountain called “Atlas” were named “Atlantes” after it (*Hist.* 4.184). Similarly, following their migration to Asia the Thracians became known as Bithynians, but say they were previously called Strymonians after the river Strymon on which they lived (οἰκέοντες ἐπὶ Στρυμόνι) (7.75). In addition, there are several cases in which natural inanimate entities function both as primary and recipient ὀνομα-bearers. To give just one example, Herodotus mentions the river Aegae on the Crathis, which is never dry ἀπ’ ὅτεν ὁ ἐν Ἰταλίῃ ποταμὸς τὸ οὔνομα ἔσχε (*Hist.* 1.145).¹¹⁶ Finally, there are instances in which natural inanimate entities give their ὀνόματα to places or parcels of land, as when a city is named for a neighboring mountain (Mt. Aitna) (Pindar, *Pyth.* 1.30-2). Elsewhere, Herodotus mentions a region called Cinyps, which gets its name from the river that waters it (*Hist.* 4.198).

The third category consists of those instances in which various entities receive their ὀνόματα from places or parcels of land. In this regard, one parcel of land might give its ὄνομα to another: Teucer informs Helen of Apollo’s prophesy that he will found ὄνομα νησιωτικὸν Σαλαμῖνα θέμενον τῆς ἐκεῖ χάριν πάτρας (Eur. *Hel.* 149-50). In one notable instance, the recipient entity is a certain type of animal. Specifically, a kind of horse is said to be called “Nisaeon” because it comes from the great Nisaeon plan, where large horses are found: ἔστι πεδῖον μέγα τῆς Μηδικῆς τῷ οὔνομά ἐστι Νήσαιον. τοὺς ὧν δὴ ἵππους τοὺς μεγάλους φέρει τὸ πεδῖον τοῦτο (Her. *Hist.* 7.40). In addition, the recipient entities might be natural inanimate entities; in this connection, the

¹¹⁵ Herodotus mentions Ismenian Apollo at 5.60.

¹¹⁶ For other relevant passages see *Hist.* 4.52, 7.58, and 9.51.

town Therma on the gulf is said to have given that gulf its name (*Hist.* 7.121).¹¹⁷ Moreover, individuals might receive their appellations from places associated with noteworthy events, as when a man named Archias reports to Herodotus that τῷ πατρὶ ἔφη Σάμιον τοῦνομα τεθῆναι in memory of his grandfather's heroic death at Samos (3.55) (for another pertinent example see Hes. *Th.* 198).¹¹⁸ Human constructions, too, could get their ὀνόματα from places at which significant events take place. Along these lines, Athena tells Orestes to name the temple he will built at Halae after Tauris to commemorate his sufferings there (ἐπώνυμον γῆς Ταυρικῆς πόνων τε σῶν) (*Eur. I.T.* 1453-4). One may round out this discussion of categories by mentioning that, fourthly, a parcel of land might be named for a people. Relevant here is Herodotus' report that Darius gave the Barcaeans taken as slaves a village in Bactria to inhabit: οἱ δὲ τῇ κώμῃ ταύτῃ οὔνομα ἔθεντο Βάρκην (*Hist.* 4.204).

CONCLUSION

Consideration of the numerous relevant passages indicates the wide range of categories and subcategories into which writers' use of eponymy may be analyzed. Moreover, while in some instances—notably those in which individuals give their names either to other individuals or to groups—one might expect questions of nature transfer and performance expectations to emerge, they typically do not. In certain cases, as when Athena and Athens are spoken of, such factors do appear to be relevant. Generally speaking, though, the literary tradition evinces little express interest in the recipient entity, but appears largely content simply to make identifications of source.

In its use of ἐπώνυμος and related terms—as elsewhere—the literary tradition fails to distinguish in any clear-cut way between etymology and eponymy. In contrast, Plato's praxis reflects a marked distinction between the two, insofar as it involves an explicit rejection of etymology, on the one hand, and the development of a revised version of eponymy, on the other: more specifically, having denied epistemological value to analyses of terms' descriptive content in the *Cratylus*, in the *Phaedo* Plato focuses and transforms the eponymy relation in accord with his own metaphysical theory. Plato locates the ὄνομα-warranting and recipient entities on two quite different planes of reality, and on that

¹¹⁷ The Thermaic Gulf is mentioned again at 7.123.

¹¹⁸ While it may well be the case that the name "Samius" was partly given to commemorate the father's heroism, it might well also be forward-looking, indicative of the father's hopes that his son will cultivate similar achievements.

basis explores and specifies the character of the dependence relation holding between the two.¹¹⁹ Central here is the markedly different approach to the issue of appropriateness that his middle-period metaphysics permits him; in preparation for a subsequent exploration of Plato's own approach, the literary tradition's handling of fitness will constitute the subject of the following chapter on that tradition's approach to the ὄνομα-entity relation. With its completion a foundation will have been laid for the exploration of Plato's approach to the relevant issues.

¹¹⁹ This relation is viewed in terms of a nature transfer with the recipient entities in the subordinate role.

Appendix A

Names: Gods and Divine Inspiration

THE GODS

1. A writer may express a concern with what the gods, notably Zeus, want to be called. There is an especially notable passage of this type in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*—quoted previously—in which the poet also emphasizes the tremendous scope of Zeus' power and wisdom:¹²⁰

Ζεὺς ὅστις ποτ' ἐστίν, εἰ τόδ' αὖ-
τῷ φίλον κεκλημένῳ,
τοῦτό νιν προσεννέπω·
οὐκ ἔχω προσεικάσαι
πάντ' ἐπισταθμώμενος
πλήν Διός, εἰ τὸ μάταν ἀπὸ φροντίδος ἄχθος
χρὴ βαλεῖν ἐτητύμως...

Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων
τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν. (*Ag.* 160-75)¹²¹

Euripides' tone suggests that he is somewhat less awestruck: ὅστις ποτ' εἰ σύ, δυστόπαστος εἰδέναι, Ζεὺς, εἴτ' ἀνάγκη φύσεος εἴτε νοῦς βροτῶν, προσηυξάμην σε (*Tr.* 885-7). The poet alludes to this shift in attitude by having Menelaus emphasize the strangeness of this form of address: τί δ' ἔστιν· εὐχὰς ὡς ἐκαίνισας θεῶν (889). Relevant here is also Euripides' *Heracles* (1258-65), where Heracles concludes by making the following remarks to Theseus: Ζεὺς δ', ὅστις ὁ Ζεὺς, πολέμιόν μ' ἐγείνατο Ἥρα (σὺ μέντοι μηδὲν ἀχθεσθῆς, γέρον· πατέρα γὰρ ἀντὶ Ζηνὸς

¹²⁰ With regard to poets' emphasis on Zeus' power and wisdom see also Hes. *W.D.* 213-73.

¹²¹ Zeus: whatever he may be, if this name
pleases him in invocation,
thus I call upon him.
I have pondered everything
yet I cannot find a way,
only Zeus, to cast this dead weight of ignorance
finally from out my brain....
Cry aloud without fear the victory of Zeus,
you will not have failed the truth. (tr. by Lattimore)

ἡγοῦμαι σ' ἐγώ). While the first several words hearken back to the aforementioned *Agamemnon* passage, what follows suggests a marked difference in attitude and orientation. It is perhaps not coincidental that a Euripidean character, having observed Hecuba's plight and condition, juxtaposes Ζεύς and τύχη and muses about the possible preeminence of the latter: ὦ Ζεῦ, τί λέξω; πότερά σ' ἀνθρώπους ὄραν ἢ δόξαν ἄλλως τήνδε κεκτήσθαι μάτην [ψευδῇ, δοκοῦντας δαιμόνων εἶναι γένος], τύχην δὲ πάντα τὰν βροτοῖς ἐπισκοπεῖν; (*Hec.* 488-91).¹²² (In this connection see also *Cycl.* 599-607 and *Ion* 1512-15.)¹²³

2. Writers sometimes focus explicitly on descriptive content in their use of divine epithets that are relevant in particular contexts. Elsewhere they draw attention to the multiple appellations of particular deities; they may also use forms of identification or address—some more elaborate than others—which are tied to divine aid either hoped for received.¹²⁴ Examples include:

a) Aeschylus. *Eum.* 90-1, Apollo to Hermes: Ἑρμῇ, φύλασσε, κάρτα δ' ὦν ἐπώνυμος πομπαῖος ἴσθι.

b) Aeschylus. *Th.* 8-9, Eteocles: From this disaster Ζεὺς ἀλεξητήριος ἐπώνυμος γένοιτο Καδμείων πόλει.

c) Herodotus. *Hist.* 7.192: Having discovered that the Persian ships had been destroyed, the Greeks offered prayers and libations Ποσειδέωνι σωτήρι; Ποσειδέωνος σωτήρος ἐπωνυμίην ἀπὸ τούτου ἔτι καὶ ἐς τόδε νομίζοντες.

d) Herodotus. *Hist.* 1.44: Croesus invokes Zeus under several epithets on a single occasion, because all appear to him to be relevant to the goals he has on that particular occasion. In his profound grief at his son's death, Croesus

ἐκάλεε μὲν Δία καθάρσιον, μαρτυρόμενος τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ ξείνου πεπονθῶς εἶη, ἐκάλεε δὲ ἐπιστίον τε καὶ ἐταιρήιον, τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον ὀνομάζων θεόν, τὸν μὲν ἐπίστιον καλέων, διότι δὴ οἰκίοισι ὑποδεξάμενος τὸν ξείνον φονέα τοῦ παιδὸς ἐλάνθανε βόσκων, τὸν

¹²² O Zeus, what can I say?
That you look on man and care?
Or do we, holding that the gods exist,
deceive ourselves with unsubstantial dreams
and lies, while random careless change and change
alone control the world? (tr. by Arrowsmith)

Line 490 is bracketed in the OCT (del. by Nauck).

¹²³ Cf. Burkert, who mentions these last three passages in some remarks about Τύχη's "rise to fame" (*Greek Religion*, 186, with fn. 29).

¹²⁴ Or perhaps received *and* hoped for (in future), as in the third case cited below.

δὲ ἐπαιρήιον, ὥς φύλακα συμπέψας αὐτὸν εὐρήκοι
πολεμιώτατον.¹²⁵

- e) Pindar. *Isth.* 5.1: The mother of the sun, Theia, is addressed as πολυώνυμε.
f) Aeschylus. *Prom.* 209-10: Prometheus says of his mother that she is called both Themis and Earth, πολλῶν ὀνομάτων μορφὴ μία.
g) Sophocles. *Ant.* 1115-16: The chorus addresses Dionysus as πολυώνυμε, Καδμείας νύμφας ἄγαλμα...
h) Euripides. *Hipp.* 1-2, where Aphrodite describes herself as follows: Πολλὴ μὲν ἐν βροτοῖσι κοῦκ ἀνώνυμος θεὰ κέκλημαι Κύπρις οὐρανοῦ τ' ἔσω.
i) Euripides. *Bacc.* 274-6: Teiresias says that mankind possesses two supreme blessings, one of which is Δημήτηρ θεά—γῇ δ' ἐστίν, ὄνομα δ' ὁπότερον βούληται κάλει.
j) For elaborate forms of address, see the priest Chryses' prayer 'Απόλλωνι ἄνακτι, τὸν ἡύκομος τέκε Λητώ:

κλῦθί μευ, ἀργυρότυξ', ὃς Χρύσην ἀμφιβέβηκας
Κίλλαν τε ζαθέην Τενίδοιό τε ἱφί ἀνάσσεις,
Σμινθεῦ, εἴ ποτέ τοι χαρίεντ' ἐπὶ νηὸν ἔρεψα,
ἢ εἰ δὴ ποτέ τοι κατὰ πύονα μηρί' ἔκηα
ταύρων ἢ δ' αἰγῶν, τόδε μοι κρήνην ἐέλωρ·
τείσειαν Δαναοὶ ἐμὰ δάκρυα σοῖσι βέλεσσιν. (*Il.* 1.35-42)¹²⁶

Regarding Apollo see also *Rhesus* 224-32. Also noteworthy for the degree of its elaboration is the way in which Hippolytus and his attendant huntsmen address Artemis in Euripides' *Hippolytus* (62-71); see also Hippolytus' prayer in what follows (73ff.).

As previously discussed, there are numerous cases in which the descriptive content of the gods' names themselves is highlighted, e.g., various writers connect Zeus' name with διά and/or ζῆν. Epithets depicting various functions of deities are also plentiful. In these instances, rather than the god's name itself being the linguistic entity on which authors

¹²⁵ In the violence of his grief Croesus prayed to Zeus, calling on him as God of Purification to witness what he had suffered at the hands of his guest; he invoked him again under his title of Protector of the Hearth, because he had unwittingly entertained his son's murderer in his own house; and yet again as God of Friendship, because the man he had sent to guard his son had turned out to be his bitterest enemy. (tr. by de Sélincourt)

¹²⁶ Hear me, lord of the silver bow who set your power about Chryse and Killa the sacrosanct, who are lord in strength over Tenedos, Smintheus, if ever it pleased your heart that I built your temple, if ever it pleased you that I burned all the rich thigh pieces of bulls, of goats, then bring to pass this wish I pray for: let your arrows make the Danaans pay for my tears shed. (tr. by Lattimore)

concentrate, attention is turned to the epithet as what does the describing, i.e., as what designates the capacity in which the god is being invoked in a particular context.

This vast multiplication of divine appellations lies in sharp contrast to the situation with regard to human names, where a single individual ὄνομα is both expected and generally adequate.¹²⁷ In contrast, there are so many specific duties—for instance—which humans assign to various deities that it was simply not felt to be sufficient to rest content with a single name.¹²⁸ One important factor motivating the process must surely have been the profoundly asymmetrical relation between gods and human beings, i.e., the felt dependence of the latter on the former; this, in turn, generated the need for a diversity of names to correlate with the manifold and diverse functions which humans hoped and/or expected the gods to fulfill. In fact, with regard to divine names, it was not the case that one arrived at a fixed, closed system. Burkert conveys the fluidity and dynamism of the process with great vividness:

These detached figures are linked...to specific domains and functions in which their influence can be obtained and experienced. This link is guaranteed in two ways, by the epithets and by the personified abstractions in their retinue. Hymnic poetry, doubtless following ancient tradition, loves to heap divine epithets one upon another...in the cult it is the task of the officiant who speaks the prayer to encircle the god as it were with epithets and to discover the just and fitting name. In an established cult there will always be a fixed, well proven name, but this does not inhibit the search for further epithets. The epithets in turn are complex. Some are unintelligible and for that very reason have an aura of mystery; others result from the fusion of gods who at first were independent....Many are taken from sanctuaries...or from ritual, as if the god himself were performing the ritual act....Many are formed spontaneously to denote the domain in which divine intervention is hoped for; in this way each god is set about with a host of epithets which draw a complex picture of his activity. (*Greek Religion*, 184)

¹²⁷ This being said, it is true, of course, that writers mention certain cases involving name changes, or the acquisition of additional appellations, i.e., nicknames. Alcinoos puts the point about the universal presence of human proper names aptly when he asks Odysseus to identify himself by name: εἴτ' ὄνομ' ὅτι σε κεῖθι κάλεον μήτηρ τε πατήρ τε, ἄλλοι θ' οἱ κατὰ ἄστρῳ καὶ οἱ περὶ ναιετάουσιν. οὐ μὲν γάρ τις πάμπαν ἀνώνυμός ἐστ' ἀνθρώπων (*Od.* 8.550-2). Elsewhere Herodotus distinguishes a people called the "Atarantes" as the only ones whose constituent members lack individual appellations: they ἀνώνυμοί εἰσι μόνον ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν· ἀλέσι μὲν γάρ σφί ἐστι Ἀτάραντες οὐνομα, ἐνὶ δὲ ἐκάστῳ αὐτῶν οὐνομα οὐδὲν κεῖται (*Hist.* 4.184).

¹²⁸ With all the talk of divine names as function-descriptive, it is interesting to note that a mortal individual may undergo a name change based on a certain function he is to perform, as when the Priestess at Delphi assigned the new name Βάττος to a man based on her knowledge that he was to become a Libyan king (Herodotus identifies the name as the Libyan word for "king") (*Hist.* 4.155).

DIVINE RIGHTNESS AND INSPIRATION

Writers' treatment of ὀνόματα raises the issue of their divine rightness. The idea that such a ground of correctness exists is especially prominent when the namer is actually said to be a god, or when this is implied in a suggestive way. There are several passages in which authors state in no uncertain terms that divinities have assigned certain ὀνόματα. For instance, Homer refers to certain beetling crags: Πλαγκτὰς δ' ἦ τοι τάς γε θεοὶ μάκαρες καλέουσι (*Od.* 12.61). There are also several Homeric passages in which gods and men are said to give different ὀνόματα to the same entity (see *Il.* 1.403-4; 2.811-14; 14.290-1; and 20.73-4). Hesiod, focusing on common ground rather than variations, emphasizes that gods *and* men call Aphrodite Κυπρογενέα δ', ὅτι γέντο περικλύστῳ ἐνὶ Κύπρῳ (*Th.* 199). Elsewhere he remarks that there is no distinction between what men *and* gods call the progeny of Ceto and Phorcys, namely, the Graiae (*Th.* 270-2). Hesiod also mentions that Οὐρανός used to call his own sons Τιτῆνας "in reproach, for he said that they strained (τιταίνοντας) and did presumptuously a fearful deed" (*Th.* 207-10).¹²⁹ Moreover, Herodotus tells how an individual was renamed Βάττος, the Libyan word for "king," and claims that the Priestess at Delphi addressed him by the Libyan word because she knew that he was to become a Libyan king (*Hist.* 4.155); if one takes Herodotus' claim at face value, this passage can be cited for current purposes since the priestess executes her function based on inspiration from the god Apollo. In two other instances Prometheus links Cronus' name with the verb κραίνω (*Prom.* 911), and foretells that Io will eventually pass through the channel of Maeotis, which will be named Βόσπορος in memory of this event (*Prom.* 732-4).

As concerns implications of the divine origin of certain names, on several occasions Epaphus is said to be named for the manner of his engendering by Zeus. One might suspect that as the child's father Zeus functioned also as name-giver in this instance, though this is not stated explicitly. In another case involving Zeus, albeit less directly, the hero Heracles instructs Telamon to name his son Αἴας for the eagle sent by Zeus in answer to Heracles' prayer that Telamon be granted a son (*Pind. Isth.* 6). Here Zeus himself is not depicted as name-giver; rather, Heracles makes the assignment based on an object associated with that deity.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Tr. by Evelyn-White.

¹³⁰ Worthy of mention, though not as central here, is the case involving Zeus in which mortals' garbling of the noun ὄμηρος leads to their construction of a false account of Dionysus' birth (*Bacc.* 288ff.).

Finally, in the *Agamemnon* passage concerning Helen's name, which was cited in the foregoing discussion of etymology, the Chorus wonders who could have given a name so completely fitting:

τίς ποτ' ὠνόμαζεν ᾧδ'
 ἐς τὸ πᾶν ἐτητύμως,
 μή τις ὄντιν' οὐχ ὀρώμεν προνοί-
 αῖσι τοῦ πεπρωμένου
 γλῶσσαν ἐν τύχαι νέμων,
 τὰν δορίγαμβρον ἀμφινει-
 κῇ θ' Ἑλέναν; ἐπεὶ πρεπόντως
 ἑλένας ἔλανδρος ἐλέ-
 πτολις ἐκ τῶν ἀβροτίμων
 προκαλυμμάτων ἔπλευσεν
 Ζεφύρου γίγαντος αὔραι. (681ff.)¹³¹

On the one hand, Helen's name represents a rather unusual instance since the bearer's father—as in the case of Epaphus—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 person she will become. However, one could argue that this passage, while quite suggestive, is somewhat ambiguous since the Chorus could be asking one of two things: "Who in the world gave her this name?" or "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, and in what follows raises the possibility that an invisible power is responsible for the assignment. Specifically, the Chorus wonders whether someone unseen (μή τις ὄντιν' οὐχ ὀρώμεν) gave Helen this name based on that individual's foreknowledge of what was to be, and thus achieved success.¹³² It is important to emphasize, as Eduard Fraenkel does in his commentary, 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

¹³¹ 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? 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. (tr. by Lattimore, with minor changes)

¹³² Of course, if the name-giver is in fact invisible this would place strong constraints on who else besides Zeus could play this role.

asker of the question expects an affirmative answer or at least thinks it probable.”¹³³ About the unseen namer Fraenkel remarks: “We do not know whence his influence comes; it seems a case of one who operates φανείς ἀλάστωρ ἢ κακὸς δαίμων ποθέν (*Pers.* 354). πρόνοιαι τοῦ πεπρωμένου belong only to a god or a daimon.”¹³⁴ I agree with this final statement about gods’ and daimons’ capacities; however, what Fraenkel does not consider here is whether Zeus himself—as Helen’s male parent—might be envisioned as namer. I would claim that Aeschylus’ phrasing lends at least as much support to the claim that the Chorus is here alluding to *his* possible role as namer.

Any concerns about ambiguity notwithstanding, what is ultimately of interest is the reasoning process which one can trace in the Chorus’ observations. Success (τύχη) is said to be achieved in this instance because Helen’s effect on *mortals* has turned out to be precisely that predicted by her name. In fact, in the passage’s *reflective* sequence—versus that of presentation—it is *this* fact that leads to the Chorus’ initial musing about the name’s source. This becomes evident in what follows the long opening question, where the Chorus indicates its underlying motivation in making the inquiry at all; the phrase ἐπεὶ πρεπόντως is crucial here because it serves to link this sentence closely with what precedes, and, more importantly, indicates a causal sequence moving *from* the second sentence *to* the query made at the outset.¹³⁵ It seems quite natural for the Chorus to raise the issue of the adult Helen’s nature since the appropriateness of her name can only be judged based on the sort of person she *becomes*; because this is the case, yet the name was assigned at birth, one is led inevitably to speculate about a supernatural influence playing a role at this initial stage.

Helen’s name represents one of many instances in which the appropriateness of an ὄνομα given at birth can only be judged 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’ remarks can be generalized to cover other instances in which features and extensions of mature individuals match the descriptive content of names given at birth or creation. In fact, once one raises the issue of divine inspiration in one specific case, it seems inevitable that one would wonder whether such a force were at work in naming

¹³³ *Agamemnon*, vol. 2, 329. Fraenkel also refers here to *Oedipus at Colonus* 1500f., where “the initial question is developed” in just the same way.

¹³⁴ *Agamemnon*, 330.

¹³⁵ Fraenkel says very little about this particular instance of πρεπόντως, and does not mention ἐπεὶ at all (331).

generally. Insofar as it is the phenomenon of consonance between name and nature that leads to certain assumptions about divine origin, the status of the namer is not of decisive importance: cases in which individuals' features and characteristics turn out to match the descriptive content of ὀνόματα given at birth or creation imply an underlying belief that the parents, even mortal ones, are supernaturally inspired in their capacity as name-givers.¹³⁶ Moreover, since appropriateness is what matters, one can speak of parental inspiration whether names' descriptive content is positive *or* negative; the key is whether or not the relevant features and extensions of persons accord with the descriptive content of their names.

When names actually do have positive descriptive content one might perhaps conjecture that the namer's hopes combine with the magical idea of the ὄνομα as nature-conferring to produce certain expectations for performance (examples of names given based on parental hopes include "Theoclymenus," "Hector," "Astyanax" and "Neoptolemus"); in this sense the name would provide the individual with a model for imitation. As noted, it is only after such individuals reach maturity that can one judge whether the relevant features or characteristics have been successfully developed. *If* one's expectations—as reflected in the name—are met, *then* this implies an underlying belief that parents are supernaturally inspired. If one thinks of names as prophecies, then the idea is that one must wait some time before the truth or falsehood of their predictions can be established. In contrast, in cases that do not involve a gap between prediction and realization the issue of divine inspiration appears to be largely superfluous: These would include instances of names given based on factors involving origin since one makes such assignments based on information already at one's disposal. Also pertinent here are cases of name changes and the acquisition of nicknames, which arise in response to factors of contemporary relevance. Finally, the giving of ὀνόματα based on considerations involving the namer does not require divine inspiration insofar as it too is not forward-looking.

In addition to passages in which writers speak of or depict individuals as living up to the descriptive content of their names there are also notable cases in which they draw attention to individuals' *failure* to live up to the expectations encapsulated in their names (see for instance Aeschylus' treatment of Prometheus' and Parthenopaeus' names). What is crucial here is that one can only draw attention to such failures if one *already has* certain

¹³⁶ I owe this suggestion, and certain others made in the final pages of this appendix, to Sir Kenneth Dover. On the topic of mortal parents and supernatural influence, it is due to the fact that the name's descriptive content meshes with its bearer Polyneices' nature that Euripides characterizes his mortal father Oedipus as divinely inspired (*Phoen.* 636-7).

expectations based on names' descriptive content. Finally, there are several instances in which individuals are spoken of or portrayed as having—and living up to—names with negative descriptive content (as in the cases of “Ajax,” “Polyneices,” and “Thersites”). In such cases one cannot imagine namers hoping maliciously that name and nature will correspond; it looks instead as though such individuals, based on prophetic insight, become aware of what awaits the bearer, and simply assign ὀνόματα on that basis. In fact, Hirzel claims that the name “Thersites” constitutes not a nickname but “freilich auch nur ein providentieller Name, den der ‘Frechling’ von Dichters Gnaden erhielt.”¹³⁷ Here too, as in other cases, it is only long after birth that the judgment about divine origin can be made.

¹³⁷ *Der Name*, 95.

Chapter 2

Judgments of Appropriateness in the Literary Tradition¹

In addition to offering etymologies of ὀνόματα (especially proper names), showing a sensitivity on various levels to considerations of sound, and interesting themselves in eponymy, writers often pass judgment on the appropriateness of ὀνόματα which have been assigned to particular bearers. For purposes of analysis I divide those passages in which questions of appropriateness are raised into three categories. All assessments falling in the first involve etymological analyses designed to highlight the descriptive content of proper names. This category, in turn, has three subdivisions: subcategories one and two comprise conclusions of appropriateness and inappropriateness, respectively, reached in connection with names assigned at individuals' birth or creation, while the third involves name changes and the assignment of additional ὀνόματα, i.e., nicknames. With regard to subcategory three, the procedure must differ somewhat since new or additional names are assigned precisely because they *are* appropriate based on factors of contemporary relevance.² The second category comprises instances involving eponymy, in which writers offer assessments based on the correct identification of an ὄνομα's source. In category-three cases one appeals to certain criteria which permit one to assess whether individuals deserve to have certain functional terms (e.g., "mother") applied to them.³

¹ By "judgments of appropriateness" (or "fitness") I mean judgments regarding the appropriateness of a given ὄνομα to its referent. Some of these involve questions of mere veridicality, i.e., truth or falsity, while others also raise the issue of desert. In the former set of cases, depending on the character of the assessment one can speak in terms of *judgments* of veridicality or non-veridicality. Examples of this type would be names reflective of individuals' origins; in assessing veridicality one simply asks whether events actually transpired as suggested by a given name's descriptive content. In other cases one would consider whether a certain state of affairs obtains. Instances of the second type involve a further element of desert where performance considerations are relevant, that is, where it is fitting to ask whether someone lives up to the descriptive content of a name assigned at birth or creation. In this context a name is deserved or undeserved depending on whether the mature bearer exemplifies the trait or feature in question, e.g., exhibits the relevant intellectual capacity. To facilitate presentation, I use the terms "veridicality" and "desert" to express the distinction, with the understanding that in cases involving desert questions of veridicality are of course also relevant.

² There is one exception among the cases treated here, which will be discussed below.

³ I treat this third category for the sake of completeness, and do so in appendix A.

CATEGORY ONE: APPROPRIATENESS AND ETYMOLOGY

When authors raise the matter of fitness in category-one cases, they typically affirm the appropriateness of the ὄνομα in question. For instance, on several occasions Aeschylus says that Epaphus was named based on the manner of his engendering. In *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus tells Io that Zeus will eventually restore her to her senses by his touch, which will in turn issue in the birth of a son named for this mode of origin (848-52).⁴ Moreover, in *Suppliants* Aeschylus offers a judgment of veridicality: ἔφαψιν ἐπωνυμίαν δ' ἐπεκραίνετο μόρσιμος αἰὼν εὐλόγως, "Ἐπαφον δ' ἐγέννασεν (45ff.).⁵ The poet's reasoning appears to be that since Epaphus *really was* produced in the way specified, the appellation is indeed appropriate. Later in the play Aeschylus reiterates that "Ἐπαφος is named truly (ἀληθῶς) from the touch which delivered Io from her torments: "Ἐπαφος, ἀληθῶς ῥυσίων ἐπόνυμος (315).⁶ Once again, the judgment of veridicality seems to be grounded on the idea that it truly was Zeus' touch which, restoring Io to her senses, issued in the birth of a son.⁷

In Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* the Chorus says that Orestes, in avenging his father's death, was assisted by Zeus' daughter: ἔθιγε δ' ἐν μάχαι χερὸς ἐτήτυμος Διὸς κόρα, Δίκαν δέ νιν προσαγορεύομεν βροτοὶ τυχόντες καλῶς (948-51). Aeschylus here offers an etymology of the name Δίκη based on the bearer's origin since, once compressed, Διὸς κόρα yields Δίκη. In advancing this analysis of the name the Chorus indicates, by the phrase τυχόντες καλῶς, that the appellation befits the bearer, or, more literally, hits the mark quite nicely. This judgment has a twofold foundation: on the one hand, Dike actually is Zeus' daughter; on the other hand, she is defined as justice, such that whatever she does can fittingly be described as "just."

In another Aeschylus drama Eteocles—contrasting the justness of his and his brother's causes—offers the same etymology when he refers to her as ἡ Διὸς παῖς παρθένος Δίκη (*Th.* 662). Here Δίκη is placed in apposition to ἡ Διὸς παῖς παρθένος, yielding the same analysis, albeit not in this instance by direct compression of the poet's own words.

⁴ For the etymology see also *Supp.* 313.

⁵ The OCT prints εὐλόχως rather than εὐλόγως, with a note that the former reading appears in M. In my view, given the linguistic focus of the discussion εὐλόγως fits in better here.

⁶ See also *Supp.* 535.

⁷ Finally, it is worth noting one additional passage in which the Chorus treats the issue of Zeus' cure and the resultant birth of Epaphus (*Supp.* 574-82), and says that φυσίζου γένος τόδε Ζηνός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς (584-5). For the latter remark the Chorus offers the following explanation: τίς γὰρ ἂν κατέπαυσεν "Ἡρας νόσους ἐπιβούλους; Διὸς τόδ' ἔργον, καὶ τόδ' ἂν γένος λέγων ἐξ 'Επάφου κυρήσαις (586-9). (The verb κυρέω here has the same force as τυγχάνω in its meaning of "hit the mark.")

In addition, the poet says more here about the daughter's cosmic function: Eteocles claims that Polyneices might have succeeded if Δίκη παρῆν ἔργοις ἐκείνου καὶ φρεσὶν (662-3). However, neither previously nor at present has Δίκη taken his brother's side, an association which he finds inconceivable: ἡ δὴτ' ἄν εἴη πανδίκως ψευδώνυμος Δίκη, ξυνοῦσα φωτὶ παντόλμωι φρένας (670-1). Eteocles here expresses his feelings by way of a counterfactual statement centering on the appropriateness of Δίκη's name; he gives added emphasis to this remark by employing an adverb which has δίκη as its root, i.e., πανδίκως ("most justly"). If Δίκη remains true to her nature—about which no genuine doubt is expressed—Eteocles is confident that she will support him, since τίς ἄλλος μᾶλλον ἐνδικώτερος; (673); once again, the adjective he applies to himself (ἐνδικώτερος) is derived from δίκη. Here, as in the *Libation Bearers*, Dike's assigned function involves partisanship of someone who is already performing or about to perform what he takes to be legitimate acts of violence: in the former case she is shown assisting Orestes in avenging his father's unjustified murder; here Eteocles believes that she cannot but support his cause, even if its advance involves violence, because he is in the right—at least to his own way of thinking.

In addition, in *Works and Days* Hesiod depicts both Zeus and Dike at length as avengers of injustice, and tells also how she reports men's transgressions to the supreme Olympian.⁸ In describing Dike's conferences with Zeus, the poet offers the same etymology of her name found later in Aeschylus—ἡ δέ τι παρθένος ἐστὶ Δίκη, Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα (256); indeed, Aeschylus' formulation in *Seven against Thebes* appears to harken back to this depiction. What is more, while in the first two-thirds of the passage (213-255) Hesiod uses the proper name Ζεύς to refer to the reigning Olympian, in what follows (256-73) he employs instead the alternate form of the god's name in all three oblique cases: the genitive Διός at 267; the dative Δί at 259; and the accusative Δία at 273.⁹ It is surely not coincidental that Hesiod switches to this other form of the name at precisely that juncture in the poem when he depicts the maiden as Zeus' daughter,

⁸ It is also worth remarking that Teucer, in the same breath, asks Zeus and Dike to subject Agamemnon and Menelaus to the same monstrous treatment as that they wrought on his brother Ajax: σφ' Ὀλύμπου τοῦδ' ὁ πρεσβεύων πατὴρ μνήμων τ' Ἑρινὺς καὶ τελεσφόρος Δίκη κακοὺς κακῶς φθείρειαν, ὥσπερ ἤθελον τὸν ἄνδρα λώβαις ἐκβαλεῖν ἀναξίως (*Aj.* 1389-92). (Euripides links Zeus with δίκη in a passage which does not involve the personification of the latter (*Tr.* 885-8).)

⁹ This is of course in addition to that instance of Διός in line 256. In support of a linguistic connection between the two names in Aeschylus, one may refer to Quincey's remarks concerning *Agamemnon* 160-75, in which he advocates restoration of δικεῖν to the text from the Hesychius lemma, noting that "Zeus was the throwing god, and since *Cho.* 949 gives us Δίκα=ἐτήτυμος Διὸς κόρα, Aeschylus' etymological grouping seems to be Δία, δικεῖν, δίκη" ("Etymologica," 148).

highlighting parallels in descriptive content between the two ὀνόματα. In Hesiod, then, one finds not only etymological ties forged (256), but a clear depiction of both individuals as performing a similar cosmic function; the aforementioned shift in the god's appellation serves to heighten an already strong parallel. While the aforementioned judgments of veridicality have a twofold foundation, since they are grounded both on Dike's actual status as Zeus' daughter, and on her being defined as justice, it should now be evident that these factors are closely related.¹⁰

In Sophocles' *Ajax* the hero for whom the play is named comments as follows on the relation between his ὄνομα and present condition of despair: αἰαῖ· τίς ἄν ποτ' ᾤθ' ὦδ' ἐπώνυμον τοῦμὸν ξυνοίσειν ὄνομα τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς; νῦν γὰρ πάρεστι καὶ δις αἰάζειν ἐμοί (430-2). In this instance the name is said to have been assigned based on the adult bearer's emotional state; it is here associated with the exclamation αἰαῖ and the verb αἰάζω.¹¹ The hero states that the appellation is appropriate because he has come to experience precisely the despondency indicated by the name thus interpreted. Sophocles uses a form of συμφέρω to convey the idea of accord or agreement between the ὄνομα and an important characteristic of its bearer; moreover, his addition of the adverb ὦδε highlights the closeness of the fit between the two.

In what follows Ajax outlines the misfortunes he has suffered even though his conduct during the Trojan War proved him to be equal in stature to his father Telamon. He believes firmly that had Achilles directed the dispensation of his own armor he would have bestowed it on Ajax; instead, Odysseus, whom Ajax believes to be an inferior warrior, enjoys it at the behest of the sons of Atreus. Ajax' subsequent madness—resulting in his slaughter of beasts which he mistook for Agamemnon and Menelaus—invokes the gods' hatred. In the speech's climax, he refers once more to the evils (κακά) he has suffered, and wonders how at this juncture he can possibly restore Telamon's pride in him. In his despair he appears to find suicide the only viable option:

αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ἄνδρα τοῦ μακροῦ χρήζειν βίου,
κακοῖσιν ὅστις μηδὲν ἐξαλλάσσεται.
τί γὰρ παρ' ἡμᾶρ ἡμέρα τέρπειν ἔχει

¹⁰ In Plato's view δίκη is one's aim, what one strives to attain. Here, in contrast, one *already* has a goal and if it is of the right sort, δίκη can help one achieve it. If personified—as in this context—δίκη can serve as a kind of ally, yet that same element of personification makes it difficult to construe it as one's aim. δίκη's playing this role would require one's making both term and referent abstract, which is just what Plato does.

¹¹ The verb is defined as "cry αἰαῖ, wail," or alternately as "groan" (Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 34). The verb reappears subsequently when Tecmessa, lamenting Ajax's suicide, says that ὦδε τοῦδ' ἔχοντος αἰάζειν πάρα (904).

προσθεῖσα κάναθεῖσα πλὴν τοῦ κατθανεῖν;
 οὐκ ἂν πριαίμην οὐδενὸς λόγου βροτὸν
 ὅστις κεναῖσιν ἐλπίσιν θερμαίνεται.
 ἀλλ' ἢ καλῶς ζῆν ἢ καλῶς τεθνηκέναι
 τὸν εὐγενῇ χρή. πάντ' ἀκήκοας λόγον. (473-80)¹²

Ajax's remarks in his long speech as a whole (430-80) indicate the reasons for this extreme despair, and reinforce the etymology and judgment of appropriateness advanced at the outset (430-2).

Elsewhere, in her "prosecution" of Helen, Hecuba insists that Aphrodite is appropriately named: τὰ μῶρα γὰρ πάντ' ἐστὶν Ἀφροδίτη βροτοῖς, καὶ τοῦνομ' ὀρθῶς ἀφροσύνης ἄρχει θεᾶς (*Tr.* 989-90).¹³ Here a particular character trait is said to give rise to the assignment; moreover, Hecuba's use of ὀρθῶς signals her belief that the appellation's descriptive content meshes with its bearer's nature.

In the *Agamemnon* passage concerning Helen's name, the Chorus begins by wondering who could have given a name so well-deserved:

τίς ποτ' ὠνόμαζεν ᾧδ'
 ἐς τὸ πᾶν ἐτητύμως,
 μή τις ὄντιν' οὐχ ὀρώμεν προνοί-
 αῖσι τοῦ πεπρωμένου
 γλῶσσαν ἐν τύχαι νέμων,
 τὰν δορίγαμβρον ἀμφινει-
 κῇ θ' Ἑλέναν; ἐπεὶ πρεπόντως
 ἑλένας ἔλανδρος ἐλέ-
 πτολις ἐκ τῶν ἀβροτίμων
 προκαλυμμάτων ἔπλευσεν
 Ζεφύρου γίγαντος αὔραι. (681ff.)¹⁴

¹² It's a contemptible thing to want to live forever
 When a man's life gives him no relief from trouble.
 What joy is there in a long file of days,
 Edging you forward toward the goal of death,
 Then back again a little? I wouldn't give much for a man
 Who warms himself with the comfort of vain hopes.
 Let a man nobly live or nobly die
 If he is a nobleman: I have said what I had to say. (tr. by Moore)

¹³ As concerns the trial-like setting, note the way in which Helen and Hecuba's speeches are introduced (903-918).

¹⁴ 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? Fittingly
 death of ships, death of men and cities
 from the bower's soft curtained

As in the case of Epaphus, the bearer's father is Zeus himself, whose omniscience makes him fully capable of assigning his daughter a name befitting the sort of person she will become. The Chorus does not actually identify a particular namegiver; it begins by asking who could have given a name so altogether appropriate, and in what follows raises the possibility that an invisible power with knowledge of what was to be is responsible for the assignment, which was therefore successfully made. As previously noted, in my view the Chorus' remarks at least leave open the possibility that Zeus is envisaged as having assigned his daughter's ὄνομα.

Uncertainty about the namer's identity notwithstanding, what is crucial is that success (τύχη) is said to be achieved because Helen's effect on mortals has turned out to be just that predicted by her name; in fact, this perfect meshing of the two is actually what leads to the Chorus' initial musing about the name's source. The phrase ἐπεὶ πρεπόντως indicates a causal sequence moving from the second sentence to the query made at the outset; this sequence makes clear that while the precise identity of the namegiver may remain in some doubt, what *cannot* be doubted is the Chorus' resounding judgment of appropriateness—in 681-2, with the follow-up at 687—and how it was reached. In sum, then, the infant Helen received her name based on the anticipated destructive character of the mature individual's actions: Aeschylus not only offers an etymology tying the name to the aorist of αἰρέω, he also concludes that Helen's ὄνομα is quite fittingly assigned since the bearer is acting just as one would expect based on the descriptive content of her name. For the Chorus the only remaining question is *who* gave such a fitting name, not whether that name is appropriate.

Elsewhere Aeschylus raises the matter of appropriateness with regard to a natural inanimate entity, in this case a river. Telling Io of things to come, Prometheus notes that

ἥξεις δ' Ὑβριστὴν ποταμὸν οὐ ψευδώνυμον·
ὄν μὴ περάσεις, οὐ γὰρ εὐβατος περᾶν,
πρὶν ἂν πρὸς αὐτὸν Καύκασον μόλῃς, ὁρῶν
ὑψιστον, ἐνθα ποταμὸς ἐκφυσᾷ μένος
κροτάφων ἀπ' αὐτῶν· ἀστρογείτονας δὲ χρῆ
κορυφᾶς ὑπερβάλλουσαν ἐς μεσημβρινὴν
βῆναι κέλευθον, ἐνθ' Ἀμαζόνων στρατὸν
ἥξεις στυγάνορ'.... (*Prom.* 717-24)¹⁵

and secluded luxury she sailed then,
driven on the giant west wind. (tr. by Lattimore, with minor changes)

This passage was discussed at length in ch. 1, and similar observations are in order here; for a fuller treatment see my remarks there.

¹⁵ then you will come to Insolence, a river
that well deserves its name: but cross it not—

The poet begins by characterizing the river Ὑβριστής as οὐ ψευδώνυμον (“not falsely named”). What Aeschylus means by this characterization becomes clear only in what follows. In his ensuing remarks, Prometheus emphasizes that due to the river’s fierceness Io should take care not to attempt traversal—οὐ γὰρ εὐβατος περᾶν—until she reaches Caucasus, “where the river’s strength gushes from its very temples.” Aeschylus’ depiction of the river’s activity indicates that the phrase οὐ ψευδώνυμον is—at least in this context—simply one more way of expressing a judgment of appropriateness;¹⁶ this assessment is based on the fact that the river’s activity has precisely the violent character that one would expect given the descriptive content of its ὄνομα.

As with Helen, in Polyneices’ case too one is dealing with a name whose fitness can only be judged when the individual reaches maturity. Both Aeschylus and Euripides highlight the descriptive content of the name Πολυνείκης, and provide assessments of desert. In Aeschylus’ *Seven against Thebes* Amphiaraus calls Polyneices by name, dwelling two times on the latter part: δῖς τ’ ἐν τελευτῇ τοῦνομ’ ἐνδατούμενος καλεῖ (577-9).¹⁷ He continues by asking: ἦ τοῖον ἔργον καὶ θεοῖσι προσφιλές, καλὸν τ’ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ λέγειν μεθυστέροις, πόλιν πατρίαν καὶ θεοὺς τοὺς ἐγγενεῖς πορθεῖν, στράτευμ’ ἐπακτὸν ἐμβεβληκότα; (580-3). Clearly in the passage as a whole (577-83) Aeschylus highlights the descriptive content of Polyneices’ name; in my view, the poet also offers a judgment of desert by having Amphiaraus emphasize its second half, then immediately mention the strife associated with the course of action on which the bearer has embarked.¹⁸ In any case, some lines later Eteocles states explicitly that Polyneices is quite fittingly named, meaning that, true to his appellation—ἐπωνύμου κάρτα—Πολυνείκης has turned out to be a cause of strife (658).

it is no stream that you can easily ford—
until you come to Caucasus itself,
the highest mountains, where the river’s strength
gushes from its very temples. Cross these peaks,
the neighbors of the stars, and take the road
southward until you reach the Amazons,
the race of women who hate men.... (tr. by Grene)

¹⁶ Grene’s translation “a river that well deserves its name” captures this idea nicely. In principle, of course, οὐ ψευδώνυμον need not be equivalent to a definite *judgment* of appropriateness, involving, for example, ἀληθῶς or ὀρθῶς.

¹⁷ δῖς τ’ ἐν τελευτῇ is enclosed by daggers and provided with a note in the OCT, but printed without comment in the Loeb. Literally, the translation would run: “Dividing the name [into its two component parts] he calls twice on the latter portion.”

¹⁸ It is, after all, the second half that is crucial from the point of view of descriptive content; the first, while informative, nevertheless simply modifies what follows.

Euripides offers the same basic treatment of the name. In *Phoenician Women* Eteocles orders Polyneices to depart, combining an awareness of the name's descriptive content with a judgment of desert: ἀληθῶς δ' ὄνομα Πολυνείκη πατὴρ ἔθετό σοι θεία πρόνοια νεικέων ἐπώνυμον (636-7). As in the *Agamemnon* passage centering on Helen's name, here too the possibility of a name's divine source is raised. While in the previous instance a perfect meshing of name and nature leads the Chorus to speculate about an invisible power (possibly Zeus) governing the assignment, here the idea of supernatural influence surfaces in Eteocles' claim that Polyneices' father Oedipus assigned such an appropriate name because *he* was divinely inspired (ὄνομα...πατὴρ ἔθετό σοι θεία πρόνοια).¹⁹ Euripides conveys the judgment of desert through his use of ἀληθῶς, with which the comment begins, followed by the phrase θεία πρόνοια; both are ways of expressing this assessment. Subsequently Antigone addresses her dead brother as follows: ὦ Πολύνεικες, ἔφυς ἄρ' ἐπώνυμος (1493). Euripides' use of the second aorist of φύω here is quite interesting, given that it can have the present sense of being a certain way by nature; the consonance of name and nature is powerfully conveyed by these few words.²⁰ Taken in sum, the aforementioned passages indicate that—according to Aeschylus and Euripides—anticipation of the disruptive effect the mature bearer would have on other mortals and their affairs led to the assignment of the name Πολυνείκης; in addition, these authors state repeatedly and in no uncertain terms that Polyneices also *deserves* his name because the impact of his activity accords perfectly with those expectations engendered by the ὄνομα's descriptive content. Moreover, the close meshing of name and bearer's nature leads Euripides to raise the issue of divine inspiration governing the assignment.

Yet another case involves Orestes' use of a predicate adjective as a proper name. As the altar is prepared for the sacrifice of Orestes and Pylades, Iphigenia asks the former individual his name. In response he says that τὸ μὲν δίκαιον Δυστυχῆς καλοίμεθ' ἄν (*I.T.* 500). Orestes here provides himself with a fictional appellation mirroring his current, seemingly fatal predicament; that is, his first instinct is to offer an ὄνομα which is

¹⁹ Wyckoff's translation of lines 636-7, "Leave this place; your name means 'quarrel' and our father named you well" 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 be duly reflected in the translation.

²⁰ Such vocabulary is of special interest because it exhibits striking parallels to that used by Plato in assessing the divisions. Regarding this use of the second aorist see Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1966. Wyckoff's translation "O Polyneices, you followed your quarreling name" is good insofar as it suggests a link between name and nature; in addition, one could perhaps highlight the tightness of the connection by translating the verb more literally, although it is difficult to see how this could be done without the rendering's appearing somewhat stilted (as in "O Polyneices, how well your name and nature coincide!").

appropriate based on his present situation. However, this is not sufficient for Iphigenia, who insists on learning his actual name, i.e., that given at birth, not an appellation whose content merely describes his current dismal circumstances—τοῦτο...δὸς τῇ τύχῃ (501). She persists till at last Orestes cries in exasperation: τὸ σῶμα θύσεις τούμὸν, οὐχὶ τοῦνομα (504).²¹

While it is more common for writers treating the issue of appropriateness to focus on cases involving judgments that ὀνόματα are fitting, on occasion they express the view that for various reasons a certain ὄνομα is *inappropriately* assigned. For example, the scout in *Seven against Thebes* tells of Parthenopaeus' oath that he will destroy Thebes, and then of his appearance and demeanor:

τόδ' αὐδᾷ μητρὸς ἐξ ὄρεσκόου
βλάστημα καλλίπρωιρον, ἀνδρόπαις ἀνὴρ·
στείχει δ' ἴουλος ἄρτι διὰ παρηίδων
ῥας φυούσης, ταρφὺς ἀντέλλουσα θρίξ.
ὁ δ' ὠμόν, οὐ τι παρθένων ἐπώνυμον
φρόνημα, γοργὸν δ' ὄμμ' ἔχων, προσίσταται. (532-7)²²

Aeschylus interprets the name Παρθενοπαῖος as yielding the etymology “Maiden-faced.” In this connection Aeschylus dwells on the warrior's youth, mentioning his intermediate status between boy and man (ἀνδρόπαις ἀνὴρ), and the beard which is just now (ἄρτι) starting to grow. Straightaway, however, Aeschylus shatters this impression of youthful innocence and modesty, for in what follows he gives a vivid illustration of an attitude and demeanor which clash dramatically with those qualities: ὁ δ' ὠμόν, οὐ τι παρθένων ἐπώνυμον φρόνημα, γοργὸν δ' ὄμμ' ἔχων, προσίσταται (536-7). Confronted by this striking conflict between the expectations engendered by the name's descriptive content and the bearer's ferocious attitude, Aeschylus is led to conclude that the name Παρθενοπαῖος is not a fitting one for its bearer.²³

²¹ Iphigenia does of course eventually learn his actual identity (788ff.).

²² Such the loud vaunt
of this creature sprung of a mountain mother, handsome,
something between man and boy.
The beard is newly sprouting on his cheeks,
the thick, upspringing hair of youth in its bloom.
His spirit unlike his maiden name is savage,
and with a grim regard he now advances. (tr. by D. Grene)

²³ Moreover, Aeschylus comments explicitly on Parthenopaeus' lack of modesty (οὐ μὴν ἀκόμπαστός γ' ἐφίσταται πύλαις) (538), which serves to heighten the contrast. Aeschylus' employment of the fact of this clash as a criticism of him implies that the bearer should be living up to the descriptive content of his ὄνομα as revealed by this etymology.

Both Hesiod and Aeschylus highlight the descriptive content of the name Προμηθεύς, making clear that it is given based on a certain character trait of the bearer. In the *Theogony* Hesiod says that Clymene bore clever Prometheus, full of various wiles (Προμηθέα ποικίλον αἰολόμητιν) (510-11), and in *Works and Days* has Zeus address Προμηθεύς as follows: Ἰαπετιονίδη, πάντων πέρι μήδεα εἰδώς (54). In *Prometheus Bound* Aeschylus too analyzes the name Προμηθεύς based on its semantic constitution, but goes beyond this to provide a judgment of non-desert. Just after Hephaestus finishes putting Prometheus in bonds at Zeus' request, Κράτος taunts him as follows:

ἐνταῦθα νῦν ὕβριζε καὶ θεῶν γέρα
 συλῶν ἐφημέροισι προστίθει. τί σοι
 οἰοί τε θνητοὶ τῶνδ' ἀπαντλήσαι πόνων;
 ψευδωνύμως σε δαίμονες Προμηθέα
 καλοῦσιν· αὐτὸν γάρ σε δεῖ προμηθείας,
 ὅτῳ τρόπῳ τῆσδ' ἐκκυλισθήσῃ τέχνης. (82-7)²⁴

Κράτος bases his assessment of the name on the fact that Prometheus, always previously able to exhibit the trait expressed by his ὄνομα, is now constrained such that—to Kratos' thinking at least—he has lost the capacity to take the requisite action. Kratos emphasizes Prometheus' current dependence on others, by contrast with his previous autonomy: “For now it is precisely you yourself who are *in need of forethought* to extricate yourself from this contrivance” (86-7). Prometheus had before been the master of contrivances, yet is now powerless to act; because he is ostensibly no longer in a position to do so, Kratos deems his ὄνομα to be inappropriately assigned. Subsequently Prometheus contrasts the inventiveness which made possible his previous benefits to mankind with his present lack of a contrivance by which to alleviate his own miserable condition: τοιαῦτα μηχανήματ' ἐξευρὼν τάλας βροτοῖσιν αὐτὸς οὐκ ἔχω σόφισμ' ὅτῳ τῆς νῦν παρούσης πημονῆς ἀπαλλαγῶ (469-71). The Chorus, echoing the spirit of Prometheus' remarks, puts the point in medical terms: πέπονθας αἰκὲς πῆμ'· ἀποσφαλεῖς φρενῶν πλανᾷ, κακὸς δ' ἰατρὸς ὥς τις ἐς νόσον πεσὼν ἀθυμεῖς, καὶ σεαυτὸν οὐκ ἔχεις εὐρεῖν ὁποίοις φαρμάκοις ἰάσιμος (472-5).²⁵ While these two passages, taken together, do

²⁴ Now, play the insolent; now, plunder the Gods' privileges and give them to creatures of a day. What drop of your sufferings can mortals spare you? The gods named you inappropriately when they called you Forethought, for now it is precisely you yourself who are *in need of forethought* to extricate yourself from this contrivance. (lines 82-4 tr. by Grene, lines 85-7 my translation)

²⁵ Cf. Wecklein's note on line 86, in whose concluding sentence he refers the reader, “on the thought,” to 474f. Interestingly, in his comments on 472-5, he does not draw attention to the medical language used.

not constitute an explicit assessment of non-desert, such a judgment is clearly implied, particularly in light of Kratos' earlier remarks in lines 86-7.²⁶

Finally, speculative in nature is a possible judgment of non-desert involving Agamemnon's name. In the *Cratylus* Plato offers the following etymology of this ὄνομα: Κινδυνεύει γὰρ τοιοῦτός τις εἶναι ὁ “Ἀγαμέμνων,” οἷος ἂν δόξειεν αὐτῷ διαπονεῖσθαι καὶ καρτερεῖν τέλος ἐπιτιθεῖς τοῖς δόξασι δι’ ἀρετὴν (395a5-7). Now, if one accepts this fairly straightforward treatment of the ὄνομα, i.e., as involving a combination of ἄγαν and μέμνων, then Euripides may offer a judgment of non-desert through the character Menelaus in *Iphigenia at Aulis*. There Menelaus informs his brother that πλάγια γὰρ φρονεῖς, τὰ μὲν νῦν, τὰ δὲ πάλαι, τὰ δ’ αὐτίκα....νοῦς δέ γ’ οὐ βέβαιος ἄδικον κτῆμα κού σαφὲς φίλοις....ἄνδρα δ’ οὐ χρεὼν τὸν ἀγαθὸν πρᾶσσοντα μεγάλα τοὺς τρόπους μεθιστάναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ βέβαιον εἶναι τότε μάλιστα τοῖς φίλοις, ἥνίκ’ ὠφελεῖν μάλιστα δυνατός ἐστιν εὐτυχῶν (332-48).²⁷ One need not accept the *Cratylus* analysis simply because it is *Plato's*, but based instead on the name's relative transparency and the fact that if Plato opts for this reasonably straightforward interpretation it is quite likely that he was not the first to do so. In any case, the most one can claim is that *if* Euripides has the aforementioned interpretation in view, then Menelaus *may be* offering a judgment of non-desert since Agamemnon is not—to his thinking—exhibiting the trait one would anticipate based on expectations generated by the name's descriptive content.

When writers offer etymologies, they most frequently speak in terms of ὀνόματα assigned at birth or creation. Nevertheless, there are numerous instances in which they refer to various name changes which individuals undergo, or nicknames which they acquire. Here too one is justified in raising the matter of fitness since it is precisely *because* the new or additional appellation is appropriate in some way to a current set of

²⁶ As in the case of Parthenopaeus, Aeschylus might be taken to introduce a prescriptive element into his remarks by faulting Prometheus for this clash between his name and character.

²⁷ No! You're crooked; always changing—
this way, that way, back again....
[Y]our 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. (tr. by Vellacott)

As concerns the prospect that an etymology is at issue in this passage, it is interesting to note that the adjective βέβαιος occurs on two occasions.

circumstances that it is assigned at all. For instance, Euripides speaks of the two progeny whom Psamathe bore Proteus:

τίκτει δὲ τέκνα διςσὰ τοῖσδε δώμασι,
Θεοκλύμενον ἄρσεν' [ὅτι δὴ θεοὺς σέβων
βίον διήνεγκ'] εὐγενῇ τε παρθένον
Εἰδῶ, τὸ μητρὸς ἀγλαΐσμ', ὅτ' ἦν βρέφος·
ἐπεὶ δ' ἐς ἥβην ἦλθεν ὠραίαν γάμων,
καλοῦσιν αὐτὴν Θεονόην· τὰ θεῖα γὰρ
τά τ' ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα πάντ' ἠπίστατο. (*Hel.* 8-14)²⁸

Euripides states that the parents first named their daughter Εἰδῶ based on her physical resemblance to Psamathe when she was a newborn (βρέφος). However, upon reaching marriageable age she was renamed Θεονόη based on a prophetic capacity she had developed or displayed. The phrase ἐπεὶ δέ in line twelve highlights the contrast between the two acts of naming, while the γὰρ in line thirteen illuminates the causal relation between the acquisition or discovery of this ability and the ensuing shift in appellation.

In another instance shifts in appellation are based on the namer's current attitude toward the named groups of individuals. More specifically, Herodotus tells how Cleisthenes φυλὰς δὲ τὰς Δωριέων... μετέβαλε ἐς ἄλλα οὐνόματα. ἔνθα καὶ πλεῖστον κατεγέλασε τῶν Σικυωνίων (*Hist.* 5.68). These ονόματα were derived from the Greek words for "donkey" and "pig," with modified endings; hence, while Cleisthenes called his own tribe the Ἀρχέλαοι, ἀπὸ τῆς ἐωντοῦ ἀρχῆς, he named the others Ὑᾶται, Ὀνεᾶται, and Χοιρεᾶται (5.68). Although these changes are not based on criteria relating to the named groups of individuals, they are nevertheless reflective of the namer's *present* disdain for them.²⁹

²⁸ Material bracketed as in the OCT. Lattimore translates the passage as follows:

[Psamathe] bore him two children in the house, a boy
called Theoclymenus (because his father showed
the gods love in his lifetime) and a fine girl they named
Ido (her mother's image) when she was a child;
but when she came to nubile age they changed her name
to Theonoë, for she understands all things that are,
all things to be, that divination alone can tell.

²⁹ There is one case of a name change that does not fit this pattern, namely, that in which Aristoteles receives the name Βάττος due to his stammer. Pindar says that the sound of his voice, with Apollo's aid, put to flight a pack of lions, which were frightened by his exotic accent (*Pyth.* 5.57-9); the poet also mentions that Battus had gone to Delphi to ask the god to cure his stammer (δυσθρόου φωνᾶς...ποινᾶ) (*Pyth.* 4.63). The Βάττος case deviates from the aforementioned pattern since presumably the bearer did not only just begin to exhibit his stammer, but rather developed it at some previous time. While Pindar ties the new appellation to a feature whose emergence likely dates to a substantially earlier time, Herodotus' treatment is forward looking: analyzing Βάττος as the Libyan word for king, he claims that the Delphian priestess addressed the individual by this new name because she knew that he would become a Libyan king at a future date (*Hist.* 4.155).

There are also several cases in which individuals receive additional appellations, i.e., nicknames, based on factors of contemporary relevance. For instance, Herodotus tells how Aristodemus got the nickname ὁ τρέσας based on his supposed cowardly behavior in battle. Herodotus provides two alternative accounts of his conduct with regard to Thermopylae: according to the first report, Aristodemus shirked the fighting—which ended in disaster for the Greeks—by staying behind in Alpeni; based on the second, having been sent from camp on an errand, he deliberately loitered in order to save his life. Regardless of which version of Aristodemus’ evasion one accepts, the result was that οὔτε οἱ πῦρ οὐδεὶς ἔναυε Σπαρτιητέων οὔτε διελέγετο, ὄνειδός τε εἶχε ὁ τρέσας Ἀριστόδημος καλεόμενος (*Hist.* 7.231).³⁰ Homer, in turn, tells of King Areïthous, τὸν ἐπὶ κλησὶν κορυνήτην ἄνδρες κίκλησκον καλλίζωνοί τε γυναῖκες, οὔνεκ’ ἄρ’ οὐ τόξοισι μαχέσκετο δουρί τε μακρῷ, ἀλλὰ σιδηρεῖη κορύνῃ ῥήγνυσκε φάλαγγας (*Il.* 7.138-41). This particular nickname stems from an object, specifically a weapon, with which the adult bearer is associated; Homer’s use of οὔνεκα (140) makes clear that it is because the individual currently employs this particular weapon that he receives the aforementioned nickname. Once again, in both instances factors of contemporary relevance govern the assignments.

Homer also makes reference to a nickname which an individual acquires based on the namer’s emotional reaction to a course of events involving *her*. Specifically, Cleopatra’s parents came to call their daughter “Alcyone” due to the mother Marpessa’s grief at being snatched away by Apollo: Ἀλκυόνην καλέεσκον ἐπώνυμον, οὔνεκ’ ἄρ’ αὐτῆς μήτηρ ἀλκυόνος πολυπενθέος οἶτον ἔχουσα κλαῖεν ὃ μιν ἐκάεργος ἀνήρπασε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων (*Il.* 9.561-4). On this interpretation, αὐτῆς refers to the daughter, and μιν to her mother Marpessa. Murray prints αὐτή rather than αὐτῆς, and takes the μιν as referring to Cleopatra rather than to Marpessa, as is evident from his translation: “The mother herself...wept because Apollo that worketh afar had snatched her child away.” As previously noted, one point in support of the former reading is that the halcyon is known to cry when separated from its mate; on this reading Homer has a direct analogy in view. The poet’s use of οὔνεκα reveals the causal connection between the name chosen and the namer’s grief: in response to her deep sadness, the mother provides her daughter with an additional ὄνομα, one appropriate to her own emotional state; this shift in appellation is a reaction to current or recent developments.

³⁰ Along similar lines, Electra reports—concerning herself and Orestes—that ἔδοξε δ’ Ἀργεὶ τῷδε μήθ’ ἡμᾶς στέγαις, μὴ πυρὶ δέχεσθαι, μήτε προσφωνεῖν τινα μητροκτονοῦντας (*Or.* 46-8).

Finally, Herodotus tells how Theras announced his intention to leave Sparta and join his kinfolk (συγγενέας) on the island of Thera. His son, however, declined to join the expedition. As a result, he received the nickname Οἰόλυκος based on his father's remark that, having departed on an expedition, he would be leaving his son behind like "a sheep among wolves" (οἶν ἐν λύκοις): ἐπὶ τοῦ ἔπεος τούτου οὖνομα τῷ νεηνίσκῳ [τούτῳ] Οἰόλυκος ἐγένετο, καὶ κως τὸ οὖνομα τοῦτο ἐπεκράτησε (*Hist.* 4.149).³¹ The aforementioned comment is based on Theras' fear that his departure would jeopardize his son's safety, and leads to the general assignment of the nickname based on a consolidation of the phrase which Theras was said to have uttered. Once again, it is not circumstances prevailing at birth or creation that govern the assignment of the nickname, but instead factors of contemporary pertinence.

There are also certain cases in which authors raise or allude to the matter of appropriateness in connection with various hopes which mortals harbor. In one noteworthy instance involving a name change, the Furies are asked to deserve *in future* a certain new, less threatening appellation. In *Oedipus at Colonus* Oedipus is told, regarding the spot where he sits, that αἱ γὰρ ἔμφοβοι θεαὶ σφ' ἔχουσι, Γῆς τε καὶ Σκότου κόραι (39-40). In what follows he is informed that the people of Colonus prefer to address the goddesses as τὰς πάνθ' ὀρώσας Εὐμενίδας (42).³² What is striking is that mortals assign them the name Εὐμενίδες based on how they would *like* these divinities to behave toward them. This comes out in a pivotal passage in which the Chorus in effect asks them to be true to—i.e. *act befitting*—this new name with positive descriptive content: it tells Oedipus to repeat the prayer that ὡς σφας καλοῦμεν Εὐμενίδας, ἐξ εὐμενῶν στέρνων δέχεσθαι τὸν ἱκέτην σωτηρίους (486-7).³³ While this name change is future-directed—in the sense of reflecting the wishes and intentions of those making the assignment—the question of appropriateness is nevertheless of central relevance.

A somewhat analogous case involves Priam's assignment of the nickname Ἀλέξανδρος to Paris (Eur. *I.A.* 1287-94).³⁴ One might conjecture that the namer's thoughts are focused on the future; more specifically, the second appellation appears more likely to reflect Priam's hopes for his son's superior performance in battle rather than any

³¹ Demonstrative adjective bracketed as in the OCT.

³² See also *O.C.* 122ff.

³³ As previously noted, one finds the same reluctance to name these deities in Euripides' *Orestes* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*.

³⁴ Homer employs both appellations in the *Iliad*. For Ἀλέξανδρος see, e.g., *Il.* 3.16, 329, 346, 366, 450, 7.355, 11.369, 505, 581, and 24.28. For occurrences Πάρις see, e.g., *Il.* 3.325, 437, 6.280, 503, 512, 12.93, 22.359, and 24.249 (for the form Δύσπαρις see 3.39 and 13.769).

past or contemporary achievements, at least from the characterization which Homer offers. In the *Iliad* Alexander is revealed as making a show of courage: αὐτὰρ δοῦρε δῶω κεκορυθμένα χαλκῷ πάλλων Ἀργείων προκαλίζετο πάντας ἀρίστους ἀντίβιον μαχέσασθαι ἐν αἰνῇ δηϊότητι (3.18-20). Yet, at just the point when he would be required to back his bravado with action, he retreats shivering with fear. As Menelaus approaches, Alexander promptly dissolves into the crowd:

ὥς δ' ὅτε τίς τε δράκοντα ἰδὼν παλίνορσος ἀπέστη
οὔρεος ἐν βήσσει, ὑπὸ τε τρόμος ἔλλαβε γυῖα,
ἄψ δ' ἀνεχώρησεν, ὥχρός τέ μιν εἶλε παρειάς,
ὥς αὖτις καθ' ὅμιλον ἔδω Τρώων ἀγερώχων
δείσας Ἀτρεὺς υἱὸν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδής. (33-7)³⁵

Interestingly, here the individual named Ἀλέξανδρος (“Defender-of-men”) is shown acting in precisely the opposite way, i.e., using the cover afforded by others as a means to his own preservation. In chiding him for his cowardice, Hector sums up his brother’s present condition well: he has an attractive exterior (καλὸν εἶδος), yet ἔστι βίη φρεσὶν οὐδέ τις ἀλκή (44-5). While swayed by this chastisement to engage in single combat, right from the start Alexander is obviously outclassed by Menelaus—himself no great warrior—and is rescued from death only by Aphrodite’s intervention (380-3). This incident suggests that *even if* Ἀλέξανδρος possessed the desire to live up to the descriptive content of his name, his current ability to do so is questionable at best. His lacking even the will to serve as defender is suggested again subsequently (see *Iliad* Book 6, where Hector’s reproaches are required to induce his brother to leave Helen’s company and return to battle). While by no means conclusive, such evidence suggests that Priam’s hopes for his son’s future may well be reflected in the nickname he assigns (*I.A.* 1287-94), rather than a recognition of current performance.³⁶

Other forward-looking cases center on divine epithets. The first involves Apollo’s request to Hermes to keep watch over Orestes:

³⁵ As a man who has come on a snake in the mountain valley suddenly steps back, and the shivers come over his body, and he draws back and away, cheeks seized with a green pallor; so in terror of Atreus’ son godlike Alexandros lost himself again in the host of the haughty Trojans. (tr. by Lattimore)

³⁶ In Homer’s treatment the bearer is depicted as not presently living up to the descriptive content of his ὄνομα, and this fact is deployed against him as a criticism; the implication is that the bearer should be measuring up to the norm embodied therein. Elsewhere, after Pentheus announces his intention to bind Dionysus, the god informs him that he is fit (or deserves) to be ill-starred or unfortunate with regard to his name: ἐνδυστυγῆσαι τοῦνομ’ ἐπιτήδειος εἶ (*Bacc.* 508). This statement only makes sense if one has the name’s descriptive content in view. Given Dionysus’ divine status, and knowing what will happen to Pentheus in what follows, one might construe this remark as implying a future judgment of appropriateness.

σὺ δ', αὐτάδελφον αἶμα καὶ κοινοῦ πατρός,
 Ἑρμῇ, φύλασσε, κάρτα δ' ὦν ἐπώνυμος
 πομπαῖος ἴσθι, τόνδε ποιμαίνων ἐμὸν
 ἰκέτην. σέβει τοι Ζεὺς τόδ' ἐκνόμων σέβας
 ὁρῶμενον βροτοῖσιν εὐπόμπῳ τύχῃ. (*Eum.* 89-93)³⁷

Apollo here formulates his request by asking Hermes to act in accord with the descriptive content of his epithet πομπαῖος. Along similar lines, Eteocles pleads for Zeus' assistance at the outset of *Seven against Thebes*:

εἰ μὲν γὰρ εὖ πράξαιμεν, αἰτία θεοῦ·
 εἰ δ' αὖθ', ὃ μὴ γένοιτο, συμφορὰ τύχοι,
 Ἑτεοκλέης ἂν εἷς πολὺς κατὰ πτόλιν
 ὑμνοῖθ' ὑπ' ἀστών φροιμίῳ πολυρρόθοις
 οἰμώγμασιν θ', ὦν Ζεὺς ἀλεξητήριος
 ἐπώνυμος γένοιτο Καδμείων πόλει. (4-9)³⁸

Once again a deity is asked to frame his future actions in consonance with the descriptive content of one of his epithets (ἀλεξητήριος). In fact, Eteocles' remarks suggest that his side's chances of success in the upcoming battle hang on Zeus' intervention in the aforementioned capacity.

In another case of this type, the Chorus in *Seven against Thebes* asks Apollo to base his future actions on the semantic constitution of one of his epithets, namely, Λύκειος: καὶ σύ, Λύκει' ἄναξ, Λύκειος γενοῦ στρατῷ δαϊώι... (145-6); here the Theban maidens express their collective hope that Thebes' warriors will succeed in holding off the city's attackers.³⁹ Finally, several times Apollo is invoked under the epithet Παιάν ("Healer"), as for instance when the Chorus of citizens of Pherae stands outside the palace gates waiting to find out whether Alcestis is dead or alive, and one member observes: οὐδέ τις ἀμφιπόλων στατίζεται ἀμφὶ πύλας. εἰ γὰρ μετακοίμιος ἄτας, ὦ Παιάν, φανείης (*Alc.* 89-92). Subsequently, the Chorus implores the god to assist Admetus in the face of his current misfortunes, and once again employs the appellation Παιάν: ὦναξ

37 Hermes, you are my brother from a single sire.
 Look after him, and as you are named the god who guides,
 be such in strong fact. He is my suppliant. Shepherd him
 with fortunate escort on his journeys among men.
 The wanderer has rights which Zeus acknowledges. (tr. by Lattimore)

38 For if we win success, the God is the cause
 but if—may it not chance so—there is disaster,
 throughout the town, voiced by its citizens,
 a multitudinous swelling prelude
 cries on one name "Eteocles" with groans:
 which Zeus defender keep from the city of Cadmus
 even as his name implies. (tr. by Grene)

39 Cf. Kranz's mention of these three examples (*Stasimon*, 288).

Παιάν, ἔξευρε μηχανάν τιν' Ἀδμήτῳ κακῶν. πόριζε δὲ πόριζε... λυτήριος ἐκ θανάτου γενοῦ, φόνιον δ' ἀπόπαυσον Ἴδαν (221-5) As with Hermes, Apollo is requested to act in accord with the descriptive content of different epithets based on the desires and needs of his petitioners.

Up to this point I have been speaking as though there were a neat division between the large class of cases in which authors simply offer etymologies to highlight descriptive content, and that subset of instances in which they also raise questions of appropriateness; what precedes illustrates that writers offer evaluations in connection with or by assuming an etymology, and provide clear assessments of fitness. However, judgments may be more or less explicit, and in addition to the aforementioned cases there are instances in which writers do not raise the issue expressly, yet considerations of appropriateness are obviously pertinent. One relevant example is the case of Apollo as Aeschylus presents it. Cassandra says ὥπολλον ὥπολλον, ἀγνῖατ', ἀπόλλων ἐμός· ἀπώλεσας γὰρ οὐ μόνις τὸ δεύτερον (Ag. 1080-2).⁴⁰ While the poet does not offer an explicit judgment of appropriateness, one is clearly implied:⁴¹ first, the previous destructive act, which resulted in mortals' disbelief in Cassandra's prophecies, is mentioned in the text (1206ff.);⁴² second, Cassandra's prophetic gift reveals her own impending doom, and the accuracy of her predictions is borne out by subsequent developments.

A positive conclusion of appropriateness is also suggested by Homer's treatment of the name "Clytaemestra." In the *Odyssey* Agamemnon's ghost informs Odysseus how Κλυταιμνήστρη δολόμητις slaughtered Cassandra, and proceeds to tell of her monstrous conduct toward him; he then notes that οὐκ αἰνότερον καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο γυναικὸς ἢ τις δὴ τοιαῦτα μετὰ φρεσὶν ἔργα βάληται, "even as she too devised (ἐμήσατο) a monstrous thing, contriving death for her wedded husband" (11.422-30).⁴³ Here Agamemnon is recounting events that have *already* transpired, not making predictions regarding what may or may not occur; this, combined with the fact that Homer is clearly highlighting the name's descriptive content, gives indirect support to the claim that Homer has a judgment of desert in view. Aeschylus too offers an etymology of the name: ἰὼ πόποι, τί ποτε μήδεται; τί τόδε νέον ἄχος; μέγα, μέγ' ἐν δόμοισι τοῖσδε μήδεται κακόν, ἄφερτον φίλοισιν, δυσίατον (Ag. 1100-3). At this juncture the murders have

⁴⁰ Lines 1080-1 are repeated verbatim at 1085-6.

⁴¹ In this connection see also Euripides' *Orestes* (121 and 955-6).

⁴² cf. the Loeb text, which also refers to this passage in a note on 1080-2.

⁴³ Murray's translation.

yet to be committed, so any implication of appropriateness would be less marked than in the aforementioned Homeric passage. However, given the fact that Cassandra's voiced concerns about Clytaemestra's destructive intentions actually culminate in the play as she predicts, there is perhaps a sense in which here too a judgment of fitness is suggested.

Aeschylus' treatment of the name "Helen" centers on an explicit judgment of appropriateness (Ag. 681ff.). In *Andromache*, Euripides too ties the name to αἰρέω, yet on the matter of fitness offers hints rather than express formulations: he says there that Ἑλένη was the cause that Greece "of a thousand ships" captured and destroyed (εἶλε) Troy (104-6). As in the case of Clytaemestra, the key events transpired in the past; a judgment of appropriateness is therefore implied. Hesiod's treatment of Πανδώρα also implies such an assessment since she received her name ὅτι πάντες Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες δῶρον ἐδώρησαν, πῆμ' ἀνδράσιν ἀλφηστήσιν (W.D. 81-2). Yet again an individual is depicted in the past tense as functioning in the way indicated by the semantic constitution of her name.⁴⁴

It should not be surprising that, in addition to the numerous cases in which judgments of appropriateness are offered explicitly, they are implied in several others. Indeed, it would seem natural—rather than exceptional—for a writer who goes to the trouble of highlighting what he takes to be a name's descriptive content also to wonder and draw conclusions about whether the individual actually lives up to it; this is especially so in cases where ὀνόματα are assigned at birth or creation based on criteria that only become relevant much later. Finally, instances in which no etymology is offered expressly, yet individuals are *characterized* as behaving in accord with the descriptive content of their names also involve considerations of appropriateness. One example of this type is Homer's unflattering treatment of Thersites, who chatters brashly on, directing abusive language toward his superiors, without showing any self-control or sensitivity to decorum (Il. 2.212-77); by depicting the bearer's conduct and others' reaction to it so pointedly and at such length, Homer might well be thought to imply a meshing of name and nature. Another instance of this kind is Hesiod's vivid portrayal of Epimetheus' conduct; here, by accepting the δόλος bestowed by Hermes, Prometheus' brother is shown manifesting the very lack of foresight encapsulated in the semantic constitution of his name (W.D. 83-9).

⁴⁴ Moreover, on the grounds of Zeus' special status alone one should take account of the proffered etymologies of his name. As noted in ch. 1, the form Δίς (found in the oblique cases) is linked to διὰ at Hes. W.D. 1-4 and Aesch. Ag. 1485-7. The form Ζεύς, in turn, is tied to ζῆν at Pind. *Isth.* 3.4-5; Aesch. *Supp.* 584-5 and Eur. *Or.* 1635. As concerns this final passage, the causal force of the participle (οὖσα) would seem to imply fairly strongly that the name is properly assigned.

Plato's own approach, as hinted at in the *Cratylus* and revealed in the *Phaedo*, differs from these other writers' orientation in several fundamental ways. Their handling of descriptive content places the "deep structure" of proper names in the role of yielding insight into individual bearers' natures. In contrast, Plato's conception of "nature" is such that it rules out individual natures and assigns fixed natures to kinds. In keeping with this view, Plato never evinces a genuine, i.e., philosophic interest in proper names and their bearers; in addition, he rejects outright any constitution-based approach to insight. Moreover, while Plato approves of raising questions both of veridicality and of desert in one's treatment of appropriateness, as is the literary tradition's practice, he does not believe that one can do so in the indiscriminate fashion which typified its *modus operandi*. Finally, Plato indicates repeatedly that normative criteria—properly understood—are at the heart of his own approach. In contrast, the literary tradition's handling of etymology evinces no pervasive or standardized use of normative criteria: writers' analyses do not always involve a normative component (as when derivations privilege something of significance pertaining to an individual's birth, e.g., the place of genesis, or physical features and related aspects of individuals); moreover, insofar as this component is present it is not always of the same sort (assignments might be traced, e.g., to attitudes and character traits of bearers, or to their skills and capacities). Plato's own treatment of normativeness based on the literary tradition's framework emphasizes both the non-pervasiveness of normative criteria and their remarkable diversity. In the *Cratylus*, Plato relies extensively on the literary tradition's handling of etymology and etymology-based judgments of appropriateness; however, he draws on that tradition's methodology and assumptions for the ultimate purpose of discrediting them.

CATEGORY TWO: APPROPRIATENESS AND EPONYMY

As with etymology, writers offer eponymy-based judgments of fitness. In one instance of the relevant type Pelasgus comments on the appropriateness of his people's name: τοῦ γηγενοῦς γάρ εἰμ' ἐγὼ Παλαίχθονος ἱνὶς Πελασγός, τῇσδε γῆς ἀρχηγέτης, ἐμοῦ δ' ἄνακτος εὐλόγως ἐπώνυμον γένος Πελασγῶν τήνδε καρποῦται χθόνα (Aesch. *Supp.* 250-3). Pelasgus' judgment of veridicality is based on his role as ἄναξ with regard to the aforementioned group of people; in Pelasgus' view, his acting in the capacity of ruler is justifiably reflected in the collective name of his subjects. This judgment has a functional element since it is based ultimately on the namer's role in relation to the recipient

individuals, but it differs from cases of functional analysis since the appropriateness of the name “Pelasgians” is not based on a specific function the *group* performs. In another case Herodotus mentions a river called ὁ Ὑπάνιος that has its source in Scythia in another great lake; καλέεται δὲ ἡ λίμνη αὕτη ὀρθῶς μήτηρ Ὑπάνιος (*Hist.* 4.52); interestingly, here the *primary* entity, a body of water, gets its own ὄνομα from another body of water which issues *from* it. Based on the fact that the relation between them is appropriately reflected in the ὀνόματα given, Herodotus offers a judgment of veridicality.

In a further case involving a conjunction of the eponymy relation and considerations of fitness, Herodotus reports a Greek belief that Libya was named for a native woman, and Asia for Prometheus’ wife, although the Lydians lay claim to the latter name.⁴⁵ Regarding the name “Europe,” one can only speculate that it came from the Tyrian woman Europa, and that the parcel of land was previously ἀνώνυμος like the others (*Hist.* 4.45). Introducing the matter of appropriateness, Herodotus wonders why it is that what is *in reality* a single land mass is subject to a threefold division clinched by the assignment of three separate women’s names: οὐδ’ ἔχω συμβαλέσθαι ἐπ’ ὅτεν μὴ εἰούση γῆ οὐνόματα τριφάσια κεῖται, ἐπωνυμίας ἔχοντα γυναικῶν... (4.45). The implication here is that, in Herodotus’ view, there is only one genuine entity available *for* naming; given that fact, the allocation of three ὀνόματα—based on an artificial division of this land mass—is simply inappropriate.⁴⁶

In a case involving the acquisition of a nickname, Homer tells of a certain beggar who arrived at Odysseus’ home: Ἀρναῖος δ’ ὄνομ’ ἔσκε· τὸ γὰρ θέτο πότνια μήτηρ ἐκ γενετῆς· Ἴρον δὲ νέοι κίκλησκον ἅπαντες, οὐνεκ’ ἀπαγγέλλεσκε κίων, ὅτε πού τις ἀνώγοι (*Od.* 18.5-7). As noted in connection with etymology-based judgments, in such a case one is justified in raising the matter of appropriateness since it is due to the fact that the additional appellation is appropriate to current circumstances that it is introduced at all. Here the poet distinguishes between the original name Ἀρναῖος which the individual received at birth, and the nickname Ἴρος which the young men gave him because (οὐνεκ’) the mature bearer would run errands when anyone asked him to do so.⁴⁷ This individual is named *after* the female deity Ἴρις, the divine messenger of Olympus. He would have been incapable of serving as messenger at birth or during his early life; rather,

⁴⁵ He claims that most Greeks hold the belief in question.

⁴⁶ Because the issue arises with regard to the number of entities available for naming, the passage evinces some limited parallels with matters of concern to Plato in the late dialogues.

⁴⁷ Since not an original but a second appellation is in question, it is natural to mention the ground of its assignment. The δέ in line six serves to mark off the nickname from that ὄνομα given at birth.

the nickname is assigned to him based on his current performance of a type of action with marked parallels to that of the primary name-bearer.⁴⁸

In addition, judgments of desert may be strongly implied, as when Oedipus invokes Athens in his prayer: ἵτ', ὦ μεγίστης Παλλάδος καλούμεναι πασῶν Ἀθῆναι τιμιωτάτη πόλις (*O.C.* 107-8). Along similar lines, in the opening speech of Euripides' *Ion*, Hermes refers to events which transpired in Athens, and mentions that ἔστιν γὰρ οὐκ ἄσημος Ἑλλήνων πόλις, τῆς χρυσολόγχου Παλλάδος κεκλημένη (8-9); later reiterating a positive valuation of Athens, Hermes reports Apollo's request to Creusa to take their newborn child λαὸν εἰς αὐτόχθονα κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν (29-30).⁴⁹ Moreover, Aeschylus has the Chorus in his *Persians* depict Xerxes as χρυσονόμου γενεᾶς ισόθεος φῶς (80); the poet refers here to the hero Perseus, who was conceived following Zeus' approach to Danae in a shower of gold.⁵⁰ 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.

CONCLUSION

My research shows that the literary tradition was quite concerned with etymology and eponymy, but never distinguished clearly between them. In fact, authors use ἐπώνυμος and related terms indiscriminately with reference both to etymology and to eponymy. Although writers make no explicit statement on the issue, indirect support for some recognition of difference may lie precisely in the relative paucity of judgments of appropriateness involving the eponymy relation, contrasted with the plentiful instances of etymology-based assessments.

There are two possible, related reasons for this difference in relative frequency.⁵¹ The first concerns the fact that, as treated by the literary tradition, instances of this relation are typically restricted to provisions of source, without further explanation linking a given ὄνομα directly to its referent via that ὄνομα's proposed origin. In contrast, writers'

⁴⁸ In a case involving Phoebe and Phoebus, which has certain similarities to this one, Aeschylus' remark that the latter is named after the former is preceded by a reference to Phoebe's passing the gift of prophesy to Phoebus (*Eum.* 6-8); though Aeschylus does not say so explicitly, his comments may imply a connection between the two events, with the former playing a causal role with regard to the latter.

