



# Durham E-Theses

---

## *A Study On Protagorean Objectivism*

LEE, YOON CHEOL

### How to cite:

---

LEE, YOON CHEOL (2012) *A Study On Protagorean Objectivism*, Durham theses, Durham University.  
Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/3383/>

### Use policy

---

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

# **A Study on Protagorean Objectivism**

**Yoon Cheol Lee**

**A thesis submitted to**

**The Department of Classics and Ancient History**

**Durham University**

**In accordance with the requirements for the**

**Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**2012**

## Abstract

Protagoras, the first and greatest sophist in the fifth century BCE, is known to have performed professionally as a teacher of various subjects, having interests in human language, political and ethical theories and activities, and education, associating himself with major and influential politicians of his time.

Ever since Plato's interpretation of Protagoras' Man-Measure Doctrine in the *Theaetetus* as a thesis of radical relativism regarding perceptual epistemology ('each individual is the criterion of the truth of a judgement about a given object or a state of affairs', thus, 'a thing which appears/is perceived as  $F$  to/by  $a$  is  $F$  for  $a$ , while the same thing which appears/is perceived as  $\neg F$  to/by  $b$  is  $\neg F$  for  $b$ '), Protagoras has been criticised by intellectuals both in antiquity and modern times for self-contradiction.

This thesis makes an exhaustive investigation of the ancient evidence for Protagoras and concludes that in fact it supports an objectivist reading which, if right, would absolve Protagoras of this criticism. For this purpose, I first analyse the so-called *Great Speech* of Plato's *Protagoras* as a source for Protagoras' ethical and political ideas (Chapter II). In the light of this, I suggest that an alternative reading of the Man-Measure Doctrine is possible in a political-ethical context (Chapter III). My interpretation of Protagoras' *peri theōn* ('on the gods') fragment suggests a new understanding of the sophist's epistemological views (Chapter IV). Then, I examine Protagoras' interest in the correct use of language (Chapter V), and finally his rhetorical sophism through the investigation of the so-called *ouk estin antilegein* ('it is not possible to contradict') doctrine (Chapters VI).

My investigation of the evidence for Protagoras shows that, in his version of objectivism, the things that are related to human affairs, such as political virtues, can and should be known and taught on the basis of the common and objective civic senses; knowledge and teaching of them is accomplished through the human objective epistemological condition and a process of synthesis of human experiences, in a correct linguistic and grammatical manner, for a good life lived in human community. If this is right, then Protagoras is not vulnerable to the accusation of self-contradiction; in fact the sophist holds a coherent 'epistemological'- 'political and ethical'- 'linguistic' position according to which his political and ethical ideas are supported by objectivist views of epistemology and naturalism of language.

## Acknowledgement

I would like to thank all the persons who helped me to bring this thesis into being. I wish to express my infinite gratitude to Professor George Boys-Stones, who, as my second supervisor, has offered valuable comments and advice for my thesis and, as a wonderful friend, supported and shared my personal worries and happiness.

I would like to thank Professor Paul Woodruff, who helped my research on Protagoras' *peri theōn*, for his supervision during my time in UT Austin as a research scholar (2007–8), and Professor Christopher Rowe for his comments on my thesis, especially on Protagoras' *peri theōn* and *ouk estin antilegein*. Also, I am profoundly grateful to Professor Christopher Gill and Doctor Phillip Horky who, as the examiners of my thesis, have kindly offered a number of valuable academic advice and suggestions concerning my further research.

Anna Eun-Young Ju, who had always tried to lead me into a right path whenever I got astray, is still sharing her warmest love with me. She was my teacher, sister, and soul-guider. I still dream that she and I walk around the field of beautiful wild flowers under the bright sun light. I really wish her to rest in peace.

I wish to express deep thanks to my dear colleagues, Bernard Collette, Xanthippe Bourloyanni, Mark Wildish, Yumi Suzuki, Jun Yeob Lee, and Doriana Cadoni in England, and Jeamin You, Gwangsoo Kye, Sangjin Lim in Korea, for being such wonderful friends to me, and for their support. I cannot forget a help and support from Hansik Kim and Jeawoo Kim, the only Korean friends with whom I could willingly share my life in Durham, England.

More impersonal thanks to Kim Hee-Kyung Scholarship Foundation for European Humanities for providing me with the financial support essentially needed to carry out my research in England. Also, I would like to thank my teachers and colleagues at the Department of Philosophy of Seoul National University and Jungam Academy for Greco-Roman Studies, especially Professors Namduh Kim, Taesoo Lee, and Jungho Lee.

Most of all, I would like to thank my first supervisor, Doctor Luca Castagnoli, who gave me the opportunity to engage in such a stimulating intellectual experience, and to express my gratitude to him for his precious suggestions concerning my research, for his patience in correcting the form and the content of my thesis and, above all, for his support and encouragement not only for my academic skill but also for my life in England. I owe immense debt to him. Needless to say, all remaining mistakes in this thesis are, of course, my own.

Word count: 98,853

## Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgement	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Abbreviations	vi
Declaration	viii
Statement of Copyright	viii
<b>Chapter I</b>	
<b>Introduction</b>	1
1. A sketch of Protagoras' life and works	1
2. The aim of the present thesis: Protagorean objectivism	8
<b>Chapter II</b>	
<b>Political-Ethical Claim 1: The <i>Great Speech</i></b>	15
1. Protagoras and the <i>Great Speech</i>	16
2. The <i>Great Speech</i> in the <i>Protagoras</i>	20
2.1. The Myth	23
2.2. The <i>Logos</i>	35
3. A claim about objective civic senses and the relativity of ethical application	42
3.1. A claim of ethical relativism or a form of ethical relativity?	42
3.2. Protagorean <i>dikē</i> , <i>aidōs</i> , and political virtues	47
<b>Chapter III</b>	
<b>Political-Ethical Claim 2: The Man-Measure Doctrine</b>	59
1. Is the Platonic reading of the Man-Measure Doctrine in the <i>Theaetetus</i> Protagorean?	61
2. An alternative reading of the Man-Measure Doctrine in the light of the <i>Great Speech</i>	71
2.1. <i>Chrēmata</i> and <i>metron</i>	71
2.2. <i>Anthrōpos</i> and <i>hōs</i>	77
<b>Chapter IV</b>	
<b>Epistemology: The <i>peri theōn</i> ('on the gods') fragment</b>	81
1. The <i>peri theōn</i> fragment	83
1.1. Atheism or agnosticism?	83

1.2. The <i>peri theōn</i> fragment as an agnostic statement	84
2. The epistemological obstacles	87
2.1. The obscurity ( <i>adēlotēs</i> ) of the gods	88
2.1.1. Are the gods objects of human experience?	88
2.1.2. The obscurity as a result of various experiences of the gods	92
2.1.3. Synthesis in Protagoras' epistemology	95
2.2. The shortness of human life ( <i>brachys ōn ho bios tou anthrōpou</i> )	97
2.3. A personal opinion or a general statement?	100
3. Protagoras' attempt at anthropological concerns	101
<b>Chapter V</b>	
<b>Linguistics: The correct use of language</b>	104
1. The ancient sources of Protagoras' interest in the correct use of language	104
2. The naturalism of language	108
3. Serious linguistics or an epideictic performance of rhetoric?	112
<b>Chapter VI</b>	
<b>Rhetorical Sophistry: The <i>ouk estin antilegein</i> ('it is not possible to contradict') doctrine</b>	116
1. Protagoras' use of the <i>ouk estin antilegein</i> doctrine	117
2. The <i>ouk estin antilegein</i> doctrine in Plato's <i>Euthydemus</i>	123
2.1. The impossibility of contradiction	124
2.2. The impossibility of speaking of what is not ( <i>to mē on</i> )	125
2.3. The objectivist use of <i>logos</i> in the <i>ouk estin antilegein</i> doctrine	129
3. Fallacies of the <i>ouk estin antilegein</i> doctrine	131
4. A rhetorical device	134
<b>Chapter VII</b>	
<b>Conclusion: Protagorean objectivism</b>	140
<b>Appendix 1: The ancient sources for the <i>peri theōn</i> fragment</b>	149
<b>Appendix 2: Plato's equation of the <i>ouk estin antilegein</i> doctrine with the impossibility of falsehood in the <i>Euthydemus</i></b>	155
1. The equation	155
2. Problems of the equation	161

<b>Appendix 3: The Platonic reading of the Man-Measure Doctrine in the <i>Theaetetus</i></b>	165
1. Interpretation	165
1.1. Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception and the Man-Measure Doctrine	165
1.2. The Secret Doctrine: the Flux-theory	170
1.3. A theory of perception	176
2. Refutation	180
2.1. Refutation of the Man-Measure Doctrine 1	180
2.2. Socrates' Defence of the Man-Measure Doctrine on Protagoras' behalf	183
2.3. Refutation of the Man-Measure Doctrine 2	186
2.3.1. The self-refutation	186
2.3.2. The impossibility of 'wisdom' and 'future benefit and usefulness'	194
<b>Bibliography</b>	197

## List of Abbreviations (alphabetical order)

Aeschylus	<i>Pers.</i> ( <i>Persians</i> ) <i>Pr.</i> ( <i>Prometheus Bound</i> )
Aristotle	<i>Ath.</i> ( <i>Constitution of Athens</i> ) <i>Cat.</i> ( <i>Categories</i> ) <i>Eth. Nic.</i> ( <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> ) <i>Top.</i> ( <i>Topics</i> ) <i>Met.</i> ( <i>Metaphysics</i> ) <i>Poet.</i> ( <i>Poetics</i> ) <i>Pol.</i> ( <i>Politics</i> ) <i>Rhet.</i> ( <i>Rhetoric</i> ) <i>Soph. Elen.</i> ( <i>Sophistical Refutations</i> )
Cicero	<i>De Nat. Deor.</i> ( <i>On the nature of the gods</i> )
Diogenes Laertius	<i>D.L.</i> ( <i>Lives of the Eminent Philosophers</i> )
Eusebius	<i>Chron.</i> ( <i>Chronicle</i> ) <i>P.E.</i> ( <i>Preparation for the Gospel</i> )
Homer	<i>Il.</i> ( <i>Iliad</i> ) <i>Od.</i> ( <i>Odyssey</i> )
Herodotus	<i>I.</i> ( <i>The Histories</i> )
Hesychius	<i>Onomatol. Bei Schol. Plat. De Rep.</i> 600c ( <i>Onomatologus in Scholia on Plato's Republic 600c</i> )
Philostratus	<i>V.S.</i> ( <i>Lives of the Sophists</i> )
Plato	<i>Alc. Ma.</i> ( <i>Alcibiades Major</i> ) <i>Crat.</i> ( <i>Cratylus</i> ) <i>Euthyd.</i> ( <i>Euthydemus</i> ) <i>Gorg.</i> ( <i>Gorgias</i> ) <i>Hipp. Ma.</i> ( <i>Hippias Major</i> ) <i>Lg.</i> ( <i>Laws</i> ) <i>Men.</i> ( <i>Meno</i> ) <i>Ph.</i> ( <i>Phaedo</i> ) <i>Phdr.</i> ( <i>Phaedrus</i> ) <i>Prot.</i> ( <i>Protagoras</i> ) <i>Rep.</i> ( <i>Republic</i> ) <i>Soph.</i> ( <i>Sophist</i> )



	<i>Tim. (Timaeus)</i>
	<i>Theaet. (Theaetetus)</i>
Plutarch	<i>Cons. ad Apoll. ([A Letter of] Condolence to Apollonius)</i>
	<i>Per. (Pericles)</i>
Proclus	<i>In Tim. (Commentary on Plato's Timaeus)</i>
Sextus Empiricus	<i>M. (Against the Mathematicians)</i>
	<i>P.H. (Outlines of Pyrrhonism)</i>
Simplicius	<i>In Phys. (Commentary on Aristotle's Physics)</i>
Theophilus	<i>Ad Autol. (To Autolycus)</i>
Theodoret	<i>Gr. aff. (Cure of the Greek Maladies)</i>

C. (A. Capizzi; *Protagora: Le Testimonianze e i Frammenti*, 1955)

DK (H. Diels and W. Kranz; *Die Fragmente Der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edition. 3 vols, 1951–2)

KRS (G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield; *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 1983<sup>2</sup>)

LSJ. *s.v.* (H. G. Liddell, R. Scott: *Greek–English Lexicon: With a Revised Supplement*, 1996)

## **Declaration**

I confirm that no part of the material offered has previously been submitted by me for a degree in this or any other University.

This thesis is exclusively based on my own research.

Material from the work of others has been acknowledged and quotations and paraphrases suitably indicated.

## **Statement of Copyright**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without her prior consent and information taken from it should be acknowledged.

**In Memory of Anna Eun-Young Ju**

# Chapter I

## Introduction

Protagoras, known in the history of western thought as the first and greatest sophist in the fifth century BCE, is said to have performed professionally as a teacher of various subjects during his acme for about forty years, having interests in human language, political and ethical theories and activities, and education, associating himself with major and influential politicians of his time.

### 1. A sketch of Protagoras' life and works

Diogenes Laertius reports that Protagoras, the son of Artemon, or, according to Apollodorus and Dinon the son of Maendrius,<sup>1</sup> is said to have been born in Abdera, a blooming city of Thrace, in which a famous ancient atomist, Democritus was also born (presumably after Protagoras);<sup>2</sup> a comic poet, Eupolis, tells that Protagoras came from Teos (D.L. 9.50: DK80 A1). Abdera seems somewhat more likely as Protagoras' birth place since he has been labelled by a number of ancient sources as 'Protagoras of Abdera (Πρωταγόρας ὁ Ἀβδηρίτης)'.<sup>3</sup> Protagoras is said to have been a child (probably a teenager) when Xerxes' invasion happened in 480 BCE, and with Maendrius' hospitality to the Persians he was favoured to receive instruction by the Persian magi at Xerxes' order (V.S. I.10.1: DK80 A2). If Protagoras was in his teens while receiving the Persian magi's instruction, his birth date can be conjectured to be no later than around 490 BCE. In the *Protagoras* 317c (DK80 A5) the sophist is described as old enough to be the father of any one of those who are at Calicles'

---

\* In this thesis all translations of the original Greek and Latin texts are mine, unless the translators are specifically mentioned.

<sup>1</sup> Philostratus (V.S. I.10, 1: DK80 A2) also confirms that Maendrius was Protagoras' father.

<sup>2</sup> The mythical foundation of Abdera was attributed to Heracles on behalf of his fallen friend Abderus, from whom the name of this city originated, and its historical foundation was attributed to a colony from Timesius of Clazomenae. This historical founding was traditionally dated in 654 BCE, which is unverified, although evidence in the seventh century BCE confirmed it. But its prosperity dates from 544 BCE, when the majority of the people of Teos migrated to Abdera to escape the Persian domination (*I.* 1.168). Later the Persians conquered Abdera twice in 513–512 BCE, and in 492 BCE, under the King Darius I (cf. Hornblower and Spawforth (1996), 1).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *De Nat. Deor.* I.24.63 (DK80 A23); Diogenes of Oenoanda, fr.12c.2 (DK80 A23); *M.* VII.60 (DK80 B10) and IX.55–56 (DK80 A12); V.S. I.10.1 (DK80 A2); *Onomatol. bei Schol. Plat. De Rep.* 600c (DK80 A3); and Stephanus Byzantius (DK80 A21). It is further remarkable that Abdera was once colonised by Teos (cf. *I.* 1.168). Eupolis' reference to Teos, then, may perhaps indicate Abdera as a colony of Teos.

house, including Socrates who is probably around 36 years old (cf. Guthrie (1956), 27), and in the *Hippias Major* 282e (DK80 A9) Hippias describes himself as much younger than Protagoras. The dramatic dates of *Protagoras* and *Hippias Major* are respectively about 433/5,<sup>4</sup> and 420 BCE. In the *Meno* 91e (DK80 A8), whose dramatic date is about 402 BCE,<sup>5</sup> Protagoras is said to have died at the age of about seventy after forty years as a practising sophist. If Protagoras started his public profession in his late twenties or early thirties, these pieces of information enable us to assume that Protagoras' heyday would probably be during 460–422/1 BCE, and that his death may have occurred no later than 421/0 BCE.<sup>6</sup>

Two significant activities of Protagoras during his time in Athens are reported in ancient sources. The one is his career as a sophist, professing to teach political virtues and charging fees for his lessons (cf. *Men.* 91e and *Prot.* 312d, 318a–319a, and 320c–328d).<sup>7</sup> The other is his association with politicians, most significantly with Pericles. For instance, a story from Plutarch (*Per.* 36 [Stesimbrotos, FGrHist. 107 F 11 ii 519]: DK80 A10) tells that once Protagoras and Pericles spent a whole day discussing a case when a pentathlete accidentally killed a competitor (Epitimus the Pharsalian) with a javelin in a contest. They debated where the legal responsibility for the player's death lies, whether with the pentathlete or the javelin or the judges of the contest.<sup>8</sup> Protagoras' association with Pericles may have strengthened the sophist's political influence over the places where Pericles' power was dominant in Hellenic areas; Heraclides Ponticus (fr. 150; D.L. 9.50: DK80 A1) says that when Pericles sent a Pan-Hellenic expedition to found a colony at Thurii in southern Italy, Protagoras went there to

<sup>4</sup> The date is inferred from Alcibiades having just reached manhood (309a–b). Cf. Allen (1992), 89.

<sup>5</sup> The date is inferred from Meno's visit to Athens after the restoration of democracy when the rule of the Thirty Tyrants ended in 403 BCE and before his expedition with Cyrus (cf. Xenophon, *Anabasis*) in 401 BCE (cf. Guthrie, 1956, 101). Also the chronological nearness of Anytus' threat to Socrates (94e) which is reminiscent of Socrates' death in 399 BCE is remarkable.

<sup>6</sup> Some ancient sources, such as D.L. 9.55 (DK80 A1) and *Onomatol. bei Schol. Plat. De Rep.* 600c (DK80 A3), report that Protagoras died at the age of about ninety. Morrison suggests (1941, 4) that the inconsistency of the sources on Protagoras' death date "rests on a confusion of *koppa* (ϙ), the symbol of ninety, with *omicron* (ο), the symbol of seventy". On this, cf. also Davison (1953), 35.

<sup>7</sup> Diogenes Laertius (D.L. 9.50–54: DK80 A1) testifies that Protagoras charged a huge fee, one hundred minae, for his teaching course. Philostratus (V.S. 1.10: DK80 A2) and Hesychius (*Onomatol. Bei Schol. Plat. De Rep.* 600c: DK80 A3) also report that Protagoras charged a high fee for his lectures. Dillon and Gergel (2003, 341, n. 9) point out that if Diogenes Laertius' testimony is correct, Protagoras' fee would probably amount to "£ 100,000 at 2003 price, if we reckon the real value of a drachma at roughly £ 10 (100 drachmas = 1 mina)." They also note that "this sum, for a full course, is attested also for other sophists (cf. *Alc. Ma.* 119a; *Hipp. Ma.* 282e), so it probably should be accepted. There were quite a number in Athens, such as Callias, son of Hipponicus, who could afford such sums. This would have been a maximum charge, however. One could have shorter courses of a mina." On the contrary, Loomis in his research on the classical concept of wages, welfare costs and inflation in 1998, suggests that it does not seem plausible for one to have charged such high fee for one's lectures in ancient Athens.

<sup>8</sup> For Protagoras' association with Pericles, cf. Muir (1981), 19; O'Sullivan (1995), 15–23.

establish a law-code at Pericles' request in 443 BCE,<sup>9</sup> as he flourished during the period of the 84<sup>th</sup> Olympiad (444–441 BCE), as Apollodorus (FGrHist. 244 f 71 ii 1040; D.L. 9.56: DK80 A1; cf. also DK80 A4) reports.<sup>10</sup>

It is uncertain how many times Protagoras visited Athens, or how long he stayed there. But it seems that he visited Athens at least three times; one visit described in the *Meno* (around 460 BCE), the other described in the *Protagoras* (around 433 BCE), and the last described by Eupolis who in his *Colaces* presents Protagoras in 422 BCE as resident in Athens. Protagoras' last visit to Athens is again mentioned in a passage of Athenaeus (the *Deipnosophistae*, V.218b: DK80 A11), according to which Protagoras arrived at Athens, probably in order to help Alcibiades who had recently recovered his political influence in Athens; this occurred not before 423 BCE and not later than 421 BCE.

Protagoras seems to have been in Sicily between his visits to Athens, where he had gained a high reputation, and later Hippias met him (*Hipp. Ma.* 282d–e). Two intervals between his three visits to Athens are possible for Protagoras' visit to Sicily; since Hippias says Protagoras was an old man when he met him in Sicily, the second interval seems more likely (but Protagoras could have visited Sicily twice).

Protagoras is said to have been accused and expelled twice from Athens for impiety because of his statement concerning the gods in which he says he is not able to know about them. The first banishment occurred, according to Cicero and Philostratus, around 458/7 BCE, by a decree against agnostics.<sup>11</sup> Later, Protagoras was accused again by Pythodorus, a member of the Four Hundred (*tetrakosioi*), and expelled once more from Athens, or he escaped from Athens to avoid the announcement of death penalty over him. It is said again by Cicero and Philostratus that this time all his books were collected and burnt in the market place by decree.<sup>12</sup> However, it is somewhat doubtful whether the real reason for the

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Barrett (1987), 10; De Romilly (1992), viii and 21. For the law-code and educational system established by Protagoras in Thuri, cf. Muir (1982), 17–24.

<sup>10</sup> 'Flourishing' often indicates that one's age is in the forties. Cf. Dillon and Gergel (2003), 344, n. 39. Eusebius in the *Chronicle* (DK80 A5), on the contrary, states that his books were collected and burnt during the 84<sup>th</sup> Olympiad. Eusebius' report, however, seems rather doubtful due to its serious incongruence with other ancient sources about Protagoras' acme as a professional sophist and teacher as well as his political influence from the association with Pericles.

<sup>11</sup> *De Nat. Deor.* I.24.63 (DK80 A23); *V.S.* I.10.2–3 (DK80 A2). Cf. also Davison (1953), 37.