⁴⁹ As the play draws to a close, Athena announces herself as ἐπώνυμος...σῆς...χθονός (1555-6).

⁵⁰ As noted in ch. 1, the authenticity of line 146 has been challenged by Schütz and Robertson; if it were in fact genuine, it would be relevant here.

⁵¹ I will not dwell extensively on this issue since the more important issue is why *Plato* found eponymy such a useful framework for his own handling of fitness, not why the literary tradition did not.

etymological analyses involve an additional dimension which forms their core, namely, the actual provision of *reasons* or *grounds* for bearers' possession of their ὀνόματα; this provision is based on names' descriptive content, and centers most frequently on characteristics of bearers themselves. Taking the name "Polyneices" as an example, both Aeschylus and Euripides maintain that this particular assignment reflects the negative effect which the adult bearer would have on other mortals and their affairs; this explanation in turn presupposes the words πολύ and νεῖκος as the name's source. These writers could merely have identified these words as the name's origin; however, by offering an explanation of their special pertinence to the bearer they indicate just how the relevant factor is reflected in the constitution of his ὄνομα.⁵² From the perspective of appropriateness the explanatory dimension is crucial because it is with the proposed or implied *application to individuals* that writers agree or disagree when raising questions of veridicality or desert. Since the eponymy relation—as these writers present it—generally lacks an explicit explanatory component, it also lacks this foundation for raising the issue of appropriateness.

The second possible reason for the difference in relative frequency is that the eponymy relation centers in large measure on the entity giving rise to the assignment rather than on the ὄνομα's recipient; insofar as its focus is on determining the source of an entity's ὄνομα the central movement is from the recipient *outward* to that primary entity. While bearer-centered performance expectations may well be relevant in some instances, they are not typically voiced; writers do not express here a clear or strong notion of bearer accountability, which is otherwise central to their reflections. Specifically, this relatively weak interest in performance lies in sharp contrast to etymological analyses, where bearer accountability is pivotal: there, one most frequently moves from the ὄνομα *inward* to a central feature of the bearer in question.⁵³

⁵² On this two-dimensional process in Polyneices' case see Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*, 577-83.

⁵³ The literary tradition—as well as Greeks more generally—was quite concerned with the issue of substantive links between proper names and their bearers' natures; in cases of etymology this is especially so with names assigned at birth or creation based on criteria which only become relevant much later, where it is natural to wonder whether bearers actually live up to the descriptive content of those ὀνόματα. The tragedians exhibit an especially keen interest in highlighting descriptive content and in offering judgments of appropriateness on that foundation.

As Steinthal notes, the idea that ὀνόματα reveal their individual bearers' natures is closely related to the view of names' power at issue in magical praxis: "Der Name, der dem Redenden als objective Macht gegenübersteht—denn er hat ihn nicht gemacht—gehört dem Dinge und kündigt das Wesen des Dinges an, ist selbst dieses Wesen. Daher vermag es auch die Zauberei, auf abwesende Personen und Dinge vermittelst der Namen derselben zu wirken, als wären sie gegenwärtig" (*Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern*, vol. 1, 8).

In contrast to the literary tradition, when Plato treats the issue of appropriateness it is the eponymy relation, rather than etymology, that he feels best suits his metaphysical framework. Unlike the literary tradition, Plato distinguishes sharply between etymology and eponymy; although he devotes much of the *Cratylus* to contesting an etymology-based foundation of appropriateness, he does not, there or elsewhere, argue similarly against eponymy. Instead, I will suggest, the *Phaedo* taps its unexploited potential. In its use of eponymy, the literary tradition typically rests content with identifying the entity giving rise to an assignment; in contrast, Plato maintains that a satisfactory theory must be grounded on a determination of the nature and status of the primary entity—that which exists ἀπλῶς—which, in turn, yields a set of conditions under which that entity’s ὄνομα can properly be applied to a certain class of recipients. While Plato manifests a limited interest in individual sensibles, his main concern is with the Forms; therefore, the eponymy relation’s ultimate focus on the primary entity, rather than on the recipient, is quite in keeping with his own orientation. The framework of eponymy lends a suitable structure to his reflections because it allows him to speak of naming a primary entity—one that is itself a nature—and of naming derivatively other entities that share the nature of the primary entity, but only partially. Plato’s two-tiered ontology (with reality as *explanans*), conjoined with the participation relation, enables his treatment of appropriateness to be complex and systematic in a way that the literary tradition’s construal of “natures” and handling of appropriateness simply do not permit.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ See ch. 4 for a lengthy discussion of Plato’s handling of eponymy in the *Phaedo*.

Appendix A

Appropriateness and Functional Terms

In addition to raising questions of appropriateness in connection with etymology and eponymy, the matter of fitness is also treated in another context, namely, with reference to functional terms. For the sake of completeness, I comment here on this group of cases. Functional terms have normative force; in this connection one assesses desert by considering whether a given individual actually performs the duties associated with someone in the relevant role. One might assume, for instance, that a woman deserves to be called “mother” by her progeny simply due to their kinship relation; however, in Greek tragedy one finds several remarks to the contrary, to the effect that *even though* someone is a blood relation—one’s mother, for instance—that person’s behavior makes use of the relevant functional term inappropriate. Conversely, someone who is not strictly speaking one’s kin may nevertheless deserve to be called “mother” if that individual acts in the way one would expect of someone with that function. As with cases falling in categories one and two, which involve etymology and eponymy, here too judgments of appropriateness may be more or less explicit.

The tragedians question the appropriateness of Clytaemestra’s progeny calling her “mother” on several occasions. In Aeschylus’ *Libation Bearers* Electra—speculating about the source of a lock of hair found at Agamemnon’s tomb—says that οὐδὲ μὲν νῦν ἢ κτανοῦσ’ ἐκείρατο, ἐμὴ γε μήτηρ, οὐδαμῶς ἐπώνυμον φρόνημα παισὶ δύσθεον πεπαμένη (189-91). Her remarks suggest a belief that Clytaemestra’s present attitude clashes with key expectations one would have of her as someone in the role of mother; moreover, Aeschylus points toward a judgment of non-desert in his use of the phrase ἐμὴ γε μήτηρ, conjoined with what immediately follows.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Latimore renders the lines 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”; this rendering does not mention the linguistic component in Electra’s criticism. In contrast, Smyth’s Loeb translation does incorporate the linguistic element: “Now yet in truth did she shear it from her head—she the murderess, my own mother, who towards her children hath taken to herself a godless spirit ill-according with *the name of mother*” (italics mine).

Electra comments more decisively on the issue in Sophocles' play of that name. One finds her already raising the issue fairly early on, when she speaks with disgust of her so-called "mother's" carryings-on with Aegisthus: ἴδω δὲ τούτων τὴν τελευταίαν ὕβριν, τὸν αὐτοέντην ἡμῖν ἐν κοίτῃ πατρὸς ξὺν τῇ ταλαίνῃ μητρί, μητέρ' εἰ χρεὼν ταύτην προσαυδᾶν τῷδε συγκοιμωμένην (271-4). Having admitted the dubious appropriateness of using the term "mother" with reference to Clytaemestra, Electra herself provides a possible alternative: she might more accurately dub Clytaemestra simply τῷδε συγκοιμωμένη. Electra returns to the issue in her subsequent remarks: ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ οὐδὲ νουθετεῖν ἔξεστί σε, ἥ πᾶσαν ἵης γλῶσσαν ὥς τὴν μητέρα κακοστομοῦμεν. καί σ' ἔγωγε δεσπότην ἢ μητέρ' οὐκ ἔλασσον εἰς ἡμᾶς νέμω (595-8). Here she provides the alternate appellation "mistress" (δεσπότης), which to her thinking would be far more properly applied to the women who gave her birth.⁵⁶ In the event that it was not already quite clear, Electra drives home the point that Clytaemestra's attitude and conduct entail her forfeiture of the consideration due one who actually does deserve the appellation. Addressing what she takes to be Orestes' ashes, Electra makes the following remarks:

...οὔτε...ποτε
μητρὸς σύ γ' ἦσθα μᾶλλον ἢ κάμοῦ φίλος...
ἐγὼ δ' ἀδελφῇ σοὶ προσηυδώμην αἰεί...
μαίνεται δ' ὑφ' ἡδονῆς
μήτηρ ἀμήτωρ, ἥς ἐμοὶ σὺ πολλάκις
φήμας λάθρα προὔπεμπες ὥς φανούμενος
τιμωρὸς αὐτός. (1145-56)⁵⁷

Finally, Electra sums her feelings up quite nicely when she insists to Orestes that 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.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ This provision of alternate descriptions helps illustrate an important difference between categories one and three. In the latter instance one has more flexibility, since one can give or withhold the relevant predicates based on performance considerations. One can also replace "mother," for instance, with what one takes to be a more fitting description, as the aforementioned passages illustrate. In contrast, it is more difficult to refrain from using individual proper names if one feels that name and nature are at odds; in such cases, name changes and the assignment of nicknames are an option.

⁵⁷ ...Never
were you your mother's love as much as mine...
You called me always 'sister.'...
Frantic with joy, she grows,
mother, no mother, whom you promised me,
in secret messages so often, you
would come to punish. (tr. by Grene)

⁵⁸ Euripides makes Clytaemestra the target of an implied judgment of non-desert vis à vis her status as "mother." Defending the rightness of his acts of revenge, Orestes informs Tyndareus that πατήρ μὲν ἐφύτευσέν με, σὴ δ' ἔτικτε παῖς...ἢ σὴ δὲ θυγάτηρ—μητέρ' αἰδοῦμαι λέγειν—ιδίοισιν ὑμεναίοισι κούχῃ σῶφροσιν ἐς ἀνδρὸς ἦι λέκτρ' (*Or.* 552-9). Here Orestes voices his strong reluctance to call this

In Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* Deianira provides another target for the same charges. Mincing no words, Hyllus—son of Heracles and Deianira—informs the latter that he can now justifiably curse her since her murderous conduct toward Heracles has destroyed her entitlement to the respect and concern ordinarily due one's mother (807-12). In what follows he exclaims: οὐρος ὀφθαλμῶν ἐμῶν αὐτῇ γένοιτ' ἄπωθεν ἐρπούση καλός. ὄγκον γὰρ ἄλλως ὀνόματος τί δεῖ τρέφειν μητρῶον, ἥτις μηδὲν ὥς τεκοῦσα δρᾷ; (815-18). The dichotomy referred to here is similar to that at issue at *Electra* 1194, where Electra's attitude toward Clytaemestra is at issue. In the Sophoclean context Hyllus gives voice in no uncertain terms to the disparity between his mother's conduct and that appropriate to one of whom the functional term is justifiably predicated. Seconding this assessment of Deianira, Heracles pleads with his son to deliver her to him for retribution: ὦ παῖ, γενοῦ μοι παῖς ἐτήτυμος γεγώς, καὶ μὴ τὸ μητρὸς ὄνομα πρεσβεύσης πλέον. δός μοι χεροῖν σαῖν αὐτὸς ἐξ οἴκου λαβὼν ἐς χεῖρα τὴν τεκοῦσαν... (1064-7).⁵⁹ As was seen with Clytaemestra, here Heracles provides an alternate description to replace "mother," namely, ἡ τεκοῦσα. Yet again a judgment of non-desert is expressed in a decisive fashion. Taken in sum, the aforementioned passages concerning Clytaemestra and Deianira indicate that merely being someone's mother in the biological sense does not automatically entitle an individual to be addressed by the corresponding functional term. Rather, one's character and actions provide the definitive criterion in light of which judgments of desert are made.

Finally, it is worth noting that the process can also work in reverse; that is, an individual's conduct can provide an otherwise non-existent justification for calling her "mother." For example, Euripides states that the priestess at Delphi raised Ion from infancy: τρέφει δέ νιν λαβοῦσα, τὸν σπείραντα δὲ οὐκ οἶδε Φοῖβον οὐδὲ μητέρ' ἥς ἔφν, ὁ παῖς τε τοὺς τεκόντας οὐκ ἐπίσταται (*Ion* 49-51). Subsequently, Ion greets her

woman "mother" due to her reprehensible conduct, and employs the alternate appellation "your daughter." He later does the same when he refuses once again to call Clytaemestra "mother," claiming that σύ τοι φυτεύσας θυγατέρ' ὦ γέρον, κακὴν ἀπώλεσάς με (585-6). With the situation involving Clytaemestra and Agamemnon in view, Electra exclaims: κάκείνους στυγῶ τοὺς παῖδας, ὅστις τοῦ μὲν ἄρσενος πατρὸς οὐκ ὠνόμασται, τῆς δὲ μητρὸς ἐν πόλει (Eur. *El.* 933-5).

⁵⁹ The possibility should be mentioned that in this context ὄνομα has—at least in some measure—the force of "person." I wish to claim that Heracles voices a judgment of non-desert in these lines; the case for this reading is strengthened by Hyllus' remarks in 815-18. At most I would maintain that ὄνομα has a kind of dual function here, meaning most centrally "name" in the sense of "functional term," but with a possible second meaning of "person" present as a sort of undertone; it appears to me that it is ultimately the inappropriateness of the appellation "mother" as applied to Deianira that, in Heracles' view, justifies the violence he would do to her person.

by saying χαῖρ', ὦ φίλη μοι μήτηρ, οὐ τεκοῦσά περ, at which the priestess expresses her pleasure: ἀλλ' οὖν λεγόμεθ' ἄ γ' ἡ φάτις δ' οὐ μοι πικρά (1324-5). Still later, as he prepares to depart, she says: καὶ χαῖρ'· ἴσον γάρ σ' ὥς τεκοῦσ' ἀσπάζομαι (1363). The text of the play indicates that it is the priestess' years-long care for and attention to Ion that justify his application of the functional term "mother" to her. The participle τεκοῦσα in line 1324 has concessive force, which is underscored by περ (here equivalent to καίπερ); hence, the import of Ion's remark is that although the priestess did not actually give him birth, he believes she deserves to be greeted as "mother" based on her treatment of him.⁶⁰ In line 1363 ὥς combines with ἴσον to suggest that in the priestess' view the relationship they have formed does not just approximate that of mother-son in some loose way while necessarily falling short, but that in a crucial sense the relationship has actually achieved that status. While both readily acknowledge that she is not *literally* his mother, their remarks show that it is her attitude and conduct that ultimately generate the entitlement to be *called* by this appellation, rather than mere considerations of biology.

In addition, there are passages in which the appropriateness of calling certain individuals "father" is discussed. For instance, Ion, toward the outset of Euripides' play of that name, claims that Apollo's attitude and behavior toward him justify his calling the god "father": Φοῖβός μοι γενέτωρ πατήρ· τὸν βόσκοντα γὰρ εὐλογῶ, τὸν δ' ὠφέλιμον ἐμοὶ πατέρος ὄνομα λέγω Φοῖβον τὸν κατὰ ναόν (136-40). It is worth noting that Ion offers this praise without realizing that Apollo *is* his father: ὥς γὰρ ἀμήτωρ ἀπάτωρ τε γεγώς τοὺς θρέψαντας Φοῖβου ναοὺς θεραπεύω (109-11).⁶¹ Given Ion's ignorance of his paternity this case parallels that involving the Delphian priestess; taken together, they show that biological ties are neither a sufficient nor even a necessary condition for judgments that a given individual deserves to be called one's "mother" or "father." Elsewhere, using the term "father" in a cosmic sense, Hyllus alludes to the matter of fitness when, at the close of Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*, he laments Heracles' impending death:

αἶρετ', ὀπαδοί, μεγάλην μὲν ἐμοὶ
τούτων θέμενοι συγγνωμοσύνην,
μεγάλην δὲ θεῶν ἀγνωμοσύνην
εἰδότες ἔργων τῶν πρασσομένων,

⁶⁰ For other examples of περ used in this way see Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1364, 1, although this *Ion* passage is not mentioned there.

⁶¹ In fact, we know already from *Hermes* that Apollo's intention is to advance Ion's cause while concealing his own paternity (71-3).

οἱ φύσαντες καὶ κληζόμενοι
πατέρες τοιαῦτ' ἐφορῶσι πάθῃ. (1264-9)⁶²

What is not stated explicitly, yet implied, is that if the gods *really* deserved to be called πατέρες they would exhibit the compassion required by the situation at hand.⁶³

While what precedes concerns individual mothers or fathers, in one noteworthy passage Admetus reproaches both his parents at once for their failure to offer themselves up to die in his place; instead, it is Admetus' wife Alcestis who volunteers to engage in this fatal act of substitution.⁶⁴ On these grounds Admetus concludes that he should be called *her* child rather than that of his biological parents, and tells his "father" Pheres that

οὐκ ἦσθ' ἄρ' ὀρθῶς τοῦδε σώματος πατήρ,
οὐδ' ἡ τεκεῖν φάσκουσα καὶ κεκλημένη
μήτηρ μ' ἔτικτε, δουλίου δ' ἀφ' αἵματος
μαστῶι γυναικὸς σῆς ὑπεβλήθην λάθραι.
ἔδειξας εἰς ἔλεγχον ἐξελθὼν ὅς εἰ,
καί μ' οὐ νομίζω παῖδα σὸν πεφυκέναι.
ἦ τάρρα πάντων διαπρέπεις ἀψυχίαι,
ὅς τηλικόσδ' ὦν κάπῃ τέρμ' ἦκων βίου
οὐκ ἠθέλησας οὐδ' ἐτόλμησας θανεῖν
τοῦ σοῦ πρὸ παιδός, ἀλλὰ τήνδ' εἰάσατε
γυναῖκ' ὀθνεῖαν, ἣν ἐγὼ καὶ μητέρα
καὶ πατέρ' ἂν ἐνδίκως ἂν ἡγοίμην μόνην.
καίτοι καλόν γ' ἂν τόνδ' ἀγῶν' ἡγωνίσω
τοῦ σοῦ πρὸ παιδός κατθανών.... (Eur. Alc. 636-649)⁶⁵

62 Raise him, my helpers. From you let me have much compassion now for what I do. You see how little compassion the Gods have shown in all that's happened; they who are called our fathers, who begot us, can look upon such suffering. (tr. by Michael Jameson)

63 Finally, Heracles informs Amphitryon that to his mind he, and not Zeus, should justifiably be considered Heracles' father: Ζεὺς δ', ὅστις ὁ Ζεὺς, πολέμιόν μ' ἐγείνατο Ἥραι (σὺ μέντοι μηδὲν ἀχθεσθῆις, γέρον· πατέρα γὰρ ἀντὶ Ζηνὸς ἡγοῦμαι σ' ἐγώ) (Eur. Her. 1263-5). This favorable judgment of Amphitryon's status is based on considerations of attitude and action; while Heracles' remarks indicate his own view of his progenitor's identity, it is unclear whether his remarks bear on linguistic matters as well.

64 Interestingly, in Plato's *Symposium* both Phaedrus and Diotima mention Alcestis' act of self-sacrifice though the two interpretations differ a great deal, as Nehamas notes (*Symposium*, xiv, tr. by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff).

65 It cannot be that my body ever came from you, nor did the woman who claims she bore me and is called my mother give me birth. I was got from some slave and surreptitiously put to your wife to nurse. You show it. Your nature in the crisis has come out. I do not count myself as any child of yours. Oh, you outpass the cowardice of all the world, you at your age, come to the very last step of life and would not, dared not, die for your own child. Oh no, you let this woman, married into our family,

Admetus' disdain for his parents' failure to act on his behalf finds expression on the level of both language and reality, that is, he indicates in no uncertain terms his disposition on the matter of desert, and at least *voices* doubts about his actual parentage.⁶⁶ Admetus' remarks, as framed, suggest that for him the two planes are closely linked,⁶⁷ and that it is his dissatisfaction with his "parents'" conduct that leads to this two-pronged condemnation of them.

Later in this same speech Admetus insists that εἰ δ' ἄλλου τυχὼν σωτήρος αὐγὰς εἰσορῶ, κείνου λέγω καὶ παῖδά μ' εἶναι καὶ φίλον γηροτρόφον (666-8). The substance of the reproach in the passage as a whole is that if Admetus' mother and father had truly deserved their respective functional appellations, or collectively the title of "parents," one of them would have chosen to die in his stead; since his wife Alcestis makes the sacrifice which Admetus believes is the responsibility of his aged parents, he concludes that it is she to whom the appellation "parent" is genuinely appropriate.⁶⁸ Pursuing the idea of responsibilities attached to particular roles, Admetus emphasizes his fulfillment of his own filial duties: οὐ μὴν ἐρεῖς γέ μ' ὥς ἀτιμάζοντα σὸν γῆρας θανεῖν προύδωκας, ὅστις αἰδόφρων πρὸς σ' ἦ μάλιστα (658-60). However, now that his parents have defaulted on their part of the "bargain"—dissolving their entitlement to be called "parents" and to be treated with the attendant concern—Admetus no longer feels compelled or inclined to play the role of dutiful son; specifically, he will neither care for them in their old age nor see that they are properly taken care of following their deaths (662-6). Instead, his

do it instead, and therefore it is right for me
to call her all the father and mother that I have.
And yet you two should honorably have striven for
the right of dying for your child. (tr. by Lattimore)

Note that Admetus avoids using the term "mother": see 637-9, where Admetus concludes that some slave must have been his actual mother; 639 ("your wife"); and, subsequently, 661 ("the woman who gave me birth"). In the context of the passage as a whole, Admetus' expressed doubts about his parentage (636-9) seem not to reflect genuine concerns on the biological plane; rather, his substantive complaints all concern his parents' failure to meet what he takes to be their proper responsibilities toward him as their son.

⁶⁶ The remark about being a slave's child may well be inserted largely or entirely for purposes of embellishment, as one more indication of Admetus' extreme disappointment in those individuals he had previously called and thought of as parents.

⁶⁷ In fact, he does not distinguish in any clear-cut way between them, i.e., identify them as two separate (albeit related) arenas in which he can and does express his discontent.

⁶⁸ The fact of their advanced age is relevant here (see 634-5, 648-50, and 669-72); it is not clear that Admetus is claiming that his parents, at any age, are obligated to offer their lives up to save his. However, what is indisputable 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 to be called "parents." Admetus is not contending merely that these individuals no longer deserve to be called "aged parents"!

wife Alcestis' behavior justifies Admetus' calling himself her child *and* support in old age (γηροτρόφος) (668); the idea here appears to be that Alcestis' conduct warrants the transfer of his filial devotion to her. In sum, then, the same issues are raised here with reference to a particular *set* of parents that were treated above by reference to individual mothers and fathers. Admetus' remarks make clear that his parents' failure to act in what he construes as the appropriate manner toward him *qua* son categorically deprives them 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."⁶⁹

Elsewhere discussion centers on the function term "daughter." As noted above, Aeschylus criticizes Helen via a judgment of appropriateness based on the negative descriptive content of her name (Ag. 681ff.). In contrast, in Euripides' *Trojan Women* Hecuba takes a different tack, questioning Helen's status as Zeus' progeny, and, indirectly at any rate, her right to be called his "daughter":

ὦ Τυνδάρειον ἔρνος, οὔ ποτ' εἰ Διός,
πολλῶν δὲ πατέρων φημί σ' ἐκπεφυκέναι,
'Αλάστορος μὲν πρῶτον, εἶτα δὲ Φθόνου
Φόνου τε Θανάτου θ' ὅσα τε γῇ τρέφει κακά.
οὐ γάρ ποτ' ἀνέχῃ Ζῆνι γ' ἐκφῦσαι σ' ἐγώ,
πολλοῖσι κῆρα βαρβάροις Ἑλλησί τε. (766-71)⁷⁰

In the aforementioned *Agamemnon* passage Aeschylus 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' daughter, one might view the Chorus as alluding to his possible role as namer of his progeny.⁷¹ Here, in contrast, Andromache insists that Zeus was not actually Helen's father, and her remarks at least imply that Helen's dreadful conduct makes her

⁶⁹ In one noteworthy passage Apollo makes some dogmatic comments about the basis of an individual's entitlement to be called "parent" (τοκεύς) (*Eum.* 657-61). In his view it is categorically and only the man who deserves to be called a child's "parent"; for the same sentiment expressed without raising the matter of appropriateness see *Orestes* 551-6 (cf. the Loeb, which refers to *Or.* 552 in a note on the Aeschylus passage).

⁷⁰ O flowering of the house of Tyndareus! Not his, not Zeus' daughter, never that, but child of many fathers I say; the daughter of Vindictiveness, of Hate, of Blood, Death; of all wickedness that swarms on earth. I cry it aloud: Zeus never was your father, but you were born a pestilence to all Greeks and the world beside. (tr. by Lattimore, slightly modified)

⁷¹ It seems clear that in the *Agamemnon* passage Aeschylus' raising the issue of Helen's namer is not equivalent to his raising the matter of paternity. If one assumes that an individual's progenitor serves as namer one would conclude that Zeus' status as Helen's father is in question just because the Chorus expresses uncertainty about the *name's* source; however, this interpretation would go far beyond anything one finds in the text.

utterly unworthy of the appellation “daughter of Zeus.”⁷² Nevertheless, while the two tragedians adopt different approaches, they accord in their emphasis on the destructive character of her activity, and in their inclination to make the point, at least in some sense, by appeal to linguistic considerations.⁷³

Finally, writers raise the issue of a particular individual’s right to be called “son.” In a striking case of this type 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 Heracles’ “son”:

γούου δὲ μηδὲν εἰσίδω δάκρυ,
 ἀλλ’ ἀστένακτος καὶ δάκρυτος, εἵπερ εἶ
 τοῦδ’ ἀνδρός, ἔρξον· εἰ δὲ μή, μενῶ σ’ ἐγὼ
 καὶ νέρθεν ὦν ἀραῖος εἰσαεὶ βαρύς.
 Υλ. οἴμοι, πάτερ, τί εἶπας; οἶά μ’ εἵργασαι.
 Ηρ. ὅποια δραστή’ ἐστίν· εἰ δὲ μή, πατὴρ
 ἄλλου γενοῦ του μηδ’ ἐμὸς κληθῆς ἔτι. (Soph. Tr. 1199-1205)⁷⁴

In a somewhat analogous case Haemon, having tried unsuccessfully to dissuade Creon from killing Antigone, states that εἰ μὴ πατὴρ ἦσθ’, εἶπον ἄν σ’ οὐκ εὖ φρονεῖν, to which the king responds: γυναικὸς ὦν δούλευμα, μὴ κώτιλλέ με (Ant. 755-6). Creon would seem to expect unquestioning approval and obedience from his son; failing to obtain it, he calls his filial status into question. While a linguistic component is not expressly incorporated, it may be implied.⁷⁵

Interestingly, it is not necessary for progeny who assume the role of sons to actually be *male*, for there are some passages in *Oedipus at Colonus* which if combined suggest that Sophocles takes Antigone’s name to mean “Instead-of” or “Like-a-son”; the idea here is that Antigone’s caring attitude and dutiful conduct fill the void left by her brothers’ default.

⁷² Later in the play (903ff.) Helen is put on trial (after a fashion) with Helen representing herself as “defendant,” Hecuba playing both “prosecutor” and “plaintiff,” and Menelaus functioning as “judge” and “jury” in the sense that it is his response to what he hears that determines the outcome of the “case.” Lattimore’s translation brings out this legal or quasi-legal dimension quite effectively.

⁷³ That being said, I do of course grant that the linguistic aspect of the condemnation is notably more explicit in Aeschylus’ treatment.

⁷⁴ Let me have no tears, no mourning. Do
 your job without lamentation, without tears,
 if you are your father’s son, or even below
 I shall wait for you, a crushing curse forever.
 Hyl. Oh! What are you saying? What have you forced me to do?
 Her. What must be done. If you do not do it, then be
 another man’s son—do not call yourself mine. (tr. by Jameson)

⁷⁵ Wyckoff’s translation “Don’t flatter me with ‘father,’ you woman’s slave” does include this dimension. In this case and the preceding one, individuals are told their status as “sons” is or will be called into question unless they act in a certain way or adopt a particular attitude.

First of all, the term γοναί is used for “sons” (1192); subsequently, acknowledging a possible disparity, Polyneices tells Oedipus that “I’m your son, or, if not...at least I’m *called* (καλούμενος) your son,” and uses the preposition ἀντί with reference to Antigone and Ismene (1323-6).⁷⁶ Oedipus proceeds to inform Polyneices that Antigone and Ismene μ’ ἐκσώζουσιν, αἶδ’ ἐμαὶ τροφοί, αἶδ’ ἄνδρες, οὐ γυναικες, ἐς τὸ συμπονεῖν· ὑμεῖς δ’ ἀπ’ ἄλλου κούκ ἐμοῦ πεφύκατον (1367-9). Functional criteria combined with the proposed etymology of Antigone’s name would seem to grant Sophocles’ treatment the status of a judgment of desert. More generally, this case, along with those involving Ion’s adopted “mother” and “father,” indicates a degree of flexibility present in assessments involving functional terms: such cases provide the clearest evidence that the duties one performs, rather than biological or gender considerations, constitute the decisive criterion.

⁷⁶ As previously noted, ἀντί has the sense of “like” or “as good as” already in Homer; for references see my treatment of Antigone’s name in ch. 1.

Appendix B

Terminology Writers Use to Assess Appropriateness

I provide here some analysis of the terminology which writers use to raise questions of appropriateness in the three categories treated in what precedes. When one examines the relevant passages, what is most striking is the marked diversity of means which writers employ; these range from single words to judgments which an author offers through multiple features of his remarks.

CATEGORY-ONE CASES

In several instances, adverbs introduce writers' assessments; elsewhere verbs or participles combined with adverbs or adverbial accusatives convey their judgments. In still other cases an author uses a verb alone to make the point, or, more frequently, combinations of adjective and adverb. One adverb that writers employ is *ὀρθῶς*. In Euripides' *Trojan Women* one finds a passage in which *ὀρθῶς* plays a central role: τὰ μῶρα γὰρ πάντ' ἐστὶν Ἀφροδίτῃ βροτοῖς, καὶ τοῦνομ' ὀρθῶς ἀφροσύνης ἄρχει θεᾶς (989-90). Here it is this single word that clearly introduces the dimension of appropriateness. In another instance *ὀρθῶς* forms the core of a judgment of desert, when an Aeschylan chorus, referring to Eteocles and Polyneices, says that οἱ δῆτ' ὀρθῶς κατ' ἐπώνυμίαν...καὶ πολυνεικεῖς ὄλοντ' ἀσεβεῖ διανοίαι (*Th.* 829-31). Here the poet extends the descriptive content of Polyneices' name to cover Eteocles as well;⁷⁷ while in the absence of *ὀρθῶς* the evaluation may be implied, this adverb once again makes it explicit.

Ἀληθῶς is another adverb used to express judgments of appropriateness, as for example in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*: Ἐπαφος, ἀληθῶς ῥυσίων ἐπώνυμος (315). In this instance the adverb alone makes what would otherwise be merely an etymology—Ἐπαφος...ῥυσίων ἐπώνυμος—into a judgment of veridicality; ἀληθῶς here modifies the adjective ἐπώνυμος which by itself here introduces only the *basis* on which this

⁷⁷ As previously discussed, Sophocles does the same with regard to Antigone and Ismene, with the descriptive content of the former individual's name being applied to both.

individual received his name. This adverb is also of central relevance in another case: ἀληθῶς δ' ὄνομα Πολυνείκη πατὴρ ἔθετό σοι θεία προνοία νεικέων ἐπώνυμον (Eur. *Phoen.* 636-7). Here ἀληθῶς is one of two factors making what would otherwise remain on the plane of etymology into a judgment of desert. In fact, one can break the statement down into three distinct levels: the words ὄνομα Πολυνείκη πατὴρ ἔθετό σοι simply indicate what name the bearer received at birth; the words ὄνομα Πολυνείκη πατὴρ ἔθετό σοι νεικέων ἐπώνυμον reveal a particular etymological analysis of the assigned ὄνομα; finally, the presence of ἀληθῶς and θεία πρόνοια adds a third element, namely, that of appropriateness. In my view either this adverb or the mention of the namer's divine inspiration would be sufficient on its own to introduce this matter; the two together make the point quite forcefully.

A third adverb one finds used to convey the idea of appropriateness is ἐτητύμως, as in the *Agamemnon* passage regarding Helen's name (681ff.). Here Aeschylus offers a judgment of appropriateness centering on this adverb (and reinforced subsequently by his use of the adverb πρεπόντως). In this powerful speech the Chorus begins by asking τίς ποτ' ὠνόμαζεν ᾧδ' ἐς τὸ πᾶν ἐτητύμως. If the Chorus were interested merely in *who* assigned the name the only two words required would be the interrogative pronoun and verb. All the remaining words—with the possible exception of ποτέ—are in some way relevant to this expression of the judgment of appropriateness. Among them the adverb ἐτητύμως modifies the verb directly, and would be sufficient by itself to make the point. While the enclitic particle ποτέ also modifies the verb directly, by itself it gives no indication that the writer is offering a judgment of fitness; rather, it seems to provide additional emphasis in a judgment conveyed quite decisively by the adverb ἐτητύμως and the words modifying *it*. The remaining words ᾧδ' ἐς τὸ πᾶν modify ἐτητύμως, and indicate just *how* appropriately the name is thought to have been assigned. In the Chorus' initial question, then, the adverb ἐτητύμως forms the core of the judgment of fitness.⁷⁸

Fourthly, a writer may employ the adverb ψευδωνύμως to convey a judgment of non-desert. Aeschylus offers an etymological analysis of the name "Prometheus," and, unlike Hesiod, attaches to it an assessment of the name's appropriateness: ψευδωνύμως σε

⁷⁸ In what follows the Chorus introduces the issue of the name's supernatural source. It then returns to the matter of accord between name and nature; the relevant portion of text begins ἐπεὶ πρεπόντως, with the subordinate conjunction linking these remarks to what precedes. The Chorus muses here about the name's divine origin precisely because of the close connection between ὄνομα and bearer. In another passage the adjective ἐτήτυμος is used in the phrase ἐτήτυμος Διὸς κόρα (*Cho.* 948-9); in this connection see 935-6 with 946-9 and 952.

δαίμονες Προμηθέα καλοῦσιν· αὐτὸν γάρ σε δεῖ προμηθείας, ὅτῳ τρόπῳ τῆσδ' ἐκκυλισθήσῃ τέχνης (85-7). Here the adverb *ψευδωνύμως* by itself indicates *that* such a judgment is being offered, while what follows *καλοῦσιν* provides the grounds on which it is based.⁷⁹

There are certain other cases in which verbs and participles combine with adverbs or adverbial accusatives to provide indications of appropriateness. For instance, in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Tauris* Iphigenia asks Orestes what name his father gave him at birth (499). Orestes does not reply to the question as formulated, but instead supplies an appellation which befits his *current* misfortunes: τὸ μὲν δίκαιον Δυστυχῆς καλοῖμεθ' ἄν (500). His use of an adverbial accusative, combined with a verb in the optative mood, conveys a judgment of appropriateness; that is, Orestes does not respond by telling Iphigenia what name *is* actually his own, but rather how she would more fittingly address him. In another instance involving Ajax's remarks on the appropriateness of his own name, it is principally or exclusively a verb-adverb combination that expresses the relevant assessment: αἰαί· τίς ἄν ποτ' ᾤεθ' ᾧδ' ἐπώνυμον τοῦμὸν ξυνοίσειν ὄνομα τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς; (430-2). It is the conjunction of the adverb ᾧδε and the verb *συμφέρειν* (here "accord with") that conveys the evaluation; more specifically, the latter indicates that such an assessment is at issue, while the adverb's presence highlights the extent to which the judgment applies in this particular case.⁸⁰

Elsewhere a participle and an adverb combine to raise questions of appropriateness, as when the Chorus in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* asserts that Orestes received divine aid in avenging his father's death: his helper is identified as Διὸς κόρα, Δίκαν δέ νιν προσαγορεύομεν βροτοὶ τυχόντες καλῶς (948-51). The words *τυχόντες καλῶς* convey the idea of fitness; one might interpret them as meaning that the ὄνομα, as here analyzed, "hits the mark quite nicely." Their presence thus makes the difference between a simple highlighting of descriptive content—an assertion that the name Δίκη is actually a consolidation of the phrase Διὸς κόρα—and a judgment of appropriateness. One finds another case involving a participle and adverb (plus prepositional phrase) in Amphiarus' address to Polyneices: δῖς τ' ἐν τελευτῇ τοῦνομ' ἐνδατούμενος καλεῖ (Aesch. *Th.*

⁷⁹ In another case involving an adverb the Chorus invokes Erapheus as ἰνὶν γ' ἀνθονομούσας προγόνου βοὸς ἐξ ἐπιπνοίας Ζηνός ἔπαφιν· ἐπωνυμίαι δ' ἐπεκραίνετο μόρσιμος αἰὼν εὐλόγως, Ἐπαφὸν δ' ἐγέννασεν (Aesch. *Supp.* 41ff.). (The OCT prints ἔπαφιν ἐπωνυμίαν δ' and εὐλόγως, but I adopt here the alternate readings, recorded in the apparatus, as found in M.) Based on these readings it is the adverb *εὐλόγως* that conveys the judgment of veridicality.

⁸⁰ As in the *Agamemnon* passage concerning Helen's name, here too it is conceivable that *ποτέ* makes a small contribution to the evaluation by providing added emphasis.

578-9).⁸¹ Amphiaraus calls to Polyneices by dividing his name into its two component parts, and dwelling two times on its latter portion; because its second half is the crucial one from the perspective of descriptive content, Amphiaraus' repetition of it conveys the idea of desert, and this interpretation is supported and reinforced by what follows.

A verb by itself may carry the weight of a judgment, as when Antigone addresses her dead brother Polyneices: ὦ Πολύνεικες, ἔφυς ἄρ' ἐπώνυμος (Eur. *Phoen.* 1493). Translations of the line include "O Polyneices, you followed your quarreling name," and "Rightly wert thou named..,"⁸² both of which make clear the centrality of the matter of desert. The second aorist of φύω has the sense here of being a certain way by nature; in its absence there would be nothing in Antigone's remark from which one could determine what motivates her address.

Writers might also raise questions of appropriateness via combinations of adverb and adjective. For instance, in one case the adverb κάρτα combines with the adjective ἐπώνυμος to bear the weight of a judgment of desert, when Eteocles asserts that ἐπώνυμοι δὲ κάρτα, Πολυνείκη λέγω, τάχ' εἰσόμεσθα τοῦπίσμ' ὅποι τελεῖ (Aesch. *Th.* 658-9).⁸³ Earlier in the same play, the adverbial phrase οὐ τι together with ἐπώνυμος (plus the genitive accompanying the latter) modify φρόνημα, and convey the poet's judgment that Parthenopaeus' name is inappropriately assigned: ὁ δ' ὠμόν, οὐ τι παρθένων ἐπώνυμον φρόνημα, γοργὸν δ' ὄμμ' ἔχων, προσίσταται (536-7). The term ὄνομα is not employed in these remarks, and in its absence ἐπώνυμος (plus genitive)—combined with the modifying words οὐ τι—carries the weight of the judgment.

Elsewhere the adjective ψευδώνυμος linked with the adverb οὐ constitutes a judgment of appropriateness when Prometheus, giving Io a foretaste of things to come, says that ἥξεις δ' Ὑβριστὴν ποταμὸν οὐ ψευδώνυμον (*Prom.* 717).⁸⁴ While these two words need not in principle signal that a judgment of appropriateness is at issue, in this case they do: the idea is that there is an extremely close fit between the river's appellation and the character of its activity. In yet another instance, ψευδώνυμος combines with the modifying adverb πανδίκως to raise the issue most emphatically, when Eteocles asserts that neither heretofore nor at present has Dike taken Polyneices' side: ἦ δῆτ' ἄν

⁸¹ Moreover, he proceeds to dwell on the strife resulting from the course of action which the bearer has undertaken (580-3). Strictly speaking of course, τοῦνομα is the direct object of the participle, while the remainder goes with καλεῖ.

⁸² The former is Wyckoff's, the latter that provided by Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*.

⁸³ See *Eum.* 90-1 for Aeschylus' use of these same two words in an expressed wish with reference to Hermes.

⁸⁴ More generally see 717-24.

πανδίκως ψευδώνυμος Δίκη, ξυνοῦσα φωτὶ παντόλμωι φρένας (Aesch. *Th.* 670-1).⁸⁵

At issue with name changes and nicknames are various ὀνόματα which bearers receive based on factors of contemporary relevance. As suggested, the very fact that such replacement or additional names are proffered at all suggests that they are appropriate, that judgments of fitness are presupposed; hence, one would not need or expect to find terms and phrases signaling such assessments in the same way one does in cases in which one judges appellations given at birth or creation.⁸⁶ Such clues as are offered are tied closely to writers' accounts of the circumstances and grounds of individual changes and additions. As concerns name changes, these hints include temporal conjunctions and other markers, coupled with explanations of why a shift or addition has taken place. Take for instance the case of Theonoë:

...εὐγενῇ τε παρθένον
Εἰδὼ, τὸ μητρὸς ἀγλάισμ', ὅτ' ἦν βρέφος·
ἐπεὶ δ' ἐς ἥβην ἦλθεν ὠραίαν γάμων,
καλοῦσιν αὐτὴν Θεονόην· τὰ θεῖα γὰρ
τά τ' ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα πάντ' ἠπίστατο. (*Hel.* 10-14)⁸⁷

Here the relative adverb of time ὅτε is used to fix the period when the original appellation was used; then, the δέ in the phrase ἐπεὶ δέ marks this name and period off from those that follow, while the temporal conjunction ἐπεὶ—as counterpart to ὅτε—highlights the point at which the shift occurred. Finally, in lines 13-14 Euripides provides the reason for the change (as the presence of γὰρ indicates). One finds similar clues where nicknames are assigned, as for example in the case of “Alcyone”; here a combination of temporal marker (τότε) and grounds of shift—introduced by οὐνεκ'—signal Cleopatra's acquisition of this additional ὄνομα (*Il.* 9.561-4).⁸⁸

In future-directed cases involving divine appellations writers often employ the imperative mood of the verb to help indicate that the speaker is expressing a wish that the

⁸⁵ Specifically, the adverb is what lends the remark its emphatic quality. Note Eteocles' use of πανδίκως in this passage, and of ἐνδικώτερος in what follows (673).

⁸⁶ I discuss only a subset of these cases here.

⁸⁷ ...and a fine girl they named
Ido (her mother's image) when she was a child;
but when she came to nubile age they changed her name
to Theonoë, for she understands all things that are,
all things to be, that divination alone can tell. (tr. by Lattimore)

⁸⁸ Similarly, in the case of King Areïthous Homer uses the phrase οὐνεκ' ἄρ' to introduce his explanation of why this individual acquired the nickname “mace-man.”

addressee act in accord with his epithet's descriptive content.⁸⁹ This is the case, for instance, with Apollo's epithet Λύκειος: καὶ σύ, Λύκει' ἄναξ, Λύκειος γενοῦ στρατῶι δαΐωι... (*Th.* 145-6). Similarly, in Euripides' *Alcestis* the Chorus focuses on another of the god's epithets, namely, Παιάν, and employs several imperatives in getting its point across: ὦναξ Παιάν, ἔξευρε μηχανάν τιν' Ἀδμήτῳι κακῶν. πόριζε δὲ πόριζε... λυτήριος ἐκ θανάτου γενοῦ, φόνιον δ' ἀπόπασσον "Αἰδαν (221-5) Elsewhere another mood, specifically the optative—used here to convey a wish—combines with phrase Ζεὺς ἀλεξητήριος ἐπώνυμος to indicate that the god is being asked to act in accord with or befitting the descriptive content of this particular epithet (Aesch. *Th.* 8-9).⁹⁰

CATEGORY-TWO CASES

As with etymology-based assessments of fitness, in cases of judgments grounded on the eponymy relation writers may employ adverbs alone to convey a judgment of veridicality; for instance, Pelasgus asserts that ἐμοῦ δ' ἄνακτος εὐλόγως ἐπώνυμον γένος Πελασγῶν τήνδε καρποῦται χθόνα (Aesch. *Supp.* 250-3). Here the adverb εὐλόγως expresses the evaluation which King Pelasgus makes; in its absence Pelasgus would merely be saying that he did in fact give his name to a people, namely, the Pelasgians. Elsewhere Herodotus uses the adverb ὀρθῶς by itself to modify the verb καλέεταο in offering a judgment of veridicality: καλέεταο δὲ ἡ λίμνη αὕτη ὀρθῶς μήτηρ Ὑπάνιος (*Hist.* 4.52); once again, without ὀρθῶς Herodotus would simply be linking two entities via the eponymy relation.⁹¹

⁸⁹ There may well be some kind of magical idea at work here, as there seems to be for instance in the case of the name "Eumenides," or in the use of εὐώνυμος in place of ἀρίστερος to refer to what is on the left.

⁹⁰ For current purposes I omit discussion of category-one cases in which judgments are implied rather than stated directly. Here I note only that writers' use of the past tense of relevant verbs in several instances—e.g., ἐμήσατο with reference to Clytaemestra, ἐδώρησαν with regard to Pandora—suggests that names given at birth or creation are appropriate, when those verbs are precisely the means by which authors indicate that they are highlighting names' descriptive content.

⁹¹ Ὀρθῶς also helps convey a judgment of appropriateness in a passage which is future-directed in the sense of involving the speaker's wishes and intentions:

καὶ νύκτα ταύτην ἣν λέγεις ἐπ' ἀσπίδος
ἄστροισι μαρμαίρουσαν οὐρανοῦ κυρεῖν,
τάχ' ἂν γένοιτο μάντις ἀνοία τινί·
εἰ γὰρ θανόντι νῦξ ἐπ' ὀφθαλμοῖς πέσοι,
τῷι τοι φέροντι σῆμ' ὑπέρκομπον τόδε
γένοιτ' ἂν ὀρθῶς ἐνδίκως τ' ἐπώνυμον,
καυτὸς κατ' αὐτοῦ τὴν ὕβριν μαντεύσεται. (Aesch. *Th.* 400-6)

And for this night you speak of on his shield
glistening with all the stars of heaven—someone
may find his folly prophetic to himself.

In a third case one finds questions of appropriateness raised directly by some type of contrast between an actual state of affairs and that suggested by certain *ὀνόματα*.⁹² In this instance Herodotus wonders why three women's names have been given to portions of what is *in reality* (ἐούση) a single parcel of land (*Hist.* 4.45).

As noted with regard to etymology-based assessments, the mere fact of offering additional names suggests that they are appropriate. Nevertheless, here too one finds certain relevant linguistic markers, as in the case of the individual named Ἀρναῖος: τὸ γὰρ θέτο πότνια μήτηρ ἐκ γενετῆς· Ἴρον δὲ νέοι κίκλησκον ἅπαντες, οὐνεκ' ἀπαγγέλλεσκε κιών, ὅτε πού τις ἀγῶγοι (*Hom. Od.* 18.5-7). Οὐνεκ' signals the provision of an explanation; moreover, the prepositional phrase ἐκ γενετῆς, along with the conjunctive particle δέ (which introduces the nickname), serves to mark the appellations and time periods off from one another. Of course, since one is dealing here with a nickname rather than a replacement appellation, the bearer ends up with two *ὀνόματα* rather than one.⁹³

Finally, several strongly implied judgments of desert are conveyed by juxtaposing positive descriptions of the name-warranting and recipient entities; the relevant descriptions are conveyed by the use of selected adjectives. Two such judgments of desert involve the Athena-Athens connection, in contexts in which writers make clear that the deity has given her name to the city. First, Oedipus invokes Athens in his prayer: ἵτ', ὦ μεγίστης Παλλάδος καλούμεναι πασῶν Ἀθῆναι τιμιωτάτη πόλις (*O.C.* 107-8). Here, the

For if in death night fall upon his eyes,
to him that bears this pompous blazonry
it shall be truly and most justly pregnant,
and he shall make his insolence prophesy
against himself. (tr. by Grene)

Both ὀρθῶς and ἐνδίκως appear in a conditional statement specifying what *would* be the case *if* a certain event, namely, Polyneices' death, were to transpire. It is likely that depicting night on one's own shield was thought to function as a sort of good omen; there may well be some idea of sympathetic magic at work linking the sign of night on the shield to that death (or "night") which the bearer hopes to, or believes he will, bring on the enemy. If this is so, then Eteocles would be expressing the wish that the magical effect be reversed such that it attaches to the shield's bearer, Polyneices, rather than to his brother and rival Eteocles. *If* Polyneices were to die, *then* one could draw the relevant conclusion about such a reversal. In offering yet another judgment, Aeschylus employs the adjective ὀρθώνυμος simply to highlight the dual meaning of the term κῆδος ("sorrow" and "marriage connection"—for greater detail see Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*): Ἰλῖωι δὲ κῆδος ὀρθώνυμον τελεσσίφρων Μῆνις ἤλασεν... (*Ag.* 699-701). Since these passages raise questions of appropriateness, but do not fit in any one of the three central categories discussed in the present chapter, I take note of them here in commenting on the use of ὀρθῶς in category-two cases.

⁹² As will become evident below, this approach is also employed in category-three evaluations.

⁹³ For a somewhat similar case see *Eum.* 6-8, where Aeschylus says that Phoebus received the gift of prophesy from the Titan Phoebe, and was named after her.

assessment of desert is conveyed by two superlative adjectives, one employed with reference to each entity (μεγίστη and τιμιωτάτη, respectively). Similarly, in the opening speech of Euripides' *Ion* Hermes refers to events which transpired in Athens, and begins by remarking that ἔστιν γὰρ οὐκ ἄσημος Ἑλλήνων πόλις, τῆς χρυσολόγχου Παλλάδος κεκλημένη (8-9); later reiterating a positive valuation of Athens, Hermes reports Apollo's request to Creusa to take their newborn child λαὸν εἰς αὐτόχθονα κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν (29-30). Here too it is adjectives that forge close links between the name-granting and recipient entities. In yet another instance, adjectives are again responsible for the pertinent links: Aeschylus has the Chorus in his *Persians* portray Xerxes as χρυσονόμου γενεᾶς ἰσόθεος φῶς (80); called to mind by this description is the hero Perseus, who was conceived following Zeus' approach to Danae in a shower of gold.

CATEGORY-THREE CASES

Finally, I consider the terminology authors employ when treating functional terms. They raise questions of appropriateness via adverbs, as when Admetus uses ἐνδίκως in connection with Alcestis, the woman ἣν ἐγὼ καὶ μητέρα καὶ πατέρ' ἄν ἐνδίκως ἄν ἡγοίμην μόνην (*Alc.* 646-7).⁹⁴ While Admetus literally claims that his *belief* is eminently justified, given what precedes he may also be implying a judgment of desert; in this regard the verb's optative mood is of possible relevance.⁹⁵

Aeschylus offers a judgment of non-desert in a case involving a conjunction of adjective and adverb—ἐπώνυμος and οὐδαμῶς, respectively—when Electra speaks of Clytaemestra, ἐμή γε μήτηρ, οὐδαμῶς ἐπώνυμον φρόνημα παισὶ δύσθεον πεπαμένη (*Cho.* 190-1).⁹⁶ The other relevant factor here is the possessive adjective and enclitic particle γε joined to μήτηρ in what precedes. As in the case of Parthenopaeus,

⁹⁴ Note also Euripides' use of the optative mood.

⁹⁵ Notably, Lattimore's translation does incorporate a linguistic element: "...and therefore it is right for me to call her all the father and mother that I have." For possible cases of some relevance involving ὁρθῶς see Aesch. *Eum.* 657 and Eur. *Alc.* 636-7.

⁹⁶ One may note certain similarities to Aeschylus' treatment of Parthenopaeus' name in *Seven against Thebes*: first, a negated ἐπώνυμος is central to the assessment; second, the poet uses the term φρόνημα to refer to what is at odds with expectations generated by the relevant appellation, be it proper name or functional term.

ἐπώνυμος carries substantial weight in conveying the judgment, but here too this is only so when negated by a suitable adverb.⁹⁷

In other instances writers employ alternate appellations which hint at or help to convey judgments of non-desert. For instance, on one occasion Electra speaks of her mother's conduct with Aegisthus, μητέρ' εἰ χρεὼν ταύτην προσαυδᾶν τῷδε συγκοιμωμένην (*El.* 273-4). Sophocles conveys his character's doubts about appropriateness through use of the conditional conjunction εἰ and the words that follow, and through provision of the alternate appellation τῷδε συγκοιμωμένη. Later in the play Electra mentions another possible appellation, namely, δεσπότις, yet once again without denying fitness expressly (597-8). Orestes, in turn, addressing Tyndareus, twice refers to Clytaemestra as Tyndareus' daughter rather than as Orestes' own mother (*Eur. Or.* 557-9 and 585-6).⁹⁸ In Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*, Heracles provides the alternate appellation ἡ τεκοῦσα with reference to Deianira (1067). Elsewhere Admetus avoids using the term "mother" in his harsh critique of his parents' failure to offer themselves up for sacrifice in his stead: he concludes that a slave woman must have been his actual mother (*Eur. Alc.* 638-9); in speaking to Pheres he refers to her as "your wife"; and finally he refers to her as "the woman who gave me birth" (ἡ τεκοῦσα) (661), thus reducing their relation to one of *mere* biology.

In cases of non-biological attachments to parental figures, a writer offers the relevant appellation plus something additional by way of clarification. Ion adopts a mother and father for himself based on considerations of desert; in each case he refers to the individual in question via the relevant functional term, and provides some other indication that the appellation is appropriately assigned. In the case of his relationship with the Delphian priestess, Ion reveals his belief that she deserves to be called "mother" when he greets her as such: χαῖρ' ὦ φίλη μοι μήτηρ, οὐ τεκοῦσά περ (*Ion* 1324). Ion conveys his assessment through this form of address combined with the participle that follows; this participle has concessive force, which is highlighted by the presence of περ.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Moreover, it is possible that Sophocles hints at a judgment of non-desert via a juxtaposition of noun and adjective, when he has Electra speak of Clytaemestra as μήτηρ ἀμήτωρ (*El.* 1154); he here uses the noun μήτηρ, but promptly retracts it by introducing a corresponding privative adjective. Strictly speaking, of course, what results is far more than a *mere* retraction.

⁹⁸ In the former instance Orestes supplies the alternate appellation, accompanied by the explanation that μητέρ' αἰδοῦμαι λέγειν.

⁹⁹ Subsequently the priestess evinces her agreement with Ion's view that she can fittingly be called his mother on non-biological grounds: ἴσον γάρ σ' ὥς τεκοῦσ' ἀσπάζομαι (1363); here the participial phrase combines with the adverbial accusative ἴσον to reinforce the judgment advanced in what precedes.

Ion also asserts that Apollo's treatment of him warrants his calling the god "father": Φοῖβός μοι γενέτωρ πατήρ· τὸν βόσκοντα γὰρ εὐλογῶ, τὸν δ' ὠφέλιμον ἐμοὶ πατέρος ὄνομα λέγω Φοῖβον τὸν κατὰ ναόν (*Ion* 136-40). It is interesting to note that Ion calls the god "father" (πατήρ) and "begetter" (γενέτωρ) without any awareness that their tie actually has a biological dimension (see 109-11). Ion's use of the adjective ὠφέλιμος with reference to Apollo provides the key to the evaluation's ground: it is because Apollo has served as his *benefactor* that Ion claims he deserves the appellation "father." Thus, the pertinent functional appellations combine with a statement centering on an adjective to yield a judgment of appropriateness. It is noteworthy that, with regard to the priestess and to Apollo, Ion uses the terms "mother" and "father" or "begetter" to signal that he is providing confirmations of fitness; in contrast, as illustrated above, in cases where biological ties are present (and the relevant individuals are aware of their existence), individuals may proffer or highlight judgments of non-desert by offering *alternate* appellations with negative connotations attached to them.

Sometimes an author expresses an evaluation—wholly or in part—by referring directly to a clash between a given appellation and some attitude, conduct, or state of affairs. In addition to the aforementioned allusions to the matter of appropriateness in speaking of Clytaemestra, Sophocles does actually offer a statement on the issue; he accomplishes this via a contrast between appellation and character, which points directly to the conclusion that the former is undeserved: μήτηρ καλεῖται· μητρὶ δ' οὐδὲν ἐξισοῖ (*El.* 1194).¹⁰⁰ The poet also employs this technique in treating the issue of desert with regard to Deianira, when Hyllus, son of Heracles and Deianira, asks: ὄγκον... ἄλλως ὀνόματος τί δεῖ τρέφειν μητρῶον, ἥτις μηδὲν ὥς τεκοῦσα δρᾷ; (*Tr.* 817-18). Here Sophocles frames the contrast in terms of a clash between appellation and conduct.¹⁰¹

In *Eumenides* Aeschylus uses ὁρθῶς to introduce or point toward a judgment of appropriateness (657); however, in the passage more generally (657-61) he offers a type of contrast between the appellation a certain class of individuals receives and an actual state of affairs. Precisely what it involves depends in a significant way on whether one reads the relevant participle as κεκλημένη or κεκλημένου, i.e., οὐκ ἔστι μήτηρ ἢ κεκλημένη

¹⁰⁰ One can almost imagine καλεῖται italicized for emphasis!

¹⁰¹ The poet increases the sharpness of his depiction by using the verb τρέφειν when speaking of the maternal title. In another instance Sophocles has Hyllus raise the issue of appropriateness implicitly with reference to the gods, wondering how οἱ φύσαντες καὶ κληζόμενοι πατέρες τοιαῦτ' ἐφορῶσι πάθη (*Tr.* 1268-9); as in *Electra* 1194 one can imagine the participle receiving particular stress when the lines are read or spoken.

τέκνου τοκεύς οἱ οὐκ ἔστι μήτηρ ἢ κεκλημένου τέκνου τοκεύς.¹⁰² In my view this second reading fits the context better, insofar as the main contrast Aeschylus appears to focus on is that between τοκεύς and τροφός rather than that between μήτηρ and τοκεύς; his concern is with the issue of whether a child's mother or father deserves to be called its "parent," and he has Apollo present a case in favor of the latter's claim to that title. In presenting his argument Apollo retains the term μήτηρ (πατήρ μὲν ἂν γείναιτ' ἄνευ μητρός—663), offering further support for the claim that it is not a woman's entitlement to receive *that* particular appellation that is at issue, but merely her status and title of "parent"; his remarks suggests that she can legitimately be called both μητήρ and τροφός, but not μητήρ and τοκεύς. Insofar as this is the case, once again a judgment of non-desert is to a significant extent conveyed via some form of contrast between an appellation, on the one hand, and an element or dimension of reality, on the other.¹⁰³

CONCLUSION

The foregoing discussion illustrates the tremendous range of terminology which writers use when raising questions of appropriateness. As concerns the particular ways in which judgments are expressed, there is overlap between the categories treated here, notably with regard to authors' employment of adverbs alone to convey their assessments. Exhibiting the diversity which characterizes poetic usage generally, as well as the contrasts and points of common ground between the three categories specifically, is interesting in its own right. Most importantly, however, exploration of the literary tradition's terminology provides valuable background for the consideration of Plato's handling of fitness.

¹⁰² The OCT prints the former, but notes that M prints the latter.

¹⁰³ In *Alcestis* Admetus insists that εἰ δ' ἄλλου τυχὼν σωτήρος αὐγὰς εἰσορῶ, κείνου λέγω καὶ παῖδά μ' εἶναι καὶ φίλον γηροτρόφον (666-8). Here Admetus conveys his assessment not by a specific word or small group thereof, but via a conditional statement whose antecedent is true. Looking more closely at this statement, one finds that the antecedent concerns the plane of actions and attitudes, the latter that of language; Admetus is saying that *if* this other individual, namely, Alcestis, acts in the aforementioned way, this has clear implications on the linguistic plane (i.e., is appropriately reflected in that terminology used to relate the two individuals). Analyzed in this way, this passage has clear affinities with others in which writers offer judgments of non-desert by contrasting appellation and nature.

Part 2

Plato's *Cratylus*

Chapter 3

The *Cratylus*: A Critique of Philosophers and Poets

INTRODUCTION

Today most scholars in Greek philosophy take for granted that theorizing about the relation between language and reality was a central preoccupation of the thinkers they study. Certainly, any assessment of Plato's systematic philosophy must, among other things, deal extensively with his philosophy of language.¹ The dialogue in which Plato concentrates most on linguistic issues is the *Cratylus*. In fact, Plato's *Cratylus* has interested those who work in the areas of Greek philosophy and philosophy of language precisely because it constitutes the first work by a thinker in the Western philosophical tradition that offers a sustained treatment of such issues.² In their attempts to locate the sources of the problems treated there, scholars have turned to Presocratic philosophers and sophists; however, the problems which *these* individuals address originate in a pre-philosophical, literary tradition on which they are drawing. Fortunately, a great deal of this material is extant, and careful study of it permits one to understand the form those problems took in their initial formulation, and the methodologies and assumptions which ground authors' treatments. My contention is that the *Cratylus*, rather than functioning purely as a work in a heavily insular philosophical tradition, with sophistic influences, represents one of the major loci of intersection in classical antiquity between two largely independent traditions: the philosophical tradition, on the one hand, and the literary tradition, on the other.³ This

¹ The phrase "philosophy of language" is often used in the literature with reference to Plato. Plato does not actually have a detachable philosophy of language; he has conceptions of various aspects of language, but not anything like 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 Normann Kretzmann ("Semantics, History of," 360); cf. Rudolf Pfeiffer (*History of Classical Scholarship*, 59).

³ In construing the dialogue as a main point of intersection between the philosophical and literary traditions, I am not claiming that it represents an amalgam of the two, but that it offers fundamental criticisms of both. Scholars have long recognized that Plato treats the literary tradition as an important opponent in handling ethical questions, specifically the matter of character formation, in *Republic* 2, 3, and 10. What distinguishes my stance is the claim that in a quite different sphere, namely, his philosophy of language, Plato adopts a strongly critical stance toward the literary tradition and views it as a key adversary.

alternative approach to the dialogue yields an interpretation that diverges appreciably from those offered by previous commentators.⁴

The *Cratylus* poses certain problems regarding the basis on which ὀνόματα may be deemed “appropriate” or “correct.”⁵ Plato focuses largely on a “natural-correctness” thesis, according to which words’ semantic constitution, highlighted by etymology, reveals their referents’ natures. To interpret the dialogue successfully, one must be able to account for the etymological section which constitutes its lengthy centerpiece. Some have largely dismissed it, while others have recognized its importance.⁶ However, even the latter have

Since others have focused on the relevant philosophical influences, I concentrate here on highlighting the literary tradition’s pertinence. As concerns the literary tradition, I have in mind here, as in pt. 1, Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; Hesiod’s *Theogony* and *Works and Days*; Pindar’s epinician odes; Herodotus’ *Histories*; and all the extant plays of the tragedians Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. When using the phrase “literary tradition” in what follows, I have these authors and works in view.

⁴ These include Georgios Anagnostopoulos, Josef Derbolav, H. N. Fowler, Paul Friedländer, Victor Goldschmidt, George Grote, W. K. C. Guthrie, Benjamin Jowett, Charles H. Kahn, G. B. Kerferd, Norman Kretzmann, Max Lekey, Kuno Lorenz-Jürgen Mittelstrass, Louis Méridier, Paul Shorey, A. E. Taylor, Max Warburg, and Rudolph H. Weingartner.

⁵ Cf. Richard Robinson (“The Theory of Names in Plato’s *Cratylus*”), who emphasizes that the dialogue is concerned not with the question of origins, but instead with the issue of correctness (103-6) (on correctness as the dialogue’s topic see also, e.g., Schofield, Derbolav, Kretzmann, Anagnostopoulos, and Lorenz-Mittelstrass). I certainly agree that this is its ultimate or genuine topic although I would emphasize that it is not presented as such initially. Interpretations centering on the question of origins, as offered for instance by Lekey (*Plato als Sprachphilosoph*, 12-13, 54-65, 84-85) and Fowler (Loeb Classical Library, vol. 6, 4), cannot be sustained; for emphasis on the topic of origins see also Otto Apelt (*Sämtliche Dialoge*, vol. 2, *Cratylus*, 1-4, 15, 19), Geoffrey S. Kirk (“The Problem of *Cratylus*,” 226), Jowett (*The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. 1, 258-9), and Bruce Rosenstock (“Fathers and Sons: Irony in the *Cratylus*,” 385). Lekey contends that the origin of words and (in his view) of language more generally is the dialogue’s main concern, and that the discussion of phonetic constitution (421-427) represents Plato’s own stance and important theoretical contribution on this topic. However, Lekey fails to recognize that Plato moves steadily away from any “attachment” to questions of origins, and in his remarks on πρῶτα ὀνόματα Lekey mistakes temporal for merely logical priority (as does Jowett, 259, 284); Robinson (106) makes the latter point in his own criticism of Lekey (for the distinction between logically and temporally “first” see also Anagnostopoulos, “The Significance of Plato’s *Cratylus*,” 322). Depending on the context in which it is used, different translations of the term ὄνομα (pl. ὀνόματα)—including “word,” “proper name,” “general term,” and “kind name”—are warranted. Though some do utilize it, “language” is an inappropriate rendering.

⁶ For interpretations which incline toward dismissal see, e.g., Shorey, Taylor, Jowett, Lekey, and Kirk. Notably, in her attempts to link the *Cratylus* closely to the *Parmenides*, *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* rather than to key middle-period dialogues—particularly the *Phaedo*—Mary Margaret Mackenzie states explicitly that she will ignore the etymology section of the dialogue: “The function of the etymologies is obscure and, as far as this paper is concerned, will remain so. The first and last sections of the dialogue, however, are more accessible” (124). In my view, one cannot develop a defensible interpretation of the dialogue as a whole without taking them seriously into account; this is of course wholly compatible with the inquiry’s outcome being negative, i.e., with Plato’s denial that one may use etymology as a means to the attainment of insight. Konrad Gaiser claims rightly that the etymological section “muß als Kernstück des ganzen Gesprächs verstanden und kann nicht etwa als unwesentliche Spielerei abgetan werden” (*Name und Sache in Platons “Kratylos,”* 25). On the importance of etymology cf. Timothy M. S. Baxter (*The “Cratylus”: Plato’s Critique of Naming*, 187); Sir David Ross (“The Date of Plato’s *Cratylus*,” 191); and J. V. Luce (“The Date of the *Cratylus*,” 149).

yet to explain the section adequately. A central issue which previous interpreters have either not addressed or handled unpersuasively is *why* Plato makes an etymology-based approach to correctness the centerpiece of the dialogue. The interpretation developed here, and in the following chapter, permits one to explain the etymological section of the *Cratylus* as a critical response to techniques and assumptions that were of central importance to the literary tradition of the eighth- through fifth-centuries B.C.⁷

Writers in the literary tradition make abundant use of etymology to highlight the semantic constitution of ὀνόματα, largely proper names, in order to reveal bearers' natures. Central here is the assumption of individual natures which grounds their analyses.⁸ In addition, authors make numerous assessments of the *appropriateness* of names to their bearers.⁹ At the outset of the *Cratylus*, Plato "invests" the praxis of naming with τέχνη status, providing a laudatory description of the sort one would expect based on those criteria put forth in the *Gorgias* to distinguish τέχναι from ἐμπειρίαι. However, in what follows Plato dismantles every exalted claim he had Socrates make for this activity and its practitioners. As in the *Gorgias*, what is treated initially as a τέχνη later has that status challenged decisively.¹⁰ In the *Cratylus*, the literary tradition provides Plato with key material used in that challenge; at the same time, he undertakes a fundamental critique

⁷ Moreover, recourse to this material shows that Plato's own philosophy of language is influenced significantly by this pre-philosophical tradition, specifically, its handling of the eponymy or "named-after" relation. (As discussed in pt. 1, eponymy involves the naming of one entity for or after another, e.g., naming the people called "Persians" after the hero "Perseus"; unlike etymology, the focus is not on the use of deep structural analyses to shed light on bearers' natures.) In my view, questions of historical sources and philosophical content or import are not as detachable as some *Cratylus* scholars have imagined when they largely dismiss the former in order to concentrate on the latter; for this approach favored explicitly see Gaiser, *Name und Sache in Platons "Kratylos"*, 11, 45, and Josef Derbolav, *Platons Sprachphilosophie im "Kratylos" und in den späteren Schriften*, 25, 28, 31. Given the difficulties associated with identifications of historical sources, one might be tempted to make a virtue of "necessity" and leave the matter largely unaddressed. However, historical and philosophical issues cannot be so neatly distinguished; rather, it would seem that successful estimates of the *Cratylus*' distinctive philosophical content and innovation require maximal awareness of other similar inquiries. In this case, estimates of Plato's philosophical contribution to the problematic in question necessitate appeals to a non-philosophical, literary tradition.

⁸ As previously noted, this 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. Instead, authors operate with a loose, non-technical notion according to which a particular individual, either mortal or divine, is widely recognized by a salient characteristic or power. Thus construed, individual natures play a central role in the *Cratylus*.

⁹ I have in mind here judgments regarding the appropriateness of a given ὄνομα to its referent; in the case of etymology, these judgments are based on criteria involving semantic constitution or descriptive content.

¹⁰ I thus see significant thematic parallels between the *Gorgias* and *Cratylus*; these ties reinforce the results of extensive stylistic inquiries linking the *Cratylus* closely to the *Gorgias* (see the lengthy study of the Platonic corpus undertaken by Hans von Arnim, "Sprachliche Forschungen zur Chronologie der platonischen Dialoge").

of the literary tradition's own analytic techniques and the assumptions on which their use rests.

In my view, the sophists' importance vis-à-vis the *Cratylus* 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. However, in so doing he does not take sophistic treatments of correctness as his point of departure. Rather, Plato bases his inquiry *directly* on the literary tradition's own techniques and assumptions. Contrary to what numerous commentators have assumed, the sophists do not constitute central Platonic opponents in the *Cratylus*, as they clearly do in the *Gorgias*; interpreters are led to this erroneous conclusion through their failure to recognize that these figures' influence is sharply curtailed by Plato's own remarks, and to distinguish adequately—when they do so at all—between different senses of “appropriateness” or “correctness.” In the dialogue itself, Plato makes clear in numerous ways that the literary tradition grounds his own investigation.¹¹

The thrust of the *Cratylus* is negative. Following a protracted investigation, Plato *rejects* the linkage of reality and ὀνόματα evinced by the literary tradition's practice of etymology; specifically, he repudiates approaches to the notions of naturalness and appropriateness which are based on or otherwise tied to the constituency of ὀνόματα. While its emphasis is largely negative, I see a limited positive result issuing from the dialogue. In judging the appropriateness of words' constitution, one need only invoke custom and convention, and for purposes of ordinary communication appeals to these sources are sufficient. This turn to convention applies to all ὀνόματα, including those designating Forms and other key elements of Plato's philosophical system; however, for philosophical purposes far more must be said, though in the *Cratylus* itself there are only brief suggestions of what his own stance actually is. Commentators often do not distinguish between these two levels—those of ordinary communication and philosophical activity—yet the distinction is crucial. I take Plato's positive hints largely from the dialogue's close, where he introduces briefly the appearance-reality dichotomy and explanatory role given Forms, and raises in passing the matter of appropriateness with

¹¹ In this chapter and the next, I consider why sophistic inquiries do not ground Plato's handling of correctness, and provide support for my assertion of the literary tradition's centrality.

regard to his own metaphysical framework. Plato develops these final clues in another middle-period dialogue, the *Phaedo*, to which I will turn in the following chapter.¹²

The present chapter begins with the provision of an analytical outline dividing the *Cratylus* into six sections, and a discussion of the *τέχνη* issue as it pertains to naming in the dialogue as a whole. In what follows, I offer a commentary on key passages and ideas raised in its constituent sections, beginning each segment by repeating the relevant portion of the outline. My remarks aim not at completeness of coverage, but are instead selective insofar as they emphasize that material of relevance to the interpretation I seek to develop of the dialogue's historical sources and focus; to that end, I concentrate somewhat more on its opening sections since they are of most central interest from this point of view.¹³ This chapter has a close, complementary relation to the following one, which touches on a range of issues but highlights Plato's treatment of appropriateness in the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo* and

¹² There he uses eponymy to treat appropriateness. On the matter of dating, I find no reason, either stylistic or thematic, to challenge the traditional assignment of the dialogue to the middle period (see, e.g., Kahn, "Language and Ontology in the *Cratylus*" and "Les mots et les formes dans le *Cratyle* de Platon"; Ross, "The Date of Plato's *Cratylus*"; Méridier, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 5, pt. 2, *Cratylus*; and Derbolav, *Platons Sprachphilosophie*). In his attempt to show that the *Cratylus* is aimed at Heraclides Ponticus, Warburg argued for a later date (*Zwei Fragen zum "Kratylos"*), and others have favored the later placement (Geoffrey S. Kirk, D. J. Allan, G. E. L. Owen, and Gilbert Ryle); for a recent attempt to group the *Cratylus* with the *Theaetetus*, see Mackenzie ("Putting the *Cratylus* in its Place"). Fowler, in turn, asserts that the *Cratylus*' position is uncertain, but suggests that Plato's rejection there (in 404b) of an etymology of the name "Hades" which he accepts at *Phaedo* 80d "may indicate that the *Cratylus* is the later of the two dialogues" (4). This is a far too superficial basis on which to advance such a conclusion, and, moreover, would presuppose that Plato took such analyses seriously in their own right when it is overwhelmingly clear from the *Cratylus* (and elsewhere) that he does not. Taking account of various challenges to the traditional dating, Luce makes a persuasive case for adhering to it ("The Date of the *Cratylus*"). In my view, the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic* complement Plato's negative remarks in the *Cratylus*, and provide confirmation and extensive supplementation of what few positive remarks he makes there; in fact, the *Cratylus* points in the direction of issues worked out in somewhat different terms in the middle and late dialogues. On the explanatory role of Forms with regard to ontological, epistemological, and ethical concerns see Harold Cherniss, "The Philosophical Economy of the Theory of Ideas"; in view of their handling in both the middle and late writings one may also highlight Forms' explanatory function with regard to semantic issues.

¹³ My comments on the text are preceded by a bullet symbol (•). The commentary will focus on the following main points: the literary tradition's status as a direct and central opponent of the *Cratylus* discussion, with accompanying critical remarks on numerous "sources" to whom the inquiry has previously been linked (as concerns its historical sources, the dialogue will emerge as a major point of intersection between the literary and philosophical traditions); Plato's handling of etymology and use of it to ground judgments of appropriateness (for comments on Plato's use of etymology outside the *Cratylus* see appendix B); the assumption of individual natures, with the notion of naturalness closely linked to words' constitution; Plato's challenge to naming's *τέχνη* status and related observations on naming and the possibility of its achieving the rank of *τέχνη* (concerning the latter see appendix A); ties between naming and dialectic; the actual ground of words' correctness when their constitution is in question (with attention here and in the next chapter to the proper role and scope of convention in the context of naming); those clues offered by Plato regarding his own metaphysical stance and approach to semantic issues; finally, setting the stage for the identification of the most direct and strongest ties to other dialogues—both middle and late—through an interpretation of the *Cratylus* which highlights the notions of naturalness and appropriateness. Several of the foregoing issues are discussed further in the following chapter.

those intimately related—indeed foundational—metaphysical issues which are pivotal to such a discussion. Due to considerations of presentation, I reserve sustained discussion of certain passages and ideas for the next chapter; this will bring the connections and points of divergence between the two dialogues into sharpest relief.

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE¹⁴

I. 383a1-390e4: The natural-correctness thesis is tentatively adopted, and the τέχνη status of τὸ ὀνομάζειν is assumed.

A. 383a1-386e5: Rejection of an alternative approach grounded on extreme relativism.

1. 383a1-384a7: Cratylus and natural correctness; Socrates' assistance requested.
2. 384a8-c8: Prodicus and appropriateness; Socrates on Hermogenes' name.
3. 384c9-385b1: Hermogenes' alternative(s) to natural correctness.
 - a. 384c9-e2: Hermogenes' statement of his approach; a conflation of two options.
 - b. 385a1-b1: Socrates' specification of Hermogenes' stance.
4. 385b2-396d7: Socrates' detachment of Hermogenes from the extreme view.
 - a. 385b2-e3: Linguistic route.
 - b. 385e4-386d7: Ontological consequences.
5. 386d8-e5: Rejection of extreme view; things have fixed natures.

B. 386e6-390e4: The need for a view of appropriateness reflecting the fact that entities have fixed natures.

1. 386e6-387d9: Πράξεις, as a class of entities, have fixed natures.
2. 387d10-390d6: Πράξεις and tools (with a special focus on naming).
 - a. 387d10-388a9: Identity of tools.
 - b. 388a10-c8: Tool use.
 - i. 388a10-c2: What they permit one to accomplish.
 - ii. 388c3-8: Using tools well.
 - c. 388c9-390a8: Tool construction.

¹⁴ The breakdown offered here diverges in numerous ways from those of previous commentators: see Weingartner (*The Unity of the Platonic Dialogue*, 16, and "Making Sense of the *Cratylus*," 8); Levinson ("Language and the *Cratylus*: Four Questions," 28); Anagnostopoulos ("The Significance of Plato's *Cratylus*," 325); Goldschmidt (*Essai sur le "Cratyle": Contribution à l'histoire de la pensée de Platon*, 37); Méridier (*Cratylus*, 7-13); Gaiser (*Name und Sache in Platons "Kratylos"*, 20-4); Apelt (*Cratylus*, 33-6); Leky (*Plato als Sprachphilosoph*, Table of Contents); Derbolav (*Platons Sprachphilosophie*, ch. 2, 40-9); and Friendländer (*Plato*, vol. 2, 196-215, divisions in margins). Of the foregoing outlines, mine is closest in its basic divisions to that of Gaiser.

- i. 388c9-389a4: Identity of constructors.
- ii. 389a5-390a8: Procedure.
- d. 390b1-d6: Evaluation of constructed products.

3. 390d7-e4: Summing up.

II. 390e5-397c3: Plato makes clear the specific way in which he construes ὀρθότης, namely, that he will use etymology to treat appropriateness.

A. 390e5-394e7: Clarification of what is meant by “natural correctness”; grounding the *Cratylus* investigation of ὀρθότης.

- 1. 390e5-391b6: Must establish what is meant here by “correctness.”
- 2. 391b7-c7: Sophists are not of central importance to the current enterprise.
- 3. 391c8-d3: Must turn to Homer and poets more generally.
- 4. 391d4-392b2: Homeric cases of different names gods and human beings use for the same entities.
- 5. 392b3-393b6: Etymology and appropriateness.
 - a. 392b3-e8: The names of Hector’s son.
 - b. 393a1-b6: Hector’s name.
- 6. 393b7-c7: Natural kinds and natural-kind terms.
- 7. 383c8-394e7: Functional and value terms, and proper names; desert and individual natures.
 - a. 393c8-d4: The functional term “king.”
 - b. 393d5-e9: Digression: remarks on the names of letters.
 - c. 394a1-e7: Functional and value terms, plus proper names; desert and non-desert; names and individual natures.

B. 394e8-397c3: Literary tradition, continued (tragedians and Hesiod); foundation completed.

- 1. 394e8-396b3: Etymologies of members of House of Atreus (tragedians).
- 2. 395e5-397a3: Etymologies of selected gods’ names (Hesiod).¹⁵
- 3. 397a4-c3: Ground of investigation said to have been laid.

III. 397c4-421c2: Etymological inquiry proceeds on this foundation.

A. 397c4-400d1: Etymological analysis of a group of common nouns: types of being with agency; certain subdivisions thereof.

¹⁵ There is overlap in Stephanus numbers between this and the previous subsection because—given the content of Greek mythology—I believe that Zeus, whose name is analyzed in 395e5-396b3, merits inclusion in both sequences of analyses.

- B. 400d1-408d5: Return to proper names (divine ὀνόματα).
1. 400d1-401a7: Introduction.
 2. 401b1-e1: Hestia etymology (Heraclitus and “doctrine of flux” introduced into discussion).
 3. 401e1-402c3: Rhea and Cronus (philosophical and literary traditions linked together).
 4. 402c4-408d5: Numerous other divine names analyzed.
- C. 408d6-410e5: Analysis of terms denoting natural bodies, elements, and cycles.
- D. 411a1-421c2: Analysis of so-called καλὰ ὀνόματα (notably, terms key to the areas of ethics, psychology, epistemology, and metaphysics).
- IV. 421c3-427d2: Primary names (phonetic constitution).**
- A. 421c4-426b9: Grounding the investigation.
1. 421c4-422c1: Introduction.
 2. 422c1-423d10: Primary names reveal natures differently; what form of imitation is not involved.
 3. 423e1-425b4: Naming and imitation.
 4. 425b5-426b9: Cannot carry out ideal procedure; must do what one can.
- B. 426c1-427d2: Analysis of individual letters.
- V. 427d3-438d1: Natural correctness thesis challenged.**
- A. 427d3-430a5: The question of agreement between Socrates and Cratylus.
1. 427d3-428c8: Cratylus professes agreement with the results of the foregoing discussion.
 2. 428d1-429a1: The inquiry’s steps retraced.
 3. 429a2-430a5: Emergence of a significant point of disagreement between Socrates and Cratylus.
- B. 430a6-434b8: Imitation and representation: A challenge to Cratylus’ extreme view.
1. 430a6-431c3: To establish the possibility of appropriate *and* inappropriate assignments, Socrates highlights the name-picture analogy; Cratylus, having insisted initially on the disanalogy, seems to admit the possibility of wrong assignments.
 2. 431c4-432a4: Analogy between primary names and pictures (better and worse artists/constructors); Cratylus insists on the disanalogy.
 3. 432a5-433c10: “The two Cratyluses” (images must differ from what they represent); Cratylus insists on the disanalogy.

4. 433d1-434b8: Conclusion.
- C. 434b9-435d1: Decisive challenge to resemblance theory.
 1. 434b9-435b6: σκληρότης: custom and convention govern the fitness of terms' constitution.
 2. 435b6-c2: Case of number: reinforces the conclusion that custom and convention govern correctness.
 3. 435c2-d1: Conclusion.
- D. 435d1-438d1: Names as sources of knowledge.
 1. 435d1-436a8: Cratylus: ὀνόματα are the sole sources of insight.
 2. 436a9-437d7: Contesting the view that one can rely on ὀνόματα in the way that Cratylus suggests.
 - a. 436a9-b11: The first legislator and the problem of deception.
 - b. 436b12-d7: Consistency is no proof of correctness.
 - c. 436d7-437c8: Names are not consistent.
 - d. 437d1-7: Versus majority rule in determining correctness.
 3. 437d8-438d1: First Names: Legislators and Knowledge.
 - a. 437d8-438b8: The circularity of Cratylus' approach.
 - b. 438c1-d1: Appeals to divine source lack explanatory power; the problem of self-contradiction.
- VI. 438d2-440e7: Clues to Plato's stance.
 - A. 438d2-439b9: One cannot read off natures from ὀνόματα.
 - B. 439b10-440d3: The correct ontology is required for naming and knowledge.
 1. 439b10-e6: Hints of Plato's approach to ontology and naming.
 2. 439e7-d3: Requirements on proper objects of knowledge; if there were only particulars, any acquisition of knowledge would be impossible.
 - C. 440d3-e7: End—exhortation to Cratylus not to give up the inquiry.

IS NAMING A τέχνη?