<sup>12</sup> *De Nat. Deor.* I.23.63 (DK80 A23). On this, cf. also D.L. 9.51–52 (DK80 A1); *V.S.* 1.10 (DK80 A2); *Onomatol. bei Schol. Plat. De Rep.* 600c (DK80 A3); *M.* 9.55 (DK80 A12). However, according to Eusebius' *Preparation for the Gospel* X.3.25 (DK80 B2), Protagoras' books seem to have survived until 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century CE. Regarding the charges against Protagoras, Diogenes Laertius (9.54: DK80 A1) and Apuleius (*Florida* 18, cf. D.L. 9.56: DK80 A4) say that the charges were filed, not by Pythodorus, but by Euathlus who was once one of Protagoras' pupils and refused to pay the teaching fee. The story of the charges goes that in a law court Protagoras claimed that if he won the case, Euathlus should pay the teaching fee because he won, and if he did not, Euathlus still needed to pay because through teaching he became good enough to win. Euathlus, in turn,

accusation against him was actually religious. Diogenes Laertius reports that the first speech Protagoras publicly made in Athens was his reading of the book in which his fragment on the gods (the so-called *peri theōn* fragment) was included. So his public performance in Athens can be assumed to have been no later than 453 BCE, but later Protagoras flourished and his influence and reputation grew in Athens. The fact that his views on the gods were seen as impious does not seem to fit with his successful career and political influence for forty years in Greece.<sup>13</sup> The second accusation is said to have occurred around 421 BCE,<sup>14</sup> when the Pericleans lost their political power after the first period of the Peloponnesian War (431–421 BCE).<sup>15</sup> Together with this, it is also remarkable that the accuser of Protagoras, Pythodorus, later (411 BCE) joined the oligarchic group, which was a revolutionary political movement against the Periclean democracy, called the Four Hundred. It may be conjectured that as Pericles lost his power, his associates too would lose their power and influence, and a young ambitious politician (or a group of people like him) would probably be encouraged to accuse the political associates of the former political leader. The religious reason for Protagoras' banishment probably was a mere pretext; rather the sophist was banished for political reasons. Protagoras is said to have drowned whilst he was sailing to Sicily in an attempt to escape from Athens,<sup>16</sup> and Euripides in his *Ixion* (cf. frs. 424–426, ed. Nauck, J. A.) makes a concealed reference to this. To sum up, the main known events in the life of Protagoras can be briefly summarised as follows:<sup>17</sup>

---

replied that he would owe nothing even if he lost, since that would show that Protagoras had not taught him adequately, and if he won, he did not need to pay because he won (cf. also Gellius 5.10). These charges by Euathlus would surely be different ones from the accusation by Pythodorus, and seem to have been adopted by ancient sources to show a self-refuting sphere of rhetorical and sophistic deeds (e.g. 'convertible arguments (*antistrephontes logoi*)', cf. Castagnoli, 2010, 15, n. 10), rather than pointing out a significant historical event that may have affected Protagoras' life and death.

<sup>13</sup> Also, it is noticeable that in his time Protagoras was not the only one who seems to have made an impious statement; Xenophanes (570–475 BCE), for example, is reported to have made a statement to attack the idea of anthropomorphic gods; a poet, Diogoras of Melos (5<sup>th</sup> BCE) was also considered to have made an atheist claim in antiquity (Nestle (1931, 32, cited in Levi (1940a), 167), probably on the grounds of the atheist connection between them in Cicero's *De Nat. Deor.* I.1.2, Diogenes of Oenoanda's fragment 12c.2.1.19W (DK80 A23), Sextus Empiricus' *M.* 9.56 (DK80 A12), and Theodoret of Cyrus' *Gr. aff.* II.112.2–114.1 (C. A23), suggests that Diogoras was one of Protagoras' disciples; however, as Levi (1940a, 167, n. 4) points out, there is no real evidence of their teacher-disciple association).

<sup>14</sup> Davison (1953), 38.

<sup>15</sup> Pericles died of the plague in 429 BCE during the Peloponnesian war.

<sup>16</sup> D.L. 9.55 (DK80 A1). On his drowning, cf. *V.S.* I.10.1 (DK80 A2); *Onomatol. bei Schol. Plat. De Rep.* 600c (DK80 A3). Cf. also Guthrie (1971), 263; Kerferd (1981a), 43; Dherbey (1985), 9. On the contrary, according to some, Protagoras died on a journey (*kata tēn hodon*), which may imply a land journey, as Diogenes Laertius reports (D.L. 9.55: DK80 A1). On this, cf. Dillon and Gergel (2003), 344, n. 37.

<sup>17</sup> On the life and death of Protagoras, cf. also Morrison (1941), 1–16; Davison (1953), 33–45.

Year (BCE)	Event	Age
Around 490	Abdera/Thrace: birth	0
Around 479–470	Abdera/Thrace: instruction from the Persian Magi	11–19
Around 460	Athens 1: working as a sophist/public teacher	30
? (458/457)	? (Sicily? Banishment from Athens)	(32/33)
444/443	Thurii: establishing a colonial law	46/47
Around 433	Athens 2: working as a sophist/public teacher	57
? (428/427)	? (Sicily? Meeting Hippias?)	(62/63)
Around 422	Athens 3: working as a sophist/public teacher	68
421/420	Pythodorus' accusation, drowned on the way to Sicily	69/70

Diogenes Laertius (9.54–55: DK80 A1) reports Protagoras' books on various subjects:

*On the Gods (To Peri Theōn)*

*The Art of Eristic (Technē Eristikōn)*

*On Wrestling (Peri Palēs)*<sup>18</sup>

*On Learning (Peri tōn Mathēmatōn)*<sup>19</sup>

*On the State (Peri Politeias)*

*On Ambition (Peri Philotimias)*

*On Excellences (Peri Aretōn)*

*On the Original State of Things (Peri tēs en Archēi Katastaseōs)*

*On the Things in Hades (Peri tōn en Haidou)*

*On the Misdeeds of Men (Peri tōn Ouk Orthōs tois Anthrōpois Prassomenōn)*

*Instruction (Prostaktikos)*

*Law-Case about a Fee (Dikē Hyper Mithou)*

*Opposing Arguments books 1 and 2 (Antilogiōn A B)*

Plato (*Theaet.* 161c: DK80 B1 and *Crat.* 391c: DK80 A24) and Sextus Empiricus (*M.* 7.60) mention Protagoras' book entitled:

<sup>18</sup> In *Soph.* 232d–e (DK80 B8) Plato also says that Protagoras wrote a book on wrestling.

<sup>19</sup> There is controversy regarding the exact title of this book, since *mathēmatōn* could possibly mean both 'mathematics' and 'learning (or disciplines and teaching)'. One, like Diels and Kranz, may argue that focusing Aristotle's *Metaphysics* III.2,997b32 (DK80 B7), where he discusses Protagoras' argument against his contemporary geometers on the perceptual concepts of lines and measuring rods, the title may be concerned with mathematics. However, Plato, illustrating that Protagoras professes that, unlike other teachers who abuse their students by teaching them what they do not want to learn such as arithmetic, he himself teaches only what his pupils want to learn from him, namely political art and how to be a good citizen (cf. *Prot.* 318d7–319a2: DK80 A5), reveals Protagoras' disinterest in mathematics. In addition, if we take Protagoras' interest in education into consideration and notice that besides the passage from the *Metaphysics* there is no evidence in which the sophist is said to have paid attention to mathematics, the title may perhaps be understood as referring to learning.



*Truth, or, Downthrowers (Alētheia, or, Kataballontes)*

Eusebius (*P.E.* X.3.25: DK80 B2) says that the sophist once wrote a book in which he expressed a view on what is (*to on*) contrary to that of the Eleatic thinkers, titled:

*On What Is (Peri tou Ontos)*

According to *Anecdota Parisiensia* I.171.31 (*De Hippomachō* B 3: DK80 B3), Protagoras emphasised the importance of nature and practice for education (a fragment on education (1) below) in a book entitled:

*The Great Speech (Megas Logos)*

None of these<sup>20</sup> has survived. Despite the absence of extant books of Protagoras, ancient sources contain fragments of these works. Albeit few in number, they are still available for us to examine Protagoras' thoughts (the order of Protagoras' fragments given below is based on that of DK):

The Man-Measure Doctrine (DK80 B1: *Theaet.* 152a3–4 and *M.* 7.60): πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστιν, τῶν δὲ οὐκ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν. (cf. also *Crat.* 385e6–386a1: DK80 A13; *Met.* X.1.1053a35 and XI.6.1062b12: DK80 A19; *P.H.* 1.216: DK80 A14; D.L. 9.51: DK80 A1)

Of all things the measure is man, of the things that are that/how they are, of the things that are not that/how they are not.

The *peri theōn* fragment (DK80 B4: *P.E.* 14.3.7): περὶ μὲν θεῶν οὐκ ἔχω εἰδέναι οὔθ' ὡς εἰσὶν, οὔθ' ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶν, οὔθ' ὁποῖοι τινες ἰδέαν· πολλὰ γὰρ τὰ κωλύοντα με εἰδέναι, ἢ τ' ἀδηλότης καὶ βραχύς ὢν ὁ βίος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. (cf. also D.L. 9.51: DK80 A1; *M.* 9.56: DK80 A12; *Theaet.* 162d6–e7: DK80 A23; *Ad Autol.* III.28: C. A23; *M.* 9.56: DK80 A12; *P.E.* 14.3.7: DK80 B4; *Gr. aff.* II.112.2–114.1: C. A23. Cf. Appendix 1 below for ancient sources of this fragment)

On the one hand, on the gods I am not able to know either that/how they are or that/how they are not, or what they look like in shape. For many are the things preventing me from knowing [the gods]; the obscurity [of the gods] and the shortness of human life.

---

<sup>20</sup> Untersteiner (1953, 18–25) conjectures that all these works were parts, as different sections, of a single work entitled *Contradictory Arguments (Antilogiai)*; but his conjecture is grounded on no textual evidence.

The two-*logoi* fragment (DK80 B6a: D.L. 9.51): δύο λόγους εἶναι περὶ παντὸς πράγματος ἀντικειμένους ἀλλήλοις. (cf. also D.L. 9.51: DK80 A1; Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* VI.65 and Seneca, *The Moral Letters to Lucilius* 88.43: DK80 A20)

[Protagoras was the first to say that] on all issues there are two arguments (*logoi*) opposed to each other.

The weaker/stronger *logoi* fragment (DK80 B6b and A21: *Rhet.* II.24.1402a23): τὸ τὸν ἥττω δὲ λόγον κρείττω ποιεῖν. (cf. also Eudoxus, fr. 307 Lasserre in Stephanus Byzantius, *Ethikon s.v.* Abdera: DK80 A21)

Making a weaker argument (*logos*) stronger.

A fragment on art and practice (DK80 B10: Stob. iii (Flor.) 29.80): μηδὲν εἶναι μήτε τέχνην ἄνευ μελέτης μήτε μελέτην ἄνευ τέχνης.

Art is nothing without practice and practice nothing without art.

A fragment on education (1) (DK80 B3: *Anecdota Parisiensia* I.171.31): φύσεως καὶ ασκήσεως διδασκαλία δεῖται, ... ἀπὸ νεότητος δὲ ἀρξαμένους δεῖ μανθάνειν.

Teaching requires nature and practice ... one must start learning from early youth.

A fragment on education (2) (DK80 B11: Plutarch *On Practice* 178.25): Education does not sprout in the soul unless one goes to a great depth. (The original Greek is lost, the English version translated by O'Brien in Sprague (1972, 24) is a translation of a German translation of a Syriac version by J. Gildemeister and F. Bücheler.)

The *ouk estin antilegein* doctrine (DK80 A1: D.L. 9.53; DK80 A19): οὐκ ἔστιν ἀντιλέγειν. (For the argument, cf. *Euthyd.* 285e9–286a3)

It is not possible to contradict.

The correct use of language (*logos*) and grammar (DK80 A1: D.L. 9.52): ὀρθόεπεια, ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων (the correctness of words and names). (For the contents, cf. *Phdr.* 267c4–d4: DK80 A26; *Crat.* 391c2–4: DK80 A24. Cf. also *Rhet.* III.5.1407b6–9: DK80 A27; *Soph. Elen.* XIV.173b16–25: DK80 A28; *Poet.* XIX.1456b15–9: DK80 A29; and Aristophanes, the *Clouds* 658–679: DK80 C3)

Protagoras' teaching subject (DK80 A5: *Prot.* 318e5–319a2): εὐβουλία περὶ τῶν οἰκείων, ὅπως ἂν ἄριστα τὴν αὐτοῦ οἰκίαν διοικοῖ, καὶ περὶ τῶν τῆς πόλεως, ὅπως τὰ τῆς πόλεως δυνατώτατος ἂν εἴη καὶ πράττειν καὶ λέγειν.

Good deliberation concerning domestic affairs, how best to manage one's household, and concerning the affairs of the city, how to be the most influential in the affairs of the city, both in action and speech.

## 2. The aim of the present thesis: Protagorean objectivism

On the grounds of the ancient evidence for Protagoras, scholars both in antiquity and modern times have tried to construct Protagoras' own unique philosophical outlook. Their attempts, beyond the shadow of a doubt, have always commenced having Protagoras' Man-Measure Doctrine (hereafter the MMD) and its interpretation as the fundamental basis of all the sophist's thoughts on various subjects.

Many intellectuals in antiquity paid attention to the MMD and proposed interpretation of it. Plato, for instance, treated it as a claim of radical relativism, equated with an idea that knowledge is perception, and criticised it for its intrinsic problems such as the impossibility of teaching and self-refutation (*Theaet.* 152a–186e: DK80 B1); Aristotle discussed the MMD to reveal its logical fallacy, namely the violation of the Principle of Non-Contradiction (*Met.* IV.4.1007b18 ff. and XI.1062b11–19: DK80 A19); Sextus Empiricus, interpreting the MMD as a thesis of epistemological relativism, discerned it from Pyrrhonian scepticism and discussed its self-refutation (*M.* VII.60–64, 388–397 and *P.H.* I.216–219: DK80 B1).

All these interpretations of the MMD are grounded on a certain assumption and

---

<sup>21</sup> This *Great Speech* represented in Plato's *Protagoras* must be distinguished from one of Protagoras' lost books, which is, according to *Anecdota Parisiensia* I.171.31 (DK80 B3), also entitled *The Great Speech* (*Megas Logos*) from which Protagoras' fragment on education (1) is delivered. The *Great Speech* would probably have been a part of *The Great Speech*, and thus entitled so (cf. page 19 in Chapter II below).

Besides the fragments above, a passage in Didymus the Blind's *Commentary on Psalms* 3, 222.21–22 was unearthed during the Second World War and first published by Gronewald (1968, 1). Protagoras was given the paternity of this passage. The new alleged Protagorean fragment runs as follows:

σοφιστής δὲ ἦν ὁ Πρωταγόρας—λέγει, ὅτι τὸ εἶναι τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν τῷ φαίνεσθαι ἐστίν. [λ]έγει ὅτι φαίνομαι σοὶ τῷ παρόντι καθήμενος· τῷ δὲ ἀπόντι οὐ φαίνομαι καθήμενος· ἄδηλον εἰ κάθημαι ἢ οὐ κάθημαι.

Protagoras was a sophist—he says that for things that are, being is in appearing. He says that for you who are present, I appear as sitting, but for someone who is not present, I do not appear as sitting; whether I am sitting or not sitting is obscure.

Protagorean authenticity of this fragment has been questioned. Gronewald (1968, 1–2), Mejer (1972, 177), Woodruff (1985, 485), and Gagarin (2002, 114–20) agree to attribute the fragment to Protagoras, as the fragment fairly reveals Protagorean view of empirical epistemology. Mansfeld in Kerferd (1981, 51, n. 45) and Schiappa (1991, 149–51) carefully suggest that although it is suspicious whether the words in the fragment are original to Protagoras, the fragment might contain the genuine Protagorean ideas. On the contrary, Barnes (1982, 645, n. 16) and Osborne (1987, 1–9), pinpointing the objectivist epistemological viewpoint from the fragment, suggest that this fragment does not match with Protagoras' epistemological relativisms supplied by Plato in the *Theaetetus*, and reject Protagorean authenticity of the fragment. Barnes' and Osborne's rejection, however, depends upon the reading of Plato's Protagoras in the dialogue, not on Protagoras' works found in ancient sources in general as a sophist.

arguments supplied by Plato in the *Theaetetus*. In the dialogue, as soon as Theaetetus defines knowledge as perception, Socrates equates this definition with Protagoras' MMD. In this equation, Plato assumes that *metron*, *chrēmata* and *anthrōpos* in the MMD mean respectively 'the standard of truth', 'any things (as objects of perception)', and 'each individual human being with perceptual power', and on this basis he argues that each appearing to me is being for me, appearance (from 'appearing') is perception (from 'to be perceived'), and thus to be perceived is to be (*Theaet.* 152a–c, esp. 152b5–7)—Plato seems to take these assumption and arguments for granted in interpreting the MMD, but their validity has not been properly proved through argument in the *Theaetetus*.

Supported by the arguments and assumption, the MMD has hence been read as a claim of radical relativism based on perceptual epistemology, according to which 'man is the measure of all things', thus 'I am the measure, i.e. the standard of truth, of (my judgement about) all things that appear to/are perceived by me; whilst you are the measure of (your judgement about) all things that appear to/are perceived by you'. In other words, 'the Platonic reading' of the MMD proposes that it declares that each individual is the criterion of the truth of a judgement about a given object or a state of affairs; thus, a thing which appears/is perceived as  $F$  to/by  $a$  is  $F$  for  $a$ , while the same thing which appears/is perceived as  $\neg F$  to/by  $b$  is  $\neg F$  for  $b$  (cf. Appendix 3 below for my analysis of the Platonic reading of the MMD).<sup>22</sup>

Such a reading has characterised Protagoras as an epistemological relativist; owing much to the Platonic reading of the MMD in the *Theaetetus*, modern scholarship on Protagoras has tried to present the sophist as having stood for relativism (and against the objectivism defended by philosophers like Plato and Aristotle) in the history of western philosophy, interpreting his thoughts and activities on epistemology, moral theory, political views, and language in a relativistic way (cf. e.g. Guthrie (1971), 164–75; Kerferd (1981a), 139–62; De Romilly (1992), 213–33; Zilioli (2007), 89–112, etc.). This picture of the sophist has been widely accepted till the present without doubt.

Despite such attempts to interpret the sophist's philosophy in a relativistic way, however, a serious criticism against Protagoras has never been answered. The criticism is that on this interpretation Protagoras becomes unable to maintain a coherent stance for his own activities and thoughts; rather he ends up 'throwing down' his own ideas and 'self-contradicting' himself (as Plato endeavours to show in the *Theaetetus* 170a–179b and Sextus Empiricus in

---

<sup>22</sup> Cf. also *Met.* IV.4.1007b18–19; *M.* VII.60 and *P.H.* I.216.

*Against the Mathematicians* VII.388–397). As Cole properly pointed out in 1972, in other words, if Protagoras is understood as one who maintains a relativist position, he cannot help but entirely contradict himself and demolish all his ideas by himself. A relativist whose epistemological notion is grounded on perception (i.e. the Platonic reading of the MMD) can confess no agnostic view concerning the gods, since he must profess his belief about them as he experiences them in the way that they appear to, and are thus perceived by, him. Also such a relativist can neither promise to teach political virtues nor emphasise the correct use of language, such as the correctness of words and grammar. Since all men are by themselves the measure of (their judgements about) the political virtues (which are just and true for each of them as they appear so), no one needs to learn it from Protagoras, and the nature of the correct use of language will vary depending on what the names and grammars are judged to mean by each person.

Taking such criticism into consideration, a significant question in relation to a study on Protagoras arises: does the ancient evidence for Protagoras, i.e. the sophist's works and activities reported by our sources in antiquity, indeed show him to be someone who endorses a relativist position on every issue in which his concerns lie? In order to suggest an answer to this question, my thesis about Protagoras' philosophy aims to exhaustively investigate and evaluate the ancient evidence for him, as Kerferd (1981a, 173) emphasises that for a study on the sophist "what is needed is a process of quasi-archaeological reconstruction on the basis of the traces that survive." This thesis, I believe, will show us either that, as Plato and Sextus Empiricus show in their works, Protagoras indeed takes a wobbly approach to thinking in which he is constantly illustrated to be astray, even unable to comprehend the absurdity of the self-contradiction by sustaining a relativist notion of epistemology, or that his stance stands on a straight path according to which he is seen to take an unshaken and consistent position for his thoughts and activities.

For this purpose, in the following chapter, I will scrutinise Protagoras' *Great Speech* as presented in Plato's *Protagoras* 320c8–328d2. Protagoras professes to teach good deliberation (*euboulia*) concerning domestic affairs (how best to manage one's household), and concerning the affairs of the city (how to be the most influential, both in action and speech) (*Prot.* 318e5–319a2), i.e. political virtues. Socrates objects to this profession for two reasons: since anyone can bring opinions and advice regarding political matters in the Assembly there can be no expert on political art and no one, even great politicians like Pericles, could teach political art to their sons or could have any other specialist educate them in the subject. Therefore, Socrates argues, political virtues are not teachable (319b3–320b5).

Then, Protagoras immediately gives the *Great Speech* as a response to Socrates' objection. In this speech, Protagoras first admits that all human beings equally share in the civic senses (as Zeus' gift), i.e. a sense of what is right (*dikē*) and a sense of shame (*aidōs*), for the preservation of their community and race, and then professes to teach political virtue (*politikē aretē*) such as justice (*dikaiosynē*) and moderation (*sōphrosynē*), as a type of knowledge (art), produced by the application of the civic senses, by which they can pursue a better life in their community. Through a systematic analysis of the *Great Speech*, I will reveal the objective character of the civic senses and their role as the fundamental political and ethical principles by means of which human beings can measure their actions and speeches with a view to the preservation of the human race and community. Further I shall suggest that in Protagoras' view, political virtue is knowledge of different factors and circumstances, which promotes the application of the civic senses in a better way and thus produces political and ethical benefits. In Protagoras' political and ethical viewpoint, the application of the civic senses to certain issues regarding human (political) affairs has a form of ethical relativity, depending upon diverse factors such as chronological and geographical differences.

In Chapter III, I will propose an alternative reading of the MMD in the light of Protagoras' ethical and political perspective grounded on the analysis of the *Great Speech*. In this reading, the MMD is understood, not as a radical relativist thesis of perceptual epistemology, but as a political and ethical claim according to which man as a social being, who shares in the common civic senses as the objective political and ethical principles and in political virtues, is by himself the measure of all the basic needs for the purpose of preservation of human race and community, i.e. of all ethical and political actions and speeches that he and others do and make in the community; all these are measured as to whether and how they are appropriate things to practise in the light of the civic senses and political virtues.