Central to my interpretation of the *Cratylus* is the matter of naming's τέχνη status; to provide a framework for what follows, I outline here what Plato's concerns and attitude are as evinced in the dialogue as a whole. The general philosophical problem involved is that of links between language and reality. Specifically, the issue is the type of relation existing between ὀνόματα and their referents and, closely related to this, the problem of what and

how much they permit one to discover about those referents. Are ὀνόματα merely conventional products with no function other than to facilitate communication, providing quite limited information about their denotations? Do they reveal natures directly? Or, do they point in the direction of natures without in fact disclosing them? At stake for human beings is the extent and kind of reliance they may permissibly have on words.¹⁶

In the *Cratylus* Plato uses the notion of τέχνη, narrowly construed, as a framework for the discussion of these issues; in particular, he seeks to discover whether naming, as practiced to date, succeeds or fails to meet the requirements he establishes for an activity of this status in the *Gorgias*.¹⁷ In treating naming along these lines, Plato indicates how it would have to transpire for its products to be nature-revealing, then measures actual practice against those standards. Having advanced naming's τέχνη status as an hypothesis early in the dialogue, he later reaches the conclusion that this hypothesis is false. Though commentators have noted Plato's use of the "craft analogy" in framing the discussion of naming, they have not recognized that his early remarks serve to "establish" a high rank for naming—i.e., that of τέχνη—which will be systematically undermined in what follows. The τέχνη issue, thus construed, governs a substantial portion of the dialogue, and—most importantly—*makes a pivotal contribution to its unity and coherence*.¹⁸ Given the

¹⁶ Given the focus of the present inquiry, it is worth distinguishing at the outset several different types of information which ὀνόματα may provide about their referents: 1. They may disclose their referents' natures; this is the sort of intelligence which Cratylus insists that they provide. 2. They may have some descriptive relation to communication in a particular context. For example, I may, while fixing a door, point to a group of screwdrivers and ask a friend to hand me the "short" one. In this case I provide data about the entity's (relative) length so that my friend may identify the particular screwdriver I require (by contrast with those others with which it is currently grouped), but this specification is context-dependent and not of anything essential. 3. Variations in the case of nouns, adjectives, and participles may indicate what role a particular referent has within the claim expressed by a given sentence. For instance, in Greek the genitive case indicates possession, and knowing certain facts of possession may indeed sometimes be useful; however, a given referent's role is sentence-relative, and is expressed by grammatical phenomena whose particular manifestations are merely context-dependent. 4. In Greek, noun suffixes may provide limited data about their referents; for instance, ὀδ (nominative -ὄς) and τῆς (nominative -της) signal that their referents are abstract substantives, as in ἰσότης and ποιότης, both of which Plato employs (see *Ph.* 74c1 and *Th.* 182a8, respectively) (on the formation of abstract substantives in Greek see Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 230-1). In this case, it is a wholly arbitrary fact that particular sound combinations signify abstract singular terms. Only the first of these four types of information involves specification of what is essential to the referent; the remaining three incorporate varying degrees of arbitrariness. (I consider later the direction in which Plato moves once he rejects that particular way of linking ὀνόματα with φύσεις.)

¹⁷ As with other terms, e.g., τέμνειν and μετέχειν, Plato employs τέχνη in a broad and a narrow sense. As regards the former, he uses the term along conventional lines, according to which it covers activities requiring skill in some general, unanalyzed sense. However, Plato also employs the term to mark classes of activities off from one another. In this context, having some unspecified notion of skill or expertise apply to it will not qualify a praxis for τέχνη status. Instead, in the *Gorgias* Plato advances a set of conditions which any activity aspiring to τέχνη status must meet; key here is a *revision* of conventional usage.

¹⁸ For failures to identify this unifying dimension of the inquiry see, e.g., Jowett (*The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. 1); Guthrie (*A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 5); Luce ("Plato on Truth and Falsity in Names" and

centrality of this dynamic, recognition of it goes a long way toward addressing scholars' concern, repeatedly voiced, with the *Cratylus*' apparent lack of cohesion. A further consideration, which goes beyond the descriptive plane, is whether naming, though not presently a τέχνη, could be established as such. If, in the end, naming can have nothing at all to do with natures, then it is mere empirical "science" along the lines depicted in the *Cratylus*, governed—like rhetoric—solely by convention and belief. In this chapter, I explore the question of naming's τέχνη status from Plato's point of view with regard both to current practice and to future possibility.¹⁹

As introduced in the *Gorgias*, the five τέχνη requirements are as follows:

1. δύνάμις: the activity in question must represent some capacity.
2. περὶ τί: the "subject matter" of a genuine τέχνη includes both the Form(s) in question and specification of that toward which activity is directed.²⁰
3. Understanding: practitioners must be in the proper cognitive state, i.e., operate with insight rather than mere belief; presupposed here is the existence of a small class of expert practitioners.

"The Theory of Ideas in the *Cratylus*"; Grote (*Plato*, vol. 2); Goldschmidt (*Essai sur le "Cratyle"*); Weingartner (*The Unity of the Platonic Dialogue* and "Making Sense of the *Cratylus*"); Kretzmann ("Plato on the Correctness of Names" and "Semantics, History of"); Taylor (*Plato: The Man and His Work*); Kahn ("Les mots et les formes" and "Language and Ontology in the *Cratylus*"); Friedländer (*Plato*, vol. 2); Anagnostopoulos ("The Significance of Plato's *Cratylus*" and "Plato's *Cratylus*: The Two Theories of the Correctness of Names"; Ketchum ("Names, Forms and Conventionalism: *Cratylus*, 383-395); and Ware ("The *Cratylus* and How Words Are Used"). Rosenstock maintains that one should link the *Cratylus* to the *Gorgias* with reference to the opposition between philosophy and rhetoric or sophistry, claiming that "the *Cratylus* puts into doubt the possibility of employing a rhetoric-free discourse" ("Fathers and Sons," 386); he finds an additional reason in the dialogues' shared treated of the νόμος/φύσις distinction (386) (I comment subsequently on the νόμος/φύσις issue as it pertains to the *Cratylus*). Though Rosenstock is correct to privilege ties between these two dialogues, in my view the key point of common ground involves the τέχνη issue specifically. Baxter speaks about this issue (*The "Cratylus,"* 45, 51), and highlights a prescriptive-descriptive contrast involving the early material and the etymologies that follow (e.g., 46, 48). In his view, Plato prescribes "what a philosophically ideal language would look like" (52), and in the section on πρῶτα ὀνόματα puts "the abstract argument of the tool analogy passage into a more concrete form, thereby developing the prescriptive theory" (77). Baxter concludes that the *Cratylus* provides a model of how namegiving ought to take place, and that Plato "believed in the desirability of a language that was as mimetic as possible" (186). Baxter does not pinpoint the specific form assumed by Plato's concern, which serves to link the *Cratylus* closely to the *Gorgias*; notably, rather than Plato's discussion of phonetic constitution applying a methodology previously set forth, that section, like the previous one centering on etymology, displays a constitution-based approach to correctness which Plato finds untenable. Pfeiffer raises the issue of ἐπιστήμη and τέχνη in his discussion of the *Cratylus*, yet does not identify the aforementioned dynamic at work therein (*History of Classical Scholarship*, 57-65).

¹⁹ I address the latter issue in appendix A.

²⁰ In the case at hand, ὀνόματα are supposed to reveal natures, and one constructs names with this function by appeal to the Form of Name and to the natures of names' referents. In the *Gorgias* itself, Plato does not explore the ontological status of the subject matter of genuine τέχναι. However, the middle dialogues make clear that Forms play this role.

4. Teachability/Giving a λόγος: one must be able to provide a rational account of those procedures which comprise the activity and their relevance to the end in question.

5. Goodness: the activity in question must be of genuine benefit to human beings, not simply cater to their whims and indiscriminate desires.

Naming itself breaks down, most fundamentally, into construction and use. As treated in the *Cratylus*, there are two basic theories of name-use. According to one of these theories, the proper use of ὀνόματα requires simply learning the relevant conventions.²¹ According to the other, one decomposes names to determine what the name describes, i.e., one engages in “name-decoding.” It is the second of these theories that connects name-use to the same τέχνη at issue in name-construction as depicted in the *Cratylus*; the tie between them consists in the fact that the criteria for names’ proper use must be part of the τέλος in the Form-oriented artisan’s mind. In the *Cratylus*, Plato devotes most of his attention to name-use in this second sense; hence, in considering whether naming qualifies as a τέχνη he has in view construction conjoined with use in the above-specified sense.

For naming to be a τέχνη, it would have to meet the aforementioned requirements. What is involved, specifically? As in the *Gorgias*, in the *Cratylus* too the δύναμις condition is given little weight, and will not be discussed here. Far more important is the περὶ τί condition, which is construed as follows in the *Cratylus* when naming’s τέχνη status is “established”: practitioners are said to act with the Form of Name in view, and focus on producing names which when used reveal natures.²² As concerns the understanding requirement, Plato posits a small group of expert practitioners, the νομοθέται, who operate with insight and not mere belief. Moreover, practitioners must be able to provide others with a rational account of the procedures they employ and their relevance to the end of producing ὀνόματα which disclose natures; Plato purports to offer an account meeting this general description. Finally, the presumption is that practitioners’

²¹ There are of course two sets of conventions involved: one specifying vocabulary and the other denotation.

²² Though certain commentators (e.g., Kahn, Derbolav, and Gaiser) have viewed Plato as positing multiple Forms of Shuttle and hence of Name, there is no convincing textual evidence that he has more than one Form in view in these cases. (Though Gaiser concurs with Derbolav on the point about multiple Forms of Name, he rightly points out *contra* Derbolav (*Platons Sprachphilosophie*, 95, 98-9) that “dieser sprachtheoretische Ansatz...die Ideenlehre voraus[setzt]” rather than vice versa (*Name und Sache in Platons “Kratylos,”* 18).) In my view, on balance the text best supports the claim that there is a single Form of Shuttle which is *implemented* in different ways depending on the type of fabric to be produced; this account of a single Form with diverse implementations accords with what Plato says in both the *Phaedo* and *Republic*, and does not require the positing of multiple Forms to correlate with differences in type.

activity benefits human beings by providing them with means of gaining insight into reality, i.e., natures.

As noted, in the *Cratylus* Plato rejects the claim of naming to be a τέχνη in the narrow sense of that term: no practice of naming engaged in to date has to do with natures, but can be explained solely by reference to convention and belief, i.e., qualifies as mere empirical science. This having been said, it is important to determine what grounds Plato's assessment.²³

THE περὶ τί CONDITION

Plato concludes that all name-construction to date—whether of proper names or general terms—has focused, ultimately, on the realm of appearances, with no appeal at all to the Form of Name or to natures, properly construed.²⁴ He makes clear that in fact particular needs (societal and individual), beliefs, fears, desires, and similar *impetus* 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 τέχνη status in his *Cratylus* treatment of shuttle-construction:

ΣΩ. ἴθι δὴ, ἐπίσκεψαι ποῖ βλέπων ὁ νομοθέτης τὰ ὀνόματα τίθεται· ἐκ τῶν ἔμπροσθεν δὲ ἀνάσκειν. ποῖ βλέπων ὁ τέκτων τὴν κερκίδα ποιεῖ; ἂρ' οὐ πρὸς τοιοῦτόν τι ὃ ἐπεφύκει κερκίζειν;

ΕΡΜ. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Τί δέ; ἂν καταγῇ αὐτῷ ἡ κερκὶς ποιῶντι, πότερον πάλιν ποιήσει ἄλλην πρὸς τὴν κατεαγυῖαν βλέπων, ἢ πρὸς ἐκεῖνο τὸ εἶδος πρὸς ὅπερ καὶ ἦν κατέαξεν ἐποίει;

ΕΡΜ. Πρὸς ἐκεῖνο, ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ. (389a5-b4)²⁵

²³ As mentioned, I later consider whether naming could *become* a τέχνη (and if so what sort of τέχνη it would most closely approximate).

²⁴ These natures are, of course, Platonic Forms (e.g., the Form of Beauty, the Form of Good). In the framework of this empirical discipline, acquiring linguistic competence involves learning what the current Greek vocabulary happens to be. Moreover, denotations are assumed to be entities in the spatial-temporal realm or closely aligned thereto; insofar as one seeks reference for ὀνόματα, one consults particulars. For Plato, the learning of vocabulary and of what its constituent terms denote are matters of δόξα, while discovery of what ὀνόματα should denote is a matter of ἐπιστήμη.

²⁵ Soc. Come then, consider what the legislator has in view in constructing words. Let's reflect on this based on what precedes. What does the carpenter who is making a shuttle look toward? Does he not look toward that which is a shuttle in its very nature?

Herm. He certainly does.

Soc. And what happens if the shuttle breaks? Does the carpenter make another with the broken specimen in view, or does he not instead look toward that Form with a view toward which he also constructed the broken one?

The point is that construction with anything other than the Form in mind disqualifies categorically any pretension of the activity in question to the rank of τέχνη narrowly construed, leaving it capable of τέχνη status only in a generic and undistinguished sense.

One may also assess the situation from the vantage point of products' evaluation and use. Indeed, since the constructor's supposed task is to produce names with a view toward their proper use, one *must* evaluate those products to see how well they achieve the avowed end of disclosing natures. If one cannot use them for this purpose, then one may infer that name-givers were not proceeding correctly. In the etymological section, it becomes evident that whether one treats proper names or general terms any given analysis is merely aspectual—revealing only a particular feature of the entity in question—and reflects the analyst's own biases.²⁶ Not only are names subject to changing assessments based on a given evaluator's perspective, the point in time a judgment is made, etc., but also names *themselves* are subject to change; at issue here is an indeterminacy that pervades names and indeed all particulars (see the end of the *Cratylus*, as well as the *Phaedo*, *Symposium* and *Republic*). This negative conclusion about names' disclosive power is reached apart from and prior to *philosophical* scrutiny of the notion of φύσις itself. Plato's predecessors and opponents made natures particular in a way he finds untenable; in his view, one can only fully assess the claim that names reveal natures if one properly *identifies* those natures. Having rejected etymology as a way of treating appropriateness with his opponents' false construal in mind, the sole remaining question is whether etymology might be reconstituted from a Form-based point of view; that is, could one, operating with the right ontology, eradicate indeterminacy from language (in particular names and their components) in such a way that the analysis of ὀνόματα reliably, indeed invariably yields insight?²⁷

Herm. Toward the latter, it seems to me. (Unless otherwise noted, translations of Plato are my own.)

²⁶ See the analyses of Ἀτρεΰς; Κρόνος; ἥρως; ψυχή; σῶμα (where, in addition to the provision of more than one analysis, explicit mention is made of the fact that various interpretations are possible); Ἑστία; Ποσειδῶν; Αἰδης; Ἥρα; Ἀπόλλων; Λητώ; Ἄρτεμις; Ἀθηνᾶ; Ἄρης; ἥλιος; ἀήρ; ἐπιστήμη; ἡμέρα; δέον; and δόξα. On the ultimate triviality of etymologies (even those assumed to be correct) and their tendency to obscure rather than to illuminate natures, see Plato's treatment of δίκαιον (412c-413d), a value term whose referent is elsewhere granted Form status.

²⁷ I return to this issue subsequently.

THE REQUIREMENT OF UNDERSTANDING (AND EXPERT PRACTITIONERS)

Πράξεις, of which naming is one, have fixed natures. Specifically, they must be performed based on *their own* natures (φύσεις), not on *our* own beliefs (δόξαι). Regarding naming in particular, Socrates says that it must transpire in the naturally-appropriate way if agreement is to ensue (387d4-7). The aforementioned distinction, in particular the rejection of δόξα as a ground of the activity, is to be expected *on the assumption* that naming actually constitutes a τέχνη. This is clear from the *Gorgias*, where having knowledge rather than mere belief is a condition imposed on practitioners of genuine τέχνη (see 454c-e).²⁸ In that dialogue, it is a clear shortcoming of rhetoric that the persuasion at issue stems from and produces mere belief on a given topic.²⁹

Section I of the *Cratylus* ends with a conditional statement: *If* naming is a τέχνη, the assertion of natural correctness is tenable. In what follows, it becomes evident that naming does not in fact have the status tentatively assigned to it at this early juncture.³⁰ Notable for present purposes is the fact that it has no practitioners of a fittingly high caliber; specifically, such agents as are held responsible for this activity turn out to operate based on belief (δόξα) rather than insight (ἐπιστήμη). With regard to the issue of cognitive state, Plato makes clear the predominance of belief in a gradual and cumulative manner. First, conversation turns to Homer's treatment of names and their appropriateness: having given numerous examples of Homer's approach, Plato concludes that the investigation has simply disclosed the poet's belief (δόξα) on the matter of fitness (393a-b). This is a notable first step away from the claim that insight is what governs the praxis of naming, which would have to be the case for it to qualify as a genuine τέχνη.

This initial move is followed by others which grant belief an increasingly general reign over the enterprise. In the first of these subsequent remarks, δόξα is said to govern the provision of divine ὀνόματα (400d-401a).³¹ While Plato had previously associated the

²⁸ There Plato draws a sharp contrast between ἐπιστήμη and πίστις. As E. R. Dodds notes (*Gorgias*, 206), the knowledge-belief distinction is first made formally by Plato in this *Gorgias* interchange between Socrates and Gorgias. Subsequently, δόξα becomes the standard term for opinion; in the *Republic* discussion of the Divided Line, πίστις, along with εἰκασία, becomes a subdivision of δόξα.

²⁹ Interestingly, in the *Gorgias* the rhetorician is initially assumed to have insight (φρόνησις) into the subject matter of his supposed τέχνη (449e5-6). While in his fifth account of rhetoric Gorgias gives the just and unjust as rhetoric's subject matter (454b5-7), subsequently that activity is shown to have neither this nor any other genuine subject matter, and its practitioners to have only πίστις.

³⁰ Of course, in any case the implication is false. Even if naming were to qualify as a τέχνη, natural-correctness in the sense at issue in the *Cratylus* is quite indefensible; what matters for Plato is proper denotation.

³¹ Kahn identifies this point as "the decisive shift" ("Language and Ontology in the *Cratylus*," 157) without recognizing that although this extension is certainly important, in the dialogue's broader context it

element of arbitrariness with heroic and human names, it turns out that it cannot be removed even with regard to divine ὀνόματα: as in the case of other proper names, human beliefs are responsible for those ὀνόματα which mortals use. Plato's introduction to his discussion of divine names establishes as the very principle or ground of the investigation that one can only get at human δόξα. In the dialogue's broader context, this remark is significant as a generalization of Plato's earlier comment about Homer; key here is that belief is said to govern not simply one individual's approach to naming, but the making of an entire *class* of assignments. Later in the etymological section, Plato extends the scope of δόξα's reign still further, to the praxis of naming as a whole (411b-c). Notably, he does so in introducing his discussion of τὰ καλὰ ὀνόματα, which includes numerous terms of philosophical import. These terms and their referents cannot be given the status and treatment they deserve within the framework of etymological analysis; a satisfactory investigation would transcend the limits imposed by a reliance on and restriction to δόξα.

This progression, most fundamentally its culmination in a general statement about the governance of belief, is central to Plato's debunking of any pretensions to τέχνη status that the praxis of naming might have. Also important in this connection, and closely related to his handling of belief, is Plato's treatment of the term ἐπιστήμη. Specifically, it is noteworthy that in the *Cratylus* Plato never employs this noun to discuss the cognitive state of those involved in the praxis of naming. Instead, he reserves for ἐπιστήμη the important role of illustrating that indeterminacy which governs the process of etymological analysis: Plato's provision of two quite different analyses of this term—one privileging the doctrine of flux, the other entities' fixity—highlights the pertinent element of uncertainty associated with the enterprise. Taken in sum, Plato's remarks are designed to show that δόξα governs every assignment of terms to date.³²

TEACHABILITY/GIVING A λόγος

Required here is a rational account of the genesis of names. What procedures are followed, and what is their contribution to the end of constructing naturally-correct, i.e., nature-

constitutes simply the second stage in a three-stage progression; Gaiser omits mention of stage one (*Name und Sache in Platons "Kratylos,"* 65).

³² Correspondingly, the supposed small group of expert practitioners dissolves into a vague, diverse collection of individuals and forces (among them followers of Orpheus and διάνοια).

revealing ὀνόματα? Instead of a λόγος covering any procedures followed to date, the origin of names currently in use is attributed to chance; divinities; foreign origin; and change over time producing deviations from an unrecoverable original. In such cases, mere identifications of *source*—however vague—substitute for genuine accounts of procedure. In fact, Plato labels the latter three “reasons” as mere excuses (ἐκδύσεις) for an inability to provide the requisite account (λόγον διδόναι) (426a1-3).³³

If one replaces a description of actual procedures followed by expert practitioners with the mere identification of supposed sources of naturally-correct names, an otherwise clear distinction between practitioners and process, as well as that between process and end, collapses. As concerns the latter distinction, in the case of genuine τέχναι one must identify causal links between procedures and the end in question. For example, in the case of medicine it is not sufficient to say merely that doctors act in various ways, e.g., prescribe dietary regimens; one must also specify causal links between their procedures and the achievement of medicine’s goal, namely, the restoration and preservation of that harmony between bodily elements wherein health was thought to consist. The treatment of naming offered in the *Cratylus* makes it impossible to provide an analogous specification in the case of naming.

Naming supposedly involves putting together linguistic constituents such that their products reveal referents’ natures. A genuine account of naming must include remarks on how language and reality are to be broken down and combined such that ὀνόματα and φύσεις mesh. In fact, early in the dialogue Plato makes a preliminary “attempt” to ground such an account in connection with remarks about Form-based construction, but what later emerged was precisely the impossibility of correlating this description with naming as practiced to date.³⁴ The key point is that one must understand reality properly *before* one can even raise the λόγον διδόναι issue in a meaningful way; that is, one cannot describe a procedure which involves correlating names with natures unless one has a prior grasp of the latter. This is a preliminary requirement unmet by any of Plato’s predecessors and opponents.

³³ For divine origin see also 391d-392b; 416c (the διάνοια of gods or men, or both); and 438c. Regarding names’ foreign source see in addition 409c-410b and 416a; moreover, worth noting is 421c-d where mention is made of both foreign origin and deviation from an unrecoverable native original. On chance (τύχη) as source see 394e9 and 395e4.

³⁴ For the close link between linguistic units and elements of reality see also 424-5.

GOODNESS

If practitioners constructed names which disclose natures, naming would meet the goodness requirement since human beings could employ them to gain insight into reality. In fact, names mislead by only purporting to reveal φύσεις. Moreover, for Plato human beings are seriously deceived if, in hearing the term καλόν, they are unable to distinguish between qualified and unqualified applications of the term (e.g., mistaking beautiful particulars for beauty itself), an incapacity exhibited strikingly by “the lovers of sights and sounds” (*Rep.* 5); language as presently structured fosters and reinforces this inability.³⁵ For these two reasons, naming fails to meet the goodness condition.

Due to its failure to meet any of the foregoing requirements, Plato concludes that naming as practiced to date does not qualify as a τέχνη in the narrow sense of that term. It thus joins rhetoric as a τέχνη only in a broad, non-philosophical sense, that is, as mere empirical “science” hence no science at all.³⁶ Having provided this overview, in what follows I return to the outline framework which will permit discussion of noteworthy passages and ideas on this and other topics.

THE *CRATYLUS*: A SELECTIVE COMMENTARY

I. 383a1-390e4: The natural-correctness thesis is tentatively adopted, and the τέχνη status of τὸ ὀνομάζειν is assumed.

A. 383a1-386e5: Rejection of an alternative approach grounded on extreme relativism.

1. 383a1-384a7: Cratylus and natural correctness; Socrates’ assistance requested.

2. 384a8-c8: Prodicus and appropriateness; Socrates on Hermogenes’ name.

3. 384c9-385b1: Hermogenes’ alternative(s) to natural correctness.

a. 384c9-e2: Hermogenes’ statement of his approach; a conflation of two options.

b. 385a1-b1: Socrates’ specification of Hermogenes’ stance.

4. 385b2-396d7: Socrates’ detachment of Hermogenes from the extreme view.

a. 385b2-e3: Linguistic route.

b. 385e4-386d7: Ontological consequences.

³⁵ On this confusion with regard to καλόν cf. Hippias’ response to Socrates’ query (τί ἐστὶ τοῦτο τὸ καλόν;) and the ensuing discussion between them in the *Hippias Major* (387dff.).

³⁶ As the foregoing discussion makes clear, the centerpiece of Plato’s rejection is practitioners’ failure to have the right view of natures, and in fact all of Plato’s innovative suggestions about naming in the *Phaedo*, *Sophist*, and *Politicus* are based on and tied explicitly to what he considers to be the proper understanding of φύσεις.

5. 386d8-e5: Rejection of extreme view; things have fixed natures.
- B. 386e6-390e4: The need for a view of appropriateness reflecting the fact that entities have fixed natures.
 1. 386e6-387d9: Πράξεις, as a class of entities, have fixed natures.
 2. 387d10-390d6: Πράξεις and tools (with a special focus on naming).
 - a. 387d10-388a9: Identity of tools.
 - b. 388a10-c8: Tool use.
 - i. 388a10-c2: What they permit one to accomplish.
 - ii. 388c3-8: Using tools well.
 - c. 388c9-390a8: Tool construction.
 - i. 388c9-389a4: Identity of constructors.
 - ii. 389a5-390a8: Procedure.
 - d. 390b1-d6: Evaluation of constructed products.
 3. 390d7-e4: Summing up.

What is accomplished: In this introductory section of the dialogue, Plato rejects an approach to correctness grounded on Protagorean relativism, and provisionally embraces a “natural-correctness” thesis. At this early juncture, he purports to maintain that naming is a τέχνη, based on criteria used in the *Gorgias* to draw and buttress the τέχνη-ἐμπειρία distinction. The section concludes with Plato’s insistence that *if* his description is accurate, the natural-correctness thesis will stand. Plato does not specify here what “natural correctness” consists in though he offers certain hints; this introductory section is closely related to the following one, in which Plato presents an etymology-based approach to the matter of ὀρθότης.

How: In what follows, I focus on relevant material within this introductory section.

- I. 383a1-390e4: Introduction. The natural-correctness thesis is tentatively adopted, and the τέχνη status of τὸ ὀνομάζειν is assumed.
 - A. 383a1-386e5. An alternative approach, based on or presupposing extreme relativism, is rejected.
 1. 383a1-384a7: Hermogenes asks Socrates for help in understanding Cratylus’ position, or, preferably, for an exposition of his own view.³⁷ Cratylus is said to

³⁷ Hermogenes is among those present with Socrates on his final day of life (*Phaedo* 59b7). According to Xenophon, he was a member of Socrates’ inner circle (*Mem.* 1.2.48).

espouse a natural-correctness theory.³⁸ The issue of appropriateness is raised here for the first time, when Cratylus finds his own name and that of Socrates to be fittingly assigned, yet insists that Hermogenes' name is wholly *inappropriate*: “Οὐκουν σοί γε,” ἡ δ' ὅς, “ὄνομα Ἑρμογένης, οὐδὲ ἂν πάντες καλῶσιν ἄνθρωποι” (383b6-7). Cratylus' unwillingness to give the ground of this judgment about Hermogenes' name prompts the latter's turn to Socrates.

- The combination of this remark with Socrates' more specific comment in 384c indicates right from the start that descriptive content is important.

2. 384a8-c8: Socrates mentions that he has not heard Prodicus' fifty-drachma *ἐπίδειξις* on ὀρθότης τῶν ὀνομάτων (“correctness of words or names”), but only his one-drachma treatment: εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐγὼ ἤδη ἡκηκόη παρὰ Προδίκου τὴν πεντηκοντάδραχμον ἐπίδειξιν, ἣν ἀκούσαντι ὑπάρχει περὶ τοῦτο πεπαιδεῦσθαι, ὥς φησιν ἐκεῖνος, οὐδὲν ἂν ἐκώλυν σε αὐτίκα μάλα εἰδέναι τὴν ἀλήθειαν περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος· νῦν δὲ οὐκ ἀκήκοα, ἀλλὰ τὴν δραχμιαίαν. οὐκουν οἶδα πῇ ποτε τὸ ἀληθὲς ἔχει περὶ τῶν τοιούτων (384b2-c2).³⁹

- Prodicus and Protagoras, especially the former, were associated with the matter of ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων, and Plato refers to both when setting the stage for his own treatment of ὀρθότης; hence, many have assumed that Plato's reflections have their ground in such speculations. In contrast, I maintain that the relevance of Prodicus and Protagoras—indeed sophists in general—is narrowly circumscribed by Plato's own remarks, and that proper specification of their pertinence necessitates careful distinction between different senses of “appropriateness” or “correctness.”⁴⁰

³⁸ We know virtually nothing about the historical Cratylus. For references to Cratylus by Aristotle see *Met.* 987a29-b1, 1010a7-15, and *Rhet.* 1417b1-3.

³⁹ “If I had attended Prodicus' fifty-drachma *epideixis*, which is—so Prodicus maintains—essential to one's education on this topic, nothing would prevent you from straightaway gaining thorough knowledge of the truth on the subject of words' correctness. As things stand, however, I have not attended that course, but only the one-drachma version. Hence I most assuredly do not know the truth on this topic.” Aristotle too refers to the fifty-drachma version (*Rhet.* 1415b15-17). Doubts have been raised as to whether a single lecture or multiple lectures were at issue (see Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 3, 42).

⁴⁰ On “correctness” as a concern of both Prodicus and Protagoras see Kerferd (*The Sophistic Movement*, 68); as he notes, ὀρθότης τῶν ὀνομάτων was above all associated with Prodicus (73). In his discussion of language (68-77), Kerferd situates the *Cratylus* firmly in the context of sophistic discussions. In my view, the mere fact that Plato himself treats the issue of appropriateness in this dialogue is in itself an insufficient reason for concluding—as Kerferd does without hesitation—that his remarks must be based on *sophistic* discussions of the “same” topic (75, 77). Notably, Kerferd's chapter on language does not take account of Plato's focus on words' semantic constitution although this is quite different from the orientation which Kerferd attributes to Protagoras and Prodicus in their own approaches to correctness. Weingartner claims

that Plato challenges the views of such “professional predecessors and contemporaries” as Protagoras (*The Unity of the Platonic Dialogue*, 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, and “Making Sense of the *Cratylus*,” 24). Both commentators fail to distinguish clearly between different senses of “correctness,” and hence are overly willing to base Plato’s approach in the dialogue on sophistic treatments simply by virtue of the fact that all are supposed to involve “the” issue of appropriateness; yet, the heading “correctness of words” encompasses a range of different pursuits, and once one distinguishes between various senses of ὀρθότης an ostensibly tight link between the *Cratylus* and the sophists can be called into question. (In this connection see also Lecky (*Plato als Sprachphilosoph*), who simply asserts that the etymology section is quite obviously a parody of contemporary sophistic (32) without offering any support for this contention; in addition, he makes numerous unsupported and wholly generic claims that Plato’s targets are contemporary pseudo-inquirers (13, 14, 27, 52, 67, and 81). Along similar lines, Julius Stenzel views *Cratylus* as “den der Sophistik in jedem Belange Nahestehenden,” and claims in addition that Plato has inserted features of contemporary philosophers into his depiction of this figure (*Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 11, 1662); for assumed ties to the sophists cf. James H. Ware, “The *Cratylus* and How Words Are Used,” 99.)

Guthrie, in turn, 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” (*History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 5, 4), and calls the issue of words’ correctness “a topical question,” chosen here by Plato because sophists had been debating it of late, and because it impacted the theory of Forms (vol. 5, 16). He links Hermogenes’ thesis with Protagoras, and *Cratylus*’ position with Antisthenes (vol. 3, 208) (for Antisthenes as the target of the etymologies in 411a-421c, which involve terms denoting philosophical concepts, see Adalbert Steiner, “Die Etymologien in Platons *Kratylos*,” 127-9). Though Guthrie admits that “it is hard to be sure what Antisthenes’ teaching was” (209), he asserts that it “resembles” *Cratylus*’ natural-correctness thesis (215). Guthrie concludes that both Antisthenes and the *Cratylus* of Plato’s dialogue held the view that ὀνόματα have a “natural affinity” with their objects (219); however, in his speculations about Antisthenes he fails to uncover a substantive connection between any notion of “natural affinity” that might be supposed for Antisthenes and the specific form that concern takes in the context of *Cratylus*’ approach. Cf. H. Steinthal’s rejection of the speculative view that Antisthenes focused on etymologies, *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern*, vol. 1, 123. For doubts and denials of the thesis, which gained prominence with Schleiermacher, that the *Cratylus* targets Antisthenes, see also Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (*Platon: Sein Leben und Seine Werke*, 221-31, esp. 223 and 230); Taylor (*Plato*, 86, 89); Méridier (44-5); Ronald B. Levinson (“Language and the *Cratylus*,” 32); and Derbolav (30-1).

In his remarks on the dialogue, Steinthal notes that Plato, in treating the issue of ὀρθότης τῶν ὀνομάτων, was following in the footsteps of previous philosophy and sophistic (85); in addition, unlike several other commentators Steinthal observes that Plato pursued the matter differently from others (for recognition that there is no evidence to support the claim that Prodicus or Protagoras engaged in etymology see Méridier, 42-4). However, not finding a specific precedent for the natural-correctness thesis, Steinthal turns to the historical *Cratylus* himself, maintaining that one can use the dialogue as a source of information on the man behind the figure (82); he states that it is “durchaus wahrscheinlich” that *Cratylus* had turned Plato’s attention toward etymology before the latter studied with Socrates (83; cf. Wilamowitz, 223, and Levinson, who makes the somewhat weaker claim that “the character is based on the man,” 33). Steinthal concludes as follows: “Mag nun also, denke ich, *Kratylos* oder sonst wer die Wortdeutung als Maxime der Forschung ausgesprochen und Plato sie von ihm gehört, oder mag Plato selbst sie erfunden haben: in jedem Falle hatte Plato Veranlassung genug, auch diese Methode einmal ‘durchzuirren’” (85). (In addition, he comments that the *Cratylus*’ depiction of the “nature-based” (φύσει) view, and demonstration of how names can instruct, “ist durchaus Platons Werk” (85).) The former option—that involving the historical *Cratylus*—is entirely speculative, and embraced as a last resort, while the latter can be challenged based on existing source material, namely the literary tradition of the eighth through fifth centuries; this is not to say that Plato is not at all innovative, but rather that he both utilizes and challenges a long-standing literary tradition whose concern with substantive links between ὀνόματα and their referents antedates that of philosophers and sophists. (On the difficulties and implausibility of treating the historical *Cratylus* as the source of that stance to which his name is linked in Plato’s dialogue, see Derbolav (*Platons*

Contra Benjamin Jowett, whose translation gives poverty as the reason for Socrates' failure to attend Prodicus' thoroughgoing treatment of the topic—and hence might be taken to imply that the content of this ἐπίδειξις would be key to the present inquiry—no ground is actually provided.⁴¹ While his concern with words certainly fell under the rubric, or within the scope of “correctness,” Prodicus' own construal of ὀρθότης is strikingly different from that at issue in the *Cratylus*, and this fact can be used to shed light on Socrates' claim not to have heard Prodicus' detailed treatment of the subject.⁴²

Prodicus treated ὀρθότης in a very special way. Specifically, surviving evidence indicates that Prodicus was keenly interested in making fine distinctions between terms with different although closely related senses, and occasionally with distinguishing between different senses of a single term: for examples see

Sprachphilosophie, 29-31) and Méridier (40).) Adopting an inclusive—and no better substantiated—approach, Jowett claims that “had the treatise of Antisthenes upon words, or the speculations of Cratylus, or some other Heraclitean 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 fifth-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” (253; for unsupported and wholly generic references to current practitioners and theories cf. 259-61).

In addition, the mere invocation of a clash between “nature” and “convention” certainly does not require that the *content* of the opposed views be itself sophistic in inspiration. Guthrie describes νόμος and φύσις as “catchwords” of Greek reflection in the fifth and fourth centuries (vol. 3, 55), and several commentators incline toward the view that this opposition grounds the *Cratylus*. See for instance Steinthal (44, 75, 77, 85, and more generally 41-113); see also Guthrie (vol. 3, 208); Mackenzie (127); and Pfeiffer (63). While Plato uses the term φύσις with reference to the natural-correctness thesis, he uses νόμος only once with regard to its rival, and even then not alone; instead, he employs other terms (ἦθος, συνθήκη, ὁμολογία) (cf. Robinson, “The Theory of Names in Plato's *Cratylus*” 112). I second Robinson's conclusion that one is not confronted here with simply another instance of the familiar νόμος-φύσις controversy, and that the divergence involved is more than merely terminological (111-16). C. Schaarschmidt fails to recognize this (“Über die Unechtheit des Dialogs *Kratylos*”), and hence reaches the implausible conclusion that the *Cratylus*' author makes the grave *error* of attempting to extend the νόμος/φύσις opposition—so central to fifth-century discussions of morality—to the treatment of linguistic issues; moreover, Schaarschmidt uses this alleged misstep as one reason for judging the dialogue inauthentic (for discussion of his claims see the following chapter).

⁴¹ As cited above, the Greek runs simply: εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐγὼ ἤδη ἡκηκόη παρὰ Προδίκου τὴν πεντηκοντάδραχμον ἐπίδειξιν... (384b2-4). In contrast to Jowett (“If I had not been poor, I might have heard the fifty-drachma course of the great Prodicus...”), Fowler's translation, rightly, does not mention poverty: “Now if I had attended Prodicus's fifty-drachma course of lectures...”; the same goes for Méridier, who translates “Si, pour ma part, j'avais déjà entendu de la bouche de Prodicos la leçon de cinquante drachmes...” (cf. Apelt, 38). Goldschmidt's interpretation of these lines assumes a lack of means as the ground of Socrates' failure to attend the more advanced ἐπίδειξις (*Essai sur le “Cratyle,”* 38, 43); Taylor rightly points out that Socrates' poverty is not the reason given for this lack of attendance, but offers no suggestion as to what the *actual* ground might be (*Plato*, 77).

⁴² On the topic of the divergent approaches of Prodicus and Socrates, Pfeiffer notes that “for Prodicus the Sophist ἡ τῶν ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης had meant the proper distinction of kindred terms and their correct use in oratory; Socrates gave the same expression a totally different and purely philosophical meaning” (*History of Classical Scholarship*, 62).

Protagoras 337a-c, 340a-b, 341a-b; *Meno* 75e; *Euthydemus* 277e-278a; *Laches* 197b-d; *Charmides* 163b-d; and Aristotle, *Topics* 112b.⁴³ In his view, the comprehension reflected in ordinary usage of a range of terms was not sufficiently subtle; however a superior understanding would and should be reflected in modifications or *corrections* of such usage. In this connection, Prodicus is said to have distinguished, for instance, between the terms “impartial” and “undecided”; “debate” and “dispute”; “esteem” and “praise”; “satisfaction” and “pleasure”; and “will” and “desire” (*Protagoras* 337a-c, 340a-b). The notion of the correction of ordinary usage comes out strongly in remarks attributed to him on proper employment of the term “terrible” (δεινόν) in 341a-b.⁴⁴ Crucial for present purposes is the fact that Prodicus raised questions of meaning without reference to words’ *constitution*.

Interpretations that see evidence of close ties between Plato and Prodicus underscore the latter’s mention here and the sophist’s known interest in ὀρθότης. I maintain that consideration of these two factors supports a different interpretation. In my view, Plato acknowledges merely a limited, quite general point of common ground with Prodicus, while emphasizing significant divergence on the level of specifics. The limited common ground between the two consists in the fact that both treat the general question of ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων, hence Socrates’ having heard the *one*-drachma lecture. However, what Plato is getting at in 384b-c is that a consideration of Prodicus’ own *particular* orientation to the issue is not pertinent to the current enterprise; in my view, this is what Socrates’ failure to hear the specialized fifty-drachma ἐπίδειξις represents. This early mention of Prodicus—far from representing Plato’s wish to forge strong ties between himself and this

⁴³ In the aforementioned *Euthydemus* passage one finds the comment that πρῶτον...ὥς φησι Πρόδικος, περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος μαθεῖν δεῖ (277e3-4). What is noteworthy is that the *content* given by this sophist to the notion of ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων is made clear in the remarks immediately following, which treat different senses of τὸ μανθάνειν. Having referred to this passage, Goldschmidt simply asserts that “de cette même rectitude, il est question dans le *Cratyle*, le dialogue sur l’étymologie (384b). Il faut donc croire que Prodicos se servait, à l’occasion, de l’étymologie, pour établir des distinctions verbales” (*Essai sur le “Cratyle,”* 8; italics mine). Goldschmidt fails to note that the general phrase ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων may be applied, as here, to different forms of inquiry on the level of specifics.

⁴⁴ At issue is the exegesis of some lines in Simonides, in particular, what sense should be given to the word χαλεπόν. Socrates focuses on the notion of different senses of the term, observing that the situation with χαλεπόν may be like that with regard to δεινόν: Πρόδικός με οὕτοσι νουθετεῖ ἐκάστοτε, ὅταν ἐπαινῶν ἐγὼ ἢ σὲ ἢ ἄλλον τινὰ λέγω ὅτι Πρωταγόρας σοφὸς καὶ δεινὸς ἐστὶν ἀνὴρ, ἐρωτᾷ εἰ οὐκ αἰσχύνομαι τάγαθὰ δεινὰ καλῶν. τὸ γὰρ δεινόν, φησὶν, κακόν ἐστιν· οὐδεὶς γοῦν λέγει ἐκάστοτε “δεινοῦ πλούτου” οὐδὲ “δεινῆς εἰρήνης” οὐδὲ “δεινῆς ὑγείας,” ἀλλὰ “δεινῆς νόσου” καὶ “δεινοῦ πολέμου” καὶ “δεινῆς πενίας,” ὡς τοῦ δεινοῦ κακοῦ ὄντος (341a7-b5). In what follows, Prodicus’ treatment of χαλεπόν does indeed focus on different senses of the term.

prominent sophist—can thus be interpreted in terms of Plato’s concern to mark his own approach off from that of Prodicus at the start, thereby restraining an otherwise natural tendency of the audience to link the two investigations far more closely than Plato desires.⁴⁵

Not coincidentally, right away Socrates indicates the direction his own approach will take by returning to the matter of Hermogenes’ name, and speculating that Cratylus had its semantic constitution in view in speaking of it as undeserved: ὅτι δὲ οὐ φησί σοι Ἑρμογένη ὄνομα εἶναι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, ὥσπερ ὑποπεύω αὐτὸν σκάπτειν· οἶεται γὰρ ἴσως σε χρημάτων ἐφιέμενον κτήσεως ἀποτυγχάνειν ἐκάστοτε (384c3-6).⁴⁶

3. 384c9-385b1: Hermogenes’ alternative(s) to natural correctness.

a. 384c9-e2: Hermogenes states his own alternative to Cratylus’ approach; this “approach” appears to confuse a genuine convention-based view with one according to which any ὄνομα that any individual gives to any entity is by virtue of that fact correct (ὀρθόν) (d6).

b. 385a1-b1: Socrates specifies the position which Hermogenes has put forward: Hermogenes does indeed think it makes no difference as regards correctness whether the namer is a private individual or a πόλις (a1-b1).

• Plato has Hermogenes conflate two alternatives to natural correctness. On the one hand, there is a view of words presupposing extreme relativism, which Plato will reject unequivocally. On the other hand, there is a genuine custom- or convention-based position according to which one determines appropriateness by reference to the practices of particular linguistic communities, e.g., πόλεις. Much later in the dialogue, Plato espouses the second of these two options, albeit to a limited extent.⁴⁷ Hermogenes’

⁴⁵ Marrou wrongly uses *Cratylus* 384b to ground the claim that Prodicus pursued etymology in particular (*Histoire de l’éducation dans l’Antiquité*, 97); as the foregoing remarks make clear, though Plato here and elsewhere ties Prodicus to ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων in general, in no case does he link the sophist to the study of etymology in particular.

⁴⁶ Leky emphasizes what he takes to be an element of ridicule in this comment, directed toward Cratylus’ natural-correctness stance (*Plato als Sprachphilosoph*, 18, 26); while one cannot absolutely rule this out, in any case the key point for Plato is to highlight from the start the particular form to be assumed by *his* inquiry into ὀρθότης.

⁴⁷ See my subsequent discussion of 434bff. The distinction at issue is thus between a relativistic view, which does not assume agreement, and a convention-based one. Given this fact, it is inappropriate to represent these stances as two versions of a convention-based view (*contra* Ketchum, “Names, Forms and Conventionalism: *Cratylus*, 383-395,” 136, and Baxter, *The “Cratylus,”* 4). I accord with Weingartner’s observation that it is quite misleading to call the former position “conventionalism” (*The Unity of the Platonic Dialogue*, 17, cf. “Making Sense of the *Cratylus*,” 7); for this stance see also Ludwig C. H. Chen,

confusion provides Plato with a way of temporarily suppressing a genuine convention-based view as an autonomous ground of correctness once the extreme stance is rejected; he holds that option in reserve till the etymological *tour de force* has spent itself, leaving the “natural-correctness” thesis in serious trouble.

4. 385b2-386d7: Socrates raises linguistic and ontological issues in his attempts to dissuade Hermogenes from holding the extreme view, and the latter approach succeeds.

a. 385b2-e3: Linguistic route—’Ονόματα, as parts of true and false λόγοι, can themselves be true or false. This line of reasoning fails to dissuade Hermogenes from espousing his extreme thesis; in 385d2-e3 he re-affirms his commitment to this position.

b. 385e4-386d7: Ontological consequences—Immediately following the failure of this linguistic approach, Socrates shifts to one focusing on the *ontological* position to which Hermogenes commits himself in adopting an extreme position on the matter of fitness. This leads to Socrates’ first invocation of Protagoras, the second sophist associated with ὁρθότης ὀνομάτων. Socrates emphasizes that Hermogenes’ holding this view of fitness commits him to Protagoras’ “man-measure” doctrine, which makes it impossible to make distinctions between individuals of the sort that people—including Hermogenes—wish to and actually do make (386c8-d1).⁴⁸ Once

“Onomatopoeia in the *Cratylus*,” 86. In fact, as Grote notes, the extreme view is “an implied contradiction” of the genuine convention-based position (*Plato*, 501). Hence, Jowett’s claim that the three positions of Hermogenes, Socrates, and Cratylus “may be described as the conventional, the artificial or rational, and the natural” is not sufficiently precise (*The Dialogues of Plato*, 257; cf. 256). Both Anagnostopoulos and Kretzmann clearly recognize that two positions are at issue though they consider it in some way appropriate to include the extreme view—“naming by fiat” (Anagnostopoulos’ phrase) or “autonomous idiolects” (Kretzmann’s formulation)—as part of the conventionalist thesis. (For Anagnostopoulos’ stance see “Two Theories of the Correctness of Names,” 701-2. For Kretzmann’s position see “Semantics, History of,” 360; notably, in his subsequent article Kretzmann observes that Hermogenes’ advocacy of autonomous idiolects is in fact “inconsistent with his conventionalism” (“Plato on the Correctness of Names,” 127-8).)

⁴⁸ Plato adopts a similar approach elsewhere, as in the second refutation of the Attunement Theory in the *Phaedo* (92e-94b), where he appeals to our conviction that souls differ on moral and intellectual grounds. Shorey mentions *Theaetetus* 161d-e in connection with the *Cratylus* observation, but not the *Phaedo* passage (*What Plato Said*, 260). Grote claims that Plato mistakes Protagoras’ view: “Plato...reasons...as if, according to Protagoras, a man believed whatever he chose. This, however, is not an exact representation of the doctrine ‘Homo Mensura:’ which does not assert the voluntary or the arbitrary, but simply the relative as against the absolute” (*Plato*, 513-514). Whether or not a misrepresentation actually occurs, the key issue, as with Plato’s treatment of Heraclitus, is what he takes the opponent’s position to

Socrates brings this fact to his attention, and mentions the position of Euthydemus which leads to the same result, Hermogenes is prompted to give up his attachment to the extreme view.⁴⁹

- Protagoras is introduced here in connection with his approach to ontological questions, which is itself treated as incorrect; he is *not* directly linked here to linguistic issues in general, let alone to ὁρθότης ὀνομάτων in particular.
- It is an appeal to ontological considerations, not to some dimension or feature of language, that persuades Hermogenes to give up that approach at one pole of the “dichotomy” whose other pole is natural correctness (on this dichotomy see my final comment on I.B.1 below). Subsequently, when the natural-correctness thesis is rejected, it is once more an appeal to ontological factors—albeit a Platonic stance—that illustrates how wrongly oriented any approach to the achievement of insight is that presumes to acquire it by analyzing the constituency of ὀνόματα.

5. 386d8-e5: Based on the dichotomy posed (386a2-4), having rejected the extreme view, one cannot but embrace the notion that things have some fixed nature (οὐσία βέβαιος) of their own; Plato will make the latter the foundation of the natural-correctness thesis.

- This notion of things having a “fixed nature” is left substantially unanalyzed here and in what immediately follows. At the end of the *Cratylus*, one gains a measure of clarity on what it means, within Platonic metaphysics, for entities to have this character; Plato discusses his approach at far greater length in the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic*. Also largely unspecified here is just what is meant by “things”; their identity must be firmly established for the notion of “fixed natures” to take on meaning, hence Plato’s treatment of both issues in the aforementioned places.

B. 386e6-390e4: One requires a view of appropriateness that corresponds to how entities (ὄντα) are. As concerns naming, what issues from the conclusion that they are not as Protagoras claims, i.e., once one rejects one prong of the dichotomy as set out?

be. In the present context, Hermogenes’ extreme view does have the ontological consequences outlined, regardless of whether they are actually identical with the position espoused by Protagoras himself.

⁴⁹ For a recognition that these two arguments are directed only at the extreme view see Anagnostopoulos, “The Significance of Plato’s *Cratylus*,” 329, and “Two Theories of the Correctness of Names,” 701.

1. 386e6-387d9: Since ὄντα have some fixed nature of their own, and πράξεις constitute one class (εἶδος) of ὄντα, it follows that πράξεις too have fixed natures. Specifically, they must be performed based on *their own* natures (φύσεις), not on *our* own beliefs (δόξαι). (Examples: τέμνειν, κάειν, τὸ λέγειν, τὸ ὀνομάζειν.) Regarding naming in particular, Socrates says that it must transpire in the naturally-appropriate way if agreement is to arise (d4-7).⁵⁰

- Notably, Plato will continue to adhere, in both his middle and late writings, to the position that one's handling of appropriateness must reflect how ὄντα are. The first and most essential requirement, as concerns Platonic metaphysics and philosophy of language, is to understand what entities are most fundamental, and what attributes they have. In his view, previous writers—whether poets, philosophers, or sophists—either did not clearly make these determinations, or did so wrongly.

- This talk of activities' (πράξεις) having fixed natures signals a transition to the issue of genuine τέχνηαι. Τέχνη status, narrowly construed as in the *Gorgias*, is an elevated position given by Plato to a range of activities which he takes to be *worth* engaging in; the relevant activities comprise both those which, as such, Plato takes to be of greatest importance (dialectic and mathematics) and those which may achieve this rank depending on how they are conducted (e.g., carpentry).

- Τὸ λέγειν, of which τὸ ὀνομάζειν is a part (μέριον), is identified as a πρᾶξις...περὶ τὰ πράγματα (387c10).⁵¹ Since this remark occurs in a section of text in which the notion of τέχνη is at issue, the phrase περὶ τὰ πράγματα calls to mind the περὶ τί condition of the *Gorgias*. It is worth noting that there too Plato combines the preposition περί with the noun πρᾶγμα to refer to the subject matter of a given τέχνη (450b2). Based on the approach taken to the περὶ τί stipulation in the *Gorgias*, one would rightly be suspicious of the claim that speaking or naming has subject matter in such a way as to meet that requirement: Granted, the particular issue there is whether rhetoric, assumed early on to be a τέχνη, has λόγοι as *its*

⁵⁰ Grote disputes the idea that the comparison of naming and material agencies is simply “indifferent banter,” and follows Schleiermacher in finding it both seriously intended and Platonic (503). In my view, it is, strictly speaking, neither of the two. In his remarks on material agency in what is designated here as Section I of the *Cratylus*, Plato emphasizes the analogy to make plausible the notion that naming too qualifies as a τέχνη. Hence, the comparison is far from mere banter. In addition, while seriously meant it is not Platonic, if by that one means representative of a position that Plato himself actually adopts; Grote sees far more than I of Plato's own stance early on, and in the dialogue generally.

⁵¹ Cf. Plato's use of πράγματα in 387c1. Given the broader context of 387c10, I prefer Fowler's rendering “things”—cf. Méridier (“choses”) and Apelt (“Dinge”)—to Jowett's translation “acts.”

subject matter (449d8ff.), but Plato's remarks on the pervasiveness of λόγοι are relevant to the determination of whether τὸ λέγειν and hence τὸ ὀνομάζειν themselves qualify as τέχναι. In the *Gorgias*, λόγοι—and by extension ὀνόματα as components thereof—are shown not to constitute the subject matter of any particular τέχνη; rather, they constitute the means by which the subject matter of τέχναι (and whatever passes as “subject matter” among ἐμπειρίαι) is presented and discussed.⁵² Τὸ λέγειν and τὸ ὀνομάζειν *themselves* have no clearly specifiable subject matter along the lines of genuine τέχναι (e.g., medicine) as treated in the *Gorgias* and elsewhere; rather, they find their “subject matter” anywhere and everywhere, but thus construed the notion is far removed from that strict sense at issue in the *Gorgias*.

Notably, this *Cratylus* discussion occurs before Plato breaks the naming process down explicitly into name-construction and name-use. While the focus at this preliminary juncture seems to be on the latter,⁵³ the term “naming” is ambiguous in a way that “cutting” and “burning” are not since the appellation τὸ ὀνομάζειν can be given to the πράξεις of name-construction *and* name-use, both of which involve “tools” (letters and syllables in the former case, and fully-constituted names in the latter). Plato makes clear in what follows that the τέχνη at issue here is construction conjoined with use, if one understands “use” as “name-decoding”; as noted above, the link between construction and use consists in the fact that the criteria for names' proper employment must be part of the τέλος in the practitioner's mind when he undertakes Form-based construction. In the *Cratylus*, naming, thus construed, is denied the rank of τέχνη, and a central ground of this denial is its failure to meet the subject-matter requirement.

This rejection is of course compatible with naming's being integral to the conduct of τέχναι. From this point of view, Plato's special concern is with the way in which one should treat the question of names' appropriateness from the perspective of philosophy or dialectic, which has as *its* subject matter those Forms

⁵² *Gorgias*' first attempt to show that rhetoric meets the περὶ τί condition involves his positing λόγοι as rhetoric's subject matter (*Gorgias*, 449e1). With regard to this attempt, Plato has Socrates point out that a given τέχνη “is concerned with those particular λόγοι which treat the subject matter to which each τέχνη pertains” (450b1-2); hence, this initial response does not directly address the question of subject matter, but rather avoids it.

⁵³ For an emphasis on use see Ketchum, “Names, Forms and Conventionalism: *Cratylus*, 383-395,” 145; in contrast, Kretzmann's comment on 387b-c privileges the sense of imposition (“Plato on the Correctness of Names,” 128, also referred to by Ketchum).

corresponding to value and mathematical concepts. Dialectic's status as the *τέχνη par excellence*, and the function of τὸ ὀνομάζειν in its conduct, is explored in the *Phaedo*, *Symposium* and *Republic*.⁵⁴ Plato's treatment of fitness in the context of philosophical inquiry accords with, and builds on, the results of his analyses in the *Gorgias* and *Cratylus*.

- Some attribute significance to the mention of “cutting and burning” in connection with division.⁵⁵ However, there are several reasons for thinking that taxonomy is not at the core of Plato's reflections in the present context. Notable among them is the fact that in the *Cratylus*, τέμνειν (“to cut”) has not yet developed the technical meaning it will have in connection with the divisions, but rather is used here with κάειν (“to burn”) in its familiar medical sense (both “cutting” and “burning,” i.e., surgery and cautery, were aspects of medical practice at the time).⁵⁶

⁵⁴ For dialectic as the coping-stone (θριγκός) see *Rep.* 534e2. As concerns naming, while appropriateness in general is at issue in the *Republic*, in the middle dialogues eponymy specifically is considered only in the *Phaedo*. Among the late writings, Plato's concern with the role of naming in the conduct of dialectic is strongly evident in the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, whose approach to naming and ties to the *Cratylus* are discussed in ch. 5.

⁵⁵ In this regard see Kretzmann (“Plato on the Correctness of Names,” 130, plus his emphasis on division in the article more generally). Friedländer says that “perhaps the passage about the τέμνειν κατὰ τὴν φύσιν (*Cratylus* 387A) should also be considered in this context. Here τέμνειν gets a medical shading from κάειν which follows, whereas, to start with, τέμνειν is to be understood generally. Then, however, it agrees with διατέμνειν κατ’ ἄρθρα ἢ πέφυκεν (*Phaedrus* 265E)” (*Plato*, vol. 2, 345). It is not clear what “generally” should be taken to mean, given the variety of ways in which Plato uses the term (see the following note); certainly, *contra* what Friedländer here suggests, there are more options than simply use in a medical context or with regard to division. As I indicate below, τέμνειν is first used in the latter way in the *Phaedrus*.

⁵⁶ Possibly also at issue these remarks is an oblique reference to medicine in the narrower or Platonic sense. On the medical role played by “cutting” and “burning” cf. Apelt: “Bei dem ‘Schneiden’ und ‘Brennen’ hat man vorzugsweise an chirurgische Tätigkeit zu denken. Denn das waren die beiden Hauptseiten der chirurgischen Kunst” (136). On Plato's use of τέμνειν cf. Luce, who argues against Cherniss' linking of the passage to *Phaedrus* 265e by noting the conjunction of τέμνειν with κάειν (Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy*, 253, and Luce, “The Theory of Ideas in the *Cratylus*,” 32). For philosophical and literary instances of these terms' combination prior to Plato, see Heraclitus, DK 58: οἱ γοῦν ἰατροί...τέμνοντες, καίοντες, πάντῃ βασανίζοντες κακῶς τοὺς ἀρρωστούντας, ἐπαιτέονται μηδὲν ἄξιοι μισθὸν λαμβάνειν παρὰ τῶν ἀρρωστούντων, ταῦτ' ἐργαζόμενοι, τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰς νόσους. Aeschylus, in turn, has Agamemnon use the terms metaphorically in a speech given on his return to Argos: ὅτῳ δὲ καὶ δεῖ φαρμάκων παιωνίων, ἤτοι κέαντες ἢ τεμόντες εὐφρόνως πειρασόμεσθα πῆμ' ἀποστρέψαι νόσου (*Ag.* 848-50).

For the medical sense in Plato (τέμνειν and κάειν combined), see *Gorgias* 456b4; 479a9; 480c6-7; and 521e8. Interestingly, as in the *Cratylus*, in the *Gorgias* too Plato discusses the processes of cutting and burning for purposes of illustration, in remarks on injustice and paying a penalty (476c3-d2). Notably, the term does not appear *at all* in the *Gorgias* in the one passage in which Plato offers an instance of division (464b-466a); in this dialogue, a classificatory schema is used to advantage in a single context, but division is not yet conceived as a method of general relevance. In fact, with a view toward the *Cratylus* it is worth observing that τέμνειν with a medical sense, weaving, and an instance of division are all present in the *Gorgias* without being linked together. For τέμνειν separately and with a literal sense, see *Menexenus* 242c4; *Gorgias* 508d7, e2; *Republic* 426e8 (cutting off a hydra's head), 470d5, and 471c1. For other instances see Aristophanes' *Symposium* speech on the mythical unities which Zeus divided in two,

- The alignment of agreement with the nature-based view (387d4-7) provides a clear indication of what has happened, namely, that a genuine convention-based view has been suppressed as an option in its own right. The dichotomy as posed is artificial, i.e., it does not include all possible options, but is suitable if Plato is to explore the natural-correctness thesis *before* turning to convention as an independent ground of appropriateness. (In what follows convention will be subordinated to naturalness more fundamentally in the person of the νομοθέτης functioning as ὀνομαθέτης.)

2. 387d10-390d6: Πράξεις and tools.

a. 387d10-388a9: What tools are required for the performance of these various activities? (Examples: τέμνειν, κερκίζειν, ὀνομάζειν, τρυπᾶν.) In the case of naming, ὀνόματα serve as tools.

- Note the centrality of the craft analogy. It is often invoked by Plato, as in the *Charmides*, *Gorgias*, *Euthydemus*, and Book 1 of the *Republic*.

b. 388a10-c8: Tool use.

i. 388a10-c2: What, specifically, do such tools permit one to do? (Examples: shuttle; awl; name.) An ὄνομα is a tool whereby we instruct one another and discern natures ("Ὄνομα ἄρα διδασκαλικόν τί ἐστίν ὄργανον καὶ διακριτικὸν τῆς οὐσίας) (388b13-c1).

- Plato will contest this view insofar as it is tied to the idea that ὀνόματα—if properly constructed—reveal φύσεις or οὐσίαι, about which one can gain instruction by recourse to etymology. In the *Phaedo*, Plato indicates how he does construe the relation between ὀνόματα and natures or essences.

producing human beings: 190d5, 7 (finite verb and participle), 190e2, 191a6, d4; *Protagoras* 338a7, where Hippias recommends that both Socrates and Protagoras steer a middle course as concerns the length of their remarks; *Meno* 85a1, where the term is used with regard to geometry (specifically, a line cutting a square in two); *Republic* 509d6, 7, on the formation of the Divided Line, and 525e2, concerning experts' ridicule of those attempting to divide the unit in argument. The verb does not appear at all in the *Phaedo*.

It is not the case that the technical sense at issue in division *replaces* the non-technical (in this regard see *Politicus* 293b2 and 298a4 where τέμνειν, conjoined with κείν, has its familiar medical sense). However, the technical sense comes here strongly to the fore (see, e.g., *Sophist* 219e4, 227d1; and *Politicus* 261b11, which contains two instances of the term). The introduction of this technical sense occurs in the *Phaedrus*, which first introduces division as a *method*; in fact, the term occurs three times there, all in connection with division: 266a4 (two instances of the participle) and 277b7. Those aforementioned instances with a mathematical sense may well have a transitional or intermediate status (esp. those at *Rep.* 509d6 and 7), but are not equivalent to that technical sense involved in διαίρεσις.

- ii. 388c3-8: What does it mean for the tool-user to use the tool well? Examples are weaver and shuttle; teacher and ὄνομα. Using them well or properly (καλῶς) means as befits a weaver and teacher.
- Plato emphasizes proper procedure in the conduct of the activities in question. He expands the notion of correct procedure when speaking at length about shuttle construction, and his remarks about the practice of weaving can be extended by analogy to other relevant cases. The matter of appropriateness is associated first with tool use, and only afterward with tool construction; as the inquiry develops it becomes evident that Plato's overriding interest, as concerns naming, lies in terms' use or application.
- c. 388c9-390a8: Tool construction.
- i. 388c9-389a4: Whose work does the user employ when he utilizes tools?: that of the individual having the requisite τέχνη (388c12). (For example, the weaver uses the work of the carpenter with the requisite skill; the piercer uses the work of the skillful smith.) In the case of ὀνόματα, the νομοθέτης is identified as constructor; by a linguistic ploy he becomes the ὀνομαθέτης as well. The emphasis is on this figure's expertise, on him as the one with the requisite τέχνη. He is called an ὀνοματουργός and the most rare of δημιουργοί.
- Again, the craft analogy is in the foreground.
 - The term τέχνη first appears in the text at 388c12 though the way has been paved by Plato's foregoing remarks on πράξεις.
 - Interestingly, in his *Gorgias* discussion of rhetoric's τέχνη status, specifically the subject-matter condition, Plato uses weaving as an example: to give Gorgias an indication of the type of response he seeks, Socrates notes that weaving has as its subject matter the production of clothes (ἡ τῶν ἱματίων ἐργασία) (449d2-3). In what follows, Gorgias makes a number of unsuccessful attempts to provide an analogous response for the practice of rhetoric. Since weaving is among those activities mentioned in the *Gorgias*, which, like the *Cratylus*, privileges talk of crafts, one can explain

its selection for illustrative purposes in the latter dialogue too without appeal to division and the late writings.⁵⁷

- The notion of construction is prominent here. As the dialogue proceeds, it becomes evident that Plato does not actually have this process in view, and the *ὀνομαθέτης* himself is unveiled as a mere construct. Artifact production is not the paradigm of interest to Plato in the stance he adopts toward naming; instead, what concerns him is one's approach toward such *ὀνόματα* as are already in existence. *That* this is so is clear from the *Cratylus*; *how* Plato conceives this approach is evident in the *Phaedo*, where he uses the framework of eponymy to treat questions of the use or application of terms.

At the beginning of the *Cratylus*, Plato describes production and evaluation/use as aspects of a continuous and unified process; they are later detached for investigative purposes when he focuses on the latter. In Plato's view, in treating the issue of construction with regard to already-existent *ὀνόματα* one cannot move beyond the empirical and speculative; these restrictions do not apply to questions of application. However, construction does not recede permanently: it becomes clear in the late dialogues, notably, the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, that production too has a distinct—albeit subordinate—role to play in the practice of dialectic. The difference there is that, in contrast to the *Cratylus*, the issue is construction of terms by the dialectician *where they do not previously exist*, based on dialectic's having revealed a genuine unity which has yet to have an *ὄνομα* assigned to it.⁵⁸

- Plato's use of a linguistic ploy to yield the *νομοθέτης*' additional function once again draws attention to the descriptive content of *ὀνόματα*. The appellation *ὀνομαθέτης* is derived either from a consolidation of article and noun (*ὁ νομοθέτης*, 389a2) or from compression of the phrase *ὁ τὰ ὀνόματα τίθεται* (389a5-6), or both.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ As noted above, weaving and an instance of division are both present in the *Gorgias*, yet not linked together. In the *Phaedo*, Cebes' objection to the Affinity Argument (86eff.) makes use of an analogy with weaving to express a concern about the soul's ultimate perishability.

⁵⁸ At this later juncture, the fitness of terms' constitution is determined by appeal to convention, in keeping with the outcome of the *Cratylus* inquiry.

⁵⁹ The term *ὀνομαθέτης* does not itself appear here (or indeed elsewhere in Plato), but is suggested repeatedly in the *Cratylus* by Plato's language, and clearly presupposed by his assigning the lawgiver the

ii. 389a5-390a8: What does the legislator look toward in constructing *ὀνόματα*? There is an analogy between naming and shuttle construction: in constructing their products, both *τέχνη* practitioners—and by extension practitioners of other *τέχναι* as well—look toward the relevant Forms.⁶⁰ Also, knowledge is associated with expert practitioners like the *ὀνομαθέτης* (d6).⁶¹

- Plato here highlights the distinction between the correct and incorrect practice of carpentry (applicable by analogy to similar activities). Proper performance involves construction with the Form in view: one who acts based on *ὄντα* thus construed proceeds aright. In contrast, one who acts with particulars in view proceeds wrongly:

ΣΩ. Ἴθι δὴ, ἐπίσκεψαι ποῖ βλέπων ὁ νομοθέτης τὰ ὀνόματα τίθεται· ἐκ τῶν ἔμπροσθεν δὲ ἀνάσκειναι. ποῖ βλέπων ὁ τέκτων τὴν κερκίδα ποιεῖ; ἄρ' οὐ πρὸς τοιοῦτόν τι ὁ ἐπεφύκει κερκίζειν;

ΕΡΜ. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Τί δέ; ἂν καταγῇ αὐτῷ ἡ κερκὶς ποιοῦντι, πότερον πάλιν ποιήσει ἄλλην πρὸς τὴν κατεαγυῖαν βλέπων, ἢ πρὸς ἐκεῖνο τὸ εἶδος πρὸς ὅπερ καὶ ἦν κατέαξεν ἐποίει;

ΕΡΜ. Πρὸς ἐκεῖνο, ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ. (389a5-b4)⁶²

second function of namegiver. (At *Charmides* 175b5, the OCT prints *νομοθέτης*, following BTW; the term *ὀνοματοθέτης* appears in the apparatus, as scr. rec. See Brandwood, *Word Index to Plato*, 633, and Plato, *Opera*, vol. 3.)

⁶⁰ One might want to raise the issue of whether Plato capitalizes on two senses of *εἶδος* in this passage. Nevertheless, in the passage as a whole, as in the final portion of the dialogue, Platonic Forms are unmistakably at issue (*contra* Luce, who insists that the *Cratylus* represents a distinctly earlier stage in Plato's reflections than that reached in the *Phaedo* ("The Theory of Ideas in the *Cratylus*," 21)). On the subject of Forms, Kahn rightly maintains that "le *Cratyle* ne peut pas représenter une étape de la théorie des formes essentiellement différente de celle que nous trouvons dans ces grands dialogues classiques," i.e., the *Symposium*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic* ("Les mots et les formes," 91). In the *Cratylus* Plato introduces the Theory of Forms only to the extent that it is pertinent; for his purposes here, which are largely negative, there is no need for Plato to treat his metaphysical theory at great length and draw attention to all its numerous dimensions. (In the *Phaedo*, in contrast, where the soul's immortality is at issue, it is not merely relevant, but essential for Plato to treat the theory more extensively.) Moreover, everything of a positive sort that Plato *does* say in the *Cratylus* is fully compatible with his remarks in the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic*.

⁶¹ On expert practitioners' knowledge see also 389c7, and on the legislator's knowledge in particular 393e8 and 394b3.

⁶² Directly preceding this interchange, the *νομοθέτης* is described as *τῶν δημιουργῶν σπανιώτατος* (389a2). The issue is not whether one should look toward a *defective* particular or to the Form. Rather, as the presence of *καί* at the close of Socrates' second question affirms (b3), the difficulties are with particulars *as such*: all construction must proceed with the Form in view.

This distinction is important because it highlights the fact that Plato has the narrow conception of τέχνη in mind in the *Cratylus*. It is not any practice of carpentry, but that undertaken with the relevant εἶδος in view, that concerns Plato here; under this description, carpentry joins the ranks of τέχνηαι narrowly construed.

Discussion of Forms for artifacts is the exception, not the rule, in Plato; for the other notable passage in which they are at issue, see *Rep.* 596.⁶³ There is a close relation between the scope of the Theory of Forms and the range of activities that may be considered genuine τέχνηαι: In the *Gorgias*, Plato gives subject matter as a condition which any activity aspiring to τέχνη status must meet, but does not discuss the ontological status of that subject matter. In the *Phaedo*, *Symposium* and *Republic*, Forms are treated as the subject matter of genuine τέχνηαι. The core group of Forms comprises those for mathematical and value concepts; correspondingly, it is the activities to which these concepts are central that qualify as τέχνηαι in the strict sense. On the one hand, when a range of other activities, including carpentry, are practiced aright, i.e., with the relevant Forms in view, they too qualify as τέχνηαι on the narrow reading; on the other hand, if practiced with only particulars in mind, they are τέχνηαι solely on the broad or conventional construal. Finally, there are activities, e.g., sophistry, which by definition cannot qualify as τέχνηαι, narrowly construed.⁶⁴

d. 390b1-d6: Who will *know* and *evaluate* whether tools have been properly constructed?: the user. (As previously, various crafts are listed.) In the case of ὀνόματα, the figure sought is none other than the dialectician (c10-11, d4-5); for the dialectician as having knowledge or insight see c10. This is how things

⁶³ It is worth noting the similar language used in *Cratylus* 389a-b and *Republic* 596b. In the *Republic* passage, where the artifacts at issue are beds and tables, Plato has Socrates speak as follows: Οὐκοῦν καὶ εἰώθαμεν λέγειν ὅτι ὁ δημιουργὸς ἐκατέρου τοῦ σκεύους πρὸς τὴν ἰδέαν βλέπων οὕτω ποιεῖ ὁ μὲν τὰς κλῖνας, ὁ δὲ τὰς τραπέζας, αἷς ἡμεῖς χρῶμεθα, καὶ ἄλλα κατὰ ταῦτά; (596b6-9).

⁶⁴ To avoid any possible misunderstanding, it is worth mentioning what happens in the *Sophist*, where sophistry is the indivisible Form or kind arrived at by repeated division of the generic Form τέχνη; there, Plato admits sophistry as part of reality, but only in a very specific sense. In the middle period, Plato's view is that genuine τέχνηαι have Forms as their subject matter, while ἐμπειρίαι ("knacks") such as sophistry—the lowest class of τέχνηαι on the broad construal—focus solely on particulars. In the later writings, an activity like sophistry is directed toward abstract entities or Forms, but only toward their bad parts, as can be seen from the intermediate Forms or kinds through which the *Sophist* divisions move, most notably the final one with which the dialogue ends (264d-268d). Though the form of its expression changes at this juncture, Plato's attitude toward such practices remains the same.

must transpire if the construction and evaluation of ὀνόματα are to proceed καλῶς (d5).⁶⁵

- The term διαλεκτικός appears only three times in the *Cratylus*, and on the two pertinent occasions quite early on (in this very passage) (390c11, d5; 398d7).⁶⁶ The dialectician's abrupt disappearance from the scene is not taken account of by those who wish to attribute great significance to his early and brief appearance in the dialogue although even that concerns solely an approach to naming that Plato ends up *rejecting*. At this early juncture, naming and dialectic are related as one τέχνη to another, their practitioners related as one knowing expert to another. Moreover, Plato specifies the dialectician's activity on the assumption that the former practice does in fact have this status. Once he challenges naming's τέχνη status, the connection between naming and dialectic, as forged at the outset, must of necessity dissolve; this explains the dialectician's abrupt disappearance from the discussion. Having discovered in the *Cratylus* that naming and dialectic are not linked as one τέχνη to another, one is left wondering precisely how they *are* tied together. For a description of the actual connections between ὀνόματα and naming, on the one hand, and dialectic, on the other, one must look largely to other dialogues: to the *Phaedo* in the middle period, and to the *Sophist* and *Politicus* among the late writings (where, as noted, the dialectician subsumes the function of ὀνόματα-constructor).
- Once again, the notion of right performance is in the foreground; this continued emphasis makes sense given the concern here with genuine τέχνηαι.

⁶⁵ For a general statement of the superiority of the user to the producer see *Republic* 601d1-602a2. That passage begins with the observation that περὶ ἕκαστον ταύτας τινὰς τρεῖς τέχνας εἶναι, χρησομένην, ποιήσουσαν, μιμησομένην (601d1-2). In what follows, the user's superiority to the maker is grounded on their different cognitive states (knowledge vs. true belief). (The imitator fares the worst in this regard since he has neither knowledge nor true belief (602a8-9; on imitation more generally see 602a3-603d8).) The inclusion of all three types of activity among the ranks of τέχνηαι indicates that Plato here has the broad sense of τέχνη in view (for this wide or non-philosophical sense see also *Rep.* 533b-c); this is reinforced by his ensuing remarks on practitioners' cognitive states. In contrast, when Plato has the narrow sense in view, as in the *Gorgias* and *Cratylus*, he insists that practitioners of genuine τέχνηαι have knowledge not mere belief; restriction to the latter signals that an ἐμπειρία, *not* a τέχνη, is at issue. Analogous constraints operate with regard to the identity and scope of τέχνηαι's subject matter: when operating with the term's broad sense (as in the two *Republic* passages), Plato does not raise the issue of subject matter to distinguish between genuine and pseudo-τέχνηαι; in contrast, he highlights this consideration when privileging the term's restricted sense (as in the *Gorgias* and *Cratylus*).

⁶⁶ On the third, and here irrelevant occasion, the term appears in Plato's etymology of the term ἥρωας.

3. 390d7-e4: Summing up. If this is how the process unfolds, then it is no shabby enterprise, or the province of random practitioners; furthermore, Cratylus would be correct in saying that ὀνόματα are naturally correct: Κινδυνεύει ἄρα, ὦ Ἑρμόγενης, εἶναι οὐ φαῦλον, ὥς σὺ οἶεις, ἢ τοῦ ὀνόματος θέσις, οὐδὲ φαύλων ἀνδρῶν οὐδὲ τῶν ἐπιτυχόντων. καὶ Κρατύλος ἀληθῆ λέγει λέγων φύσει τὰ ὀνόματα εἶναι τοῖς πράγμασι (390d7-e1).⁶⁷

- At issue here, in my view, is a conditional whose protasis ends up being false: the claim involved is that if naming is a τέχνη, then the natural-correctness thesis stands. Here, as in the *Gorgias* where rhetoric is under investigation, a praxis is *supposed initially* to be of this caliber; however, in what follows every one of the exalted claims and assumptions made about it—in terms of subject matter, practitioners, and cognitive state—will be undermined by Plato. Moreover, even if naming *were* to be established as a τέχνη, the implication is false because the natural-correctness thesis, etymologically defined, is in Plato's view untenable.
- Although some commentators do this, in my view one cannot automatically transfer the elements of what is said here, notably talk of the dialectician and οὐσίαι—linked as they are to a pseudo-τέχνη—over to a supposed positive view which one then simply attributes to Plato.⁶⁸ Granted, key ingredients of what I take to be Plato's own view are in some loose sense “present” in the *Cratylus*—dialectic, τέχνη, οὐσίαι, naming. However, they are clearly and genuinely linked

⁶⁷ Robinson offers a negative valuation of the shuttle analogy, which culminates in Plato's introduction of the dialectician; in his view “the argument is weak and fanciful and little more than a fairy tale,” resting entirely “on the easily deniable assumption that a name is a tool like a shuttle” (“A Criticism of Plato's *Cratylus*,” 124-5). As concerns the Form of Name specifically, he claims that the focus is on “the mystic vision of an object which there are no directions for finding” (128). Both Robinson and Anagnostopoulos—who, criticizing Robinson, insists that Plato takes the tool analogy quite seriously—fail to see the merely hypothetical character of the discussion, which centers on the τέχνη issue (for Anagnostopoulos' remarks see “The Significance of Plato's *Cratylus*,” 330); the same is true of Kahn, who maintains that in 390e “Cratylus' thesis is said to be true under its Platonic reinterpretation” (“Language and Ontology in the *Cratylus*,” 166).

⁶⁸ For notable instances of interpretations which privilege a supposed positive stance see Grote (*Plato*, vol. 2); Kretzmann (“Plato on the Correctness of Names,” preceded by “Semantics, History of”); and Weingartner (*The Unity of the Platonic Dialogue*, along with “Making Sense of the *Cratylus*”). Rather than situating the craft analogy in the framework of Plato's *challenge* to naming's τέχνη status, Weingartner maintains that by his recourse to it Socrates is paving the way for the development of his own account (“Making Sense of the *Cratylus*,” 17). Chen views the section on πρῶτα ὀνόματα as completing the account provided at this earlier juncture (“*Onomatopoeia* in the *Cratylus*,” 92); while he briefly mentions the τέχνη issue (90), Chen completely fails to see that naming's τέχνη status is advanced solely as an hypothesis which will subsequently be judged untenable (88-90). When speaking of affirming and denying naming's τέχνη status in connection with the *Cratylus*, I have the narrow construal in view. Thus, a denial amounts to the claim that naming is not a τέχνη in the narrow or philosophical sense of the term.

together only in other middle dialogues: There, dialectic is treated as the *τέχνη par excellence*, whose subject matter is that class of οὐσίαι corresponding to value and mathematical concepts. In turn, τὸ ὀνομάζειν—properly construed—while not itself a τέχνη, is depicted as indispensable to dialectic’s proper conduct; in fact, Plato’s innovative suggestions about naming have nothing to do with etymology, but instead concern the use of eponymy to treat appropriateness. A substantial positive view, such as the one I just sketched, is nowhere present in the *Cratylus*; however, it is found in dialogues, most notably the *Phaedo*, to which the *Cratylus* may be closely *linked*.

II. 390e5-397c3: Plato makes clear the specific way in which he construes ὀρθότης, namely, that he will use etymology to treat appropriateness.

A. 390e5-394e7: Clarification of what is meant by “natural correctness”; grounding the *Cratylus* investigation of ὀρθότης.

1. 390e5-391b6: Must establish what is meant here by “correctness.”
2. 391b7-c7: Sophists are not of central importance to the current enterprise.
3. 391c8-d3: Must turn to Homer and poets more generally.
4. 391d4-392b2: Homeric cases of different names gods and human beings use for the same entities.
5. 392b3-393b6: Etymology and appropriateness.
 - a. 392b3-e8: The names of Hector’s son.
 - b. 393a1-b6: Hector’s name.
6. 393b7-c7: Natural kinds and natural-kind terms.
7. 383c8-394e7: Functional and value terms, and proper names; desert and individual natures.
 - a. 393c8-d4: The functional term “king.”
 - b. 393d5-e9: Digression: remarks on the names of letters.
 - c. 394a1-e7: Functional and value terms, plus proper names; desert and non-desert; names and individual natures.

B. 394e8-397c3: Literary tradition, continued (tragedians and Hesiod); foundation completed.

1. 394e8-396b3: Etymologies of members of House of Atreus (tragedians).

2. 395e5-397a3: Etymologies of selected gods' names (Hesiod).⁶⁹
3. 397a4-c3: Ground of investigation said to have been laid.

What is accomplished: Sections I and II taken together lay the foundation for what follows. Here in Section II, Plato develops his etymology-based approach to ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων. In privileging the notions of etymology and appropriateness, Plato both relies heavily on the literary tradition's handling of proper names and, as becomes increasingly clear in the dialogue, views that tradition as a central opponent. Plato will use this etymology-based approach to fitness, first set out in Section II, as a key way of debunking the supposed τέχνη status of the activity of naming.

How: In what follows, I focus on relevant material within Section II.

II. 390e5-397c3: Plato makes clear the specific way in which he construes ὀρθότης, namely, that he will focus on etymology to treat correctness or appropriateness. In this context, the literary tradition takes center stage.

A. 390e5-394e7: Hermogenes requests clarification of what "natural correctness" consists in.⁷⁰ The sophists' authority is rejected, and the literary tradition embraced as the ground or foundation of the enterprise; the investigation of proper names is set up. Plato introduces those notions key to the inquiry: etymology; etymology as a way of treating appropriateness; appropriateness and inappropriateness; veridicality and desert; individual natures.⁷¹

- The explanation Socrates gives plays the crucial role of setting the *Cratylus* investigation apart clearly from others on the same general topic, namely, those of sophists.

⁶⁹ As previously noted, there is overlap in Stephanus numbers between this and the previous subsection because—given the content of Greek mythology, according to which Zeus was the father of Tantalus—I believe that the supreme Olympian, whose name is analyzed in 395e5-396b3, merits inclusion in both sequences of analyses.

⁷⁰ Anagnostopoulos rightly notes that Plato has argued up to this point only in favor of natural correctness without specifying what it consists in ("Two Theories of the Correctness of Names," 718); I would, however, reiterate that the foregoing summation is carefully phrased in conditional form.

⁷¹ One must put the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo* together in order to gain a complete perspective on these notions; I do this at length in ch. 4. Regarding etymology, the way was paved by Plato's early comments on Hermogenes' name, along with that linguistic ploy which yielded the legislator's additional function (i.e., that of ὀνομαθέτης). As previously noted, "judgments of appropriateness" (or "fitness") break down into those which involve questions of mere veridicality, i.e., truth or falsity, and those which also raise the issue of desert. As before, to facilitate presentation I use the terms "veridicality" and "desert" to express the distinction, with the understanding that in cases involving desert questions of veridicality are naturally also relevant.

1. 390e5-391b6: Having established that ὀνόματα are naturally correct, and that naming is the province of experts, the next thing to reflect on what is meant by “correctness” in the present context.

2. 391b7-c7: The sophists’ authority and relevance are *rejected*. In contrast to 385-6, Protagoras is here linked to ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων, but Hermogenes points out that, having repudiated his ontological orientation, it would not be fitting for him to align himself with Protagoras’ approach to this topic: “Ατοπος μεντὰν εἶη μου, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἡ δέσις, εἰ τὴν μὲν Ἀλήθειαν τὴν Πρωταγόρου ὅλως οὐκ ἀποδέχομαι, τὰ δὲ τῇ τοιαύτῃ ἀληθείᾳ ῥηθέντα ἀγαπῶν ὥς του ἄξια (391c5-7).

- In contrast to the earlier comment about Prodicus (384b-c), here poverty actually is mentioned, as what prevents Hermogenes from consulting the sophists—specifically Protagoras—directly (391b9-c4); however, Hermogenes makes clear immediately that what ultimately and categorically precludes a turn to Protagoras is *not* a lack of means but instead his rejection of Protagoras’ view of reality (c5-7). Hence, in the case of neither sophist is poverty depicted as what prevents direct consultation of his particular stance on ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων.

- As noted, Protagoras, like Prodicus, is said to have been concerned with ὀρθότης. More specifically, in his own treatment of appropriateness Protagoras was concerned with dividing λόγος into different types. In this connection he noted inaccuracies in others’ usage, which he traced to shortcomings in their comprehension of the relevant distinctions (see Aristotle, *Poetics* 1456b, where he is said to have faulted Homer for opening the *Iliad* with a command when the poet thought he was uttering a prayer).⁷² Protagoras is also said to have divided nouns into three genders, prescribing adjustments in terms’ gender where fitting (see Aristophanes, *Clouds* 658ff., where this interest is evinced, and Aristotle, *Sophistici Elenchi* 173b).⁷³ While the content of Protagoras’ treatment of ὀρθότης

⁷² According to Protagoras, the study of poetry constituted the most important dimension of education (*Prot.* 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).

⁷³ With reference to the *Clouds* passage, K. J. Dover comments that “Protagoras expatiated on the genders of nouns, as part of ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης” (*Clouds*, 132). In the *Sophistici Elenchi* passage, Aristotle reports Protagoras’ insistence that the words for “wrath” and “helmet,” currently feminine in gender, should be changed or *corrected* to the masculine. Proposed grounds have included both the notion that the referents are strongly associated with the male sex and a concern with morphological consistency (see Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement*, 69).

differs from that of Prodicus, neither sophist's observations and prescriptions focus on the *constitution* of ὀνόματα. This makes it implausible for either to be identified as the inspiration behind the *Cratylus* inquiry.

As with the previous rejection of Prodicus' relevance, one can explain the rejection of Protagoras' authority in 391b-c based on the fact that he espoused a notably different approach; in both passages taken together Plato indicates that, while they too treated the matter of ὀρθότης, he is not taking *their* explorations as his own point of departure. Since Prodicus and Protagoras are those sophists especially known for investigation of ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων, one may reach the general conclusion that Plato has disavowed close ties to sophists in his own handling of this issue; the claim that his rejection is general in form gains strong textual support from the fact that immediately following the aforementioned turn away from Protagoras—which is itself preceded by reference to sophists *as a class* (391b11)—Plato looks to *another tradition altogether* in his attempt to ground the inquiry.

3. 391c8-d3: The other alternative presented is to *learn from Homer and the other poets*. Far from rejecting this approach, Hermogenes expresses an interest in pursuing it:

ΣΩ. 'Αλλ' εἰ μὴ αὖ σε ταῦτα ἀρέσκει, παρ' Ὀμήρου χρὴ
μανθάνειν καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων ποιητῶν.

ΕΡΜ. Καὶ τί λέγει, ὦ Σώκρατες, "Ὅμηρος περὶ ὀνομάτων,
καὶ ποῦ; (391c8-d3)

- The answer to Hermogenes' question, "What is meant by ὀρθότης?" is here grounded on an already-existing approach—going back to the eighth century—with which the enterprise is aligned: the approaches of one group (the sophists) have been rejected; that of another group (the literary tradition) is here embraced.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Friedländer says that following the rejection of Protagoras in 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" (*Plato*, vol. 2, 204). Friedländer misinterprets the significance of this reference to Homer and the other poets. The issue is not language or poetic exegesis in general, but ὀνόματα, in particular their correctness or appropriateness; it is poets' treatment of etymology and fitness to which the *Cratylus* reacts *directly*. In fact, commentators consistently fail to lend this introduction of "Homer and the other poets" the significance it deserves; in so doing they are excessively moved by the dialogue's early invocations of Prodicus and Protagoras to assume that the sophists provide the inspiration for what follows. In his concern to show that sophistic discussions inspired the dialogue, Kerferd fails to see the importance of this invocation of Homer and the other poets, instead using the remark as grounds for drawing a positive conclusion about *Protagoras himself*. More specifically, he interprets 391c-d as providing "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 belief in the doctrine of natural rightness" (75). These

remarks make little sense in light of the fact that it is precisely Protagoras' authority that has just been *rejected* (391c), and the view itself is quite speculative in character, thus in no way justifying Kerferd's confident phrase "sufficient grounds"; in addition, insofar as Protagoras did treat the notion of correctness, his orientation did not involve a focus on words' semantic constitution, as Kerferd himself admits (68-9). In any case, such speculations are unnecessary since a far more natural explanation centering on the literary tradition itself is available. Like Kerferd, Guthrie does not see the intrinsic importance of Socrates' invocation of the literary tradition; he uses 391d, where Homer specifically is treated as an authority on correctness, as a basis for concluding that ὁρθοέπεια, like the investigation of the "correctness of words," probably encompassed reflection on words' natural appropriateness (vol. 3, 206) (cf. Taylor, who mentions Socrates' rejection of Protagoras without saying anything about its significance, 82). In both cases, scholars use a key mention of "Homer and the other poets" as grounds for making speculative inferences about the scope and character of Protagorean or more general sophistic inquiries. Weingartner too fails to give 391c8-d1 the significance it deserves (the same can be said of his mention of the comment about Hesiod in 396c4); instead, he dismisses this as a reference to "a fine source of knowledge for the Plato who banned Homer from his Republic!" (*The Unity of the Platonic Dialogue*, 38, and "Making Sense of the *Cratylus*," 23) (cf. William D. Rumsey, "Plato in the *Cratylus* on Speaking, Language, and Learning," 392). This abrupt dismissal constitutes no *argument* against the tradition's relevance, and is in any case unjustified since Plato's recourse to the literary tradition does not indicate his own acceptance of its techniques and assumptions; rather, he intends to show that the literary tradition's orientation and approach are fundamentally *misguided*. Similarly, Jowett remarks that, as in the *Republic*, Socrates makes an ironic appeal to Homer (260), without even considering the possibility that the passage has greater import; instead he, like numerous others, laments the paucity of extant source material (in his case with notable regard to Antisthenes, *Cratylus*, and Prodicus), and prefers to make wholly generic references to alleged contemporary targets.

More generally, scholars consistently fail to take account of the significance of the literary tradition from Homer through Euripides. Apelt neither comments on 391 and its possible significance, nor otherwise displays an awareness of the literary tradition's potential relevance to reflections on the dialogue's sources and topics; indeed, though he observes the thematic distance between the *Cratylus* and sophistic inquiries (134, 138), on the "positive" side of the issue Apelt's remarks are extremely general ("alle Tändeleien und Anmaßungen angeblicher etymologischer Kunst"; "die Anmaßungen und Exzesse der Etymologen" (28)). Fowler mentions no specific sources, but only notes in passing that lack of knowledge of *current theories* of language erects serious interpretive difficulties (4, italics mine); cf. Shorey (*What Plato Said*), who begins his chapter on the *Cratylus* by asserting that Plato "parodies the etymological speculations of his day" (259). Even when commentators make certain isolated references to the literary tradition, they do not integrate those observations in the fabric of their arguments themselves; rather, they appear to assume without question that this tradition cannot be the object of Plato's critique in the section on etymology. Along these lines, see Steinthal's passing references (81, 83). Taylor mentions Heraclitus and Herodotus as exhibiting "traces" of the view that names are nature-revealing, a view buttressed "in the age of Pericles...by the vogue of allegorical interpretations of Homer, which depended largely on fanciful etymologies" (77); this passing reference does not focus on the literary tradition *per se*, nor does it give an indication of the depth and import of any supposed links. In a footnote, he suggests that "probably, if only we had adequate literary records of the Periclean age we might find that a good many of the etymologies are specimens of the serious speculations of the persons satirized" (83). Taylor thus joins those commentators who believe that if only more evidence were extant on one or another person or group, interpretation of the *Cratylus* would be greatly facilitated. This may well be the case; I would claim, however, that one should not be led by regrettable gaps in the extant source material to neglect the study of what pertinent material *has* survived. Guthrie mentions the literary tradition's orientation toward proper names, but does not treat that tradition as an actual Platonic opponent (vol. 5, 16, fn. 2). He asserts that in the etymology section Plato "is parodying a current practice," and mentions in passing (also in a footnote) that Euripides *too* knew about this practice (citing *Tr.* 989f.) (vol. 3, 207; on the issue of currency cf. 218). Rather than linking Euripides himself with a tradition going back to Homer in the eighth century, against which—taken in its entirety—Plato himself is reacting, he associates Plato and Euripides as both aware of a *separate* and contemporary practice. Kahn thinks that having more information on Democritus' views would likely help in interpreting the dialogue ("Language and Ontology in the *Cratylus*," 155-6), a view that—given the state of the evidence—is hard to confirm or deny; having mentioned Burkert's work on the Derveni papyrus, he

connects Plato's use of etymology with late fifth-century attempts to see poets' thought and language as anticipating "the 'modern' theories of Anaxagoras and other Ionian cosmologists" (156; cf. his more recent remarks in "Les mots et les formes," 98-9). I agree with Kahn's general assessment of the dialogue as clearing the ground of key rivals (168); however, he too fails to identify the literary tradition of the eighth through fifth centuries—that is, from Homer through Euripides—as a central Platonic rival (in fact, he appears to discount the possibility of this tradition's direct relevance when, having briefly mentioned Greek literature's handling of proper names, he concludes: "But the same attitude is characteristic of etymologies in many other archaic cultures," 160). Steinthal, Taylor, Guthrie, and Kahn all mention the literary tradition only in passing, and do not treat it as a pivotal influence and opponent to be accounted for in its own right. (On the Derveni papyrus see Burkert ("La Genèse des choses et des mots" and "Orpheus und die Vorsokratiker"). The papyrus' remains emphasize links between language and reality on the level of natural or cosmic phenomena and events; as concerns language, one finds a general concern with semantic issues, notably, matters of synonymy and terms' proper denotation in connection with reality thus construed. A general concern of this type must be distinguished here, as with both Prodicus and Protagoras, from an interest in the analysis of semantic constitution, or etymology in particular; correspondingly, any concern with "natural correctness" in a broader context cannot be identified straightaway with that etymology-based approach to naturalness central to the *Cratylus*. To the extent that the papyrus, dated by Burkert to the early fourth century B.C., does deal with semantic constitution in particular (see Cols. 18 and 22), the concern does not originate here, but postdates the literary tradition's strong interest in this type of link between language and reality; this observation is made with a view toward placing such interest in its proper, i.e., broader context. (Finally, it is worth noting that the analysis of the name "Demeter" as "Mother-earth," presented in Col. 18, was suggested by Euripides; see *Bacc.* 275-6 and *Phoen.* 683-6.))

Luce ("Plato on Truth and Falsity in Names") mentions that proper names predicate qualities of their bearers ἐτύμως or ψευδώνυμως, and refers to *Prom.* 85-6 and the epitaph of Eutychides (225); he also remarks in passing that "in the detailed etymologies of the *Cratylus* Plato operates with this traditional Greek conception of proper names, and he extends it also to cover general names, which, so far as he is concerned, are indistinguishable in their logical function from proper names" (225). The phrase "operates with" is vague, and Luce refers to a "traditional Greek view" and "traditional Greek conception" rather than to the literary tradition specifically. The question is, in what way, precisely, is Plato working with this so-called "traditional Greek conception of proper names"? The question deserves far more attention than it has received to date. In his remarks on the *Cratylus* Pfeiffer mentions but does not discuss the "task of ἐτυμολογία, familiar [to poets] from Homeric times" (61). One is left wondering just how, according to Pfeiffer, Plato's inquiry is related to these earlier reflections: notably, Is it tied to them directly and consciously? If so, how extensive is Plato's reliance on this tradition, and precisely what form does that reliance take? Derbolav, in turn, observes that commentators have linked the Platonic *Cratylus* with the historical Cratylus, as well as with Antisthenes, Protagoras, Prodicus, and Heraclides Ponticus, and reaches the following sober conclusion: "Doch sind die Beweisgrundlagen für alle diese Lösungsangebote so dürftig und die Schlüsse aus ihnen so spekulativ, daß die Entscheidung zu einer von ihnen eher einem Bekenntnis als einer Erkenntnis gleichkommt" (31). While Derbolav notes that assertions of substantive ties between Democritus and Plato on the subject of πρῶτα ὀνόματα are unconvincing (36), he claims that—etymologically speaking—though for Democritus there is hardly anything one could call reliable, one can probably assume "daß er in den Chor der Dichter und Philosophen eingestimmt hat, die dieses Verfahren hermeneutisch oder bereits in philosophischer Absicht anwandten" (34, cf. his subsequent comment: "Platon selber steht schon in der Tradition einer von Dichtern und Philosophen wenigstens okkasionell gehandhabten etymologisierenden Praxis," 69). Since Derbolav refers to no fragments to support his statement linking Democritus to etymology, denying that one can use DK 2 to that end, the basis for this conclusion is unclear. More to the point, he does not identify the members of this supposed "choir" by name. Who comprises this group of poets (and philosophers)? Of what specific relevance are their remarks and reflections to a suitable interpretation of the dialogue? Unfortunately, Derbolav does not treat these topics. Diels sees clearly the relevance of poets, among others, to discussions of Greek etymology, but does not single them out in any way in his comments on the *Cratylus* inquiry; he focuses instead on Heraclitus and later Heracliteans ("Die Anfänge der Philologie bei den Griechen," 3-7). Gaiser recognizes that poets engaged in etymology (51), but does not pursue the matter.

Louis Méridier, in turn, refers in his notes on the *Cratylus* to passages from the literary tradition, yet this limited awareness of its pertinence in no way translates into a recognition, let alone exploration of the

- Plato and the sophists share a common literary heritage. Sophists treat linguistic issues by reference to poets. Plato too thinks that consideration of the literary tradition is important to reflections on linguistic questions, but not in the way the *sophists* believed; just where he does locate its significance emerges clearly in the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo*.⁷⁵ Those who think that Plato is responding to the sophists

possibility that this very tradition constitutes a direct and central Platonic opponent. Regarding the inquiry's turn to poets in 391c-d, Méridier comments that "on sait par ailleurs ce que pense Platon de la 'sagesse' poétique" (15); he proceeds to cite the *Protagoras*, where the sophist of that name asserts the tremendous educational value of poetic study, a claim with which Socrates there takes issue. Méridier concludes that the value of the assertion in 391 and of the considerations which follow is fixed by such outside knowledge of Plato's assessment of the actual merit of poetic "wisdom" (16). His own subsequent assessment of various proposed historical sources for this dialogue does not include the literary tradition, and his remarks are largely critical of sources proposed by others; in fact, Méridier concludes that it would be inadvisable to attempt to give names to those several adversaries whose theories he nevertheless assumes Plato to have in view (45, cf. his comment that the target of the dialogue's polemic is certain contemporary theories of language, 30). Warburg's *Zwei Fragen zum "Kratylos"* includes a discussion of the particular features of Greek etymology, notably its rootedness in religion and myth, and as concerns the literary tradition, provides some examples from Greek tragedy. However, Warburg offers nothing remotely approaching a systematic treatment of etymology and Greek tragedy, let alone the literary tradition more generally as construed in the present study. Moreover, his book's thesis is that Plato's student Heraclides Ponticus, whom he alleges to have combined Heracliteanism and etymologizing, is the actual target of the *Cratylus*; hence, while Warburg explores what he takes to be the basic characteristics of Greek etymology in general, and evinces some awareness of certain poets' use of etymology, he does not—indeed cannot, given his most fundamental claim—make the literary tradition *itself* into a direct and central Platonic opponent. While this much is clear, and while Warburg makes some suggestive comments about Greek etymology and the background for the *Cratylus*, it is not evident to me precisely what role Warburg does view Greek literature specifically as having for Plato vis-à-vis the *Cratylus*; clarity on this point would require that systematic treatment of the literary tradition's techniques and assumptions from Homer onward which Warburg, whose ultimate focus is on the Academic Heraclides, does not undertake (I later discuss Warburg's own thesis). Baxter assembles a wide range of likely or possible opponents of the etymology section (*The "Cratylus,"* 94-163), and places the literary tradition in that group. Much of what Baxter says is quite speculative, and in certain instances he tentatively associates *Cratylus* etymologies with other sources *although* they can be clearly linked to poets—a fact to which he makes no reference (in this regard see the Ἡρα-ἄηρ derivation linked to Empedocles (124, 125) and the Δημήτηρ-διδούσα ὡς μήτηρ analysis tied to the Derveni Papyrus specifically, or Orphic "scholars" more generally (132)). While Baxter is quite right to recognize that the literary tradition is important (though he concentrates only on Homer and Aeschylus), systematic study of the extant evidence justifies the claim that it is not merely one source among numerous others. (Invoking the literary tradition in a very different context, Seth Benardete asserts that the dialogue sheds light on Plato's understanding of Greek tragedy. He has in mind *not* their common use of etymology, but the general issue of tragedy's stance toward human life and possibility, as when, in discussing the etymologies of "Apollo" and "Pan," he claims that "Apollo is tragedy's own view of itself. Pan is Socrates'.... The goatishness of Pan is the laughably human about which tragedy sings its myths and lies. Pan is the root of the tragic Apollo"; in what follows he identifies the idea that "the individual loses nothing of himself in attaining significance" as "the essence of tragedy, [which] was shown to obtain *per impossibile* only in the realm of the arch-sophist Hades" ("Physics and Tragedy: On Plato's *Cratylus*," 137). The interpretation advanced in this article is highly speculative, and in any case does not speak to the issue of the tragedians and other poets as Platonic opponents in the *Cratylus* due to their own use of etymology specifically.)

⁷⁵ This is especially so of the *Phaedo*. The *Cratylus* and *Phaedo* are related largely as negative to positive, with the *Cratylus* clearing the ground for Plato's use of eponymy, also prominent in the literary tradition, to treat appropriateness in the *Phaedo*. Rosenstock rightly highlights the existence of a complementary

are thus not completely wrong, but simply have not properly identified the form of that response. Key here is the fact that both target the literary tradition *directly*: When Plato considers the literary tradition he is not concerned to refute the sophists; in fact, he has no deep or abiding interest in their procedure in this regard. Plato is not responding to the literary tradition via the sophists, but to the poets themselves, hence only *indirectly* to the sophists insofar as they too used that material, albeit wrongly to his way of thinking.

4. 391d4-392b2: Discussed first are Homeric instances of different ὀνόματα used by gods and humans with reference to the same entities; one can assume that those appellations the gods employ are naturally-correct. Examples: 1. river—Xanthus and Scamander; 2. bird—Chalcis and Cymindis; 3. mound before Troy—Batieia and Myrine. Socrates notes that speaking directly of gods' assignments is likely beyond their resources.⁷⁶

- The issue of a divine component involved in matters of naming first arises here, as Plato makes the transition from sophists to poets in grounding his treatment of ὀρθότης. Plato would not want to embrace this approach to correctness since a sufficient explanation of appropriateness in such cases is simply to invoke appellations' divine *source*. To claim that particular names are superior simply because they are associated with these superior beings leaves no room for a sustained investigation of the sort that Plato *is* interested in pursuing. These

relationship between the two dialogues; however, he wrongly views the *Cratylus* as “the perfect complement to the *Phaedo*”—rather than vice versa—privileging what he views as the *Cratylus*' challenge to “the *Phaedo*'s reliance upon simple *logoi* as a medium of truth” (“Fathers and Sons,” 410).

⁷⁶ There are several *Iliad* passages in which Homer says that men give an entity one name, while the gods employ another:

1. *Il.* 1.403-4: Homer refers to that son of Poseidon, having a hundred hands, “whom the gods call Briareus, but all men Aegaeon”; ὁ γὰρ αὐτὲ βίην οὐ πατρὸς ἀμείνων.

2. *Il.* 2.811-14: There is a mound before Troy, which men call Batieia, “but the immortals call it the barrow (σῆμα) of Myrine, light of step.” (In this and the preceding passage I employ Murray's translations.)

3. *Il.* 14.290-1: There is a mountain bird, which the gods call Chalcis, and men Cymindis.

4. *Il.* 20.73-4: There is a river, which the gods call Xanthus, and men call Scamander.

In his remarks here Plato mentions all except the first.

In contrast, it is worth noting Hesiod's focus on parallels between gods and men with regard to naming:

1. *Th.* 195-7: Gods *and* men call the maiden Aphrodite.

2. *Th.* 270-2: There is no distinction between what men *and* gods call the progeny of Ceto and Phorcys, i.e., the Graiae.

Moreover, Hesiod emphasizes such parallels in connection with other matters:

1. *Th.* 220: The Fates pursue the transgressions (παραιβασίας) of both men *and* gods.

2. *Th.* 406-7: Leto is characterized as ἥπιον to men *and* the immortal gods.

3. *Th.* 766: Death is characterized as hateful *even* to the immortal gods.

instances serve to *introduce* Homer—and by extension the literary tradition in general—as having treated correctness; however, it is the ensuing treatment of the names given to Hector’s son, which involves a focus on semantic constitution, that typifies the brand of ὀρθότης at issue for Plato in the *Cratylus*. The matter of names’ possible divine source will be a recurrent theme in the dialogue.⁷⁷

5. 392b3-393b6: Etymology and the issue of appropriateness: Scamandrius/Astyanax and Hector.

a. 392b3-e8: The fitness of Hector’s son’s name is explored. Socrates notes that Homer gave him two ὀνόματα: Astyanax and Scamandrius. The more insightful individuals, here identified as the men, are said to have utilized the former appellation; the less insightful, here the women, are supposed to have employed the latter: Οὐκοῦν οἴσθα ὅτι Ὅμηρος τὸ παιδίον τὸ τοῦ Ἑκτορος ὑπὸ τῶν Τρώων φησὶν καλεῖσθαι Ἀστυάνακτα, Σκαμάνδριον δὲ δῆλον ὅτι ὑπὸ τῶν γυναικῶν, ἐπειδὴ οἱ γε ἄνδρες αὐτὸν Ἀστυάνακτα ἐκάλουν; (392c10-d3).

• This example provides an effective bridge between the previous cases and those that follow: it first looks as though Plato, in treating the son’s name, will proceed along the same lines as before—a mere identification of source as the ground of correctness—but this choice of example allows a smooth transition to descriptive content as the basis of judgments of appropriateness.

Plato here deliberately misidentifies the sources of the appellation “Scamandrius” as provided by Homer: In the *Iliad* it is Hector *himself* who calls his son by this name, while other men call him “Astyanax,” οἷος γὰρ ἐρύετο Ἴλιον Ἑκτώρ (6.402-3; see also 22.506-7 and 24.499-501).⁷⁸ One can see why Plato would wish to re-assign the name “Scamandrius” to a different source. It would likely seem odd for the child’s own parent to have made what Plato here identifies as the inferior assignment; rather, Hector’s

⁷⁷ Plato’s treatment of it differentiates him quite sharply from the literary tradition. Regarding the latter, see pt. 1.

⁷⁸ Méridier notes Plato’s deviation from Homer (16, 64), but interprets it quite differently; see also Rosenstock (“Fathers and Sons,” 400-402). In his comments on 392c-3, Fowler refers only to *Il.* 22.506-7; he does not mention Plato’s misidentification of the source as Homer had given it earlier in the epic poem. Shorey does mention 6.402-3, but not the shift in attribution (*What Plato Said*, 261).

choice of “Scamandrius” might suggest that *it* is primary. Once Plato attributes this appellation instead to Trojan women, he can more readily discount it.⁷⁹

It is important that the name “Astyanax” be seen as superior, since, of the two ὀνόματα, only it lends itself to investigation by etymology; in contrast, the name “Scamandrius” could only be treated by way of eponymy (i.e., the individual as named for or after the river Scamander). Notably, Plato does not even *mention* the latter derivation; only in the *Phaedo* does he indicate how one may properly use eponymy to treat appropriateness.⁸⁰

In the name “Astyanax,” namers’ *hopes*—elicited by Hector’s superlative performance as warrior—come to the fore since the boy was much too young to permit judgments of his *own* performance. In the literary tradition, namers’ hopes and wishes were often an important consideration when providing appellations. At the close of Section II, Plato says that he will omit discussion in what follows of heroic and human ὀνόματα since such factors often govern assignments, introducing an element of arbitrariness into the procedure which he wishes to avoid.

- This clear shift in focus to descriptive content links up closely with the previous remarks made about Hermogenes’ name—which gave the first indication of how Plato wishes to construe ὀρθότης—and with the way in which Socrates arrives at the figure of the ὀνομαθέτης.

b. 393a1-b6: Socrates moves on to Hector’s ὄνομα, which is said to have been assigned by Homer himself (a1-2). He notes that the two names—Astyanax and Hector—are very close with regard to their semantic constitution (βασιλικὰ ἀμφοτέρω εἶναι τὰ ὀνόματα, 393a7), and connects the name “Hector” to the verb ἔχειν. Hector’s ὄνομα, like that of his son, is treated as fittingly assigned.⁸¹ Plato concludes by saying that they have shed light on Homer’s δόξα περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος (393b3-4).

⁷⁹ Plato first correlates the insight of name-givers with correctness in assignments (392c2-5). Then, having laid great emphasis on the “fact” that the women in πόλεις are less insightful than the men, he attributes the inferior assignment to the former (392c6-d4). Since Homer believed that the men of Troy were wiser than the women, he must also have believed in the superiority (ὀρθότερον) of their assignment (392d5-10). In what follows, attention focuses on the ground of the superior appellation’s fitness.

⁸⁰ Interestingly, though, one of the foregoing examples does mention this river by name (391e-392a). Also relevant to the preference for “Astyanax,” of course, is the matter of ties in semantic constitution between the names “Astyanax” and “Hector.”

⁸¹ In fact, as in the literary tradition, the appropriateness of the name “Astyanax” derives solely from that of his father’s appellation.

- Homer too links the name “Hector” to the verb ἔχειν, in Andromache’s address to her dead husband: ἦ γὰρ ὄλωλας ἐπίσκοπος, ὅς τέ μιν αὐτὴν ῥύσκει, ἔχες δ’ ἀλόχους κεδνὰς καὶ νήπια τέκνα (*Il.* 24.729-30).

6. 393b7-c7: Socrates shifts here from proper names to natural kinds and natural-kind terms as though there were no notable transition involved; he mentions human beings, animals, and plants. The notions of being at odds and in accord with nature are contrasted.

- At issue with natural kinds are questions of veridicality, not those of desert (as was the case previously with proper names): in judging the fitness of terms’ application one simply checks the world to see whether a certain state of affairs obtains; specifically, one assesses the physical appearance of the creature in question to ensure that it matches that of its progenitors in the relevant ways.⁸²

Plato’s early treatment of ὀνόματα and their appropriateness thus conflates:

1. proper names and general terms, and 2. questions of desert and veridicality. He does here in a conscious and concentrated fashion what the literary tradition undertakes with no such awareness or clarity of purpose.⁸³

- Plato has Socrates associate the relevant concepts and terminology with what transpires in the natural *world*; in so doing, he aims to invest the turn to natural *correctness*—abruptly made following the rejection of Hermogenes’ extreme view—with added “plausibility.”

7. 393c8-394e7: The terms βασιλεύς, ἀγαθός, and καλός—The notions of desert and non-desert.

- a. 393c8-d4: The same account applies to the offspring of kings: as with lions and horses, they too deserve to be called “king” (“king” being a general term of a functional variety). The key is for the referent’s nature to be revealed by its ὄνομα; semantic constitution is what matters, not the particular letters and syllables chosen.

⁸² One could of course view other criteria, notably, behavioral ones, as relevant to determinations of fitness when natural kinds are at issue; they are not, however, mentioned here, and would in any case be more pertinent to evaluations made not at birth, but only after organisms have developed in various ways.

⁸³ For extensive documentation of the literary tradition’s approach see pt. 1. With regard to general terms and the literary tradition, functional terms predominate. Notably, with natural-kind terms assessments of fitness (specifically, veridicality) are not made by appeal to the descriptive content of ὀνόματα; as evidenced by ch. 2, the same is true of the literary tradition’s judgments of appropriateness involving functional terms.

b. 393d5-e9: There is a digression to remedy Hermogenes' lack of understanding, which consists in brief remarks about the ὀνόματα of letters.⁸⁴

c. 394a1-e7: Plato returns to βασιλεύς, with the addition of ἀγαθός and καλός; he tries to assimilate these cases to those involving natural kinds.⁸⁵ In making assignments, the particular letters and syllables are not what matter, but closeness of semantic constitution.⁸⁶ Socrates gives other examples of proper names, with different descriptive content from those of Hector and his son (e.g., Polemarchus and Eupolemos). Such ὀνόματα are appropriately given if name and nature coincide (d2-4). On the other hand, if there is not a match but a *clash* between a name with positive descriptive content and the bearer's nature, then the name is *undeserved*; in such a case, the individual in question is not entitled to the name in question, but to one which does in fact mesh with the nature thus revealed (d5-e7).⁸⁷

- Socrates will treat the terms ἀγαθός and καλός themselves in his ensuing etymological investigation (412c and 416c-d, respectively). His mention of them here thus *points ahead* to the integration of such ὀνόματα in a model grounded on the etymological analysis of proper names. Moreover, Plato elevates precisely these two notions to Form status at the close of the *Cratylus* (and elsewhere), where it becomes clear that constitutional analysis does not yield insight.⁸⁸ In the etymological section, Plato treats all ὀνόματα on the same model, ostensibly "levelling out" important distinctions which can and must be drawn, most generally, between proper names and general terms (specifically, of course, Plato's philosophical interest centers on a *subset* of general terms). However, he will eventually show not only that the analysis of words' constitution fails to yield insight (*Cratylus*), but also that it makes all the difference whether one names Socrates or beauty (i.e., some terms and referents are decidedly more important than others); while this distinction is

⁸⁴ For subsequent comments on the ὀνόματα of letters see 431e-432a and 432d-433a.

⁸⁵ He attempts this even though, as noted, his remarks on natural kinds did not concern terms' semantic constitution. In the remainder of the dialogue's etymologies, Plato leaves functional terms aside.

⁸⁶ There is an explicit return to the names of Astyanax and Hector: they have only one letter in common.

⁸⁷ The distinction between appropriate and inappropriate assignments was already in evidence at the outset of the dialogue, when Cratylus invokes the issue of fitness to mark his own name and that of Socrates off from Hermogenes' appellation. The subsequent discussion gives content to that distinction as initially drawn.

⁸⁸ In the *Symposium*, Plato treats τὸ καλόν at length based on his metaphysical theory; in the *Republic*, he suggests how one must construe τὸ ἀγαθόν on that same ground.

strongly implied in the *Cratylus*, it is a clear and central assumption of the *Phaedo*.

- Natural correctness is once again associated, as in the literary tradition, with the semantic constitution of ὀνόματα (393a6; 394c1; 394e5). Along with that tradition, at this point Plato simply assumes the existence of individual natures, and emphasizes the meshing of names' descriptive content and individual bearers' natures as the ground of judgments of appropriateness. As was the case with these other writers, here too a normative dimension is strikingly evident when name and nature clash (e1-2, 4-6). These principles will be applied at great length in what follows.
- Once again, Plato attempts to increase the plausibility of the natural-correctness thesis by reference to what happens in the natural world (e.g., talk of things coming-to-be κατὰ and παρὰ φύσιν, d2-5).

B. 394e8-397c3: Literary tradition, continued (tragedians and Hesiod added); laying of foundation completed (strengthening of ties to the literary tradition's techniques and assumptions); further investigation of proper names.⁸⁹

1. 394e8-396b3: Orestes-Zeus. Plato analyzes the names of key members of the House of Atreus spanning several generations; this investigation culminates in Zeus, the House's supposed point of origin.

- It is among the Greek tragedians that the affairs of the royal house *itself* play a central role; this is in contrast to Homer's *Iliad*, where the sons of Atreus—Agamemnon and Menelaus—are important as prominent Greeks battling the Trojans. Taking the two epic poems together, Odysseus is the only Greek whose affairs and house receive considerable attention.

- The name of the supreme Olympian had two forms: the supreme Olympian was called Ζεύς; one also finds Δίς, an old nominative for Ζεύς, in the oblique cases. Both were popular targets of etymological analysis among writers in the literary tradition, specifically, Hesiod, Pindar, Aeschylus, and Euripides.⁹⁰ In that

⁸⁹ In his subsequent treatment of proper names, Plato will emphasize the diversity of analyses possible in any given case: each etymology, rather than being nature-revealing *per se*, is perspective-dependent and merely aspectual.

⁹⁰ Regarding Zeus' unique status among the gods, Walter Burkert 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" (*Greek Religion*, 131). At the outset of his *Works and Days*, Hesiod's invocation to the Muses links one form of the god's name, Δίς, to the preposition διὰ ("through" or "on account of"): "Muses...tell of Zeus (Δί') your father and chant his praise. Through him (ὅν τε διὰ) mortal men are famed or unfamed, sung or unsung alike, as great Zeus

tradition, a given writer typically analyzes only one form of the god's name. Even when a single poet treats the two forms, as does Aeschylus, he does not do so in the same play, let alone in the same passage. In contrast, in a single *Cratylus* passage Plato provides one analysis covering both: συμβαίνει οὖν ὁρθῶς ὀνομάζεσθαι οὗτος ὁ θεὸς εἶναι, δι' ὃν ζῆν ἀεὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ζῶσιν ὑπάρχει· διείληπται δὲ δίχα, ὥσπερ λέγω, ἐν ὃν τὸ ὄνομα, τῷ “Διὶ” καὶ τῷ “Ζηνί” (396a8-b3). Thus, this *Cratylus* treatment of the god's name does not simply highlight common ground with numerous poets on the level of specific etymologies, but shows that Plato could beat the literary tradition at its own game (if only he were interested in playing!).⁹¹

- The notion of individual natures is once again in the foreground.
- 2. 395e5-397a3: Zeus-Uranus. Hesiod is called to mind here by Plato's inclusion of Zeus, in conjunction with his father Cronus and grandfather Uranus.⁹² Hesiod's genealogy is mentioned explicitly (396c3-4).
- 3. 397a4-397c3: The ground (τύπος) of the investigation is said to have been laid (397a5). The issue is raised of which sorts of names should be treated in what follows. Heroic and human names will be ignored since they are deceptive: individuals are named after their ancestors, or based on namers' hopes—as the case of Astyanax illustrates—so analysis would not reliably yield insight into bearers'

wills (Διὸς μέγαλοιο ἔκητι)” (1-4; tr. by Evelyn-White). Aeschylus too connects this form of the god's name with διὰ. The Chorus in *Agamemnon* identifies Zeus as the ultimate source of the misfortunes of the House of Atreus: they happened “all through Zeus (διὰ Διός), Zeus, first cause, prime mover. For what thing is done by mortals without Zeus (ἄνευ Διός)?” (Ag. 1485-7; modified translation of Richmond Lattimore). In *Isthmian* 3, in contrast, Pindar ties the form Ζεύς to ζῆν (“life”): “O Zeus (Ζεῦ), mortal man's prowess springs from you. His happiness abides (ζῶει) longer when he reveres you” (4-5). (Tr. by Nisetich, modified; Nisetich does not mention this connection in his introduction to the ode.) Aeschylus highlights the same link in a reference to what “is in very truth the seed of life-giving Zeus” (φυσιζόου γένος...Ζηνός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς) (*Supp.* 584-5; tr. by Smyth). Finally, Euripides links the two in a passage in which Apollo, speaking about Helen, says that she “lives (ζῆν), for being born of Zeus (Ζηνός γὰρ οὖσαν), she could not die” (*Or.* 1635; tr. by Arrowsmith). Here a direct causal connection is suggested.

⁹¹ Grote comments that no *Cratylus* etymology “is more strange than that of Ζεὺς-Δία-Ζῆνα” (526); he addresses this “strangeness” by noting the etymology's reproduction in *Περὶ Κόσμου* and use by the Stoic Zeno. However, reference to subsequent works and philosophers cannot dissipate the supposed oddity of Plato's analysis; it is precisely recourse to etymologies previously offered by poets that makes his approach intelligible.

⁹² Interestingly, in a passage concerned solely with the capacity of one god to bring evil to another, Aeschylus associates Cronus' name with the verb κραίνω when he has Prometheus say that πατὴρ δ' ἄρ' αὖ Κρόνου τότ' ἤδη παντελῶς κρανθήσεται unless Zeus seeks and obtains Prometheus' aid (*Prom.* 910-15). Plato's analysis, in turn, treats the name as signifying κόρον...οὐ παῖδα, ἀλλὰ τὸ καθαρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκήρατον τοῦ νοῦ (396b6-7); one may contrast this remark with his unflattering use of the name at *Euthyd.* 287b3 (as mentioned by Méridier, 69-70).

natures. Plato professes interest in cases in which a power more than human may have been at work (397b7-c2).

- Plato's comment about the foundation having been laid occurs at precisely *this* point because he has now "established" that the praxis of naming constitutes a τέχνη, set forth that etymology-based construal of ὀρθότης which governs his investigation, and, in so doing, forged close ties to the literary tradition.
- Interest is expressed in cases of supernatural influence since there one is most likely to discover ὀνόματα which are naturally correct: εἰκὸς δὲ μάλιστα ἡμᾶς εὔρεῖν τὰ ὀρθῶς κείμενα περὶ τὰ ἀεὶ ὄντα καὶ πεφυκότα. ἐσπουδάσθαι γὰρ ἐνταῦθα μάλιστα πρέπει τὴν θέσιν τῶν ὀνομάτων· ἴσως δ' ἕνια αὐτῶν καὶ ὑπὸ θειοτέρας δυνάμεως ἢ τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐτέθη (397b7-c2). The way in which one interprets the initial remark about appropriateness depends on the reference one assigns to the phrase τὰ ἀεὶ ὄντα καὶ πεφυκότα; for a long while, Plato will privilege such entities as others have construed them, yet makes clear at the dialogue's end that Forms are the actual *denotata*. This ostensibly positive comment about superhuman influence must be understood in light of Plato's stance toward it in the dialogue as a whole. In that broader context his judgment is negative: appeals to this type of source are merely evasions lacking genuine explanatory power (see 425d-426a and 438c-d). This conclusion is of special pertinence to Plato's critical challenge to the literary tradition, for which the question of supernatural origin was important when considering the matter of fitness.⁹³

⁹³ Writers' treatment of the names "Helen" and "Polyneices" illustrates this quite effectively, and provides a basis for generalization to that large class of assignments in which names given at birth are later found to be appropriate.

Back in 1867, Grote judged unacceptable the "modern discovery or hypothesis" that the sophists are Plato's targets, insisting on the absence of proof that either Prodicus or Protagoras was concerned with etymology (521); yet, as previously noted, numerous twentieth-century scholars have stubbornly adhered to the view which Grote attacked, in the absence of textual or historical evidence to support it. While Grote realizes the untenability of claims about the sophists, he does not see the significance of what follows, specifically, Plato's turn to the literary tradition as a foundation and opponent; quite the contrary. Regarding the sustained provision of etymologies, Grote maintains that Plato does not intend to caricature anyone else's approach: "By doing this, he would be only discrediting and degrading the very theory which he had taken so much pains to inculcate upon Hermogenes....He would ridicule himself and his own theory for the benefit of opponents generally" (523, see also 527); rather, Plato advanced them "as genuine illustrations of a theory of his own respecting names" (525). Grote, who believes the foregoing discussion to represent Plato's own view, finds it incomprehensible that Plato would proceed to call it into question. If however, as I maintain, Plato has only indicated early on what the praxis of naming would have to be like if it were a τέχνη, one can quite reasonably view him as posing a challenge to others' (notably poets') use of etymology. On Plato's ties to etymology, see also Steinthal: "Man müht sich ja aber überhaupt nicht ab an der Kritik einer Ansicht, ei sei denn, man stehe zu dieser in einer inneren Beziehung"

- In keeping with the foregoing observations pertaining to the names of human beings and heroes, Plato will not treat those ὀνόματα in what follows. However, no mention is made of the such considerations ruling out the analysis of divine names, which is in fact soon undertaken at great length.

III. 397c4-421c2: Etymological inquiry proceeds on this foundation.

- A. 397c4-400d1: Etymological analysis of a group of common nouns: types of being with agency; certain subdivisions thereof.
- B. 400d1-408d5: Return to proper names (divine ὀνόματα).
 - 1. 400d1-401a7: Introduction.
 - 2. 401b1-e1: Hestia etymology (Heraclitus and “doctrine of flux” introduced into discussion).
 - 3. 401e1-402c3: Rhea and Cronus (philosophical and literary traditions linked together).
 - 4. 402c4-408d5: Numerous other divine names analyzed.
- C. 408d6-410e5: Analysis of terms denoting natural bodies, elements, and cycles.
- D. 411a1-421c2: Analysis of so-called καλὰ ὀνόματα (notably, terms key to the areas of ethics, psychology, epistemology, and metaphysics).

(*Geschichte der Sprachphilosophie*, 85; cf. Robinson, “A Criticism of Plato’s *Cratylus*,” 122). Similarly, Friendländer claims that “what matters is that we recognize the impulse to etymologize...[is] deeply seated in the Greek temperament, and in Plato’s as well” (*Plato*, vol. 2, 197; cf. Wilamowitz, who asserts that Plato was inclined toward that approach which the *Cratylus* is intended to combat, but which also evinces the approach’s powerful *attraction* (*Platon*, 223). In my view, the tone and progression of the *Cratylus*, and Plato’s generally indifferent stance elsewhere, belie the existence of such a relation or impulse (for interpretations stressing Plato’s lack of interest or seriousness see Shorey, 259; Taylor, 77-8; Apelt, 13-15; Jowett, 259-62; Méridier, 19, 21, 29; Kirk, 226; and Ryle, *Plato’s Progress*, 273). In addition, *contra* Steinthal, Plato is certainly quite willing to critique views to which he is not attracted, but in fact views as significantly, even dangerously mistaken (see his critique of poets and their negative influence on character in the *Republic*; cf. his challenge to the material explanations of natural philosophers in the *Phaedo*). Steinthal further suggests that, although he embraces convention (107), Plato was interested in a science (*Wissenschaft*) of etymology but felt incapable of instituting it (99, 108); I find no evidence within or outside the *Cratylus* to support this conclusion. Lorenz and Mittelstrass, in turn, maintain that Plato was making “a proposal for a *rational reconstruction* of language,” and that “the quasi-etymologies in the *Cratylus* are used as examples of how one should proceed when this programme is accepted” (Plato’s *Cratylus* Reconsidered,” 10, 13). On Plato’s lack of interest in the construction of an ideal language see, e.g., Kahn, “Les mots et les formes,” 92, preceded by “Language and Ontology in the *Cratylus*,” 167; Gaiser, *Name und Sache in Platons “Kratylos,”* 47, 79; and Apelt, *Cratylus*, 20-1. Goldschmidt denies that Plato wished to establish a science of etymology, or generally to replace “la langue grecque par une langue idéale” (*Essai sur le “Cratyle,”* 141, 202). On the positive side, Goldschmidt asserts that Plato’s sympathy lay with the doctrine of Cratylus, and that Plato was interested in the creation of a new technical vocabulary, taking steps in this direction in the late dialogues (168, 203, 208).

What is accomplished: Plato undertakes a range of etymological analyses based on the framework established in what precedes. Specifically, he considers classes of ὀνόματα, whose members' referents enjoy various types of priority—e.g., ontological and explanatory—based on different ways of construing and breaking down reality.⁹⁴ First, Plato treats the literary tradition's articulation into beings with agency, through a hierarchy at whose apex stand the gods (followed later by sustained analysis of individual divine names). Next, Plato turns to that rather different framework favored, in general, by philosophers of nature. Third and finally, Plato focuses on a class of ὀνόματα containing terms of importance based on his own articulation of reality; included here are ὀνόματα designating those entities, i.e. Forms, which enjoy numerous types of priority within Platonic metaphysics.

How: In what follows, I focus on relevant material within this section.

III. 397c4-421c2: Etymological inquiry proceeds on the foundation laid in Sections I and II.

A. 397c4-400d1: Plato first treats a group of common nouns, comprising types of being with agency and certain subdivisions thereof.

- At issue here are entities with different ontological statuses—in descending order—based, generally speaking, on the way in which poets broke down reality. In this framework, gods dwelt at the top of the hierarchy, and human beings at the bottom. There was much that poets viewed as problematic (*explananda*), e.g., outstanding human accomplishments and vicissitudes in human affairs; often writers in this tradition favored explanations in terms of origin, where the *point* of origin is identified as a divine being (*explanans*).⁹⁵ In between lie beings of intermediate rank, namely, daimons and heroes. Gods and heroes (part human, part divine) constitute the subject

⁹⁴ Cf. Baxter, who observes that “the etymologies can be seen as a schematized developmental picture of Greek thought,” (*The “Cratylus,”* 93). The number and proportion of entities having this status, relative to the total number of ὀνόματα treated, varies between classes. For an excellent discussion of key explanatory patterns in Greek thought see Moravcsik (“Appearance and Reality in Heraclitus’ Philosophy,” *Monist*, 551-66).

⁹⁵ See Moravcsik, who speaks of a “productive model of explanation,” and notes with regard to Homer specifically that “we find primarily two kinds of facts represented as problematic. These are: large scale natural phenomena such as the changing of seasons, storms, plagues, etc., and outstanding human achievements such as sustained prowess in fighting, the winning of crucial duels, or shrewdness” (“Appearance and Reality in Heraclitus’ Philosophy,” 533). To give just one example of how divine, personal beings were invoked to explain problematic phenomena: at the start of the *Iliad* a plague devastates the Greeks; its advent is traced to Apollo’s anger at an injustice done to his priest Chryses, and its subsequent departure to the appeasement of that anger (1.37-52, 380-6, 451-7). Hesiod’s *Theogony*, in turn, appeals to a series of marriages and begettings involving divine beings, anthropomorphically construed, to explain the coming-to-be of the world as we know it.

matter of Greek myth, which was an inexhaustible source of material for Greek poets from Homer onward. In general, regardless of other differences, their writings exhibit a distinct hierarchy of beings: gods; heroes; ordinary human beings.

1. 397c4-d7: θεοί:

φαίνονται μοι οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων τῶν περὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα τούτους μόνους [τοὺς θεοὺς] ἡγεῖσθαι οὕσπερ νῦν πολλοὶ τῶν βαρβάρων, ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην καὶ γῆν καὶ ἄστρα καὶ οὐρανόν· ἅτε οὖν αὐτὰ ὀρῶντες πάντα ἀεὶ ἰόντα δρόμῳ καὶ θέοντα, ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς φύσεως τῆς τοῦ θεῖν “θεοὺς” αὐτοὺς ἐπονομάσαι· ὕστερον δὲ κατανοοῦντες τοὺς ἄλλους πάντας ἤδη τούτῳ τῷ ὀνόματι προσαγορεύειν (397c8-d6).⁹⁶

• As Plato tells it, natural and heavenly bodies were the original deities, and received the collective appellation θεοί due to their perpetual movement or running (θεῖν); the Olympians, when later introduced, were covered by the same group ὄνομα. Interestingly, a previous writer, Herodotus, had offered a different etymology of the term, one emphasizing gods’ ordering and regulative function; according to this derivation, the Pelasgians called the gods by the Greek word θεοί because κόσμῳ θέντες τὰ πάντα πράγματα καὶ πάσας νομὰς εἶχον (*Hist.* 2.52). Herodotus further claims that the Pelasgians initially sacrificed and prayed to the gods without any distinction of appellation, and that only later were the names of individual gods introduced into Greece from Egypt. Both writers thus note an early stage of religious belief and practice when the term θεοί was employed but names of the familiar anthropomorphic deities were not in use.

2. 397d8-398c4: δαίμονες. (Hesiod is quoted: *W.D.* 121-3; see also 252-3.)⁹⁷

⁹⁶ “The first Greeks seem to me to have considered as gods only those whom present-day barbarians identify as such, namely, sun, moon, earth, stars, and heaven. Due to the fact that they saw them all continually moving on course and running, they called them ‘gods’ or ‘runners.’ Later, having learned about all the others, they applied this group appellation to them as well.”

⁹⁷ Plato’s quotation runs as follows:

Αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ τοῦτο γένος κατὰ μοῖρ’ ἐκάλυπεν,
οἱ μὲν δαίμονες ἀγνοὶ ὑποχθόνιοι καλέονται,
ἔσθλοί, ἀλεξίκακοι, φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων.

This version diverges in several places from that printed in the OCT version of *Works and Days*:

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τοῦτο γένος κατὰ γαῖα κάλυψε,
τοὶ μὲν δαίμονες εἰσι Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλᾶς
ἔσθλοί, ἐπιχθόνιοι, φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων.

Heraclitus (Fr. 63) hearkens back to these Hesiodic lines, but in his remark ἦθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων (Fr. 119) appropriates the term for use in an ethical context, highlighting the notion of individual responsibility for the development of one’s own character (cf. Guthrie, who notes that Heraclitus reinterprets the “superstitious belief” in an external δαίμων “in a highly enlightened, rational, and ethical way,” *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1, 482). In the *Republic*, Plato reprises as follows the latter two lines from Hesiod:

3. 398c5-e3: ἥρως.⁹⁸

4. 398e3-399c6: ἄνθρωπος.

5. 399c7-400c9: Plato here subdivides man into two.

a. 399c7-400b7: ψυχή. He offers two etymologies. The first runs as follows: ὅταν παρῇ τῷ σώματι, αἰτίον ἐστὶ τοῦ ζῆν αὐτῷ, τὴν τοῦ ἀναπνεῖν δύναμιν παρέχον καὶ ἀναψύχον, ἅμα δὲ ἐκλείποντος τοῦ ἀναψύχοντος τὸ σῶμα ἀπόλλυται τε καὶ τελευτᾷ· ὅθεν δὴ μοι δοκοῦσιν αὐτὸ “ψυχὴν” καλέσαι. The second derivation—involving a consolidation of ἡ φύσιν ὁχεῖ καὶ ἔχει—is tied to Anaxagoras’ privileging of νοῦς in his cosmogony and with regard to living creatures in the developed world.⁹⁹

- The first analysis is noteworthy because the view underlying it—that ψυχή is what keeps one alive—goes back to Homer; it refers to that within a man which departs from him at the moment of death, proceeding to take up its sojourn as a shadow entity in Hades.¹⁰⁰

b. 400b8-c9: σῶμα. οἱ ἄμφι Ὀρφέα are mentioned as the source of this ὄνομα (for the σῶμα-σῆμα tie, discussed here, see also *Gorgias* 493a1-3).

- Apropos of this reference to Orphics, it is worth noting that in the *Cratylus* in general Plato assigns responsibility for various assignments to different agencies, moving away from the deliberate attribution to an expert constructor

οἱ μὲν δαίμονες ἄγνοοι ἐπιχθόνιοι τελέθουσιν,
ἐσθλοὶ, ἀλεξίκακοι, φύλακες μερόπων ἀνθρώπων. (469a1-2; for invocation of the tradition notion of the δαίμων as guardian cf. the *Phaedo*, 107d-e)

⁹⁸ For Plato’s conception of hero described as that of Hesiod see Méridier, 73.

⁹⁹ For Anaxagoras’ conception of νοῦς see DK 11-14; in the *Phaedo*, as is well known, Plato criticizes Anaxagoras for merely announcing the great explanatory power of νοῦς without making proper use of it in those explanations he actually offers (97b8-98c2). In the *De Anima*, Aristotle mentions etymologies to which supporters of different views of soul appeal: οἱ μὲν τὸ θερμὸν λέγοντες, ὅτι διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τὸ ζῆν ὠνόμασται, οἱ δὲ τὸ ψυχρόν, (διὰ τὸ) διὰ τὴν ἀναπνοὴν καὶ τὴν κατάψυξιν καλεῖσθαι ψυχὴν (405b27-9).

¹⁰⁰ For this Homeric view of ψυχή see B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, 8. With Heraclitus “the intellect is explicitly placed in the soul” (*The Presocratic Philosophers*, 204); see DK 117-18. On the issue of self-control see Fr. 117, which discourages drunkenness for its stultifying effect on the soul. In addition, Heraclitus emphasizes the debilitating effect of anger, and presumably by extension strong emotion in general, in terms of its diminution of the soul’s effectiveness: θυμῷ μάχεσθαι χαλεπὸν· ὁ γὰρ ἂν θέλῃ, ψυχῆς ὠνεῖται; on the detrimental effect of negative attitudes, in this case ὕβρις, see DK 43. At issue here, albeit in rudimentary form, are the basic elements of Plato’s tripartite conception of soul, with pride of place reserved for the intellect. Notably, both Plato and Aristotle privilege complex hierarchical conceptions of soul, whose respective pinnacles are occupied—as for Heraclitus—by reason or intellect (see *Republic*, Book 4, and *De Anima*, Books 2 and 3).

made at the outset when he insisted on “presenting” naming as a τέχνη. This is crucial because, rather than maintaining a small, elite group of Form-oriented practitioners, as described at the outset, Plato ends up finding constructors “anywhere and everywhere” (in that sense analogous to what transpires with regard to the subject matter of naming).

- Ψυχή and σῶμα are two terms of import in Plato’s framework, which cannot be given the role and consideration they deserve by the provision of etymologies. As in numerous other cases, to ascertain his own view one must look to other middle-period dialogues. Specifically, Plato explores the ψυχή-σῶμα division of man in the *Phaedo*, but does so there in his *own* treatment of the soul’s immortality and related issues. At that juncture, soul is correlated with the rational principle, while desires, emotions, and sense-perception are aligned with the body. Plato presents his own hierarchical conception of soul in Book 4 of the *Republic* (435ff.); there, his tripartite framework accommodates those features and capacities which the *Phaedo* divides *between* soul and body.¹⁰¹ (For the constituents of this tripartite conception see *Phaedo* 82b-c. One may also view the *Symposium* as containing the ingredients of the tripartite conception, with pride of place given to reason in the ascent (210aff.).¹⁰² However, for the developed and explicit view, one must consult *Republic* 4, combined with Books 5-7 where Plato explores the nature and functions of reason at great length.)

B. 400d1-408d5: Plato returns to proper names; specifically, he is interested in gods’ ὀνόματα.

- Plato focuses here on members of that class of entities, θεοί, whose collective appellation he analyzed above. For poets and Greeks in general, these entities enjoyed various types of priority (ontological, logical, natural, and explanatory). Regarding their explanatory priority in particular, writers in the literary tradition account for a

¹⁰¹ As concerns the framework’s explanatory power, it is at least conceivable that Plato believed his tripartite approach capable of accounting for those basic types of psychic conflict which poets, principally tragedians, had explored in a non-systematic and piecemeal fashion.

¹⁰² If one notes the basic psychic elements and types of creative activity discussed in Socrates’ speech, the same general division suggests itself: physical desire, which seeks immortality through procreation; a love of honor, which seeks immortality through noble deeds (immortality consisting in a name, i.e., reputation, that endures); finally, reason, the products of whose activity are increasingly abstract. Reason’s final object is not in any way *its* product, yet immortality is not here irrelevant; quite the reverse (cf. the *Phaedo* discussion of the soul’s immortality where, as noted, soul is linked solely with the capacity to reason).

range of phenomena—natural, psychological, intellectual, and physical—by invoking gods as their source. Gods’ explanatory role is also evident in writers’ approach to questions of naming; specifically, the question of divine origin is important to judgments of names’ appropriateness. The common element here is appeal to divine beings to explain what these writers take to be problematic; the basic paradigm is explanation in terms of origins.

- Among proper names, it is precisely gods’ ὀνόματα that are not ruled out, at least explicitly, by Plato’s previous comment at the close of Section II. Perhaps these assignments—the reasoning seems to go—do not incorporate that element of fallibility which concerned Plato above with regard to the names of heroes and humans, leading him to avoid treating the latter sorts of names, but leaving gods’ names available for analysis.

1. 400d1-401a7: Introduction. Plato provides the principle or ground of this investigation: one can only get at human δόξαι.

- This observation indicates Plato’s view that, *contra* what poets believed, the notion of names’ “divine source” is useless and devoid of content for purposes of genuine explanations which human beings might offer; specifically, since humans can never knowingly arrive at assignments constructed or sanctioned by gods, it cannot serve as a satisfactory account of names’ fitness simply to invoke their allegedly “divine” origin.¹⁰³ The key idea here is that human beings assign gods’ appellations based solely on their own beliefs, which also govern judgments of fitness. Since insight, *not* mere belief, is required of name-givers *qua* τέχνη practitioners, this observation is suggestive.

2. 401b1-e1: Hestia etymology. This etymology is important because it introduces Heraclitus into the picture.¹⁰⁴

- I do not wish to contest the central relevance of the philosophical tradition to proper interpretation of the *Cratylus*; nonetheless, it is interesting that Heraclitus is only mentioned once the investigation is well under way.¹⁰⁵ He is nowhere clearly

¹⁰³ Cf. 425d. The qualification “knowingly” is important here since (assuming them to exist) one might arrive at such assignments by accident.

¹⁰⁴ The following comment begins Plato’s treatment of “Hestia”: Κινδυνεύουσι γοῦν, ὡγαθὲ Ἑρμόγενης, οἱ πρῶτοι τὰ ὀνόματα τιθέμενοι οὐ φαῦλοι εἶναι ἀλλὰ μετεωρολόγοι καὶ ἀδολέσχει τινές (401b6-8). The description here of the first namegivers as not “shabby” (φαῦλοι) hearkens back to 390d8, where the same characterization is found. In the *Phaedo* the verb ἀδολεσχεῖν appears in Socrates’ preface to his treatment of the soul’s immortality (70b10-c3).

¹⁰⁵ Anaxagoras is mentioned earlier, but is far less central to the *Cratylus* than Heraclitus.

invoked in the *Cratylus* with regard to language in general or naming in particular, but solely in connection with the “doctrine of flux”; notably, at that critical juncture when the ground of the investigation is laid (391b-d), the choice Plato offers is one between sophists and poets—philosophers are not even mentioned. Nevertheless, it has been said that “as far as the φύσει ὀρθότης τῶν ὀνομάτων is concerned, Heraclitus *might* have been the spiritual father of Plato’s *Cratylus*.”¹⁰⁶ The question is, What if any evidence is there to support such a conjecture?

Examination of the extant fragments reveals a thinker with great sensitivity to language. A notable example of this is Heraclitus’ concern, on various levels, with the way in which sounds are combined. In this regard, in a given fragment one may find the same combinations of words repeated with their sequence reversed (ἀθάνατοι θνητοί in Fr. 62); individual words repeated in different cases (πηλός, Fr. 5; θάλασσα, Fr. 31; ὕδωρ, γῆ, and ψυχή in Fr. 36; χρυσός and χρῆμα in Fr. 90); the same and similar sound combinations in close proximity (ἄισμα αἰδοίοισιν, ἀναιδέστατα in Fr. 15; κοινὸν κόσμον...κοιμωμένων in Fr. 89); and numerous occurrences of single letters and closely related ones (kappa and xi in Fr. 34 (ἄξύνετοι ἀκούσαντες κωφοῖσιν εἰκάσι), cf. Frs. 29 and 124; pi in Frs. 52 and 53).¹⁰⁷ Notably, Heraclitus shares *both* this sensitivity to sound *and* these particular manifestations of it with the literary tradition;¹⁰⁸ in neither case, however, does this awareness and use of language count as etymology, and hence as useful in explaining the particular approach to ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων taken by Plato in the dialogue’s etymological centerpiece.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Marcovich, *Heraclitus*, 193; see also Diels (“Die Anfänge der Philologie bei den Griechen,” 3, cf. 4-6) and to some extent Hans Diller (*Das Neue Bild der Antike*, vol. 1, 303-16). (Gaiser remains substantially noncommittal, *Name und Sache in Platons “Kratylos,”* 29.) This view of the relationship is called into question by Kirk, *The Cosmic Fragments*, 118-19.

¹⁰⁷ Fragments are numbered as in Diels-Kranz, Ninth Edition.

¹⁰⁸ For numerous instances in the literary tradition see my remarks in the Phonetic Constitution section of ch. 1. Like the literary tradition, Heraclitus also uses the euphemistic εὐφρόνη in place of νύξ (“night”); see Frs. 26, 57, 67, and 99. For εὐφρόνη in the literary tradition see Hesiod, *W.D.* 560; Pindar, *Nem.* 7.3; and Herodotus, *Hist.* 7.56.

¹⁰⁹ In addition, for stylistic reasons Heraclitus elsewhere varies prefixes and parts of speech of terms which clearly have the same root (see Frs. 1, 72, 121, and 114 (i.e., ἰσχυρίζεσθαι and ἰσχυροτέρως; the ξὺν νόφ/ξυνῶ connection will be discussed below)). Having challenged the view that the figure Cratylus represents Heraclitus’ own stance, Kirk 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” (*The Cosmic Fragments*, 119). First, one cannot simply appeal to a group of poets to ground the claim that Heraclitus held a certain view of the name-thing relation; second, from the claim that both Heraclitus and Aeschylus (and the tragedians more generally) believed in “some essential relation” between the two, it need not follow that this relation took the same *form* for Heraclitus

Elsewhere, Heraclitus highlights different senses of a single term. In this connection see Fr. 26, where he capitalizes on the dual meaning of ἄπτεσθαι: ἄνθρωπος ἐν εὐφρόνῃ φάος ἄπτεται ἑαυτῷ [ἀποθανών] ἀποσβεσθεῖς ὄψεις, ζῶν δὲ ἄπτεται τεθνεώτος εὐδων, [ἀποσβεσθεῖς ὄψεις], ἐγρηγορῶς ἄπτεται εὐδοντος. The literary tradition uses the same technique, as in Pindar's tenth *Olympian* ode where the poet plays quite effectively on different senses of the term τόκος—"child" and "interest" (i.e., on a debt).¹¹⁰ In another instance of this type, Aeschylus emphasizes the dual meaning of κῆδος ("sorrow" and "connection by marriage" (Ag. 699-700). Kirk dubs Heraclitus' use of ἄπτεσθαι "a typical Heraclitean word-play."¹¹¹ While indeed an instance of one *type* of "word-play," it evinces a different analytic technique than that at issue in etymology as treated in the *Cratylus* and hence in the present study.¹¹²

There are other fragments of which one might wish to take note: Fr. 50, for the presence of τοῦ λόγου and ὁμολογεῖν; and Fr. 114, in which one finds ξὺν νόωι and ξυνῶι. Marcovich considers these to be "merely rhetorical puns" (192). One may reach this conclusion, or grant the latter somewhat more importance, as does Kirk in viewing it as a good example of significant word-play.¹¹³ In the former case Heraclitus' goal is to make a substantive point about the λόγος. Though he is no doubt aware that the verb and noun have the same root, there is no evidence that he is offering an etymology specifically; moreover, any conceivable explanatory

and the poets. Indeed, Kirk himself admits 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).

¹¹⁰ For discussion of Pindar's use of τόκος in *Ol.* 10 see Nisetich (*Pindar's Victory Songs*, 129-30). Plato too highlights the term's dual meaning (see *Rep.* 507a); cf. his employment of the term συμφορά in *Phil.* 64d11-e3, with the note by R. Hackforth (*Plato's Examination of Pleasure*, 136), and his appeals to νόμος in the sense of "song" or "musical strain" to support remarks pertaining to νόμος in the sense of "law" (*Rep.* 531d, *Laws* 700a-b, 722c-723b, 734e, and 799e; I owe the *Laws* citations to Levinson, "Language and the *Cratylus*," 35).

¹¹¹ *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 206.

¹¹² This conclusion naturally applies to the literary examples as well. Of course, Heraclitus' selection of the term λόγος to play a pivotal role in his ontology constitutes the most important and pervasive example of the technique in question; of interest here is his assignment to it of a technical sense pertaining to the structure and character of reality, which exists alongside λόγος in the familiar sense of "discourse." Any suggestion of ties between language and reality which may be reflected herein is noteworthy, but such links would not be grounded on etymology.

¹¹³ *The Cosmic Fragments*, 68. In fact, Kirk claims that this is one of the four best examples found in Heraclitus of names purporting "to reveal a real connexion between apparently different things which bear similar...names," the others being μόροι-μοίρας; δοκέοντα-δοκιμώτατος; and βίῃ-βίῳ. He concludes that "there is no evidence that Heraclitus went deeper than this into the theory of names...but even from these examples it may be inferred that verbal coincidences were not disregarded by him" (68).

role of the former with reference to the latter would only be pertinent in the context of the broader claim expressed by the fragment (οὐκ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστὶν ἐν πάντα εἶναι). With regard to the latter instance, a limited explanatory role (i.e., of ξυνῶι with reference to ξὺν νόωι) is possible in the sense that the linguistic similarities in this twofold use of the dative may reinforce the substantial claim being made in the remark which contains it (i.e., ξὺν νόωι λέγοντας ἰσχυρίζεσθαι χρὴ τῶι ξυνῶι πάντων); however, it is far from clear that Heraclitus intends to provide an *etymology*. Thus, taking the two together, one finds no distinct evidence of etymology conjoined with an explanatory role granted to such ties as are highlighted, as is so prominent in both the *Cratylus* and the literary tradition.¹¹⁴

In addition, there is the βίος-βίος link evinced in Fr. 48: βίος: τῶι οὖν τόξωι ὄνομα βίος, ἔργον δὲ θάνατος. (Interestingly, Sophocles emphasizes the same tie: ἀπεστέρηκας τὸν βίον τὰ τόξ' ἐλών. ἀπόδος, ἰκνοῦμαί σ', ἀπόδος, ἱκετεύω, τέκνον. πρὸς θεῶν πατρώων, τὸν βίον με μὴ ἀφέλῃ (*Phil.* 931-3).) Marcovich takes this fragment to illustrate the fact that “Heraclitus shared the Greek belief that *name* reveals a great deal of the true φύσις of its object” (192).¹¹⁵ In my view, 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 ὄνομα and ἔργον with regard to the term and referent in question (ἔργον is literally “function” here, but the more general

¹¹⁴ Kirk asserts that Heraclitus’ “underlying meaning was sometimes reinforced by word-plays (e.g. ξὺν νόφ-ξυνῶι in 250 [DK 114]) and etymological periphrases” (*The Presocratic Philosophers*, 210). (While he rightly does not claim the word-play in Fr. 114 to have etymological force, Kirk himself does not provide any examples in the chapter on Heraclitus of what he actually does have in mind in using the expression “etymological periphrase.”) One might want to distinguish DK 25 (μόροι γὰρ μέζονες μέζονας μοίρας λαγχάνουσι) from the aforementioned cases in terms of the idea that the word-play has etymological import, with the suggested parallel between μόρος and μοῖρα playing a certain explanatory role. On this point see Marcovich, who comments that “the etymological word-play...is intentional” (514); see also Kirk (*The Cosmic Fragments*, 68). Yet, as Marcovich also notes, the same parallel is found in Aeschylus, when Orestes tells Clytaemestra that καὶ τόνδε τοῖνον Μοῖρ' ἐπόρσεν μόνον (*Cho.* 911). (Following Diels, he refers in connection not with the word-play but with the thought expressed by the fragment to the *Cratylus* (398b9-c1). Also strictly on the level of thought, with regard to DK 16 (τὸ μὴ δύνόν ποτε πῶς ἂν τις λάθοι;) Marcovich suggests that *Cr.* 413 b-c evinces Plato’s understanding of “Heraclitus’ criticism of the traditional god Helios” (433); on 413b-c see also Kirk, who states that “it is likely enough that there is some reference here to Heraclitean ideas, and it is possible that ἐπειδὴν ὁ ἥλιος δύνῃ refers to this fragment” though he emphasizes that due to the jocular tone of numerous *Cratylus* passages one cannot make such attributions with certainty (*The Cosmic Fragments*, 363-4).)

¹¹⁵ For a positive though less strongly-formulated evaluation see Kirk (*The Cosmic Fragments*, 122, 198); on a more general plane he takes note of the partial or aspectual character of such links as there are between ὀνόματα and their referents (118, 120).

conflict is that between language and reality, specifically, the effect the bow has on elements thereof). Rather than using this parallel as strong evidence of a belief in names' revelatory power, one might more plausibly conclude from the fragment's content that a focus on such linguistic analyses obscures as much—or perhaps even more—than it clarifies (this is emphasized by the presence of δέ).¹¹⁶ In any case since the same parallel is drawn in the literary tradition, which without question made extensive use of etymology, this example cannot be cited as evidence that Heraclitus in particular is the inspiration behind the *Cratylus*. Finally, it is worth mentioning Fr. 32: ἐν τὸ σοφὸν μοῦνον λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς ὄνομα. Though one might initially be tempted to view Heraclitus as pointing toward the etymology involving ζῆν which poets made so much of, the suggestion is implausible: in my view, it would take quite a stretch of imagination to tie ἐν τὸ σοφὸν here closely to the particular notions of life and death in the way required by this interpretation.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ One might say that there is a significant clash between those expectations generated by the ὄνομα and the kind of impact which its bearer has on reality. While use of the bow results in death, such ties as there are between the bow itself and life are indirect, i.e., they exist insofar as life and death are themselves coincident opposites. The fragment does not suggest a way in which the bow *itself* could represent life or a coincidence of opposites involving life and death; with Kahn (202), I do not find it likely that Heraclitus had in mind the obvious fact that hunters' activity of killing secures the continuation of their own lives. Cf. Fr. 67: ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμῶν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός (τάναντία ἅπαντα οὗτος ὁ νοῦς), ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὥκωσπερ (πῦρ), ὅποταν συμμιγῇ θυώμασιν, ὀνομάζεται καθ' ἡδονὴν ἐκάστου, with Kirk's comment, which seems to me right, that "God...is said to be the common connecting element in all extremes, just as fire is the common element of different vapours (because these were conceived as a compound of fire with different kinds of incense). Change from one to another brings about a total change of name, which is misleading, because only a superficial component has altered and the most important constituent remains" (*The Presocratic Philosophers*, 191, italics mine; this represents a modification of his earlier, somewhat more positive stance (*The Cosmic Fragments*, 118)). The proliferation of names would seem to *reinforce* the common and mistaken human tendency to greatly magnify the importance of perceptible changes and contrasts. For the contrary view see Marcovich who, in his comments on βίος-βιός, claims that DK 67 does not contradict the view that for Heraclitus an ὄνομα "reveals a great deal of the true φύσις of its object" (192). In his remarks on Fr. 67 itself, he emphasizes a supposedly close fit between the content of this fragment and the view that "names reflect a *certain part* of the very essence of things" (416; italics mine in both cases); even this claim, which is notably weaker than that on p. 192, is unsubstantiated by the text of the fragment. For a clash between reputation and reality see Fr. 28: δοκέοντα γὰρ ὁ δοκιμώτατος γινώσκει, φυλάσσει; despite a high reputation, which would ostensibly correlate with superiority to ordinary human beings in terms of knowledge, for Heraclitus such individuals emphatically do not have this elevated status. While there may well be intentional word-play here, there is no suggestion that this play takes the form of a proffered etymology; also, one would be hard pressed to find a clear explanatory relation going in either direction.

¹¹⁷ *Contra* Kahn (*The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, 270), who does see a tie to ζῆν here, and with Kirk (*The Cosmic Fragments*, 392) and Marcovich (445), both of whom find the link unlikely. (In *The Presocratic Philosophers*, ch. 6, Kirk says nothing about a possible etymology or other natural link between name and referent.) Marcovich takes the phrases Δίκης ὄνομα (Fr. 23) and Ζηνὸς ὄνομα (Fr. 32) to "imply that the name corresponds to the very essence of its holder" (193) (regarding the former, Marcovich notes (230) that in the former case "ὄνομα seems to imply 'idea'"). One might view the latter

The surviving fragments indicate a sensitivity to and use of language quite similar in numerous ways to that displayed in poetic creations from Homer through Euripides. While Heraclitus certainly evinces interest in word-play in general, what one does not find is a marked interest in etymology *specifically*, as treated in the *Cratylus* and by Plato's non-philosophical predecessors. To the extent that Heraclitus may be viewed as offering etymologies and/or granting an explanatory role to certain parallels in descriptive content (as with *μόρος-μοῖρα* in DK 25, perhaps *ξὺν νόῳ-ξυνῶ* in Fr. 114, along with the substantially negative import and indirect ties in *βίος-βίος*, Fr. 48), he is following a procedure initiated and developed far more by his literary predecessors, contemporaries, and successors;¹¹⁸ in fact, in those two of the three aforementioned cases which make some use (however limited) of etymology, the same parallels are found in poets themselves (*μόρος-μοῖρα* in Aeschylus, and *βίος-βίος* in Sophocles). Even if one were to lend more positive import to a given example, notably, the *βίος-βίος* parallel, the fact remains that insofar as Heraclitus does raise the issue of etymology he is drawing on a non-philosophical, literary tradition to which he—like Plato—is heavily indebted for the initial formulation of this and related problems. Writers in that tradition, unlike Heraclitus, make extensive use of etymology, grant their analyses clear explanatory value, and use etymology on numerous occasions to treat explicitly the question of names' appropriateness. Finally, mitigating strongly

as indicating that Heraclitus' *ἐν τὸ σοφόν* shares some attributes with the Olympian Zeus but not others (for the concentration on attributes see Kirk, *The Cosmic Fragments*, 198; however, he focuses implausibly on the name-bearer connection—the name *Ζεύς* and the referent of the phrase *ἐν τὸ σοφόν*—rather than directly on the bearer-bearer link which is, in my view, where Heraclitus' concern lies). Leaving various possible interpretations of both fragments aside, there is no evidence in the case of *Δίκη* that Heraclitus is offering an etymology. In the case of *Ζεύς* an etymology is quite improbable but, given the general prevalence of the analysis cannot absolutely be ruled out (as previously discussed, the same treatment is found in Pindar, Aeschylus, and Euripides); in any case, such an etymology *if* hinted at is common, and would not be tied for Heraclitus to that notion of individual natures which plays a prominent role both in the literary tradition and in the *Cratylus*. With respect to other possible instances of significant word-play in the sense at issue in this study: Marcovich asserts that, given the clash depicted in DK 5, word-play between *μαϊνόμενοι* and *μαίνεσθαι* is unlikely (460); in contrast, he does find “an intentional word-play” in Aeschylus' use of the terms (*Th.* 343-4), though “not a reminiscence of Heraclitus' saying” (463). Regardless of how one resolves the issue of whether some form word-play is intended by Heraclitus and Aeschylus, what is crucial here is the fact that, at least on my reading, in neither instance do such parallels as there are have etymological import. In another case, following Schleiermacher, Marcovich views DK 112, in which both *σωφρονεῖν* and *σοφίη* appear, as “no more than a late (probably Stoic) imitation of Heraclitus” (96).

¹¹⁸ As regards chronology, for present purposes I accept that Heraclitus's *acme* was around 500 B.C. Kirk suggests provisionally that Heraclitus' “main philosophical activity had ended by about 480” (*The Presocratic Philosophers*, 181-2).

against Heraclitus as the inspiration for Plato's discussion of ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων is the fact that individual natures are prominent in the *Cratylus* as what etymologies reveal: this makes sense if Plato has the literary tradition in view, but *not* if he is thinking of Heraclitus. In conclusion, I do not dispute the view that Heraclitus is a central Platonic opponent in the *Cratylus*, but would maintain that he is such largely on the ontological plane rather than as concerns the "correctness of words."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ I thus do not rule out a quite limited influence in this regard, but would certainly maintain that the evidence fails to support Heraclitus' status as a clear, let alone central opponent on the matter of ὀρθότης. On another front, Warburg (*Zwei Fragen zum "Kratylos"*) has claimed that the *Cratylus* is directed against Heraclides Ponticus, the fourth-century academic philosopher, whom Warburg maintains combined etymologizing and Heracliteanism. His theory, quite speculative in character, has been successfully challenged on numerous fronts. Hellfried Dahlmann illustrates the untenability of Warburg's appeals to Cicero and Aristotle as evidence that etymology was an established method in the Academy before the Peripatetic school split off from it (*Deutsche Literaturzeitung für Kritik der internationalen Wissenschaft*, 1671). Diogenes Laertius attributes a work called Ἡρακλείτου ἐξηγήσεις δ' to Heraclides, of which only the title remains; from this attribution alone Warburg concludes that Heraclides Ponticus was a *follower* of Heraclitus. Challenging this hasty conclusion, Dahlmann rightly observes that the mere reference to Heraclides as among Heraclitus' interpreters does not indicate a particular relation or attitude toward Heraclitus (i.e., an allegiance to his ontology), noting further that if one sought to link Heraclides with a prominent figure one would better identify that figure as Democritus or Pythagoras (1673); cf. von Arnim, who comments that there is no proof here that Heraclides was a Heraclitean in any other way than every Platonic disciple, namely, applying Heraclitus' account merely to the perceptible realm ("Die sprachliche Forschung als Grundlage der Chronologie der platonischen Dialoge und der *Kratylos*," 21-2). Relying on Cohn, Warburg asserts that the Heraclides whose περὶ ἐτυμολογιῶν Orion excerpts in his *Etymologica* is not the homonymous student of Didymus but rather Plato's pupil, also insisting, in contrast to Cohn, that Heraclides influenced Plato's composition. According to Warburg, "von den unter dem Namen des Herakleides überlieferten Etymologien stimmen einige nicht nur methodisch, sondern auch sachlich—wörtlich mit solchen des 'Kratylos' überein" (26). Yet, rather than discussing *all* parallel instances which he alleges to have discovered, as he must to provide genuine support for his claim about Heraclides, he discusses only one case, the etymologies of σελήνη found in both Orion's *Etymologica* and in Plato's *Cratylus* (cf. von Arnim, 22), reaching the conclusion that Plato's derivation is related to Heraclides' as variation to a theme, i.e., "wie das Sekundäre zum Primären" (27). Given the extant material, any conclusion about a dependence relation can only be speculative in nature, and Warburg's own priority claim is unconvincing, as is his following treatment of σκιά to support the claim that Heraclides was not just Heraclitean and etymologist, but combined the two. As von Arnim notes, Warburg's analysis shows no link to Heracliteanism in particular, which finds flux where human beings believe to see stability; this does not apply in the case of a shadow (25). Dahlmann maintains that the material in Orion's *Etymologica*, to which Warburg appeals in support of his theory, suggests *contra* Warburg "daß der Herakleides bei Orion ein ganz anderer als der von Platon parodierte ernsthafte Etymologe" (1674). Fritz Wehrli, in turn, argued persuasively that most, if not all, of those etymologies to which Orion's *Etymologica*, the *Ed. Gud.*, and *Et. Magn.* link the name of Heraclides Ponticus have as their source the grammarian and student of Didymus, Heraclides Ponticus the Younger (first-century A.D.) (*Die Schule des Aristoteles*, 117-19). Moreover, according to von Arnim, given the facts of the situation it is not impossible that the source of the etymologies was neither the grammarian nor the Academic philosopher, but a younger philosopher who named himself after his older compatriot (21); see also Dahlmann (1674). In sum, Warburg concludes that Plato's student was the source of the etymologies in Orion and that he combined etymologizing and Heracliteanism, but in fact he never shows: 1) that this Heraclides was a Heraclitean; 2) that, even if he did etymologize, Plato's *Cratylus* is dependent on his student's analyses; 3) that Heraclides is the actual source of the material in Orion; or 4) that the etymologies in question are Heraclitean in character.

As concerns dating, Warburg wishes to link the *Cratylus* closely to the *Theaetetus*; indeed, Warburg absolutely requires this later dating in order to avoid what is otherwise the chronological impossibility that Heraclides Ponticus influenced Plato. To this end, he is compelled to challenge the results of von Arnim's

3. 401e1-402c3: Rhea and Cronus. Plato ties the philosophical and literary traditions—his two major opponents in the dialogue—together:

ΣΩ. Τὸν Ἡράκλειτόν μοι δοκῶ καθορᾶν παλαί' ἅττα σοφὰ λέγοντα, ἀτεχνῶς τὰ ἐπὶ Κρόνου καὶ Ῥέας, ἃ καὶ Ὅμηρος ἔλεγεν.

ΕΡΜ. Πῶς τοῦτο λέγεις;

ΣΩ. Λέγει πού Ἡράκλειτος ὅτι “πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει,” καὶ ποταμοῦ ῥοῇ ἀπεικάζων τὰ ὄντα λέγει ὡς “δὺς ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν ποταμὸν οὐκ ἂν ἐμβαίης.”

ΕΡΜ. Ἔστι ταῦτα.

ΣΩ. Τί οὖν; δοκεῖ σοι ἀλλοιότερον Ἡρακλείτου νοεῖν ὁ τιθέμενος τοῖς τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν προγόνοις “Ῥέαν” τε καὶ “Κρόνον”; ἄρα οἶει ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου αὐτὸν ἀμφοτέροις ῥευμάτων ὀνόματα θέσθαι; ὥσπερ αὖ Ὅμηρος “Ὠκεανόν τε θεῶν γένεσιν” φησιν “καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν.” οἶμαι δὲ καὶ Ἡσίοδος. (402a4-b6)¹²⁰

stylistic investigations, which tied the *Cratylus* most closely to the *Meno*, *Phaedo* and *Gorgias* (“Sprachliche Forschungen zur Chronologie der platonischen Dialoge,” 213), and in fact Warburg attacks the very foundations of von Arnim’s approach. Abandoning a comprehensive approach for concentration on a few uncommon phrases of assent uniquely shared by small groups of dialogues, Warburg arrives at a collection of dialogues to which he feels the *Cratylus* is most closely linked (48); most importantly for his purposes, this group includes the *Theaetetus*. Von Arnim, in turn, responded forcefully to Warburg’s challenge, maintaining that Warburg’s attack rests on a fundamental misconstrual of his approach and arguing persuasively against the explanatory value of Warburg’s own methodology (“Die sprachliche Forschung als Grundlage der Chronologie der platonischen Dialoge und der *Kratylos*,” 1-20, see esp. 16-20). Moreover, even if one accepted Warburg’s approach to stylistic questions—which I do not—one may object to the fact that, of those dialogues to which he does tie the *Cratylus*, he too abruptly privileges the *Theaetetus* in particular. Interestingly, Warburg himself identifies the *Phaedo* as belonging to that group of dialogues having “eine offenbar mehr als zufällige Verwandtschaft zum ‘Kratylos’” based on the approach to stylistic questions which he prefers to that of von Arnim (48). However, having established this grouping he does not consider what specific grounds there might be on the level of issues treated that would serve to forge close links between *these* two dialogues; in my view, thematic links between the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo* are stronger than those between the *Cratylus* and *Theaetetus*, and their existence should be brought to bear on the issue of chronology. Finally—and counterfactually—even if there were some plausibility to Warburg’s theory that Plato, in composing the *Cratylus*, had Heraclides Ponticus in view, Warburg tries to use this single figure to explain significantly more than is possible. In claiming that Heraclides is the one sought because, according to Warburg, he combined Heracliteanism and etymologizing, Warburg subordinates the literary tradition far more than is justifiable; specifically, he fails to see that the literary tradition constitutes a key and direct Platonic opponent of the *Cratylus* discussion.

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Soc. Heraclitus seems to me to understand some of the wise sayings of old, which really go back to the time of Cronus and Rhea, things of which Homer also spoke.

Herm. What do you mean by that?

Soc. Heraclitus says somewhere that “everything flows and nothing stays still,” and likening entities to the flow of a river he says that “you could never step in the same river twice.”

Herm. Yes, that is what he says.

Soc. Well then, doesn’t the one who identifies Rhea and Cronus as the progenitors of the other gods seem to you to operate with the same basic understanding of reality as Heraclitus? And do you believe that his giving of the names of streams to both of them

- It is quite noteworthy that Plato links Heraclitus and the literary tradition together in this passage, and the parallels he draws appear designed to show that their basic ontological orientations exhibit significant points of common ground, sufficient for both to be encompassed by his invocation of the “doctrine of flux.”¹²¹ Guthrie’s contention that Socrates’ tracing of the flux-doctrine back to Homer (402b) is an instance of Plato’s practice of bringing in “not only earlier philosophers but even poets as *soi-disant* parents of philosophical doctrines” (vol. 3, 182) misses the more fundamental point involved here: Plato’s interest is in *the reciprocal linkage of his own opponents’ views*.¹²²

- This is a crucial passage since it lends further support to the claim that these two traditions are Plato’s paramount concern in the *Cratylus*, with the sophists playing a comparatively minor role. A key question here is, What is the particular threat that both traditions pose from Plato’s point of view? In brief, the common denominator appears to be that each, in its way, poses a threat to that reality-appearance *dichotomy* which Plato insists on repeatedly in the middle-period dialogues, including the close of the *Cratylus* itself. The basic idea is one of giving more weight and precedence to appearances than their ontological status warrants.