In Chapter IV, I will examine the *peri theōn* ('on the gods') fragment in which Protagoras confesses his ignorance of the gods, in relation to the sophist's epistemology and anthropological concerns through which his interest in human affairs is fairly well documented. In the fragment Protagoras states that on the gods he is not able to know either that/how they are or that/how they are not, or what they look like in shape, due to the obstacles that prevent him from knowing the gods, and then states that the obscurity of the gods and the shortness of human life are such obstacles. First, I will show that the *peri theōn* fragment is a characteristic agnostic claim concerning only the gods' nature, and then suggest that the Protagorean epistemological obstacles found in the fragment enable us to assume that

the sophist sharply demarcates the area of what can be known by human beings from that of what cannot be known by them. The standard of the demarcation, as its context can be fairly inferred from the nature of the obstacles, is the range of the objects of human experience in the length of human life. This standard, which applies equally to all human beings, is considered, at least to Protagoras' eyes, a universal and objective epistemological condition; no one can know the things beyond this standard. Knowledge in Protagoras' view is hence acquired through a filter of the universal and objective epistemological condition.

I will argue further that since things are experienced in various ways and a single experience of an object always reaches a judgement about the object in a certain way, such as a judgement that 'x is F' or that 'x is G', Protagoras' ignorance of the gods comes not from a single experience, but from a process of inference between two or more different—sometimes conflicting—experiences about the gods, which I shall call a 'synthesis' in Protagoras' epistemology. Protagoras' confession hence, paradoxically, brings out the role of synthesis in his idea of acquiring knowledge about given objects. Together with this, I will show Protagoras' hidden intention in the *peri theōn* fragment to encourage human beings to abandon studies on cosmology, natural philosophy or theology, and turn their attention to anthropological concerns,<sup>23</sup> i.e. a sort of humanistic study that concerns the affairs of human beings in human life and community.

After that, I will discuss, in Chapter V, Protagoras' idea on the correct use of language (*logos*). Protagoras' interest in the topic is found in his ideas regarding the correctness of names and words (*orthoepia*) and the correction of grammar in which he argues that things should be correctly spoken in accordance with their nature. I shall argue that in his interest in the correct use of language, Protagoras expresses an idea of the naturalism of language which shows the consistency of grammatical genders on the basis of the natural genders of things and the morphological consistency of the words based on their grammatical genders.

In Chapter VI, I will examine Protagoras' rhetorical sophistry, by analysing the *ouk estin antilegein* ('it is impossible to contradict') doctrine and the argument in its support as presented in the *Euthydemus* 285e9–286b6. In the doctrine Protagoras argues that it is not possible to contradict, since it is possible only to speak of what is (*to on*) as it is (*hōs esti*) and impossible to speak of what is as it is not (*hōs ouk esti*) because it is the same as speaking of what is not (*to mē on*). I will maintain that in this argument, in order to prove that

---

<sup>23</sup> The term 'anthropological' with regard to Protagoras' *peri theōn* fragment was first suggested by Jaeger (1947, 176), and later adopted by Barnes (1982, 450) and Schiappa (1991, 145–8). For further discussion on this issue, cf. Section 3 in Chapter IV below.

contradiction is absolutely impossible so long as no one is able to speak of what is as it is not, Protagoras adopts the objectivist use of *logos*, and that a relativist reading of the doctrine (in the light of the Platonic reading of the MMD in the *Theaetetus*) is thus invalid at all. I will further show the logical fallacies of the *ouk estin antilegein* doctrine, such as the equivocation of the Greek words *einai*, *logos*, and *pragma*, and then its character as Protagoras' rhetorical sophistry in connection with the two-*logoi* fragment and the weaker/stronger *logoi* fragment.

Lastly, as the conclusion of my study on Protagoras' ideas, in Chapter VII, in the light of the whole discussion of the ancient evidence for Protagoras examined in the previous chapters, I will attempt to present a whole philosophical framework of Protagoras's outlook in a coherent way, which I shall call 'Protagorean objectivism'.<sup>24</sup> In this framework the sophist takes a firmly objectivist position regarding his political and ethical views, epistemological ideas, and linguistic concerns, as well as even the art of rhetorical sophistry.

In short, according to Protagoras whose interest lies in the things that properly belong to the range of the objects of human experience and the length of human life, i.e. human (political and ethical) affairs, knowledge and teaching about them can be accomplished through the human objective epistemological condition and a process of synthesis of human experiences (as indicated in the *peri theōn* fragment). More specifically, the things that are related to human affairs, as the subjects of Protagoras' teaching, such as political virtues, can be known and established on the grounds of the common objective civic sense, i.e. the fundamental political and ethical principles (as indicated the *Great Speech* and the MMD). As Protagoras emphasises the importance of the laws of a city as a method of preserving the city (cf. *Prot.* 325d2–326e1), it is important for people to understand what is said and written in a correct way in order to practise properly political and ethical actions and speeches. Protagoras thus insists upon grammatical and linguistic correctness on the grounds of the nature of things, avoiding relative usages of language (which is known as the correct use of language). Even when Protagoras utilises rhetorical sophistry, he appeals to the objectivist use of human *logos*, universally given to all human beings who have a capacity to speak (the *ouk estin antilegein* doctrine). In this regard, Protagoras is not vulnerable to the accusation of self-contradiction, but advocates a certain type of objectivism, namely 'Protagorean objectivism', holding a coherent 'epistemological'-'political and ethical'-'linguistic' position according to which his

---

<sup>24</sup> As it will be revealed in the discussion on Protagoras' fragments in the following chapters (especially stated in the conclusion chapter), I admit that Protagoras' objectivism does not entail the traditional concept and structure of objectivism found in the ancient philosophy such as Platonic or Aristotelian metaphysics, ontology and epistemology. Basically, by 'objectivism' I mean a type of arguments or claims, as discerned from those in a form of relativism, to which the so-called '*pros ti*' concept (cf. *Theat.* 152a6–c6 and *M.* VII.60–64) does not apply for the truth of any judgments constructed in them.



political and ethical ideas are supported by objectivist views of epistemology and the naturalism of language.

(After all these Chapters, I will give three Appendices: in the first Appendix I will provide the ancient sources of Protagoras' the *peri theōn* fragment, which are slightly different in wording, and suggest the most probable form of the original fragment; in the second Appendix I will discuss Plato's equation of the *ouk estin antilegein* doctrine with the impossibility of falsehood in the *Euthydemus*, and show the invalidity of such an equation; and in the last Appendix I will analyse the Platonic reading of Protagoras' MMD in the *Theaetetus*.)

At this preliminary stage of the presentation of my study on Protagoras' philosophy, I should note that this is not entirely the first attempt in the history of philosophy or the study of the early Greek sophists to provide an objectivist reading of the thought of the sophist. A series of studies presenting Protagoras as an objectivist has already been proposed by some modern scholars. Levi, for instance, in his papers on Protagoras' MMD and ethical concerns in 1940, argues for the sophist's utilitarian objectivism, especially for the sophist's social ideas. Dupréel (1948, 30–5 and 55) and Donovan (1993, 35–47) also present a similar view, that Protagoras' interest in a humanist study may focus on universal practice in the light of an utilitarian or pragmatic viewpoint. Woodruff (2005, 158–9), briefly but strongly, indicates that no radical relativist can hold fast to the idea of the correctness of words and grammar, focusing on an objectivist stance of Protagoras in the field of language and linguistic education.

Despite their value, however, these studies are somewhat fragmentary, focusing respectively on each of Protagoras' works or fragments, and restricting the scope of Protagoras' objectivism. On the contrary, my study aims to present the full scope of Protagoras' objectivist thought as reflected in his interests in language, political and ethical issues, and epistemological ideas, found in his surviving works as reported by ancient sources. Since such attempt at a complete picture of Protagoras' character as an objectivist in this way has not yet been proposed in modern scholarship, in this regard my research aims to contribute a new perspective for study of Protagoras in particular. Moreover, like Bett's suggestion (1989, 136–69) about the non-relativistic activities of the sophists in the early Greek period (on the basis of his argument for a clear distinction between a notion of relativism and the concept of relativity), I expect my work to provide a possible basis for a new and wider interpretation of the ancient Greek sophistic movement in the fifth and fourth century BCE in general.

## Chapter II

### Political-Ethical Claim 1: The *Great Speech*

In the *Protagoras* 320c8–328d2, Protagoras gives a long speech, the so-called *Great Speech* in which the sophist tells the origins of the human race and community as well as arguing for the teachability of political virtues. This speech is composed of two parts, the ‘Myth’ and the ‘*Logos*’. The former explains how human beings are equipped with technical wisdom (*entechnon sophia*), fire (*pyr*), and a sense of what is right (*dikē*) and a sense of shame (*aidōs*); the latter concerns the idea that all men in a community care for and teach political virtue/art (*politikē aretē/technē*).

Many modern scholars have endeavoured to construct one of the earliest political and ethical theories from the *Great Speech*, such as the first form of democratic idea in antiquity (cf. Adkins (1973), 3–12; Kerferd (1981a), 139–62, esp. 144–7; Farrar (1988), 44–125, esp. 77–98; Moore (1988), 357–68; Schiappa (1991), 168–74; Zilioli (2007), 129–31), or the earliest theories of social contract (cf. again Kerferd (1981a), 139–62, esp. pp. 147–8; De Romilly (1992), pp. 213–33). Mostly, however, one general agreement among those scholars is that, no matter what form of a political-ethical idea the *Great Speech* may detail, it explicitly reveals an ancient structure of ethical relativism according to which various relativist views on politics, morality, culture, and language in Protagoras’ thoughts can also be explained (cf. Oehler (2002), 207–14; Zilioli (2007), 89–112, esp. 93–102).

In this chapter, I shall first briefly argue for the importance of the *Great Speech* for scholarship on Protagoras, against the suggestion of doubt about Protagorean authenticity. I shall then analyse the speech as presented in the *Protagoras*, arguing that it provides objectivist political and ethical ideas. In this argument I will show that Protagoras first admits that all human beings equally share the common objective civic senses, i.e. a sense of what is right and a sense of shame, for the preservation of their community and race, and then professes to teach political virtues, such as justice (*dikaiosynē*) and moderation (*sōphrosynē*), as a type of knowledge (art), produced from the application of the civic senses, by which they can pursue a better life in their community. The application of the civic senses to certain issues regarding human affairs, from which political virtues are produced, can be relativised depending upon diverse factors such as chronological and geographical differences; yet the objectivist character of the civic senses is not lost.

## 1. Protagoras and the *Great Speech*

In modern scholarship on Protagoras, some have doubted the attribution of the *Great Speech* to Protagoras, believing that the *Great Speech*, particularly the Myth part, in which the sophist expresses his views on the gods, is not reconcilable with his agnostic views expressed in the so-called *peri theōn* fragment. Allen (1996, 100–2), for instance, states that the *Great Speech*, especially the Myth, “is hard to reconcile with the agnostic views of the historical Protagoras” because Plato says that Protagoras is one “who expressly refused to discuss the existence or nonexistence of gods (*Theaetetus* 162d–e),” and thus suggests that the Myth should not be taken seriously in scholarship on Protagoras.<sup>25</sup> However, it is strange that here Allen uses a Platonic passage (from the *Theaetetus*) to reject Protagoras’ views of the gods in the Myth presented in another Platonic work (from the *Protagoras*).

In the *Theaetetus* where Protagoras’ MMD is reported by Socrates, the sophist is depicted as dead and the main discussion regarding the doctrine—and its fallacies—is guided not by Protagoras but by Socrates and Theaetetus, whereas in the *Protagoras*, Protagoras is portrayed as being alive, getting involved in all the discussion as Socrates’ main interlocutor. Taking into account the characteristic features of the dialogues, the probability regarding what Protagoras authentically stated can thus be considered higher in the latter dialogue. Allen needs to present a convincing explanation why a passage from the *Theaetetus* is more reliable than that from the *Protagoras*; otherwise, his argument cannot escape the fallacy of *petitio principii*.<sup>26</sup>

On the grounds that the *Great speech* is presented in Plato’s *Protagoras*, it may be conjectured that this speech was purely Plato’s creation and does not reflect Protagoras’

---

<sup>25</sup> For a similar suggestion, cf. Levi (1940b), 290, n. 1; however, in the following passages (*ibid.*, 292–3) he immediately ends up admitting the possibility of Protagorean authenticity of the *Great Speech*, emphasising its importance for scholarship on Protagoras’ thoughts.

<sup>26</sup> One, appealing to the fact that besides the passage from the *Theaetetus* other sources also report Protagoras’ agnostic claim, i.e. the *peri theōn* fragment, may argue that the Myth still seems hard to reconcile with the sophist’s agnostic views. However, Allen’s argument simply focuses on the passage from the *Theaetetus*, and does not refer to other sources. In addition, (even though Allen’s argument is supported by other sources for Protagoras’ agnostic claim,) it is not necessarily the case that Protagoras should not express any ideas about the gods, since he has agnostic views on them. According to the sources, in the fragment the sophist claims to be unable to know the gods. Someone who has some ideas about the gods (as Protagoras does regarding what the gods did to human beings and their divinity in the *Great Speech*) is not counted as entirely knowing them. Even a Christian who has a number of views about God can claim that he is unable to know God, emphasising human limited rationality. For my analysis of Protagoras’ *peri theōn* fragment, cf. Chapter IV below; for ancient sources of the fragment, cf. Appendix 1 below.

original thoughts on the origins of the human race and the teachability of political virtues. However, the fact that the style of the *Great Speech* does not seem to be congruent with Plato's own, but is characteristic of pre-Platonic *epideixeis* (displays) in the fifth century BCE, enables us to assume that the *Great Speech* could be Plato's representation extracted from Protagoras' own ideas, rather than taking it to be Plato's pure creation. The typical form of Plato's so-called earlier and middle dialogues, including the *Protagoras*, is, as is well known, Socratic conversation in which Socrates and his interlocutors have conversations on various—but mostly ethical and political—issues; usually, the interlocutors give their views about certain topics and Socrates questions and refutes them. On the contrary, Plato's representation of the *Great Speech* has the form of *epideixis* without breaks at great length (320c8–328d2). When it ends, Socrates explicitly says that ‘then Protagoras, having *displayed* so many and such things [i.e. the *Great Speech*], ceased his argument (Πρωταγόρας μὲν τοσαῦτα καὶ τοιαῦτα ἐπιδειξάμενος ἀπεπαύσατο τοῦ λόγου)’ (*Prot.* 328d3–4).<sup>27</sup> Hence Gagarin (1968, 90) argues:

The many indications of pre-platonic style in it [i.e. the *Great Speech*], and the many parallels in style and content to other writers of the fifth century ... indicate that the speech must go back to a fifth-century source, and it seems hardly likely that Plato would have looked to any source but Protagoras himself. These factors and the inner unity and cohesion of the speech, moreover, indicate that this is probably not a patchwork creation from several of his writings.

Gagarin (*ibid.*, 93–5) further suggests that the mode of representing the *Great Speech* is significantly different from that of the rest of the arguments and conversations in the *Protagoras*, since the former is described “in a way that is unusual, if not unique, in Plato,” and that Socrates does not object to the *Great Speech* itself, but “sets out at the end of it on what is essentially a new course.”<sup>28</sup>

One may suggest that the *Great Speech*, especially the Myth, in the *Protagoras* is neither Plato's creation nor his representation of Protagoras' own thought, but rather Plato's

---

<sup>27</sup> It is very rare that Plato has one of Socrates' interlocutors offer such a long display without breaks, except for a very few cases, such as Socrates' representation of Aspasia's democratic funeral orations (236d–249c) in the *Menexenus*, Socrates' self-defence in the *Apology*, Lysias' speech (230e–234c) and Socrates' two speeches (237b–241d; 243e–257b) on love (*eros*) in the *Phaedrus*, and some speeches on love made by the characters in the *Symposium*. On Plato's characteristic style to represent others' speeches, cf. Beresford (2009), 5; Morgan (2000), 133–4.

<sup>28</sup> Schiappa (1991, 147) further conjectures that the *Great Speech* is indeed Plato's mere transcription of Protagoras' own words. As Manuwald (2007, 1) pinpoints, however, such conjecture is “untenable since the speech alludes to a performance of Pherecrates' comedy entitled *The Savages* in 420 BCE (327d) and at the same time presupposes that Pericles' sons, who died in 429 BCE, are alive and present (328d).”

use of the traditional and authoritative myth of Prometheus, which he attributes to Protagoras in the *Protagoras* for his philosophical discussion. He does so either because he believes that the Myth is the same as (or at least a good example to express) Protagoras' actual views on the origins of the human race, or because Protagoras indeed adopted the Myth for his own thoughts on the matter. However, both cases do not seem credible for the following reason: in the eighth century BCE, Hesiod composed two poems in which he relates the myth of Prometheus, *Works and Days* (42–105; esp. 69–89) and *Theogony* (511–616); and later, during the fifth century BCE, Aeschylus, in his tragedy entitled *Prometheus Bound* (esp. II. 436–506), tells the details of the myth of Prometheus; finally, we have Plato's representation in the *Protagoras* (320c8–322d5). Yet, besides some trivial references in Ibycus (*PMG*, 342) and Sappho (207 LP; Servius on Virg. *Ecl.* 6. 42), as Griffith (1983, 3, n. 10) points out, there is almost no textual trace of the myth of Prometheus between the time of Hesiod and the fifth century BCE.

It is also noticeable that some remarkable references to the gods' and Prometheus' characteristic features and deeds found in the versions of the myth of Prometheus in Hesiod's and Aeschylus' works are not stated in the *Great Speech* at all. For example, according to relevant passages from the *Theogony*, Prometheus tries to trick Zeus into accepting the lesser portions of sacrificial victims, while teaching human beings the art of sacrifice. Zeus then punishes the human race by withholding the secret of fire, and Prometheus in turn steals fire from Zeus to give it to human beings. The version in the *Works and Days* explains why we must labour to survive. Hesiod does not give any explanation why Prometheus wishes to bring benefits to the human race, while Aeschylus does; but none of these is found in the *Great Speech*. In addition, differences in the contents of the versions of the myth, albeit slight, can be pointed out; in Hesiod's and Aeschylus' works human beings are said to be created out of clay by Prometheus' effort, while in the *Great Speech* they are created out of earth, fire, and their mixture, by the gods.<sup>29</sup> Such different representations of the myths of Prometheus in antiquity demonstrate that the Myth in the *Great Speech* is not extracted merely from the traditional and authoritative one—indeed, there may not be such a one. Of course, there are some common features in the myths of Prometheus in Hesiod's, Aeschylus' and Plato's works, such as the fundamental idea of Prometheus' care for the human race. Nonetheless, this does not deny that Plato, in presenting the Myth, as well as the *Logos*, does not attempt to represent what Protagoras intends concerning the issues of the origins of the human race and

---

<sup>29</sup> On the difference of the myths of Prometheus and Zeus in ancient texts, cf. Griffith (1983), 1–4; Taylor (1991), 77–8; Ferrarin (2000), 292–300.

community, although partly shared with earlier traditions.

Consequently, regarding the issue as to whether the *Great Speech* needs to be examined when studying Protagoras, modern scholars have reached a consensus that the *Great Speech* offers precious information about Protagoras' ideas on human virtues and the origins of the human race and community. In short, the *Great Speech*, though represented in a Platonic work, is produced on the basis of original Protagorean thought. Grote (1875, 47, n. 1), remarks that if the *Great Speech* is "the composition of Protagoras himself, my estimation of him would be considerably raised," argues that the *Great Speech* fairly represents Protagoras' own ideas. Similarly, Adkins (1990, 4–5), albeit personally believing that it seems improbable that Plato borrowed a genuine Protagorean work to present the Myth, confesses that indeed "there was nothing to prevent him [*sc.* Plato] from so doing [*i.e.* presenting Protagoras' own ideas] since all published work was in the public domain" at Plato's time. Levi (1940b, 292–3) also supports this view, affirming that as "the myth and the *logos* are presented by Protagoras without a break, without his having to answer to objection from Socrates, it is natural to think that, in their substance at least, they are taken from the sophist's writings and that they faithfully represent his opinion: accordingly, these texts have a fundamental importance for the interpretation of the essence of his thought."

Probably, as Protagoras endeavours in the *Great Speech* to prove the teachability of political virtues and emphasise the importance of education in the subject, it would have been part of one of the sophist's lost books, entitled also *The Great Speech (Megas Logos)*, from which, according to *Anecdota Parisiensia* I.171.31 (*De Hippomacho* B 3: DK80 B3), Protagoras' fragment on education ('teaching requires nature and practice ... one must start learning from early youth', cf. n. 39 below) is also found. Or, as Dillon and Gergel (2003, 22 and 343, n. 30) suggest, the *Great Speech* which "seems to embody positions that Protagoras should have held—and that Plato certainly did not hold—so that it seems legitimate to make at least cautious and qualified use of it as a source for his [*i.e.* Protagoras'] political theory", would probably have been a part of the sophist's book, *On the Original State of Things (Peri tēs en Archēi Katastaseōs)*, which may have contained Protagoras' views on the origins of the human community as well as his political views,<sup>30</sup> and from which Plato might have

---

<sup>30</sup> Then, the book *The Great Speech* could be considered a part of the book *On the Original State of Things*. Similarly, Kerferd (1981a, 125) posits that the *Great Speech*, especially the Myth, "in all probability is based to some extent on doctrines of the historical Protagoras as published in such works as his treatise *On the Original State of Man*." However, a Protagorean treatise entitled in this way is not found in the list of his works in D.L. 9.55. For similar views, cf. also Nestle (1942), 282–9; Untersteiner (1953), 75–85; Havelock (1957), 407–9; Farrar (1988), 78. On the genuineness of the title *Peri tēs en Archēi Katastaseōs*, cf. O'Sullivan (1996), 120–1.

extracted the *Great Speech*.<sup>31</sup>

## 2. The *Great Speech* in the *Protagoras*

In the *Protagoras*, Protagoras is depicted, by both Socrates and Hippocrates who is eager to learn from the sophist, as someone whose task is to be ‘in charge of making [people] clever at speaking (ἐπιστάτην τοῦ ποιῆσαι δεινὸν λέγειν)’ (312d6–7). To Socrates’ question in what subject precisely Protagoras makes people clever at speaking, the sophist answers that ‘it will be given to you, if you are [i.e. study] with me, that on the very day you associate with me, you will go home a better man, and the same thing will happen on the day after. And also every day, day after day, you will become better (ἔσται τοίνυν σοι, ἐὰν ἐμοὶ συνῆς, ἧ ἂν ἡμέρα ἐμοὶ συγγένη, ἀπιέναι οἴκαδε βελτίονι γεγονότι, καὶ ἐν τῇ ὑστεραίᾳ ταῦτα ταῦτα· καὶ ἐκάστης ἡμέρας ἀεὶ ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον ἐπιδιδόναι)’ (318a6–9). The learning (*mathēma*) of Protagoras’ teaching is then summarised as “‘good deliberation (*euboulia*)”<sup>32</sup> concerning

<sup>31</sup> Cf. also Wolfsdorf (1998), 126–33, for the historicity of dramatic elements of the *Protagoras*, where he suggests that it is fairly acceptable to take Protagoras’ ideas viewed in the *Protagoras* to be historical on the basis of some reliable historical backgrounds illustrated by Plato in the dialogue, such as Callias’ figure both in characteristic and financial aspects. On Protagorean authenticity of the *Great Speech*, cf. also J. Adam and A. M. Adam (1893), xxi–xxii; Nestle (1942), 282–9; Kerferd (1953), 42–5; Untersteiner (1954), 72, n. 24 and 75–85; Havelock (1957), 407–9; Guthrie (1971), 64, n. 1 and 265–8; Barnes (1982), 450; Nill (1985), 5–7; Farrar (1988), 78 and 87–98; Schiappa (1991), 145–7.; Taylor (1991), 78; Morgan (2000), 12 and 132–6; Lavery in O’Grady (2008), 39; Beresford (2009), 2–5.

<sup>32</sup> *Euboulia* (according to LSJ. *s.v.*) literally means ‘good counsel’, ‘soundness of judgement’ or ‘prudence’, and especially in the fifth century BCE, it generally means good or wise counsel, or best decision. Cf. *Pr.* 1035–1038:

Πρ.: σὺ δὲ πάπταινε καὶ φρόντιζε, μηδ' ἀθαδίαν  
εὐβουλίας ἀμείνον' ἠγήση ποτέ.  
Χο.: ἡμῖν μὲν Ἑρμῆς οὐκ ἄκαιρα φαίνεται  
λέγειν· ἄνωγε γάρ σε τὴν ἀθαδίαν μεθέντ'  
ἔρευνᾶν τὴν σοφὴν εὐβουλίαν.

PROMETH. So then, do you take heed, deliberate,  
and do not hold *good counsel* cheaper than an  
obstinate spirit.

CHOR. To us it seems that Hermes speaks in  
season, bidding thee lay aside thy obstinacy and  
with *good counsel* walk the path of wisdom.  
(trans. Thomson, 1932)

Cf. also Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* I.78, 4:

ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐν οὐδεμιᾷ πω τοιαύτη ἁμαρτία ὄντες  
οὔτ' αὐτοὶ οὔθ' ὑμᾶς ὀρῶντες λέγομεν ὑμῖν, ἕως  
ἔτι ἀθαίρετος ἀμφοτέροις ἡ εὐβουλία, σπονδᾶς  
μὴ λύειν μηδὲ παραβαίνειν τοὺς ὄρκους, τὰ δὲ  
διάφορα δίκη λύεσθαι κατὰ τὴν ξυνηθήκην.

Neither we nor you, as far as we can see, are in  
any danger yet of this mistake. So we urge you  
now, while we both still have the freedom to  
make *the best decisions*, not to break the treaty or  
contravene your oaths, but to let our differences  
be resolved by arbitration under the agreement.  
(trans. Hammond, 2009)

Regarding Protagoras’ use of this term, scholars have offered various translations; “proper care of [one’s] personal affairs” (Guthrie, 1956), “prudence” (Ostwald, 1956; Kerferd, 1981a), “formation of correct decision” (Havelock, 1957), “good judgement” (Lamb, 1964; Schiappa, 1991; Allen, 1996; Woodruff, 2005; Schofield and

domestic affairs how best to manage one's household, and concerning the affairs of the city how to be the most influential in the affairs of the city, both in action and speech (εὐβουλία περὶ τῶν οἰκείων, ὅπως ἂν ἄριστα τὴν αὐτοῦ οἰκίαν διοικοῖ, καὶ περὶ τῶν τῆς πόλεως, ὅπως τὰ τῆς πόλεως δυνατώτατος ἂν εἴη καὶ πράττειν καὶ λέγειν)' (318e5–319a2). After that, Socrates asks whether Protagoras professes to teach political art (*politikē technē*) and to make a man into a good citizen (*agathos politēs*), and the sophist agrees (319a4–5).<sup>33</sup>

Listening to Protagoras professing to make men into good citizens by teaching political art (virtues), Socrates objects to Protagoras' claim of the teachability of political art for two reasons: (1) that unlike the case of other arts such as the art of building houses or ships of which the Athenians (who are considered wise by Socrates) look for the experts and call them to the Assembly in order to gain advice whenever they encounter some issues regarding those subjects, when deliberating on the political issues and on the management of their city, the Athenians gather all together in the Assembly whether they are rich, poor, well-born, or low-born, and anyone can bring opinions and advice, clearly on the assumption that there is no such expert on political art (319b3–d7);<sup>34</sup> and (2) that those who are deemed to be great

---

Griffith, 2010), “sound judgement” (Maguire, 1977), “good planning” (Hubbard and Karnofsky, 1982), “proper management” (Taylor, 1991), “sound deliberation” (Lombardo and Bell in Cooper, 1997), “good management” (Dillon and Gergel, 2003; Lavery in O’Grady, 2008), “being good at working out what to do” (Denyer, 2008). For a philosophical use of the term, cf. *E.N.* VI.9.1142b6 ff., where Aristotle distinguishes simple good deliberation (*euboulia haplōs*) that leads its holders to the state of well-being and to the political aim, from more specialised good deliberation that directs its holders to work for more special aim. On the use and meaning of *euboulia* in Pre-Platonic thought, cf. Schofield (1986), 6–31, and for Protagorean use of this term, cf. Schiappa (1991), 184–5.

<sup>33</sup> On Protagoras' profession of education in politics, cf. *Men.* 91d–92a (DK80 A8); Maguire (1977), 104–5; Kerferd (1981a), 25–6.

<sup>34</sup> Taylor (1991, 72–4) formulates Socrates' first objection as below:

- (1) The Athenians are wise (319b3–4).
- (2) (Thus, their opinion can be taken as true.)
- (3) On any arts which the Athenians think can be taught, they allow only experts for advice (319b5–c7).
- (4) On political issues and the management of a city, they allow anyone for advice (319c7–d6).
- (5) Thus, from (3) and (4), the Athenians think that political art cannot be taught (319d6–7).
- (6) Therefore, by (2) and (5), political art cannot be taught.

He points out that this formulation does not perfectly work unless the inserted proposition (2), which is derived from (1), is confirmed to be valid: the proposition (2) is “neither explicitly stated by Socrates nor challenged by Protagoras.” However, if we closely notice the task which Protagoras is performing and the place where the sophist performs his task, we can defend Socrates' objection by a relativising method without asking for the proposition (2): the propositions (1) and (5) can be modified as ‘(1') The Athenians to whom Protagoras is trying to teach political art are wise’, and as ‘(5') (Thus, from (3) and (4), the Athenians whose opinions are considered wise think that political art cannot be taught)’. Then, the conclusive proposition can be modified as ‘(6') Therefore, by (5'), at least to the Athenians, political art cannot be taught, and Protagoras' profession to teach it is meaningless or unwise to them—thus, no one in Athens will be willing to learn from Protagoras’. Taylor (*ibid.*, 73–4) points out one more problem of Socrates' first objection, arguing that “[T]he step from 4 to 5 requires the additional assumption 4': The Athenians consider that it is not the case that all citizens are experts on questions of running the city,” and thus suggests that Protagoras' consideration in his *Great Speech* is to reveal that the Athenians are indeed wrong (regarding the teachability of political virtues). However, Taylor's suggestion seems somewhat dubious, since what Protagoras tries to reveal by the *Great Speech* is not that the Athenians are wrong, but that the Athenians who are still wise indeed think that political art can be taught;



politicians, i.e. those who are regarded to hold political art, like Pericles, though providing their sons with the best education for everything, neither teach them themselves nor have any other specialist educate them in the subject at which they are really wise, namely, political art (319d7–320b3). Socrates thus argues that therefore, to him ‘it does not seem that such virtue (*aretē*) [on political matters] is teachable for these two reasons (εις ταῦτα ἀποβλέπων οὐχ ἡγοῦμαι διδασκτὸν εἶναι ἀρετῆν)’ (320b4–5).<sup>35</sup> Since Protagoras has professed to teach it, Socrates thus requires Protagoras to prove that political virtues can be taught. As a response to Socrates’ objections, Protagoras gives a long display, the *Great Speech* (320c8–328d2), which consists of what has been called ‘the Myth’ as a response to Socrates’ first objection (320c8–322d5) (and its explanatory parts and summary from 322d5 to 324d1) and ‘the *Logos*’ as a response to the second objection (324d1–328c2), and a very brief summary of them (328c3–d2).<sup>36</sup> Protagoras asserts that he can demonstrate the teachability of political virtues, against Socrates’ objections, by presenting his point either in a form of a story (*mythos*) or in that of a reasoned account (*logos*). Then, saying that presenting it in the form of a story will be more charming (*chariesteron*), he first begins with the Myth, responding to Socrates’ first objection and explaining how and why political virtues can and must be taught.

Protagoras offers no further account about the methodological or argumentative differences between the Myth and the *Logos*. The main difference between the Myth and the *Logos* in the *Protagoras*, some suggestions on this notwithstanding,<sup>37</sup> as we will see shortly, seems to lie in their aims. The former, as a story, is self-complete in and of itself, offering a

---

Protagoras’ consideration is rather an attack on Socrates’ misunderstanding of the wise Athenians’ belief on this issue.

<sup>35</sup> What Protagoras first promises to teach is political art, i.e. *technē*, but here Socrates now converts this term into political virtue, i.e. *aretē*. The conversion of art into virtue implies that Socrates regards the former as equated with the latter, and vice versa. However, Protagoras in the following speeches does not seem annoyed by such conversion; rather he also seems to admit it, based on his belief that both political *technē* (art) and political *aretē* (virtue) are, as equated with each other, teachable. The equation of art with virtue seems somewhat problematic, because not all virtues can be treated as equivalent to art. A good ability to see, for instance, is a sort of virtue (or excellence) of the eyes, but this virtue is not considered an art of the eyes. Nonetheless, in the matter of political affairs, it is probable that one can be deemed to fully have an art of managing a city only when one is indeed expert at it, that is to say, one has the virtue (i.e. excellence) in it. In this regard, both Protagoras and Socrates seem to admit the interchangeable usage of art and virtue. Along with them, in my analysis of the *Great Speech*, ‘political virtues’ and ‘political art’ are entirely interchangeable with each other. For further discussion on such equation of *technē* with *aretē*, especially in Protagoras’ thought in the Myth, cf. pages 33–5 and n. 46 below. Cf. also Adkins (1973), 4; Taylor (1991), 75–6; Allen (1996), 144.

<sup>36</sup> For a division of the *Great Speech*, cf. Kerferd (1953), 42; Gagarin (1969), 134 and 139–44; Taylor (1991), 76 and 99–100; Taylor (1996), 16–17. Most recently, Schofield and Griffith divide Protagoras’ *Great Speech* (320c–328d) as follows (2010, 140):

- 320c–323c: The myth of Prometheus and Epimetheus, with commentary on its meaning.
- 323c–324c: The practice of punishment reveals a general belief that goodness can be taught.
- 324cd–328a: The relevant forms of teaching are not a matter for a specialised art or science.
- 328a–d: Protagoras reformulates his manifesto, and summarises the case he has made.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Taylor (1991), 76; Morgan (2000), 138–41; Dillon and Gergel (2003), 348, n. 87 and n. 88; Denyer (2008), 100.

descriptive and self-justifying idea that does not require any further proof, whereas the latter, as an argument, uses certain types of argumentative methods for justification or proof of the suggested points in its structure. In fact, the Myth, relying on the divinity for its justification in relation to the idea of the initial and original disposition of human beings with the civic senses, is presented to show that all men in a city share in a sense of what is right (*dikē*) and a sense of shame (*aidōs*) so that they are capable of possessing political virtues such as justice (*dikaiosynē*) and moderation (*sōphrosynē*) to some extent—against Socrates’ first objection.<sup>38</sup> On the contrary, the *Logos*, adopting argumentative methods such as a kind of hypothetical method and analogical method for its justification, aims to demonstrate that all good men in a city indeed (try to) teach their sons political virtues and thus their possession of the political virtues (to a relatively higher degree compared to those who absolutely lack them) makes them not entirely bad—against Socrates’ second objection. Such differences will be more clearly revealed below. Let us first examine the Myth of the *Great Speech*.

## 2.1. The Myth

The Myth runs as follows: Once upon a time the gods existed, but mortal creatures did not, and when the time came that was set by fate for mortal creatures’ generation, the gods put earth, fire, and the elements blended with earth and fire into the earth and mixed them to mould the mortal creatures. The gods then ordered the two titans, Prometheus (‘Forethought’) and Epimetheus (‘Afterthought’), to assign various powers for survival to the mortal creatures. Epimetheus begged Prometheus for the privilege of assigning the powers himself, and distributed each power to each mortal with Prometheus’ consent. Epimetheus gives different kinds of power (*dynamis*) of survival to non-reasoning mortal creatures. They are respectively assigned strength, speed, claws, horns, small size, wings, the ability to dwell underground, thick hair, tough skins, natural bedding, hooves, and the ability to digest and survive upon different kinds of food such as pasture, fruits, roots, and a meat-eating habit, and finally prolific and non-prolific characters for a good balance of survival. These powers are given as innate capacities to the non-reasoning mortal creatures because the assignments

---

<sup>38</sup> Similarly, Plato tries to establish his cosmology by presenting a likely story (*eikōs mythos*) on the origins of the physical universe and relies on the story itself for the plausibility, or validity of his cosmology (*Tim.* 26a ff.). There the Demiurge, using paradigms and imitating the heavenly universe, creates the physical universe as it is now as an image (*eikōn*) of the heavenly universe, but no explanation or justification of why he had to create it as it is now; the only justification of his creation of the world is suggested through his divinity. Likewise, Socrates’ explanation of the existence of human soul and its immortality in the *Meno* 81a, takes a form of story, relying on the saying of priests and priestesses for its justification.

were made before they were born. However, since Epimetheus was not very wise, he absentmindedly assigned all the possible given powers to the non-reasoning animals, and was then left with the problem of a completely unequipped human race:

ἄτε δὴ οὖν οὐ πάνυ τι σοφὸς ὢν ὁ Ἐπιμηθεὺς ἔλαθεν αὐτὸν καταναλώσας τὰς δυνάμεις εἰς τὰ ἄλογα· λοιπὸν δὴ ἀκόσμητον ἔτι αὐτῷ ἦν τὸ ἀνθρώπων γένος, καὶ ἠπόρει ὄτι χρήσαιτο. ... ἀπορία οὖν σχόμενος ὁ Προμηθεὺς ἦντινα σωτηρίαν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ εὕροι, κλέπτει Ἥφαιστου καὶ Ἀθηνᾶς τὴν ἔντεχνον σοφίαν σὺν πυρί— ἀμήχανον γὰρ ἦν ἄνευ πυρὸς αὐτὴν κτητὴν τῷ ἢ χρησίμην γενέσθαι—καὶ οὕτω δὴ δωρεῖται ἀνθρώπῳ. τὴν μὲν οὖν περὶ τὸν βίον σοφίαν ἄνθρωπος ταύτη ἔσχεν, ... ἐπειδὴ δὲ ὁ ἄνθρωπος θεΐας μετέσχε μοίρας, πρῶτον μὲν διὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ συγγένειαν ζώων μόνον θεοὺς ἐνόμισεν, καὶ ἐπεχείρει βωμούς τε ἰδρύεσθαι καὶ ἀγάλματα θεῶν· ἔπειτα φωνὴν καὶ ὀνόματα ταχὺ διηρθρώσατο τῇ τέχνῃ, καὶ οἰκῆσεις καὶ ἐσθῆτας καὶ ὑποδέσεις καὶ στρωμνάς καὶ τὰς ἐκ γῆς τροφὰς ἤϋρετο. οὕτω δὴ παρεσκευασμένοι κατ' ἀρχὰς ἄνθρωποι ὄκουσιν σποράδην, πόλεις δὲ οὐκ ἦσαν· (321b6–322b1)

Now Epimetheus, since he was not wholly wise, did not notice himself having used up all the powers on the non-reasoning kinds; so the human race was left unfurnished by him, and so he was at a loss what he should do. ... Prometheus, having this problem, found a way of preservation for mankind, so he stole from Hephaestus and Athena technical wisdom along with fire—for it was impossible for anyone to acquire or use that art without fire—and in this manner he bestowed [them] to man. Thus man obtained the wisdom about life [i.e. individual survival] in this way, ... since man shared of a divine portion, first of all, because of his kinship with the god, of living creatures he only worshiped the gods, and he attempted to set up altars and statues of the gods. Second he soon articulated sound and words by means of his art, and he discovered housings, clothing, foot-gear, bedding, and food from the earth. Thus equipped, at the beginning men lived scattered, and there were no cities.

Seeing that among the mortal creatures only the human race was equipped with no powers to survive, Prometheus stole from Hephaestus and Athena technical wisdom (*entechnon sophia*) along with fire (*pyr*) by which one can acquire wisdom, and gave them to the human race. These two things were given by Prometheus to human beings before they were asked to come out in the light of day. Thus, like non-reasoning creatures who received Epimetheus' gifts for their individual survival, now human beings were equipped with their own powers for individual survival.

Technical wisdom and the use of fire enable human beings not only to advance their individual survival through the ability to create bedding, housing, and get food from the earth, but also to worship the gods with which they share in divinity to some degree, developing the

use of articulate speech—the symbols of rationality that distinguish human beings from non-reasoning creatures. In Protagoras’ thought, thus, human beings, who are innately equipped with technical wisdom and fire, are by nature those who are able to develop and use language and to establish the fundamentals for individual survival.<sup>39</sup>

However, as the human race is still physically weaker than some non-reasoning mortal creatures, men need to gather together to protect themselves from the attacks of other creatures, building a community for which they will require a certain type of wisdom such as political wisdom. But technical wisdom and fire that are innately given by Prometheus to human beings do not ensure them the ability to construct cities and live together. No city exists yet at this stage:

ἦν γὰρ παρὰ τῷ Δίῳ. τῷ δὲ Προμηθεΐ εἰς μὲν τὴν ἀκρόπολιν τὴν τοῦ Διὸς οἴκησιν οὐκέτι ἐνεχώρει εἰσελθεῖν—πρὸς δὲ καὶ αἱ Διὸς φυλακαὶ φοβεραὶ ἦσαν (321d5–7), ... ἀπώλλυντο οὖν ὑπὸ τῶν θηρίων διὰ τὸ πανταχῆ αὐτῶν ἀσθενέστεροι εἶναι, καὶ ἡ δημιουργικὴ τέχνη αὐτοῖς πρὸς μὲν τροφήν ἰκανὴ βοηθὸς ἦν, πρὸς δὲ τὸν τῶν θηρίων πόλεμον ἐνδεής—πολιτικὴν γὰρ τέχνην οὐπω εἶχον, ἧς μέρος πολεμικὴ—ἐζήτουν δὴ ἀθροίζεσθαι καὶ σφύζεσθαι κτίζοντες πόλεις· ὅτ’ οὖν ἀθροισθεῖεν, ἠδίκουν ἀλλήλους ἄτε οὐκ ἔχοντες τὴν πολιτικὴν τέχνην, ὥστε πάλιν σκεδαννύμενοι διεφθείροντο. (322b1–8)

For that [i.e. political art] was near to Zeus. And there was not enough time for Prometheus to come to the citadel of Zeus—moreover, the guards of Zeus were terrible, ... so they [i.e. human beings] were killed by the wild beasts, because they were altogether weaker than them, and their craftsman’s art was sufficient to them for providing food, but insufficient for fighting against the wild beasts—for they did not yet have political art of which the art of warfare is part—and so they sought to gather together and preserve themselves by founding cities. Now when they gathered together, they did wrong to each other, in as much as they did not have the political art, so they scattered and were destroyed again.

The natural human power, the craftsman’s art (*dēmiourgikē technē*) previously described as technical wisdom and fire, is sufficient to help the human race to secure food and bedding, the basic necessities for individual, but not communal, living. However, due to their physical weakness compared to wild beasts, the human race is not able to survive when living

<sup>39</sup> In a fragment on education, which states that ‘teaching requires nature and practice ... one must start learning from early youth (φύσεως καὶ ἀσκήσεως διδασκαλία δεῖται ... ἀπὸ νεότητος δὲ ἀρξαμένων δεῖ μαθηθῆναι)’ (*Anecdota Parisiensia* I.171.31: DK80 B3), Protagoras seems to mean by ‘nature’ this natural rationality through which human beings are able to develop and use language. Students must have natural rational abilities to learn, basically an ability to understand what is said, i.e. language. Later, in the *Logos* part (325c6–7), when demonstrating that indeed all good men in a community teach their children political virtues, Protagoras asserts that parents educate their children from early youth, as soon as they can understand what is said.

individually. To protect themselves against the threat of the wild beasts, human beings need to build a community in which they can gather together, with the potential to wage the art of warfare (*polemikē technē*) which constitutes a facet of political art (*politikē technē*)—the art of warfare is not equivalent to the wild beasts’ innate ability to hunt; the latter is more like a natural instinct which comes with their naturally equipped powers such as sharp teeth and strength, while the former is what needs to be performed with certain strategies, aiming to gain victories in battles. Thus, the art of warfare, when performed, requires man to be able to maintain relationship with others, i.e. (a sort of) political art. In short, to survive, human beings need to possess political art. As they gather together with the hope of protecting themselves but without the necessary facility in political art, they do wrong to each other (*adikein allēlous*), scatter and live individually, again facing the end of the race.