4. 402c4-408d5: A series of divine names is subject to etymological analysis.

- Writers in the literary tradition focused on numerous individuals in this series.

- a. 402c4-d3: Tethys; b. 402d4-403a3: Poseidon; c. 403a3-404b4: Pluto/Hades;¹²³ d. 404b5-9: Demeter;¹²⁴ e. 404b9-c4: Hera;¹²⁵ f. 404c5-

happened arbitrarily? Likewise, in turn, Homer speaks of “Oceanus, the origin of gods, and mother Tethys.”

¹²¹ Regarding Heraclitus, see Kirk, who views the remark πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει as “Plato’s seriously intended summary of fr. 12” (*The Cosmic Fragments*, 14); he elsewhere dubs the comment δις ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν ποταμὸν οὐκ ἂν ἐμβαίης “a clear paraphrase” of this same fragment (370, cf. 372). As is well-known, Aristotle reports Cratylus to have thought in the end, *contra* Heraclitus, that one could not even step into the same river once (*Met.* 5.1010a13-15).

¹²² Leky too fails to see the focus and import of this passage, interpreting it strictly in connection with Plato’s challenge to Heraclitus’ ontology (49-50). (It is a separate issue—and one which I leave aside here—whether Plato’s depiction of Heraclitus is fair.) In the *Theaetetus*, Plato once again attributes the doctrine of flux to both Heraclitus and Homer, among others, making reference again, as in the *Cratylus* passage, to the latter’s remarks about Oceanus and Tethys in *Iliad* Book 14 (152d-e). For Plato’s association in these passages of two types of opponents based on an ultimate commitment to the doctrine of flux see also Jean Bollack, who comments on the meaningfulness (Aussagekraft) of Plato’s remarks (“Vom System der Geschichte zur Geschichte der Systeme,” 15-16). Derbolav, who mentions both passages, does not take note of the fact that poets, in this case Homer and Hesiod, are also associated with the doctrine of flux in the *Cratylus* passage (28).

¹²³ A special ability to avoid detection is the ground of Homer’s treatment of Hades as the “Unseen-one”: Athena put on the cap of Hades, μή μιν ἴδοι ὄβριμος Ἄρης (*Il.* 5.844-5). In the *Cratylus*, Plato claims to

d8: Persephone; g. 404d8-406a3: Apollo;¹²⁶ h. 406a3-5: Muses i. 406a6-b1: Leto; j. 406b1-6: Artemis; k. 406b7-c6: Dionysus; l. 406c7-d2: Aphrodite;¹²⁷ m. 406d3-407c2: Pallas/Athena (interpreters of Homer mentioned);¹²⁸ n. 407c3-8: Hephaestus; o. 407c9-d5: Ares;¹²⁹ p. 407d6-

revise this analysis, replacing it with one which will not elicit mortals' fear. He first observes: ὁ δὲ “Αἰδης,” οἱ πολλοὶ μὲν μοι δοκοῦσιν ὑπολαμβάνειν τὸ αἰδὲς προσειρησθαι τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ, καὶ φοβούμενοι τὸ ὄνομα “Πλούτωνα” καλοῦσιν αὐτόν (403a5-8). In what follows, he offers an alternative: Καὶ τό γε ὄνομα ὁ “Αἰδης,” ὃ Ἑρμόγενης, πολλοῦ δεῖ ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰδοῦς ἐπωνομάσθαι, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἀπὸ τοῦ πάντα τὰ καλὰ εἰδέναι, ἀπὸ τούτου ὑπὸ τοῦ νομοθέτου “Αἰδης” ἐκλήθη (404b1-4). (Notably, in the *Phaedo* Plato, like Homer, treats Hades as the “Unseen-one”; I discuss the relevant passage in appendix B.)

¹²⁴ In the *Bacchae* Euripides notes that Demeter and earth are said to be identical: Δημήτηρ θεά—γῆ δ' ἐστίν, ὄνομα δ' ὁπότερον βούλη κάλει (275-6). This suggests the etymology of “Mother-earth.” He appears to make the same proposal in *Phoenician Women*, when the Chorus mentions the διώνυμοι θεαί, Περσέφασσα καὶ φίλα Δαμάτηρ θεά, πάντων ἄνασσα, πάντων δὲ Γᾶ τροφός (683-6). In the *Cratylus* Plato offers a similar etymology: Δημήτηρ μὲν φαίνεται κατὰ τὴν δόσιν τῆς ἐδωδῆς διδοῦσα ὡς μήτηρ “Δημήτηρ” κεκλησθαι (404b8-9).

¹²⁵ In the literary tradition, an individual's name might be analyzed based on an element over which that individual has control. This is the case with Homer's linkage of Hera with air: the poet says that she sheds thick mist (ἀήρ) about her horses (*Il.* 5.775-6). As if to reinforce the etymology, he associates Hera with air again later in the work (14.277ff.). (In addition, Euripides connects Hera with οὐρανός at *Hel.* 31ff., and with αἰθήρ at *Hel.* 243ff.) This is in fact one of two derivations which Plato offers in the *Cratylus*: “Ἡρα δὲ ἐρατή τις, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ λέγεται ὁ Ζεὺς αὐτῆς ἐρασθεὶς ἔχειν. ἴσως δὲ μετεωρολογῶν ὁ νομοθέτης τὸν ἀέρα “Ἡραν” ὠνόμασεν ἐπικρυπτόμενος, θεὶς τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐπὶ τελευτῇ· γνοίης δ' ἂν, εἰ πολλάκις λέγοις τὸ τῆς Ἡρας ὄνομα.

¹²⁶ The tragedians devote much attention to the god's name and to one of his key epithets. In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* Cassandra, in despair, bemoans her fate: ὦπολλον ὦπολλον, ἀγνιᾶτ', ἀπόλλων ἐμός· ἀπώλεσας γὰρ οὐ μόλις τὸ δεύτερον (*Ag.* 1080-3, with verbatim repetition of the first two lines at 1085-6). In *Orestes* Euripides has Helen refer τοῖν τ' ἀθλίῳ τοῖνδ', οὓς ἀπώλεσεν θεός (121); subsequently, the messenger notes in despair that οὐδ' ὁ Πύθιος τρίποδα καθίζων Φοῖβος, ἀλλ' ἀπώλεσεν (955-6). In *Oedipus Tyrannus* Sophocles has Jocasta address Apollo as follows: “I came as suppliant to you, ὦ Λύκει’ Ἀπόλλων...grant us escape free (λύσιν τιν’) of the curse” (919-21, tr. by Grene). Elsewhere, a citizen of Pherae asks Apollo to be Admetus' redeemer (λυτήριος) from death (*Alc.* 221-5). It is interesting to note here that one of the four etymologies of Apollo's name offered by Plato in the *Cratylus* is based on a compound of λύω. Elsewhere with reference to Apollo, Xerxes' mother Atossa says that ὀρῶ...φεύγοντ' αἰετὸν πρὸς ἐσχάραν Φοῖβου, φόβῳ δ' ἄφθογος ἐστάθην (*Pers.* 205-6). (Euripides may perhaps connect Φοῖβος and φόνιος in a passage in which Orestes says that it was a black hour for Neoptolemus when φόνιον αἰτήσῃ δίκην ἄνακτα Φοῖβον (*Andr.* 1002-3); however, the parallels here may well be restricted to the phonetic plane.) As he had in connection with the name “Hades,” in treating the name “Apollo” Plato starts by noting mortals' fear: πολλοὶ πεφόβηται περὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ, ὡς τι δεινὸν μηνύοντος (404e1-2). In what follows he offers four derivations correlating with the god's four δυνάμεις.

¹²⁷ Hesiod speaks of the goddess whom gods and men call Ἀφροδίτην...οὐνέκ' ἐν ἀφρῷ θρέφθη (*Th.* 195-8). Euripides offers an etymology of the name Ἀφροδίτη different from that presented by Hesiod: in *Trojan Women* he has Hecuba say that τὰ μῶρα...πάντ' ἐστὶν Ἀφροδίτη βροτοῖς, καὶ τοῦνομ' ὀρθῶς ἀφροσύνης ἀρχεὶ θεᾶς (989-90). Here in the *Cratylus*, Plato voices explicit acceptance of Hesiod's etymology: περὶ δὲ Ἀφροδίτης οὐκ ἄξιον Ἡσιόδῳ ἀντιλέγειν, ἀλλὰ συγχωρεῖν ὅτι διὰ τὴν <ἐκ> τοῦ ἀφροῦ γένεσιν “Ἀφροδίτη” ἐκλήθη (ἐκ added by Hermann).

¹²⁸ There is a notable *Odyssey* passage in which Athena's name may be associated with νόημα and νοῦς (νόος). Odysseus, upon his arrival on Ithaca, asks his divine protector Athena—there disguised as a mortal—whether he has in fact reached his island home. The goddess responds by saying that αἰεὶ τοι τοιοῦτον ἐνὶ στήθεσσι νόημα· τῷ σε καὶ οὐ δύναμαι προλιπεῖν δύστηνον ἐόντα, οὐνέκ' ἐπητής ἐσσι

καὶ ἀγχίνοος καὶ ἐχέφρων (13.330-2). This passage assumes heightened interest based on Plato's own similar treatment of the name in the *Cratylus*, combined with the fact that a reference to the interpreters of Homer begins his analysis:

εοίκασι δὴ καὶ οἱ παλαιοὶ τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν νομίζειν ὥσπερ οἱ νῦν περὶ Ὅμηρον δεινοί. καὶ γὰρ τούτων οἱ πολλοὶ ἐξηγούμενοι τὸν ποιητὴν φασὶ τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν αὐτὸν νοῦν τε καὶ διάνοιαν πεποιηκέναι, καὶ ὁ τὰ ὀνόματα ποιῶν εἴκοι τοιοῦτόν τι περὶ αὐτῆς διανοεῖσθαι, ἔτι δὲ μειζόνως λέγων θεοῦ νόησιν ὥσπερ εἰ λέγει ὅτι “ἄ θεονόα” ἐστὶν αὕτη, τῷ ἄλφα ξενικῶς ἀντὶ τοῦ ἦτα χρησάμενος καὶ τὸ ἰῶτα καὶ τὸ σίγμα ἀφελάν. ἴσως δὲ οὐδὲ ταύτη, ἀλλ’ ὥς τὰ θεία νοούσης αὐτῆς διαφερόντως τῶν ἄλλων “Θεονόην” ἐκάλεσεν. οὐδὲν δὲ ἀπέχει καὶ τὴν ἐν τῷ ἦθει νόησιν ὥς οὖσαν τὴν θεὸν ταύτην “Ἥθονόην” μὲν βούλεσθαι προσεῖπεν· παραγαγὼν δὲ ἡ αὐτὸς ἢ τινες ὕστερον ἐπὶ τὸ κάλλιον ὥς φόντο, “Ἀθηνάαν” ἐκάλεσαν (407a8-c2).

The men of old seem to have viewed Athena just as do the contemporary interpreters of Homer. For many of these, interpreting the poet, say that he represented Athena as *nous* and *dianoia*. The one constructing names appears to have believed some such thing about her. Moreover, the name-giver appears to have had a still more elevated conception of her as divine intelligence (*theou noēsis*) hence the name *he theonoa*, in which alpha appears in the foreign way instead of eta, and the iota and sigma are omitted. Maybe, however, on account of her superlative knowledge of divine matters (*ta theia noousēs*) he called her *Theonoē*. And one would not be far wrong in believing that the constructor of names conceived of her as moral intelligence (*en tōi ēthei noēsis*), hence the name *Ethonoē* which either he himself or others after him modified to what they believed a superior form, calling her Athena.

Also worth mentioning here are Hesiod's comments on Athena's birth, specifically, his attribution of superlative intelligence both to her mother Metis and to Athena herself. In the *Theogony*, the poet remarks that Zeus first wed Metis,

πλεῖστα θεῶν εἰδυῖαν ἰδὲ θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων.
ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ ῥ’ ἤμελλε θεὰν γλαυκῶπιν Ἀθήνην
τέξεσθαι, τότε ἔπειτα δόλῳ φρένας ἐξαπατήσας
αἰμυλίῳσι λόγοισιν ἔην ἐσκάτθετο νηδύν...
ἐκ γὰρ τῆς εἵμαρτο περίφρονα τέκνα γενέσθαι,
πρώτην μὲν κούρην γλαυκῶπιδα Τριτογένειαν
ἴσον ἔχουσαν πατρὶ μένος καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλὴν,
αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ’ ἄρα παῖδα θεῶν βασιλῆα καὶ ἀνδρῶν
ἤμελλεν τέξεσθαι, ὑπέρβιον ἦτορ ἔχοντα. (887-98)

and she was wisest among gods and mortal men.
But when she was about to bring forth the goddess
bright-eyed Athene, Zeus craftily deceived her with
cunning words and put her in his own belly...
for very wise children were destined to be born of her, first the
maiden bright-eyed Tritogeneia, equal to her father
in strength and in wise understanding; but after-
wards she was to bear a son of overbearing spirit,
kind of gods and men. (tr. by Evelyn-White)

(For the birth of Athena from Zeus's head see, e.g., *Th.* 924 and Pindar, *Ol.* 7.35-7.)

¹²⁹ Aeschylus offers an etymology of the name Ἀρης, linking it with ἄρα: πικρὸς δὲ χρημάτων κακὸς δατητὰς Ἀρης ἀρὰν πατρώαν τιθεὶς ἀλαθῇ (*Th.* 944-6). In a possible, different attempt at etymology with regard to Ares' name, Homer has Hephaestus bemoan the fact that Aphrodite scorns him due to his physical deformity, φιλέει δ’ ἁ ἰδηλὸν Ἀρηα, οὐνεχ’ ὁ μὲν καλὸς τε καὶ ἀρτίπος (*Od.* 8.309-10). Rather than follow either of the above routes, Plato's analysis moves along different lines: Οὐκοῦν, εἰ μὲν βούλει, κατὰ τὸ ἄρρεν τε καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἀνδρεῖον “Ἀρης” ἂν εἴη· εἰ δ’ αὖ κατὰ τὸ

408b7: Hermes (including comment on appropriateness of Hermogenes' name); q. 408b8-d5: Pan (tragedy is mentioned).¹³⁰

C. 408d6-410e5: Plato analyzes a range of terms denoting natural bodies, elements, and cycles.

• At issue here, generally speaking, are ὄντα which Presocratic philosophers take to be fundamental—whether as primary substances (ἀρχαί) or in some other way. Plato here moves permanently away from proper names for the duration of the *Cratylus*;¹³¹ this shift coincides to a large extent with the dawn of philosophy, insofar as the latter tradition rejects the notion of personal, divine beings as *explanantes* with regard to the formation and operation of the cosmos. Notable in this portion of the *Cratylus* are those ὀνόματα designating elements; such entities are granted various types of priority by Presocratics, and are central to explanations of what they take to be problematic.¹³²

1. 408d6-409a5: ἥλιος (natural body); 2. 409a6-c3: σελήνη (natural body; Anaxagoras mentioned);¹³³ 3. 409c4-6: μείς (natural cycle); 4. 409c6-9: ἄστρα (natural bodies); 5, 6. 409c10-410b1: πῦρ, ὕδωρ (elements; foreign origin); 7. 410b1-6: ἀήρ (element); 8. 410b6-8: αἰθήρ (element); 9. 410b8-c3: γῆ/γαῖα (element; Homer mentioned); 10, 11. 410c3-e5: ἐνιαυτός/ἔτος (natural cycle; this use of a dual etymology recalls the earlier twofold analysis of Zeus' name).

D. 411a1-421c2: At issue here are the so-called καλὰ ὀνόματα (411a2, a8-b1). This class includes a wide range of terms whose referents are of great importance from

σκληρόν τε καὶ ἀμετάστροφον, ὃ δὴ “ἄρρατον” καλεῖται, καὶ ταύτη ἂν πανταχῇ πολεμικῶ θεῶ πρέποι “Ἄρη” καλεῖσθαι (407d1-4).

¹³⁰ Notably, Plato's analyses of the final two names center on language. Perhaps, in some way, the remarks on Pan help bring the focus back to nature and the natural world.

¹³¹ This is so with the exception of Hermogenes' name, which comes under discussion again in 429b-e.

¹³² To give several examples of elements as ἀρχαί: Thales privileged water. While Anaximander's ἀρχή, τὸ ἄπειρον, was not identical with any natural substance in the developed world, his primary cosmogonic opposites, the hot and the cold, were none other than “flame or fire and mist or air” (*The Presocratic Philosophers*, 120). Anaximenes gave pride of place to air. Heraclitus does not have an ἀρχή in the standard Milesian sense; notably, he does not believe that the cosmos had a genesis (DK 30). However, Heraclitus views fire as the most fundamental material substance, indeed, as crucial to the cosmos' operation, and seems at times to link closely or even identify fire with the λόγος. Notwithstanding important differences between Heraclitus' fire and previous candidates for primary substance, it resembles its predecessors in a crucial way: namely, to the extent that it is a kind of “stuff” which is, on the one hand, unified (the world order as πῦρ αἰεζῶν, DK 30), yet, on the other hand, distributed in those entities which constitute the cosmos. Empedocles, in turn, in his concern to address the arguments and objections of Parmenides, posits multiple primary substances or “roots”: earth, air, fire, and water.

¹³³ In his etymology of this term Plato comments that Σελαναίαν δέ γε καλοῦσιν αὐτὴν πολλοί, and proceeds to identify the original form which, once hammered together (συγκεκροτημένον), yields this appellation. The form Σελαναία is found in Euripides (*Phoen.* 176).

Plato's *own* point of view, in the areas of ethics, psychology, epistemology, and metaphysics. Key here is the fact that Plato includes terms denoting entities which he takes to have the highest ontological status, and to enjoy natural, logical, and explanatory priority as well (ἀγαθόν, δίκαιον, and καλόν).¹³⁴

Rather than mentioning every term analyzed in this section of the dialogue, I select a range of the ὀνόματα at issue. Terms designating key elements of Plato's philosophical system are subject to the same etymological analysis as other ὀνόματα, including proper names: central among them are ψυχὴ (399d-400b); φρόνησις (411d); νόησις (411d); σωφροσύνη (411e-412a); ἐπιστήμη (412a and 437a); σοφία (412b); ἀγαθόν (412c); δικαιοσύνη (412c); δίκαιον (412c-413d); ἀνδρεία (413d-414a); τέχνη (414b); ἀρετή (415c-d); καλόν (416c); ἔρως (420a9-b4); ἀλήθεια (421b1-3); ὄν and οὐσία (421b-c).¹³⁵ Plato also treats the term ἡδονή (419b7-c1), and subjects the term ὄνομα itself to analysis (421a7-b1), which is noteworthy given the fact that it is precisely ὀνόματα whose status as "naturally correct" is here in question. From within this framework Plato cannot privilege the aforementioned terms and their referents in the way he believes they deserve.

Moreover, this structure provides no way for Plato to draw fitting distinctions *between* certain contrasting terms—specifically, of course, their referents—mentioned in the *Cratylus*, contrasts which play important roles in his metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and moral psychology. I have in mind here, for instance, the dichotomy between σῶμα and ψυχὴ (399d1-400c9) of which he makes so much elsewhere, as

¹³⁴ The literary tradition had treated justice as a deity. Aeschylus observes that Δίκη received her name based on the fact that she is Zeus' daughter (*Cho.* 949), and in fact once compressed Διὸς κόρα yields Δίκη. Elsewhere Aeschylus refers to her as ἡ Διὸς παῖς παρθένος Δίκη (*Th.* 662). Hesiod before him had spoken of the maiden as ἡ παρθένος Δίκη, Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα (*W.D.* 256). Given the similarities between the formulations in *Seven against Thebes* and *Works and Days*, it is possible that Aeschylus intentionally recalls Hesiod's treatment. Writers treated her as one whose aid mortals might hope for and enlist. In contrast to the literary tradition, Plato views justice as a Form rather than a deity; as emerges most strikingly in the *Republic* (Books 2-9), for him it is something at which one can and should *aim*. The differences in treatment are marked though the two entities, as treated by poets and Plato, have certain attributes in common. (Among the Presocratics, for Δίκη as what might be termed "the personification of normality and therefore regularity" (Kirk, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 202) see Heraclitus, Fr. 94: "Ἥλιος γὰρ οὐχ ὑπερβήσεται μέτρα· εἰ δὲ μή, Ἑρινύες μιν Δίκης ἐπικούροι ἐξευρήσουσιν. In the proem to his hexameter poem Parmenides too indulges in personification, here closely following Hesiod; the mention of "avenging Justice" (Δίκη πολύποινος) makes the parallel especially vivid (for Δίκη as avenger see Hesiod, *Works and Days* 213-73; Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers* 948-51, *Seven Against Thebes* 662ff.; and Sophocles, *Ajax* 1389-92).)

¹³⁵ A key measure of the futility, even danger of this approach is found in the etymology conflating εἶναι and ἰέναι ("to be" and "to go"), which runs as follows: τὸ δὲ "ὄν" καὶ ἡ "οὐσία" ὁμολογεῖ τῷ ἀληθεῖ, τὸ ἰῶτα ἀπολαβόν· ἰὸν γὰρ σημαίνει, καὶ τὸ "οὐκ ὄν" αὐτῷ, ὥς τινες καὶ ὀνομάζουσιν αὐτό, "οὐκ ἰὸν" (421b7-c2). Cf., e.g., the etymologies of φρόνησις (φορᾶς...καὶ ροῦ νόησις, 411d4) and ἀγαθόν (τοῦ θοοῦ...τῷ ἀγαστῷ αὕτη ἡ ἐπωνυμία ἐστίν, "τάγαθόν," 412c4-5).

well as that between ἀρετή and κακία (415a9-e1). Also relevant here is the contrast between καλόν and αἰσχρόν (416a10-d11), and that involving ἀλήθεια and ψεῦδος (421b1-7). In addition, Plato includes the terms ἐπιθυμία and θυμός in his etymological discussion (419d8-e2). Even more centrally, Plato provides the terms of the contrast between ἐπιστήμη, νόησις, φρόνησις, and σοφία, on the one hand, and δόξα, on the other, a dichotomy which is essential to his epistemological reflections. Key here are terms denoting concepts and distinctions which play crucial roles in the *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Symposium*, and which, in many cases, are subject there to sustained philosophical analysis.¹³⁶

- One finds analyzed here terms designating entities with the highest ontological status from Plato's perspective, in contrast to those entities to which poets and Presocratic philosophers give pride of place. This is not to say that all three classes of entities share no common properties; for example, neither gods nor natural elements nor Platonic Forms are subject ultimately to perishing, and all are invisible, at least in part.¹³⁷ Notwithstanding this limited sharing of attributes, for Plato it is the differences between the types of entity that are ultimately decisive.

On the issue of explanatory priority in particular, Plato challenges the approaches taken both by poets and by philosophers. As concerns poets, this comes out notably in the *Cratylus* itself; there, Plato disputes repeatedly the paradigm of explanation in terms of origin, insisting instead that merely identifying a god as the source of some phenomenon or product, e.g., an ὄνομα, constitutes merely an excuse for having no genuine account to offer. As concerns his philosophical predecessors, Plato criticizes them sharply in the *Phaedo* for privileging the notion of material causation (96a ff.).¹³⁸ He accuses them—including Anaxagoras, whose approach Plato describes as initially more promising—of conflating a merely necessary condition (ἐκεῖνο ἄνευ οὗ) with a

¹³⁶ The following chapter contains additional remarks on the aforementioned terms and referents.

¹³⁷ Among the Milesians, though what was construed as fundamental was something material, it was thought of as being only partially visible, as in the case of water, or invisible yet substantial, as in the case of air. Thales appeared to view water not just as the original state from which the cosmos developed, but also as the underlying constituent of entities in the developed world; since it is not perceived as uniformly distributed, some of the water constituting entities must be invisible. Anaximander's ἀρχή, is not identical with any natural substance in the developed world; it is qualitatively indefinite, hence not as such visible. With regard to Anaximenes, Kirk notes that for him "ἄήρ was not mist, but...the invisible atmospheric air...It looks...as though Anaximenes simply assumed that some part, at least, of the atmospheric air was substantial, and indeed the basic form of substance" (*The Presocratic Philosophers*, 146).

¹³⁸ For present purposes I need not address the question of precisely how much of what is said regarding natural science there can be attributed to the historical Socrates (for a discussion of this issue see Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 127 ff.).

genuine *explanans*, i.e., that on account of which something happens or is accomplished (99b). Plato notes the explanatory priority of Forms at the end of the *Cratylus*, and treats it at length in the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic*.

- This section shows most vividly of all how wrong one goes by seeking insight via the analysis of words' constitution: because it contains the most important terms treated, consideration of them and their referents merely by etymology casts into sharpest relief the superficiality of that approach to correctness and insight.
- 411b-c further extends the scope of δόξα's governance when it comes to the praxis of naming.¹³⁹

IV. 421c3-427d2: Primary names (phonetic constitution).

A. 421c4-426b9: Grounding the investigation.

1. 421c4-422c1: Introduction.
2. 422c1-423d10: Primary names reveal natures differently; what form of imitation is not involved.
3. 423e1-425b4: Naming and imitation.
4. 425b5-426b9: Cannot carry out ideal procedure; must do what one can.

B. 426c1-427d2: Analysis of individual letters.

What is accomplished: Having devoted a great deal of space to questions of semantic constitution, Plato here ends his treatment of constitutional analysis with a comparatively short discussion of phonemes and phonetic constitution.

How: In what follows, I focus on relevant material within this section.

IV. 421c3-427d2: Primary names: the issue of phonetic constitution.

A. 421c4-426b9: Setting up the investigation of phonemes.

1. 421c4-422c1: Introduction. There are primary names, and one must analyze them in a different way.
2. 422c1-423d10: Primary names reveal natures differently. How do they accomplish this? The notion of imitation is introduced, with emphasis on the sort of μίμησις that is not involved. There is mention of ἡ τέχνη ἡ ὀνομαστική (423d8, cf. 425a4-5); with regard to the type of imitation at issue, the art of naming

¹³⁹ On the passage and its import see my earlier remarks in "Is Naming a τέχνη?". In this passage more generally, Plato describes what he views as the wholesale projection onto reality of one's own defective internal condition (cf. 439b10-c6).

is contrasted with those of music and drawing, which deal with μιμήματα involving sound, figure, and color.¹⁴⁰

3. 423e1-425b4: Naming and imitation. Socrates outlines a procedure for dividing letters and non-linguistic entities into classes, and forging ties between them based on this articulation.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Though considerations of space preclude doing so here, it would be worth comparing Plato's handling of imitation in the *Cratylus* and *Republic* (Books 2, 3, and 10).

¹⁴¹ Ἄρ' οὖν καὶ ἡμᾶς οὕτω δεῖ πρῶτον μὲν τὰ φωνήεντα διελέσθαι, ἔπειτα τῶν ἐτέρων κατὰ εἶδη τὰ τε ἄφωνα καὶ ἄφθογγα—οὕτως γὰρ που λέγουσιν οἱ δεινοὶ περὶ τούτων—καὶ τὰ αὐτὰ φωνήεντα μὲν οὐ, οὐ μέντοι γε ἄφθογγα; καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν φωνηέντων ὅσα διάφορα εἶδη ἔχει ἀλλήλων; καὶ ἐπειδὴν ταῦτα διελώμεθα [τὰ ὄντα] εὖ πάντα αὐτοῖς δεῖ ὀνόματα ἐπιθεῖναι, εἰ ἔστιν εἰς ἃ ἀναφέρεται πάντα ὥσπερ τὰ στοιχεῖα, ἐξ ὧν ἔστιν ἰδεῖν αὐτὰ τε καὶ εἰ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἔνεστιν εἶδη κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς στοιχείοις· ταῦτα πάντα καλῶς διαθεασαμένους ἐπίστασθαι ἐπιφέρειν ἕκαστον κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα, ἅντι ἐν ἐνὶ δέῃ ἐπιφέρειν, ἅντι συγκεραννύντα πολλὰ [ἐνί], ὥσπερ οἱ ζωγράφοι βουλόμενοι ἀφομοιοῦν ἐνίοτε μὲν ὅστρον μόνον ἐπήνεγκαν, ἐνίοτε δὲ ὅτιοι ἄλλο τῶν φαρμάκων, ἔστι δὲ ὅτε πολλὰ συγκεράσαντες, οἷον ὅταν ἀνδρείκελον σκευάζωσιν ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν τοιούτων—ὡς ἂν οἶμαι δοκῇ ἐκάστη ἢ εἰκὼν δεῖσθαι ἐκάστου φαρμάκου—οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἡμεῖς τὰ στοιχεῖα ἐπὶ τὰ πράγματα ἐποιήσομεν, καὶ ἐν ἐπὶ ἓν, οὐδ' ἂν δοκῇ δεῖν, καὶ σύμπολλα, ποιοῦντες ὃ δὴ συλλαβὰς καλοῦσιν, καὶ συλλαβὰς αὐτὰ συντιθέντες, ἐξ ὧν τὰ τε ὀνόματα καὶ τὰ ῥήματα συντίθενται· καὶ πάλιν ἐκ τῶν ὀνομάτων καὶ ῥημάτων μέγα ἤδη τι καὶ καλὸν καὶ ὅλον συστήσομεν, ὥσπερ ἐκεῖ τὸ ζῶον τῇ γραφικῇ, ἐνταῦθα τὸν λόγον τῇ ὀνομαστικῇ ἢ ῥητορικῇ ἢ ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡ τέχνη. (424c5-425a5)

Then must we not begin first of all by dividing vowels, then also consonants and mutes, into classes—for this is how experts in these matters speak—and in turn those letters which are neither vowels nor mutes? And must we not also distinguish the different classes in the case of vowels? And when we have thoroughly distinguished all the existent things to which, in turn, one must apply *onomata*, we will proceed analogously on the side of *ta onta*, which inquiry would allow one to see existents as they truly are and whether there they have classes within them in the same way as do the basic elements of language. After we have considered these things thoroughly we will know how to apply letters based on the principle of likeness, whether there is need of a one-to-one correlation or whether many letters are to be combined, just as painters, wanting to create a likeness, sometimes uses only purple or some other single color, and other times mixes many colors together, as for instance when creating a flesh-colored pigment or some other such thing. As the artist uses colors based in each case on what the image requires, so too do we apply elements to things, making use of one or many as required. From these elements we construct syllables, and in turn put syllables together to get *onomata* and *rhēmata*. Combining these we arrive at language, large and fine and whole—just as happens with the figure in painting—by the art of grammar or rhetoric, or whatever *technē* one wishes to invoke.

An interest in basic linguistic elements is evident in several later dialogues. With this treatment of sounds compare *Phil.* 18b6-d2, where the Egyptian Theuth is the one supposed to have engaged in the inquiry there described (for Theuth as the inventor of writing see *Phdr.* 274c5-275b2). For remarks on the combination of γράμματα see *Soph.* 252e9-253a12, and for extended discussion of syllables and their στοιχεῖα see *Th.* 202eff. Notably, these discussions in the *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Philebus* all post-date Plato's introduction of the Method of Division, which occurs in the *Phaedrus* (266b-c). For a treatment of διαίρεσις that privileges the markedly innovative character of the *Sophist* and *Politicus* investigations by contrast with earlier methodologies see Stenzel, *Plato's Method of Dialectic*.

- Here one finds an instance of division. However, one is not entitled to conclude that the Method of Division *as such* is at issue, any more than one would be justified in so concluding with regard to the *Gorgias* based on its employment, in a specific context, of a classificatory schema.¹⁴²
- In this passage, the τέχναι of rhetoric and naming are mentioned together (425a4-5), which is noteworthy given the fact that the τέχνη status of each is challenged in the *Gorgias* and *Cratylus*, respectively. It is possible, at any rate, that Plato here hearkens back to the earlier *Gorgias* discussion and the fate of rhetoric in that context.
- While supposedly describing the original procedure of formation, Socrates slips into the first person, then purports to correct himself:

μᾶλλον δὲ οὐχ ἡμεῖς, ἀλλὰ λέγων ἐξηνέχθην. συνέθεσαν μὲν γὰρ οὕτως ἥπερ σύγκειται οἱ παλαιοί· ἡμᾶς δὲ δεῖ, εἴπερ τεχνικῶς ἐπιστησόμεθα σκοπεῖσθαι αὐτὰ πάντα, οὕτω διελομένους, εἴτε κατὰ τρόπον τὰ τε πρῶτα ὀνόματα κεῖται καὶ τὰ ὕστερα εἴτε μή, οὕτω θεᾶσθαι· ἄλλως δὲ συνεῖρειν μὴ φαῦλον ἢ καὶ οὐ καθ' ὁδόν, ὧ φίλε Ἑρμόγενης (425a5-b3).¹⁴³

These remarks reinforce the idea that names' *origin* is not what actually concerns Plato (as emphasized at the outset), but instead the proper approach to existing ὀνόματα, specifically, their evaluation and use.¹⁴⁴ This general shift in focus weakens substantially the force of the craft analogy to the extent that it privileged the notion of construction.

4. 425b5-426b9: In treating phonemes, Socrates feels incapable of implementing the most rigorous or ideal procedure sketched above.

- The stipulation of “giving a rational account” (λόγον διδόναι) is mentioned.¹⁴⁵ The issue of providing this account is an important one because the ability to do so is given as a key τέχνη requirement in the *Gorgias*; in fact, failure to meet it plays a

¹⁴² For comments on that key stage in the development of Platonic methodology to which the *Phaedrus* gives expression see ch. 5.

¹⁴³ “But actually I don’t mean that *we* do this; in speaking thus I got carried away. What I offered in what precedes was a sketch of how the *ancients* formed language. However, if we are to gain a thorough knowledge of the matter, we must analyze what they put together, considering whether primary and secondary *onomata* are correct; for any other way of constructing the latter yields a deficient product and is misguided.”

¹⁴⁴ Interestingly, Leky, who insists that the dialogue’s main topic is the origin of words and (in his opinion) of language in general, quotes the entire passage without commenting at all on Socrates’ “slip” (63).

¹⁴⁵ As previously discussed, the λόγον διδόναι requirement was clearly at issue early on when Plato takes steps to ground such an account in his remarks on Form-based construction; in what follows, he indicates the marked disparity between such a description and any process of naming yet undertaken.

central role there in the denial of rhetoric's τέχνη status.¹⁴⁶ In the *Cratylus* as well, Plato makes clear that an important issue is practitioners' ability to satisfy the λόγον διδόναι requirement.¹⁴⁷ In this connection, Plato mentions appeals to divine sources (which he associates with tragedians), to barbarians as a point of origin, or to an unrecoverable native source as mere excuses for being unwilling (=unable) to provide a rational account of the procedures involved: αὐται γὰρ ἄν πᾶσαι ἐκδύσεις εἶεν καὶ μάλα κομψαὶ τῷ μὴ ἐθέλοντι λόγον διδόναι περὶ τῶν πρώτων ὀνομάτων ὡς ὀρθῶς κείται (426a1-3).¹⁴⁸ These are precisely the sorts of factors that were invoked throughout the investigation to explain the *genesis* of terms presently in use, and Plato's remarks here are intended to show that 424c-425a describes no approach yet taken, and that in fact one cannot supply a rational account of "procedures" followed to date.

It is not just such "evasions" that Plato takes to be unacceptable, but any falling short with regard to the procedure outlined above. This comes out in the lines directly following the above remark (in fact, Plato highlights the continuity by use of καίτοι):

καίτοι ὅτω τις τρόπῳ τῶν πρώτων ὀνομάτων τὴν ὀρθότητα μὴ οἶδεν, ἀδύνατόν ποῦ τῶν γε ὑστέρων εἰδέναι, ἃ ἐξ ἐκείνων ἀνάγκη δηλοῦσθαι ὧν τις περὶ μηδὲν οἶδεν· ἀλλὰ δῆλον ὅτι τὸν φάσκοντα περὶ αὐτῶν τεχνικὸν εἶναι περὶ τῶν πρώτων ὀνομάτων μάλιστα τε καὶ καθαρῶτατα δεῖ ἔχειν ἀποδείξαι, ἢ εὖ εἰδέναι ὅτι τὰ γε ὕστερα ἤδη φλυαρήσει. ἢ σοὶ ἄλλως δοκεῖ; (426a3-b3)¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ This is one of the two requirements mentioned in rhetoric's exclusion from the class of τέχνηαι at the outset of Socrates' conversation with Polus: κολακείαν μὲν οὖν αὐτὸ καλῶ, καὶ αἰσχρὸν φημι εἶναι τὸ τοιοῦτον, ὃ Πῶλε—τοῦτο γὰρ πρὸς σὲ λέγω—ὅτι τοῦ ἡδέος στοχάζεται ἀνευ τοῦ βελτίστου· τέχνην δὲ αὐτὴν οὐ φημι εἶναι ἀλλ' ἐμπειρίαν, ὅτι οὐκ ἔχει λόγον οὐδένα ᾧ προσφέρει ἢ προσφέρει ὅποι' ἅττα τὴν φύσιν ἐστίν, ὥστε τὴν αἰτίαν ἐκάστου μὴ ἔχειν εἰπεῖν. ἐγὼ δὲ τέχνην οὐ καλῶ ὃ ἂν ἢ ἄλογον πρᾶγμα· τούτων δὲ περὶ εἰ ἀμφισβητεῖς, ἐθέλω ὑποσχεῖν λόγον. (464e2-465a7) The proximate object here is cookery, but the remarks are meant to distinguish ἐμπειρία, as a class, from τέχνηαι. In the former cases, a λόγος cannot be provided: since human whims, desires, and feelings govern procedure, no rational explanation is possible.

¹⁴⁷ It is thus especially noteworthy that rhetoric and naming are mentioned together in 425a.

¹⁴⁸ While he might acknowledge that—from an empirical perspective—the latter two of these factors have some explanatory power, for Plato they are no substitute for the rigorous undertaking necessary in the case at hand.

¹⁴⁹ "And yet any ignorance as regards the correctness of primary *onomata* makes one incapable of achieving knowledge of terms derived from them since one can only gain understanding of the latter by way of the former. Thus, it is clear that the one asserting to be an expert (*technikon*) in these matters must be able to provide a demonstration of his expertise with reference to primary *onomata* most of all and in a systematic fashion, or he will be guaranteed to talk nonsense about the others. Or do you see the situation differently, Hermogenes?"

If one's knowledge of primary names falls short in any way (ὅτῳ τρόπῳ), he will be incapable of achieving knowledge of the rest (ἀδύνατόν που τῶν γε ὑστέρων εἰδέναι).¹⁵⁰ The individual asserting (ὁ φάσκων) to practice a τέχνη must be not partially, but *extremely* clear about πρῶτα ὀνόματα, or he will talk to no purpose about the rest. Such clarity would require a solid understanding of reality, which is something Plato clearly does *not* attribute to his diffuse, diverse collection of ὄνομα-constructors (424d-e, with 439b-c).¹⁵¹

- It is important that here Plato once again rejects the mere identification of source—no matter how “elevated”—as a sufficient explanation of why an ὄνομα is correct. In treating fitness in the *Phaedo*, Plato uses the eponymy relation for far more than mere identifications of source (in contrast to the literary tradition, which used eponymy largely for this purpose).

B. 426c1-427d2: Plato analyzes individual letters.

¹⁵⁰ These remaining ὀνόματα were the topic of conversation from the beginning till 421, and—in that connection and also from the outset—it is precisely genuine insight that has been attributed to those involved in naming when its τέχνη status was asserted.

¹⁵¹ Finally, Socrates introduces his own observations on phonemes with the remark that “Ἄ μὲν τοίνυν ἐγὼ ᾔσθημαι περὶ τῶν πρώτων ὀνομάτων πάνυ μοι δοκεῖ ὑβριστικὰ εἶναι καὶ γελοῖα. τούτων οὖν σοι μεταδώσω, ἂν βούλῃ (426b5-7). (Apelt comments as follows: “Danach ist es des Sokrates eigene Hypothese, die er hier vorträgt, der er aber zugleich auch das vernichtende Urteil spricht” (147).) While Plato does not think naming presently meets the λόγον διδόναι requirement, a further question is whether naming, properly construed, could meet this and the other τέχνη conditions (for treatment of this issue see appendix A). Jowett distinguishes between the satirical, i.e., etymological, and serious portions of the dialogue (*The Dialogues of Plato*, 259-62; cf. Chen, “*Onomatopoeia in the Cratylus*,” 100, 86, and 92). There is nothing in the latter “which is either weak or extravagant. Plato is a supporter of the Onomatopoeic theory of language; that is to say, he supposes words to be formed by the imitation of ideas in sounds” (259); Jowett offers an extremely high valuation of Plato's remarks on πρῶτα ὀνόματα, claiming that he hits on “the greatest and deepest truth of philology” (284) (cf. Méridier, who puts this section on a decidedly higher footing than Plato's handling of etymology as regards the latter's attitude, while acknowledging that Plato's actual discussion of sounds “ne peut être mise sur le même plan que l'exposé de la méthode” (26, for Méridier's stance see 22 and 25-7)). Leky, in turn, insists that 421-427 has been unjustifiably neglected because commentators have failed to recognize that while Plato is functioning as critic in the etymology section, he is here making quite serious proposals, is indeed “durch den bahnbrechenden Eigenforscher abgelöst” (54). However, Leky never shows clearly and precisely why one should draw such a sharp distinction in this regard between the two sections rather than viewing the latter as simply the logical culmination of what precedes and hence subject to the same basic Platonic valuation (for a similar failure to distinguish between historically and logically “first” cf. Jowett, 259, 284). It is worth noting, from a Platonic perspective, that the analyses of phonemes privilege empirical qualities, and is impossible to see how they could constitute the linguistic correlate to any legitimate Platonic elements of reality; moreover, it is difficult to see how this shortcoming could be remedied (on Plato's negative valuation of this approach cf. Apelt, 146). Most fundamentally, whether semantically or phonetically grounded, the fact of indeterminacy simply could not be removed, and this is the ultimate stumbling block to a program either of the sort Leky proposes or of one grounded on etymology (*à la* Grote or Steinthal).

1. 426c1-e6: ρ (Plato provides etymologies of κίνησις and στάσις);¹⁵²
2. 426e6-427a1: ι;
3. 427a1-7: φ, ψ, σ, ζ;
4. 427a7-b2: δ, τ;
5. 427b2-5: λ;
6. 427b5-7: γ;
7. 427c1-3: ν;
- 8, 9. 427c3-4: α, η;
10. 427c4-d2: ο (with concluding remarks).

V. 427d3-438d1: Natural correctness thesis challenged.

A. 427d3-430a5: The question of agreement between Socrates and Cratylus.

1. 427d3-428c8: Cratylus professes agreement with the results of the foregoing discussion.
2. 428d1-429a1: The inquiry's steps retraced.
3. 429a2-430a5: Emergence of a significant point of disagreement between Socrates and Cratylus.

B. 430a6-434b8: Imitation and representation: A challenge to Cratylus' extreme view.

1. 430a6-431c3: To establish the possibility of appropriate *and* inappropriate assignments, Socrates highlights the name-picture analogy; Cratylus, having insisted initially on the disanalogy, seems to admit the possibility of wrong assignments.
2. 431c4-432a4: Analogy between primary names and pictures (better and worse artists/constructors); Cratylus insists on the disanalogy.
3. 432a5-433c10: "The two Cratyluses" (images must differ from what they represent); Cratylus insists on the disanalogy.
4. 433d1-434b8: Conclusion.

C. 434b9-435d1: Decisive challenge to resemblance theory.

1. 434b9-435b6: σκληρότης: custom and convention govern the fitness of terms' constitution.
2. 435b6-c2: Case of number: reinforces the conclusion that custom and convention govern correctness.
3. 435c2-d1: Conclusion.

D. 435d1-438d1: Names as sources of knowledge.

¹⁵² Leky, who insists repeatedly that this section of the dialogue is quite seriously meant as an exposition of Plato's own stance while the etymological portion is satyric, is puzzled by the presence here of etymologies: "Daß in *diesem* Zusammenhange (nach Art des etymologischen Teiles) die Wörter κίνησις and στάσις etymologisch erklärt werden, ist unserer Meinung nach höchst verwunderlich" (65). He tries unsuccessfully to explain them away, raising the possibility, for example, of viewing the passage "als nicht gehörig überarbeitet oder als späteres Einschleusen" (65). Méridier, who does not go to this extreme, nevertheless characterizes the presence of these etymologies as "déconcertante à tous égards" (24).

1. 435d1-436a8: Cratylus: ὀνόματα are the sole sources of insight.
2. 436a9-437d7: Contesting the view that one can rely on ὀνόματα in the way that Cratylus suggests.
 - a. 436a9-b11: The first legislator and the problem of deception.
 - b. 436b12-d7: Consistency is no proof of correctness.
 - c. 436d7-437c8: Names are not consistent.
 - d. 437d1-7: Versus majority rule in determining correctness.
3. 437d8-438d1: First Names: Legislators and Knowledge.
 - a. 437d8-438b8: The circularity of Cratylus' approach.
 - b. 438c1-d1: Appeals to divine source lack explanatory power; the problem of self-contradiction.

What is accomplished: In this section of the dialogue, Plato challenges the natural-correctness thesis. He concludes that appeals to custom and convention suffice if one wishes to determine whether the constitution of ὀνόματα is fitting.

How: In what follows, I focus on relevant material within this section.

V. 427d3-438d1: The natural correctness thesis is challenged.

A. 427d3-430a5: The issue of agreement between Socrates and Cratylus arises.

1. 427d3-428c8: Cratylus re-enters the discussion at Hermogenes' urging, and expresses his agreement with the view which Socrates has developed: καὶ ἐμοὶ σύ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐπεικῶς φαίνει κατὰ νοῦν χρησμοδεῖν, εἴτε παρ' Εὐθύφρονος ἐπίπνους γενόμενος, εἴτε καὶ ἄλλη τις Μοῦσα πάλαι σε ἐνοῦσα ἐλελήθει (428c6-8).

• Cratylus, said at the outset to espouse the natural-correctness thesis, was silent during its establishment and discussion; his return coincides with the beginning of Plato's most explicit challenge to that thesis, which takes place on the foundation laid in what precedes.

• Cratylus' mention of Euthyphro or some other Muse as the source of Socrates' inspiration, rather than Euthyphro alone, is noteworthy since it suggests a possible analogy with the inspiration of poets and hence a tie to the literary tradition (cf. *Odyssey*, 1.1-10; *Theogony* 1-34).¹⁵³

¹⁵³ Interestingly, both Homer and Hesiod are quoted or mentioned in this *Cratylus* passage. Cratylus quotes Homer just prior to indicating his agreement (428c4-5), and Hermogenes mentions Hesiod (428a1). It is worth saying something here on the issue of Euthyphro, specifically, the question of whether one may associate the historical individual with etymology-based inquiry as pursued in the *Cratylus* (for the assertion that the lengthy section comprising etymologies of the names of gods (and other entities conceived as gods,

e.g., the sun) is directed against Euthyphro, see Steiner, "Die Etymologien in Platons *Kratylos*"; on connections between Euthyphro and etymology, cf. Levinson, 36 (Apelt, in turn, appears simply to assume that Euthyphro offered divine etymologies, though he remains agnostic on the question of whether Plato actually cites any of his analyses, 140-41). One should observe straightaway that nothing is known about this individual aside from that information provided by Plato; while one should not rely too much on an argument *ex silentio*, it is at least noteworthy that if Euthyphro himself engaged in this activity, or was the figurehead for a group of individuals thus occupied, there is no mention of this in extant source material. I turn now to Plato. The name "Euthyphro" appears in two dialogues, the early *Euthyphro*, which focuses on the issue of piety, and the *Cratylus*. While one cannot, of course, prove beyond all doubt that the Euthyphro in both places is the same individual, the conclusion is quite a reasonable one and will be assumed here. In the early dialogue named for him, Euthyphro is remarkably arrogant, and emphasizes repeatedly his access to wisdom not available to the ordinary person. There is no hint at all there that this alleged wisdom is based on or tied in any way to etymology; rather, the idea is simply that special ties to the divine realm issue in privileged access to important truths. Hence, the *Euthyphro* provides no support for claims that this individual engaged in etymology; instead, it would be more plausibly cited by one who held the opposing view. Turning now to the *Cratylus*, the name "Euthyphro" occurs on six occasions. There are various reasons why Plato might introduce such a person as Euthyphro into the discussion. These include: 1. the wish to distance himself from the inquiry into correctness in the form it takes in the *Cratylus*; 2. the wish to dissipate any element of strangeness associated with the discussion (cf. Gaiser, 19); and 3. the desire to account for how Socrates could apprehend the matters of which he speaks, an understanding which would be inaccessible to the average person. One cannot be sure why Plato introduces Euthyphro, and I here avoid all dogmatic claims, but would simply note that of the foregoing three possible grounds, the last at least meshes with that picture of him gained from the early dialogue. Also, and interestingly, the first occurrence of his name in the *Cratylus* (396d) follows two independent assertions by Socrates of his own ignorance on the subject of the dialogue; notably, the first of these is quite early, occurring in 384c, hence well before etymology comes to be the focus of the discussion. At this point (396d), Socrates is operating on the assumption that one may in some sense "re-enact" the original procedure of names' assignment, and has just provided etymologies of certain key divine ὀνόματα. Thus, some privileged understanding would indeed seem to be required; also, in the discussion as a whole, Socrates makes a tremendous range and scope of observations which would appear to testify to his having insight not commonly possessed. Notably, Plato elsewhere makes appeal to divine sources to explain how individual mortals are capable of performing in ways ordinarily beyond the scope of their capabilities (as in *Euthydemus* 275c-d and 291a). Regarding the specific issue of Euthyphro and etymology, I make the following additional observations: It is not straightforwardly obvious from the references and discussion in the *Cratylus* that any wisdom which Plato does wish to attribute to Euthyphro is specifically etymological in content, versus simply being of divine provenance in general. No particular etymologies are attributed to him, and, in fact, the reference in 428c to Euthyphro or some other *Muse* suggests that he as an individual may not be what is important from Plato's point of view (cf. Méridier's appeal to this passage to support the claim that "ce médiocre devin et les gens de son milieu ne soient pas le véritable objet de ses attaques," 42). This having been said, one cannot of course rule out the possibility that the historical Euthyphro was engaged in etymology; however, in the absence of additional evidence clear and confident attributions are impossible. It is not sufficient to embrace Euthyphro on simply negative grounds, notably, by a mere process of elimination, and one should avoid making stronger claims with regard to him than are justified. Hence, statements like that of Kahn ("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") cannot be firmly supported, and his additional assertion that Euthyphro "might even be its author" ("Language and Ontology in the *Cratylus*," 156) appears simply to constitute an attempt to treat two situations in which marked uncertainty prevails by merging them in a way that permits the "removal" of that uncertainty; see also Kahn's more recent remarks in "Les mots et les formes," 98-9, and Rosenstock, "Fathers and Sons," 404. In contrast, though Baxter believes that the Derveni Papyrus "remains a prime candidate as a target of the *Cratylus*," he dismisses the possibility that Euthyphro might be the writer in question as "far-fetched" (*The "Cratylus*," 139, 133).

2. 428d1-429a1: Having noted that there is nothing worse than self-deception, Socrates recalls key features of the theory “advanced” early in the dialogue:¹⁵⁴ he reiterates that a correct name reveals its bearer’s nature;¹⁵⁵ that names are given for purposes of instruction (428e4), and that naming is a τέχνη with δημιουργοί, specifically, the νομοθέται (428e6-429a2).¹⁵⁶

- This reidentification of name-givers as δημιουργοί paves the way for further use of the craft analogy in what follows.

3. 429a2-430a5: As is the case with practitioners of other τέχναι (e.g., painting, housebuilding), some νομοθέται are better than others hence construct superior products. Cratylus makes this analogy, offered by Socrates, into a disanalogy: he denies that there are better and worse legislators, laws, and names, insisting that falsehood is impossible. Hermogenes’ ὄνομα is used again for purposes of illustration; according to Cratylus, it does not belong to him, but to one whose nature (φύσις) it does in fact illuminate. It thus becomes clear that there is actually significant disagreement between Cratylus and Socrates.

- The notion of individual natures is once again in the foreground with this return to etymology via Hermogenes’ name and the question of its appropriateness; these remarks further recall the “theory” of naming advanced in Sections I and II.

- The mere fact that the issue of falsehood arises here does not serve to link the *Cratylus* closely to the *Sophist*. The impossibility of falsehood is also an issue in the *Euthydemus* (283eff.), yet this dialogue is not presumed to have a strong kinship with the *Sophist* simply for this reason. To my mind, the question is not whether there are significant ties between the *Cratylus* and *Sophist*, but where they reside; I locate them in the treatment of naturalness and appropriateness in both places, with the attendant discussion of names’ evaluation and construction. While granting important connections between these two dialogues, in my view the *Cratylus*’ most direct and central links are to the *Phaedo*; this emerges most clearly in the strong continuity between the final section of the *Cratylus* (438d-440e)—

¹⁵⁴ On self-deception, cf. *Gorg.* 458a2-b1; *Ph.* 91b7-c5; and *Rep.* 382a4-b9.

¹⁵⁵ ὁρθότης ἐστὶν αὕτη, ἥτις ἐνδείξεται οἷόν ἐστι τὸ πρᾶγμα (428e1-2). While this language is decidedly weaker than that involving φύσις, it is clearly supposed to reprise the same notion. Plato may here have his opponents in view, for whom the distinction would not be relevant; also, one could use this terminology with reference to individuals, whereas for Plato individuals as such do not have φύσεις, but only *qua* human beings.

¹⁵⁶ Plato has Socrates persist in such talk, yet it sounds increasingly hollow. Once again, Homer is quoted (428d7-8).

conjoined with the dialogue's general conclusions—and the *Phaedo*'s handling of metaphysical and semantic issues.

B. 430a6-434b8: Imitation and representation: Socrates attempts to convince Cratylus that his either-or approach to terms' appropriateness is untenable.

1. 430a6-431c3: Wishing to preserve the possibility of incorrect assignments, Socrates returns to the analogy between pictures and names. 'Ὄνόματα are not identical with their referents; both names and pictures are imitations (μιμήματα) of things (πράγματα). One can assign the likeness of a man to a man, and a woman to a woman; one can also assign the likeness of a man to a woman, and vice versa. Using the same ὀνόματα (ἄνθρωπος, γυνή), Socrates suggests that one may proceed analogously in the case of naming. The first mode of attribution is correct whether figures or names are involved, and in the latter case also true; conversely, the second mode of attribution is incorrect in both cases, and in the latter instance also false. Cratylus, having insisted initially on the disanalogy (430d8-e2), seems to agree that a wrong assignment of ὀνόματα, ῥήματα, and λόγοι is possible (431c3).

- As in Section II of the dialogue, Socrates appeals to biological facts and differences to facilitate the making of a point or distinction. Since Socrates merely wishes to establish the possibility of making inappropriate assignments—leaving aside here questions of better and worse—use of the ὀνόματα “man” and “woman” is felicitous: the criteria of evaluation are straightforward, easy to apply, and provide a clear and uncontroversial foundation for judging some assignments wholly inappropriate. At issue, as previously with natural kinds, are questions of veridicality rather than those of desert (vs. the discussion of Hermogenes' name, most recently in 429b-e). Note also that, as in the earlier discussion of natural kind terms, the *constitution* of ὀνόματα is not here considered.

2. 431c4-432a4: Returning to the language of “better” and “worse,” Socrates draws an analogy between τὰ πρῶτα ὀνόματα and pictures. The presence of all the appropriate elements yields a fine image. One can also produce an image, though not a fine one, which contains omissions or additions of a minor sort (σμικρά); this difference in product quality presupposes a similar distinction in the caliber of practitioners. Confronted again with talk of “better” and “worse,”

Cratylus continues to insist on the disanalogy between pictures and ὀνόματα: the latter are always properly assigned; fitness is not a matter of degree.¹⁵⁷

- Left unspecified here is what precisely distinguishes small deviations (σμικρά) from substantial ones, i.e., what the minimum requirements are which any assignment of good quality must satisfy.

3. 432a5-433c10: Socrates grants that Cratylus' rigid stance is suitable when considering quantities; there, addition or subtraction of any unit makes the entity in question into something else (432a8-b1). However, the situation is different with qualitative entities and images (b1-2). Socrates introduces "the two Cratyluses": if the image of Cratylus failed in no way to match the original, it would cease to be an image. With regard to the name-thing relation, the issue cannot be either-or judgments; what matters, with ὀνόματα and λόγοι, is that the referent's general character (τύπος) be retained. Once again, Cratylus insists that of so-called "names" only those with all the proper constituent letters are *in fact* ὀνόματα.

- Here quantitative distinctions are added to biological ones as being straightforwardly and definitively made.

- Initially at issue is the substitution of one inappropriate letter (τὸ μὴ προσήκον γράμμα, 432e3), followed by one ὄνομα (or λόγος) in a λόγος. Immediately, however, this stringency is relaxed: what is said to matter is simply retention of the referent's "general character" (τύπος); that more latitude is involved here is further emphasized by mention of the example of letters' names, where *several* letters may be inessential.¹⁵⁸ At this point the key question becomes, How can one reliably distinguish the essential from the inessential or misleading? Plato's answer will be that one in fact cannot; the way is paved here for making prominent that indeterminacy which precludes treating ὀνόματα as nature-revealing.

4. 433d1-434b8: Conclusion: Cratylus admits that an ὄνομα is a representation (δήλωμα) of its referent; that some ὀνόματα are primitive and others derived; that representation by likeness is incomparably superior to a convention-based approach ("Ὅλω καὶ παντὶ διαφέρει, ὦ Σώκρατες, τὸ ὁμοιώματι δηλοῦν ὅτι ἂν τις δηλοῖ ἀλλὰ μὴ τῷ ἐπιτυχόντι, 434a1-2, cf. 433d8-e2); and that resemblance

¹⁵⁷ Once again, the δημιουργὸς ὀνομάτων and νομοθέτης are identified (431e1-4), and naming's τέχνη status is assumed (e6-7, 11) though no longer with any conviction.

¹⁵⁸ Contrast Cratylus' remark on the ὀνόματα of letters in 431e-432a. Also, contrast the observation that something can be designated when this "general character" is present, κὰν μὴ πάντα τὰ προσήκοντα ἔχη (433a4-5), with the more restricted acknowledgment in 432e3.

between ὀνόματα and their referents is only possible if a resemblance relation holds on the most basic level, namely, that of letters.

- The claim that representation by likeness is infinitely superior (ὄλω καὶ παντὶ διαφέρει) will be evaluated in remarks made in 434b-440e. By posing the choice here as one between resemblance and randomness (434a1-2), Plato wishes once again for choice of a nature-based view to appear temporarily “obvious.”
- Here, as in Hermogenes’ early remarks, an extreme position and a genuine convention-based approach are conflated (see 433e2-434a2). In what follows, however, Plato leaves the extreme stance behind, and assesses the latter as an independent ground of correctness when terms’ constitution is at issue.

C. 434b9-435d1: The resemblance theory is challenged.

1. 434b9-435b6: Plato has Socrates consider the noun σκληρότης (“hardness”). In addition to the letters rho and sigma, which are expressive of rapidity, motion, and hardness (σκληρότης), the word contains the letter lambda, supposedly indicative of softness. Nevertheless, people using the term in conversation comprehend one another perfectly, and convention and custom end up being the ground of this, and by extension other words’ correctness:

Ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνομοίου γε ἢ ὁ διανοούμενος φθέγγομαι, εἶπερ τὸ λάβδα ἀνόμοιον ἐστὶ τῇ ἢ φῆς σὺ σκληρότητι· εἰ δὲ τοῦτο οὕτως ἔχει, τί ἄλλο ἢ αὐτὸς σαυτῷ συνέθου καὶ σοι γίγνεται ἡ ὀρθότης τοῦ ὀνόματος συνθήκη, ἐπειδὴ γε δηλοῖ καὶ τὰ ὅμοια καὶ τὰ ἀνόμοια γράμματα, ἔθους τε καὶ συνθήκης τυχόντα; εἰ δ’ ὅτι μάλιστα μὴ ἐστὶ τὸ ἔθος συνθήκη, οὐκ ἂν καλῶς ἔτι ἔχοι λέγειν τὴν ὁμοιότητα δῆλωμα εἶναι, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἔθος· ἐκεῖνο γάρ, ὡς ἔοικε, καὶ ὁμοίῳ καὶ ἀνομοίῳ δηλοῖ. (435a5-b3)¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ As concerns the final ὁμοίῳ καὶ ἀνομοίῳ, the idea is not that both are necessary in any given instance, but rather that various combinations simply do, as a matter of empirical fact, exist. One might render these lines as follows:

In speaking, I can make myself understood by the dissimilar, if indeed lambda is correlated with something unlike that signified by *sklērotēs*. If this is the case then you have, so to speak, made a “convention” with yourself and correctness turns out, in your view, to be grounded on convention since both like and unlike letters get one’s meaning across, in whatever combinations they are found based on custom and convention. And even if you wish to distinguish custom sharply from convention, you are still compelled to say that custom, not likeness, is what makes understanding possible, for that may, as it turns out, accomplish this by like or unlike.

The conclusion reached is that convention and custom make an indispensable contribution to the indication (δήλωσις) of our thoughts (435b5-6).¹⁶⁰

- Notably, Plato indicates that the issue for him is not a *revision* of words as presently constituted: The point of contention is the fact that λᾱμβδᾱ τὸ ἐναντίον δηλοῖ σκληρότητος (434d7-8). When Cratylus suggests that νῦν ἴσως ἀντὶ τοῦ λάβδᾱ ῥῶ δεῖ λέγειν (434d12), this is rejected as *wholly unnecessary* since the presence of letters signifying opposites in no way inhibits communication. The possibility of successful communication rests ultimately on the fact that certain combinations of letters are sanctioned by custom and convention as denoting particular entities; likeness is not the basis of signification, but custom, which signifies by like and unlike letters as such combinations *happen to be* established. In the case of σκληρότης, Plato focuses on the presence of letters signifying opposites because this brings into sharpest relief the fact that likeness is inessential. Additional support for this conclusion lies in the fact that the word σκληρότης also contains letters which do not, strictly speaking, signify an opposite, but which are irrelevant and undesirable from the perspective of likeness (consider the letters eta and omicron as analyzed in 427c-d).¹⁶¹

- In my view, the thrust of the *Cratylus* is negative. Following a protracted investigation, Plato rejects those ties between reality and ὀνόματα evinced by the literary tradition's practice of etymology, central to which was a belief in individual natures, and the notion that deep structural analyses brought those natures to light.¹⁶² More generally, he views that tradition, along with Heraclitus, as

¹⁶⁰ Plato treats here the issue of words' constitution, specifically the conventional ground of *its* correctness, as pertains to the communication of human thoughts. Other factors are of course relevant to such communication, and Plato here makes clear that he does not intend the foregoing as a complete explanation of how these thoughts are conveyed.

¹⁶¹ On the constitution of σκληρότης cf. Anagnostopoulos, who observes that "not only do most of the elements of the name correspond and imitate nothing in the thing, but the force of the only letter (ρ) that imitates the thing is countered by the force of another letter (λ) which imitates the opposite" ("Two Theories of the Correctness of Names," 732).

¹⁶² Plato discredits any etymology-based approach to the acquisition *or* presentation of insight. One may frame the issue as follows: The literary tradition believed that etymological analysis illuminates the deep structure of ὀνόματα which, in turn, discloses bearers' natures (given that tradition's particular ontological assumptions). From Plato's point of view this would necessitate 1) there being only one possible etymological analysis of each relevant ὄνομα, and 2) one's espousing the correct, i.e., Platonic metaphysical theory. As becomes apparent in the course of the *Cratylus*, the literary tradition's approach met neither of these requirements. Even if one met the second condition, Plato's procedure suggests that one could not eliminate indeterminacy from ὀνόματα to the extent required to meet the first. As previously noted, Steinthal maintains that although he embraces convention, Plato was interested in a science (*Wissenschaft*) of etymology yet felt incapable of instituting it (*Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft*, 99, 107-8). I find no evidence in the dialogue to support this conclusion, and Plato's awareness of this

committed to a “doctrine of flux,” which he repudiates. With his rejection of constitution-based naturalness as the ground of words’ correctness, Plato is in a position to forge *systematic* connections between reality and ὀνόματα on the basis of his own metaphysical theory, which is precisely what he does via eponymy in the *Phaedo*. As concerns his own positive assessment of the ground of words’ correctness, Plato maintains that one judges fitness by appeal to custom (ἔθος) and convention (συνθήκη). The σκληρότης example, combined with a second involving ὀνόματα of numbers, signals Plato’s embrace of these forces as the ground of correctness when words’ constitution is at issue. This is not to say, of course, that custom and convention govern all aspects of terms’ *application* to entities; the specific issue here is what criteria one invokes to assess their constituency.

2. 435b6-c2: Plato turns to the case of number: ἐπεὶ, ὃ βέλτιστε, εἰ θέλεις ἐπὶ τὸν ἀριθμὸν ἐλθεῖν, πόθεν οἶε ἔξειν ὀνόματα ὅμοια ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ τῶν ἀριθμῶν ἐπενεγκεῖν, ἐὰν μὴ ἔῃς τι τὴν σὴν ὁμολογίαν καὶ συνθήκην κύρος ἔχειν τῶν ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος περὶ;¹⁶³

• Plato here adduces the case of number for the purpose of reinforcing and further illuminating the conventional ground of words’ correctness; in the event that residual doubts remain as to the scope of convention’s importance, this second example is intended to remove them. The presence of τι in b8 might suggest a limited conclusion, but this is plainly counteracted by the content of the particular example chosen: the names of numbers do not presently indicate by likeness, and, in fact, could only be made to point toward essences if complete authority were given to convention.¹⁶⁴ As concerns the matter at hand, Plato’s view is not simply

indeterminacy tells against such an interest. As concerns Plato’s treatment of resemblance and primary ὀνόματα, analyses of letters reveal empirical qualities, which cannot be mapped onto Forms; even if this state of affairs could somehow be altered, one would still be confronted with the issue of indeterminacy.

¹⁶³ Socrates had previously considered quantities, but not numbers’ ὀνόματα (432a5-433c10).

¹⁶⁴ On this point see Schofield:

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....Yet if that is the message...then the supposedly restricted form of conventionalism apparently advocated here turns out in fact to be barely distinguishable from the radical conventionalism of the previous section [435a-b]. And in any case, the unequivocal assertion of radical conventionalism there makes it hard not to read the tone of our present section as ironical. It prepares us to construe ‘contribute something’ as an understatement for ‘govern entirely’, and ‘a certain authority’ as saying in effect ‘all authority’ (“The dénouement of the *Cratylus*,” 79).

that agreement and convention make a subsidiary contribution to words' correctness when terms' constitution is at issue, but rather that they *determine* it.¹⁶⁵ The conclusion reached here applies to every ὄνομα, whether proper name or general term. For purposes of ordinary communication no more need be said.¹⁶⁶

- Mathematics plays a crucial role in Plato's philosophical system, and the fact that the ὀνόματα of numbers are not and cannot be accommodated by the natural-correctness "thesis" is quite suggestive of the latter's ultimate irrelevance. The tremendous importance of mathematics is clearly indicated elsewhere (notably *Republic* 6-7); mathematical and value concepts constitute the core group of entities to which Plato assigns Form status, and extensive training in mathematics is treated as crucial to prospective guardians' education. Notably, while mathematics is introduced here (435), value terms are central in the closing section of the dialogue (438-440). As concerns one's access to natures or essences, no particulars—including ὀνόματα—have the attributes required of something that could disclose natures in an unambiguous way; in his remarks on how one gains access to natures

On grounds provided above, I do not view the remark about convention making an indispensable contribution to the indication of one's thoughts as tentative in the way the following comment about "authority" (κῦρος) might be interpreted (since the latter, unlike the former, is tied to correctness of names specifically); however, Schofield's interpretation of it is also plausible and cannot be ruled out. Nothing essential is at stake either way, since the extent of Plato's turn to convention remains ultimately the same.

¹⁶⁵ See, e.g., Robinson, who notes that custom is what allows us to understand one another, and, specifically, that "names for the numbers apparently must be non-resembling and merely customary" (117). Bernard Williams rightly views Plato as concluding in 435c "that agreement and custom govern everyday correctness" ("Cratylus' Theory of Names and Its Refutation," 91), and Weingartner observes that "*actual* languages are a product of custom" ("Making Sense of the *Cratylus*," 24); on the centrality of custom and convention cf. Levinson, 37, and Ketchum, 147. Derbolav, on the one hand, recognizes that numbers "lassen sich nicht nach dem...Prinzip der Ähnlichkeit, sondern nur aufgrund von Setzung und Übereinkunft benennen (434e-435c)" (47); on the other hand, he maintains that what transpires in 434e-435d preserves only a limited validity for convention-based correctness, and that at the end of the dialogue the principle of ὁμοιότης is "sogar noch als gültig voraus[gesetzt]" (51, cf. 216-17). These remarks suggest that Derbolav does not interpret the σκληρότης and number examples at a sufficient level of generality. Allan maintains that "the 'resemblance' theory" is advanced in the *Cratylus* "and never withdrawn" ("The Problem of Cratylus," 284), without indicating how he interprets Plato's treatment of σκληρότης and ὀνόματα of numbers; Chen, in turn, simply asserts that convention is decisively rejected as the ground of terms' correctness (86-7), failing to take account of this section of the discussion. With regard to the conventional ground of words' correctness, see also Plato's illustration of terms' ambiguity via ἐπιστήμη (437a, with 412a).

¹⁶⁶ I am of course not claiming that convention-based criteria leave no room for judging one language superior to another. Naturally, more *could* be said by one with a different orientation. One might, for instance, consider how the relevant conventions are formed, passed on, etc., but such empirical questions are of little or no genuine interest to Plato.

(*Phaedo*, *Symposium*, *Republic*), Plato does not give this authority to particulars in general, let alone words' constitution in particular.¹⁶⁷

3. 435c2-d1: Socrates praises the desirability of a likeness-based approach to fitness.

- These concluding remarks are meant ironically. Such "praise" would be expected from Socrates based on his heretofore vigorous "partisanship" of the natural-correctness theory; however, due to the tone of his comments, the force of his remarks in 434b-435c is left undiminished.¹⁶⁸ In fact, the ensuing discussion reinforces the conclusion that this "expression" of residual attraction is insincere.

D. 435d1-438d1: Names as sources of knowledge.

1. 435d1-436a8: Cratylus: names are the sole sources of insight; the method of inquiry and discovery is the same as that of instruction.

- Specifically, Cratylus insists that names' δύναμις is διδάσκειν...καὶ τοῦτο πάννυ ἀπλοῦν εἶναι, ὅς ἂν τὰ ὀνόματα ἐπίστηται, ἐπίστασθαι καὶ τὰ πράγματα (435d4-6). The issue here is the use and usefulness of ὀνόματα, specifically, the ability of constitutional analysis to yield insight. Plato makes clear at the dialogue's close that particulars, *as such*, lack the unity, stability, and other features required of sources or objects of knowledge (note his use of none other than the term ἐπιστήμη to illustrate terms' fundamental ambiguity).

- The term τέχνη is used for the last time in the dialogue (435e2).

2. 436a9-437d7: Socrates contests the view that one can rely on names in the way that Cratylus suggests.

a. 436a9-b11: The problem of deception: if, seeking things, one follows names (ἀκολουθοῖ τοῖς ὀνόμασι), one is in great danger of being deceived.¹⁶⁹ The first legislator assigned ὀνόματα based on his own conception of reality; if his view was wrong, his followers will be misled.

¹⁶⁷ Schofield aptly notes that "any reader of the *Republic*...will simply not believe that Plato could here be taking seriously the notion that sights or sounds could painlessly disclose the essence of number" (80).

¹⁶⁸ I thus agree with Schofield, who, *contra* Grote and others, reads these comments as not seriously meant (80). Failing to recognize the passage's ironic tone, Anagnostopoulos relies heavily on it to support his claim that "Plato prefer[s] a language consisting of natural names" ("Two Theories of the Correctness of Names," 736; for this same view of the passage reiterated see "The Significance of Plato's *Cratylus*, 332, 338-9, and on Plato's alleged preference for natural correctness cf. the former article, 731, 735). Baxter, in turn, cites 435c2-3 to support the claim that Plato "believed in the desirability of a language that was as mimetic as possible" (*The "Cratylus,"* 186).

¹⁶⁹ For the same terminology, see Aristotle, *De Anima* 405b26-7 (διὸ καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν ἀκολουθοῦσιν).

b. 436b12-d7: The consistency of names. *Contra* Cratylus, consistency is no proof of correctness. Socrates draws an analogy with diagrams: if a small, unapparent mistake is made at the outset, all the ensuing deductions will be mutually consistent, yet mistaken.

- Given Plato's treatment of numbers in the foregoing turn to convention, it is noteworthy that mathematics is highlighted here once again by remarks on diagrams.¹⁷⁰ Plato's insistence on the paramount importance of embracing the right ἀρχαί (d4) plainly calls to mind the procedure he adopts at the close of the *Cratylus* and in numerous other dialogues.

c. 436d7-437c8: Names are not in fact consistent. Individual terms are ambiguous; also, there are etymologies of "good" terms indicating that things are at rest, and analyses of "bad" terms indicating that things are in flux.

- Plato chooses ἐπιστήμη to illustrate terms' ambiguity (see 412a conjoined with 437a); one's analysis will simply reflect one's own ontological stance. Given the tremendous emphasis laid on ὄνομα-constructors' supposed insight, and the alleged capacity of constitutional analysis to yield knowledge, it is noteworthy that Plato reserves precisely the noun ἐπιστήμη for making this point.¹⁷¹

d. 437d1-7: Plato contests the invocation of majority rule in determining which etymologies are correct.

- Plato is strongly opposed to the decision of important questions via appeals to sheer numbers (on political questions, cf. the *Gorgias* and *Republic*). In any case, given the foregoing remarks on ambiguity, the notion of "majority rule" is in fact substantially devoid of meaning.

3. 437d8-438d1: First Names—Legislators and Knowledge.

a. 437d8-438b8: Cratylus' approach is circular: one cannot explain how the legislators acquired that insight on the basis of which they gave the first names if all insight is gained through ὀνόματα.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. their role in the *Meno* conversation between Socrates and a slave boy, and in the *Republic*. In neither dialogue are they viewed as autonomous sources of insight; rather, as the Divided Line makes clear, treating them as self-sufficient, or generally giving them more weight than they deserve, is a fundamental error made only by inferior users.

¹⁷¹ In his previous discussion of the νομοθέται, Plato used the verb ἐπίσταμαι and the noun σοφία with reference to their cognitive state, but nowhere the noun ἐπιστήμη; moreover, he gave an increasingly-significant role to δόξα.

b. 438c1-d1: *Contra Cratylus*' suggestion, appeals to the "divine source" of these ὀνόματα lack explanatory power; one still must confront the problem of legislators' self-contradiction, i.e., the presence of some terms indicating flux and others rest, which cannot be addressed within the confines of Cratylus' approach.

VI. 438d2-440e7: Clues to Plato's stance.¹⁷²

- A. 438d2-439b9: One cannot read off natures from ὀνόματα.
- B. 439b10-440d3: The correct ontology is required for naming and knowledge.
 - 1. 439b10-e6: Hints of Plato's approach to ontology and naming.
 - 2. 439e7-d3: Requirements on proper objects of knowledge; if there were only particulars, any acquisition of knowledge would be impossible.
- C. 440d3-e7: End—exhortation to Cratylus not to give up the inquiry.

What is accomplished: In this closing section of the dialogue, Plato gives hints of his own metaphysical theory and correlated stance toward the issue of appropriateness.

How: Plato provides a sustained discussion of these matters in the *Phaedo*, which I view as closely tied to the *Cratylus* from a thematic point of view. Given these links between the two dialogues, I reserve several of my comments on this portion of the *Cratylus* for the following chapter.

VI. 438d2-440e7: Plato provides hints of his own view.

- As at the beginning of the dialogue, when challenging Hermogenes' extreme view, Plato displays his conviction that one's treatment of appropriateness must be true to how things are.
 - A. 438d2-439b9: Judgments of appropriateness require another standard. One cannot read off entities' natures from the constitution of the terms which designate them; independent knowledge of those entities is required.
 - The issue here is how one may properly discover the truth about entities, and Plato insists that one cannot obtain this from ὀνόματα, which are, after all, mere visual and verbal images.¹⁷³ Plato's remarks on the inferiority of an image-centered approach to

¹⁷² For more sustained treatment of this final section see ch. 4. One of the most powerful arguments against those who insist on viewing the *Cratylus* as a relatively late dialogue—i.e., a work belonging to the "critical group"—are the hints in this final section, combined with the stance and developments in the *Phaedo* (supplemented by the *Republic* and *Symposium*).

¹⁷³ This is of course not to say that one may not profitably *use* words, and language more generally, in the search for truth (cf. Derbolav, *Platons Sprachphilosophie*, 145). Kahn notes that "l'étude des mots ne nous apprend rien sur la vérité des choses," and sees the key philosophical problem—raised in the *Cratylus* but

truth call to mind vividly his critique of “the lovers of sights and sounds”—those entranced by objects of the senses of sight and hearing—in *Republic* V; there too Plato adamantly opposes giving excessive weight to images or likenesses, insisting that those who do so lead a dream existence (476c).

B. 439b10-440d3: Not just any view of “things” will do—the correct ontology is required for naming and knowledge.

1. 439b10-e6: Hints of Plato’s approach to ontology and naming: the existence of Forms; the reality-appearance dichotomy; the matter of appropriateness on this ontological foundation.¹⁷⁴

• The two examples of Forms given here are those for value concepts; the specific instances are αὐτὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν (c8). Here, Plato criticizes beautiful or fine particulars as subject to continuous change; these remarks gain added significance from the fact that he had previously spoken of “fine words” (411a2, a8-b1), “fine letters” (431c10), and “fine images” (431d4-5).¹⁷⁵ The key idea here is that, taken in sum, they constitute merely a subset of τὰ καλὰ. In Plato’s view it is only specification of what actually constitutes reality (“things” most properly), and what by contrast is mere appearance (“things” derivatively), that makes possible genuine treatment of the word-thing relation and appropriateness.

2. 439e7-d3: Requirements on proper objects of knowledge.

C. 440d3-e7: End—exhortation to Cratylus, who indicates his stubborn adherence to the flux ontology.

resolved only in the *Sophist*—as involving the formulation of true and false discourse (“Les mots et les formes,” 94-5, cf. 102; on the former point see also “Language and Ontology in the *Cratylus*,” 153). On the negative side I fully accord with Kahn, but on the positive front would maintain that Plato’s concern in the *Cratylus* is with naming in particular—specifically the notions of naturalness and appropriateness—and hence that its most direct ties are to other dialogues and discussions which treat that dimension of language; without wishing to deny the existence of the connection privileged by Kahn, it seems to me that the *Cratylus*’ closest links are to the *Phaedo*’s handling of eponymy, on the one hand, and to the *Sophist* and *Politicus*’ treatment of division, on the other. (For a stance privileging ties to the *Charmides* and *Phaedrus*, one which does not, however, pay sufficient attention to the particular ontological and semantic issues governing the *Cratylus* discussion see Ware, “The *Cratylus* and How Words Are Used,” 98.)

¹⁷⁴ Plato refers to the constructors of ὀνόματα as having assigned them based on a mistaken belief in the doctrine of flux; ἀλλ’ οὗτοι αὐτοὶ τε ὥσπερ εἰς τινα δίνην ἐμπεσόντες κυκῶνται καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐφελκόμενοι προσεμβάλλουσιν (439c4-6). Cf. Plato’s use of the term δίνη in the *Phaedo* (99b6) when criticizing those who, mistakenly, grant genuine explanatory power to what are simply material or physical preconditions.

¹⁷⁵ Regarding names’ status, Weingartner notes that they are “a part of the phenomenal world, subject to the vicissitudes of the Heraclitean flux” (Making Sense of the *Cratylus*,” 8); according to Levinson, Plato “demot[es] words to their merely human place, displaying their character as ‘artifacts,’ not ‘deofacts’” (36).

Appendix A

A τέχνη of Naming?: The Issue of Possibility

In the *Cratylus*, Plato concludes that naming as practiced to date, is not a τέχνη in the narrow sense of that term. The remaining question is, Could naming, if revamped, *become* a τέχνη? There are two ways in which this might happen. Naming could be like mathematics, where there is no end beyond the activity itself; or, it could be like carpentry and similar disciplines, where activity is a means to an end, e.g., that of producing shuttles.¹⁷⁶ ὀνόματα would have different functions in each, and one can use this fact to help address the issue of naming's possible τέχνη status. For naming to be like mathematics, it must have no end beyond itself. This would require that ὀνόματα not be instruments for some other purpose, but result in self-contained activity; in this context, they would have to be nature-revealing.¹⁷⁷ However, Plato believes that this is simply impossible, even assuming that one had the right ontology: As concerns the resemblance theory, the analyses of letters privilege empirical qualities, which cannot be used to specify the nature of abstract entities (here there is an unbridgeable gap); even if this state of affairs could somehow be remedied, the question of indeterminacy would in any case arise. With regard to etymology, the matter of indeterminacy is decisive straightaway; it cannot be eradicated such that there is only one possible analysis of a given ὄνομα.

In fact, in Plato's view no particulars are capable of disclosing natures; rather, at best they can point *toward* natures. This emerges clearly from Plato's exposition of the Recollection Theory in the *Phaedo* which highlights sharp differences between particulars and Forms, and cautions strongly against deception through viewing the former as the full and sole reality. Language, and names specifically, are no exception to his strictures. In

¹⁷⁶ As previously noted: The core group of Forms comprises those for mathematical and value concepts; correspondingly, it is the activities to which these concepts are central that qualify as τέχναι in the strict sense. On the one hand, when a range of other activities, including carpentry, are practiced aright, i.e., with the relevant Form(s) in view, they too qualify as τέχναι on the narrow reading; on the other hand, if practiced with only particulars in view, they are τέχναι solely on the broad or conventional interpretation. Finally, there are activities, e.g., sophistry, which by definition cannot qualify as τέχναι, narrowly construed (on Plato's handling of sophistry in the *Sophist* see ch. 5).

¹⁷⁷ Mathematics deals, among other things, with the domain of numbers; these objects exist independently of all practitioners and attempts at understanding. The activity involved here amounts to discovery of numbers and their relations (which, for Plato, help constitute order and harmony).

the *Cratylus*, Plato lays great emphasis on the fact that ὀνόματα, like all particulars, are subject to continual change; even fine (καλά) linguistic units constitute merely a subclass of τὰ καλά, which have a categorically lower ontological status and value than αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν. To make naming a τέχνη *à la* mathematics would be to invest names with a function which *no* particular could perform, including those at issue in mathematics itself: the mathematician's activity has no end beyond itself; this expert uses diagrams to assist him in his reflections on triangle and other mathematical concepts, yet without viewing those particulars themselves as sources of insight. Thus, for Plato there can be no ideal science of etymology: to make names disclosive of natures proper would be to elevate them to a status beyond particulars, no longer encompassed by Plato's description of the general features of appearances, which mark them off decisively from Forms; such a move would threaten the appearance-reality *dichotomy* which he seeks above all else to maintain. In my view, this is a danger that those *Cratylus* interpreters who are proponents of an "ideal language" interpretation do not take sufficiently into account.