Next, Protagoras presents the final passage of the Myth on the issue regarding human survival in a community. In this passage, Zeus, worrying about the survival of human beings and wishing to save them from extinction, devises a way:

Zeὺς οὖν δεισας περὶ τῷ γένει ἡμῶν μὴ ἀπόλοιτο πᾶν, Ἑρμῆν πέμπει ἄγοντα εἰς ἀνθρώπους αἰδῶ τε καὶ δίκην, ἵν' εἶεν πόλεων κόσμοι τε καὶ δεσμοὶ φιλίας συναγωγοί. ἐρωτᾷ οὖν Ἑρμῆς Δία τίνα οὖν τρόπον δοίη δίκην καὶ αἰδῶ ἀνθρώποις· "Πότερον ὡς αἱ τέχναι νεπέμνηται, οὕτω καὶ ταύτας νείμω; νεπέμνηται δὲ ὧδε· εἷς ἔχων ἰατρικὴν πολλοῖς ἰκανὸς ἰδιώταις, καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι δημιουργοί· καὶ δίκην δὴ καὶ αἰδῶ οὕτω θῶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἢ ἐπὶ πάντας νείμω;" "Ἐπὶ πάντας," ἔφη ὁ Ζεὺς, "καὶ πάντες μετεχόντων· οὐ γὰρ ἂν γένοιτο πόλεις, εἰ ὀλίγοι αὐτῶν μετέχειεν ὥσπερ ἄλλων τεχνῶν· καὶ νόμον γε θεὸς παρ' ἐμοῦ τὸν μὴ δυνάμενον αἰδοῦς καὶ δίκης μετέχειν κτείνειν ὡς νόσον πόλεως." (322c1–d5)

So Zeus, fearing that our [i.e. human] race would wholly perish, sent Hermes to bring to men a sense of shame (*aidōs*) and a sense of what is right (*dikē*), so that they might be the principles of order of cities and the bonds of friendship. Now Hermes asked Zeus in which way he was to give a sense of shame and a sense of what is right to men: “As the [technical] arts were distributed, so shall I distribute these [to men]? These [arts] were distributed thus: one doctor is enough for many men, and so with the other craftsman’s arts. Shall I give a sense of what is right and a sense of shame to men in that way too, or distribute them to all?” “To all,” said Zeus, “and let all share in them; for cities could not exist, if only a few shared in them as in the other arts. And establish a law from me that he who cannot share in a sense of shame and a sense of what is right must be killed as a disease of the city.”

Zeus orders his son, Hermes, to bring human beings two senses by means of which they will

become capable of maintaining a social life and living all together. These two senses are a sense of shame (*aidōs*) and a sense of what is right (*dikē*). Anyone who receives a sense of what is right and a sense of shame has an ability to develop his powers to construct and preserve a community in which he can safely survive and exist with others who too share the same senses; if not, he must be regarded as a serious disease causing fatal problems in the community and killed in the name of Zeus.<sup>40</sup>

At the same time, these senses are the principles of the order and the bonds of friendship among men. Without the order and the bonds of friendship, no one is able to live together with others. A man who lacks these senses cannot coexist with others and so will perish. In short, a sense of what is right and a sense of shame are given to men, not to worship higher beings such as the gods, but to care for one another in a human community.<sup>41</sup> Unlike the distribution of other technical arts (e.g. the art of medicine), Zeus commands that all human beings must be given these senses in order to live all together in societies and avoid the extinction of their race, and that whoever does not have them must be punished by death.

From this passage, Protagoras is now seen to suggest a complete idea of a human being: ‘one who can properly and safely exist as a man only in a community is a man who must be given a sense of what is right and a sense of shame; otherwise he can no longer survive.’<sup>42</sup> The initial powers, technical wisdom and fire, enable a man to pursue an individual life, but outside a community only for a very short period until he gets killed by wild beasts, so that they cannot fully guarantee the complete preservation of man’s survival. The survival of a

---

<sup>40</sup> Protagoras’ promise to teach good deliberation on how to manage domestic affairs can be understood in this regard, since a family is also a human community, as a starting point of social life. Even in a domestic community man needs to know how well to manage it with a sense of what is right and just; otherwise this community will not exist and neither will man. The management of domestic affairs, thus, is no less important than that of political affairs in Protagoras’ thought.

<sup>41</sup> Zeus is often illustrated as the god of friendship. Cf. *Gorg.* 500b6 and *Phdr.* 234e2.

<sup>42</sup> Some scholars have considered a sense of what is right and a sense of shame, together with political virtues (justice, moderation and etc.), a human nature or natural powers. This consideration, however, does not seem plausible for the following reason: non-reasoning mortal creatures were innately equipped by Epimetheus’ distribution with their natural powers, such as strength, speed and ability to fly and swim, to survive. Likewise, human beings were innately equipped by Prometheus’ effort with technical wisdom and fire before they came out to the light. However, a sense of what is right and a sense of shame were given by Zeus to human beings when they faced the extinction of their race; in other words, according to the Myth, human beings came to possess these senses obviously after birth. Something that one obtains after birth is not a natural power; these senses are rather something afterwards acquired, especially in this case of the Myth. In fact, if a sense of what is right and a sense of shame are considered human natures, Protagoras would be instantly questioned how he can process to teach something that everyone has as a human nature. If these senses are not human natures, then, what does Protagoras think they are? Protagoras would probably believe that they are ‘basic and fundamental moral insightful dispositions’, by which human beings are able to establish and develop political virtues such as justice and moderation, through education and punishment, and thus subsequently hold and exercise them, pursuing a better civic life in a human community. On this point to understand a sense of what is right and a sense of shame as moral insightful disposition, cf. Levi (1940b), 294, n. 4; Loenen (1940), 11, n. 28; Heinimann (1945), 116; Kerferd (1953), 42–5 and (1981a), 142–3; Rankin (1983), 89–91.

human being in a full sense is possible only in a community that men build when they possess a sense of what is right and a sense of shame—these senses are thus a necessary condition of the survival of human beings. These senses, equipped for human civic life in a community, are thus a type of civic senses.<sup>43</sup>

On account of the above passage, the civic senses have been deemed by some scholars to be identical with political wisdom and political virtues in Protagoras' thoughts. And, in reflecting this onto Protagoras' claim of teaching and other passages in the *Great Speech*, this identification results in the following equation: "good deliberation = political virtues (art) = good citizenship = virtues = political wisdom = justice, moderation, holiness and the rest of political virtues = human virtues" (this identification comes from Maguire (1977), 105. Cf. also Weiss (1985), 335–6 and Zilioli (2007), 95, n. 13). However, it is not obvious whether the civic senses are equivalent to political virtues; at 321d5–7 in the Myth Protagoras simply states that political art (virtues) is needed for human beings to preserve their survival in community, but it is 'near to Zeus (*para tōi Dii*)', protected by his terrible guards, so that Prometheus was unable to steal it, then later at 322c1–d5 Protagoras says that Zeus gave human beings a sense of what is right and a sense of shame. Due to the difference between the passages, it is not necessary to identify those senses with political virtues; rather it is possible to assume that Zeus decided to give human beings a basic and fundamental moral insightful disposition, i.e. the civic senses, for human civic life, by which human beings are able to establish and exercise political virtues (cf. n. 42 above). Then, only the following remains acceptable: 'political virtues (art) = justice, moderation, holiness and the rest of political virtues = human virtues'—these are established only on the basis of the civic senses.

The equipment of the civic senses, as a rudiment later equipped by the order of Zeus, is what enables human beings to construct communities and thus preserve their survival and existence. At this stage, it is enough for human beings to have only the civic senses in order to survive by constructing communities; but on the basis of these civic senses, it becomes possible for them to acquire further and establish political virtues for a better life in communities, through proper care, teaching, and practice. It is thus not in question whether the civic senses are teachable, since they are equally given to all human beings by Zeus—

---

<sup>43</sup> The fact that the Promethean gifts come chronologically earlier to men than the Zeusian gifts does not entail that thus the former are more essential than the latter. Rather in Protagoras' thought what is essential for something seems to be what preserves its existence and survival, not simply what comes first to it. For instance, what is essential for lions is, not their fur (coming earlier), but their sharp teeth and strength (coming later). In this sense, unlike a traditional view (cf. J. A. Davison's *TAPhA* 80 (1949, 66–93), cited in O'Sullivan (1995), 15 and 22, n.3), what is supposed to represent the feature of Protagoras as one caring for humanity is likely, not Prometheus, but Zeus.

what is in question is, obviously, political virtues. If this disposition of the civic senses is given to man unequally and relatively, then no peaceful life and agreement on what is right and wrong in a community can be guaranteed.

Protagoras further explains by showing the teachability of political virtues and answering Socrates' first objection, i.e. why the Athenians think that everyone should get involved with giving counsel on public matters:

<p>διὰ ταῦτα οἱ τε ἄλλοι καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι, ... οἴονται ... ὅταν δὲ εἰς συμβουλήν πολιτικῆς ἀρετῆς ἴωσιν, ἣν δεῖ διὰ δικαιοσύνης πᾶσαν ἰέναι καὶ σωφροσύνης, εἰκότως ἅπαντος ἀνδρὸς ἀνέχονται, ὡς παντὶ προσῆκον ταύτης γε μετέχειν τῆς ἀρετῆς ἢ μὴ εἶναι πόλεις. (322d5–323a3)</p>	<p>For these reasons [i.e. all human beings share in the civic senses by the order of Zeus], the others and also the Athenians [whose common opinion Socrates takes for his first objection] ... think ... that whenever they come to the counsel on political virtue, which<sup>44</sup> must proceed entirely through justice and moderation, they reasonably accept advice from all men, since all men share in this virtue, or else there would be no cities.</p>
--	---

This passage is somewhat tricky, since here Protagoras asserts that all men share in political virtue, not in the civic senses; thus the sophist has been criticised by modern scholars (cf. Levi, 1940b, 293 ff.; Kerferd, 1953, 43 ff.) for the inconsistency that Protagoras professes to teach what all men already have, i.e. political virtue. But in this passage Protagoras does not explicitly mention that all men share in political virtue ‘by nature’ or ‘by Zeus’ command’ (cf. n. 42 above). Rather, Protagoras seems to mean that the reason why all men are described as having political virtue may be due to the earlier education in political virtue that all have in their community, as Protagoras himself will shortly say in his *Logos*. That is, all are supposed to be able to give counsel on political virtue such as justice and moderation, because they beforehand shared in a sense of what is right and a sense of shame, i.e. the civic senses, that have enabled them to be properly educated in political virtues from the very beginning of their social life both privately and publicly.

One more criticism of another inconsistency has been suggested; Taylor (1991, 87–8) points out that Protagoras' position in this passage seems “inconsistent with his common sense admission that not every member of a civilized community is a good man (cf. 329e5–6, 349d5–8).” The problem of this inconsistency, however, seems to be easily resolved if the meaning of ‘unjust’ in the claim is taken in Protagoras’ thought as a case of lack of justice

---

<sup>44</sup> The antecedent referred to by ἣν is συμβουλήν, not ἀρετῆς. Cf. Taylor (1991), 87.



due to lack of education, not as a case of lack of a sense of what is right. This point will be clearer if we look at an analogous example: when the process of fertilisation of a baby has just started, the embryo will be immediately equipped with natural powers, but not yet with legs and arms. Later on, legs and arms (i.e. proper bodily disposition) will be formed. Having formed legs enables a man to achieve and activate his ability of walking and running, and later with proper education and practice of it, his walking and running ability will be finally completed. In this case, however, it is not true that simply because one has legs, one can automatically and naturally run. Likewise, a man, who shares in a sense of what is right by the order of Zeus (i.e. proper disposition of the civic senses), can seem unjust (*adikos*), if he has not yet been educated in justice (i.e. a political virtue), especially when compared to others who have properly been. This reading of the Myth shows that sharing in the civic senses is a pre-condition for sharing in justice and moderation. At this stage, nonetheless, the satisfaction of the former condition does not necessarily prove the automatic and natural completion of the latter condition; what we can infer from the Myth so far is that the satisfaction of the former condition only makes human beings capable of pursuing the completion of the latter condition.

Protagoras, by comparing the confession of being unjust with one's profession to be good at other technical virtues (323a5–b7), offers one more piece of evidence that all men (*pantes anthrōpoi*) are believed to share in justice, moderation, and other political virtues. According to his comparison, if someone claims to be good at the art of flute-playing when he is not really so, others around him will laugh at him or get annoyed at him, and his family will treat him like a mad man; whereas, in relation to the case of justice and the other political virtues, if someone who is indeed unjust (*adikos*) and also regarded so by others tells the truth about himself to others, they will think of him as mad or non-human. All men have to claim that, whether they are really so or not, they are just (*dikaioi*). Protagoras argues that it is 'because they think everyone must share in this [i.e. political virtues] to some extent or other, or else not be among men (*anthrōpoi*) at all (ὡς ἀναγκαῖον οὐδένα ὄντιν' οὐχὶ ἅμῶς γέ πῶς μετέχειν αὐτῆς, ἢ μὴ εἶναι ἐν ἀνθρώποις)' (323b7–c2).

It is worth examining exactly what Protagoras means by the example of an 'unjust' and 'mad' man. One can suggest that a man who admits to being unjust is wholly lacking both in a sense of what is right and in the justice of which everyone is supposed to share. But this suggestion can be only accepted partially; after all, Protagoras would not admit that a man who is able to live with others in a community can entirely lack a sense of what is right, since it is given by Zeus to all men to (be able to) have a civic life in the community. But lacking

justice for someone can be possible, if he has not established it on the basis of his sense of what is right, by not having received fine education in it, or having practised it properly. Protagoras, by the expression ‘sharing in political virtue to some extent or other (*hamōs*)’ (323c1), seems to admit the different degree of virtues in people. This expression surely gives us the impression that Protagoras insinuates that the degree of political virtues would probably be determined by the different extent of education or practice.<sup>45</sup> Hence, Protagoras, in the following passages, of course, immediately tries to prove the teachability of political virtues. An unjust man is, in Protagoras’ eyes, one who, while having a sense of what is right, has no justice either at all or fully.

This unjust man, if he confesses to be unjust before others, is considered mad. But, in what sense is he mad? Taylor (1991, 88–9) argues that this unjust man must be considered mad, either (a) because “[E]veryone must possess (justice) to some extent or other, or else be banished or put to death”, or (b) because “[E]veryone must possess (justice) to some extent or other, unless he did he could not live in a community”. In case (a), the mad man is mad because he condemns himself to the death penalty or banishes himself from human community by admitting to be unjust; while in case (b), the mad man is mad because he says something apparently untrue by admitting to be unjust, since no one can be unjust. Taylor then further argues that, although the suggestion (b) “fits better with 327c–d” in the *Logos* in which Protagoras says that even the most unjust man in a human society governed by laws appears just and expert at political virtues in comparison with those without education or laws, the suggestion (a) “appears more strongly supported” on the grounds that it “follows directly from the words of Zeus at 322d4–5, and is supported by the reference to the capital punishment of moral ineducables at 325a7–b1”; he then points out that (a) is however inconsistent with “the views which Plato attributes to Protagoras in these passages.” Neither case, however, seems plausible. The case (b) is based on the assumption that there can be no unjust man at all. However, as previously mentioned, man, if he is a man at all, who cannot stand up against Zeus’ command, must share in a sense of what is right, but may lack justice

---

<sup>45</sup> This point seems congruent with Protagoras’ fragment on art and practice, which states that ‘art is nothing without practice and practice nothing without art (μηδὲν εἶναι μήτε τέχνην ἄνευ μελέτης μήτε μελέτην ἄνευ τέχνης)’ (Stob. iii (Flor.) 29, 80: DK80 B10). In this fragment Protagoras may reveal his idea that all types of art—including, of course, political art (virtues)—need practice, since without it even the art that one has acquired, whatever it is, will fade. In another fragment on education that ‘education does not sprout in the soul unless one goes to a great depth’ (Plutarch *On Practice* 178.25: DK80 B11) (The original Greek is lost, the English version translated by O’Brien in Sprague (1972, 24) is a translation of a German translation of a Syriac version by J. Gildemeister and F. Bücheler), again, the sophist seems to emphasise the importance of practice. Such practice for art needs to begin from early youth, according to Protagoras’ later claim in the *Logos* (325c6–7) and the fragment on education (*Anecdota Parisiensia* I.171.31: DK80 B3) (cf. n. 39 above).

due to lack of education and practice. Protagoras does not completely deny the possibility of a human being without education of political virtues such as savages like those in the poet Pherecrates' play (327d3–4). If this is the case for Protagoras, someone's 'admitting to be unjust' could mean his 'admitting that he lacks justice, i.e. admitting that he lacks education in political virtues', and this is not untrue and impossible. On the contrary, the inconsistency in case (a) comes from the apparent contradiction between the proposition that 'by Zeus' command all men share in justice' and the proposition that 'there exists an absolutely unjust man'. Indeed, Protagoras, in the above passage, states that 'everyone must possess political virtue, namely justice'; but the possession of justice is not accomplished at the same level for everyone, but 'to some extent or other' depending on different circumstances for people. The possibility of different degrees of political virtue entails the possibility of teaching it, and thus solves the problem of inconsistency in the case (a). Accordingly, the 'mad' man referred to is simply, as a limited instance of case (a) without inconsistency, someone who dares to put himself to death, but he is not telling something false.

Protagoras' comparison also sheds light on his use of the notion of art interchangeably with virtue in the *Great Speech* (as briefly mentioned at n. 35 above). As seen above, in the comparison of technical arts and political virtues (e.g. justice), Protagoras compares the confession of being unjust with the false profession of being expert in the art of flute-playing. If someone professes to be expert at the *art* of flute-playing when he is not really so, people will think of him as mad; and if someone confesses to being unjust in the case of political *virtues*, people will think of him as mad too. This shows that, at least in his speech, Protagoras seems to suppose that art (*technē*) and virtue (*aretē*) are to be treated as equivalent to each other, or regarded as something similar to each other in their character. Being an expert in flute-playing (i.e. having the art of flute-playing) is being excellent in flute-playing (i.e. having the virtue/excellence of flute-playing), and likewise, being an expert at how to manage political affairs (i.e. having political art) is being excellent at how to manage political affairs (i.e. having political virtues/excellence). One who is thought to have the art of flute-playing is admitted to possessing it only if he is indeed excellent at flute-playing, and one who is thought to be excellent at flute-playing is thought to be really so only if he actually has this art. Equally, one who is thought to have political virtues is confirmed in possessing them if he is indeed excellent at managing political affairs, and so one who is thought to have political virtues is proved to be so only when he indeed has this art. Thus, both Socrates' and

Protagoras' transposition of *art* into *virtue* can be understood in this regard.<sup>46</sup>

Protagoras now focuses on the demonstration of the teachability of political virtues, promptly stating that 'after this [i.e. that everyone shares the civic senses (and in justice and moderation as well)], what I shall try to show you is that they [*sc.* the Athenians and others] think that this [i.e. political virtue] does not come by nature or by accident, but is teachable and is present to whomever it comes to be present as a result of care (ὅτι δὲ αὐτὴν οὐ φύσει ἡγοῦνται εἶναι οὐδ' ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου, ἀλλὰ διδακτόν τε καὶ ἐξ ἐπιμελείας παραγίνεσθαι ᾧ ἂν παραγίγηται, τοῦτό σοι μετὰ τοῦτο πειράσομαι ἀποδειῖξαι)' (323c5–8). As a demonstration of this, Protagoras immediately makes the comparison between an absurd and foolish case of attempting to correct one's natural deficiency and a fine and necessary case of correcting one's lack of political virtue.

According to the Athenians' common belief, no one gets angry or annoyed at those who have natural faults or deficiencies; those who are naturally ugly or short or extraordinarily weak do not get punished or blamed for their natural deficiencies, but pitied. Protagoras insists that it is really foolish (*anoētos*) if one attempts to correct their natural faults by reforming them, since it is impossible to change one's nature.<sup>47</sup> On the contrary, on the qualities that can be acquired, not by nature, but by 'care (*epimeleia*)', 'practice (*askēsis*)', and 'teaching (*didachē*)', people get angry and annoyed at those who lack them, and are willing to punish them for the sake of correction or reformation. Among these qualities, there are justice, piety, and other virtues, and thus the absence of them is considered injustice (*adikia*), impiety (*asebeia*), as an evil state, i.e. 'collectively everything that is contrary to political virtue (συλλήβδην πᾶν τὸ ἐναντίον τῆς πολιτικῆς ἀρετῆς)' (323c8–324a1).

Protagoras continues that, unlike punishment of wild beasts that is inflicted as blind vengeance for past misdeeds,<sup>48</sup> human punishment aims at reformation in the future so that not only the same person who beforehand received proper punishment but also the others who have seen this person receiving punishment do not commit the wrongdoing, e.g.

---

<sup>46</sup> One may raise an objection that art is defined *in terms of*, or *aims to*, virtue/excellence, and thus they cannot be equivalent to each other. This may be true; but at least both in Protagoras' and Socrates' thoughts in the *Protagoras*, this objection is not taken into consideration. On this equation of art and virtue, cf. Adkins (1973), 4; Taylor (1991), 75–6. They both suggest that *aretē*, in some passages like 323a7–8, can even be read as 'skill' that can apparently be taught.

<sup>47</sup> Protagoras, adopting the Athenians' common beliefs, appeals to their being wise by implicitly emphasising that the wise men would not do such a foolish (*anoētos*) thing to correct human natural deficiencies. The point here asserted by the sophist, of course, is that even the wise Athenians think that political virtues that are not given to human beings by nature but gained by care, practice, and teaching are something that can be taught, standing against Socrates' first objection.

<sup>48</sup> It is not quite sure in what sense Protagoras claims that the wild beasts punish and take vengeance for the past misdeed. Allen (1996, 98) posits that "in fact wild beast do not exact vengeance."

something unjust or impious, again in their community. This kind of human punishment which is inflicted for the sake of the future is taken ‘with reason (*meta logou*)’ (324b1), while that of animals’ that is inflicted for the blind vengeance would apparently be without reason. Human beings, who are originally and innately equipped with some divine features like technical wisdom and the use of fire (322a5–6) by means of which they can develop language and are considered rational, should consider the punishment something administered on the basis of reason—an instrument designed for reformation and correction. And by offering this sort of rational instrument, people can acquire and establish the proper virtues for a better life in a community.<sup>49</sup>

At this stage, it seems that Protagoras manifestly identifies punishment with a sort of education. Education is, as the sophist initially stated when he was asked by Socrates to tell what he taught, and as he will also state in the following *Logos*, basically what guarantees men a better state regarding a certain subject. The more education in the subject one has, the better one will be about the subject. Also, by looking at the fact that well-educated people have better lives in general and are more influential in a community, others may want to be educated as well. Just like education that aims at promising a better life, punishment, according to Protagoras, is oriented toward leading people into a better life with a better political character in a community. Protagoras says that when educating a youth if he does not willingly obey his teachers and acts ‘like a piece of warped and crooked wood, the teachers must direct him straight with threats and beatings (ὥσπερ ξύλον διαστρεφόμενον καὶ καμπτόμενον εὐθύνουσιν ἀπειλαῖς καὶ πληγαῖς)’ (325d6–7).<sup>50</sup> In this respect, it is quite

---

<sup>49</sup> For further discussion on the concept of punishment and its application for correction, as well as the manner of its justification, in relation to the modern view on it, cf. Taylor (1991), 90–6.