The sole remaining option is for naming to qualify as a τέχνη along the lines of carpentry.¹⁷⁸ In this context, the function of ὀνόματα would not be to reveal natures, but, through their denotative function, to serve as instruments for getting individuals to *think about* the right unities; this would be the end beyond themselves to which ὀνόματα are the means. This approach is at any rate not ruled out by those considerations making it impossible for naming to serve as a τέχνη along the lines of mathematics; indeed, other particulars, e.g., diagrams, are elsewhere treated as useful insofar as they point beyond themselves to unities which must be studied independently and in their own right.¹⁷⁹ Would naming, thus construed, meet the τέχνη conditions enunciated above? The subject matter would be the Form of Name, with construction directed toward linguistic products which mark off genuine unities. If names were thus constructed, naming would meet the goodness condition: naming would be of genuine benefit to human beings insofar as it yielded products which pointed them toward those genuine unities which Plato takes to be constitute reality proper. It could also meet the understanding and teachability requirements: One could provide an account indicating how one breaks down reality, and

¹⁷⁸ As concerns the realm of *possibility*, the analogy with artifact production in the *Cratylus*, especially in Section I, is noteworthy. As in mathematics, in constructive activity too one does not produce the domain with which one operates. Here the domain is the relevant Form (e.g., Shuttle, Chair, Name). In this case, however, unlike mathematics, one produces the elements of that domain (e.g., individual shuttles, chairs, and names).

¹⁷⁹ This is indeed the most important role that particulars can have; thus, to construe ὀνόματα in this way would be to grant them the highest status that they, *qua* particulars, could achieve.

correlates names with unities; one could also specify the causal links between procedures and end. As concerns understanding, qualified νομοθέται could be identified and—guided by the dialectician—attain the proper orientation and cognitive state; in this respect, the νομοθέτης seems analogous to the carpenter who, having received instruction on the Good from the dialectician, undertakes construction on that basis.

However, the praxis of naming, thus construed, has one noteworthy feature. In order to do his job properly, the name-giver would have to know the Form of Name plus *all* unities making up reality, i.e., all other Forms as well, otherwise he could not perform his assigned function. Insofar as this is the case, one cannot properly speak of the dialectician rendering a *measure* of assistance to a practitioner of another τέχνη so that this individual may operate successfully with the relevant Form(s) in view. Rather, the scope of the legislator's activity would make the requirements on him indistinguishable from those on the dialectician under ideal circumstances—which is to say that this *figure* becomes indistinguishable from the dialectician. The conclusion to draw is that although it is possible in principle to construe naming on this basis, as a τέχνη along the lines of carpentry and other relevant types of artifact production, the manner in which this would have to be accomplished is precisely one which makes the institution of such a science quite unnecessary: since the description of its practitioners would have to match that of the dialectician, the creation of a separate group of experts would constitute a pointless duplication. This theory is supported by Plato's own procedure elsewhere: he never has anyone besides the dialectician preside when offering innovative suggestions on how naming should transpire, even when construction assumes a measure of importance, as in the later dialogues.

Finally, there is an extremely strong normative dimension present in the case of naming that is absent with regard to activities like carpentry. If construction of a bed or chair, for instance, goes awry, the possible harm to human beings is merely physical, and quite limited at that; whereas, if something goes wrong in the naming process such that ὀνόματα do not pick out the proper unities, human beings may be deceived about reality itself, with quite disastrous consequences. Judged from this point of view, the activity of naming is far too important to be left to a practitioner whom the dialectician simply advises in a limited way. It can only be entrusted to the dialectician himself.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Notably, in the middle and late dialogues Plato has something to say on the topics of the three basic areas of modern linguistics: phonology (*Philebus*); syntax (*Sophist*, combination (συμπλοκή) of ὀνόματα and ῥήματα); and semantics (*Cratylus*, *Phaedo*, Method of Division in the late dialogues, and of course the *Sophist* discussion of truth and falsehood). In terms of mastering a language, there is, on the one hand, the

issue of acquiring the relevant vocabulary and, on the other, that of learning the rules of denotation. Plato opposes any conflation of the two problems, or false understanding of their relation: in the *Cratylus*, Plato attacks those who confuse specification of a lexicon with getting denotations right *and* those who think that this lexicon, due to the decomposition of its elements, yields mastery of denotations (as prescribed by the ὀρθότης theory). Of the three (phonology, syntax, and semantics), insofar as the last of these could become a τέχνη in the narrow sense of that term its normative character would not distinguish it from dialectic. As the *Sophist* discussion shows, while the ordinary grammatical syntax of the Greek language is not the product of a τέχνη, that specialized syntax dealing with very basic rules for forming sentences that express what is true or false may be assigned this rank; in addition, this specialized grammatical τέχνη would not overlap with dialectic in the way specified above with regard to semantics. Moreover, for Plato phonology is another branch of modern linguistics that may qualify as a genuine τέχνη; this is so because he construes it as involving the natural articulation of the Form of Sound *and* because the process does not place constraints on practitioners of the sort that precluded naming's being left to a practitioner other than the dialectician. Due to constraints of topic and space, my discussion in this dissertation focuses on Plato's treatment of semantic issues.

Appendix B

Brief Remarks on Plato's Use of Etymology Outside the *Cratylus*

The distinction between the *Cratylus* and other dialogues, as regards etymology, does not lie in its presence in the former and complete absence in the latter. Plato does include etymologies elsewhere though they are used far more sparingly, and their presence serves a quite different function from those one finds in the *Cratylus* as the project is advanced at the outset. While Plato employs derivations in various contexts, they are not treated as nature-revealing or otherwise essential to the presentation of his view.

In one instance, at the close of Pausanias' encomium in the *Symposium* Apollodorus ties the name "Pausanias" to the verb παύειν: Πausανίου δὲ παυσαμένου—διδάσκουσι γάρ με ἴσα λέγειν οὕτως οἱ σοφοί—ἔφη ὁ Ἀριστόδημος δεῖν μὲν Ἀριστοφάνη λέγειν (185c4-6). Plato here uses the aorist participle to heighten the parallel between the two ὀνόματα. In this context, there is no pretense of revealing the bearer's nature; rather, this is an instance of mere verbal play or stylistic embellishment.

Later in the dialogue, Plato highlights ties between "loving" and "speaking." Following Agathon's speech, which made abundant use of rhetorical techniques,¹⁸¹ Socrates notes what he takes to be fundamental differences between that sort of approach and one directed toward uncovering the truth of what is being investigated; he says that πάνυ δὴ μέγα ἐφρόνουν ὥς εἰ ἐρῶν, ὥς εἰδὼς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ ἐπαινεῖν ὅτι οὐν (198d6-7). The word "speak" (ἐρῶν) here is homonymous with the word for lover.¹⁸² This etymology plays no explanatory role in the discussion, and Socrates could register his complaint just as effectively without its inclusion. Interestingly, Plato's *Cratylus* etymology of ἥρως ties it to ἔρως on the one hand, and to "speech" (εἶπειν) on the other (398c-e); the ties between the two are here indirect rather than direct as in the *Symposium*. Notably, however, the *Symposium* analysis differs from the *Cratylus* etymology of ἔρως, which ties the term to ἐσπεῖν (420a-b). Moreover, in the *Phaedrus* Plato offers yet a third derivation, there linking it to ῥώμη (238c).

In the *Phaedo*, Plato includes the etymology—familiar already from Homer yet rejected in the *Cratylus*—which ties the name Ἀΐδης to the word for unseen (αἰδέος) in remarks on the fate of the soul following its separation from the body at death: Ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ ἄρα, τὸ

¹⁸¹ In this connection, see Socrates' remark that it called Gorgias to mind, and his substitution of "Gorgias" for "Gorgon" in his mention of the "Gorgian head" (198c).

¹⁸² Cf. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, *Symposium*, 38.

αἰδές [τοῦ ἀνθρώπου], τὸ εἰς τοιοῦτον τρόπον ἕτερον οἰχόμενον γενναῖον καὶ καθαρὸν καὶ αἰδῆ, εἰς Ἄιδου ὡς ἀληθῶς, παρὰ τὸν ἀγαθὸν καὶ φρόνιμον θεόν... ἀπαλλαττομένη τοῦ σώματος εὐθὺς διαπεφύσεται καὶ ἀπόλωλεν, ὡς φασιν οἱ πολλοὶ ἄνθρωποι; (80d5-e1; cf. 81c11 and *Gorg.* 493b4-5) (for this etymology in the literary tradition see Homer, *Il.* 5.844-5). In remarks on the soul's fate after separation from the body, Plato suggests an analogy between the realm of Forms and the world of myth, but the etymology plays no essential role in the discussion; Plato could readily—and elsewhere does—offer the same characterization of the plane of Forms without recourse to this derivation. In fact, in the *Cratylus* Plato rejects this analysis explicitly, and espouses a different etymology of the god's name, one highlighting his intelligence (404b). In each of these two cases, Plato's acceptance or rejection of a particular derivation is based on the requirements of context. As previously noted, one commentator, H.N. Fowler, has suggested that Plato's rejection there of an etymology of the name "Hades" which he accepts at *Phaedo* 80d "may indicate that the *Cratylus* is the later of the two dialogues."¹⁸³ Such an approach would lend etymologies far more importance than they deserve; the fact that Plato offers different etymologies of particular terms in different dialogues cannot in itself be used to ground hypotheses about dating. This would presuppose that Plato took such derivations seriously in their own right when it is overwhelmingly clear from the *Cratylus*, and from analyses offered in other dialogues, that he does not.

Elsewhere, when explaining the origin of the simplest form of πόλις, Plato focuses on the issue of need satisfaction. Πόλεις arise in the first instance because human beings have more needs than they can meet individually: Γίνεται τοίνυν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, πόλις, ὡς ἐγῶμαι, ἐπειδὴ τυγχάνει ἡμῶν ἕκαστος οὐκ αὐτάρκης, ἀλλὰ πολλῶν (ῶν) ἐνδεής.... Οὕτω δὲ ἄρα παραλαμβάνων ἄλλος ἄλλον, ἐπ' ἄλλου, τὸν δ' ἐπ' ἄλλου χρεῖα, πολλῶν δεόμενοι, πολλοὺς εἰς μίαν οἴκησιν ἀγείραντες κοινωνοὺς τε καὶ βοηθοὺς, ταύτη τῇ συνοικίᾳ ἐθέμεθα πόλιν ὄνομα (*Rep.* 369b5-c4). In providing his account, Plato offers an etymology tying the noun πόλις to the adjective πολὺς. This derivation is not nature revealing in a Platonic or even conventional sense (other groups beside πόλεις have multiple constituent members, and even if this analysis correctly marked off the group's size, the etymology would still be only aspectual); in fact, it privileges nothing of import that Plato's exposition does not otherwise bring to light.

¹⁸³ Loeb, 4.

The function of this analysis, as of those offered elsewhere, is to lend emphasis and embellishment to a point that Plato wishes to make relying on other grounds. Steinthal, in his comment on 369c, claims that the derivation “geschieht...einerseits in so bescheidener Andeutung, dass man sieht, diese Betrachtungsweise ist nicht mehr beliebt; anderseits aber verrät dies doch eine alte heimliche Neigung.”¹⁸⁴ While I agree with Steinthal’s assessment of the etymology’s significance, I dispute his interpretation of this fact: his remark that the approach is “nicht mehr beliebt” presupposes that it was once “beliebt,” a claim I find unsupported by Plato’s general treatment of etymology. Moreover, I see no evidence that Plato evinces here a residual attraction to the technique; the derivation’s mere presence does not in itself constitute such evidence.¹⁸⁵

Further support for the claim that the mere presence of etymologies does not indicate a genuine belief in their disclosive power, i.e., in a “natural-correctness” thesis, is provided by reference to Aristotle. On the one hand, Aristotle, like Plato, offers etymologies: for examples see *De Anima* 405a (ψυχή, quoted above in connection with Plato’s etymologies of ψυχή); *Nicomachean Ethics* 1132a (δίκαιον from δίχα); and, later in that same work, 1140b (σωφροσύνη from σφζουσα τὴν φρόνησιν; cf. Plato, σωτηρία φρονήσεως, *Cratylus* 411e-412a). On the other hand, as is well known, Aristotle disavows in no uncertain terms any belief in natural-correctness (*De Int.* 16a19-29). Plato repudiates such a belief in the *Cratylus*, and given this fact, as with Aristotle one may therefore not attribute special import to his use of the technique elsewhere.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft*, vol. 1, 85.

¹⁸⁵ For other examples see *Gorgias* 493a-c; *Phaedrus* 244c-d and 251c. A complete survey is unnecessary to the points I wish to make here, and outside the scope of this project (for additional cases see Méridier, who rightly points out that Plato had no serious interest in the procedure in the *Cratylus* or elsewhere, 18-19).

¹⁸⁶ Dahlmann puts the point well (1672).

Part 3

Ties Between the *Cratylus* and the *Phaedo*, *Sophist*, and *Politicus*

Chapter 4

Plato and Naming: A Rejection of Etymology in the *Cratylus*, and a New Turn toward Eponymy in the *Phaedo*

INTRODUCTION

Plato's *Cratylus* raises key problems regarding the basis on which ὀνόματα may be judged "appropriate" or "correct." Inquiry centers on a "natural-correctness" thesis, according to which words' descriptive content, revealed by etymology, discloses their referents' φύσεις. The interpretation I develop treats Plato's discussion of etymology as a critical response to techniques and assumptions of central importance to the literary tradition from Homer through Euripides. In the *Cratylus*, Plato's handling of poets plays a central role in his debunking of naming's τέχνη status, but at the same time he offers a radical challenge to their handling of the notions of naturalness and appropriateness, concepts which are fundamental to his own metaphysics and philosophy of language.

The thrust of the *Cratylus* is negative. After a lengthy investigation, Plato rejects the linkage of reality and ὀνόματα evinced by the literary tradition's practice of etymology; specifically, he repudiates approaches to the notions of naturalness and appropriateness which are based on or otherwise linked to the constituency of ὀνόματα. However, a limited positive result does emerge from the discussion. In judging the appropriateness of words' constitution, one need only invoke custom and convention; this turn to convention applies to all ὀνόματα, including those designating Forms and other key elements of Plato's philosophical system. What remains to be provided is an account of the correct *use* of words from a philosophical perspective. In the *Cratylus* itself there are only brief suggestions of what that account will involve. I take these positive hints largely from the dialogue's close, where Plato introduces briefly the appearance-reality dichotomy and explanatory role given Forms, and raises in passing the matter of appropriateness with regard to his own metaphysical framework.

Plato develops these final clues in the *Phaedo*.¹ There, he explores the reality-appearance dichotomy, with reality as *explanans*, and the participation relation. In addition, he introduces a strong notion of “ontological naturalness” to replace that tied closely to words’ constitution. By this I mean that Plato links the notion of naturalness primarily and fundamentally to the structure of reality itself; he seeks to identify what are objective and theoretically important unities, relations between which constitute order and harmony. Platonic order and harmony are expressed in general, necessary truths; within such a framework, there is no need for individual natures in the case of spatiotemporal particulars. Notably, in the *Phaedo* Plato expressly denies such a commitment.²

In addition to its value in explaining Plato’s treatment of etymology in the *Cratylus*, concentration on the literary tradition has philosophical merit because it assists one in understanding the arguments which Plato makes about naming in the *Phaedo*, where his discussion of linguistic issues is not explicitly tied to that tradition. Although Plato views eponymy as a central semantic notion, commentators have not generally given it the attention it deserves.³ Moreover, appeals to the standard sources in discussions of Plato’s middle-period Theory of Forms, notably, Socrates, Heraclitus and Parmenides, do not permit one to situate and explain Platonic eponymy. The reason is that this semantic relation is important, not for previous philosophers, but rather for a literary tradition whose origins antedate those of philosophy. Reflection on this tradition’s approach allows one to distinguish what are merely inherited presuppositions from Plato’s distinctive philosophical contribution to the problematic in question. Scholars have not previously attempted to understand the *Phaedo* against this background; specifically, the literary tradition’s extensive handling of the eponymy relation offers a heretofore unrecognized precedent for Plato’s own systematic use of eponymy to treat issues of appropriateness. Although he rejects etymology outright in the *Cratylus*, in the *Phaedo* Plato offers a revamped version of the eponymy relation based on his own metaphysical theory. In fact, the *Phaedo* provides both an extensive treatment of Forms and μετέχοντα (participants), and Plato’s only discussion of eponymy (with the exception of remarks much later in the *Parmenides* and

¹ The existence of strong thematic links between the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo*, as emphasized by this study, complements the results of stylistic inquiries tying the former quite closely to the latter (von Arnim, “Sprachliche Forschungen zur Chronologie der platonischen Dialoge”).

² As far as the empirical world is concerned what remains are individual characters, awareness of which is a matter of δόξα because it does not yield necessary propositions.

³ Its importance was clearly recognized by Aristotle, whose account of Plato’s theory emphasizes this aspect of it (*Met.* 987b7-10).

Timaeus which simply recapitulate his *Phaedo* stance).⁴ In this context, Forms are the primary ὄνομα-bearers, while individual sensibles bear their ὀνόματα derivatively; although Plato continues to maintain that the constitution of all words is correct based on convention, he insists that given the selection of certain appellations to designate Forms it is emphatically not a matter of convention how these ὀνόματα are applied to μετέχοντα. Questions of appropriateness arise when one considers the extent to which individual sensibles strive to be like those Forms in which they participate, and hence deserve to be “named after” them.⁵

The interpretation of the *Cratylus* developed in this study provides what I believe to be, in key respects, a more accurate account of Plato’s aims and critical targets than has heretofore been offered. In addition, it allows the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo* to be linked differently and more closely than previous commentators have thought. In my view, the most fundamental and tightest connections involve the notions of naturalness and appropriateness. Scholars working on the *Cratylus* have not seen these particular ties to the *Phaedo*, and commentators on the *Phaedo* have not explored such links to the *Cratylus*. It is a focus on these connections that distinguishes my interpretation.⁶

⁴ See *Parmenides* 130e-131a, 133c-d; and *Timaeus* 51e-52a. The eponymy relation has that of participation, which is not mentioned in the *Cratylus*, as its immediate ontological ground. In this chapter I focus largely on the *Phaedo* due to its importance; however, I also cite relevant passages from the *Republic* and *Symposium*.

⁵ To avoid any possible confusion, a brief note about the phrase “individual sensibles” is in order here. Though there are a range of participants which are not αἰσθητά, in the middle period Plato seems to take αἰσθητά as capturing the bulk of them; moreover, it is true that certain entities which are not strictly speaking αἰσθητά are nevertheless in various ways dependent on them. Plato emphasizes the epistemological contrast between νοητά and αἰσθητά, and generally glosses over the fact that this does not map precisely onto the Form-participant relation. (In the late writings this problem recedes: Plato operates with even more participants which are not sensibles, and his epistemology becomes more complex; in addition, the Form-particular relation is no longer the central focus of his technical discussions.) In light of this middle-period tendency, the phrase “individual sensibles” should, where relevant, be given the broader interpretation.

⁶ In fact, this interpretation of the *Cratylus* allows one to tie it more closely and differently than others have thought to the *Phaedo*, on the one hand, and to the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, on the other. Ties to the late dialogues do not center on the Method of Division (διαίρεσις), as has been thought; rather, the key in both the middle and late periods lies in Plato’s concern with naturalness and appropriateness, which are treated in light of division at the latter juncture. The *Cratylus*’ ties to the *Sophist* and *Politicus* are treated in ch. 5.

Various commentators have noted what they take to be the isolated position of the *Cratylus* in the Platonic corpus: see, e.g., Wilamowitz (*Platon*, 228); Méridier (30); Fowler (4); and Jowett (*The Dialogues of Plato*, 254). However, the nineteenth-century German scholar C. Schaarschmidt took the extreme view that the dialogue is so unworthy of a thinker of Plato’s caliber that one cannot but judge it inauthentic. He insists that the figure of Socrates presented therein is neither the historical nor the Platonic Socrates (“Über die Unechtheit des Dialogs *Kratylos*,” 331), and reaches the sweeping conclusion that “im Kratylosdialog weder die Prosopopoeie, noch die Composition überhaupt, noch der Grundgedanke, noch endlich die Mittel der Durchführung desselben zu dem stimmen, was wir also Platos schriftstellerische und philosophische Eigentümlichkeit aus dessen unzweifelhaft echten Werken kennen” (355). (For a

THE LITERARY TRADITION

Writers in the literary tradition make abundant use of etymology to highlight the descriptive content of ὀνόματα, largely proper names; they do so in a range of ways, and the technique plays a central role in their reflections on individuals and their natures. In addition, authors make extensive use of the eponymy or “named-after” relation to account for the source of various ὀνόματα. Moreover, they demonstrate a concern with the question of whether names which have already been assigned are in fact appropriate to their bearers. Writers treat the issue of appropriateness by raising questions of veridicality and by offering assessments which involve considerations of desert tied to bearers’ achievements or performance.⁷ The matter of fitness arises in connection both with etymology and with eponymy. In the *Cratylus*, Plato rejects the use of etymology to address questions of fitness, while in the *Phaedo* he embraces a transformed version of the eponymy relation and uses eponymy to treat appropriateness. It is my contention that the literary tradition’s handling of etymology, eponymy, and appropriateness is of central relevance to one’s understanding of Plato’s views and procedures in both the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo*; hence, to set the stage for my discussion of appropriateness in these two dialogues, I return briefly to the literary tradition’s treatment of these issues.

ETYMOLOGY

In offering etymologies, writers in the literary tradition employ a tremendous range of criteria and examples, of which I recapitulate a mere sampling here. The most popular criterion they use in highlighting names’ descriptive content is attitudes or character traits of bearers. For instance, both Hesiod and Aeschylus comment on the name Προμηθεύς. In *Theogony*, Hesiod says that Clymene bore “clever Prometheus, full of various wiles”

diametrically opposed valuation see Jowett: “In fancy and humour, and perfection of style and metaphysical originality, this dialogue may be ranked with the best of the Platonic writings” (253).) In Schaarschmidt’s view, the *Cratylus*’ author—whoever he might be—is not sufficiently talented to handle the subject matter with which he nevertheless attempts to deal, and in fact its composer seems “nach der Weise moderner Romanschriftsteller ganz ohne Plan, aufs Geratewohl, gearbeitet zu haben” (343, italics mine). In his remarks on the dialogue’s philosophical content—or supposed lack thereof—Schaarschmidt fails to appreciate the fact that much of what Plato says in the *Cratylus* is not intended as an exposition of positions which he himself holds, and hence cannot be treated as a series of *errors* made by the author; rather, it constitutes ideas (notably, naming’s τέχνη status) which Plato does not subscribe to and will in fact challenge.

⁷ As before, I operate with the understanding that in cases involving desert questions of veridicality are of course also pertinent.

(Προμηθεά ποικίλον αἰολόμητιν) (510-11), and in *Works and Days* Zeus addresses Προμηθεύς as “Son of Iapetus, surpassing all in cunning” (Ἰαπετιονίδη, πάντων πέρι μήδεα εἰδώς) (54).⁸ In Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* Kratos ties the name Προμηθεύς to the noun προμηθία (“forethought”) (85-7).

In another case, Homer refers to the suitor Ctesippus, who is said to trust in his boundless wealth (Κτήσιππος δ’ ὄνομ’ ἔσκε...ὅς δὴ τοι κτεάτεσσι πεποιθώς θεσπεσίοισι) (*Od.* 20.288-9). Hesiod, in turn, remarks that Pontus’ eldest child Νηρεύς “is trusty (νημερτής)...and does not forget the laws of righteousness” (*Th.* 235-6). The tragedians offer etymologies of several other individuals’ names. For example, trying to persuade Φιλοκτήτης (“Lover-of-gain”) to join forces with the Greeks, Neoptolemus tells him that “it is a glorious heightening of gain (καλὴ γὰρ ἡ ἰκίτησις),” first to be healed and then to gain great fame for the conquest of Troy (*Soph. Phil.* 1344-7).⁹ Euripides offers an etymology of the name “Aphrodite” when he has Hecuba say that τὰ μῶρα...πάντ’ ἐστὶν Ἀφροδίτη βροτοῖς, καὶ τοῦνομ’ ὀρθῶς ἀφροσύνης ἄρχει θεᾶς (*Tr.* 989-90).¹⁰ In the *Rhesus*, Euripides highlights the descriptive content of the name Δόλων by emphasizing the bearer’s δόλος (“guile” or “cunning”) (215; see also 216-18). Moreover, in the *Bacchae* Pentheus’ mother Ἀγαύη is asked by the Chorus whether she is proud (ἀγάλλη;) (1198). Writers also provide etymologies based on individuals’ skills and capacities. For example, Proteus and Psamathe changed their daughter’s name to Θεονόη due to her gift of divination: τὰ θεῖα γὰρ τὰ τ’ ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα πάντ’ ἠπίστατο (*Hel.* 13-14).

Attitudes, character traits, skills and capacities all pertain directly to the named individual. In addition, as previously discussed, ὀνόματα may be tied to certain extensions of persons. There is a large group of cases in which names are assigned based on something connected with an individual or group’s actions (see for instance Aeschylus’ derivation linking the ὄνομα “Persians” to the verb πέρθειν (“waste,” “destroy”) (*Pers.* 176-8).¹¹ In other contexts, the descriptive content of a divinity’s name might be associated with the instrumental role that individual plays in the universe at large. It is in

⁸ Translations of Hesiod are by Hugh G. Evelyn-White.

⁹ Tr. by David Grene.

¹⁰ “Aphrodite is nothing but the human lust, named rightly, since the word of lust begins the goddess’ name.” (tr. by Richmond Lattimore, slightly modified)

¹¹ As previously noted, when speaking of the basis of assignments what I have in mind specifically is the ground on which writers claim that assignments were made.

this connection that Zeus' ὄνομα was a popular object of etymological analysis.¹² Both Hesiod and Aeschylus link one form of the god's name, Δίς, to the preposition διὰ ("through" or "on account of") (see *W.D.* 1-4 and *Ag.* 1485-7, respectively). Pindar, Aeschylus, and Euripides, in turn, tie the form Ζεύς to ζῆν ("to live") (see *Isth.* 3.4-5; *Supp.* 584-5; and *Or.* 1635, respectively).¹³

Writers addressing the matter of appropriateness in connection with etymology do so by treating both cases involving veridicality and those involving considerations of desert. For instance, as concerns the former, Aeschylus maintains that Ἐπαφος is named truly (ἀληθῶς) from the touch (ἔφαψις) which delivered his mother Io from her torments (*Supp.* 315 and 45ff.). This judgment of veridicality is grounded on the idea that it *really* was Zeus' touch which, restoring Io to her senses, issued in the birth of a son.

Writers more frequently provide assessments of the second type. For instance, in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* the Chorus offers a resounding judgment of appropriateness, and wonders who could have given Helen a name so well-deserved:

τίς ποτ' ὠνόμαζεν ᾧδ'
 ἐς τὸ πᾶν ἐτητύμως,
 μή τις ὄντιν' οὐχ ὀρώμεν προνοί-
 αῖσι τοῦ πεπρωμένου
 γλῶσσαν ἐν τύχαι νέμων,
 τὰν δορίγαμβρον ἀμφινει-
 κῇ θ' Ἑλέναν; ἐπεὶ πρεπόντως
 ἐλένας ἔλανδρος ἐλέ-
 πτολῖς...ἔπλευσεν (681ff.).¹⁴

Success (τύχη) is said to be achieved because Helen's effect on mortals has turned out to be just that predicted by her name; in fact, this perfect meshing of the two is actually what leads the Chorus to muse about the name's divine source.

¹² The supreme Olympian was called Ζεύς; one also finds Δίς, an old nominative for Ζεύς, in the oblique cases. This important name is discussed at greater length in chs. 1-3.

¹³ Euripides links the two in a passage in which Apollo, speaking about Helen, says that she "lives (ζῆν), for being born of Zeus (Ζηνὸς γὰρ οὖσαν), she could not die" (tr. by William Arrowsmith); here a direct causal connection is suggested.

¹⁴ 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? Fittingly
 death of ships, death of men and cities...
 she sailed. (Lattimore's translation, slightly modified)

As with Helen, in Polyneices' case too one can only make a judgment of desert when the individual reaches maturity; with the adult bearer's conduct in view, both Aeschylus and Euripides claim that the name "Polyneices" is deserved. In Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*, Eteocles states that his brother is quite fittingly named, meaning that—true to his appellation—Πολυνείκης ("Much-wrangling") has turned out to be a cause of strife (658; see also 577-83). Euripides offers the same basic treatment of the name. In *Phoenician Women* Eteocles orders Polyneices to depart, combining an awareness of the name's descriptive content with a judgment of desert: ἀληθῶς δ' ὄνομα Πολυνείκη πατὴρ ἔθετό σοι θεία προνοία νεικέων ἐπώνυμον (636-7). Subsequently, Antigone addresses her dead brother as follows: "Polyneices, how well your name and nature coincide (ἔφυς ἄρ' ἐπώνυμος)!" (1493).¹⁵ The consonance of name and nature is powerfully conveyed by these few words. Taken in sum, the aforementioned passages indicate that Polyneices deserves his ὄνομα because the impact of his activity accords perfectly with those expectations engendered by his name's descriptive content; in fact, the close meshing of name and bearer's nature leads Euripides to raise the issue of divine inspiration with regard to the assignment.

As mentioned, in *Prometheus Bound* Aeschylus analyzes the name Προμηθεύς based on its semantic constitution; in addition, he concludes that the name is undeserved. After Hephaestus binds Prometheus at Zeus' request, Κράτος ("Might") taunts him as follows: "The gods named you inappropriately (ψευδωνύμως) when they called you Forethought (Προμηθεύς), for now it is precisely you yourself who are *in need of forethought* (προμηθία) to extricate yourself from this contrivance" (85-7).¹⁶ This assessment is based on the fact that Prometheus, always heretofore able to exhibit the trait expressed by his name's semantic constitution, is now thoroughly constrained. Prometheus had before been a master of contrivances, yet is now powerless to act; based on this incapacity, Κράτος deems his ὄνομα to be inappropriately assigned.

Plato's own approach, as hinted at in the *Cratylus* and revealed in the *Phaedo*, differs from these other writers' orientation in several fundamental ways. Their handling of descriptive content places the deep structure of proper names in the role of yielding insight into individual bearers' natures. In contrast, Plato's conception of "nature" is such that it rules out individual natures and assigns fixed natures to kinds.¹⁷ In keeping with this

¹⁵ My translation.

¹⁶ My translation.

¹⁷ One is more likely to evince a belief in individual φύσεις if one adheres to some form of theological fatalism, as the writers treated in this study do, albeit to varying extents. Anthropomorphized divine beings

view, Plato never evinces a genuine, i.e., philosophic interest in proper names and their bearers; moreover, he rejects outright any approach to insight based on the analysis of words' constitution. In addition, while Plato approves of raising questions both of veridicality and of desert in one's treatment of appropriateness, as is the literary tradition's practice, he does not believe that one can do so in the indiscriminate fashion which typified that tradition's approach. Finally, while the literary tradition's handling of etymology displays no pervasive or standardized use of normative criteria, Plato indicates repeatedly that such criteria—properly understood—are at the heart of his own approach.¹⁸ In the *Cratylus*, Plato relies extensively on the literary tradition's handling of etymology and etymology-based questions of fitness; however, he draws on that tradition for the ultimate purpose of discrediting it.

THE EPONYMY RELATION

The literary tradition also makes considerable use of the eponymy relation, typically for the purpose of identifying the source of a given ὄνομα. As with etymological analyses, there are numerous categories and examples, of which I provide a brief recapitulation here. In one set of cases, groups of people receive their ὀνόματα from their supposed leaders or progenitors. These cases are quite numerous. For instance, Homer says that Erichthonius, son of Dardanus, begat Tros, leader of the Trojans (*Il.* 20.230). Elsewhere, Aeschylus claims that the Pelasgi were named after their king Pelasgus (*Supp.* 250-3), and Herodotus reports that the descendants of Targiteus' three sons, taken as a group, were named "Scolotoi" after their king (τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπωνυμίην) (*Hist.* 4.6). Both Herodotus and Euripides insist that Ion gave his name to a group of people. According to the former writer, 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 became Athenians; and upon Xuthus' son Ion's becoming general they assumed the title of Ionians (*Hist.* 8.44; see also 7.94).

are central to their explanatory scheme, and, more specifically, authors' belief in names' divine source manifests such an allegiance. While a notion of individual responsibility begins to develop, notably in Greek tragedy, it exists alongside that of divine governance; insofar as both are present, writers do not delineate the relationship between them. In contrast, Plato rejects the idea of theological fatalism, and makes central a notion of individual responsibility which comes out clearly, among other places, in the *Phaedo* (e.g., his remarks on the transmigration of souls), and in the Myth of Er (*Republic* 10).

¹⁸ Needless to say, to the extent that normative criteria are relevant to literary praxis, the standards involved are of a radically different type from those of interest to Plato.

Euripides says that Ion's grandchildren will be called "Ionians" based on the name of their grandfather (*Ion* 1581-8).

There are also cases in which writers identify natural inanimate entities as the source of the ὄνομα of a people or parcel of land. In this connection, Herodotus reports that the people living around the mountain called "Atlas" were named "Atlantes" after it (ἐπὶ τούτου τοῦ ὄρεος ἐπώνυμοι) (*Hist.* 4.184). Elsewhere, Pindar mentions a city named for its neighboring mountain, Mt. Aetna (τοῦ ἐπωνυμίαν πόλιν) (*Pyth.* 1.30-2). In other instances, parcels of land and bodies of water are named after mortal individuals, as when Aeschylus foretells that the inlet of the sea to which Io is driven will be called "Ionian, a memorial to all men of your journeying" (*Prom.* 840-1);¹⁹ in Euripides' *Electra*, Castor instructs Orestes to found a city which will take its name from him (ἐπώνυμος δὲ σοῦ πόλις κεκλήσεται) (*El.* 1275). Moreover, there are cases in which human constructions are said to be named for individuals. For instance, Pindar reports that Apollo called a temple of his the "Ismenion" after the son given him by the nymph Melea (*Pyth.* 11.5-6). Along similar lines, Herodotus says that "the Delphians call this gold and silver which Gyges sent the Gygean Treasure, after the treasure's donor (ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀναθέντος ἐπωνυμίην)" (*Hist.* 1.14).²⁰ Elsewhere, a human construction gets its ὄνομα from a place at which significant events transpired: Athena tells Orestes to name the temple he will build at Halae after Tauris, to commemorate his sufferings there (ἐπώνυμον γῆς Ταυρικῆς πόνων τε σῶν) (*I.T.* 1454).

As with etymology, writers offer eponymy-based judgments of appropriateness. In one instance of the relevant type, Pelasgus 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.* 250-3).²¹ Pelasgus' judgment of veridicality is based on his role as ἄναξ with regard to the aforementioned group of people; in Pelasgus' view, his acting in the capacity of ruler is justifiably reflected in the collective name of his subjects. This judgment has a functional element since it is based ultimately on the namer's role in relation to the recipient individuals, but it differs from cases of functional analysis since the appropriateness of the name "Pelasgians" is not based on a specific function the group performs. In another case, Herodotus mentions a

¹⁹ Tr. by Grene.

²⁰ Unless otherwise noted, translations of Herodotus are my own.

²¹ Modified tr. of Seth G. Benardete.

river called “Hypanis” that has its source in Scythia in another great lake, “properly (ὀρθῶς) called the Mother of Hypanis” (*Hist.* 4.52); interestingly, here the *primary* entity, a body of water, gets its own ὄνομα from another body of water which issues from it. Based on the fact that the relation between them is appropriately reflected in the ὀνόματα given, Herodotus offers a judgment of veridicality. In a further case involving a conjunction of the eponymy relation and considerations of veridicality, Herodotus wonders “why three distinct women’s names [Libya, Asia, and Europa] should have been given to what is in reality a single land-mass (μὴ ἐούση γῆ)” (4.45).²² The implication here is that, in Herodotus’ 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 land mass—is simply inappropriate.

In one 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 honoured mother had given him at his birth (ἐκ γενετῆς); but Irus all the young men called him, because (οὔνεκ’) he used to run on errands when anyone bade him” (*Od.* 18.5-7).²³ In cases of name changes and the acquisition of nicknames, one is justified in raising the matter of fitness since it is because the new or additional appellation *is* appropriate to current circumstances that it is introduced at all. This individual is named Ἴριος after the female deity Ἥρις, the divine messenger of Olympus. He would have been incapable of serving as messenger 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.

In addition, judgments of desert may 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!” (*O.C.* 107-8).²⁴ Similarly, in the opening speech of Euripides’ *Ion*, Hermes refers to events which 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).²⁵ Moreover, Aeschylus has the Chorus in his *Persians* speak of the Persian king Xerxes, “a man equal to god, one whose race is

²² Tr. by Aubrey de Sélincourt, slightly modified.

²³ Tr. by A. T. Murray.

²⁴ Tr. by Robert Fitzgerald.

²⁵ Tr. by Ronald Frederick Willetts. As the play draws to a close, Athena announces herself as “the one giving her name to your land (ἐπώνυμος σῆς χθονός)” (1555).

sprung from gold" (80); the poet refers here to the hero Perseus, who was conceived following Zeus' approach to Danae in a shower of gold.²⁶ Strictly speaking, any suggested 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.

My research shows that the literary tradition was quite concerned with etymology and eponymy, but never distinguished clearly between them; in fact, authors use ἐπώνυμος and related terms indiscriminately with reference both to etymology and to eponymy. In contrast, Plato distinguishes sharply between etymology and eponymy; although he devotes much of the *Cratylus* to contesting an etymology-based foundation of appropriateness, he does not, there or elsewhere, argue similarly against eponymy. Instead, I suggest, he taps its unexploited potential. In its use of eponymy, the literary tradition typically rests content with identifying the entity giving rise to an assignment. In contrast, Plato maintains that a satisfactory theory must be grounded on a determination of the nature and status of the primary entity; this, in turn, yields a set of conditions under which that entity's ὄνομα can properly be applied to a certain class of recipients. While Plato manifests a limited interest in individual sensibles, his main concern is with the Forms; therefore, the eponymy relation's ultimate focus on the primary entity, rather than on the recipient, is quite in keeping with his own orientation. In the *Phaedo*, Plato embraces eponymy as the optimal framework for presenting the semantics of the Form-particular relation; his transformed version of eponymy incorporates those revisions necessitated by the structure and content of his middle-period metaphysics.

THE CRATYLUS

In the *Cratylus*, Plato explores rival conceptions of the ground of words' appropriateness or correctness (ὀρθότης). In considering a φύσις- or "nature"-based view, according to which an ὄνομα is appropriately assigned insofar as the analysis of its constituents provides insight into the nature of its referent, Plato treats approaches to correctness based on descriptive content and phonetic constitution, respectively, but devotes most of his attention to the former.²⁷ His main concern in the dialogue is to invalidate the natural-correctness thesis. Having accomplished this, Plato simply embraces convention as a

²⁶ My translation. As noted in pt. 1, the authenticity of line 146 has been challenged; if the line were in fact genuine, it would be pertinent here.

²⁷ Hence, this study focuses largely on Plato's handling of descriptive content.

sufficient ground of appropriateness for purposes of ordinary communication, and provides only the barest sketch of the role this turn to convention plays in the approach he favors to the practice of philosophy.

Plato's highlighting of descriptive content via etymology, and judgments of appropriateness made on that foundation, constitute the centerpiece of the *Cratylus*; hence, any interpretation that cannot account for their presence and character must be regarded as seriously inadequate. I contend that one can only offer a successful interpretation of the dialogue's central focus, and hence of the work as a whole, if one looks to the literary tradition. Once again, in interpreting the *Cratylus* as a major point of intersection between the philosophical and literary traditions, I am not claiming that it represents some kind of fusion of the two, but that it offers fundamental criticisms of both.

In setting the stage for his treatment of etymology in the *Cratylus*, Plato refers to certain conventional authorities, most notably the sophists Prodicus and Protagoras, to whom ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων was a concern, and this has led many commentators to see a central sophistic influence operating on Plato. In contrast, I maintain in the preceding chapter, first, that the relevance of Prodicus and Protagoras—indeed sophists in general—is sharply curtailed by Plato's own procedure, and that commentators do not take sufficient account of this; a second point, related to the first, is that interpreters typically fail to distinguish adequately (when they do so at all) between different senses of ὀρθότης as it appears in the phrase ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων.

At the outset of the dialogue Socrates does indeed mention Prodicus, commenting on his failure to attend the latter's thoroughgoing fifty-drachma ἐπίδειξις “on the correctness of words” (περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος) (384b2-6). As has often been noted, Prodicus did indeed treat the issue of correctness; specifically, he was quite interested in making fine distinctions between terms with different yet closely related senses, and occasionally with distinguishing between different senses of a single term. In his view, the comprehension reflected in ordinary usage of a range of terms was not sufficiently subtle, but a superior understanding would and should be reflected in corrections of such usage. Prodicus thus raised questions of meaning without reference to words' constitution. While his concern with words certainly fell under the rubric, or within the scope of ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων, Prodicus' own handling of ὀρθότης is strikingly different from that at issue in the *Cratylus*, and this fact sheds light on Socrates' claim not to have heard Prodicus' detailed

treatment of the subject; in my view, what Plato is getting at in 384b is that a consideration of Prodicus' own orientation to the issue is not *pertinent* to the current enterprise.²⁸

Protagoras too is said to have been interested in ὀρθότης. In his own treatment of appropriateness, Protagoras was concerned with dividing λόγος into different types; in this connection, he referred to imprecisions in others' usage due to shortcomings in their understanding of the relevant distinctions. He is also said to have divided nouns into three genders, prescribing adjustments in terms' gender where fitting. Once again, these observations and prescriptions do not involve treatment of words' constitution.²⁹ Protagoras, like Prodicus, is introduced early in the dialogue (385e6), and on the strength of this and of his being known to have treated "correctness" one might conclude that he is of central relevance. However, he is not mentioned at all there in connection with an interest in ὀνόματα in general, or ὀρθότης 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 (385e4-386d7). Protagoras is reintroduced as Socrates—at Hermogenes' request—prepares to undertake a sustained exploration of what the "correctness of words" consists in (390e5-391c7). At this juncture, unlike previously, Protagoras is associated with the matter of "correctness" (391c2-4). However, his own authority or relevance, along with that of sophists in general, is here rejected decisively (391c-d). Scholars who simply assume the centrality of a sophistic foundation for Plato's approach do not take sufficient account of the markedly different ways in which the matter of appropriateness can be treated, and overlook the way in which Prodicus and Protagoras are handled in that crucial section of the dialogue leading up to Plato's own exploration of ὀρθότης; hence, they are led to invest the sophists with an importance they do not deserve.

This rejection of the sophists' pertinence occurs precisely when Socrates, having established the apparent tenability of the nature-based model, and preparing to take up the issue of what correctness consists in, is casting about for an appropriate *Ausgangspunkt* for the inquiry. This, 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,

²⁸ Notably, even at this initial stage Plato makes it clear through what is said about Hermogenes' name—in 384c, which is based on 383b—that he conceives of ὀρθότης along the lines of descriptive content or semantic constitution, hence in a substantially different light from both Prodicus and Protagoras; for later reflections on Hermogenes' ὄνομα see 408b and 429b-e.

²⁹ For more sustained discussion of these sophists' approaches, including numerous examples, see ch. 3.

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 (391c8-d1). Far from dismissing these *latter* sources, Hermogenes is keenly interested in learning, first of all, what Homer—the literary tradition's oldest and most esteemed representative—had to say on the matter. In fact, it is precisely with Socrates' invocation of this tradition that Plato's *own* treatment of natural-correctness begins. In addition, having provided some examples of Homer's handling of ὀνόματα, one by one Plato subjects the names of key members of the Mycenaean House of Atreus to etymological analysis: Orestes (394e); Agamemnon (395a-b); Atreus (395b-c); Pelops (395c-d); Tantalus (395d-e); and finally Zeus who, though the supreme Olympian, 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 practitioners of tragedy are referred to.³⁰ In addition, the content of numerous etymologies and attendant judgments of correctness further strengthen the *Cratylus*' ties to the literary tradition.³¹ However, most fundamentally the literary tradition is called to mind through Plato's exploration and exploitation of the technique itself, and its underlying assumptions, which occupies well over half of the dialogue. Even the very terminology Plato uses to treat questions of veridicality and desert—principally the adverbs ὀρθῶς, ἀληθῶς, δικαίως, and καλῶς—parallels in striking ways that employed by the literary tradition.³²

³⁰ For appearances of Hesiod's name see 396c4, 397e5, 402b6, 406c7, and 428a1. Regarding Homer see 391c8, 391d2 (followed by quotations in 391e5-6 and 392a5), 392b9, 392c10, d5, e4, 393a2, 393b3, 402a6, b4, 407a9 (his interpreters), 408a4, 410c2, and 417c8 (for Homer quoted but not mentioned by name see 407d8-9 (with Εὐθύφρωνος in place of Τρώϊοι), 415a2, 428c4-5 and d7-8). Concerning tragedy and tragic poets see 408c-d and 425d5 (also worth noting in this regard are 414c5 and 418d4).

³¹ Along these lines see the etymologies of the ὀνόματα "Hector" and "Astyanax" (393aff.); "Zeus" (395e-396b); "Cronus" (396b); θεοί (397c-d); "Hades" (403a, 404b); "Demeter" (404b); "Hera" (404b-c); "Apollo" (405b-406a); "Aphrodite" (406c-d); "Athena" (407a-c); "Ares" (407d); and δίκη (personified in poets' analyses) (412c-413d: δικαιοσύνη and δίκαιον). On the name "Hades" cf. *Phaedo* 80d5-e1, 81c11; and *Gorgias* 493b4-5. (Regarding divine ὀνόματα, elsewhere Plato analyzes the name "Prometheus," as had both Hesiod and Aeschylus before him (*Prot.* 361d).)

³² This is especially true of ὀρθῶς: see for instance Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* (829-31); Euripides' *Alcestis* (636-9); his *Trojan Women* (989-90); and Herodotus' *Histories* (4.59, ὀρθότατα). For ἀληθῶς see for example Aeschylus' *Suppliants* (315) and Euripides' *Phoenician Women* (636-7). For terms with the same root as δικαίως see Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* (670-1, πανδίκως); Euripides' *Iphigenia*

At the outset of the *Cratylus*, Plato purports to make strong claims for the praxis of naming. He asserts that it is a τέχνη (388e); more specifically, since Plato supposes there that ὀνόματα reveal essences or natures, naming must be tied closely to the practice of dialectic, which he views as the τέχνη *par excellence* in the middle and late dialogues.³³ That naming is supposed to be a highly normative enterprise is revealed by this identification of its status and—on the level of specifics—by Plato’s attendant invocation of the νομοθέτης as ὀνόματα-constructor, with reinforcement from his presentation of the διαλεκτικός as utilizing his knowledge of οὐσίαι to determine whether the resulting products are properly constituted. One arrives at judgments of appropriateness 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)

at *Tauris* (500, δίκαιον as adv. acc.); and his *Alcestis* (646-7, ἐνδίκως). Finally, for καλῶς see Aeschylus’ *Libation Bearers* (948-51).

³³ While Plato’s view of what dialectic consists in changes over time, his judgment of its pivotal importance does not. As previously indicated, the *Cratylus* has certain important parallels to the *Gorgias*. Most notably, in both dialogues the τέχνη status of a certain activity is first assumed without question, only to be undermined in what follows. In the *Gorgias* Plato challenges the elevated status of rhetoric as taught by sophists, and employed by them and politicians, while in the *Cratylus* his focus is on a praxis which had been of special concern to the literary tradition for centuries. Because Plato’s talk of οὐσίαι in the *Cratylus* comes at the outset in connection with an orientation and technique which he will challenge, hence when the τέχνη status of this activity is simply being asserted, one cannot necessarily accept Plato’s remarks there as evidence of his own positive view (as does, e.g., Weingartner, *The Unity of the Platonic Dialogue*, 16 and 26, and “Making Sense of the *Cratylus*,” 6 and 14). Much hangs on how one treats the analogy with weaving, and, more generally, on the extent to which one sees Plato as anticipating the Method of Division, which becomes important in the *Sophist* and *Politicus*. Not surprisingly, Weingartner views the *Cratylus* as looking ahead to the *Phaedrus* and the aforementioned late dialogues (*The Unity of the Platonic Dialogue*, 35, and “Making Sense of the *Cratylus*,” 20-21, 25; regarding the emphasis on ties to division cf. Rumsey, “Plato in the *Cratylus* on Speaking, Language, and Learning,” 399-400). Kretzmann sees a great deal of Plato’s own stance in the dialogue, and ties it closely to those in which διαίρεσις comes to the fore. He claims that the discussion with Hermogenes focuses primarily on taxonomy. However, in support of his assertions he appeals largely to *other* dialogues rather than to the *Cratylus* itself. He simply asserts that the weaving analogy is used similarly in the *Cratylus* and *Politicus*. Although the dialectician is not described as such in the *Cratylus*, Kretzmann refers to him more than once in that context as knowing how to “‘carve reality at the joints,’ the one whose essential concern is taxonomy” (“Plato on the Correctness of Names,” 130; see also 132 and his earlier remarks in “Semantics, History of,” 360-1). He admits that the carving metaphor is not found here, and hence supports the assertion exclusively by reference to other dialogues (130); for unsupported claims about division in the *Cratylus* see also 132 and 137. Kretzmann wrongly looks to the mention of cutting and burning to support his use of the carving metaphor in the present context. Τέμνειν (“to cut”)—a key term in connection with division—here lacks that specialized meaning which Plato gives it for the first time in the *Phaedrus*; hence, the mere fact that the verb occurs here cannot be used to support claims about a concern with διαίρεσις in particular (see my remarks on Plato’s use of τέμνειν in the preceding chapter). In tying the dialectician to taxonomy, Kretzmann notes that this figure “is described several times in the dialogues as the one who knows how to recognize natural kinds” (130); once again Kretzmann reads back into the *Cratylus* the picture he only finds spelled out elsewhere. (See also Malcolm Schofield’s remarks on why, *contra* Kretzmann, this later concern is not central here (“The dénouement of the *Cratylus*,” 61-2).)

(394e-395a).³⁴ Plato here supplies the expected cognitive underpinning for an activity of this caliber, vigorously denying any connection with mere belief (δόξα).³⁵ At this early juncture, Socrates concludes that *if* these and related contentions about the elevated status of this activity were well-founded, it would hold an impressive rank indeed, qualifying as a τέχνη in the narrow sense of that term. However, in what follows Plato dismantles every single one of the exalted claims he has “made” for the praxis of naming; hence, as in the *Gorgias*, what is first simply assumed to be a τέχνη has that status challenged decisively in what follows.³⁶

Plato evaluates this activity’s claims to τέχνη status in the course of his treatment of the natural-correctness thesis which, as noted, itself takes the literary tradition’s treatment of proper names as its point of departure (391c-d).³⁷ That tradition’s methodology and assumptions provide him with key material used in that challenge; moreover, in drawing on this tradition Plato simultaneously undertakes a fundamental critique of its own analytic techniques and the view of natures on which their use rests. Plato’s own approach to the literary tradition reflects and incorporates its key assumptions: first, that generally speaking

³⁴ At this juncture, the referents are mortal or divine individuals: these constitute the literary tradition’s main focus, and the foundation of Plato’s own investigation. On correctness and the disclosure of natures cf. 390e1-4.

³⁵ As previously discussed, fulfillment of the understanding requirement presupposes the existence of a small class of expert practitioners; hence, a single τέχνη condition is at issue.

³⁶ Once again, this is a state of affairs that escapes the awareness of commentators, such as Weingartner and Kretzmann, who seek to treat what is said at this early juncture about the dialectician and οὐσίαι as representative or constitutive of Plato’s own view. Based on his claim that Plato has given his positive view in what precedes, Kretzmann construes 390d-e as a summary of “the allegorical presentation of Plato’s general theory” rather than as summing up claims about the praxis’ elevated status which will be *undermined* in what follows (“Plato on the Correctness of names,” 130); see also his subsequent reference to the so-called “general theory” as, in Plato’s mind, “an established truth and *not a mere hypothesis*” (133, *italics mine*).

At issue with regard to naming is construction combined with use in the sense specified in ch. 3. Once again, the key requirements involved in the assertion of naming’s τέχνη status are: 1. understanding (presupposing a small class of expert practitioners); 2. περὶ τί; 3. teachability/giving a λόγος; and 4. goodness. For a more extensive treatment of the τέχνη issue as regards naming see ch. 3. As before, affirmations and denials of τέχνη status involve the narrow or philosophic sense of that term.

³⁷ Williams comments that although the first cases treated in the dialogue “are proper names of people, 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” (“Cratylus’ Theory of Names and its Refutation,” 84). Williams does not specify the perspective from which general terms qualify as “the basic case,” and his remark does not take account of the tradition—literary or otherwise—from which Plato’s own investigation emerged. For that tradition proper names *are* the basic case, and Plato’s own critique of the natural-correctness thesis takes that tradition as its point of departure, branching out from there to treat ὀνόματα of other types. Kahn, in contrast to Williams, observes that while ὀνόματα are not limited to proper names, “they remain throughout the typical or paradigm case” (“Language and Ontology in the *Cratylus*,” 159); see also Luce, “Plato on Truth and Falsity in Names,” 225. More generally, Robinson notes that when Greeks heard the word ὄνομα they thought first of a proper name (“The Theory of Names in Plato’s *Cratylus*,” 101). Plato’s own concern is not with proper names, but the version of the natural-correctness thesis based on semantic constitution does take proper names as its point of departure, moving from there to a consideration of general terms.

it is mortal and divine individuals, e.g., Polyneices and Zeus, who can properly be said to have φύσεις; second, that highlighting the descriptive content of such individuals' names via etymology yields insight into those natures (see for instance 394e8-11, 395b2-8, and 396a2-b2 where Plato mentions the φύσεις of specific mortal or divine individuals as the objects of etymological analysis). More generally, Plato's approach exemplifies writers' conflation of proper names and general terms, and of judgments of appropriateness involving veridicality and desert;³⁸ it also manifests the literary tradition's invocation of a range of different criteria, most notably characteristics and extensions of bearers, as the basis of its "deep" structural analyses. While the literary tradition operated unreflectively and unsystematically, Plato employs that tradition's assumptions and analytic techniques quite consciously, with the ultimate goal of discrediting them.

As previously noted, the literary tradition's etymology-based judgments of appropriateness do not involve clear-cut and pervasive normative criteria. In fact, Plato mounts a two-pronged attack on those judgments' status as norm-governed. First, he concentrates on the literary tradition's own assumptions, according to which one attributes "natures" to mortal and divine individuals. Study of this tradition suggests that namers' hopes for bearers' futures underlie a large class of assignments, which may successfully disclose mature bearers' φύσεις due to their divine source or perhaps based simply on luck.³⁹ Notably, Plato focuses on precisely these features in his own treatment of the issue.⁴⁰ The key point for present purposes is that the literary tradition's handling of etymology evinces no pervasive or standardized use of normative criteria: writers' analyses do not always involve a normative component; moreover, insofar as this component is present it is not always of the same sort. On the one hand, authors might ground their interpretations on something of significance pertaining to an individual's birth, e.g., the

³⁸ By his vivid and compressed presentation of this fusion, Plato makes recognition of it unavoidable.

³⁹ In the case of names with negative descriptive content, one cannot properly speak of namers' wishes unless one assumes malice, for which there is no textual justification. Nevertheless, the descriptive content of these names may mesh with bearers' natures based on their divine source, or due to chance (τύχη).

⁴⁰ While Socrates initially expresses a desire to curtail investigation of human and heroic names because they reflect namers' wishes for their progeny (397b), in what follows he reintroduces the very issue of mortals' bias in his treatment of divine names and various general terms (see for instance 403a, 404c, 405d-e). In addition, Plato characterizes Socrates repeatedly as divinely inspired in his conduct of the investigation (see for example 396d, 399a, and 407d), and as wishing to focus on those assignments in which a superhuman power may well have been at work (397c). (Not surprisingly, Socrates does ultimately reject the tactic of invoking an original divine name-giver because he considers it to be a mere expedient designed to discourage genuine exploration of the issues (see 425d-426a). Divine inspiration as handled by the literary tradition is regularly construed as something positive and not subject to question (on this point see 425d5-8); in contrast, for Plato divine inspiration is a boon only to the extent that reason shows it to have this status.) Finally, Plato introduces the element of luck or chance (τύχη) as a possible ground of appropriateness (394e and 395e).

manner or place of genesis. Derivations might also privilege physical features and related aspects of individuals, or entities—animate or inanimate—with which bearers are associated. In the foregoing cases normative considerations do not arise. On the other hand, in numerous instances a normative dimension *is* central. However, no uniform criteria are invoked; instead, authors' employ a wide range thereof. Included here are assignments traced to features or aspects of individuals, notably, their attitudes and character traits, or skills and capacities. The relevant criteria might also be associated with a type of activity by which an individual or group is distinguished, or with a certain effect which someone or something has on mortals. In his own handling of normativeness based on the literary tradition's framework, Plato emphasizes both the non-pervasiveness of normative criteria and their remarkable diversity.⁴¹ Incorporating these factors in his treatment of etymology allows him to show that the procedure as conceived by the literary tradition does not treat the issue of normativeness in either a comprehensive or a consistent fashion.

Second, Plato illustrates that the *praxis* does not meet his own criteria for a normative enterprise, i.e., that it fails to qualify as a rational purposive discipline or τέχνη. In the spirit of the literary tradition, the νομοθέτης, connected here and elsewhere with the normative enterprise of giving laws, becomes also a word-giver (ὀνομαθέτης) based merely on a linguistic ploy (388e-389a); here too Plato forges a link with this tradition. As it becomes increasingly clear that naming does not constitute a τέχνη, the νομοθέτης is shown to be a mere construct introduced by Plato in his initial depiction of word-formation as a normative endeavor. Having initially depicted a single individual as responsible for construction, in what follows Plato vacillates in his statements concerning just whom he envisions as having played that role, and with what degree of success. Speaking in a negative vein, Plato portrays the constructors of ὀνόματα as “astronomers and idle talkers” (401b7-8), and likens them pejoratively to many of the current “so-called wise men” (411b6); elsewhere he identifies the source as διάνοια (416c). He even attributes the invention of one term (σῶμα) to the Orphic poets (400c4-5). What is most significant here is not, as has been thought, that Plato “often departs from the notion of a single

⁴¹ In connection with the former, a notable example is his etymology of the name “Aphrodite” (406c-d): Plato expresses an explicit preference for Hesiod's etymology, which traces the ὄνομα to the bearer's manner of genesis, i.e., from ἀφρός (“foam”) (Euripides' analysis, in contrast, ties the name to its bearer's ἀφροσύνη (*Tr.* 989-90), hence does privilege a normative criterion). With regard to the diversity of normative considerations, Plato, like the literary tradition, invokes a wide range of criteria: for example, he privileges bearers' attitudes and character traits (e.g., at 395a-d), and the undertaking of a certain type of action (e.g., at 403a).

Nomothetes to speak of a plurality of namegivers,”⁴² 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 dissolution of the initial link between the promulgator of νόμοι and constructor of ὀνόματα.⁴³ Moreover, the pretense that Plato is concerned with both construction and evaluation/use, rather than solely with the latter, is later dropped (see Socrates’ telling slip into the first person at 425a); from this point of view the νομοθέτης becomes superfluous.⁴⁴

Plato’s treatment of the διαλεκτικός is less subtle, yet no less effective dramatically. What is striking is that, despite the pivotal role this figure plays in the enterprise as depicted initially, the term διαλεκτικός is used only three times in the *Cratylus*; of these, only the two early instances are pertinent. Socrates, providing a standard characterization, 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 νομοθέτης (390d5); at this juncture, the dialectician is purportedly related to the legislator as one τέχνη practitioner to another. Here, as elsewhere in Plato, the authority of τέχνη practitioners—and of the dialectician most of all, as practitioner of the τέχνη *par excellence*—derives from their insight into οὐσίαι. Guided by this awareness, the dialectician’s activity is norm-governed and norm-granting; hence, it seems appropriate for Plato to invoke him at the outset, when the haphazard character of the naming enterprise has yet to be revealed. However, despite the great fanfare with which the dialectician is introduced, Plato ceases quite abruptly talking about him. Given the close links between the two supposed τέχναι and their practitioners, 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.⁴⁵ A genuine τέχνη, as characterized

⁴² Nancy Demand, “The Nomothetes of the *Cratylus*,” 108.

⁴³ Highlighting various shifts in Plato’s depiction of the νομοθέτης, Robinson refers to this figure as a “mythical device”; “Whenever he is inconvenient, he retires or dissolves” into a nebulous group, into *dianoia*, or into God (“The Theory of Names in Plato’s *Cratylus*” 105-6).

⁴⁴ On the fate of the νομοθέτης cf. Derbolav: “Mit der Einsicht, daß die richtige Wortung nicht primär eine Gestaltungsleistung, sondern eine Frage der rechten Wirklichkeitsauffassung sei, verliert die Wortbildung ihren emphatischen Charakter und der Nomothetes die Aureole eines Gesetzgebers” (*Platons Sprachphilosophie*, 63).

⁴⁵ The dialectician is only invoked twice in the relevant context, and introduced in connection with a view of the enterprise which Plato rejects. Since Plato finds the activity with which he initially connects the dialectician not to qualify as a τέχνη, one cannot, without further argument, simply transfer his services to a supposed alternative framework based merely or largely on his invocation in the *original* context.

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 certain stringent requirements. Plato’s treatment of the legislator, supplemented by that of the dialectician, shows that the alleged τέχνη of naming has no practitioners of the requisite caliber, and hence plays an important role in his challenge to naming’s τέχνη status.⁴⁶

As one might expect—since meeting the understanding requirement presupposes the existence of a small class of expert practitioners, and this class dissolves in the course of the inquiry—the cognitive ground of the naming process shifts quite dramatically. Plato insists elsewhere that practice of the τέχνη called “dialectic” or “philosophy” requires insight or ἐπιστήμη, in contrast to belief (δόξα), which he depicts as subject to the limitations imposed by human perception, preferences, and intentions. For Plato, the dichotomy between belief and knowledge is fundamental. In other dialogues, he insists that only the philosopher or dialectician has ἐπιστήμη, i.e., insight into οὐσία. At the outset of the *Cratylus*, Plato repudiates the idea that δόξα directs the enterprise of constructing and evaluating ὀνόματα (387a). He utilizes the verb ἐρίσταμαι on several occasions (see for example 389d and 393e); moreover, he emphasizes Socrates’ σοφία at diverse points in the inquiry (see for instance 396c, 401e, and 410e). While Plato insists continually 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 praxis at issue in the *Cratylus*.

In fact, Plato’s remarks on the governance of δόξα become progressively more general in scope. First, he admits that insofar as Homer’s views are under consideration the

⁴⁶ Grote attributes much significance to the idea of the “scientific or artistic Name-giver,” likening him to the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* and the dictator of the *Politicus* (Plato, 545). Grote maintains that what “Plato does for social systems in the *Politikus*, he does for names in the *Kratylus*. The full rectitude of names is when they are bestowed by the scientific Ruler, considered in the capacity of Name-giver. He it is who discerns, and embodies in syllables, the true Name-Form in each particular case” (547). Grote tries to link the *Cratylus* closely to these late dialogues in a way which Plato’s own treatment of naming within and outside the *Cratylus* simply does not support. As concerns the possibility of enacting the procedure Grote outlines, two things would be required of the name-giver: the right ontology; and removal of indeterminacy such that only one analysis of a given name was possible. In my view, Plato concludes that even if one had the correct ontology, indeterminacy could not be fully eradicated. That is why, in the dialogue’s final section, and in the closely related *Phaedo*, Plato turns away from constitution-based approaches to fitness, and embraces a quite different stance. Moreover, there is no suggestion that in turning to eponymy Plato is settling for second-best; on the contrary, the suggestion is that, given his metaphysical theory, eponymy—not a constitution-based approach—is the *optimal* way to treat the question of names’ appropriateness. In the *Phaedo*, as in the *Cratylus*, his genuine interest is not in construction but in questions of use or application. Even in the late writings, where ὄνομα-construction is described as being among the dialectician’s responsibilities, issues of constitution never govern the selection of ὀνόματα in the way required by the “model” supposedly developed in the *Cratylus*.

enterprise can only lay hold of the poet's belief (δόξα) "about the correctness of words" (περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος) (393b3-4); at issue here is the δόξα of a single individual. Subsequently, Plato observes that in analyzing divine names one only gains awareness of that human δόξα which produces those ὀνόματα (401a4-5); in this case δόξα governs a certain class of assignments. Still later, Plato reaches the wholly general conclusion that those first assigning *all* classes of ὀνόματα did so based on a particular belief (δόξα) they held about the character of reality (411b-c). Toward the end of the dialogue, Plato is left "adhering" to incompatible claims. On the one hand, the analysis of words' constitution is still asserted to be essence-revealing; on the other hand, the ground of the process is said to be mere belief rather than knowledge. One of these claims must be rejected: the foregoing inquiry, which illustrated naming's failure to meet not just one, but all four central τέχνη conditions, paves the way for Plato's *explicit* statement that it has no connection with essences or natures (438d2ff.).⁴⁷ Having brought to light the fundamental shortcomings of this praxis, Plato reaches a negative conclusion regarding its τέχνη status, hence also its allegedly close ties to the τέχνη *par excellence*, dialectic.

In my view, the thrust of the *Cratylus* is negative.⁴⁸ Following a protracted investigation, Plato rejects the linkage of reality and ὀνόματα evinced by the literary tradition's practice of etymology, central to which was a belief in individual natures and the notion that deep structural analyses brought those natures to light. More generally, he views that tradition, along with Heraclitus, as committed to a "doctrine of flux," which he repudiates. Having rejected the "natural-correctness" thesis as described in the *Cratylus*, Plato is in a position to forge deeper connections between reality and ὀνόματα based on what he views as the correct metaphysical theory, and this is precisely what he does in the *Phaedo*. It should be emphasized, however, that this reformulation of ties is not necessary for determinations of correctness for ordinary purposes. As concerns his own positive assessment of the ground of words' correctness, Plato's treatment of the σκληρότης and

⁴⁷ For Plato δόξα by itself is a fundamentally inadequate faculty in light of which to discuss φύσεις or οὐσίαι. In his view, any talk of so-called individual natures would be, by definition, exclusively a matter of δόξα; one simply cannot have ἐπιστήμη of the entities in question, which would be the faculty required to sustain claims of the process' elevated status. As noted in the preceding chapter, having φύσεις or οὐσίαι as subject matter is the linchpin of the τέχνη enterprise: they are pivotal to specifications of a given τέχνη's τέλος; they are what expert practitioners understand; they are the ultimate sources of a τέχνη's benefit to human beings; and they are pivotal to any rational account of a τέχνη's procedures.

⁴⁸ On the dialogue's negative emphasis cf. Méridier (38). As noted in what precedes, several commentators see in the dialogue a great deal of Plato's own positive view. I readily acknowledge that the *Cratylus* clears the ground for subsequent developments by disposing of rival notions of the import of words and the basis of their appropriateness; although Plato offers clues to his positive stance, their development occurs elsewhere.

number examples (434c-435c) shows that he opts for the convention-based prong of the nature-convention dichotomy; that is, he maintains that one judges correctness by appeal to custom (ἔθος) and convention (συνθήκη).⁴⁹ Plato's view is not simply that custom and convention contribute to words' appropriateness, but rather that ultimately they *determine* it. Notably, the relevant norms are wholly detached from words' constitution; *this*, Plato insists, neither reflects nor prescribes standards. The conclusion reached here applies to every ὄνομα, whether proper name or general term: regarding any word's constitution, Plato answers the question of whether it is naturally correct in the negative. For purposes of ordinary communication no more need be said.

Having elucidated the character of the rejected view, and his reasons for its condemnation, one must explore what Plato commits himself to in embracing "convention" as the ground of the correctness of ὀνόματα. This will in turn illuminate in general terms the significance of his conclusion for the practice of philosophy.⁵⁰ First, it is worth reiterating that Plato mentions two alternatives to natural correctness, which he has Hermogenes conflate (384c-385e). On the one hand, there is a view of words presupposing extreme relativism, according to which any ὄνομα which anyone assigns to any entity is by virtue of that fact alone an appropriate one *for* that entity; Plato rejects this view unequivocally. On the other hand, there is a genuine custom- or convention-based position according to which correctness is determined by reference to the practices of particular linguistic communities, e.g., πόλεις. Plato espouses the second of these two options; this having been said, it is essential to specify the way in which he does so.⁵¹

There are two different levels on which one might adopt a convention-based view. First, one could assume that conceptions of reality itself have this ground; second, one might contend that convention grounds all aspects of the assignment of terms to reality. Regarding the nature-convention controversy specifically, as treated in the *Cratylus*, Plato does not maintain that certain abstract units achieve the status of Forms on conventional grounds. However, his rejection of an etymology-based approach applies generally, such that even the correctness of terms used to designate Forms is grounded on convention;

⁴⁹ See ch. 3 for discussion of these two examples and their import.

⁵⁰ Regarding the notion of two planes, the ordinary and the philosophical, cf. Williams' distinction between "internal" and "external" correctness ("Cratylus' Theory of Names and its Refutation," 91).

⁵¹ Derbolav's comment that with the rejection of the extreme view Socrates has thereby laid bare ("damit...freigelegt") the nature-based approach (*Platons Sprachphilosophie*, 41) is somewhat misleading without the additional observation that, having detached the two orientations conflated by Hermogenes, the argument proceeds based on the suppression, till much later (435a-c), of the genuine convention-based view as an orientation in its own right.

nevertheless, even here Plato's approach is not wholly convention-based since not *all* dimensions of terms' assignment to entities have this foundation, as becomes clear in the *Phaedo*. In his view, one can only make philosophical judgments of appropriateness based on the correct ontological assumptions.

As previously noted, in the *Cratylus* terms denoting key elements of Plato's philosophical system are subject to the same etymological analysis as other ὀνόματα, including proper names, and all are covered by his conclusion regarding the conventional ground of words' correctness: central among them are ψυχή (399d-400b); φρόνησις (411d);⁵² νόησις (411d-e); σωφροσύνη (411e-412a); ἐπιστήμη (412a and 437a);⁵³ σοφία (412b); ἀγαθόν (412c); δικαιοσύνη (412c); δίκαιον (412c-413d); ἀνδρεία (413d-414a);⁵⁴ τέχνη (414b-c); ἀρετή (415c-e); καλόν (416c-d); ἔρως (420a-b); ἀλήθεια (421b); ὄν and οὐσία (421b-c).⁵⁵ Moreover, Plato treats the term ἡδονή (419b7-c1), which cannot receive here the sustained consideration he provides in the *Gorgias*. Last but not least he subjects the term ὄνομα itself to analysis (421a7-b1), which is noteworthy given the fact that it is precisely ὀνόματα whose distinction as "naturally correct" is at issue in the *Cratylus*. From within this framework Plato has no means of privileging the aforementioned terms and their referents in the way he believes they deserve.

This structure also provides no way for Plato to draw fitting distinctions *between* certain contrasting terms—specifically, of course, their referents—mentioned in the *Cratylus*, contrasts which play important roles in his metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and moral psychology. I have in mind here, for instance, the dichotomy between σῶμα and ψυχή (399d1-400c9) of which he makes so much elsewhere—it underlies the classificatory scheme of the *Gorgias*, and plays a central role in the *Phaedo*—as well as that

⁵² With regard to φρόνησις outside the *Cratylus* see for instance *Rep.* 4, where the term appears in place of σοφία in Plato's list of the four virtues (433b8). For φρόνησις in the sense of theoretical insight see *Phaedo* 66e3, 68a2, 7, 69a10, b3, 76c12, 79d6, and 114c7 (cf. David Gallop, *Phaedo*, 102). For φρόνησις, ἐπιστήμη and σοφία as synonymous see *Symposium* 202a2-9.

⁵³ Ἐπιστήμη is precisely what turns out to be lacking in the practitioners of what is alleged at the outset to be a τέχνη. Interestingly, the noun itself is never used in the dialogue with reference to these individuals; Plato reserves for it the role of illustrating words' inherent ambiguity.

⁵⁴ Plato's treatment here of ἀνδρεία completes the core list of ἀρεταί ("virtues") of interest to him (the others being σωφροσύνη, σοφία, and δικαιοσύνη); these are the four he handles in the *Republic*. (Agathon mentions the same four in his encomium to Ἔρως in *Symp.* 196b-e though they are not discussed there based on Plato's own views; for observations on Agathon's misinterpretation of each ἀρετή see Nehamas and Woodruff, *Symposium*, 34-5.)

⁵⁵ As previously suggested, a key measure of the futility, even danger of this approach is found in the etymology conflating εἶναι and ἰέναι, which runs as follows: τὸ δὲ "ὄν" καὶ ἡ "οὐσία" ὁμολογεῖ τῷ ἀληθεῖ, τὸ ἰῶτα ἀπολαβόν· ἰὸν γὰρ σημαίνει, καὶ τὸ "οὐκ ὄν" αὖ, ὥς τινες καὶ ὀνομάζουσιν αὐτό, "οὐκ ἰόν" (421b7-c2).

between ἀρετή and κακία (415a9-e1). Also relevant here is the contrast between καλόν and αἰσχρόν (416a10-d11), which is central to the *Symposium*, and that involving ἀλήθεια and ψεῦδος (421b1-7).⁵⁶ In addition, Plato includes the terms ἐπιθυμία and θυμός in his etymological discussion (419d8-e2), which figure importantly in Book 4 of the *Republic*, and between which he there distinguishes (439e-440a).⁵⁷ Even more notable is the fact that Plato provides the terms of the contrast between ἐπιστήμη, νόησις, φρόνησις, and σοφία, on the one hand, and δόξα, on the other, a dichotomy which is essential to his epistemological reflections in the *Republic* and several other dialogues.⁵⁸ Central here are terms denoting concepts and distinctions which play crucial roles in the *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Symposium*, and which, in many cases, are subject there to sustained philosophical analysis.

Notwithstanding Plato's espousal of convention as sufficient for ordinary purposes, his ultimate interest is in philosophy, which is neither a product of custom and convention nor subject to their governance. In order to speak about naming in this context, one cannot merely embrace one pole of the nature-convention dichotomy, as one can with only ordinary communication in mind; rather, any use of these conventional products will be fundamentally misguided if one is not aware of what *does* in fact have a natural foundation. In Plato's view, one must consider first and foremost which entities are fundamental, and which derivative. His οὐσίαι center neither on mortal or divine individuals, nor on individual sensibles; from his perspective nothing that is native to the sensible realm, or the world of capricious gods, can properly be said to *have* a nature, and hence to be worthy of investigation in its own right.⁵⁹ Toward the end of the dialogue, Plato provides some

⁵⁶ See also *Rep.* 475e9, where Plato states explicitly that καλόν and αἰσχρόν are opposites.

⁵⁷ Plato labels the lowest element of the soul τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν ("the appetitive"), and uses the noun to represent appetite in a general contrast with the soul's spirited element (440a5-6). He also maintains that each of the three has its own desires (ἐπιθυμίας) (580d8).

⁵⁸ Plato treats the term δόξα in 420b7-9. In my view, it is surely not coincidental that ἐπιστήμη is the term Plato employs to deliver the *coup de grâce* to the etymology-based approach to appropriateness (412a and 437a). The literary tradition's orientation leads one equally well in antithetical directions (ontologically speaking), and provides no criteria allowing one to dispel the resulting uncertainty; one can only determine what ἐπιστήμη consists in via *Plato's* approach. Since the claim under scrutiny is that etymological analysis yields insight, it is noteworthy that utilizing the procedure provides no reliable guidance as to what the nature of insight itself actually is.

⁵⁹ This is not to say, of course, that the 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 passing-away. To avoid any possible confusion, a few words are in order here about the *Phaedo's* handling of fire and snow (103-6), which I do not otherwise discuss (for present purposes I will concentrate on fire though what is said applies also to the case of snow). There is a controversy over the question of whether fire and snow do or do not qualify here as Forms, into which I need not enter here. Even if fire turns out not to be a Form, 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

indication of what having a “nature” consists in.⁶⁰ To help prepare for this shift in focus, on the level of language his etymological investigation moves from a consideration of proper names—toward which the literary tradition oriented itself—to the analysis of terms denoting Forms, and other ὀνόματα which play important roles in his philosophical system.⁶¹

In the *Cratylus*, Plato brings his own ontological commitments to bear on the literary tradition’s use of etymology in order to reveal its bankruptcy. Having shown that this tradition’s primary objects of investigation—mortal and divine individuals—do not meet his requirements for satisfactory objects of knowledge, Plato invokes the criteria he prefers. Specifically, at the dialogue’s close he introduces the reality-appearance dichotomy by contrasting “the beautiful itself and good itself and each existent with this status” (αὐτὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἐν ἑκάστων τῶν ὄντων οὕτω)—about which Socrates is said to have frequent dreams—with “some beautiful face or another of such things” (πρόσωπόν τι καλὸν ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων) (439c8-d4); one cannot but think here of those numerous passages treating the same basic distinction in the *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Symposium*.⁶² In addition, Plato notes reality’s function as *explanans* (439b-440d).

By the dialogue’s end Plato has shown that once one adopts his view of what natures consist in, i.e., the Forms, etymological analysis is of no use in helping one apprehend them. In addition, he raises briefly the matter of appropriateness from that perspective. First, he issues an exhortation: Αὐτὸ...ἐκεῖνο σκεψώμεθα, μὴ εἰ πρόσωπόν τί ἐστιν καλὸν ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων, καὶ δοκεῖ ταῦτα πάντα ρεῖν· ἀλλ’ αὐτό, φῶμεν, τὸ καλὸν οὐ τοιοῦτον ἀεὶ ἐστιν οἷόν ἐστιν; (439d3-6)⁶³ Then, immediately following this

class subsumption, whereby the class of fiery things is a subset of the class of hot things. While fire is expressly identified as a Form in the *Timaeus* (51b8), it is simply not clear from those remarks which Plato makes in the *Phaedo* whether he yet considers it to be a Form rather than some other type of natural unit. In any case, and of most direct relevance to the matter at hand, no *particular* fire can be said to have a nature.

⁶⁰ I use the phrase “some indication” because Plato does not discuss the ontological status of the subject matter of genuine τέχνη at length before the *Phaedo* although one can note a distinct movement in that direction when comparing the *Gorgias* and *Cratylus*.

⁶¹ More specifically, his investigation—having shifted away from proper names—includes these terms.

⁶² Luce attempted, in my view unsuccessfully, to use the mention of dreaming (ὀνειρώττειν) to support the claim that the *Cratylus* presents the Theory of Forms at a distinctly earlier stage than the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic* (“The Theory of Ideas in the *Cratylus*,” 25-7). Gaiser’s alternative interpretation seems to me to be the correct one: “Damit wird nicht das Gewicht dieser These abgeschwächt, sondern angedeutet, daß ihre Begründung hier nicht mitgeteilt wird” (53); on the reference to dreaming cf. Baxter (177) and Méridier (136-7).

⁶³ “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?”

remark on the proper orientation, he issues a contrasting statement about individual sensibles: Ἄρ' οὖν οἷόν τε προσεπειν αὐτὸ ὀρθῶς, εἰ ἀεὶ ὑπεξέρχεται...ἢ ἀνάγκη ἅμα ἡμῶν λεγόντων ἄλλο αὐτὸ εὐθύς γίνεσθαι καὶ ὑπεξίεναι καὶ μηκέτι οὕτως ἔχειν; (439d8-11)⁶⁴ Here Plato indicates that one cannot resolve the issue of fitness in the same way with regard to Forms and particulars: he suggests that based on their inferior ontological status one cannot *properly* (ὀρθῶς) call individual sensibles “beautiful,” and this might also be taken to imply that one *can* speak appropriately of “beauty” with reference to the Form itself—especially when this remark is combined with the preceding one about “the beautiful itself” (αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν). In any case, while Plato does not provide the details of his own account, he says enough to indicate that not all aspects of words’ assignment to their referents have a conventional foundation. Having merely broached the subject of appropriateness, he turns in the dialogue’s final lines to the matter of knowledge, and requirements on its proper objects. Plato offers only the barest sketch of 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. For detailed exploration of Plato’s metaphysical views, and his resulting linguistic commitments, one must turn to the *Phaedo*.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ “Can we appropriately (*orthōs*) 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?”

⁶⁵ Cf. Kahn’s remark that “the *Cratylus* never mentions participation, and the fuller ontological framework of Plato’s theory of names is merely hinted at” (“Language and Ontology in the *Cratylus*,” 175-6), though I disagree that this hint consists simply in Plato’s “mention of the dialectician as the user and judge of names” (176). At the end of the *Cratylus*, as elsewhere, metaphysical, epistemological, and linguistic considerations are tied together; however, no single dimension is discussed at any length. Since the framework and details of Plato’s own view of appropriateness arise from his metaphysical theory, and his discussion of the eponymy relation itself has that of participation—which is *not* introduced here—as its immediate ontological model, it is not surprising that he says nothing more specific here about the matter of naming. Μετέχειν appears only once in the *Cratylus*, in connection with Plato’s etymology of the name “Hestia”; given his mention of οὐσία in that context the term’s presence may be suggestive. Μεταλαμβάνειν, elsewhere used to refer to participants in the Forms (see *Phaedo* 102b2), is not found at all in the *Cratylus*. In addition, it is worth noting the complete absence of ἐπώνυμος and related terms used with reference to eponymy itself. The verb ἐπονομάζειν occurs fifteen times in the *Cratylus*, all in connection with *etymologies*; similarly, the noun ἐπωνυμία appears twelve times in connection with various such analyses (see Leonard Brandwood, *Word Index to Plato*, for these and other statistics). (It might look as though the occurrence of ἐπωνυμίαν at 394d9 did not involve descriptive content, but the context shows that Plato is speaking here about the semantic constitution of proper names and not about natural kind terms. Secondly, one might think that the phrase κατὰ προγόνων ἐπωνυμίας at 397b3 involved eponymy in the literary tradition’s sense; however, Plato’s focus on descriptive content is indicated by his reference to the participants’ earlier remarks, which involved inter-generational continuity in ὀνόματα based on their semantic constitution.) In contrast, in the *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Symposium*—treated as a group—Plato employs this terminology in three different ways, only *one* of which concerns the highlighting of descriptive content; the others involve eponymy in the literary tradition’s sense, as when a way of life is called “Pythagorean” after its founder (*Rep.* 600b4), or philosophically construed (only in the

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The course Plato takes in the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic* permits him to assign places and roles to terms and referents treated in the *Cratylus* merely by etymology, hence by definition not insightfully: ὄν; οὐσία; ψυχή; σῶμα; φρόνησις; ἐπιστήμη; σοφία; νόησις; τέχνη; δόξα; ἀρετή; κακία; δικαιοσύνη; σωφροσύνη; ἀνδρεία; ἀλήθεια; ψεῦδος; ἔρως; καλόν; αἰσχρόν; ἀγαθόν; καλόν; δίκαιον; ἀδίκαια; ἡδονή; ἐπιθυμία; and θυμός. One might say that in these three dialogues philosophical exploration of the relevant concepts and distinctions replaces mere etymological analysis of the terms in question. In the *Phaedo*, Plato's arguments for the soul's immortality provide the *Ausgangspunkt* for a discussion which develops the metaphysical theory and linguistic views whose barest outline one finds in the *Cratylus*. In the *Symposium* Plato explores the issue of motivation or aspiration on the ground of his ontology. Finally, in the *Republic* Plato's treatment of justice, more specifically his consideration of who may properly be called a "philosopher," gives rise to what are principally ontological and epistemological reflections in Books 5 through 7. Of the three, the *Phaedo* is where Plato offers his most

Phaedo). In contrast to the literary tradition's serious use of the relevant terminology in connection both with etymology and with eponymy, when Plato employs it in those senses nothing significant is at stake. Finally, the adjective ὁμώνυμος occurs once in the *Cratylus*, in connection with a proposed etymological analysis of the name "Apollo" (405e1). The term is not found in the *Symposium*, and appears once in the *Phaedo* and *Republic*, respectively; the first instance pertains to the Form-particular relation (*Phaedo* 78e2). I return subsequently to the *Phaedo* passage, and, more generally, comment further on Plato's use of the foregoing terminology.

Schaarschmidt seriously misinterprets those genuine clues to Plato's stance which one does find in the dialogue, hence his claim that in the end *nothing* positive remains ("Über die Unechtheit des Dialogs *Kratylos*," 344). Notably in this regard, he insists without substantiation that the *Cratylus'* epistemology differs from Plato's own: "Der Kratylusautor sinkt vom λόγος zur αἴσθησις als Erkenntnisprinzip zurück....Plato [setzt] das Wissen als Anschauung der Idee, der Kratylusverfasser als sinnliche Erfahrung" (350). Moreover, while Schaarschmidt contends on the one hand that the *Cratylus* does not in fact treat language in general (die Sprache überhaupt) (342), he later asserts that the dialogue denies value to language (Sprache) as a way to achieve genuine understanding, "womit er sich denn zu Plato in einen diametralen Gegensatz gestellt hat" (347); cf. his comment that the *Cratylus'* author wrongly believes himself justified on Plato's authority in voicing a general condemnation of understanding through language (349). In contrast, Schaarschmidt views the *Phaedo* (which he takes to be one of Plato's latest and most mature dialogues) as representing the philosopher's own stance: "Jeder, welcher Plato kennt, weiß, daß das ἐν λόγοις σκοπεῖν, ἐν λόγοις διατρίβειν recht eigentlich sein Standpunkt ist" (346). Schaarschmidt does not see clearly that Plato's *Cratylus* critique is aimed at words or names (ὀνόματα) in particular, and in that regard specifically at constitution-based approaches to insight (whether semantically- or phonetically-grounded). Plato does not claim there that words, let alone language in general, are wholly without merit as concerns the apprehension of Forms. What he does do, however, is bring to light the deceptive capacity of ὀνόματα when one approaches them from the incorrect point of view. Since the *Cratylus* treats naming specifically, its closest ties to the *Phaedo*, with regard to linguistic issues, will involve that material in the latter dialogue which also treats that same topic, namely, Plato's handling there of eponymy. Schaarschmidt wrongly views the dialogues as embodying opposed stances whereas in fact, as I suggest, their relation is strongly complementary.

extensive treatment of Forms and μετέχοντα (participants), and the only dialogue in which he discusses his conception of eponymy. Plato's remarks in the *Symposium* and *Republic* are consistent with his analyses in the *Phaedo*, and complement them on certain points; the best available hypothesis is that the latter constitutes the foundation of his remarks in the other two dialogues. Because the *Phaedo* is the place where Plato actually presents his own revised version of eponymy based on his ontological commitments, in what follows I focus largely on that dialogue.

Plato takes issue with fundamental assumptions of the literary tradition in its handling of etymology, eponymy, and the issue of appropriateness; as noted, insofar as these other writers had a view of natures at all, their concern was with individual natures, which for Plato are always a matter of δόξα. In its treatment of eponymy in particular, the literary tradition typically used that relation merely to link two entities by identifying one as the source of the other's ὄνομα. As the foregoing examples show, there was wide variation in the identity of the primary and recipient entities, which included mortal individuals and groups, natural inanimate entities like rivers, and human constructions like temples. The primary and secondary entities could be singular or plural; also, there were no determinate criteria governing which types of entity could serve in each capacity, and which sorts could be paired with one another. Central here is the idea that the same type of entity, e.g., a mortal individual or group of such individuals, could serve in different contexts in either a ὄνομα-warranting or recipient capacity.⁶⁶ While the literary tradition manifested substantial interest in using the eponymy relation to make identifications of source, it was far less concerned with the entities themselves, or with serious pursuit of questions of appropriateness as they arose in connection with eponymy.

In contrast, Plato offers a thorough and systematic treatment of eponymy within a more restricted field of application. Plato's reality-appearance distinction and the resultant explanatory role given Forms lend his account an entirely different foundation. In both cases eponymy involves two *relata*, with some type of priority given to the ὄνομα-warranting entity. However, his view of natures leads Plato to institute very different requirements on the identity of primary and secondary entities. These requirements are fixed and precise; they involve two types of entity native to different planes of existence, with an absolute prohibition on those in one class serving in the alternate capacity.

⁶⁶ My remarks on literary eponymy earlier in the chapter provide examples of groups being named for or after mortal individuals (for additional instances see ch. 1); a group may also be in the name-warranting role (Herodotus, *Hist.* 4.204), and a mortal individual may function in a recipient capacity (e.g., Homer, *Il.* 4.473-7). Natural inanimate entities frequently serve in both capacities (e.g., *Hist.* 1.145).

Moreover, the primary entity must always be singular, and those entities named after it at least potentially a plurality. In contrast to the literary tradition, Plato offers specific guidelines on the kinds of priority enjoyed by the principal entity, and this primacy rests always on non-empirical grounds. The framework of eponymy lends an optimal structure to Plato's reflections because it allows him to speak of naming a primary entity—one that is itself a nature—and of naming derivatively other entities that share the nature of the primary entity, but only partially. In basic structure, Plato's approach most closely resembles those literary-tradition cases of eponymy in which a single individual gives his name to a group of individuals. However, this type of case, like the others, is unacceptable to Plato since the primary and recipient entities are native to or improperly aligned with a single plane of existence, namely, the empirical world; since the primary entity is misidentified, one cannot assign it the requisite priority.⁶⁷ In addition, the recipient entities in question are groups of mortals, i.e., peoples, hence merely a subset of particulars in Plato's sense.

Plato develops his own conception of naming and appropriateness based on the extensive criticisms and limited positive suggestions advanced in the *Cratylus*.⁶⁸ He adheres to the position embraced there that the constitution of ὀνόματα—even those designating Forms—is appropriate based on convention. However, Plato insists that the proper determination of whether and how terms denoting Forms are applied to particulars has a *natural* foundation. More specifically, he maintains that one properly invokes convention to explain the fitness of those sounds which combine to form ὀνόματα; however, *given that* the phrase αὐτὸ τὸ ἴσον (“the equal itself”), for example, designates the Form or primary name-bearer it is emphatically *not* a matter of convention that the relevant particulars, or derivative name-bearers, are called τὰ ἴσα (“the equals”). For purposes of philosophical inquiry one thus ends up with the following framework, which has three components: 1) the matter of identifying those abstract entities that deserve the status of Forms, which occurs on a non-conventional foundation;⁶⁹ 2) the issue of the constitution of those terms used to designate Forms, whose treatment rests on appeals to

⁶⁷ One might say that within its confines, and by its criteria, the primary entity often occupies a superior or more favorable position; however, the criteria involved in such assessments would not be of interest to Plato.

⁶⁸ Contrast H. Steinthal, who views the *Cratylus* as wholly negative: “Es handelt sich im *Kratylos* *nur* um die Abweisung der falschen Anwendung der Wörter zur Erkenntnis. So kommt nun Plato auch in *Theätet* und im *Sophisten* nur gelegentlich auf die Sprache, um ihr wahres Verhältnis zur Dialektik darzulegen” (*Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft*, 112; italics mine). What is of positive significance in the *Cratylus* wholly escapes Steinthal's notice.

⁶⁹ While their recognition by mortals involves human agency, their elevation to this status does not take place on this basis.

convention; and 3) the question of the assignment of terms denoting Forms to individual sensibles, which is not governed by convention.

While this third and final determination has a natural foundation, Plato does not return to a constitution-centered model of naturalness; instead, he relies on a strong notion of “*ontological* naturalness.” By this I mean that Plato ties the notion of naturalness primarily and fundamentally to the structure of reality itself: in his view, what is natural is a certain articulation of reality into objective and theoretically important unities, which are granted the status of Forms.⁷⁰ Mortals themselves do not invent this structure, nor is its existence in any way mind-dependent; rather, it is something that mortals, i.e., the most gifted among them, discover. On the basis of this natural articulation, one specifies and assesses the connection between reality (Forms) and appearances (individual sensibles). The relation between primary and secondary name-bearers is isomorphic to the structure of reality; thus, Plato sustains some links between ὀνόματα and naturalness, but ties the notion of naturalness to words derivatively, and in no way based on their constitution.⁷¹ What Plato requires is a linguistic tool allowing him to link reality with appearances in a way that accords with and mirrors his particular metaphysical commitments. For this purpose Plato returns to the eponymy relation, yet the version he presents is one revised in light of his own theory; Plato develops this alternate conception in the *Phaedo* (notably, 102b and 103b).⁷² Because Plato’s revamped version of eponymy is based on his metaphysical theory, it is with the latter that one must begin.

⁷⁰ I later cite direct linguistic manifestations of this naturalness. In presenting Plato’s view one must appeal to natures; the key is to identify elements whose interrelations yield that order and harmony which Plato construes as paradigmatic (notable cases of this being mathematical entities and values). For Plato these elements may or may not be definable; as far as the middle dialogues are concerned, he regards many Forms as primitives (i.e., indefinable basic notions). On the question of definition in the late writings, see the following chapter.

⁷¹ In fact, based on its role in his ontology Plato invokes “nature” and “naturalness” in other, related contexts. In the *Republic* he makes abundant reference to a certain “philosophical nature” (see for example 485a4-5, a10, c1, 489e4, 490a8-9, and 490c8); someone of this type exhibits the disposition and traits required for apprehension of the Forms, and hence is said to possess a philosophical φύσις. Moreover, in considering the issue of whether women can serve as rulers or guardians proper, Plato maintains that biological factors are not the ground of the most fundamental differences between individuals. In this connection, he emphasizes that the division of human beings into men and women is παρὰ φύσιν. The crucial distinction is between those men and women whose gifts and aptitudes equip them for the study of philosophy and those who are deficient in this regard; *this* division is κατὰ φύσιν (456b-c). Here, in contrast to the *Cratylus*, the phrases κατὰ φύσιν and παρὰ φύσιν derive their ultimate meaning from the Forms since one makes one’s division based on the promise which individuals show for apprehending οὐσία.

⁷² I discuss the relevant passages below. R. S. Bluck notes that “Plato was anxious to prove that ‘the just’ (τὸ δίκαιον) and the other virtues exist in nature (φύσει) and not only as matters of convention (νόμῳ)” (*Phaedo*, 182), and later refers to his use of φύσει (“in or by nature”) in 103b as probably “a gesture of triumphant defiance in the face of those who argued that all ‘things’ existed only νόμῳ, ‘by convention’” (200). Bluck is right to mention nature in connection with the Forms; however, it is not at all clear that

The reality-appearance dichotomy reflects Plato's belief that there is a sharp divergence in ontological status between Forms and particulars, and Plato draws on it in order to drive a solid wedge between the two types of entity. This distinction plays a central role in the *Phaedo*. Depicting reality itself, Socrates asks:

αὐτὴ ἡ οὐσία ἥς λόγον δίδομεν τοῦ εἶναι καὶ ἐρωτῶντες καὶ ἀποκρινόμενοι, πότερον ὡσαύτως αἰεὶ ἔχει κατὰ ταῦτα ἢ ἄλλοτ' ἄλλως; αὐτὸ τὸ ἴσον, αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, αὐτὸ ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστιν, τὸ ὄν, μή ποτε μεταβολὴν καὶ ἡντινοῦν ἐνδέχεται; ἢ αἰεὶ αὐτῶν ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστι, μονοειδὲς ὄν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό, ὡσαύτως κατὰ ταῦτα ἔχει καὶ οὐδέποτε οὐδαμῇ οὐδαμῶς ἀλλοιῶσιν οὐδεμίαν ἐνδέχεται; (78d1-7)⁷³

Plato's view should be understood exclusively or even primarily in the context of the νόμος/φύσις controversy specifically, which was central to reflection and argumentation in the second half of the fifth century, given the fact that φύσις was construed differently by sophists, Presocratic philosophers, and the literary tradition. In any case, a proper approach to the *Cratylus*, in particular the opponents and orientation Plato has in view there, is essential to interpretations of connections between nature or naturalness and Forms in the *Phaedo*.

⁷³ I take οὐσία in d1 to refer to the Forms as a totality, as does Gallop (227), and translate the passage as follows: "As to this reality itself of whose being we give an account by way of question and answer, is it always just the same, or is it one way at one time, and another way at another time? Does the Equal itself, the Beautiful itself and each thing that qualifies as a nature ever admit of any change whatsoever? Or does each nature, being uniform, independent and complete in itself, always remain just the same and never admit any type of alteration whatsoever?" The *Phaedo* discussion of Forms builds to this point. They are first mentioned in passing (65d-e), prior to the arguments for immortality, but the focus there is on how one apprehends those entities rather than on characterizing or otherwise treating them directly. (There is some controversy as to whether the entities spoken of in that passage actually qualify as Platonic Forms, i.e., enjoy a separate existence; to my mind, there is no compelling reason for thinking that Plato does not have them in view.) Subsequently, in the Recollection Argument, the Forms play a central role; their existence is assumed, as elsewhere in the *Phaedo*, and constitutes a crucial premise in the argument. Here too Plato refrains from listing attributes, and focuses instead on establishing that Forms and particulars constitute two different types of entity (74a-c). It is in the above-quoted passage, found in the Affinity Argument, that one gets something like a detailed characterization of the sorts of entity at issue.

In the *Symposium*, Plato concentrates on a single Form or element of reality, αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν ("the beautiful itself"), and its connections to beautiful particulars (τὰ καλά). He enumerates the various ways in which the Form, in contrast to particulars, is unqualifiedly beautiful:

πρῶτον μὲν αἰεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον, οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον, ἔπειτα οὐ τῇ μὲν καλόν, τῇ δ' αἰσχρόν, οὐδὲ τοτὲ μὲν, τοτὲ δὲ οὐ, οὐδὲ πρὸς μὲν τὸ καλόν, πρὸς δὲ τὸ αἰσχρόν, οὐδ' ἐνθα μὲν καλόν, ἐνθα δὲ αἰσχρόν, ὡς τισὶ μὲν ὄν καλόν, τισὶ δὲ αἰσχρόν· οὐδ' αὖ φαντασθήσεται αὐτῷ τὸ καλὸν οἶον πρόσωπόν τι οὐδὲ χεῖρες οὐδὲ ἄλλο οὐδὲν ὧν σῶμα μετέχει, οὐδέ τις λόγος οὐδέ τις ἐπιστήμη, οὐδέ που ὄν ἐν ἐτέρῳ τινι, οἶον ἐν ζῳῳ ἢ ἐν τῇ ἢ ἐν οὐρανῷ ἢ ἐν τῷ ἄλλῳ, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ μεθ' αὐτοῦ μονοειδὲς αἰεὶ ὄν. (210e6-211b2)

First of all it always is; it is subject neither to coming-to-be nor to destruction, neither to increase nor to diminution. Next, it is not beautiful in this way, ugly in that, nor is it beautiful at one time but not at another; nor again is it beautiful with reference to one thing but ugly with regard to another, nor beautiful here yet ugly there, as would be the case if it were beautiful to some but ugly to others. Nor will the beautiful appear to [the aspirant] in the guise of some face or hands or anything else having to do with the body, nor will he conceive of it as some discourse or some type of knowledge. Nor 'is' it by being contained in something else, for instance in an animal, or in the earth or sky, or in

In what follows Plato provides a contrasting account of the relevant individual sensibles:

Τί δὲ τῶν πολλῶν καλῶν, οἷον ἀνθρώπων ἢ ἵππων ἢ ἱματίων ἢ ἄλλων ὠντινωνοῦν τοιούτων, ἢ ἴσων [ἢ καλῶν] ἢ πάντων τῶν ἐκείνοις ὁμωνύμων; ἄρα κατὰ ταῦτ' ἔχει, ἢ πᾶν τούναντίον ἐκείνοις οὔτε αὐτὰ αὐτοῖς οὔτε ἀλλήλοις οὐδέποτε ὥς ἔπος εἰπεῖν οὐδαμῶς κατὰ ταῦτά; (78d10-e4; ἢ καλῶν bracketed following Burnet)⁷⁴

Later in the same passage, Plato emphasizes the explanatory role played by reality when he contrasts the futility of that activity which draws the soul—led by the body—“toward those things which never remain in the same state” with the philosophical success achieved when the soul focuses on “what is pure, always existent, immortal and always in the same state” (79c2-d2).⁷⁵ Plato also emphasizes Forms’ explanatory function in the Recollection Argument when he notes that properly oriented individuals confronted by particulars of the relevant types will invariably judge them by reference to or against the Form, and conclude that the former strive to be like the latter but fall significantly short (74d-e). In addition, Forms’ explanatory role is strikingly evident in Plato’s remarks in connection with and based on the participation relation.⁷⁶

One can conceive of particulars, those entities which “never remain at all the same,” in two senses: first, as manifestations of something underlying, which is their veridical sense; second, as self-sufficient, hence deceptive. Parmenides viewed appearances as categorically fallacious; in contrast, for Plato appearances are deceptive only if one assumes that they are the sole existents.⁷⁷ Because he has this less negative view of them, Plato—

anything else, but, being independent and self-sufficient it is always uniform. (I adopt here Nehamas and Woodruff’s phrase “in the guise of”)

74 In contrast, what about the multiple beautiful particulars, for instance human beings or horses or clothing or any other such things, or particular equal entities, and in fact all entities having the same *onoma* as those entities which qualify as natures? Are *these* always just the same, or in complete contrast to natures do they, to speak in general terms, never remain at all the same either with reference to themselves or to one another?

75 For the full contrast see 79c2-d7.

76 In the *Symposium*, Plato conveys the notion of the Form’s explanatory priority via his depiction of the ascent, in which αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν serves as the ultimate object of aspiration; having apprehended it one can then assign the various τὰ καλά their proper rank and value (see 211d). For the reality-appearance dichotomy in the *Republic* see 476a-d. There Plato uses waking-sleeping imagery to illustrate the crucial difference in explanatory success permitted by the two relevant ontological orientations (this is the same basic contrast found at *Phaedo* 79c2-d7); on the matters of orientation and explanatory priority, see also the Cave Allegory (*Rep.* 514-18).

77 On this point see *Phaedo* 65a-d and 82e-83c, combined with 74a-76e, and also *Republic* 476d. While Plato’s remarks in the Recollection Argument do not clarify precisely how one would use the senses to help recover insight, what is evident is his own belief that this is what transpires under the proper circumstances. Plato and Parmenides agreed that there was a plurality among appearances. However, while Parmenides believed that the realm of appearances was fundamentally incoherent, Plato thought that this sensible

unlike his predecessor—is not content merely to posit an ontological divide, but introduces the notion of “participation” (μετέχειν) to ground certain links between the two classes of entities. Once Plato propounds the reality-appearance dichotomy, μετέχοντα must always be a plurality, either in reality or by potential.

The participation relation is a central feature of Plato’s metaphysical reflections in the *Phaedo*, and the idea of participation—which presupposes the reality-appearance dichotomy and the explanatory role of Forms—is critical to Plato’s treatment of eponymy since it provides the immediate ontological foundation for it.⁷⁸ The verb μετέχειν occurs fourteen times in the dialogue, and the noun μετάσχεσις once. Like other terms Plato employs in the dialogues, e.g., τέχνη and τέμνειν, μετέχειν has a technical and a non-technical sense.⁷⁹ Of central interest here are those instances which involve the presentation of his metaphysical theory (100c5, 101c3, c4, c6) because they connect directly with the issue of appropriateness. Plato maintains that he can prove the soul’s immortality if the existence of Forms is assumed (100b7-9); turning the spotlight on the participation relation, Socrates informs Cebes that εἴ τί ἐστιν ἄλλο καλὸν πλὴν αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, οὐδὲ δι’ ἑν ἄλλο καλὸν εἶναι ἢ διότι μετέχει ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ· καὶ πάντα δὴ οὕτως λέγω. τῇ τοιᾷδε αἰτίᾳ συγχωρεῖς; (100c4-7, on the specific case of beauty see also d7-8 and e2-3)⁸⁰ Here Plato provides as the ground (αἰτία) of any other entity’s being beautiful its participation in the Form of Beauty, and states that one can treat

plurality could be explained by appeal to that plurality constituted by Forms; this derivation lends appearances a measure of order or coherence.

⁷⁸ These remarks pertain to participation insofar as it involves Forms and individual sensibles. When language of participation is used in later dialogues with reference to mutual relations between Forms (see the *Sophist*), the notion of blending is central, as is the fact that there is sometimes a fundamental symmetry between the two *relata* (cf. Francis M. Cornford, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, 256, with the qualification that participation involving Forms themselves is not always symmetrical). Both notions are notably false of Plato’s middle-period approach to participation, which applies solely to Forms and particulars.

⁷⁹ Though the relevant terminology is used earlier, the participation relation as such is first introduced at 100c5. Cf. Gallop’s remark that μετέχειν as found in 100c5 and 101c3-6 “is the ordinary Greek word for ‘share’ used semi-technically,” with μεταλαμβάνειν used similarly at 102b2 (182); I take it that Gallop has the same basic distinction in view.

⁸⁰ “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?” (On the Form of Beauty as itself beautiful see also *Symposium* 210e2-212a7; cf. Plato’s earlier remarks in *Protagoras* 330c3-e2 with regard to the virtues of justice and piety.) As in the Recollection Argument, the existence of Forms is simply assumed. Socrates continues to use beauty as an example in what follows, and in so doing invokes the reality-appearance dichotomy in contrasting the sorts of explanation devotees of each plane would offer for the beauty of a given particular; those who are properly oriented would recognize the explanatory role played by Forms, that is, realize that proper explanations must appeal to the relevant Form, in this case the Form of Beauty, rather than to features such as the color or shape of the particular in question (100d1-e6).

all other relevant cases on this model.⁸¹ Following remarks on the Large and Small (100e-101b), Plato treats cases of arithmetic operations, and considers what the proper explanation would be of why the result is two (the αἰτία τοῦ δύο γενέσθαι) when one and one are added; the obvious and typical answer would be to invoke addition, or, in relevant instances, division (101b9-c2). However, applying the general principle that there is no other way in which each thing comes to be (γινόμενον) “save by sharing in that specific nature in which it participates” (101c2-4),⁸² Plato concludes in the case at hand (ἐν τούτοις) that the αἰτία or ground of something’s coming to be two or one can only be that entity’s participation in Twoness or Oneness, respectively (101c4-7). Although Plato here uses the unmodified participle γινόμενον (“comes to be”) (c3), context shows that the appropriate qualification is assumed; that is, he is not asking how something comes to be from nothing at all, but how each thing comes to assume a certain range of attributes. In support of this reading, in what follows (as in 101b9-c2) Plato does not speak of “coming-to-be” in an unqualified sense, but once again of the αἰτία τοῦ δύο γενέσθαι (c4-5).⁸³

Plato’s metaphysical theory, in turn, yields a specific treatment of the matter of appropriateness. Having shown in the *Cratylus* that etymological analysis yielding the “deep structure” of ὀνόματα is an unsatisfactory approach to the issue of fitness, Plato’s strategy is to privilege those entities, the Forms, which bear their appellations in an original and primary sense. While this fundamental difference exists, Plato’s approach to naming in the *Phaedo* has certain points of common ground with the literary tradition: he evinces some interest in individuals—in his case individual sensibles—and is concerned with the basis on, and way in which they deserve certain ὀνόματα which are *already* being applied to them.⁸⁴ In particular, Plato displays a central interest in the eponymy or “named-after”

⁸¹ In the *Phaedo*, Plato concentrates on Forms for concepts involved in the pursuit of genuine τέχναι, most notably mathematics and philosophy or dialectic. I share Gallop’s reluctance to use the standard translation “cause” (169-70); Gallop himself selects “reason” to render the noun.

⁸² ἡ μετασχὼν τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας ἐκάστου οὐ ἂν μετᾶσχη

⁸³ Plato speaks in the same way with regard to the future (101c5-7). While Cebes’ objection to the Affinity Argument would seem to warrant attention to “coming-to-be” in the absolute sense, the investigation focuses solely on the acquisition of attributes (see Gallop, 170-1, and Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 144-5). As Gallop notes, what is of central interest here is the genesis of living things, and “where the value of *F* is ‘alive’, ‘coming to be *F*’ and ‘coming to be *simpliciter*’ will coincide” (171).

In the *Symposium*, Plato links the Form of Beauty to the relevant class of particulars via the participation relation: τὰ δὲ ἅλλα πάντα καλὰ ἐκείνου μετέχοντα τρόπον τινὰ τοιοῦτον, οἷον γιγνομένων τε τῶν ἄλλων καὶ ἀπολλυμένων μηδὲν ἐκεῖνο μήτε τι πλέον μήτε ἔλαττον γίγνεσθαι μηδὲ πάσχειν μηδέν. (211b2-5) Here, as in Book 5 of the *Republic*, Plato highlights the unity of Forms in contrast to the multifaceted diversity of individual sensibles. Concerning participation in the *Republic* see 476d.

⁸⁴ In contrast, focusing on groups in the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, Plato will ask whether they deserve ὀνόματα *at all*; the key point here is whether the group at issue in a given instance forms a natural kind,

relation; although he rejects etymology and etymology-based judgments of appropriateness in the *Cratylus*, and never retreats from that condemnation, he nowhere undertakes an analogous critique of eponymy. In fact, given Plato's interests and priorities, eponymy provides an ideal linguistic framework for their expression.⁸⁵

i.e., meets Plato's strong unity requirement. In ch. 5, I take up this and related issues as treated in those dialogues.

⁸⁵ While the literary tradition never distinguishes clearly between etymology and eponymy, Plato provides separate treatments and valuations of each technique and its potential. Plato only treats etymology in his rejection of it in the *Cratylus*, while eponymy plays an important role in his own philosophical framework and hence has relevance far beyond the confines of a single dialogue. (Regarding Plato's approach to correctness, one can already see from his brief remarks in the *Cratylus* (439b-440d) that any satisfactory view of correctness must take account of both Forms and particulars.) Commentators have not previously identified those key ties between the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo* which are the focus of this study; moreover, discussions of the latter do not typically devote sufficient attention to eponymy, which Plato in fact views as an important semantic notion. Gallop, for example, mentions certain *Cratylus* passages (e.g., 400c, 404b), but only in very specific contexts; he nowhere refers or even alludes to more general or substantive connections between the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo* based, most notably, on their different approaches to the matter of appropriateness (and the closely related issue of naturalness). In the Notes to his edition of the *Phaedo*, John Burnet too provides several textual references to the *Cratylus* with no mention whatsoever of more significant links between the two dialogues. On the subject of naming in the *Phaedo*, Gallop notes that a Form is "the prime bearer" of the relevant ὄνομα (96, 197), and that participants are "named after" eponymous Forms (192, 197). However, he does not consider why the "named-after" relation is especially suitable to Plato's enterprise; treat the latter at any length as a linguistic reflection of the participation relation itself; or attempt to situate the notion of eponymy in a broader historical context. (Gallop himself does not use the noun "eponymy," but the phrase "named after," and the adjective "eponymous" with reference to Forms.) Both Hackforth and Bluck make isolated references to the *Cratylus* in connection with very specific points; however, like Gallop, they nowhere mention any substantive ties between the two dialogues. Bluck comments briefly on the matter of naming in the *Phaedo* though, interestingly, he does not discuss the issue in his textual commentary on the relevant passages; rather, in the introduction to his translation he mentions in passing the participation relation as the ground of something's deserving its name (17), and in an appendix refers to objects and acts in this realm as "named after" the Forms which "alone, strictly speaking, deserve" the appellations in question (180). These brief remarks are interesting as far as they go, but the matter of naming warrants more attention than Bluck gives it; this same judgment applies to Burnet, who also has very little to say about eponymy. In his remarks on the dialogue Taylor nowhere mentions the *Cratylus*, while Friedländer and Guthrie both refer to a single passage from the dialogue (in the latter case in a footnote). Moreover, neither Taylor nor Guthrie nor Friedländer treats the issue of naming in his discussion of the *Phaedo* (see Taylor, *Plato*, ch. 8; Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 4, 324-65; and Friedländer, *Plato*, vol. 3, 35-62, 471-7). Derbolav claims that after the *Cratylus* Plato's philosophical reflections on language no longer focus on ὀνόματα, but are instead confined to the plane of λόγοι: "Darüber aber können uns erst die späteren Dialoge Aufschluß geben" (*Platons Sprachphilosophie*, 66); Derbolav thus fails to take account of that key stage in Plato's reflections on semantic issues which involves his elevation of eponymy to a technical notion and use of it to treat the semantics of the Form-particular relation. (Cf. Steinthal: "Es handelt sich im Kratylus nur um die Abweisung der falschen Anwendung der Wörter zur Erkenntnis. So kommt nun Plato auch im Theätet und im Sophisten nur gelegentlich auf die Sprache, um ihr wahres Verhältnis zur Dialektik darzulegen" (*Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft*, 112, previously quoted in part). Steinthal remains unaware of the important role played by the *Phaedo*, and to a lesser extent the *Republic*, in the development of Plato's own view of appropriateness.) Gaiser, like Derbolav, discusses ties between the *Cratylus* and other dialogues (95-117), but he too fails to see the import of eponymy in the *Phaedo* and hence the close links between the two dialogues in their handling of semantic issues with regard to ὀνόματα. Rosenstock rightly highlights the existence of a close relationship between the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo*; however, as previously noted, he wrongly views the *Cratylus* as "the perfect complement to the *Phaedo*"—rather than vice versa—privileging

Plato inherits a skeletal framework from the literary tradition, namely, one centering on a two-member relation with some type of priority assigned to that member treated as primary. Notwithstanding this generic common ground, the literary tradition's version of eponymy reflects a basic ontological symmetry which Plato finds untenable if the notion is to assume philosophical importance. This symmetry is exhibited by the centrality of the empirical world on both tiers of the relation, and by the fact that—depending on the context—the very same types of entity can assume a primary or secondary role. In contrast, Platonic eponymy rests on a fundamental ontological *asymmetry* between the two *relata*. While Plato embraces the framework of eponymy, he transforms the relation in light of his own ontological commitments. He designates that entity with ontological priority, namely, the Form, as the primary ὄνομα-bearer. Metaphysically speaking, a Form's participants are not self-sufficient, and semantic relations must reflect metaphysical ones; thus, Plato maintains that—due to this posteriority—participants are named derivatively or “after” the relevant Form. Here the question of appropriateness arises when one considers the extent to which individual sensibles strive to be like that Form in which they participate, and hence deserve to be designated by the general term in question.⁸⁶ Although Plato

what he views as the *Cratylus*' challenge to “the *Phaedo*'s reliance upon simple *logoi* as a medium of truth” (“Fathers and Sons,” 410). Kahn does link the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo* with regard to the matter of naming in a suggestive way (175-6), yet only briefly and not based specifically on the notions of naturalness and appropriateness treated in this study. For passing references to the “named-after” relation, which are also not tied to these two notions, cf. Luce, “The Theory of Ideas in the *Cratylus*,” 35, and Rumsey, “Plato in the *Cratylus* on Speaking, Language, and Learning,” 393 conjoined with 402; in addition, Rumsey's alleged example (sophist) is incorrect since sophistry is not elevated to Form status until the much later *Sophist*, and eponymy as developed in the *Phaedo* does not figure in Plato's treatment there of whole-part ties involving mutual relations between Forms. Finally, in addition to a general failure of discussions of the *Phaedo* to devote sufficient attention to Platonic eponymy, none of the scholars mentioned above takes account of the literary tradition's importance as a precedent for Plato's transformed approach.

Scholars have long disagreed on the identity of the *Phaedo*'s central topic. Taylor, for instance, claims that “the immediate and principal object of the whole conversation is the justification of the life of ‘tendence of the soul’” (177, for this stance see also Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 3); in contrast, Guthrie maintains that “whatever people may say, the *Phaedo* is about the immortality of the soul, and the posthumous blessedness of the wise and good....The need to make the soul's tendence our paramount consideration is no more than an important consequence” (vol. 4, 363-4). My aim is not to challenge one or another view of the dialogue's main concern, or to replace other proffered candidates with the topic of naming. What I do wish to point out is that Plato's treatment of naming in the *Phaedo* has an importance in the framework of that dialogue, closely related works (especially the *Cratylus*), and Plato's philosophy of language and metaphysics more generally than discussions of the *Phaedo* would typically lead one to suspect.

⁸⁶ As concerns the notion of striving itself, Plato states that “all these equal entities strive (ὁρέγεται) to be like the equal itself, but fall short of it (ἔχει δὲ ἐνδεεστέρωσ)” (75a2-3); raising the same issue in slightly different terms, he insists that “all equal particulars yearn (προθυμείται) to be like the Form, but are inferior to it (ἔστιν δὲ αὐτοῦ φαυλότερα)” (75b7-8). Plato's choice of example shows that this basic dynamic is relevant in all cases, regardless of whether what does the striving has intentionality or agency. In the *Symposium*, he provides supplementation on this issue. There Plato presents a teleological

shows some interest in individual sensibles, they are of concern to him only insofar as they are part of a larger framework in which they occupy a subordinate position.⁸⁷ Therefore, in contrast to the literary tradition, he is not discouraged from raising the matter of appropriateness in connection with eponymy by the fact that the relation and ensuing judgments center on the name-warranting or predicate-grounding entity; quite the contrary. Unlike the literary tradition, Plato turns the spotlight on entities in that role—that which just *is* καλόν (“beautiful” or “fine”), for instance—believing that only then can one arrive at appropriate conditions allowing one to apply the terms denoting them to individual sensibles. While Plato assigns participants no intrinsic worth, he displays a marked interest in determining these conditions of application, and he uses the eponymy relation to advance the claim that individual sensibles deserve to have certain predicates applied to them—albeit with qualification—based on those sensibles’ participation in the relevant Forms.

Plato inaugurates his remarks on naming by referring to each class of individual sensibles as ὁμώνυμον with the relevant Form (78e2). In the literary tradition, entities’ being ὁμώνυμοι was a question of choice, as when Pindar mentions the maternal uncle and namesake of—the one ὁμώνυμος with—Strepsiades the Isthmian victor (*Isth.* 7.24); it might also be a matter of coincidence, as when Homer uses the adjective with reference to two individuals who happen to share the name “Aias” (*Il.* 17.720). In contrast, for Plato the selection of those entities designated as ὁμώνυμα with a given Form is never grounded on chance or agency, but only on whether they stand in the ontologically proper relation to the Form. Typically, the adjective ὁμώνυμος is vaguer and less informative than ἐπώνυμος: Strictly speaking, the former specifies only identity with regard to ὀνόματα, whereas the latter indicates the existence of a dependence relation governing the assignment. Moreover, in a given context it involves stipulation of which entity plays the ὄνομα-warranting role, and which functions as recipient. Although Plato here uses ὁμώνυμος rather than ἐπώνυμος or a related term (i.e., ἐπωνυμία or ἐπονομάζειν), he

psychology in which motivational issues are treated in terms of objects of ἔρως (“aspiration”); hence, he needs to examine the character and status of those objects, whose articulation is based on his treatment of Forms in the *Phaedo*. (In adopting “aspiration” as a translation of ἔρως I follow Moravcsik, “Reason and Eros in the ‘Ascent’-Passage of the *Symposium*.”) The *Republic* too contains language of aspiration and striving used with regard to those oriented toward οὐσία; see 485b1 (ἐρᾶν), 485d4 (ὀρέγεσθαι), 490b2 (ἐρῶς), and 501d2 (ἐραστής).

⁸⁷ Cf. Hackforth’s comment, in connection with the ἀνάμνησις (“recollection”) argument, that “valueless though [perceptions] may be in themselves, it does not follow that they may not have value in so far as they point beyond themselves; and that is all that the ἀνάμνησις doctrine claims for them” (74).

has the phenomenon of eponymy in view. In the passage cited above (78d10-e4), Plato in effect pairs a superior ontological status and explanatory role with bearing an ὄνομα in a primary sense; correspondingly and more straightforwardly, he ties an inferior ontological status, and function as *explanandum*, to bearing an ὄνομα in a derivative sense. In his remarks on appearances, Plato mentions precisely those two classes of particulars, i.e., equal and beautiful entities, whose respective Forms he has just invoked; this, combined with his invocation of the ontological divide (78d-e) and his emphasis on Forms' explanatory role (79c-d and 74d-e), allows one to interpret his remark about classes of particulars bearing the same ὀνόματα as their respective φύσεις or οὐσίαι in the context of the eponymy relation.⁸⁸

Plato takes up the eponymy or "named-after" relation explicitly in connection with his treatment of participation. He 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, get their names from these entities themselves" (τούτων τὰλλα μεταλαμβάνοντα αὐτῶν τούτων τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἴσχειν) (102b1-2).⁸⁹ He approaches the notion of appropriateness based on the sharp contrast between how people typically

⁸⁸ At this point the notion of participation, which constitutes the immediate ontological ground of the eponymy relation, has yet to be introduced; hence, it is not surprising, but to be expected that Plato's remarks would take this more general form. For later confirmation of this use of ὁμώνυμος see Plato's recapitulation of his *Phaedo* stance at *Parmenides* 133c-d and *Timaeus* 51e-52a; cf. Aristotle's comments at *Met.* 987b7-10, in which ὁμώνυμα appears (as well as his employment of ὁμώνυμον at 990b6 and 1079a2). Interestingly, while for us homonymy involves a difference in meaning, Plato employs it here to highlight that element of likeness obtaining between the two *relata*. In his comments on 78d10-e5, Gallop rightly notes that Forms are "here treated as the prime bearers of their names." He goes on to remark that "particulars are 'named after' them," making reference to 102-3 and simply assuming that the "named after" relation is invoked here as well. While I indicate above that I think this is the correct interpretation of the passage, in my view this more specific conclusion needs to be argued for since the meaning in question is at this juncture unprecedented for Plato. The text says simply that individual sensibles have the same ὄνομα as the relevant Form. The notion of sensibles' being "named *after*" a Form is only invoked explicitly in connection with participation, which is itself not introduced until 100c5 (μετέχειν is first used in the technical sense there, and in what follows at 101c3, 4, and 6; μεταλαμβάνειν is employed in the pertinent sense only at 102b2). In Plato's view, the eponymy relation constitutes the linguistic manifestation of the participation relation.

⁸⁹ Note Plato's use here of the verb μεταλαμβάνειν as synonymous with μετέχειν, and the participle's causal force. He employs similar language at *Parmenides* 130e5-6, where Parmenides attributes the following view to Socrates: δοκεῖ σοι, ὡς φῆς, εἶναι εἶδη ἅττα, ὧν τάδε τὰ ἄλλα μεταλαμβάνοντα τὰς ἐπωνυμίας αὐτῶν ἴσχειν; (see also 133d1-2). Cf. Aristotle's report that Plato inherited an interest in universal definition from Socrates, but construed the objects of definition in a very special way: ἀδύνατον γὰρ εἶναι τὸν κοινὸν ὅρον τῶν αἰσθητῶν τινός, ἀεὶ γε μεταβαλλόντων. οὗτος οὖν τὰ μὲν τοιαῦτα τῶν ὄντων ἰδέας προσηγόρευσε, τὰ δ' αἰσθητὰ παρὰ ταῦτα καὶ κατὰ ταῦτα λέγεσθαι πάντα· κατὰ μέθεξιν γὰρ εἶναι τὰ πολλὰ ὁμώνυμα τοῖς εἶδεσιν (*Met.* 987b6-10; on Plato's inherited concern with universal definition see also *Met.* 1078b-1079a). While Aristotle does not literally employ ἐπωνυμος or a related term, the words παρὰ ταῦτα λέγεσθαι function equivalently (so too the ὁμώνυμα that follows, as in *Phaedo* 78e2, *Parmenides* 133d3, and *Timaeus* 52a5 (ὁμώνυμον)). Aristotle's comments reaffirm that, according to Plato, it is *due to* their participation in Forms that αἰσθητά share their appellations, are in fact named after them.

think and speak—according to which τὰ ἴσα (“the equals”), for instance, deserve to be called “equal” in their own right and without qualification—and modes of thought and speech grounded on those normative considerations which Plato introduces. The fact that the linguistic dimension is incorporated so matter-of-factly highlights the intimate connection between the determination of something’s ontological status and the way in which one properly applies the ὄνομα in question to that entity.

Of crucial importance, and in line with his approach in the *Cratylus*, Plato here rejects explicitly the notion of individual natures or essences: he insists that Simmias does not surpass Socrates in height because it is in his nature (πεφυκέναι) to do so, i.e., “by virtue of being *Simmias*” (τῷ Σιμμίαν εἶναι), but rather “by virtue of the largeness or height that he happens to have” (τῷ μεγέθει ὃ τυγχάνει ἔχων) (102c1-2).⁹⁰ The key point here is that Plato associates “naturalness” not with mortal (or divine) individuals—as he did in the *Cratylus*, following the literary tradition—but rather with *kinds*. In fact, Plato concludes that Simmias ἐπωνυμίαν ἔχει σμικρός τε καὶ μέγας... ἐν μέσῳ ὧν ἀμφοτέρων (102c10-11); one sees here the relation between ontology and naming, with the former in the governing role (note the participle’s causal force).⁹¹ Speaking generally, Plato sums up the contrast as one between talk “about those things having opposites, which are named after those opposites,” and that “regarding those opposites themselves from whose inherence in which the things named receive their appellations” (περὶ τῶν ἐχόντων τὰ ἐναντία... ἐπονομάζοντες αὐτὰ τῇ ἐκείνων ἐπωνυμία and that περὶ ἐκείνων αὐτῶν ὧν ἐνόντων ἔχει τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν τὰ ὀνομαζόμενα) (103b6-8). This passage evinces a convergence of the reality-appearance dichotomy (with reality as *explanans*), the participation relation, and Plato’s views on naming, with a clear indication of how the ontological and linguistic dimensions interrelate. The second formulation here, that involving reference to inherence, raises the same ontological and linguistic issues as do the first and that observation made at 102b1-2; Plato simply uses language of inherence rather

⁹⁰ Interestingly, in maintaining that one cannot explain what largeness is by reference to the largeness of particulars, Plato explicitly rejects the stance taken in this century by G. F. Stout, which treats universals as abstract particulars (see the discussion between G. E. Moore, Stout, and G. Dawes Hicks entitled “Are the Characteristics of Particular Things Universal or Particular?”; Stout’s remarks comprise pp. 114-22).

⁹¹ Plato insists here that proper explanations of particulars’ having a certain attribute must be offered by reference to Forms. In his comments on the passage, neither Gallop nor Bluck refers to these remarks as contesting a view of individual natures in the case of spatiotemporal particulars, and espousing the connection of “naturalness” only with kinds. The point in 102c1-2 is that Simmias, *qua* Simmias, *has* no nature or essence. Hackforth refers to Simmias as a “container,” but does not pinpoint the main contrast Plato has in view (for failures to identify this feature of Plato’s account see also Taylor, Guthrie, Friedländer, and Burnet). For reiteration of the point about individual φύσεις by reference to Socrates and Phaedo, respectively, see 102c2-8.

than that of participation, as he had in 102b, because he is now considering the Form-particular relation from the point of view of Forms rather than that of individual sensibles.

In what follows, Plato states his position on the matter of appropriateness when Forms themselves are at issue, claiming that αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος ἀξιοῦσθαι τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὀνόματος εἰς τὸν αἰὲ χρόνον...τὸ...περιττὸν αἰεῖ που δεῖ τούτου τοῦ ὀνόματος τυγχάνειν ὅπερ νῦν λέγομεν· ἢ οὐ; (103e3-7).⁹² An adequate rendering of these lines must highlight the notion of fitness; for instance, one might say that “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 appropriate for Oddness to be in possession of the *onoma* which we are now employing to designate it. Wouldn’t you agree?” The contrast between the way in which ὀνόματα designating Forms and particulars apply to their bearers thus comes clearly to light. It is always appropriate to call the Form, e.g., αὐτὸ τὸ περιττόν (“the odd itself”), “odd” in an unqualified sense since it just *is* the nature of Oddness, whereas individual sensibles in the relevant class have oddness in a limited sense and are thus properly “named after” that Form.⁹³

⁹² One may contrast Plato’s use of ἀξιοῦσθαι here with reference to Forms with *Cratylus* 395c4, where he employs ἄξιον in making an etymology-based judgment of fitness regarding the proper name “Pelops.” In the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, in turn, Plato uses both the verb and adjective in remarks on Forms or kinds in the context of division (see *Soph.* 223a and 226c, and *Pol.* 276b).

⁹³ What Plato says explicitly here about appropriateness involves Forms themselves, hence judgments of veridicality rather than those of desert. It has been proposed that for Plato a Form’s ὄνομα has the status merely of a proper name, in the sense of functioning as a proxy or label that picks out its *denotatum* without indicating anything about the nature of its referent (see Thomas W. Bestor, “Plato’s Semantics and Plato’s *Cratylus*” and “Common Properties and Eponymy in Plato”). The key idea is that the Form’s ὄνομα lacks descriptive force. Yet, if this is what Plato believed there would be no point at all to his embrace and transformation of eponymy. It is precisely because Plato wishes to explain how properties and hence terms may attach to entities both with *and* without qualification that he finds eponymy to be an optimal way of treating the semantics of the Form-particular relation (this is clear from the *Phaedo* discussion, and Forms’ being *x* without qualification is evident both there and in the *Symposium*) (see 100c4-7 and 210e-212a, respectively; cf. Plato’s earlier remarks in *Prot.* 330c-e). If one is to account for the qualified embodiment of attributes by particulars and hence the derivative application of terms to them—as Plato was quite concerned to do—one cannot rest content with treating the Form’s appellation as having the force merely of a proper name viewed as a label which does not indicate anything about the referent’s nature. (In claiming that the *Cratylus* rejects the “Description Theory” in favor of the “Proxy Theory” (“Plato’s Semantics and Plato’s *Cratylus*,” 327-8), Bestor fails to distinguish between “descriptive content” and “descriptive force.” What actually happens is that Plato rejects the notion that terms’ descriptive *content*—illuminated by etymological analysis—yields insight into their referents’ natures. In the *Cratylus* Plato concludes that the correctness of all terms’ constitution is determined by appeal to custom and convention. *Contra* Bestor, the dialogue’s conclusion thus leaves open more than one alternative stance toward the relation between a Form and its ὄνομα; in particular, the possibility that terms applied to Forms have descriptive force is not excluded, and receives confirmation elsewhere.) While I believe that the primary movement was from Plato’s metaphysical theory to his eponymy-centered account of naming, one cannot rule out a limited reciprocal influence stemming from the fact that once Plato turns toward eponymy *and* puts the spotlight on the primary entity, the question naturally arises of how the term in question refers to that nature derivatively shared by the relevant class of individual sensibles. Plato’s point is that different types of descriptions correlate with primary and secondary entities, i.e., full and derived natures: relatively

Over and above the fact that one can invoke ontological naturalness quite generally—with regard to the idea that what is natural, first and foremost, is the breakdown of reality into objective and theoretically important unities—Plato offers direct linguistic testament to its centrality. Specifically, he emphasizes that the opposite itself can never become opposite to itself, “neither the opposite in us nor that in nature (ἐν τῇ φύσει)” (103b5); this remark provides a direct manifestation of the centrality of “ontological naturalness” since the opposite “in nature” is none other than the Form itself.⁹⁴

simple descriptions in the case of Forms (e.g., “the equal itself”), and more complex ones in the case of particulars (e.g., “equal in length,” “equal to one person but not to another”) (74a-b; cf. *Symp.* 210e6-211b5). (Notably, the Form’s ὄνομα does not function as a definite description in such a way as to render that entity a perfect particular. Definite descriptions are compound and, in modern languages, derivative (one moves, e.g., from “doctor” to “the finest doctor”).) What makes the framework of eponymy particularly suitable for Plato is that it allows him to present *two* ways of applying these descriptions’ central terms (e.g., “equal”) to entities, namely, unqualifiedly and qualifiedly (with variations), and questions of appropriateness are resolved by appeal to entities’ ontological status.

⁹⁴ One may contrast this use of φύσις with Euripides’ aforementioned linkage of Polyneices’ name and nature by way of the verb φύειν (*Phoen.* 1493). In another notable passage, Plato uses φύειν when speaking of necessary relations between Forms, the idea being that some Forms necessarily have other Forms as attributes. Speaking further about Oddness, and using the number “three” as an example, Socrates refers to something else besides the Form

ὁ ἔστι μὲν οὐχ ὅπερ τὸ περιττόν, ὅμως δὲ δεῖ αὐτὸ μετὰ τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ ὀνόματος καὶ τοῦτο καλεῖν αἰεὶ διὰ τὸ οὕτω πεφυκέναι ὥστε τοῦ περιττοῦ μηδέποτε ἀπολείπεσθαι...σκόπει δὲ περὶ τῆς τριάδος. Ἄρα οὐ δοκεῖ σοι τῷ τε αὐτῆς ὀνόματι αἰεὶ προσαγορευτέα εἶναι καὶ τῷ τοῦ περιττοῦ, ὄντος οὐχ ὅπερ τῆς τριάδος; ἀλλ’ ὅμως οὕτως πέφυκε καὶ ἡ τριάς καὶ ἡ πεμπτάς καὶ ὁ ἡμισυς τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ ἅπας, ὥστε οὐκ ὦν ὅπερ τὸ περιττόν αἰεὶ ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ἐστι περιττός. (104a1-b1; it is worth noting that the term φύειν is used twice here for emphasis)

which is, on the one hand, not Oddness itself, nevertheless, on the other hand, something which it is always necessary to call “odd” in addition to calling it by its own *onoma* because its nature is such that it never leaves off being odd....Consider for instance the nature of the number “three.” Does it not seem to you that one must always call it by its own *onoma* and by that of “odd” although Oddness is not identical with the essence or nature of three? But nevertheless the essence of three and five and in fact every alternate number is by nature such that although they are not the Form of Oddness each of them is always odd.

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, e.g., αὐτὸ τὸ ἴσον (“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. Plato here invokes “naturalness” in relation to a certain class of Forms which must always be called “odd” because (διὰ) it is their nature always to *be* odd; a close link between ontology, naturalness, and appropriateness is thus made explicit. Plato uses the term οὐσία six times in the dialogue: as Gallop observes (227), on four occasions he does so with reference to the entire realm of Forms (see 76d9, 77a2, 78d1, and 92d9), and twice with regard to individual Forms (see 65d13 and 101c3). It is also worth noting here that insofar as Plato employs οὐσία with the broader extension, it is synonymous with φύσις as used in 103b5 with reference to nature in the sense of reality itself. In addition, when Plato says that nothing can come to be *x* without “sharing in that specific *ousia* in which it participates,” one might well translate οὐσία as “nature” (101c3).

In addition to using explicit language of naturalness in the foregoing passage, when speaking subsequently about what transpires after death Plato invokes the earth itself (ἡ γῆ αὐτή), i.e., “the true earth,” and 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 abstract entities (109a-114c). In this connection, Plato speaks extensively of animate and inanimate natural entities, and makes frequent use of the terms φύσις and φύειν.⁹⁵ He contrasts life in the earth’s hollows (ἐν τοῖς κοίλοις) with that above the earth (ἄνω ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) (109c3-d8), and his comments there about mistaking appearance for reality call to mind the Cave Allegory in *Republic* 7. Plato remarks that those who are able commune directly with the gods, and glimpse the sun, moon, and stars as they really are (111b6-c2); in the context of the allegory, this is equivalent to apprehension of the Forms, which, metaphysically speaking, constitute the divine in contrast to the strictly human, and as such have an explanatory function.⁹⁶ Plato suggests that those who are properly equipped, i.e.,

The *Republic* provides several linguistic manifestations of the centrality of “nature” and “naturalness.” First, the notion of “naturalness” is evident in certain uses of the term οὐσία, as for instance in Book 7, where examination of all things κατὰ δόξαν is contrasted with that occurring κατ’ οὐσίαν (534c2). This passage is especially noteworthy since Plato draws the same contrast toward the outset of the *Cratylus* with φύσις in place of οὐσία (387a1-2). Second, in the *Republic*, as in the *Cratylus*, Plato uses the verb φύειν and the noun φύσις in connection with Forms; however, in the *Republic* he employs the terminology in a way that builds on the conclusions reached in the *Cratylus*. In Book 6 Plato asserts that πρὸς τὸ ὄν πεφυκὼς εἴη ἀμιλλᾶσθαι ὃ γε ὄντως φιλομαθής, καὶ οὐκ ἐπιμένοι ἐπὶ τοῖς δοξαζομένοις εἶναι πολλοῖς ἐκάστοις, ἀλλ’ ἴοι καὶ οὐκ ἀμβλύνοντο οὐδ’ ἀπολήγοι τοῦ ἔρωτος, πρὶν αὐτοῦ ὃ ἔστιν ἐκάστου τῆς φύσεως ἄψασθαι (490a8-b3). (“The genuine lover of learning has a natural capacity for gaining access to reality, and does not remain abiding among the multiple individual sensibles which are the objects of belief, but he progresses without becoming disheartened or desisting, till he gains access to the nature of that which is in each case.”) (There are certain interesting parallels to the *Symposium* in 490a-b, notably the mention of ἔρωτος with a motivational sense, and language of procreation.) In this context, Plato uses the noun φύσις as the centerpiece of a phrase designating the Forms, indeed as synonymous with οὐσία (cf. *Phaedo* 101c3). 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). One could replace the phrase τὸ φύσει δίκαιον (“the by-nature just”)—to take just one example—with αὐτὸ τὸ δίκαιον (“the just itself”), an instance of a favorite Platonic way of designating Forms. Elsewhere, Plato speaks of the need for prospective philosophers to become skilled in calculation (λογιστική); they must not pursue it as dilettantes, but so as to catch a glimpse “in thought of the nature of numbers (τῆς τῶν ἀριθμῶν φύσεως)” (525c2-3). Here Plato has οὐσίαι in view, and the term φύσις functions equivalently. In addition, in what follows he refers to calculation as directing the soul upward and compelling it to discourse about numbers themselves (περὶ αὐτῶν τῶν ἀριθμῶν) (525d5-7); αὐτοὶ οἱ ἀριθμοί (“numbers themselves”) are of course among Platonic οὐσίαι, and synonymous with ἡ τῶν ἀριθμῶν φύσις (“the nature of numbers”) above. For the phrase ἐν τῇ φύσει used with reference to Forms, as at *Phaedo* 103b5, see *Republic* 597b5-6 and *Parmenides* 132d1-2. As in the *Phaedo*, such linguistic evidence testifies to Plato’s linkage of φύσις primarily and most fundamentally to unmovable structures, i.e., immutable essences.

⁹⁵ See 109e6, 110a4, d4, 111a1, c4, e5, and 113d1.

⁹⁶ For him, in contrast to the literary tradition, the genuinely “divine” is what reason reveals as ontologically primary. Regarding Socrates’ conviction that upon death he will join the company of gods

adequately prepared by nature and education, can distinguish superior from inferior entities: εἰ ἡ φύσις ἱκανὴ εἶη ἀνασχέσθαι θεωροῦσα, γινῶναι ἂν ὅτι ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθὺς οὐρανὸς καὶ τὸ ἀληθινὸν φῶς καὶ ἡ ὥς ἀληθὺς γῆ (109e6-110a1). In this instance, Plato uses the term φύσις derivatively with reference to mortal individuals; at issue here is that same philosophical nature to which Plato makes frequent reference in the *Republic*. In both dialogues Plato has in mind those few individuals enabled by aptitude and education to apprehend the Forms, i.e., natures or essences themselves.⁹⁷

Having introduced the reality-appearance dichotomy and the nature-dependency thesis (109c-d), Plato elaborates on the distinction between the two realms; in addition, he raises the issue of terms' appropriateness based on this ontological contrast. Human beings mistake appearances for reality, and hence inappropriately call the air "heaven," *as if* (ὥς) "the stars moved through *this* heaven" (109d7-8). Only through a basic shift in orientation does it become apparent that the entities *genuinely* worthy of such appellations lie elsewhere (109e7-110a1). Having emphasized the inferior character of what resides in the sensible realm, Plato notes that in the sea "there is no vegetation worth mentioning" (φύεται ἄξιον λόγου οὐδέν) (110a4). Here the term "vegetation" can be interpreted as denoting a kind, and Plato remarks that some individuals do not have enough characteristics of the kind to be worthy of inclusion. In addition, as concerns implications of appropriateness with regard to a specific abstract entity, he concludes that there are no entities in this lower realm that one can properly esteem "beautiful" (κάλλη κρίνεσθαι...ἄξια) (110a7).⁹⁸ Following this comment about beauty and desert, Plato emphasizes that with regard to the more fundamental contrast between the earth's hollows and the area above it—which the contrast involving sea was employed merely to illustrate—the disparity is far greater still (110a8); not coincidentally, he then highlights the

see 63b-c and 82b-c. For the divine characterized as naturally fit for ruling see 80a, and on the Forms as divine see 80b.

⁹⁷ In this final section, Plato combines metaphysical and eschatological considerations, and this leads to an inconsistency when the philosopher's soul is said to dwell in a place still fairer than the realm above the earth; this is of course not what one would expect based on what are otherwise firm ties between the philosopher's soul and the realm of Forms (see, e.g., 79d). Hackforth concludes that "this confusion...is the price which Plato has to pay for his attempt to run together the 'two-world' metaphysical antithesis" with a complex eschatological schema (175).

⁹⁸ This use of ἄξιον and ἄξια in 110a4 and 7, respectively, contrasts nicely with ἀξιοῦσθαι as employed in 103e3-7 with reference to Forms. Plato makes use of a contrast between the ocean's bottom and the realm above its surface to illustrate that between the earth's hollows and the area above it, though he emphasizes that the latter contrast is far sharper and more fundamental. Having employed the former contrast to introduce the notion of basic differences in ontological status, Plato uses it to raise the matter of appropriateness.

superlative beauty of what resides on the highest plane (i.e., that of Forms) (110c3, c6, e2). Based on this reading of the passage as a whole, one can see how Plato employs the notions of “nature” and “naturalness” in an allegorical fashion as the very framework in which he introduces his ontology, and alludes to his theory of terms’ appropriateness derived therefrom.⁹⁹

When raising questions of appropriateness with regard to Forms themselves, only considerations of veridicality are relevant. Strictly speaking, one simply makes *judgments* of veridicality since the ontological priority of Forms ensures that it will always be true to say that the relevant terms apply to them unreservedly (103e3-7).¹⁰⁰ In contrast, on the level of individual sensibles one invokes both veridicality and desert. First, one must determine whether one is in fact dealing with entities of the relevant type (e.g., τὰ ἴσα); this is an issue of veridicality. Second—and far more importantly—one must introduce the matter of desert by focusing on the way in which those entities are situated with reference to that Form in which they participate (e.g., αὐτὸ τὸ ἴσον). When speaking of the participation relation, Plato treats eponymy explicitly (102b1-2, 102c10-11, and 103b6-8). When he discusses ὀνόματα and particulars without mentioning participation, Plato uses other language to signal that he has the eponymy relation in view, as in his use of ὁμώνυμος (78e2). Assuming that one has correctly identified the particulars, in all cases of this sort one’s evaluation of desert has the same form. What varies in individual cases is the ways in and extent to which particulars fall short; however, because individual sensibles, e.g., particular equal entities, inevitably *do* fall short of that Form toward which they strive (74d-e), one must apply the term “equal” or “beautiful” to them in a correspondingly qualified sense.¹⁰¹ As previously noted, in judging appropriateness the

⁹⁹ Gallop’s comments on the section from 107c1-115a8 are quite brief. More to the point, he does not attribute significance to this long passage in connection with the notion of naturalness as it arises in Plato’s ontology, or mention the fact that questions of naming surface here as well (in my terminology, the issue of appropriateness). Moreover, Hackforth, Bluck, Taylor, Friedländer, and Burnet make no mention of these issues in their comments on the passage; the same is true of Guthrie, who prefaces his own proportionally lengthy remarks with the observation that editors typically “give very little space to this splendid bit of imaginative writing” (361).

¹⁰⁰ As previously indicated, raising the issue of veridicality can lead one to make *judgments* of veridicality or non-veridicality.

¹⁰¹ This notion of deficiency, as presented in the *Phaedo*, makes it impossible to view Plato as employing the semantic relation of eponymy to offer a general theory of predication since individual sensibles do not fall short of any and all predicates they might have. Such a view of eponymy would commit him to view every predicate as such that individuals fall short of it and posit a Form for every general term. As indicated, Plato does not embrace the former position. The ultimate metaphysical foundation of any attempt to provide a comprehensive account would be the assumption of Forms for all general terms. In this connection, it is imperative to realize that one should not construe Plato’s Forms along the lines of Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore’s universals, as does, notably, Russell himself (*The Problems of*

literary tradition invoked veridicality and desert, yet proceeded haphazardly, i.e., in the absence of fixed standards for the regulation of the enterprise. In contrast, Plato is quite concerned to arrive at such criteria; in his view, it is the ontological status of the referent that determines the type(s) of judgment one must use to gauge appropriateness. The possibility, indeed, requirement of making the requisite assessment permits his own handling of fitness in the *Phaedo* to be systematic in a way he only points toward in the *Cratylus*.¹⁰²

Philosophy, ch. 9) (for Moore's view see *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, supp. vol. 3, and for Russell's stance see *The Problems of Philosophy* and "On the Relations of Universals and Particulars," in *Logic and Knowledge*, 105-24). Among scholars in Greek philosophy, Ross' *Plato's Theory of Ideas* evinces a powerful influence stemming from these twentieth-century developments insofar as he operates unquestioningly with the view that Plato espoused a theory of universals. In adopting this stance Ross relies heavily on *Republic* 596a5-7, which, however, need not be interpreted as supporting the wholly generic interpretation he gives (see also Derbolav, who simply assumes that the passage mentions "die offenbar bewährte Methode...für jede Erscheinungsvielfalt, die den gleichen Namen trägt, eine Idee anzusetzen," *Platons Sprachphilosophie*, 145). (To start with, one may invoke Plato's careful emphasis on customary procedure in 596a6 to support the claim that he intends to carefully restrict the scope of those entities to which he wishes to grant Form status along the lines of his earlier remarks in the *Republic* itself and in other relevant dialogues composed up to that point in time. Similarly, in his initial comments on Forms in the *Phaedo* (65d-e) Plato provides several examples of Forms, with the comment that he speaks καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐνὶ λόγῳ πάντων τῆς οὐσίας ὃ τυγχάνει ἕκαστον ὄν (cf. *Crat.* 439c8-d1). (In contrast to that of Grube, Gallop's translation—"and, in short, about the Being of all other *such* things"—suggests the requisite qualification, which is later provided explicitly by Plato himself (see 75c10 and 76d8-9).) One need not, indeed must not give such remarks a wholly general reading; rather, one must properly limit their scope of application based on those criteria which Plato espouses in this period for the positing of Forms.) Taylor too thinks one may call Forms "universals," though he insists one observe the caution that the former may inhere in particulars to varying degrees (*Plato*, 202). Yet, precisely this serves to distinguish Forms and participation in a central way from universals and instantiation as treated by Russell and Moore; Taylor rightly notes the point of variance, but fails to see its consequences for any supposed identification of Forms with universals. Plato and these twentieth-century philosophers simply focus on different *explananda*: Plato seeks to account for the qualified embodiment of properties by particulars, while Moore and Russell wish to explain their mutual similarity. (The Theory of Forms explains this as well, but its main emphasis is on the former (*contra* R. E. Allen, "Participation and Predication in Plato's Middle Dialogues," 56).) In fact, the distinction between unqualified and qualified embodiment, or full and derived natures, is simply absent from the latter two philosophers' discussions. For Plato in the middle period the key idea is that certain statements, for instance those about geometrical shapes, are true, but when applied strictly to empirical entities they become false because in the spatiotemporal world lines have width and points have extension. Nevertheless, those statements form the skeleton of more complex statements about spatiotemporal entities. In the framework of universals, this would require some universals' being better than others in a strong metaphysical sense (i.e., having a superiority which cannot be reduced to differences in scope of application). Eponymy constitutes the semantics of the bridge between the two realms. Hence, as a theory of predication, eponymy—which is grounded on Plato's metaphysical theory and the participation relation most directly—covers only a subset of cases in which Moore and Russell would invoke universals and instantiation.

¹⁰² While Plato does not invoke the issue of appropriateness explicitly in the *Symposium*, what he says there is consistent with his remarks on naming and other relevant topics in the *Phaedo* and *Republic*. Plato employs the verb ἐπωνομάζειν and the noun ἐπωνυμία once each in that dialogue (the adjective ἐπώνυμος appears only in the *Laws*): the former case involves straightforward eponymy in a non-Platonic sense (180d8) while the latter raises questions of appropriateness concerning a descriptive appellation (μυλακός) regularly used with reference to Apollodorus (173d7). Ὁμώνυμος does not occur in the

CONCLUSION

The *Cratylus* raises certain issues about what Plato's views were on etymology, and, more generally, regarding the basis on which ὀνόματα may be deemed "appropriate" or "correct." A key question which commentators have not answered satisfactorily is why Plato devotes so much attention to an etymology-based approach. Extant evidence, along with careful study of Plato's own methodology in the *Cratylus*, supports the claim that the literary tradition from Homer through Euripides functions as a key Platonic opponent in the dialogue based on its extensive recourse to etymology. Insofar as it conceived of natures at all, this tradition located them in mortal and divine individuals; moreover, its highlighting of descriptive content via etymology and etymology-based judgments of appropriateness indicates that it viewed names' constitution as revealing their bearers' natures. At the outset of the *Cratylus*, Plato "invests" the construction and use of ὀνόματα—as previously specified—with τέχνη status, only to undermine that status in what follows. The literary tradition provides him with a central means of achieving this end; at the same time, Plato challenges that tradition's analytic techniques and the assumptions on which their use rests. Contrary to what numerous commentators have assumed, the sophists do not constitute

Symposium. In the *Republic*, Plato does not employ ἐπονομάζειν, ἐπωνυμία or ὁμώνυμος in discussing the Form-particular relation. He uses the verb ἐπονομάζειν three times: once in referring to a mode of government (445d4); another time in speaking of the third and lowest element of the soul (580e2); and elsewhere with reference to the "Pythagorean" way of life (600b4). In addition, Plato employs the noun ἐπωνυμία once when Adeimantus recalls Chryses' invocation of Apollo in Book 1 of the *Iliad*. Finally, he uses ὁμώνυμος on a single occasion, in a sense familiar from the literary tradition, when Cephalus refers to his grandfather and namesake (330b2-3). Nevertheless, Plato refers to the issue of appropriateness in other ways, as for instance when he denies that one can appropriately (ὀρθῶς) say of appearances that they 'are' or 'are not' in an unqualified way (εἰλικρινές) (478e1-3); cf. Plato's use of ἐν δίκη in e4. As in the *Phaedo*, judgments are based on entities' ontological status. In earlier remarks with an ontological focus, Plato insists that "that which is not, is not appropriately (ὀρθότατα) called some one thing, but nothing" (478b12-c1). In addition, he hints at the matter of fitness regarding Forms themselves when he says that "the beautiful itself and the good itself, and so too with all those things which we then classed as many, we now class according to a single Form because each is one and of a single nature, and give each the appellation 'that which is' (ὃ ἔστιν)" (507b5-7); insofar as Plato suggests here that it is because of the Form's unqualified being and unity that one calls each one "that which *x* is," where *x* represents any abstract entity qualifying as a Form, he offers an implied judgment of veridicality (concerning reality itself see also 516a1-3). While Plato does not treat the relevant aspects of naming explicitly in the *Republic*, his remarks there are consistent with his *Phaedo* treatment of desert via the eponymy relation, and of veridicality with reference to Forms. Plato also raises the matter of appropriateness in a derivative fashion when he refers to those whom "one would properly call 'philosophers'" (ὅν τις ὀρθῶς προσεῖποι φιλοσόφους) (476b1-2); this judgment of appropriateness is based on the ability of such individuals to apprehend a certain class of *objects*, namely, the Forms (*Rep.* 476b10-11). In addition, the relevant terminology appears on numerous occasions in the remainder of the Platonic corpus, and is employed there in several senses. From the perspective of philosophic eponymy, the relevant passages are *Parmenides* 130e5-131a2, 133c8-d5, and *Timaeus* 51e6-52a7 (cf. Aristotle's description of Plato's theory at *Met.* 987b7-10, along with his use of ὁμώνυμον at 990b6 and 1079a2).

major Platonic opponents in this dialogue, as they clearly do in the *Gorgias*. Interpreters are led to this erroneous conclusion through their failure to recognize that these figures' influence is sharply curtailed by Plato's own procedure, and to distinguish adequately—when they do so at all—between different senses of “appropriateness” or “correctness.” Plato's main concern in the *Cratylus* is negative: he rejects that view according to which natures are assigned to individuals, and repudiates any constitution-based treatment of appropriateness. On the positive side, Plato espouses convention as the ground of correctness when words' constitution is at issue, and this conclusion is sufficient for purposes of ordinary communication. However, Plato's own interest is in philosophy, and he provides here only the barest outlines of his approach to ontology and naming.

This interpretation of the *Cratylus*, which treats it as a major point of intersection between two largely independent traditions, allows one to tie it closely to other dialogues regularly viewed as middle, most notably the *Phaedo*. There Plato explores the reality-appearance dichotomy, with an explanatory role given to Forms, and the participation relation; in addition, he introduces a notion of “ontological naturalness” to replace that tied closely to words' constitution. With regard to the issue of appropriateness, the literary tradition's handling of the eponymy or “named-after” relation offers a heretofore unrecognized precedent for Plato's own systematic approach. While he rejects etymology outright, Plato offers a revised version of eponymy based on his own ontological commitments. In Plato's framework Forms are the primary ὄνομα-bearers, and appearances, veridically construed, bear their ὀνόματα derivatively. Although he continues to maintain that the constitution of all words is correct based on convention, Plato insists that given the selection of certain ὀνόματα to designate Forms, μετέχοντα receive their appellations on non-conventional grounds; the issue of appropriateness arises when one considers the extent to which αἰσθητά strive to be like those Forms in which they participate, and hence deserve to be “named after” them. The interpretation of the *Cratylus* developed here provides what I believe to be a more accurate account of Plato's aims and opponents, and the resulting view of this dialogue allows one to link it differently and more closely than before to the *Phaedo*, that critical work in which Plato unveils his innovative treatment of eponymy based on his own metaphysical theory.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ The Form-particular relation is the one-many link that is most central to Plato's technical discussions in the middle dialogues. Although these technical discussions focus on individual Forms and on the Form-particular relation, Plato is obviously committed to the existence of ontological links between Forms. Notable here is his *Republic* treatment of the virtues of soul (Book 4, preceded by *Meno* 71-80); the relation between the Form of Good and other Forms (*Rep.* 5-7); and his remarks on connections between

mathematical entities in the *Phaedo*'s last argument for immortality. While committed to the existence of such ties and aware of their importance, Plato does not incorporate the consequences of this realization in the fabric of his metaphysical theory as set out at this juncture, nor does he specify the semantic relation which he takes to obtain between, for instance, virtue and particular virtues. For present purposes, the key question is, How broad is the scope of eponymy? More specifically, does or can eponymy cover other one-many relationships such as that obtaining between virtue and particular virtues like justice? (Plato deals in the dialogues with at least three one-many relationships: that between Forms and participants, e.g., the connection between the Form of Beauty and beautiful particulars in the sensible realm; whole-part relations as between virtue and particular virtues; and those whole-part ties exhibited by his late-period use of division. I treat the last of these in the following chapter.) One might initially be tempted to consider the extension plausible. After all, although justice is *a* virtue, it can only be identified with qualification as virtue itself insofar as it does not constitute the whole of it; hence, one finds here some form at any rate of the unqualified-qualified distinction, which is pivotal to Plato's handling of the Form-particular relation. Nevertheless, I suggest that the eponymy relation cannot in fact be invoked to cover this other one-many link. As the *Meno* and *Republic* discussions of virtue make clear, the specific one-many relation involved here is that of whole to part, which is not an appropriate characterization of the Form-particular relation (i.e., Plato does not view the Form as a whole of which the relevant particulars are parts). (I use here the example of virtue, but what I say applies also to the case of number.) The whole-part relation is applicable to the case of virtue because all the *relata* involved belong to an immutable order; this makes it possible for them to have important properties fully in common (e.g., both virtue and justice are unqualifiedly good). The whole in question cannot be composed of ephemeral parts; hence, "whole-part" is an incorrect characterization of the Form-particular relation. Here the aforementioned common ground is absent (e.g., justice itself and Solon are not good in the same sense). While the Theory of Forms permits more than one type of metaphysical relationship, in the *Phaedo* Plato insists that participation *specifically* is the immediate ground of the eponymy relation (the causal tie is quite explicit here and is reiterated in the *Parmenides*). Yet, he does not view the relation between Forms themselves as involving the participation of the less generic and comprehensive in that which is more so (this is evident from the *Phaedo*, *Meno*, and *Republic* treatments of links between more and less generic mathematical and value concepts). (As previously noted, even though language of participation is used later with reference to Forms themselves, the relationship is fundamentally different.) The key point is that based on the notion of "falling short" as the middle dialogues present it, being a part of *x* does not imply falling short of it; rather, the Form of Justice, for instance, is that with reference to which numerous *other* entities are judged deficient. In contrast, "participating-in" as defined in the *Phaedo* clearly does imply the deficiency of μετέχοντα. Though both are supported by the Theory of Forms, "being-part-of" and "participating-in" are in fact two quite different metaphysical relationships, and Plato is careful not to confuse them. Plato does not make known what semantic relation he does find appropriate to this whole-part relation. What *is* abundantly clear is that for him semantic relations must reflect metaphysical ones, and this alone makes it impossible for eponymy as Plato defines it to provide the semantics of the other one-many tie. It is perhaps conceivable that one might develop two very different versions of eponymy: one to cover cases involving Forms and participants, and another to encompass those whole-part relations of which the case of virtue is a central instance. However, this is not something Plato does, nor *could* he do so without substantial modifications reflecting key differences in the metaphysics of the two one-many relationships.

Chapter 5

A Natural Body and Its Limbs: Division, Naturalness, and Appropriateness in the *Sophist* and *Politicus*

INTRODUCTION

A distinction between the observable and unobservable, with an explanatory role given to the latter, was familiar from Homer onward, and numerous of Plato's predecessors had offered versions of the appearance-reality dichotomy.¹ Plato takes issue with all approaches previously employed for failing to properly specify what constitutes reality and hence the distinction between it and *explananda*. Plato's goal is not to reduce the empirical world to complete insignificance, but rather to counteract what he sees as a prevailing tendency to posit as reality what he takes to be merely appearance; he distinguishes between the two based on those criteria for determination of the "real" which he takes to be fundamental. Plato emphasizes his view of what reality consists in, namely, unobservable Forms, and the necessity of construing appearance by contrast with *it*. Plato's middle-period dialogues showcase his metaphysical theory, which is there presented as a great discovery with remarkable explanatory power.² Plato's optimism in this regard emerges clearly in the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic*, where he employs the theory to ground his treatment of epistemology, education, ethics, psychology, and naming.

In these dialogues, Plato introduces and explores the basic features of his theory. He concentrates on marking particulars off from Forms, i.e., appearance from reality, and his technical discussions focus largely on individual Forms and the Form-particular relation. Plato must also account for how human beings, who are surrounded by nothing but appearances, could ever have access to reality. Here the Recollection Theory is central because it focuses on the movement of human cognition from particulars to Forms, which

¹ For Plato's predecessors, the two distinctions may but need not coincide. In Plato's view, they must coincide since nothing observable is a fundamental element of reality.

² While Plato does not attempt there to prove the theory in any formal sense, one might view his repeated depictions of its explanatory value in a range of important areas as indirect attempts at proof (or proofs of a different type).

is of great concern to Plato in the middle period. Plato's reflections on ὀνόματα in the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo* are important to his inquiry into the role of particulars in aiding recollection. The general question here is, How much and what kinds of assistance can particulars lend one in the process of achieving insight, i.e., learning in the relevant sense?³ The discussions of ἀνάμνησις in the *Meno* and *Phaedo* make clear that particulars, even classes thereof, are not themselves sources or objects of insight.⁴ However, while they do not constitute the subject matter of rational inquiry, if viewed correctly particulars can lead one to the genuine objects of such inquiry. More specifically, if one understands precisely how to *describe* particulars, this comprehension will naturally prompt a shift in focus from them to Forms;⁵ that is, properly understood, general descriptions of particulars show their natures to be incomplete, thus pointing one toward those unities which themselves qualify as φύσεις and must be investigated in their own right for natures and nature-dependencies to be properly understood.

Plato's handling of appropriateness in the *Phaedo* reflects his middle-period metaphysics. Different types of descriptions correlate with primary and secondary entities, i.e., full and derived natures: relatively simple descriptions in the case of Forms (e.g., "the equal itself"), and more complex ones in the case of particulars (e.g., "equal in length," "equal to one person but not to another") (74a-b; cf. *Symp.* 210e6-211b5). Plato employs the framework of eponymy to present two ways of applying these descriptions' central terms (e.g., "equal") to entities, unqualifiedly and qualifiedly, and questions of fitness are resolved by appeal to entities' ontological status.⁶ His metaphysics concentrates on a limited range of properties which were already being attributed to entities on a regular basis—e.g., equality and beauty—albeit wrongly insofar as without qualification. Therefore, Plato's corresponding approach to fitness deals with words which are already part of the Greek lexicon though he insists that the criteria governing their application must be revised in light of his restrictions on the correct attribution of properties. While the manner of terms' assignment to entities reflects and expresses certain general facts about

³ On precisely what Plato sought to explain by his introduction of recollection see Moravcsik, "Learning as Recollection."

⁴ For detailed application to the case of ὀνόματα see ch. 3.

⁵ Notable in this regard is Plato's treatment of equality and beauty in the *Phaedo* and *Symposium*, respectively.

⁶ Plato rejects a constitution-based approach to fitness in the *Cratylus*, insisting that human beings will be seriously deceived if they rely on the descriptive content of ὀνόματα to instruct them about natures. Plato's switch to eponymy in the *Phaedo* allows him to address the second key way in which words may deceive, namely, insofar as one who hears a range of terms (e.g., ἴσον, καλόν) mistakes appearance for reality.

φύσεις—namely, whether the referents of ὀνόματα are natures or things that have natures in a derivative sense—for Plato ὀνόματα alone and as such do not reveal those natures.

Plato's basic ontology remains the same in the late writings though the focus of his technical discussions shifts to mutual links between Forms. Questions of naturalness and appropriateness remain central, and both notions are tied there to conceptual "cuts" made in reality in the process of διαίρεσις. ὀνόματα are properly assigned only if they denote natural unities, and the process of division uncovers both extraneous terms and gaps in the conventional lexicon. Characterizations of natures (λόγοι) may be more or less revealing, but must in each case specify those Forms to which the *explanandum* is linked. As the components of these λόγοι, individual ὀνόματα are indispensable to determinations of φύσεις. However, particular ὀνόματα do not themselves disclose natures since they are incapable of specifying the referent's connection to other Forms or kinds. Issues of denotation always takes precedence, and Plato never identifies or conflates any descriptive suggestions which ὀνόματα may contain with an answer to the all-important τί ἐστὶ question. As in the *Phaedo*, Plato's handling of appropriateness is based on his ontology; one must therefore begin once again with the latter.

QUESTIONS OF ONTOLOGY

Examining the middle-period dialogues, one can make out four general levels on which human beings can operate, only one of which involves the conduct of genuine philosophical activity.⁷ First, there is that plane on which one acts in the belief that particulars are the sole existents, without even a glimmer of recognition that there is anything beyond them; the "lovers of sights and sounds" of *Republic* 5 typify this approach, which Plato condemns sharply and without qualification.⁸ The second level is transitional in character, and encompasses, broadly, activity with an awareness that particulars do not actually constitute the whole of what exists. Individuals realize to varying extents the shortcomings of particulars when judged against ideal standards, and thus the need to explore the nature of those standards.⁹ Third, there is that plane typified

⁷ These do not coincide in every case with the four-stage sequence of the Divided Line as treated in *Republic* 6; the first stage identified here covers the initial two stages of that progression, while the second concerns the transition from a focus on the visible realm to a concentration on the intelligible.

⁸ This same basic attitude is also clearly evident elsewhere in the *Republic* (e.g., in the Cave Allegory), at the close of the *Cratylus*, and in the *Phaedo* and *Symposium*.

⁹ On the recognition of deficiency see for example Plato's treatment of equality in the *Phaedo*'s Recollection Argument. As noted, this is a transitional stage, and Plato is vague on just what prompts one to move beyond an exclusive focus on particulars (in this connection, see also the Cave Allegory at *Rep.*

by mathematical activity, where one focuses attention on these ideal standards or Forms yet explores them indirectly (i.e., via particulars like diagrams) rather than firsthand; Plato characterizes this approach in *Republic* 6 and 7. His praise of it is qualified: insofar as mathematical activity is directed ultimately toward Forms, it is to be lauded, while due to its reliance on particulars and unquestioning use of hypotheses it is rightly subject to criticism.¹⁰ Fourth and finally, there is that activity which Plato views as constitutive of philosophy proper. In contrast to previous stages, where one operates with varying degrees of reliance on particulars, here one proceeds solely via Forms; all movement from particulars to Forms is viewed as merely preparatory. This emerges clearly in the *Republic*, where Socrates identifies the upper section of the intelligible as

τοῦτο οὐδ' αὐτὸς ὁ λόγος ἄπτεται τῇ τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι δυνάμει, τὰς ὑποθέσεις ποιούμενος οὐκ ἀρχὰς ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι ὑποθέσεις, οἷον ἐπιβάσεις τε καὶ ὁρμάς, ἵνα μέχρι τοῦ ἀνυποθέτου ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχὴν ἴων, ἀψάμενος αὐτῆς, πάλιν αὖ ἐχόμενος τῶν ἐκείνης ἐχομένων, οὕτως ἐπὶ τελευτὴν καταβαίνει, αἰσθητῶ παντάπασιν οὐδενὶ προσχρώμενος, ἀλλ' εἶδεναι αὐτοῖς δι' αὐτῶν εἰς αὐτά, καὶ τελευτᾷ εἰς εἶδη. (511b4-c2;¹¹ cf. 533b-d)

While Plato offers this general description of philosophical activity proper, he leaves several questions unanswered: What types of mutual relations between Forms should the dialectician try to understand? and, closely related to this, How might he coordinate the exploration of ties between Forms at differing levels of generality? Moreover, what results, specifically, should the dialectician hope to achieve from such inquiry?

515c4ff., where Plato observes that something may awaken one's awareness of entities beside those in space and time without specifying how the process happens).

¹⁰ There are various ways of construing the difference between stages three and four of the Divided Line. On the interpretation adopted here, the difference is not one of objects, but of methodology. Another stance would involve viewing the objects of stage three as mathematical entities, intermediate between particulars and Forms. Ross presents a third option, according to which Forms are involved on both levels but different portions of that realm are at issue in each case; specifically, he claims that "the objects of διάνοια are not the 'intermediates' but are simply the mathematical Ideas, and those of νοῦς the other Ideas" (*Plato's Theory of Ideas*, 65). While this is an interesting suggestion, Plato's handling of the Line and his comments elsewhere in the middle period support the claim that the dialectician's activity is directed toward Forms for both mathematical and value concepts.

¹¹ that which reason itself lays hold of by the power of dialectic. It does not take hypotheses as *archai*, but literally as hypotheses in the sense of stepping stones and points of departure, in order to advance to that which is not hypothetical, the genuine *archē* of everything. Then, having grasped this *archē*, and clinging to what follows from it, reason descends in this way to a conclusion, never making any use of sensibles but operating instead by means of Forms themselves, through and to Forms, and concluding with Forms.