<sup>50</sup> Allen (1996, 98) argues that Protagoras here seems not to make a distinction between a descriptive concept of justice, i.e. for example, a theory on legal system, and a normative idea on the application of punishment, i.e. for instance, case by case articles of the laws. The sophist simply insists that whoever lacks the political qualities to handle political matters must be punished, and that those qualities can be fairly taught. Thus, the fact that there is no such distinction in Protagoras’ speech paradoxically shows that “Protagoras identified the justification of punishment in individual case with what he thinks ought to be its institutional aim: to correct and deter, to prevent future wrongs.” If Protagoras indeed considered them identical, he obviously committed “a fallacy of division”, since a theory on legal system is one by which case by case articles of the law can be determined to apply to a certain case of wrongdoing, not what is the same as those articles. For instance, “the legal order punishes theft to deter it, and Jones because he has committed theft; the rule [i.e. the theory on legal system] is justified by its purpose, but the punishment by Jones’s breach of the rule.”

However, Allen’s argument seems somewhat rash, if we bear in mind the purpose of Protagoras’ Myth. What Protagoras aims by presenting the Myth is not to identify a theory of a legal system with a manual on the application of punishment, but to show what he was asked to show, that is, the teachability of political virtues, and also that even the wise Athenians think so, against Socrates’ first objection. Protagoras has not been required to clarify the difference between a theory of legal system and a manual on the application of punishment to each case, but to demonstrate the rationale and role of punishment as a sort of education for those who lack non-natural qualities such as political virtues. It is remarkable that throughout the passages in the Myth, Protagoras, expressing his own thought on the teachability of political virtues, never fails to appeal to the

understandable why in this passage the most severe and harshest punishment that man can have, i.e. the death penalty or banishment, is not taken into consideration at all.

According to Zeus' command, the death penalty and banishment from a city must be inflicted on anyone who entirely lacks the civic senses, namely, a non-human being in Protagoras' eyes. But, all human beings, so long as they are supposed to be capable of living together with each other in a community since they have already shared those senses, do not deserve to receive these kinds of most severe and harsh punishment, but to receive punishment by which they can be reformed to pursue a better life in the community. The death penalty and banishment cannot be considered reformation of someone who has committed wrongdoings, because they do not aim to correct him and his life, although they may lead others who see him put to death or exiled to a better life. On the basis of an idea of punishment as a type of education, therefore, Protagoras concludes that against Socrates' first objection, the Athenians indeed think that all who share in the civic senses must get involved in debate on political issues, and that political virtues can be taught on the basis of those senses.<sup>51</sup>

## 2.2. The *Logos*

Protagoras now turns to the *Logos* in order to answer to Socrates' second objection. Socrates had earlier (319d7–320b3) pointed out that those who are thought of as great politicians, such as Pericles, neither teach their sons political virtues themselves nor have any other specialist educate them in political virtues. From this Socrates inferred that political virtues are, thus, not teachable. For the answer to the second objection, Protagoras first utilises a sort of hypothetical method to demonstrate that those who are considered good at political virtues certainly care for their sons on the ground of the teachability of political virtues; and then he

---

Athenians' common belief. Refuting, or answering to, one's adversary's argument by using the same source on which he relies is in fact a very effective rhetorical strategy. When utilising this rhetorical strategy, no further argument—in this case, particularly, for the division between a theory of legal system and a manual for the application of punishment depending on each case—may be needed, if an answer, or refutation, is sufficiently given. At this stage Protagoras thus may not, though he may have an idea on such division, feel the need to make such distinction and demonstrate it to Socrates. In addition, *pace* Allen, not giving a distinction between two different things at a certain stage is not the same as considering them identical at that stage. There is no need to rashly conflate Socrates' (or Plato's) thought with the Athenians' belief about the non-teachability of political virtues (at least in the *Protagoras*) when he brought the objection based on this belief to Protagoras' profession, simply because he does not give his detailed account of it.

<sup>51</sup> For more analyses of the Myth and its argumentative structure, cf. Taylor (1927), 241–7; Heinemann (1945), 115–6; Kerferd (1949), 20–6, (1953), 42–5 and (1981a), 142–3; Guthrie (1971), 63–8 and 255ff.; Dodds (1973), 9–23; Adkins (1973), 3–12; Blumenberg (1979), 299 ff.; Schiappa (1991), 181–7; Nussbaum (2001), 100–6; Taylor (2007), 9–20; Denyer (2008), 99–109. Cf. also Vernant (1965), esp. ch. 4; Vernant and Detienne (1974); Brisson (1975), 7–37.

utilises a sort of analogical method for the argument that not only good men, but indeed everyone teaches political virtues to their sons. Both methods throughout the *Logos* aim to prove that all men as well as the wise Athenians try to teach political virtues. It first goes as follows:

ὁδε γὰρ ἐννόησον· πότερον ἔστιν τι ἐν ἧ οὐκ ἔστιν οὗ ἀναγκαῖον πάντας τοὺς πολίτας μετέχειν, εἴπερ μέλλει πόλις εἶναι; ἐν τούτῳ γὰρ αὕτη λύεται ἢ ἀπορία ἦν σὺ ἀπορεῖς ἢ ἄλλοτι οὐδαμοῦ. εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἔστιν, καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ ἐν ... δικαιοσύνη καὶ σωφροσύνη καὶ τὸ ὄσιον εἶναι, καὶ συλλήβδην ἐν αὐτὸ προσαγορεύω εἶναι ἀνδρὸς ἀρετήν—εἰ τοῦτ' ἐστὶν οὗ δεῖ πάντας μετέχειν καὶ μετὰ τούτου πάντ' ἄνδρα, ἐάν τι καὶ ἄλλο βούληται μανθάνειν ἢ πράττειν, οὕτω πράττειν, ἄνευ δὲ τούτου μή, ἢ τὸν μὴ μετέχοντα καὶ διδάσκειν καὶ κολάζειν καὶ παῖδα καὶ ἄνδρα καὶ γυναῖκα, ἕωσπερ ἂν κολαζόμενος βελτίων γένηται, ὃς δ' ἂν μὴ ὑπακούῃ κολαζόμενος καὶ διδασκόμενος, ὡς ἀνίατον ὄντα τοῦτον ἐκβάλλειν ἐκ τῶν πόλεων ἢ ἀποκτείνειν—εἰ οὕτω μὲν ἔχει, οὕτω δ' αὐτοῦ πεφυκότος οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἄνδρες εἰ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα διδάσκονται τοὺς υἱεῖς, τοῦτο δὲ μή, σκέψαι ὡς θαυμασίως γίνονται οἱ ἀγαθοί. ὅτι μὲν γὰρ διδακτὸν αὐτὸ ἡγοῦνται καὶ ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ, ἀπεδείξαμεν· (324d7–325b4)

Consider it this way; is there or is there not one thing in which all citizens are of necessity to share, if there is to be a city at all? In this [one thing] and this alone, not anything else, the very problem with which you are in trouble [i.e. Socrates' second objection that those who seem to hold political art neither teach their sons political art themselves nor have teachers of it for them] is solved. For if it exists, and it is one thing ... to be justice and moderation and holiness, I call this one collectively human virtue—if this is what all must share in, and what all men must act with, even if [this is] whatever else one wants to learn or to do, and anyone who is without it or does not share in it must be taught and punished, whether man or woman or child, until they become better through punishment, and anyone who does not respond to punishment and teaching must be regarded as incurable and banished from the city or put to death—if that is the way things are, and if this is natural, but good men have their sons taught other things, but not this, then think how surprising it is that they became good men. For we have shown that this thing [i.e. political virtue] is thought to be teachable both privately and publicly.

Protagoras here utilises a kind of hypothetical method in which by a sort of *modus ponens* he tries to demonstrate that good men indeed teach their sons political virtues, or at least care for them in relation to political virtues. First he sets up a premiss that ‘there must be one thing in which all men in a city must share, if there is to be the city.’ This premiss is justified by the Myth that everyone in a city must share in a sense of what is right and a sense of shame on which everyone is capable of building up political virtues, and by a fact that they all (i.e.

Protagoras, Socrates, Hippocrates, the others in Callias' house, and the Athenians as well) now really live in the city of Athens, thus it is true that there is a city in which they live. Setting up this premiss, Protagoras puts forth the following hypotheses: (1) the one thing that all men in a city must have is not a particular technique but justice (*dikaiosynē*), moderation (*sōphrosynē*), and holiness (*hosios*), i.e. collectively human virtue (*aretē andros*), and without this one thing being held by all, there can be no city and thus no man; (2) if someone does not have it, the others need to concentrate on reforming or correcting him, by way of punishment; (3) someone who is diagnosed as incapable of being reformed at all, cannot be considered 'man' due to the complete absence of ability of gaining this virtue, and he must be banished from the city or put to death. After proposing these hypotheses Protagoras argues that if they all are the case, it is obvious that good men in their city indeed teach their sons political virtues. At this point, Protagoras seems to appeal to a common belief to which Socrates does not bring any objection that no one who is good wishes to leave their sons banished from their city or dead, believing that this is not good at all. If good men do not care for their sons in regard to teaching them political virtues, then, how can they be considered 'good' men? This hypothetical method can be briefly reformulated as follows:

- A premiss that is justified by the Myth and a fact: There must be one thing in which all men [in a city] must share, if there is to be a city.
- A proposition that needs to be justified: (If those who are regarded as good are really 'good' because they have political virtues,) those who are regarded as holding political virtues teach their sons political virtues.
- Hypothesis (1): The one thing that everyone in a city must have is political virtues.
- Hypothesis (2): If one does not have political virtues, one must be reformed or corrected by punishment or instruction.
- Hypothesis (3): If one is not able to be reformed at all, one must be banished from a city or put to death.
- A common belief (4): Those who are regarded as holding political virtues are indeed considered good, and they do not want their sons to be banished from their city or put to death.
- Conclusion (the proposition justified): (Since (1), (2), (3) are justified by the Myth and (4) is commonly accepted,) those who are regarded as holding political virtues do teach their sons political virtues.

According to Protagoras, good men in a city offer their sons care and teaching of political



virtues from their youth and as long as they live. As soon as their sons begin to understand language, i.e. as soon as they begin to exercise properly their human rational nature (the Promethean gifts), people try to implant political virtues into their sons' minds by showing them 'by every word and deed that this is right, and that wrong, this praiseworthy and that shameful, this holy and that unholy, and by saying "do this" and "do not do that" (παρ' ἕκαστον καὶ ἔργον καὶ λόγον ... ὅτι τὸ μὲν δίκαιον, τὸ δὲ ἄδικον, καὶ τόδε μὲν καλόν, τόδε δὲ αἰσχρόν, καὶ τόδε μὲν ὄσιον, τόδε δὲ ἀνόσιον, καὶ "τὰ μὲν ποίει", "τὰ δὲ μὴ ποίει")' (325d2–5). Later they send their sons to school, where more attention is paid to the education of well-ordered behaviour (*eukosmia*). The school education thus focuses on, for the improvement of their minds, learning the works of good poets by heart and developing the skill in a musical instrument like the lyre. When their minds are properly formed by those ways of education, their bodies will be in a better condition to act under their directions, and finally the school education turns to physical training. Reading the works of good poets which entail a lot of exhortation, praises, eulogies, and panegyrics helps their sons to realise what a good and worthwhile life is. The development of instrumental musical skill, which helps their sons to uplift moderation (*sōphrosynē*) in their minds, makes them habituated to the rhythms and melodies by which they become more civilised (*hēmeroteros*), well-balanced (*eurythmoteros*) and better adjusted (*eu[h]armosteros*), and so useful (*chrēsimos*)<sup>52</sup> in speaking and acting. And the physical training helps them not to be forced by physical deficiency to act cowardly in battle or in any other situation.<sup>53</sup> After this school education, the sons are forced by the city to learn the laws and to consider them as their life paradigms and live along with them not to go astray and lose their life goals. Like the outlines of letters drawn by teachers with a stylus in writing-notebooks for children by which they do not go out of the proper lines when writing letters, the laws are laid down by the city for the purpose of guiding them not to go out of proper life in their city. 'The city that drew the laws, the discoveries of good and ancient lawgivers, compels them to rule and to be ruled according to them [i.e. the laws], and punishes anyone who steps outside them (ἡ πόλις νόμους ὑπογράψασα, ἀγαθῶν καὶ παλαιῶν νομοθετῶν εὐρήματα, κατὰ τούτους ἀναγκάζει καὶ ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι, ὅς δ' ἂν ἐκτὸς βαίνη

<sup>52</sup> *Chrēsimos* is "a key Protagorean term" reminiscent of a significant term, *chrēmata*, in the sophist's Man-Measure Doctrine. Here Protagoras implicitly reveals his idea of *chrēmata*: one's soul's fineness as being more civilised, well-balanced, and better adjusted through proper education enables one to act and speak well in one's community. This implication is very much suitable for the education of political virtues as well. Cf. Dillon and Gergel (2003), 350, n. 103.

<sup>53</sup> Note the similarity between Protagoras' purpose of school education here and that of Plato's in the *Republic* III and the *Laws* II and VII where Plato has Socrates argue for the importance of musical and physical practices for soul's and body's self-controlled state, i.e. harmony. Cf. Kerferd (1981a), 146–7; Dillon and Gergel (2003), 350, n. 103.

τούτων, κολάζει)’ (326d5–8). The punishment inflicted by the city in the name of the laws is called in many places, including Athens, ‘straightening (*euthynai*)’,<sup>54</sup> since ‘the penalty (*dikē*)<sup>55</sup> straightens [wrongdoers] (ὡς εὐθυνούσης τῆς δίκης)’ (326e1).

Protagoras continues demonstrating that good men in their city teach—and indeed have taught—their sons political virtues. For this demonstration, the sophist, by means of a sort of analogical method, argues that in a city no one is absolutely ignorant of or lacking political virtues. In the analogy Protagoras’ view on the possibility of different levels or degrees of political virtues depending on different education and circumstances is also revealed:

εἰ μὴ οἶόν τ' ἦν πόλιν εἶναι εἰ μὴ πάντες ἀλλήται ἦμεν ὁποῖός τις ἐδύνατο ἕκαστος, καὶ τοῦτο καὶ ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ πᾶς πάντα καὶ ἐδίδασκε καὶ ἐπέπληττε τὸν μὴ καλῶς ἀλοῦντα, καὶ μὴ ἐφθόνει τούτου, ... οἶει ἂν τι, ἔφη, μᾶλλον, ὃ Σώκρατες, τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀλλήτων ἀγαθοῦς ἀλλήτας τοὺς υἱεῖς γίγνεσθαι ἢ τῶν φαύλων; οἶμαι μὲν οὐ, ἀλλὰ ὅτου ἔτυχεν ὁ υἱὸς εὐφύεστατος γενόμενος εἰς ἀλλησιν, οὗτος ἂν ἐλλόγιμος ἠξήθη, ὅτου δὲ ἀφυῆς, ἀκλειῆς· καὶ πολλάκις μὲν ἀγαθοῦ ἀλλήτου φαῦλος ἂν ἀπέβη, πολλάκις δ' ἂν φαύλου ἀγαθός· ἀλλ' οὖν ἀλλήται γ' ἂν πάντες ἦσαν ἱκανοὶ ὡς πρὸς τοὺς ἰδιώτας καὶ μηδὲν ἀλλήσεως ἐπαίοντας. (327a4–c4)

Suppose that there could not be a city unless all played the flute to the best of their ability, and each taught all these things both privately and publicly, and punished one who played badly and refused [to share with all others in] it, ... do you think, he [*sc.* Protagoras] said, Socrates, that the sons of good flute-players would become better flute-players than the sons of poor players? I think not, but if one’s son happened to become well-suited for flute-playing, the son would grow highly reputed, while if one’s son [happened to become] unsuited [for flute-playing], the son [would grow] inglorious. And often the son of a good flute-player would turn out poor, and the son of a poor flute-player good. But they all would play the flute [sufficiently] enough as against those particular individuals who never play it at all.

Likewise:

οὕτως οἴου καὶ νῦν, ὅστις σοὶ ἀδικώτατος Similarly, too now, whoever appears to you as

<sup>54</sup> *Euthynai* is the technical term indicating the public review and examination to audit officials’ behaviour, taken at the end of their term of service. On the use of this term in ancient texts, cf. *Pol.* 1274a17–18 and *Ath.* 48.4–5. On this term, cf. Sauppe and Towel (1889), 79; Dillon and Gergel (2003), 350, n. 104; Denyer (2008), 118; Schofield and Griffith (2010), 163, n. 40.

<sup>55</sup> *Dikē* here means, not literally a sense of what is right as previously meant, but ‘the penalty’ established on this sense as a customised legal punishment process. Translations of this word here are “the penalty” (Guthrie, 1956), “the prosecution” (Lamb, 1964), “the law” (Taylor, 1991), “the just penalty” (Allen, 1996), “legal action” (Lombardo and Bell in Cooper, 1997), “Justice” (Dillon and Gergel, 2003), “the legal process” (Schofield and Griffith, 2010).

φαίνεται ἄνθρωπος τῶν ἐν νόμοις καὶ ἀνθρώποις  
τετραμμένων, δίκαιον αὐτὸν εἶναι καὶ  
δημιουργὸν τούτου τοῦ πράγματος, εἰ δέοι αὐτὸν  
κρίνεσθαι πρὸς ἀνθρώπους οἷς μήτε παιδεία  
ἐστὶν μήτε δικαστήρια μήτε νόμοι μηδὲ ἀνάγκη  
μηδεμία διὰ παντὸς ἀναγκάζουσα ἀρετῆς  
ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, ἀλλ' εἶεν ἄγριοί τινες οἷοίπερ οὗς  
πέρυσιν Φερεκράτης ὁ ποιητῆς ἐδίδαξεν ἐπὶ  
Ληναίῳ. (327c4–d4)

the wickedest among those men who have been  
brought up in the laws, is just and skilled in this  
thing [i.e. political virtues], if he is to be  
compared to men who have never had education,  
or courts, or laws, or any coercion at all to force  
them to care for virtue, but rather they would be  
savages like those in the poet Pherecrates' play at  
last year's Lenaea.

If the ability of playing the flute were necessarily required for all men in a city to maintain its existence, they would all teach it to others as much as they could, and the city would be better if all its members were better able to play the flute. Analogously, if the possession of political virtues is of necessity required for everyone in a city to maintain its existence, all those in the city would teach it to others as much as they could, and the city would be a better city if all its members possessed political virtues at a better and higher level. Yet, not everyone can reach the same level at the art of flute-playing; some may become the best players if they are well-suited for this, some may not if they are not. Analogously, not everyone can reach the same degree of political virtue. Nonetheless, all men who have been taken care of by promoting their ability to play the flute in their city are good enough at this skill compared to those who have never received any education in it. Analogously, all men who have been taken care of for the possession of political virtues in their city are good enough at it compared to those who have never been forced by education, courts, laws, or any coercion for it. Three main points, united as an answer to Socrates' second objection, are vividly made in this analogy: (1) all men take care that others possess political virtues, including, of course, the good politicians with their sons, because this is the only way for them to keep their city existent; (2) political virtues are found in varying degree in men; and (3) all men in a city are indeed good at and aware of political virtues (when compared to those with no education at all).

Together with this, Protagoras draws one more analogy between teaching political virtues and learning a language. He says that 'all are teachers of [political] virtue to the best of their ability, but no one will appear [as a teacher of it] to you; why, it is as if you were seeking who is a teacher of speaking Greek, no one would appear [as the teacher of it] (πάντες διδάσκαλοί εἰσιν ἀρετῆς καθ' ὅσον δύνανται ἕκαστος, καὶ οὐδεὶς σοὶ φαίνεται· εἶθ', ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ ζητοῖς τίς διδάσκαλος τοῦ ἐλληνίζειν, οὐδ' ἂν εἷς φανεῖη)' (327e1–328a1). Men,

while not holding a fully actualised power to speak their native language from the very beginning of their individual life, can learn it from everyone while growing up and associating with others, both at home and at school. But, to learn it, they are at least required beforehand to have the capacity for learning and using it, namely, the rationality that came from Prometheus' gifts. Analogously, men, while not having full political virtues from the very beginning of their social life, can learn them from everyone while growing up and associating with others in their city. But, to learn political virtues, they are at least required in advance to hold the capacity for learning them, namely the civic senses, Zeus' gifts, thanks to which such virtues can be educated and established. Therefore, Protagoras concludes that the sons of those with great political virtues, like the sons of Polycleitus, are not *as bad* as Socrates initially described in his objection; it is too early to blame them for being bad since they are still young with more chances to learn political virtues, and there is still hope (*elpis*) for them (328c3–d2). With this conclusion, Protagoras finishes his *Great Speech*, adding that in teaching political virtues, that is to say, in making people fine and good, he surpasses others,<sup>56</sup> so that he deserves to receive as large fees as he wants (cf. n. 7 in Chapter I above), or according to the oath made by his students on how much they think that what they have learned is worth (328b1–c2).

The points made throughout the *Great Speech* can then be summarised as follows (with slightly modified order):

- (1) Prometheus' gifts (human nature): technical wisdom (*entechnon sophia*) and [the use of] fire (*pyr*).
- (2) Zeus' gifts (disposition with which human beings are equipped afterwards): a sense of what is right (*dikē*) and a sense of shame (*aidōs*).
- (3) Parents, teachers, and neighbours (by rational education and punishment): political virtue/art such as justice, moderation, and holiness (*politikē aretē/technē: dikaiosynē, sōphrosynē, hosios*), to some extent.
- (4) Protagoras (by rational education): good deliberation (*euboulia*) on public and domestic affairs, i.e. political virtue/art, to the best extent.

---

<sup>56</sup> What is not proved in the *Great Speech* is ironically the claim that Protagoras himself is the best one who can teach political virtues. In the following passages of the dialogue, Socrates, not bringing further objections to the *Great Speech*, rather focuses on examining whether Protagoras is really the best in this subject, by questioning him how he understands and clarifies virtues, especially whether all different types of virtues are in fact the same or not, i.e. the unity of virtue. Probably, Socrates would believe that if Protagoras were indeed the best, he could have answered all his questions, without being refuted, throughout the dialogue.

### 3. A claim about objective civic senses and the relativity of ethical application

All men in human communities are given the same civic sense, i.e. a sense of what is right and a sense of shame, by which they are able to rightly practise their actions and speeches in order to preserve their community and secure their survival. Protagoras' profession of teaching initially targets not the improvement of the same civic senses that all share but the improvement of political virtues by adding good deliberation to the senses—indeed, the sophist never claims in the *Great Speech* that he does or can teach the civic senses. In this regard, I suggest, Protagoras' teaching profession seems firmly grounded on the common objective civic senses as the ethical and political principles.

#### 3.1. A claim of ethical relativism or a form of ethical relativity?

Under the dominant influence of reading Protagoras' works viewed as a radical relativist, mostly on the grounds of the Platonic reading of the Man-Measure Doctrine in the *Theaetetus*, modern scholars have attempted to read the *Great Speech* as a theory of ethical relativism. Such attempts are basically supported by two points. First, as Kerferd (1953, 43 and 1981a, 143) and Woodruff (2001, 58–9) suggest, the civic senses were unequally, i.e. relatively, distributed to men—since in the *Great Speech* Protagoras does not explicitly state that everyone was given the civic senses *equally* by Zeus—and thus, in this regard, Protagoras still holds fast to a notion of ethical relativism. Second, as Zilioli (2007, 101–2) argues, in the *Great Speech* Protagoras would not deny the view that people have different political virtues in different communities and times, i.e. relativised political values, depending on various factors, and adopt them as their political and ethical principles in their societies.

The first point, *pace* Kerferd and Woodruff, however, seems to overlook Zeus' intention to distribute the civic senses to all human beings. Zeus, looking at the risk of the extinction of human race, orders Hermes to distribute a sense of what is right and a sense of shame to all men. Here Zeus explicitly orders that, unlike other technical arts that are unequally given, *all* human beings must possess the civic senses, so that they can construct their community and live there with others. Zeus' order shows that all men at a fundamental level are *equally*, i.e. in the same degree, given the civic senses. For, if men were unequally given these senses and thus some had them at a higher degree while others at a lower degree, some deeds practised by those with the civic sense at the lower degree, although they themselves may consider

their deeds appropriate for the preservation of their community, could perhaps be regarded as inappropriate to practise, i.e. as wrongdoings, by those with the civic senses at the higher degree. If this kind of situation indeed occurred at the fundamental stage of constructing a human community, it would be impossible for men to live together, and hence the human community would face the danger of demolition again. Zeus, the god of friendship, who is pictured as caring for the preservation of human race in the *Great Speech*, does not seem to want to take such a risk. Protagoras may have not felt the need to state explicitly and directly that ‘the civic senses are equally distributed to all men’, because this idea is already and clearly included in Zeus’ order; Socrates also does not doubt this in the dialogue.

The suggestion that education in political virtues is especially needed for those who are given the civic senses at the lower degree is also implausible in the *Great Speech*. Protagoras neither states that education in political virtues should particularly target those with a relatively lower degree of the civic senses, nor professes to offer education in the subject only to them. And further, as we have seen above, the aim of Protagoras’ education is to elevate his students’ political virtues, not to promote their civic senses. Political virtues that are initially given to men through the very first private education by parents at home can be further developed via proper public education in the subject at school or court on the basis of the civic senses; but the civic senses are not what can be enhanced through education—they can be given to human beings only by Zeus, according to the *Great Speech*.

Zilioli (2007, 101–2) supplies an argument in support of the second point on Protagoras’ ethical relativism, which runs as follows:

But this [i.e. the fact that all men shared in the idea of justice and respect] does not mean that the shared idea of justice and respect is objectively valid in any given society. In the light of the strict parallel that Protagoras draws between practical arts and political technique [cf. *Prot.* 322a5–b8], it follows that the same technique, if applied by different people and in different contexts, will produce quite different results (in the case of political technique, it will produce rather different political virtues). Although all human beings are provided with the practical capacity to speak, they speak in fact different languages, according to the geographical place where they happen to live or to the historical time when they happen to live. ... It may easily be inferred that things will go the same way as far as political technique is concerned. Although all human beings are given the capacity to live together, to cohabit politically, they build their communal life on different conceptions of political virtue, namely on different ideas of what is just and respectful.

The argument continues:

The concept of technique that was historically predominant in the fifth century BC helps us to understand that for those Greeks living at that time, such as Protagoras, the employment of a technique just meant following some codified procedures; no assumption was ever made about the objectivity of the result obtained through the application of those codified procedures. To apply the same technical procedure in different contexts and by different individuals did not mean that the excellence or virtue obtained through the application of such a procedure needed to be objectively the same one in all cases and, above all, that the performing of such an excellence amounted to obtaining the same results [See Kube (1969); Cambiano (1991: pp. 15–28)]. ... Since in Protagoras' Myth, respect and justice (specifically), political virtue (in general) are best seen as the result of the application of a technique, this does not leave much space for an objectivist reading of such a Myth. ... Applied in different contexts and by different people, political technique produces different political virtues, that is, different conceptions of justice and respect.

In his argument Zilioli claims that the fact that all human beings are equipped with the idea of justice (*dikē*) and respect (*aidōs*) does not necessarily produce the same results in political affairs due to the different applications of political virtue, just like other technical arts that yield different results in their areas depending on the users' characters and locations and times. Given these different and also relative results both in particular arts and in political actions and speeches, the argument concludes that the *Great Speech* makes a relativist claim about ethical values.

It may be true that, depending on geographical and chronological differences or on differences of personal characters and education, people may act and speak differently. Especially, in some particular cases, like the subject of Protagoras' teaching profession, the *application* of the civic senses would be relativised depending on various circumstances. But this does not necessarily entail a form of ethical relativism but merely a form of relativity of ethical principles. Zilioli's argument seems to be a result of confusion between a relativist claim of ethical values and relative results from the application of a non-relative notion on them. Bett (1989, 141–7) argues that a form of relativity which seems to appear as a type of relativism is “only superficially relativistic”, and indeed should be distinguished from a claim of relativism in a deep sense in which “*statements in a certain domain can be deemed correct or incorrect only relative to some framework*” (Bett's italics).

A claim of ethical relativism, on the one hand, represents the position that there are no such absolute and objective ethical norms, such as an objective concept of justice accepted by all everywhere, and thus that the ethical norms are (believed to be) relatively true in each society. On the other hand, ethical relativity is based on the objectivist position of ethical

principles that apply to all people everywhere, and it simply entails the idea that the application of the same and objective ethical-political principles to particular political cases is relative and different, considering the production of proper or better results of the application, since the same, objective ethical-political principles are never relativised (cf. Cook (1999), 7–12). In such cases of ethical relativity, when people apply these principles in their community, mutual influence occurs to both the applicants and the others; hence, the members of the community are affected by the results of the application, such as their political actions and speeches. The significantly different features between a claim of ethical relativism and ethical relativity can be clearly formulated as follows:

(1) A claim of ethical relativism:

$x$  [e.g. an ethical norm] is  $F$  [e.g. right] *for/in*  $A$  [e.g. a city (or people in the city) that believes  $x$  to be right]  
 and  $\neg F$  [e.g. not-right] *for/in*  $B$  [e.g. a city (or people in the city) that believe  $x$  to be wrong],  
 thus,  $x$  is relative, and  $F$  *for/in*  $A$  and  $\neg F$  *for/in*  $B$ .

(2) Ethical relativity:

not  $x$  [e.g. a sense of what is right (as an ethical norm)] itself,  
 but *application of*  $x$  [e.g. actions and speeches for political issues] for a certain purpose [e.g. preservation of a community and human race] is  $F$  [e.g. just] (depending upon certain circumstances) *for/in*  $A$  [e.g. a city (or people in the city) that knows  $x$  to be right]  
 and  $\neg F$  [e.g. unjust] (depending upon certain circumstances) *for/in*  $B$  [a city (or people in the city) that also knows  $x$  to be right],  
 thus,  $x$  itself is not relative, but *application of*  $x$  is relative, and  $F$  *for/in*  $A$  and  $\neg F$  *for/in*  $B$ .

Thus, relativists “deny that there is anything to be known about  $x$  which they do not know: they know that  $x$  is  $F$  in  $A$ ,  $\neg F$  in  $B$ ,” on the contrary, those who hold a position of relativity do not deny the possibility of acquiring (or knowing)  $x$  in itself without reference to any relations of it to other things.<sup>57</sup>

An example will clarify a case of ethical relativity: in a desert area people may conserve water by barely taking showers, while in a forest area people may use too much of water taking showers as often as needed. In the former area people do not consume water because

---

<sup>57</sup> Annas and Barnes (1985), 98 and 132–4. On the difference between relativism and relativity in a philosophical stance, cf. Okrent (1984), 341–58; Bett (1989), 139–69, esp. 141–7. Cf. also Cerroni (2001), 356–65, for the difference between ethical relativism and ethical relativity in the light of social theory.



consuming water may bring some conflict—one's consumption of water may block others from using it— and destroy their friendship, and it may be hard for them to preserve their society. On the contrary, in the latter area not consuming water—i.e. not taking showers often—may cause the possible outbreak of infectious diseases and thus undermine their community. In this example, the actions of those who live in the desert area and those in the forest area both should be practised along with a certain and objective ethical and political principle for the preservation of their communities and indeed their friendship and race. The application of the principle to a case of using water, however, is considered a just action in the forest area, while it is an unjust action in the desert area—but only the application of the principle is relative. In this regard, “different cultures express the same human potential, and they try to meet the same human needs,” as Woodruff (2005, 130) claims.

Two more points can be shortly made against the point on language difference offered in Zilioli's argument above. First, Zilioli exemplifies different languages in different areas: different people in different places at different times use different languages although they all have the same capacity of speaking a language. However, this example shows no more than the variance in the usage and development of language in different conditions. People with the same capacity of speaking a language in the same place at the same time indeed use language differently, and also their levels of utilising the language are not entirely the same. This is, however, rather because of their different education in the language or their different capacities for learning and using the language, than because of the relativistic nature of language. Someone who admits the possibility of alternative and relative use of language due to various education or capacities is not necessarily a linguistic relativist; he is only adopting a form of linguistic relativity in relation to different factors. A linguistic relativist, if it were even possible for one to be such, may be one who argues that there is no such universal language and that a language is by nature indeterminate and also relative in relation to various factors. Whoever tries to acquire and use a language must grasp for different and relative stages of the language, in comparison with others, due to various factors and its relative nature. And further, one who holds the idea that people need to use language correctly cannot be a relativist, since a radical linguistic relativist, as Woodruff (2005, 158–9) rightly states, “would encourage students to use language as they pleased.” In this case, strictly speaking, no linguistic agreement can be established, and thus it would be as impossible as the construction of cities (cf. Plato's criticism of perceptual relativism in the

*Theaetetus* in Appendix 3 below).<sup>58</sup>

Second, Zilioli in his argument distinguishes technique, i.e. art, from virtue in order to argue that virtue comes from the application of technique and so the different application of technique results in different virtue. This distinction seems inconsistent with Protagoras' thought in the *Great Speech*, since he does not make such a distinction at all; rather, as discussed above, together with Socrates, the sophist equates art (*technē*) with virtue (*aretē*), believing that both are acquired through education on the basis of the objective and common civic senses that are equally distributed to all men (cf. 320b4–5; cf. also n. 35 and pages 33–5, n. 46 above). Thus, having acquired a certain technique regarding political matters will be, by Protagoras as well as Socrates in the discussion, considered equivalent to having learned political virtues by which men can deal with political matters in a better way.

### 3.2. Protagorean *dikē*, *aidōs*, and political virtues

As a form of ethical relativity, in Protagoras' *Great Speech* the principles which people apply to their actions and speeches in relation to political and ethical cases for the preservation of their race and community are the civic senses that are equally given to all human beings. On the grounds of the civic senses, human beings can further pursue political virtues. What exactly are then the civic senses in Protagoras' view? In order to gain an answer to this question, it would be helpful for us first to look briefly at the common understanding of a sense of what is right (*dikē*) and a sense of shame (*aidōs*) in antiquity when the Homeric ethical and political views were dominant (esp. from 8<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, before the influence of philosophical concepts), and then to examine Protagoras' view of them in the *Great Speech*.

At a primitive stage, *aidōs* was used in antiquity as a naturalistic and pathological explanation to indicate a certain type of psychological sense by which men are able to feel and further understand embarrassment. The fundamental experience connected with a sense

---

<sup>58</sup> As I will discuss in Chapter V below, Protagoras is known to have emphasised the correct use of language. In this emphasis the sophist, insisting the correctness of words (*orthoepia*), the correct usage of the genders of words—masculine, feminine, and neuter—and division of the tenses of verb, argues for the naturalism of language on the grounds of 'the grammatical genders on the basis of natural gender' and 'the morphological consistency' of the words based on their grammatical genders. For the sources of Protagoras' correct use of language, cf. *Phdr.* 267c4–d4 (DK80 A26); *Crat.* 391c2–4 (DK80 A24); *Rhet.* III.5.1407b6–8 (DK80 A27); *Soph. Elen.* XIV.173b16–25 (DK80 A28); *Poet.* XIX.1456b15 ff. (DK80 A29); D.L. 9.52 (DK80 A1); *Per.* 36 [Stesimbrotos, FGrHist. 107 F 11 ii 519] (DK80 A10). On Protagoras' interest in language, cf. Steinthal (1891), 135–9; Porzig (1950), 353–5; Guthrie (1971), 205 and 219–21; Kerferd (1981a), 68–9; Schiappa (1991), 57 and 164; Donovan (1993), 43–6; Di Cesare (1996), 87–118; Woodruff in Long (1999), 295 and 309, n. 3; Dillon and Gergel (2003), 341, n. 10.

of shame comes from being seen inappropriately, in the wrong conditions such as being ‘naked’; “the word *aidoia*, a derivative of *aidōs*, “shame”, argues Williams (1993, 77–9), is a standard Greek word for the genitals,” ... thus “The reaction” to avoid feeling embarrassed “is to cover oneself or to hide, and people naturally take steps to avoid the situations that call for it: Odysseus would be ashamed to walk naked with Nausikaa’s companions” (cf. *Od.* 6.221–222 for Odysseus naked).<sup>59</sup>

In order to avoid feeling ashamed, people were required to anticipate how they would feel if someone saw them when they were in a wrong condition and talked about it. Such a primitive stage of *aidōs*, as Williams (1993, 79) argues, expanded further to various kinds of public and social embarrassment or similar emotions by which man can understand guilt, such as inappropriate actions that may have a bad influence upon humanity and human relationship. In this sense, the lack of *aidōs* conveys a significant sign of the absence of humanity. The suitors of Penelope in Homer’s *Odyssey* can be taken as a good example of this case.

When the Greeks came to enlist Odysseus’ support in the Trojan War, Odysseus at first pretended to be insane. Palamedes, however, tricked Odysseus in order to reveal his deceit; finally Odysseus was forced to enter the war. When there was no sign of Odysseus’ return to his place even though the war was over, many suitors came to seek Penelope’s hand in marriage. As time went on, the smaller the chance that Odysseus would return became, the more the suitors behaved badly and inappropriately, and they began to take control of the palace, consuming Odysseus’ property at their feasts during his absence. They became more and more bold; for instance, one of them, Antinous, proposed to the other suitors that they should kill Telemachus, son of Odysseus and Penelope, saying that while he was alive, it would be difficult or impossible for the suitors to accomplish their purpose. They tried to murder him in the open sea during Telemachus’ homeward trip but failed; Antinous now believed that it would be best for them to murder him in some road of Ithaca, before he denounced them in front of the assembly. After that, Antinous said that the suitors could

---

<sup>59</sup> The following is Williams’ etymological explanation of *aidōs* (1993, 194, n. 9): “[T]here are two Greek roots bearing the sense of “shame”: *aid-*, as here and in the noun *aidōs*, and *aischyn-*, as in the noun *aischynē*. I have not been generally concerned to separate uses of the two kinds of word. Not much turns on the distinction, for my purposes, and, in particular, many of the variations are diachronic: in most connections, *aischyn-* terms tend to replace *aid-* ones. G. P. Shipp (*Studies in the Language of Homer*, 2nd ed., p. 191) points out that the middle *aischynomai* occurs only three times in Homer, and only in the *Odyssey*: “This is the beginning of the replacement of *aidēomai*, completed in Attic prose.” Cf. *Il.* 22.105–6, discussed later in the text (p. 79), with *Od.* 21.323–4. Herodotus, Shipp continues, uses both verbs, with a differentiation of sense: *aidēomai* + acc., to “respect the power etc. of”; *aischynomai*, to “be ashamed”. In Attic, *aischynomai* took over both these senses: cf. Eur. *Ion* 934 *aischynomai mēn σ’, ὃ γέρον, λέξω δ’ ὅμως* with *HF* 1160 *aischynomai gar tois dedramēnois kakōis*.”

divide Odysseus' property among them all, letting Penelope and his new husband keep the house (cf. *Od.* Book 4). Eurymachus, whom Odysseus long ago had taken on his knees, feeding him with meat and letting him taste the wine, felt compelled to instigate other suitors to kill Odysseus, when failing to persuade him into forgiving the suitors (cf. *Od.* Book 22). Odysseus' exclamation to Telemachus shows how unacceptable the suitors' bad and inappropriate actions were in human society:

βουλοίμην κ' ἐν ἐμοῖσι κατακτάμενος μεγάροισι  
 τεθνάμεν ἢ τάδε γ' αἰὲν ἀεικέα ἔργ' ὀράσθαι,  
 ξείνους τε στυφελίζομένους δμφάς τε γυναικάς  
 ῥυστάζοντας ἀεικελίως κατὰ δόματα καλά,  
 καὶ οἶνον διαφυσσόμενον, καὶ σῆτον ἔδοντας  
 μάψ αὐτως ἀτέλεστον, ἀνηνύστῳ ἐπὶ ἔργῳ.<sup>60</sup>  
 (*Od.* 16.106–111)

I would rather die by the sword in my own house  
 than witness the perpetual repetition of these  
 outrages, the brutal treatment of visitors, men  
 hauling the maids about for their foul purposes,  
 and wine running like water, and those rascals  
 gorging themselves, just for the sport of the  
 thing, with no excuse, no rational end in sight.

Telemachus saw those who pestered his mother with unwanted attentions and wasted his father's property as a disease and an outrage to decency. The suitors never realised that their actions were bad and inappropriate and thus understood the embarrassment that they should have felt—Homer repeatedly describes them as *anaidēs*, 'lacking of a sense of shame', i.e. 'shameless' (cf. *Od.* 1.254). In the end, when Odysseus came back to Ithaca, he killed *all of the suitors*, as in Protagoras' *Great Speech* Zeus orders to 'put a law from me that he who cannot share in *aidōs* (as well as *dikē*) must be killed as a disease of the city (νόμον γε θὲς παρ' ἐμοῦ τὸν μὴ δυνάμενον αἰδοῦς (καὶ δίκης) μετέχειν κτείνειν ὡς νόσον πόλεως)' (*Prot.* 322d4–5). If the suitors had a sense of shame, they could have felt embarrassed for what they had done in Odysseus' palace, and they could have avoided it by anticipating how they would

<sup>60</sup> Similarly, in Ovid, *Heroides* I.87–94, Penelope writes a letter to tell Odysseus of the suitors' inappropriateness and the pressure she is under (although this passage comes from Ovid (43 BCE to CE 17/18), Homer is believed to be his direct source for this work):

Dulichii Samiique et quos tulit alta Zacynthos  
 turba ruunt in me luxuriosa proci,  
 inque tua regnant nullis prohibentibus aula;  
 viscera nostra, tuae dilacerantur opes.  
 Quid tibi Pisandrum Polybumque Medontaque  
 dirum  
 Eurymachique avidas Antinoiique manus  
 atque alios referam, quos omnis turpitor absens  
 ipse tuo partis sanguine rebus alis?

Those of Dulichium and Samos and those whom  
 lofty Zacynthus bore, an extravagant mob of  
 nobles presses on me, and in your own palace  
 they play the part of king with none prohibiting;  
 our body and your wealth are being torn [from  
 you]. Why report to you of Pisander, and of  
 Polybus, and of dreadful Medon, and the greedy  
 hands of Eurymachus and Antinous, and of  
 others, you yourself being disgracefully absent  
 are sharing other things with all of them by  
 means of your own blood?

feel if someone saw them when they committed such behaviours. And most of all, by means of *aidōs*, the suitors could have preserved their lives:

<p>ὦ φίλοι ἄνδρες ἔστε, καὶ αἰδῶ θέσθ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ,  ἀλλήλους τ' αἰδεῖσθε κατὰ κρατερὰς ὑσμίνας.  αἰδομένων δ' ἄνδρῶν πλέονες σοοὶ ἢ ἐπέφανται·  (II. 15.561–564)</p>	<p>Dear friends, be men, and let a sense of shame  (<i>aidōs</i>) be your hearts, and have shame each of  the other in the fierce conflict. Of men who feel  ashamed (<i>aidomenōn</i>), more are saved than are  killed.</p>
--	---

*Aidōs*, which is based on our understanding of ourselves, basically ‘expressed inner personal conviction.’ Further, as this requires people to anticipate how to feel by being seen and talked about, it is true that it involves an objective measure of political and ethical ‘heteronomy’, i.e. human social relations, following “public opinion.” Thus, such an anticipation internalises social ideas. Yet, it is better to have some measure of heteronomy than to have a completely lack of social morality, as Penelope’s suitors show.<sup>61</sup> *Aidōs*, which conveys a significant sign of inhumanity when it is absent, dominated people’s political and ethical consciousness, and they measured things to do and avoid by means of this sense during the Homeric period and later; “[T]here is some truth in the idea that Homeric society was a shame culture, which persisted certainly into later antiquity and no doubt longer than that,” insists Williams (1993, 78).