As previously noted, while Plato's middle-period technical discussions focus on individual Forms and on the Form-particular relation, he is obviously committed to the existence of ontological links between Forms.¹² Central here is Plato's treatment of the virtues of soul in the *Republic* (Book 4, preceded by *Meno* 71-80); the relation between the Form of Good and other Forms (Books 5-7 of the *Republic*); and his remarks on connections between mathematical entities in the *Phaedo*'s last argument for immortality. While committed to the existence of such ties and aware of their importance, Plato does not incorporate the consequences of this realization in the fabric of his metaphysical theory as set out at this juncture.¹³ There is thus a gap between Plato's theory as he actually presents it, on the one hand, and his own application of it and description of the content of philosophical activity, on the other (i.e., as movement εἶδεσιν αὐτοῖς δι' αὐτῶν εἰς αὐτά, καὶ τελευτᾷ εἰς εἶδη).

Plato can close this gap only by developing the theory further to answer those questions which remain at this stage of the enterprise. He does precisely that in the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, where he has the dialectician treat links between Forms and concentrate on operating through them for the purpose of gaining insight. In fact, while Plato's basic ontology remains the same in the late writings, the focus of his technical discussions shifts from individual Forms and the Form-particular relation to the issue of mutual connections between Forms. In this context the Method of Division (διαίρεσις) plays a central role, and in the *Sophist* and *Politicus* Plato uses it to explore how certain indivisible Forms (the specific concepts of sophistry and statesmanship, respectively) are connected to a network of other more generic Forms or concepts.¹⁴ Διαίρεσις—most fundamentally the notions

¹² On this point see Moravcsik, "The Anatomy of Plato's Divisions," 325. My own discussion of διαίρεσις in the *Sophist* and *Politicus* is strongly influenced by this article.

¹³ See Moravcsik, "The Anatomy of Plato's Divisions," 325-6.

¹⁴ The dialectician is explicitly assigned responsibility for division into kinds; in this connection see the introduction of this view in the *Phaedrus* (266b-c), along with its reiteration and development in the *Sophist* and *Politicus* (253b-e and 284e-285c respectively, as well as in the two dialogues more generally). In the late writings there are certain expansions of the scope of reality, a notable example being the fact that a pursuit like sophistry, previously relegated to the class of ἐμπειρίαι, is now admitted as a τέχνη, i.e., as part of reality. However, such entities are merely bad elements thereof, as may be discerned clearly in the case of σοφιστική from those intermediate kinds through which the *Sophist* investigation moves. Hence, Plato's attitude toward such practices remains just as hostile as before though the expression of that hostility takes a somewhat different form in the late dialogues.

Julius Stenzel maintains that division is "undertaken not on account of the highest unit, but of the lowest" (*Plato's Method of Dialectic*, 108, cf. 120-1). However, one may certainly also illuminate a generic concept by properly identifying its various more specific branches (cf. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 171). Divisions articulate complex conceptual relations; they are not to be thought of as proofs (for reflections on Plato's treatment of the "concept" see Stenzel). On διαίρεσις as moving through Forms, see Moravcsik, "The Anatomy of Plato's Divisions," 329-30; Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 269-70; and J. B. Skemp, *Statesman*, 73, 74, and 76.

of naturalness and appropriateness that are central to its employment—constitutes the focus of the present inquiry.

ONTOLOGICAL NATURALNESS

As discussed in chapter 4, in the *Phaedo* Plato introduces a strong notion of “ontological naturalness,” detaching the idea of naturalness from its close ties to words’ constitution. Plato links the notion of naturalness primarily and fundamentally to the structure of reality itself; his paramount concern is with the articulation of reality into objective and theoretically-important unities. Plato retains the notion of ontological naturalness in the late dialogues, where he employs it in connection with the process of division and, in particular, those specific “cuts” one makes in reality.

Plato’s general procedure evinces this understanding of naturalness; at every stage of the inquiry one considers whether the entity in question constitutes a “natural unity” or “genuine element of reality.”¹⁵ Moreover, the *Phaedrus* and *Politicus* provide direct and vivid linguistic manifestations of this view.¹⁶ Plato had previously given examples of classificatory schemata (notable among them that schema central to the *Gorgias*’ distinction between τέχνη and ἐμπειρία). However, he first treats division theoretically and as a

¹⁵ As in the middle period, the key issue is whether the entity in question is a natural unit from the point of view of ideal science, e.g., those of mathematics and harmony. From that perspective, particulars and groups of particulars are ruled out since they all undergo change in their properties. Scientists’ concern is to understand the properties themselves, which must be done in abstraction from particular instances, and their theories are about these characteristics. These considerations move one from the plane of individual sensibles to that of abstract entities. However, from a theoretical point of view not every abstract property can function as a natural unit. One can have important theories about human beings, i.e., those with significant explanatory power, which refer to male and female, but not to Greek and barbarian; correspondingly, one can have substantive theories about number which refer to odd and even, but not to ten thousand and number-other-than-ten-thousand (for these particular examples see *Pol.* 262c10–e1, discussed below). In the cases of barbarian and number-other-than-ten-thousand, one is dealing with groups with some principle of unity, which is why their constituents can be tied together at all: in the former case the group’s members are all human beings, while in the latter they are all numbers. Note, however, that this is precisely the characteristic that entities must have to fall under the generic concepts or Forms of human being and number, respectively. Nevertheless, while this is a sufficient condition for falling under one of these generic Forms, any subdivisions of either Form which are themselves to count as εἶδη or γένη must result in groups whose constituent members have a comparatively significant but more specific shared property serving to unify them in the strong internal way they are united by sharing the property of being human or being a number (hence the property in question cannot be something merely negatively-specified or -specifiable, e.g., the property of not being Greek). This requirement automatically rules out the two abstract properties criticized in the *Politicus* discussion; it is important to emphasize that such divisions lack explanatory power, i.e., do not let scientific activity proceed but rather stifle it, since it is clear from the middle period introduction of Forms that explanatory power, while not a formal proof of the Theory of Forms’ correctness, is relevant either as indirect proof or proof of a different type.

¹⁶ For linguistic evidence of naturalness’ centrality in the *Phaedo* and *Republic*, and for reflection on Plato’s handling of naturalness in the *Cratylus*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic*, see chs. 3–4.

methodology of broad relevance in the *Phaedrus*.¹⁷ Most interesting for present purposes is the fact that Plato there describes the process of division by analogy with a natural body and its limbs, where language of “naturalness” is used to emphasize the objective character of proper distinctions. Plato insists that one not proceed randomly or at will: Τὸ πάλιν κατ’ εἶδη δύνασθαι διατέμνειν κατ’ ἄρθρα ἢ πέφυκεν, καὶ μὴ ἐπιχειρεῖν καταγνύναι μέρος μηδέν, κακοῦ μαγείρου τρόπῳ χρώμενον (265e1-3). Referring back to the two speeches previously given, Socrates observes that τὸ μὲν ἄφρον τῆς διανοίας ἔν τι κοινῇ εἶδος ἐλαβήτην, ὥσπερ δὲ σώματος ἐξ ἑνὸς διπλῶ καὶ ὁμώνυμα πέφυκε, σκαιά, τὰ δὲ δεξιὰ κληθέντα, οὕτω καὶ τὸ τῆς παρανοίας ὡς (ἐν) ἐν ἡμῖν πεφυκὸς εἶδος ἡγησαμένῳ τῷ λόγῳ (265e3-266a3).¹⁸ The analogy with natural bodies is felicitous because it highlights the fact that there are objectively correct and incorrect places to make “cuts” or “breaks” in reality. Finally, the coincidence of “natural” and “objective” is reinforced when Socrates expresses his tremendous esteem for those able to draw the relevant distinctions: ἐάν τέ τιν’ ἄλλον ἡγήσωμαι δυνατόν εἰς ἕν καὶ ἐπὶ

¹⁷ For the *Gorgias* discussion see 463e-466a (cf. 454e). While Plato employs a scheme of classification there to suit the demands of a particular context, there is no indication that he consciously views the approach as having broad or general applicability, as he clearly does from the *Phaedrus* onward. Shorey views the Method of Division as itself already present in the *Gorgias* and ties the relevant passages to the *Sophist* and *Politicus* (*The Unity of Plato's Thought*, 31), while Dodds considers *Gorgias* 463e-466a to be “an early example of that interest in systematic classification which is so prominent in *Sophist* and *Politicus*; and it already employs, as those dialogues do, the method of διαίρεσις....It has in fact a good deal in common with the final διαίρεσις in the *Sophist*” (*Gorgias*, 226). Moravcsik rightly notes that one may, as in the *Gorgias*, find an instance of the method in question, yet this need not mean that this method “was self-consciously formulated at the time of the composition of the alleged example” (“The Anatomy of Plato's Divisions,” 325); cf. Terence Irwin, who observes that “Socrates' procedure...suggests an interest in systematic division and classification which Plato does not discuss theoretically until later dialogues” (*Gorgias*, 133). An emphasis on parallels with the late dialogues can be misleading if key differences in foundation and procedure are unrecognized or overlooked. The Method of Division, as utilized in the late writings, involves the articulation of nature dependencies between Forms of a more and less generic character while in the *Gorgias* the Theory of Forms as such has yet to be introduced. Indeed, ontological issues are there to a notable extent in the background: Plato discusses neither the ontological status of the subject matter of genuine τέχνηαι nor precisely what ontological relationships his classificatory scheme expresses. In the *Phaedrus*, as previously noted, τέμνειν is first used in that technical sense connected with division (see my remarks on Plato's use of this verb in ch. 3). In his commentary on collection and division in the relevant *Phaedrus* passage, Hackforth asserts “that here we have Plato's first announcement of a new discovery to which he attaches the highest importance” (*Phaedrus*, 134). As noted, there is indeed much that is new here, but there is also a measure of continuity with earlier writings (notably, the *Gorgias*); Hackforth does not take up this issue in his remarks on the passage (except negatively with regard to the *Republic*). For an interpretative stance privileging a marked distinction between earlier examples of division (i.e., up to and including the *Republic*) and διαίρεσις as treated in the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, see Stenzel (*Plato's Method of Dialectic*, 80-2, 85, 149, and 152).

¹⁸ The right-hand division arrives at a type of ἔρως with the same appellation as (ὁμώνυμος with) the other, yet of a wholly different nature, specifically, divine. The idea that ὀνόματα are potentially misleading is relevant here; it is developed and exemplified at length, and in various ways, in the *Sophist* and *Politicus*.

πολλὰ πεφυκόθ' ὁρᾶν, τοῦτον διώκω 'κατόπισθε μετ' ἔχνιον ὥστε θεοῖο' (266b5-7). He labels individuals with this capacity διαλεκτικοί (b8-c1).

Plato employs the same analogy in the *Politicus*, as for instance early on when the Stranger asks whether he and Young Socrates might discover a natural break or division (τις διαφυή) in theoretical knowledge (ἡ γνωστική) (259d9-10).¹⁹ The most direct analogy occurs much later, as the two prepare to enumerate those τέχναι which must be distinguished from statesmanship and which resist strict bifurcation. At this critical juncture, the Stranger proposes the following methodology: Κατὰ μέλη τοίνυν αὐτὰς οἷον ἱερεῖον διαιρώμεθα, ἐπειδὴ δίχα ἀδυνατοῦμεν. δεῖ γὰρ εἰς τὸν ἐγγύτατα ὅτι μάλιστα τέμνειν ἀριθμὸν αἰεί (287c3-5). This passage makes clear that there are “natural” in the sense of “objective” places to make cuts in reality. Though the structure of reality may not always permit simple bifurcations (cf. *Phil.* 16c10-d7), one must aim to arrive at the smallest possible number of divisions. The imagery of a natural body and its limbs helps Plato emphasize these points.²⁰

In the *Phaedo*, Plato makes clear that the notion of naturalness has direct and central application exclusively to reality as he construes it, and is only of secondary or derivative pertinence to other arenas, including that of naming. In the late writings Plato espouses the same basic stance toward naturalness insofar as this notion continues to be understood in terms of the objective articulation of reality into Forms.²¹ As in the middle period, metaphysical considerations shape Plato's treatment of ὀνόματα; moreover, properly situated, questions of appropriateness continue to figure importantly in his reflections.

¹⁹ The noun διαφυή occurs only twice in the Platonic corpus. In the second, earlier instance Plato uses in its literal and more familiar sense—to refer to the joints of the body—when distinguishing genuine grounds (αἰτίαι) from mere necessary conditions (*Phaedo* 98b-99c; for διαφυαί see 98c8). Thus, as with τέμνειν, Plato invests διαφυή with a specialized meaning in connection with διαίρεσις, which deals with conceptual breaks or articulations rather than physical or material ones.

²⁰ In addition, for imagery of a biological and genealogical variety see the close of the *Sophist*, where the Stranger says that 'ταύτης τῆς γενεᾶς τε καὶ αἵματος' ὃς ἂν φῇ τὸν ὄντως σοφιστὴν εἶναι, τάληθέστατα, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐρεῖ (268d2-4). The notion of there being objectively right and wrong places to make cuts of course emerges abundantly elsewhere, as when Plato emphasizes that at all points below that of the generic Form (e.g., τέχνη or ἀριθμός) one must arrive at a μέρος which is also an εἶδος; while all εἶδη are also μέρη, the reverse is not necessarily the case (*Pol.* 263b). This view is strongly prefigured in the *Phaedrus* (265e1-3).

²¹ Of course, there is an important difference in theoretical emphasis. In the middle period, the inquirer knows what equality is, for example, and his concern is to identify those μετέχοντα in the spatiotemporal realm which bear their natures derivatively and hence are “named after” that ideal standard. At issue in the late writings is the discovery of natural parts of a generic Form. One singles out properties based on what many entities have in common, and considers whether a given common property warrants one's privileging a term's referent as a genuine εἶδος. In the case of statesmen, for instance, Plato considers what they have in common that justifies the positing of πολιτική as a natural unit. As before, such natural units play important explanatory roles.

NAMING

In the *Cratylus*, Plato concludes that naming does not actually qualify as a τέχνη though, as emphasized in what precedes, this is of course compatible with its being integral to the conduct of τέχνη, most importantly dialectic.²² Among the middle-period dialogues, the *Phaedo* describes the legitimate role that ὀνόματα play in its conduct; as noted, the dialectician employs the framework of eponymy to specify the conditions of terms' proper application to primary and secondary entities.²³ This figure deals with a limited set of privileged ὀνόματα—notably, those designating mathematical and value concepts—and works within a framework characterized by a distinction between “full” and “derived” on the ontological plane, and between “unqualified” and “qualified” in the matter of fitness. The unique way in which terms (e.g., ἴσον) apply to Forms is reflected in those singular referring expressions which incorporate them (e.g., αὐτὸ τὸ ἴσον).²⁴ Nowhere, including the late writings, does Plato elevate naming itself to τέχνη status. In both the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, Plato once again describes how naming relates to the practice of dialectic; as in the middle period, his interest lies not in the identity of particular ὀνόματα, but in what they should refer to. Although the new focus of Plato's metaphysical reflections correlates with a certain evolution in his handling of fitness, the Method of Division represents an important continuation of that Platonic concern with semantic issues previously evinced in both the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo*.²⁵

²² While naming could in principle become a τέχνη along the lines of carpentry, it is never elevated to this status; as concerns practitioners, such an elevation would constitute an unnecessary duplication, and the strong normative dimension involved in naming would in any case make it undesirable to entrust the enterprise to anyone other than the dialectician (for discussion of this issue see ch. 3, appendix A).

²³ Although it is not discussed in the *Sophist* or *Politicus*, eponymy has not become irrelevant; it is no more extraneous than Plato's metaphysical theory as depicted in the *Phaedo* and other middle-period dialogues. That being said, it is important to emphasize that it is introduced and discussed only in connection with Plato's handling of a particular one-many relationship, namely, that involving Forms and the relevant class of participants (e.g., the Form of Beauty and the class of beautiful particulars). Plato introduces other one-many relationships in the dialogues: I have in mind that relationship evinced by the *Meno* discussion of virtue and types of virtue, and that at issue in the divisions (e.g., the generic Form τέχνη and the manifold, more specific τέχνη, such as κτητική, falling under it). It is certainly worth considering how Plato thinks that one might explain these one-many relationships, which are both whole-part in form; however, it would be a rash and unjustified move to assume that eponymy as he defines it does or even could play this role (for comments on the former relation see ch. 4).

²⁴ In the *Sophist* and *Politicus* treatments of division, λόγοι “replace the earlier unique characterizations that were achieved by means of the peculiar nature-revealing singular references” (Moravcsik, “The Anatomy of Plato's Divisions,” 326). These singular references do not of course reveal through their descriptive content, but instead point one in the direction of natures.

²⁵ Of course, also central in terms of Plato's handling of semantic issues in the late writings is his discussion of truth and falsehood in the *Sophist*.

Plato sets as the goal of διαίρεσις arrival at the most revealing characterization (λόγος) possible of that indivisible Form or kind toward which inquiry is in each case directed.²⁶ As the Stranger puts it at the start of the *Sophist*—having asserted sophistry, statesmanship, and philosophy to represent three distinct γένη—the goal is καθ’ ἕκαστον μὴν διορίσασθαι σαφῶς τί ποτ’ ἔστιν, οὐ σμικρὸν οὐδὲ ῥάδιον ἔργον (217b2-3).²⁷ Διαίρεσις is not the only philosophical tool employed to investigate sophistry and statesmanship in the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, respectively.²⁸ However, the central issue for the present study is Plato’s employment of division in his conduct of this inquiry, and, more specifically still, the role assigned to ὀνόματα and issues of fitness. As in the middle period, answers to the τί ἐστὶ question never comprise the mere provision or exploration of a single ὄνομα. In fact, Plato announces in no uncertain terms his continued adherence to the view that ὀνόματα by themselves never indicate the nature of *anything* (261d-262c).²⁹ Φύσεις are always revealed at the level of λόγοι since such disclosures must indicate the *explanandum*’s relation to other concepts, which is something no ὄνομα—and only a limited set of λόγοι—can accomplish.³⁰ This is not to say that

²⁶ As previously noted, one may at the same time shed light on the generic Form τέχνη.

²⁷ For use of the phrase τί ποτ’ ἔστι with reference to sophistry in particular see 218c1, and ὅτι ποτ’ ἔστιν in 221c6.

²⁸ In fact, though a central form of inquiry, division is always employed in conjunction with other methodologies to address questions about φύσεις; in the case of both sophistry and statesmanship significant progress is made only in this way, with division having revealed points at which one must supplement its use with other forms of investigation. Stenzel continually highlights the importance of διαίρεσις to Plato at this juncture (*Plato’s Method of Dialectic*, 78, 84-5, 92, 94, 96-106, 107-8, 113, 135, 141, and 149); indeed, in his concern to defend it against the charge of triviality Stenzel seems at times to privilege it to the neglect of other significant dimensions of Plato’s approach. For an interpretation which stresses the methodology’s limitations and views Plato as wishing to curb the excessive enthusiasm of certain members of the Academy, see Skemp, *Statesman*, 18 and 67. Ryle, in turn (“Plato’s *Parmenides*”), takes an extreme view of division’s unimportance which in my view is not borne out by Plato’s actual procedure, and Ryle’s claim that in the *Sophist* dialectic and division are “only remotely connected” (143) is unsubstantiated and plainly false (notably, see *Sophist* 253d-e, thoroughly discussed by Stenzel, 96-106); for Ryle’s quite negative valuation of διαίρεσις’ philosophical import see also *Plato’s Progress*, 135-42, 261-2, and 285-6. One may acknowledge that division requires supplementation by other methodologies without reaching Ryle’s conclusion that it is not used or in fact usable for serious philosophical work.

²⁹ Plato insists that οὐδεμίαν γὰρ οὔτε οὕτως οὔτ’ ἐκείνως πρᾶξιν οὐδ’ ἀπραξίαν οὐδὲ οὐσίαν ὄντος οὐδὲ μὴ ὄντος δηλοῖ τὰ φωνηθέντα, πρὶν ἂν τις τοῖς ὀνόμασι τὰ ῥήματα κεράσῃ (262c2-5). While this observation is made in Plato’s remarks on syntax, it involves a claim about the status of ὀνόματα which is of general relevance. In the remark’s broader context, the term ὄνομα is first used generically, in the sense of “word” (see 261d2, 4). In what follows, ὀνόματα thus construed are divided into ὀνόματα and ῥήματα: ἔστι γὰρ ἡμῖν πού τῶν τῇ φωνῇ περὶ τὴν οὐσίαν δηλωμάτων διττὸν γένος.... Τὸ μὲν ὀνόματα, τὸ δὲ ῥήματα κληθέν (261e4-262a1). Given the sequence of these remarks, the claim that no ὄνομα is nature-revealing (262c) thus stands regardless of whether one has the term’s generic or more specific sense in view.

³⁰ This is evident from Plato’s use of ὀνόματα and λόγοι, respectively, in his treatment of angling, sophistry, and statesmanship in the *Sophist* and *Politicus*. All acceptable λόγοι must specify whole-part

individual *ὀνόματα* are inessential to the enterprise; however, Plato's interest in them centers on their role in compound descriptions which focus on whole-part relations involving Forms.³¹ In the remainder of this chapter, I explore the process of division with an emphasis on Plato's attendant handling of kind names and questions of fitness.³²

relations with regard to the object of investigation in a combination which singles it out from all other Forms or kinds; as Moravcsik notes, "we...take the last Form, i.e. the whole that has no wholes as parts, and give it a unique characterization (a 'definition') by listing the set of wholes of which—in that combination—it and it alone is a part" ("The Anatomy of Plato's Divisions," 340-1). (From this point of view, the investigation of statesmanship is in serious trouble when a certain *λόγος* fails even to characterize the statesman uniquely (267c-268d); cf. Plato's illustration of the difficulty by remarks on the characterization of weaving in particular, as against clothesworking more generally (279e-280b).) In a given case, more than one *λόγος* may meet the aforementioned requirement. In treating *διαίρεσις*, Stenzel emphasizes the centrality of definition (*Plato's Method of Dialectic*, 78-9, 84). On this subject Moravcsik observes that "the characterization is unique...but there is nothing in this scheme that would imply that there can be only one such characterization of any given Form. Definitions in the modern sense are supposed to establish synonymy relations; but no such constraint is placed on Platonic *logoi*. Plato's paradigm for these characterizations is presumably the way in which one characterizes abstract entities, such as number" ("The Anatomy of Plato's Divisions," 332, cf. 345). Also, the resultant *λόγοι* are less than definitions in the modern sense since they are not true in all possible worlds. However, there is a way in which *λόγοι* are more than definitions, namely, insofar as they provide far more information about the *explanandum's* relation to other concepts. Cornford maintains that the seventh division yields the only seriously intended and correct account of sophistry, while the preceding six serve as a disguised Collection (*Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 173, 175-7, 187, 324). Setting the sixth division aside (for the moment), in contrasting the first five *λόγοι* with the seventh Cornford fails to draw a key distinction between relative and absolute differences in value. Although one *λόγος* may surpass the others in adequacy and completeness, one need not—and in the *Sophist* does not—arrive at a single nature-revealing characterization beside which all the rest are simply trivial. Plato admits that the activity of sophistry has numerous aspects: see the close of the first and fifth divisions, where the Stranger remarks on this feature of his quarry by using the term *ποικίλος* with reference to it (223c2 and 226a6, respectively). In addition, just prior to embarking on that seventh division which will be completed only at the dialogue's close, the Stranger observes that the foregoing characterizations have not fully pinned down the nature of sophistry, highlighting instead numerous dimensions of that activity (232a). The final *λόγος* is treated as the best answer to the τί ἐστι question posed at the outset: ὃς ἂν φῇ τὸν ὄντως σοφιστὴν εἶναι, τάληθέστατα, ὥς ἔοικεν, ἐπεὶ (268d3-4).

³¹ In contrast, the relation privileged by Plato's middle-period technical discussions was that between Forms and particulars, which is not whole-part in form. In the late writings there are of course two sets of whole-part relations: that comprising the generic Form *τέχνη* and its parts, and a "defining" *λόγος* and its constituents. Intermediate Forms, e.g., *μιμητική*, function as parts in both sets of relations: they are parts of the generic Form *τέχνη* and parts of *λόγοι* revealing the φύσεις of indivisible Forms, e.g., *σοφιστική*. As concerns the former, one may appeal to the fact that for Plato the notion of genus is very rich, with generic Forms or concepts having manifold parts; disclosure of these parts, i.e., specification of whole-part relations in this sense, illuminates the richness of the generic concept by situating a range of less generic concepts with reference to it and to one another. In the latter case, an intermediate concept, such as *μιμητική*, is related to an indivisible Form or concept like *σοφιστική* and hence serves as part of the "definition" of that Form. Imitation is part of sophistry in the sense that it is a more generic concept—one of course also having denotation outside the genus *τέχνη*—which is involved in its conduct; hence, it will be part of a characterization of the activity's φύσις.

³² Though Cornford makes certain isolated references to the *Cratylus*, he does not see those key links between it and the *Sophist* which center on the notions of naturalness and appropriateness; in fact, while Cornford focuses a great deal on *λόγοι* in his treatment of the *Sophist*, he fails to give *ὀνόματα* and naming the attention they deserve. Similarly, Skemp mentions the *Cratylus* only twice; in the one pertinent case he simply mentions in passing the *Politicus's* repetition of the *Cratylus* stance that reality,

WHAT ὀνόματα CANNOT DO

In the *Cratylus*, Plato contests the view that individual ὀνόματα are themselves sources of insight, and he adheres to this rejection both in other middle-period dialogues and in his late writings. The investigation of natures begins with a shared ὀνομα, that given by convention. However, at the beginning of the *Sophist* Plato makes clear that having an ὀνομα in common is merely a prerequisite for an inquiry that in no way centers on it:

κοινῇ δὲ μετ' ἐμοῦ σοι συσχεπτέον ἀρχομένῳ πρῶτον, ὥς ἐμοὶ φαίνεται, νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σοφιστοῦ, ζητοῦντι καὶ ἐμφανίζοντι λόγῳ τί ποτ' ἔστι. νῦν γὰρ δὴ σύ τε κἀγὼ τούτου περὶ τοῦνομα μόνον ἔχομεν κοινῇ, τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἐφ' ᾧ καλοῦμεν ἑκάτερος τάχ' ἂν ἰδίᾳ παρ' ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς ἔχοιμεν· δεῖ δὲ αἰεὶ παντὸς περὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτὸ μᾶλλον διὰ λόγων ἢ τοῦνομα μόνον συνωμολογήσθαι χωρὶς λόγου. (218b6-c5)³³

Operating simply with an ὀνομα in common is compatible with numerous beliefs about the nature of the referent. One cannot decide between them simply by appeal to the appellation in question, but must instead pursue an independent, rational inquiry into the φύσις of the *explanandum* (τὸ ἔργον, τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτό).³⁴ In the case at hand, the indivisible Form under investigation is sophistry. One begins here in agreement not just on the ὀνομα in question, but also its denotation; that is, there is no doubt expressed as to what group of individuals the term “sophists” refers to and hence as to the reference of the activity in question. The goal of the inquiry is to pinpoint the *nature* of σοφιστική in that λόγος which best captures its unique relation to other genuine Forms or kinds; only a procedure

not ὀνόματα, is what matters. Like Cornford, Skemp says nothing about ties involving what I have termed the notions of naturalness and appropriateness; moreover he does not in my opinion give adequate attention to the matter of naming specifically, as it pertains to the conduct of διαίρεσις (the same might also be said of Derbolav's handling of the late writings (*Platons Sprachphilosophie*), which focuses quite extensively on λόγοι).

³³ “What now concerns us both is our joint inquiry. We had better, I think, begin by studying the Sophist and try to bring his nature to light in a clear formula. At present, you see, all that you and I possess in common is the name. The thing (*ergon*) to which each of us gives that name we may perhaps have privately before our minds. However, it is always necessary to have reached an agreement about the matter itself by means of explicit statements rather than be content to use the same word without formulating what it means.” (modified tr. of Cornford) Cornford rightly emphasizes the key point, namely, that individuals do not have different *denotata* in mind but instead different views of the same *denotatum*. See also 221a7-b2 where, following a discussion of angling, the Stranger observes that νῦν ἄρα τῆς ἀσπαλιευτικῆς περὶ σύ τε κἀγὼ συνωμολογήκαμεν οὐ μόνον τοῦνομα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν λόγον περὶ αὐτὸ τοῦργον εἰλήφαμεν ἱκανῶς. Cf. the clear distinction between an ὀνομα and τῆς οὐσίας ὁ λόγος in *Laws* 895d1-9 (also cited by Stenzel, *Plato's Method of Dialectic*, 119).

³⁴ For φύσεις expressly identified as the goal of inquiry in the cases of sophistry and statesmanship, respectively, see *Soph.* 264d-265a and *Pol.* 275c.

of this type can elevate one beyond mere beliefs about φύσεις; as in the middle period, ὀνόματα themselves do not reveal natures.³⁵

In fact, in the *Sophist* Plato emphasizes that using a term's descriptive content as a guide to its referent's nature can be seriously misleading, and deems it inappropriate procedure. He lays the foundation for making this point at the start of the dialogue, when Theaetetus appeals to it to resolve the question of whether the object of inquiry, in this case sophistry, qualifies as a τέχνη:

ΞΕ. Καὶ νῦν δὴ τοῦτον ιδιώτην θήσομεν, ὃ Θεαίτητε, ἢ παντάπασιν ὡς ἀληθῶς σοφιστήν;

ΘΕΑΙ. Οὐδαμῶς ιδιώτην· μανθάνω γὰρ ὃ λέγεις, ὡς παντὸς δεῖ τοιοῦτος εἶναι τό γε ὄνομα τοῦτο ἔχων. (221d1-4)³⁶

At this juncture Theaetetus exhibits a naive optimism about the disclosive power of the term's constitution—alluding to its ties to σοφός—which the ensuing discussion will show to be quite unjustified.³⁷ He here misapplies the result of the foregoing treatment of angling. There, following rational inquiry the Stranger made reference to descriptive content. In this case, Theaetetus mistakenly reverses the sequence, and moves from ὄνομα to referent. Though no particular harm is done here since sophistry does in fact qualify as a τέχνη—which is all that must be established at this preliminary stage of the investigation—Plato views the potential consequences of this approach as quite serious; in the ensuing inquiry, the danger of being misled by semantic constitution is made strikingly apparent.³⁸

³⁵ Such a λόγος is possible only through the weaving together of Forms (ἡ τῶν εἰδῶν συμπλοκή) (259e4-6, with 268c-d regarding sophistry in particular).

³⁶ While Plato often speaks in terms of practitioners—of sophists rather than sophistry—his primary concern is with the activity. For the interchangeability of πολιτικός and πολιτική see *Pol.* 258b2-c3 and 259d3-4.

³⁷ On the tie between σοφιστής and σοφός cf. *Prot.* 312b7-c6, especially Hippocrates' naive comment following Socrates' request to be told what the former thinks a sophist is: 'Εγὼ μὲν, ἢ δ' ὅς, ὥσπερ τοῦνομα λέγει, τοῦτον εἶναι τὸν τῶν σοφῶν ἐπιστήμονα (c5-6).

³⁸ Interestingly, the *Cratylus*, *Sophist*, and *Politicus* all begin with comments about the ὀνόματα of multiple individuals present. For discussion of the *Cratylus* opening see ch. 3. At the start of both the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, attention is drawn to the fact that Socrates and Young Socrates are ὀνόωνμοι. In the latter instance, Socrates observes that τοῦ δ' ἡμῖν ἡ κλήσις ὁμώνυμος οὔσα καὶ ἡ πρόσρησις παρέχεται τινα οἰκειότητα (257d3-258a2). This light introductory comment illustrates precisely the reverse of Plato's view, that one can conclude from the mere fact that entities happen to bear the same ὄνομα that their natures are also shared. (Indeed, on the value of likenesses one may contrast it with the cautionary remark in *Soph.* 231a6-8; regarding the issue of misleading inferences from shared appellation to shared nature, see his strongly-worded observations on the shared ὄνομα of "statesman" or "king" correlating with markedly different denotations (*Pol.* 301a-303c).) One can resolve the issue of appropriateness only following an independent inquiry into natures. Of course, Plato himself does not believe in individual natures or essences, and has no genuine (i.e., philosophical) interest in proper names.

Plato's assessment of the sixth division constitutes an important juncture in the movement away from a reliance on the ὄνομα, paving the way for the Stranger's remarks in connection with the seventh and final division as completed at the end of the dialogue. In the former division, on the strength of the appellation's descriptive content σοφιστική is tentatively "assigned" an elevated status. In fact, the sixth division, coming directly on the heels of a series of other λόγοι, is meant as a piece of irony rather than as a genuine "definition."³⁹ This characterization, according to which sophistry employs refutation (ἐλέγχειν) to teach humility, does not actually capture the proper denotation of the term σοφιστική; instead, it wrongly makes the referent a good part of reality by assigning it too elevated a function (Μὴ μείζον αὐτοῖς προσάπτωμεν γέρας, 231a3). In actuality, the description applies not to sophistry, but instead to the Socratic elenchus.⁴⁰ This account illustrates just how awry an inquiry can go if it purports to grant independent credence to the descriptive content of ὀνόματα. At this juncture it is said merely that the λόγος captures a certain likeness of the *explanandum*; no attempt is made to ground ontologically or otherwise specify what the points of common ground and divergence consist in (231a4-b1). The exchange runs as follows:

ΘΕΑΙ. Ἀλλὰ μὴν προσέοικέ γε τοιούτῳ τινὶ τὰ νῦν εἰρημένα.
 ΞΕ. Καὶ γὰρ κυνὶ λύκος, ἀγριώτατον ἡμερωτάτῳ. τὸν δὲ
 ἀσφαλῆ δεῖ πάντων μάλιστα περὶ τὰς ὁμοιότητας ἀεὶ ποιεῖσθαι τὴν
 φυλακὴν· ὀλισθηρότατον γὰρ τὸ γένος. ὅμως δὲ ἔστω· οὐ γὰρ περὶ
 μικρῶν ὄρων τὴν ἀμφισβήτησιν οἶμαι γενήσεσθαι τότε ὅποτεν
 ἱκανῶς φυλάττωσιν.⁴¹

Noteworthy here is Theaetetus' observation of resemblance, promptly followed by the Stranger's caution to be on guard against likenesses (ὁμοιότητες) because underlying them may be important differences in natures. This is indeed the state of affairs with regard to sophistry since the emphasis on similarity masks the genuine relation of good to bad. The comment about dogs and wolves, which look alike but differ significantly in their dispositions, illustrates these points effectively. Despite any superficial parallels between Socrates and the sophists, on all essentials the differences are fundamental and ineradicable.

³⁹ I thus agree with Cornford that this sixth characterization is inapplicable to sophistry (*Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 177); Plato provides unmistakable hints that he is not seriously advancing it as pertinent.

⁴⁰ Cf. Cornford, 177.

⁴¹ Theaet. And yet your description has some resemblance to that type (the Sophist).
 Str. So has the dog to the wolf—the fiercest of animals to the tamest. But a cautious man should above all be on his guard against resemblances; they are a very slippery sort of thing. However, be it so (*i.e.* let them pass for Sophists); for should they ever set up an adequate defence of their confines, the boundary in dispute will be of no small importance. (tr. by Cornford)

Of the first six divisions, then, five reveal aspects of sophistry while the sixth, ironically meant, applies to a radically different (and far superior) mode of activity. Only at the end of the dialogue, following prolonged investigation of not-Being and falsehood, does it become possible to arrive at a λόγος which pinpoints the nature of sophistry; in fact, in resuming the seventh division, the Stranger suggests that he and Theaetetus now have the necessary preparation for doing just that.⁴² Once the final “cut” is made, and having labelled one type of insincere mimic the demagogue, the Stranger asks what they should call the other: Τί δὲ τὸν ἕτερον ἐροῦμεν; σοφὸν ἢ σοφιστικόν; (268b10).⁴³ Theaetetus, now moving properly from the results of rational inquiry to the consideration and assignment of ὀνόματα, responds that τὸ μὲν πού σοφὸν ἀδύνατον, ἐπεὶ οὐκ εἰδότα αὐτὸν ἔθεμεν· μιμητὴς δ’ ὢν τοῦ σοφοῦ δῆλον ὅτι παρωνύμιον αὐτοῦ τι λήγεται, καὶ σχεδὸν ἤδη μεμάθηκα ὅτι τοῦτον δεῖ προσεῖπεν ἀληθῶς αὐτὸν ἐκείνον τὸν παντάπασιν ὄντως σοφιστήν (b11-c4).⁴⁴ Only the foregoing investigation

⁴² At issue is the οἰκεία φύσις of sophistry (264e3-265a1, more generally 264b-265a); cf. the analogous use of φύειν in *Pol.* 275c7.

⁴³ In the *Sophist*, the issue of practitioners’ cognitive state is presented as crucial to the determination of what sort of τέχνη sophistry is. The presence of the disjunction in 268b10 is of pivotal importance, and indicates how far the investigation has progressed. The earlier procedure covered over this crucial distinction, by assuming or leaving open the possibility of some positive connection between σοφιστής/ικός and σοφία. Subsequent inquiry reveals that the sophist does not possess genuine insight: Δοξαστικὴν ἄρα τινὰ περὶ πάντων ἐπιστήμην ὁ σοφιστής ἡμῖν ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἀλήθειαν ἔχων ἀναπέφανται (233c10-11, with 234e7-235a7); this distinction ultimately makes it possible to formulate the disjunction in 268b10. The περὶ τί requirement also plays an important role since the sophist purports and is reputed to have understanding of all subjects (232eff.); however, this all-inclusive understanding of “subject matter” will not allow the praxis of sophistry to meet the περὶ τί condition in the sense at issue for good τέχνη (τέχνη being those parts of reality at issue in the *Sophist*). While failure to meet these two *Gorgias* requirements would have previously made sophistry a mere ἐμπειρία, it is here treated as a part of reality, but a decidedly bad part; thus, as previously noted, Plato’s quite negative attitude remains, but simply expresses itself here in somewhat different terms.

⁴⁴ At this juncture, as before, the notion of resemblance or imitation is introduced, but unlike previously the contrast with what is taken to be genuine is ontologically grounded. The interruption at 236eff. is occasioned by the fact that the foregoing investigation had divided μιμητική into εἰκαστική and φανταστική without its yet being evident that the latter has a denotation in the sense at issue for Plato. Before Plato can address this issue he must establish the possibility of τὸ γὰρ φαίνεσθαι τοῦτο καὶ τὸ δοκεῖν, εἶναι δὲ μή, καὶ τὸ λέγειν μὲν ἄττα, ἀληθῆ δὲ μή (236e1-2). Since it is under the latter intermediate Form or kind that Plato wishes to place sophistry, division cannot proceed until he establishes that the referent of the term φανταστική is properly unified. In 266d-267a, Plato is able to take up where the seventh division previously left off, having achieved certainty that there are two γένη or εἶδη:

ΞΕ. Τῆς τοίνυν εἰδωλουργικῆς ἀναμνησθῶμεν ὅτι τὸ μὲν εἰκαστικόν, τὸ δὲ φανταστικόν ἐμελλεν εἶναι γένος, εἰ τὸ ψεῦδος ὄντως ὢν ψεῦδος καὶ τῶν ὄντων ἐν τι φανείη πεφυκός.

ΘΕΑΙ. Ἦν γὰρ οὖν.

ΞΕ. Οὐκοῦν ἐφάνη τε καὶ διὰ ταῦτα δὴ καταριθμήσομεν αὐτὰ νῦν ἀναμφισβητήτως εἶδη δύο;

ΘΕΑΙ. Ναί.

ΞΕ. Τὸ τοίνυν φανταστικὸν αὖθις διορίζομεν δίχα. (266d8-267a1)

has made it possible to draw the important distinction involved in this use of paronymy, which would wholly escape one unfamiliar with its progression. Unlike the eponymy relation, which highlights a genuine link between *relata* on the level of natures (albeit one primary-derivative in form), this instance of paronymy privileges a fundamental divide between the entities in question with regard to the matter of natures.⁴⁵ Had the dialogue's participants relied on allusions to the descriptive content of the term σοφιστής—a procedure toward which Theaetetus was initially inclined—the φύσις of the activity of sophistry would never have clearly emerged.⁴⁶ Following this exchange, the dialogue concludes with a recounting of that λόγος which best answers the τί ἐστι question with regard to sophistry.⁴⁷

Str. Let us remind ourselves, then, that of this production of images there were to be two kinds, one producing likenesses, the other semblances, provided that falsity should be shown to be a thing that really is false and of such a nature as to have a place among existing things.

Theaet. Yes, it was to be so.

Str. And that has now been shown; so on that ground shall we now reckon the distinction of these two forms as beyond dispute?

Theaet. Yes.

Str. Once more, then, let us divide in two the kind that produces semblances. (tr. by Cornford)

The preceding investigation allows the twofold division of μιμητική to be esteemed natural, and the process of διαίρεσις may therefore continue on that basis.

⁴⁵ In contrast to the *Phaedo*'s handling of eponymy, there is no emphasis in the *Sophist* on a dimension of common ground which to some extent, at any rate, counterbalances substantial differences in the natures of the entities in question. In contrast to language of eponymy, which Plato uses frequently and in a subset of cases invests with a technical sense, language of paronymy is quite rare and not invested with a technical meaning. In fact, such terminology occurs only twice in the Platonic corpus, the other instance being his use of παρωνύμιος at *Laws* 757d6, in the context of remarks on two types of equality which share a single ὄνομα (one strictly quantitative or numerical, the other involving considerations of merit). Interestingly, here, as in the *Sophist*, Plato uses the term when making a point about a certain clash or deviation in natures. His employment of paronymy in the *Sophist*, complemented by that instance in the *Laws*, provides a useful background for approaching Aristotle's treatment of the concept in the *Categories* (for paronymy there see the definition in 1a12-15, in conjunction with 6b13, 10a27-b11, and 11b11). It would be especially interesting to explore Aristotle's view of nature-dependencies as reflected in paronymous links between terms in light of Plato's use of paronymy, particularly in the *Sophist*. On the surface at least, Aristotle's point appears to have strictly or largely grammatical force; if so, then he has circumscribed the notion of paronymy more narrowly than Plato, who privileges conceptual or semantic considerations (albeit with an important negative emphasis). Conversely, however, it is possible that what looks to be purely or mainly a grammatical point may involve for Aristotle, as for Plato, significant conceptual or semantic issues. It is not as obvious as it may seem which option should be embraced (i.e., that the former is correct), and the matter warrants further inquiry.

⁴⁶ This dynamic involving descriptive content is central to the foregoing inquiry into sophistry. Interestingly, in his commentary Cornford makes no mention of it whatsoever.

⁴⁷ This λόγος is "naturally correct" insofar as it "defines" or discloses the φύσις of the *explanandum*. More specifically, each part of the λόγος, i.e., every ὄνομα, denotes a natural or objective unity, and these ὀνόματα are combined so as to yield that complex of denotations which most effectively locates sophistry, the object of inquiry, on the map of τέχνη. Notably, Plato does not operate by providing etymologies of

As concerns the idea of being misled by semantic constitution when inquiring into natures, Plato offers a somewhat analogous treatment of πολιτική.⁴⁸ As with sophistry, the goal is disclosure of the referent's nature. The *Politicus* investigation, involving division and other methodologies, is directed toward marking authentic statesmanship off from a wide range of activities with which it might be conflated. Division initially yields a λόγος which fails to characterize statesmanship uniquely (268c), hence offers an inadequate denotation of the term πολιτική; this is immediately followed by provision of that μῦθος which supplies a framework for the remaining investigation.

There are close links, from terminological and conceptual points of view, between πολιτική and πολιτικός, on the one hand, and πολιτεία and πόλις, on the other.⁴⁹ In actuality, there is a dependency relation involved insofar as the denotation and nature of “statesman” and “statesmanship” are based on the type of constitution (πολιτεία) and state (πόλις) in which they play their roles. This explains the fact that throughout the *Politicus*, where the issue is proper denotation of the term πολιτική with a view toward producing the most illuminating account possible of the referent's nature, Plato is quite concerned to achieve clarity about the πόλις and its constitution. In fact, one finds here an important difference between the *Sophist* and *Politicus* inquiries. As noted, the former takes an agreed-upon *denotatum* as the starting point of its inquiry into natures. In the *Politicus*, in contrast, one does not begin with accord on this point. In Athens itself, not to mention Greek communities taken together, time had given rise to varying types of πόλεις (hence, correspondingly, to different types of πολιτικοί). It is not *prima facie* obvious which of these communities—if any—should be given pride of place, and those whose focus is on πολιτική risk being misled by descriptive content if they operate with the wrong conception of πόλις (which term constitutes the root of πολιτική). At issue in the *Politicus* is prescription rather than description; that is, Plato is concerned with what the term πόλις, and hence πολιτική, *should* refer to. Here, unlike the *Sophist*, the proper

the characterization's parts, correlating terms' descriptive suggestions—whatever they may be—with the nature of sophistry.

⁴⁸ Though Skemp discusses Plato's handling of statesmanship at length, he does not comment on this particular dimension of the inquiry.

⁴⁹ Πολιτική and πολιτικός are interchangeable terms in the inquiry—though the activity is primary—and treated as identical in force with βασιλική and βασιλεύς/ικός, respectively.

denotation of the ὄνομα in question, along with its referent's φύσις, must be established through sustained inquiry.⁵⁰

The necessity of this reciprocal determination becomes increasingly clear in the course of the discussion. Following presentation of the myth, the Stranger notes that they must attempt to define the statesman's particular relation to the πόλις: specifically, δεῖ τοίνυν τὸν τρόπον, ὡς ἔοικε, διορίσαντας τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς πόλεως οὕτω τελέως τὸν πολιτικὸν ἡμῖν εἰρῆσθαι προσδοκᾶν (275a8-10; cf. 278e8-10). First, the investigation sets statesmanship apart from all other τέχναι having to do with the control of herds; however, at this relatively early juncture there remain τέχναι involved in the life of the πόλις from which statesmanship has not yet been distinguished (287b4-8), and this separation is undertaken in what follows. That inquiry itself yields a diverse group from which the genuine statesman must be detached; this, in turn, requires consideration of different forms of government which πόλεις might have, and marking off the one sought from all the rest. With the key distinctions being the number of those ruling, and whether or not those rulers appeal to laws, Plato arrives here at six types of government. However, he insists that the real criterion for judging a πόλις' constitution genuine (ὀρθή) is the presence of the requisite τέχνη in the ruler (292c5-9), i.e., a ruler operating with the necessary expertise or insight (293c5-7). The characterization offered makes clear that genuine πολιτική is not linked to the πόλις or πολιτεία on any familiar construction; hence, the depiction has substantial prescriptive force, as Plato himself makes clear (301c6-d6, d8-e4).

Because the individual ruler operating according to law and with right opinion goes by the same ὄνομα as the genuine statesman (301a10-b3), it is crucial that one grasp the conceptual bifurcation underlying this single appellation. Plato emphasizes that one must not be misled by sameness of ὄνομα to assume that the two types of "statesmanship" are alike in nature; they are no more so than the political frameworks to which they correspond. In fact, Plato insists that from the point of view of the ideal all of the six more familiar types of state must be judged harshly: since they are not genuine, those presiding over them are not actual statesman, but must instead be viewed as στασιαστικούς, καὶ εἰδῶλων μεγίστων προστάτας ὄντας καὶ αὐτοὺς εἶναι τοιούτους (303c2-3). All

⁵⁰ This difference in approach between the two dialogues is in no way accidental. In contrast to sophistry, statesmanship is for Plato a normative notion; the title of "statesman" is a term of praise assigned to those who measure up to an ideal, not, as with "sophist," a term of censure. The ultimate ground of the difference between the two τέχναι is metaphysical: statesmanship, unlike sophistry, is a good part of reality (more specifically, of the generic Form τέχνη).

other exercises of political power are sharply dissociated from the genuine τέχνη of statesmanship (ἀπὸ πολιτικῆς εἴη τέχνης) (303d1). Plato's depiction of the ideal sort of πόλις in this section of the dialogue constitutes a significant stage in the course of the inquiry into statesmanship.⁵¹

Finally, Plato sets statesmanship, as he construes it, apart from three auxiliary τέχναι which play key roles in the πόλις, namely, a certain type of oratory, generalship, and the administration of justice; he does this by making clear what function the others have in contrast to that of the statesman (303eff.). Πολιτική is the τέχνη controlling these. In fact, it turns out to be concerned with everything that shapes the life of the πόλις. It must receive an appellation indicating the scope of its δύναμις, hence is called most fittingly (δικαιότατα) πολιτική (305e2-6). As in the *Sophist* (268b-c), the invocation of descriptive content here would be meaningless to one unfamiliar with the course of the foregoing inquiry.

Having distinguished the best form of government a πόλις might have, and marked statesmanship off from other γένη involved as auxiliaries in its rule, Plato ends the dialogue by giving additional content to his notion of the πόλις. Key here is his insistence that one unable to forge a bond of conviction in his fellow-citizens τῶν καλῶν καὶ δικαίων πέρι καὶ ἀγαθῶν καὶ τῶν τούτοις ἐναντίων (309c5-6) will never be fittingly called by the appellation of "statesman" (309d6-8).⁵² Following these remarks on the character of the properly-constituted πόλις, Plato's account of πολιτική is complete (311c7-8).⁵³ Without the foregoing investigation, which specified the type of πόλις in which genuine statesmanship is evinced, those participating would have remained in agreement solely on the ὄνομα without achieving clarity on the matter of denotation or φύσις. Individuals would have continued to move unreflectively from ὄνομα to reality,

⁵¹ Plato's comments in the *Republic* on the different types of πόλεις (see esp. Book 8) provide data for which a successful theory must account; from that perspective one might view the *Politicus* inquiry as providing a theoretical exploration of differences in type which his earlier praxis singled out. On a somewhat different topic, it is worth noting another point of divergence between the *Sophist* and *Politicus* on the matter of terms' descriptive content. While in both dialogues Plato emphasizes that descriptive content can be misleading, in the *Politicus* once the referent of the term πόλις is correctly established there is no clash between it and πολιτική.

⁵² On the matter of values see also 310e5-7.

⁵³ Of the τέχνη requirements, the goodness and understanding conditions are given the most explicit emphasis in the *Politicus*, but the course of the discussion illustrates the importance of the subject-matter or περὶ τί requirement as well—most notably by giving prominence at various stages to the value concepts and virtues of justice, wisdom, courage, and moderation, and indicating that toward which the statesman's activity is directed.

continuing to assign denotation and meaning to the term πολιτική based on their own particular beliefs regarding πόλεις and their constitutions.

Central to Plato's treatment of σοφιστική and quite important (though in a somewhat different and less explicit way) to his handling of πολιτική is thus the idea that one cannot draw legitimate conclusions simply by moving from particular ὀνόματα to reality. As noted, one cannot but start with those terms provided by convention, but if one gives excessive weight to them one risks being seriously deceived. Plato emphasizes this point in numerous ways. In the cases of sophistry and statesmanship (most explicitly the former), the ὀνόματα in question were not viewed as misleading for their ultimate failure to mark off genuine unities, but instead for encouraging a false view of their referents' natures. Elsewhere, Plato focuses on the prior issue, insisting that one cannot automatically infer from the mere existence of an ὄνομα that its referent constitutes a genuine kind. If one judges ordinary language from the vantage point of διαίρεσις, one will discover superfluous ὀνόματα, that is, terms which fail to mark off natural unities.⁵⁴ This becomes clear early in the *Politicus*, when the Stranger characterizes the type of error made in the preceding treatment of statesmanship:

Τοιόνδε, οἷον εἴ τις τάνθρωπινον ἐπιχειρήσας δίχα διελέσθαι γένος διαιροῖ καθάπερ οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν ἐνθάδε διανέμουσι, τὸ μὲν Ἑλληνικὸν ὡς ἐν ἀπὸ πάντων ἀφαιροῦντες χωρίς, σύμπασι δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις γένεσιν, ἀπείροις οὖσι καὶ ἀμείκτοις καὶ ἀσύμφωνοις πρὸς ἄλληλα, βάρβαρον μὶα κλήσει προσειπόντες αὐτὸ διὰ ταύτην τὴν μίαν κλήσιν καὶ γένος ἐν αὐτὸ εἶναι προσδοκῶσιν. (262c10-d6)⁵⁵

Plato's handling of βάρβαρος, like that of σοφιστική and πολιτική, highlights the fundamental error of unreflective movement from ὀνόματα to reality. However, this case differs from those of sophistry and statesmanship insofar as here an entity's very status as a natural unity is in question. In fact, one operates *mistakenly* on the assumption that the referent of the term βάρβαρος constitutes a natural or objective unity. There is no strong principle of unity linking members of this group together (ἄπειροι ὄντες καὶ ἄμεικτοι καὶ ἀσύμφωνοι πρὸς ἄλληλα); hence, it constitutes a μέρος that is not also at the same

⁵⁴ One also discovers omissions; I consider that issue below.

⁵⁵ The kind of mistake a man would make who, seeking to divide the class of human beings into two, divided them into Greeks and Barbarians. This is a division most people in this part of the world make. They separate the Greeks from all other nations making them a class apart; thus they group all other nations together in a class, ignoring the fact that it is an indeterminate class made up of peoples who have no intercourse with each other and speak different languages. Lumping all this non-Greek residue together, they think it must constitute one real class because they have a common name 'barbarian' to attach to it. (tr. by Skemp)

time a γένος. While popular *belief* often accepted a division of humankind into Greeks and barbarians, according to Plato this “division” is untenable.⁵⁶

In the case of βάρβαρος Plato treats an already-existent term, one important to ordinary communication of ideas and distinctions. He emphasizes the causal role played by the ὄνομα in the process of judging its referent; specifically, one is deceived into thinking that its referent is a genuine γένος on account of (διὰ) the presence of a single appellation (further stress is added by Plato’s repetition of the phrase μία κλήσις). In addition, one might be misled by the fact that a term not presently part of the Greek lexicon can be *constructed* for a supposed unity that this “unity” must actually exist: ἡ τὸν ἀριθμόν τις αὖ νομίζοι κατ’ εἶδη δύο διαιρεῖν μυριάδα ἀποτεμνόμενος ἀπὸ πάντων, ὡς ἐν εἶδος ἀποχωρίζων, καὶ τῷ λοιπῷ δὴ παντὶ θέμενος ἐν ὄνομα διὰ τὴν κλήσιν αὖ καὶ τοῦτ’ ἀξιότ’ ἔχειν γένος ἐκείνου χωρὶς ἕτερον ἐν γίνεσθαι (262d6-e3). While one can invent or posit (τιθέναι) an ὄνομα for the group containing all numbers other than ten thousand, this is far from sufficient grounds for concluding that the group qualifies as a Form or kind. It is noteworthy that Plato here introduces the notion of desert explicitly, to illustrate the reverse of the approach he has in view. Once again he highlights that causal sequence which gives primacy to the ὄνομα: in this case, as with that of “barbarian,” one moves illegitimately from the existence of an appellation (διὰ τὴν κλήσιν) to the conclusion (αὖ) that a certain group deserves (ἀξιότ’) the status of γένος; here the words ἐν ὄνομα, διὰ, and αὖ combine to make the point quite emphatically. In contrast, the proper sequence, as illustrated repeatedly in both dialogues, is to use the results of rational inquiry as decisive grounds for concluding that a group, *if* also a Form or kind, in fact deserves an ὄνομα. Everything depends on whether one makes the proper “cuts” in reality; the correct approach thus involves a complete reversal of that causal progression involved in the above two examples. Worth noting here is the important role that contrast

⁵⁶ Similarly, one should not necessarily infer from the existence of a certain number of ὀνόματα that the same number of genuine unities exist (see *Sophist* 217a, and compare with *Politicus* 259c). In the case of eponymy, Plato was not interested to challenge the standard practice of, for instance, naming cities after individuals, as long as it was restricted to its proper sphere and its importance was not overestimated; in fact, having made eponymy into a technical notion in the *Phaedo*, Plato himself also uses it, where relevant, in the standard, non-philosophical way (as at *Rep.* 600b4 and *Laws* 626d3-5). In the case at hand, Plato is not contesting the use of philosophically-inappropriate ὀνόματα for ordinary purposes; he does not believe that people must stop using the term “barbarian,” for instance, in ordinary discourse since it is useful for expressing distinctions that people wish to make in its conduct. Plato himself continues to employ the term βάρβαρος, which occurs numerous times in the *Laws*, as for instance in Book 10, where the Athenian divides humankind into Greeks and barbarians (887e4; cf. Clinias’ remark in 886a4-5).

dependency may play in fostering understanding when genuine divisions are at issue, as it does in the cases of both human being and number.⁵⁷

CONSTRUCTION, DESCRIPTIVE CONTENT, AND APPROPRIATENESS

Construction

While individual *ὀνόματα* do not yield satisfactory answers to the *τί ἐστὶ* question, kind names designating objective unities must exist since they are the constituents of those *λόγοι* which *do* disclose *φύσεις*. *Διαίρεσις* involves a series of distinctions made between entities, beginning with a generic Form, e.g., *τέχνη*, proceeding through intermediate Forms to the indivisible Form in question. At each stage of the process, the crucial step involves determining whether one has made a proper division (as previously noted, this need not always be a bifurcation), yet once this issue is resolved *ὀνόματα* are always required to designate natural unities.⁵⁸ In this context, terms are fittingly assigned if they mark off Forms or kinds, and inappropriately assigned if they do not. One's *Ausgangspunkt* is always the language's current vocabulary. In undertaking divisions, the dialectician working with this lexicon may discover serious defects from a philosophical point of view, and he remedies these shortcomings as they come to light. In this way, *ὀνόματα* and questions of fitness are essential to the conduct of dialectic.

Previously emphasized was the fact that from a philosophical vantage point the Greek lexicon contains superfluous terms. However, one should not conclude from this that the only important philosophical concern is to reduce the number of *ὀνόματα* by elimination

⁵⁷ Other instances include the relation between *ποιητική* and *κτητική*, and Plato's comments on high and low musical sounds in the *Philebus* (17c-d). Plato indicates what would count as superior distinctions with regard to number and human being: *κάλλιον δὲ που καὶ μᾶλλον κατ' εἶδη καὶ δίχα διαιροῖτ' ἄν, εἰ τὸν μὲν ἀριθμὸν ἀρτίῳ καὶ περιττῷ τις τέμνοι, τὸ δὲ αὐτῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος ἄρρενι καὶ θήλει, Λυδοὺς δὲ ἢ Φρύγας ἢ τινας ἐτέρους πρὸς ἅπαντας τάττων ἀποσχίζοι τότε, ἡνίκα ἀποροῖ γένος ἅμα καὶ μέρος εὐρίσκειν ἐκάτερον τῶν σχισθέντων* (262e3-263a1). He stresses the desirability of dividing evenly, i.e., down the middle, wherever possible (*Pol.* 262aff. and 265a); cf. *Phdr.* 265e-266a.

As concerns statesmanship, the error made was of the type illustrated by the barbarian example, namely, inferring from the existence of an *ὄνομα* that its referent was a single *γένος*. As in the two foregoing examples, in his characterization of it Plato chooses language which stresses the causal role played by *ὀνόματα* in incorrect inferences made about unities' existence: *Καὶ ἔμοιγε δὲ τότε' ἐφάνης μέρος ἀφαιρῶν ἡγεῖσθαι καταλιπεῖν τὸ λοιπὸν αὐτῶν πάντων γένος ἓν, ὅτι πᾶσι ταῦτόν ἐπονομάζειν ἔσχατος ὄνομα, θηρία καλέσας* (263c9-d1). Notably, when Plato uses terminology of eponymy in this context (for which see also *ἐπωνυμία* in *Soph.* 229d5-6), it never has that technical meaning at issue in the *Phaedo*.

⁵⁸ Here, as elsewhere, language follows reality. For a class appellation which is itself a multi-word description see *Pol.* 288e4-6: *ἐν δὲ αὐτὸ προσαγορεύομεν πᾶν τὸ πρωτογενὲς ἀνθρώποις κτῆμα καὶ ἀσύνθετον καὶ βασιλικῆς ἐπιστήμης οὐδαμῶς ἔργον ὄν* (cf. the three-word phrase in 267b7).

of all that are extraneous, and that ὄνομα-construction is irrelevant or impermissible. Plato makes clear that ordinary language may also lack a range of necessary terms when judged against the structure of reality itself. In fact, notable among the variations in Plato's late-period treatment of ὄνόματα is the fact that ὄνομα-construction, in which he did not evince genuine interest in the *Cratylus* and *Phaedo*, is invested with a measure of importance alongside proper use.⁵⁹ Although construction, on the one hand, and terms' evaluation and use, on the other, were linked to different "experts" in the *Cratylus*, Plato here makes both the responsibility solely of the dialectician.⁶⁰

While the construction of ὄνόματα, in this case kind names, becomes an element of dialectical procedure, Plato insists that only one motive for production is philosophically acceptable. From the perspective of dialectic the need for construction arises when rational investigation yields previously unnamed abstract entities which constitute genuine unities. In the *Sophist's* final division, the Stranger distinguishes two types of mimicry, but finds himself at a loss for terminology by which to designate them. Where will one find ὄνόματα for each of these kinds?:

ἡ δὴλον δὲ χαλεπὸν ὄν, διότι τῆς τῶν γενῶν κατ' εἶδη διαιρέσεως παλαιά τις, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀργία τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν καὶ ἀσύννους παρῆν, ὥστε μηδ' ἐπιχειρεῖν μηδένα διαιρεῖσθαι· καθὼ δὲ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἀνάγκη μὴ σφόδρα εὐπορεῖν. ὅμως δέ, κἂν εἰ τολμηρότερον εἰρησθαι, διαγνώσεως ἕνεκα τὴν μὲν μετὰ δόξης μίμησιν δοξομιμητικὴν προσείπωμεν, τὴν δὲ μετ' ἐπιστήμης ἱστορικὴν τινα μίμησιν. (267d5-e2)⁶¹

Since current vocabulary reflects the way(s) in which reality has been construed to date *and* no one prior to Plato attempted to break reality down into its constituent unities, the process of διαίρεσις may reveal elements of reality which, because previously unrecognized, have yet to be assigned ὄνόματα (hence Plato's observation that δὴ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἀνάγκη

⁵⁹ From the fact that divisions had not been carried out prior to Plato (*Soph.* 267d-e, cf. *Pol.* 285a), one has just as much reason for inferring the existence of extraneous terms as of non-existent ones. As previously noted, the *Cratylus* purported interest, for a time, in the genesis or construction of ὄνόματα already in existence, whereas in the late dialogues the issue is construction of terms where they do not previously exist.

⁶⁰ On the dialectician and ὄνομα-construction cf. Derbolav, *Platons Sprachphilosophie*, 146-7.

⁶¹ No doubt it is hard to find one, because the ancients, it would seem, suffered from a certain laziness and lack of discrimination with regard to the division of kinds by Forms, and not one of them even tried to make such divisions, with the result that there is a serious shortage of names. However, though the expression may seem daring, for purposes of distinction let us call mimicry guided by opinion 'conceit-mimicry,' and the sort that is guided by knowledge 'mimicry by acquaintance.' (tr. by Cornford, slightly modified)

On others' failure to undertake genuine division into classes see also *Pol.* 285a.

μὴ σφόδρα εὐπορεῖν). As such junctures the dialectician is called upon to remedy the lack, and in so doing he may take descriptive content into account.⁶² However, it is important to note that here, as elsewhere, one does not move from ὀνόματα to entities, but only vice versa; that is, one identifies the activity and property in question *before* construction occurs. Moreover, such kind names break down easily into their descriptive components, so deep structural analyses—of the sort that allowed Socrates great latitude in the *Cratylus*—have absolutely no role in the process. Finally, and most fundamentally, the semantic constitution of ὀνόματα is never itself nature-revealing since it fails to indicate the referent's connection to other Forms.

Ὀνόματα: Descriptive Content and Appropriateness

Although only properly-formed λόγοι yield insight into natures, the descriptive content of individual kind names may reflect properties of τέχναι; these include both attributes of particular τέχναι and those shared by several τέχναι. However, terms' descriptive content is never investigated in its own right, but comes under discussion only in the context of division as the dialectician seeks to relate a given *explanandum* to other Forms in the same conceptual field.⁶³ Moreover, Plato never identifies or conflates any information that ὀνόματα may provide with an answer to the τί ἐστὶ question—even one of a less revealing type—which must always indicate common ground with other Forms or kinds in a way that sets the object of inquiry apart from all other such entities. Finally, Plato, perhaps conscious of a tendency even here to focus on descriptive content more than is justifiable, emphasizes that contention over ὀνόματα involves the risk of investing them with more importance than they deserve. These features of Plato's approach emerge most clearly from a consideration of the way in which division and appropriateness are tied together in numerous passages in both dialogues.

Plato's procedure alone makes clear that the ground of terms' appropriateness must be sought, ultimately, in their having γένη or εἶδη as denotations; from a philosophical point of view, only where such unities exist may one speak of an ὄνομα as fittingly assigned. In addition, he provides numerous linguistic manifestations of this stance toward appropriateness. For example, Plato maintains that a group of activities can fittingly

⁶² Contrast the tremendous difficulties which one would encounter in trying to proceed analogously in the middle period, where the focus was on abstract properties like beauty and justice; indeed, Plato does not there undertake anything of this kind.

⁶³ For this approach to descriptive content see, e.g., Plato's treatment of angling in the *Sophist* (discussed below).

(δικαιότατα) be called by a single appellation (219b1-2), and provides an account of how this judgment was reached:

ΞΕ. Πᾶν ὅπερ ἂν μὴ πρότερόν τις ὄν ὕστερον εἰς οὐσίαν ἄγῃ,
τὸν μὲν ἄγοντα ποιεῖν, τὸ δὲ ἀγόμενον ποιεῖσθαι πού φαμεν.

ΘΕΑΙ. Ὅρθῶς.

ΞΕ. Τὰ δέ γε νυνδὴ <ᾱ> διήλθομεν ἅπαντα εἶχεν εἰς τοῦτο τὴν
αὐτῶν δύναμιν.

ΘΕΑΙ. Εἶχε γὰρ οὖν.

ΞΕ. Ποιητικὴν τοίνυν αὐτὰ συγκεφαλαιωσάμενοι προσείπωμεν.
(*Soph.* 219b4-12)⁶⁴

Ποιητική, along with κτητική, is the most generic intermediate Form or kind arrived at in the *Sophist* discussion.⁶⁵ Here the ground of appropriateness is the fact that a range of τέχναι have a shared δύναμις. In this instance the group appellation provides limited information about those activities to which it applies, specifying a general capacity common to all (ποιητική, based on ποιεῖν). This kind name is properly assigned not because its descriptive content reveals the natures of these τέχναι, but because the activities in question, e.g., agriculture, and the construction or molding of vessels—whatever their own unique relations to other τέχναι—are branches of this more generic Form or kind (note the inferential force of τοίνυν in b11). While not itself nature-revealing, the term ποιητική will be one component of that λόγος at which one arrives when investigating any more specialized τέχνη sharing this property.

In what follows, Plato provides numerous examples of parallels between descriptive content and features of specific activities. He labels that part of the acquisitive τέχνη which “subdues (χειρούμενον) everything by deeds or words” as χειρωτικόν/χειρωτική (219d), and proceeds analogously with ἐρκοθηρικόν (220c); πληκτική (220c-d); πυρεντική (220d); ἀγκιστρεντικόν (220d); τριοδοντία (220e); and ἀσπαλιευτική (220e-221c). In such cases, different properties of activities are privileged in their appellations. For instance, πυρεντική is so called due to the source of illumination which allows the activity to transpire at night, namely, πῦρ. In turn, the ὄνομα of the following

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Str. He who brings into existence something that did not exist before is said to be a producer, and that which is brought into existence is said to be produced.

Theaet. True.

Str. And all the arts which were just now mentioned are characterized by this power of producing?

Theaet. They are.

Str. Accordingly, let us sum them up under the name of productive or creative art. (tr. by Jowett, slightly modified)

65 For an analogous treatment of κτητική, with a judgment of appropriateness conveyed by the verb πρέπειν, see 219c.

activity (ἀγκιστρευτικόν)—which is characterized as fishing by day—is nonetheless correlated with a feature of the spear used in its conduct. When making observations of this type Plato evinces no attachment to any particular choice of feature.

The last of those activities mentioned above, angling, is selected as a paradigm for the ensuing treatment of sophistry's nature (see the procedure in 218dff. conjoined with the explicit comment in 221c5-6). The term ἀσπαλιευτική is correlated with an aspect of the activity's procedure, namely, the drawing up of the fish from below (κάτωθεν εἰς τοῦναντίον ἄνω ῥάβδοις καὶ καλάμοις ἀνασπώμενον) (221a2-3). Notably, however, this comment simply marks the end of a lengthy process of division to which this correlation is irrelevant. Some lines later Plato refers again to this feature of the praxis—striking with a hook and drawing the fish up from below—ἀπ' αὐτῆς τῆς πράξεως ἀφομοιωθὲν τοῦνομα, ἡ νῦν ἀσπαλιευτικὴ ζητηθεῖσα ἐπὶ κλην γέγονεν (221c1-3). However, this reference occurs only after Plato's provision of that λόγος which weaves together the results of the foregoing inquiry. He prefaces this characterization as follows: Νῦν ἄρα τῆς ἀσπαλιευτικῆς πέρι σύ τε κάγῳ συνωμολογήκαμεν οὐ μόνον τοῦνομα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν λόγον περὶ αὐτὸ τοῦργον εἰλήφαμεν ἱκανῶς (221a7-b2). That the ensuing description is the ground of this positive statement is made clear by the presence of γάρ, which introduces it (b2). Thus, Plato does not object to a πρᾶξις' ὄνομα reflecting a component of the undertaking, even a central one, but he does not treat such correlations as a disclosure of φύσις. Finally, in case one had any doubts about the ὄνομα's importance, in the midst of his treatment of angling—as elsewhere—Plato cautions against demonstrating improper concern with the selection of particular kind names (220d).⁶⁶

Discussed above was Plato's use of δικαιοτάτα in connection with ποιητική. Language of appropriateness is found on numerous other occasions, with judgments of fitness always based ultimately on considerations of denotation. For instance, and similar to ποιητική, in the *Sophist* Plato emphasizes that due to their shared function one may properly apply the term “merchant” not just to one who dispenses wares aimed at the body's sustenance, but also to one whose products are directed toward the soul (e.g., music): τὸν ἄγοντα καὶ πωλοῦντα μηδὲν ἦττον τῆς τῶν σιτίων καὶ ποτῶν

⁶⁶ This issue arises on several occasions. For cautionary remarks about ὀνόματα see also *Sophist* 227b-c, where the Stranger insists that dialectic is not concerned with fine words: οὐδὲν αὐτῇ διοίσει ποῖόν τι λεχθὲν εὐπρεπέστατον εἶναι δόξει (c1-2). In the *Politicus* see 261e5-7 (κἂν διαφυλάξης τὸ μὴ σπουδάζειν ἐπὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν, πλουσιώτερος εἰς τὸ γῆρας ἀναφανήσῃ φρονήσεως) and 265c2-4 (cf. also 259c-d, 275d4-6, and e5-8).

πράσεως ἔμπορον ὁρθῶς ἂν λεγόμενον παρασχεῖν (224a5-7).⁶⁷ In turn, with denotation in view the Stranger asks whether one subdivision τῆς δὴ ψυχεμπορικῆς ταύτης ἄρ' οὐ τὸ μὲν ἐπιδεικτικὴ δικαιοτάτα λέγοιτ' ἂν (224b4-5).

The issue of shared function surfaces yet again, when the Stranger observes that a range of τέχναι, including “sifting,” “winnowing,” and “carding,” all share the function of division (Διαιρετικά που τὰ λεχθέντα εἴρηται σύμπαντα) (226c3). Because all are branches of a more generic single τέχνη, they are fittingly assigned a single ὄνομα: Κατὰ τὸν ἐμὸν τοίνυν λόγον ὡς περὶ ταῦτα μίαν οὖσαν ἐν ἅπασι τέχνην ἐνὸς ὀνόματος ἀξιόσομεν αὐτήν, i.e., διακριτική (c5-8); in the present context the truth of the subordinate clause implies the truth of what follows. Plato thus makes explicit the ground of this judgment of appropriateness. The ὄνομα's descriptive content reflects a function common to all, and the term in question would be one component of that λόγος answering the τί ἐστὶ question for each; once again, however, the ὄνομα itself does not disclose its referent's nature.⁶⁸

Elsewhere, Plato insists that it is fitting for those τέχναι which aim solely at creating pleasure to be called by a single kind name (δικαίως δ' ἂν ὀνόματι περιληφθέντα ἐνί) (*Pol.* 288c4). With regard to education, the issue is whether it has some further division worthy of an appellation (ἀξίαν ἐπωνυμίας) (*Soph.* 229d5-6). At the close of the *Sophist's* first division, the Stranger designates one γένος with different compensation and avowed aim from another as ἐτέρῳ προσειπεῖν ἄξιον ὀνόματι, in this case “sophistry” (223a4-5).⁶⁹ With regard to statesmanship, in turn, Plato employs the verb ἀξιοθῆναι in a relatively early comment pertinent to the matter of its denotation and nature (*Pol.* 275b).⁷⁰ Much later, having made great progress in the investigation, Plato offers an account of that τέχνη which προσαγορεύοιμεν δικαιοτάτ' ἂν...πολιτικὴν (305e2-6).⁷¹ That considerations of denotation are operative here is evident not just from the general course of the *Politicus* inquiry, but also from the immediate context (e8-10).

⁶⁷ In what follows, Plato wishes to locate one who buys and sells knowledge in that same group because he too shares the relevant function (224b1-2).

⁶⁸ Also relevant is δικαιοτάτ' as used in 288b5; here too the ultimate ground of appropriateness is the fact that the term's referent qualifies as a genuine Form or kind, i.e., denotation is once again primary.

⁶⁹ That from which it is distinguished is κολακικὴ or ἡδυντικὴ from its aim of producing pleasure (ἡδονή).

⁷⁰ On the matter of denotation, appropriateness, and statesmanship it is also worth noting the Stranger's remarks centering on the words τέχνην ἐν ἡμῖν ἀξίαν τούτου τοῦ...προσρήματος (276b3-4).

⁷¹ See also δικαίως as used in 305d9 with reference to the τέχναι of oratory, generalship, and judging. On the general issue of appropriateness, cf. remarks made about the term εἰδωλον in the *Sophist*: what is sought is τὸ διὰ πάντων τούτων ἃ πολλὰ εἰπὼν ἡξίωσας ἐνὶ προσειπεῖν ὀνόματι φεγεζάμενος εἰδωλον ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ὡς ἐν ὄν (240a4-6).

In addition, Plato may use participial forms of *πρέπειν* to modify the term *ὄνομα* or *ἑπωνυμία* directly: for the words *πρέπον ὄνομα* see *Sophist* 225a9 and 267d4-5, and for the words *πρέπουσα ἑπωνυμία* see *Sophist* 267b1.⁷² Notably, even here an appellation is never itself viewed as naturally fitting or correct along the lines of the *Cratylus* picture. Instead, the judgments involved are of the same form as the others, with the fitness of *ὀνόματα* tied to the matter of proper denotation. One may contrast all the aforementioned treatments of appropriateness, which involve movement from denotation to judgments of fitness, with that instance, discussed above, in which the reverse sequence is wrongly attempted, i.e., where one infers that a genuine unity exists from the mere existence of an appellation (*Pol.* 262e1-3).⁷³

CONCLUSION

In the late dialogues, Plato's technical discussions focus on mutual links between Forms. Questions of naturalness and appropriateness remain central, and in the *Sophist* and *Politicus* both notions are tied to conceptual "cuts" made in reality in the process of division. As in the middle period, naming is not itself viewed as a *τέχνη*, but remains integral to the practice of the *τέχνη par excellence*, namely, dialectic. At this juncture, *ὀνόματα* are appropriately assigned only if they mark off natural unities. In the process of *διαίρεσις*, the dialectician remedies shortcomings in the lexicon as they become apparent to him, whether they involve extraneous terms or omissions; hence, as concerns naming, his responsibilities include the evaluation, use, and construction of *ὀνόματα*. Characterizations of natures or "definitions" consist in *λόγοι* which are more or less revealing. In fact, only a *λόγος* uniquely specifying those Forms or concepts to which the *explanandum* is linked constitutes a disclosure, however limited, of the referent's nature. Since particular *ὀνόματα* comprise these *λόγοι*, it is essential that terms marking off genuine kinds exist. However, particular *ὀνόματα* do not themselves reveal natures since

⁷² In addition to those expressions used in the foregoing examples, see also *Soph.* 219c8, where the optative *πρέποι* conveys appropriateness, and 226e6, where *προσῆκει* performs the same function.

⁷³ This key remark, previously quoted, is as follows: *καὶ τῷ λοιπῷ δὴ παντὶ θέμενος ἐν ὀνομα διὰ τὴν κλησιν αὐτὸ καὶ τοῦτ' ἀξιοῖ γένος ἐκείνου χωρὶς ἕτερον ἐν γίγνεσθαι*. This comment was made with regard to the number example; as previously discussed, the same idea is at issue in the barbarian example as well. On the matter of false naming see *Politicus* 281a12-b1 where "weaving" is judged a false appellation (*ψεῦδος ὄνομα*) for the art producing warp and woof. As Moravcsik notes, such an assessment makes sense only if one has abstract rather than concrete entities in view ("The Anatomy of Plato's Divisions," 329). Here, as with sophistry but in contrast to the Greek/barbarian and ten thousand/number-other-than-ten-thousand cases treated above, the issue is proper characterization of that natural unity designated by the term "weaving."

they are incapable of specifying the referent's connection to other Forms. While individual terms' descriptive content may reflect some property of their referents, the issue of denotation always takes precedence, and Plato never identifies or conflates any descriptive suggestions which ὀνόματα may contain with an answer to the all-important τί ἐστὶ question.

Conclusion

The *Cratylus* has interested those working in the areas of Greek philosophy and philosophy of language due to its status as the first work of Western philosophy to offer a sustained treatment of linguistic issues. Given the *Cratylus*' historical primacy, it becomes especially interesting and important not only to locate its central concerns, but also to establish how they are addressed in other closely related dialogues and to discover how this work is connected to earlier treatments of the problematic in question. In the foregoing study, I develop an interpretation of the *Cratylus* that situates the dialogue with reference to earlier, non-philosophical reflections, and locates it in a new way among Plato's own philosophical reflections. As concerns the matter of historical sources, I suggest that the *Cratylus* represents a major point of intersection in classical antiquity between the literary and philosophical traditions. To support this contention, two chapters are devoted to a study of the pertinent literary evidence. As lengthy as this presentation is, I do not intend or claim to present every relevant example; however, I do believe that I have provided sufficient evidence in these chapters and in my discussion of the *Cratylus* to support my contentions about the identity and character of ties between this non-philosophical tradition and Plato's dialogue. More often than not, commentators have offered conjectures based on what little is extant of various other possible sources or simply expressed regret that additional evidence has not survived; in so doing, they have not paid sufficient attention to a key body of material which is extant and of crucial importance for interpreting the *Cratylus*.

The interpretation of the *Cratylus* offered here privileges the notions of naturalness and appropriateness, which are central to Platonic metaphysics and semantics in the middle and late dialogues; this approach brings to light close ties between the *Cratylus* and key writings from both periods. Plato's treatment of naturalness and appropriateness develops over time. In the *Cratylus* Plato's intent is largely negative or critical: he concentrates on invalidating any view of natures that assigns them to spatiotemporal particulars (or divine individuals modelled anthropomorphically thereafter); moreover, he rejects categorically any understanding of appropriateness that bases the relevant evaluations on analyses of words' constitution. The *Cratylus*' critique transpires to a large extent in the framework of an initial positing of naming's τέχνη status, followed by a sustained challenge thereto

posed by recourse to those requirements propounded in the *Gorgias* to distinguish τέχνη from ἐμπειρία. This constitutes an important thematic connection between the *Cratylus* and *Gorgias*, one which has not been explored by previous interpreters of the former. The τέχνη issue, properly understood, governs a substantial portion of the *Cratylus*, and—most importantly—makes a pivotal contribution to its unity and coherence; given the centrality of this dynamic, recognition of it goes a long way toward addressing scholars' persistent concern with the *Cratylus*' apparent lack of focus and cohesion.

The *Cratylus*' few positive hints of Plato's own stance on the relevant metaphysical and semantic issues are developed at length in the *Phaedo*, *Sophist*, and *Politicus*. In the *Phaedo*, his approach to the notions of naturalness and appropriateness differs sharply from that governing the main *Cratylus* inquiry. The notion of naturalness had been central in various ways to earlier literary, sophistic, and philosophical reflections. Platonic metaphysics, which rests on a markedly different understanding of reality, gives a central place to that concept, properly "rehabilitated." In Plato's view what is natural, first and foremost, is a certain articulation of reality into objective and theoretically important unities, which are granted the status of Forms. Hence, for him the notion of naturalness is not tied in any primary way to spatiotemporal individuals in particular *or* indeed to the spatiotemporal (i.e., so-called "natural") world in general. Forms are full-fledged natures while individual sensibles—which are ontologically posterior—share the nature of these primary entities, but only partially.

In Plato's view, this state of affairs must be suitably reflected in the way in which one applies terms to and describes both sets of entities. With that end in view, he embraces eponymy—important, like etymology, to literary treatments of naming—as the framework in which he treats the semantics of the Form-particular relation. In order to ensure the philosophical viability of the eponymy or "named-after" relation, Plato must develop a revised version of it, which is precisely what he does in the *Phaedo*; most fundamentally, the semantic relation of eponymy should reflect that fundamental ontological asymmetry which exists between the two *relata*. Having revamped eponymy, Plato utilizes it to show how one may properly apply terms to entities both with and without qualification, depending on the ontological status of the referents in question.

In the late dialogues the notions of naturalness and appropriateness remain central; however, Plato's understanding and treatment of them develops in important ways based on a shift in the focus of his technical discussions to mutual relations between Forms. The idea of naturalness is central to Plato's use of division in the *Sophist* and *Politicus*, and in

that framework questions of terms' appropriateness play a significant role. In his treatment of the latter, Plato never retreats from the conclusion reached in the *Cratylus* that the analysis of words' constitution cannot yield insight, and that one may only justifiably raise questions of terms' fitness based on the right metaphysical framework. Unlike the middle period, at this juncture there is no longer any reason for thinking that Plato relies on or alludes to the literary tradition. It seems rather that his transformative work, vis-à-vis that tradition, occurs in the *Phaedo*. The stance developed there, as regards metaphysics and naming, leads in turn to new problems which themselves fall quite outside of literary discourse. What remains constant at this late juncture is thus not a direct tie to poetic reflections, but instead that interest in the linkage of naturalness and appropriateness which Plato took over from poets and made central to his middle-period reflections.

In addition to better situating it in the broader context of Greek reflections, by highlighting the notions of naturalness and appropriateness this study allows one to tie the *Cratylus* more closely than before to key writings from the middle *and* late periods. Treating the dialogues in question with a focus on naturalness and appropriateness permits one both to emphasize important continuity between them and to highlight the various stages through which Plato's handling of the two concepts moved. One may rightly mark a number of connections between the *Cratylus* and these other dialogues. However, the key issue is not how *many* thematic ties one can discover, but which are most fundamental. I maintain that the notions of naturalness and appropriateness may justifiably be assigned this status, and that privileging these notions has important implications for one's view of the *Cratylus* in particular as well as for the interpretation of Platonic metaphysics and semantics generally. There will presumably always be controversy over the correctness, explanatory power, and relevance of Plato's theories and the assumptions which underlie them. Such debates are most fruitful when conducted against the backdrop of the most comprehensive understanding possible of those views which one is assessing; it is hoped that the foregoing study makes some contribution toward fostering that understanding.

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