While Homer insists upon the importance of *aidōs* in humanity, the role of *dikē* is also emphasised in his works. As Havelock argues in his studies of the Greek concept of justice (1978), *dikē* in Homeric usage has two senses, one ‘normative’ and the other ‘corrective’. In the first sense *dikē* is related with traditional rules of behaviour; while in the second sense the process of correcting violations of these rules and restoring traditional order is taken under *dikē*—the correction accompanies ‘punishment’ as well, if punishment is required for such a process. The normative sense of *dikē* is mostly found in the treatment of guests and strangers:

<p>ξεῖν', οὗ μοι θέμις ἔσθ', οὐδ' εἰ κακίων σέθεν  ἔλθοι,  ξεῖνον ἀτιμῆσαι· πρὸς γὰρ Διὸς εἰσὶν ἅπαντες  ξεῖνοὶ τε πτωχοὶ τε. δόσις δ' ὀλίγη τε φίλη τε  γίνεται ἡμετέρῃ· ἢ γὰρ δμῶων δίκη ἐστίν,  αἰεὶ δειδιότων, ὅτ' ἐπικρατέωσιν ἄνακτες οἱ νέοι.</p>	<p>Stranger, although coming in a worse shape than  you, it is not right (<i>themis</i>) for me to dishonour a  stranger; for all strangers and beggars are from  Zeus. Even if a gift is small, they must be  welcomed by us; for there is a sense of what is  right (<i>dikē</i>) for servants who always live in fear</p>
--	--

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Williams (1993), 75–102, esp. 95–6.

This passage enables us to see a Homeric rule of treatment; any stranger and guest, even a beggar, whoever he is and however poor he is, must be honoured because anyone who hosts him must treat him as his servant according to a sense of what is right. Mistreating him is a violation of the sense of *dikē*, and further an attempt to violate the rule of hospitality in Zeus' name.<sup>62</sup>

In the *Iliad*, Homer shows a correcting case of violation of such rule, i.e. *dikē*. Book 1 of the epic tells the original reason of Achilles' fury, as Smith (2001, 5–6) argues that “[W]hen Achilles helps to show how deadly divine intervention requires Agamemnon to give back Chryseis, a woman he had taken as a spoil of war, Agamemnon retaliates by taking Achilles' woman, Briseis, as a replacement for Chryseis. Naive readers might be inclined to think that Achilles' extreme reaction is a result of his love for Briseis, but the remainder of the story shows very clearly that it is not the anguish of lost love that leads Achilles into his madness, but the wild rage of a man unjustly dishonored.” Treating Achilles in an unjustly dishonoured way causes his insane fury that makes him refuse to fight, and this in the end brings a catastrophe to everyone who was involved in treating him in such a manner.

In ancient Greece, people considered burial customs very important; they believed that any dead victim of war must be rightly buried. Ancient Greeks often even ceased wars temporarily, simply in order to have time to bury dead soldiers.<sup>63</sup> A passage from the *Iliad* shows us the importance of this custom. After killing Hector, Achilles mutilates Hector's body, continuously dragging it around Troy until the gods intervene and force Achilles to cease and desist. Homer, through the mouth of the god, Apollo, clearly states how much it is not 'righteous (*enaisimon*)', i.e. violating *dikē*, to commit such mutilation:

ἀλλ' ὄλοϕ Ἀχιλῆϊ θεοὶ βούλεσθ' ἐπαρήγειν,  
ϕ ὄτ' ἄρ φρένες εἰσὶν ἐναΐσιμοι οὔτε νόημα  
γναμπτόν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι, ...

ὡς Ἀχιλεὺς ἔλεον μὲν ἀπώλεσεν, οὐδέ οἱ αἰδῶς.<sup>64</sup>

But, destructive Achilles whom you gods wish to  
aid, who has neither righteous mind nor bending  
thoughts in his breast, ...

So Achilles has lost all pity, nor even is a sense

<sup>62</sup> In the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, this normative sense of *dikē* was more firmly conceptualised, associated with *nomos*. For instance, in Sophocles' *Electra* l.1031–1043, Electra, interchanging *dikē* with *nomos*, believes *dikē* to be a kind of natural law. Still, the fundamental idea that *dikē* comes from Zeus (or the gods) seems to have been generally accepted by people at that period (cf. Aristophanes' *Clouds* 904).

<sup>63</sup> One of the notorious trials in Athens, which was to charge seven generals for the defeat in the Arginusae battle, was sought by the grieving families of the dead soldiers whose bodies sank into the sea so that they could not be buried. On this, cf. Woodruff (2005), 121–3.

<sup>64</sup> In this passage, Homer explicitly shows how *dikē* and *aidōs* are related; one who dares to commit something

Needless to say, we know what happens in the end to Achilles who lost *dikē* and *aidōs* in his mind; anyone, even the one who is blessed by the gods, if his mind turns out to be incurably *adikos* and *anaidēs*, must be put into the death, because:

<p>οὐ μὲν σχέτλια ἔργα θεοὶ μάκαρες φιλέουσιν, ἀλλὰ δίκην τίουσι καὶ αἴσιμα ἔργ' ἀνθρώπων. (<i>Od.</i> 14.83–84)</p>	<p>The blessed gods do not love reckless deeds, but they honour a sense of what is right (<i>dikē</i>) and the right (<i>asimos</i>) deeds of men.</p>
--	--

Under the dominant Homeric influence in antiquity, these two senses, a sense of what is right and a sense of shame, helped people to discern what is ‘just (*dikaïos*)’ and what is ‘ashamed (*aidomenōn*)’ from what is ‘unjust (*adikos*)’ and what is shameless (*anaidēs*)’. Further, by the aid of these senses, human beings could maintain humanity in their society, correcting those who committed unjust and shameless actions, and inflicting the death penalty on those who could not hold these senses. In this regard, these senses can be understood as the ancient ethical and political principles;<sup>65</sup> a society built up with these senses may be a result of the aim of those who first tried to establish social agreement or conventions which were later developed as the laws or constitutions established in written forms.

Protagoras in the *Great Speech* expresses an idea on *dikē* and *aidōs* related to that of Homer’s. According to the sophist, Zeus, when distributing the civic senses to all men, states that by means of these senses they are capable of constructing a city, living there with others, binding themselves to one another with friendship, protecting themselves from external attacks of wild beasts, preventing themselves from doing wrong to each other, and finally avoiding the danger of extinction. In this regard, the civic senses, as what all human beings must possess to survive and exist as human beings in their community, can be basically

---

*adikos* is the one who is *anaidēs*.

<sup>65</sup> Havelock (1978, 137 and *passim*) especially characterises *dikē* in antiquity (esp. under Homeric influence) as ‘a procedure’, not ‘a principle’; his characterisation of *dikē* in such manner seems to be grounded on his idea that possessing a firmly conceptualised principle of anything must be able to produce a philosophical satisfactory definition of it (cf. Adkins, 1980, 267–8). Havelock (1969, 51) thus claims that, as distinguished from a firmly conceptualised philosophical concept *dikaïosynē*, “[*D*]ikē and *dikaïos* refer to the maintenance of reciprocal relations of right: they connote ‘rights’ rather than ‘righteousness’; they were indexes of purely external behaviour whether of gods or of men.” However, Havelock’s idea does not seem to be necessarily the case; as Solmsen (1979, 431) argues, in antiquity before the era of philosophy *dikē* (as well as *aidōs*) existed as a firm “idea or conception”, as we have examined through Homeric corpus above. Even in the societies where there are no philosophical concepts established at all, such as a purely religious society or a primitive society in Amazon, it is not hard to see that people still have conceptualised principles by which they can measure their actions for ethical and political purposes.

understood as the fundamental political and ethical principles for the preservation of human community and race. People living in a community with others form their actions and speeches on the basis of these principles, whenever political issues are in the business of their practice. The successful preservation of their city guarantees their safe survival and a harmonious life. In this city no one is willing to, or should, threaten this preservation and their survival (cf. Protagoras' argument at 323a5–c2 that 'someone who claims to be unjust is considered mad because he sentences himself to death'). And all these things are only and firmly secured by the civic senses.

Taking into consideration the common understanding of a sense of what is right and a sense of shame in antiquity as Protagoras represents them in the *Great Speech*, the civic senses are thus understood as the most important and fundamental 'need' for human life and survival in a community; they enable men to discern what they should do from what they should not do, and practise the former and avoid the latter in their society. In this respect, a sense of what is right (*dikē*) is considered an active and encouraging political criterion by means of which men measure right things to do, while a sense of shame (*aidōs*) is a reactive (or passive) and regulative political criterion by means of which men measure shameless things to avoid and they feel ashamed whenever they commit something unjust.<sup>66</sup> In short, the civic senses are the fundamental political and ethical principles in Protagoras' thought by which men can preserve and secure their community and race.

According to Protagoras, people still act and speak on the basis of the same objective civic senses, but they choose different actions and speeches. Their different practices bring forth alternative results in their community regarding the political issues they are dealing with. What makes those people who share in the common objective civic senses and act and speak on their basis behave differently?

Earlier Protagoras said in the Myth that when Hermes asked Zeus whether he should give the civic senses to few people, in the way in which the medical art is distributed, or to all men, Zeus ordered him to distribute them to all (322c3–d5). As doctors have the art of medicine, human beings have the civic senses; yet, the difference is that only a *few* people have the art of medicine and thus are doctors, while *all* men have the civic senses and thus are political and ethical beings (at a fundamental level). Doctors treat patients with their art of

---

<sup>66</sup> As we can see from the Homeric passages in which mistreating Achilles brings the catastrophic end to those who were involved in treating him in such manner (Book 1 of the *Iliad*), of course, a sense of what is right (*dikē*) also has a retributive role. The role of this sense as the active encouraging political criterion, in my suggestion, is stressed in comparison with the role of a sense of shame (*aidōs*) as a reactive and regulative political criterion.



medicine, and human beings manage political affairs in their community with their civic senses. The doctors' art of medicine is the objective principle by means of which they produce bodily excellence, i.e. health, in their patients' bodies; human beings' civic senses are their objective principles by means of which they produce political excellence (virtue), i.e. justice, regarding political issues in their community.

However, doctors treat their patients, not always in the same way, but differently, considering their different bodily states; for instance, they may prescribe a patient more medicine than other patients if he is heavier or lighter than others or has a medical history, although his age and symptoms are the same as those of others. Likewise, human beings manage all political issues in their community, not always in the same way, but differently, considering the different factors of the community involved with those issues; for example, as we saw in the example above, people manage the problem of using water, considering their geographical and environmental circumstances.

As doctors' application of the art of medicine to the treatment of their patients alters depending on their patients' bodily states, people's application of the civic senses, i.e. the ethical and political principles, to the management of political matters in their community is practised differently, depending on a number of particular factors and circumstances. Doctors will have a better way to apply their medical art to their patients, if they know better about the patients' different bodily states, and then reduce the risk of mistakes. Similarly, people apply these principles in a better way when they understand the different factors more clearly. For instance, someone in the community in a desert area will apply the basic political and ethical principles in a better way if he knows that in his community water is very valuable and needs to be saved because natural sources are deficient in supplying water; on the contrary, if he lacks proper knowledge of the different factors, namely, the unique characteristic of his community, he may perhaps overuse water to take showers, simply supposing that it is good to keep his body clean not only for himself but also for others in the light of the civic senses.

All the different benefits produced in relation to political issues are the results of people's different applications of the objective civic senses to those issues. Some results may bring benefits and thus be taken as justice; some bring disadvantage and thus injustice. In other words, the appropriate application of the civic senses will produce some benefits regarding political matters and thus be considered justice (in particular) or political virtue (in general) in a community; the inappropriate application of the senses, injustice (in particular) or political vice (or evil state, i.e. 'collectively everything that is contrary to political virtue',

according to Protagoras' words at 323a1) (in general). In the case of overusing water (as an application of the civic senses), this action yields benefits in a forest community and so there it can be regarded as just, but the same action causes harm and disadvantage in a desert community and therefore must be regarded as unjust. People are required to hold knowledge of different factors and circumstances in order to apply the civic sense as properly as possible, if they intend to bring forth benefits in their community; otherwise they may be unable to properly perform their political and ethical actions and speeches for the preservation of their community and survival.

The civic senses are, as Zeus' gifts, not teachable; yet, the application of the civic senses to particular political cases, as requiring knowledge of different factors, is by itself a sort of technique (art), which thus can be taught.<sup>67</sup> It can be taught in a better way especially by those who know more about the different factors that affect the application, in the best way by those who know most. People gather together to debate on political matters, and they offer different opinions regarding given political issues. The various opinions are the results of their different applications of the objective civic senses to the given political issues, depending on their different knowledge of diverse factors that influence their application of the civic senses. Those whose consideration for given political issues is supported by better knowledge about different circumstances and factors with which the political issues are concerned will propose better counsels than those who do not know these factors. Also, those who propose better advice which brings benefits (i.e. justice in the case of political issues) will be regarded as possessing political technique/virtues. On the contrary, those who offer damaging advice which causes misfortune and disadvantage (i.e. injustice in the case of political issues) will be deemed to lack political technique/virtues, and people will think that they need to be educated in political virtues. Thus, in Protagoras' view, knowledge of different factors and circumstances, which promotes the application of the civic senses in a better way and thus produces political and ethical benefits, is political virtue.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> Note the difference between my suggestion that 'the application of the civic senses', which bears political virtues, is in itself a sort of 'art (technique)' and Zilioli's argument (as quoted above on pages 43–4) that the application is 'the application of technique' that produces political virtues. Cf. also page 47 above.

<sup>68</sup> Here, we can see the difference between Protagoras' views on the civic senses and political virtues and Plato's concepts of political virtues. Briefly stating, in Plato's ethical theory, political virtues such as justice (*dikaiosynē*) are themselves the objective and absolute moral and political norms that all members of a city must follow in order to keep the city just. Taking justice as the principle of morality and politics, there is no difference in Plato's ethical idea between *dikaiosynē* and *dikē*, as Socrates immediately interchanges the latter with the former as soon as Protagoras' *Great Speech* finishes (329c2–3)—without asking for agreement on this interchange of *dikaiosynē* and *dikē* from Protagoras, Socrates instantly changes the topic from the teachability from the unity of virtues. As Siep (2005, 85–6) says, in Plato virtues are thus "the right order of the functions of the soul" which consist of "the rule of reason (*logos*) over the forces of the emotions, drives, and needs," and

The idea of such ethical relativity in the application of the civic senses reflects Protagoras' profession of teaching good deliberation (*euboulia*) on how best to manage domestic and public affairs (*Prot.* 318e5–319a2). At a fundamental level, the management of domestic and public affairs is supported on the basis of the civic sense given to all by Zeus; if human beings are educated in political virtues (and indeed they are, as Protagoras has argued for in the *Great Speech*, especially in the *Logos*), they manage those affairs on the basis of the virtues, i.e. knowledge of different factors and circumstances, which promotes the application of the civic senses in a better way and thus produces political and ethical benefits. Political virtues are taught and established by all to some extent, and by Protagoras to the greatest extent. Protagoras' profession of teaching good deliberation was immediately equated with teaching political virtues by Socrates, and the sophist agreed. In the light of this viewpoint on ethical relativity in the application of the civic senses as discussed above, good deliberation on how to manage public affairs can be counted as good consideration of how to apply the civic senses to particular political issues; in this regard, knowing and teaching how to apply the civic senses is, or is achieved through, knowing and teaching how to manage public and domestic affairs well. The establishment of political virtues on the basis of the civic senses is then accomplished through the acquisition of knowledge of different factors and circumstances, which promotes the application of the civic senses in a better way and thus produces political and ethical benefits.

Those who have received education in different factors by which they have better advice on political issues, of course, as Protagoras' professed task emphasises (312d6–7), will become clever at speaking (*legein*) on the political issues as well. For their advice will be regarded as better, more beneficial and just, and finally more influential in their community. On an issue—especially on politics—someone with education presents his advice in a form of *logos* as a result of his application of the civic senses along the education, while someone

---

“this order corresponds to the rule of *logos* in the external world” as the political paradigms such as the Forms. True value of the political virtues is neither changeable nor affected by any variant circumstances. In a Platonic society, not anyone but only qualified teachers of political virtues (e.g. the philosopher kings) can and must teach political virtues, and further run the city (for the systematic structure of Plato's ethical universality and its linkage with objectivity, cf. Gill (2005), 19–40, esp. 21–35). On the contrary, although Protagoras' civic senses are too taken to be the absolute and objective ethical and political principles, in the sophist's idea, political virtues are rather products of the application of the civic senses. People do not follow political virtues, but apply the civic senses to particular cases in order to cause certain types of benefits in their community for the purpose of the preservation of their community and race; these benefits are the political virtues. And in a Protagorean society, everyone does and can teach political virtues, as everyone who already shares in the civic senses knows basically how to apply the civic senses. In this sense, Protagoras should not be counted as a virtue ethicist; rather he is an ethical-political principles practitioner who insists upon the practice of the application of the civic senses to particular cases, and at the same time a virtue producer who emphasises that political virtues are produced (and also established) as a result of the (practice of the) application.

else without education, or with education at a lower degree, suggests another counsel also in a form of *logos* as a result of his application of the civic senses. If the former advice (*logos*) is formulated as ‘ $x$  is  $F$  (e.g.  $x$  = using water in a forest community,  $F$  = a good way to preserve a community)’, then the latter ‘ $x$  is  $\neg F$ ’; the former would certainly be considered beneficial and just, and the one who suggests the latter would be deemed to need education in different factors in order to be capable of making better, more beneficial and just decisions for the preservation of the community.

Since all human beings have from the very beginning shared in the common objective civic senses, the main focus of Protagoras’ teaching would weigh on how to apply them to particular political cases, caring for the different types of cultural and geographical backgrounds on which their application must be based and affected. In this view, it is highly likely that through experiencing a broad range of cultures and religions one will gain more knowledge on how to better and more appropriately apply the civic senses to particular political cases in different areas; and one’s largest number of experiences (compared to others) about almost all various cultural and geographical factors reflects on one’s profession that one can teach people ‘how *best* to manage one’s household, and how to be the *most influential* in the affairs of the city, both in *action* and *speech*.’<sup>69</sup>

In the discussion above on the *Great Speech*, Protagoras argues basically for three main points: first, everyone shares in a sense of what is right and a sense of shame, i.e. the common objective civic senses, from the very beginning of their social life; second, political virtues, i.e. knowledge of different factors and circumstances, which promotes the application of the civic senses in a better way and thus produces political and ethical benefits, can and must be taught; third, men, as political and social beings, become better citizens through education in political virtues. Only on the grounds of these objective civic senses, i.e. the common ethical and political principles, can human beings construct and maintain their first community. Further, on the basis of the civic senses, they can educate each other in political virtues. Men will become better citizens by receiving good education. The appropriate

---

<sup>69</sup> Protagoras is said to have been born in Abdera in Thrace under Persian cultural influence, and later to have travelled around many places both in Asia and Greece, having associated with many different types of people like religious instructors, thinkers, and politicians, and having accumulated a great amount of experiences of all different types of socio-cultural backgrounds. Protagoras would probably consider himself one who had accumulated the greatest number of experiences about different socio-cultural circumstances, compared to others in Athens. In this sense, Protagoras could emphasise himself to be the best teacher of political virtues. On Protagoras’ various experiences about political and cultural issues via his travels, cf. cf. D.L. 9.50 (DK80 A1); V.S. 1.10 (DK80 A2); *Onomatol. bei Schol. Plat. De Rep.* 600c (DK80 A3); *Per.* 36 [Stesimbrotos, FGrHis t. 107 F 11 ii 519] (DK80 A10), and *Cons. ad Apoll.* 33 (118e) (DK80 B9); Section 1 in Chapter I above. On Protagoras’ association with Pericles, cf. Muir (1981), 19; O’Sullivan (1995), 15–23.

application of the civic senses will cause benefits as a result in a political-ethical context, and thus be considered justice; the most appropriate, or the best, application will cause the best benefits, thus be considered the best justice. Knowing how to apply most appropriately the civic senses to particular political cases—i.e. in Protagoras' terms, having good deliberation on how best to manage political and domestic affairs and how to be the most influential in them—is the very subject of Protagoras' teaching. Here, Protagoras maintains a firm idea of the objective civic senses, i.e. the ethical and political principles, rather than radically relativising them; on the basis of these senses he safely claims to teach political virtues.

Kerferd (1981a, 144–5) argues that in the Protagorean society, the objective political principles, i.e. the civic senses, of how to preserve human communities and live all together, distributed by Zeus' command, are required for the choice of advice on political issues, and thus the city is, in Protagoras' thought, designed to be led by those who hold those principles.<sup>70</sup> I shall add one more point to Kerferd's argument: people who share in the objective civic senses can be improved through education in their community. Such improvement, i.e. the development of deliberative capacities concerning how best to preserve their city and on dealing with political issues, proceeds by adding knowledge of how most properly to apply the civic senses to particular political matters with the consideration of different factors that may affect the application of the civic sense. This improvement is achieved only by the education in political virtues/art in Protagoras' view. When men become better citizens with wisdom on how to manage public and domestic affairs, i.e. how to apply the civic senses, then they will come to run their city in a better way, securing their survival and the preservation of their city to a better extent. And Protagoras claims to make them best.

---

<sup>70</sup> Similarly, Levi, throughout his article (1940b), argues for Protagorean political and ethical objectivity in terms of utilitarianism. For further suggestions of the *Great Speech* to expound the objective ethical values, cf. Kerferd (1949), 20–6; Vlastos (1956), xx–xxiv; Schiappa (1991), 170–1; Taylor (1991), 100 and 133–5.

## Chapter III

### Political-Ethical Claim 2: The Man-Measure Doctrine

Protagoras' best-known claim, the Man-Measure Doctrine (hereafter the MMD), has been reported and transmitted to us by various ancient sources. Despite some different wordings, the basic formulation of the MMD generally reads as follows:

πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος,  
τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστιν, τῶν δὲ οὐκ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν.<sup>71</sup>

Of all things (*chrēmata*) the measure is man,

Of the things that are that/how they are, of the things that are not that/how they are not.

The MMD has been read in a philosophical context as a thesis of radical relativism based on perceptual epistemology by Plato (*Theaet.* 152a–186c) and hence Sextus Empiricus who seems to have been much influenced by Plato for the interpretation of the MMD (*P.H.* I.216–219 and *M.* VII.60–64, 388–397),<sup>72</sup> or as an infallibilist claim (*Met.* IV.4.1007b18 ff., IV.4.1007b18 ff. and XI.1062b11–19) or a modified relativist claim on sophistic and rhetorical scheme utilised to win in the battle of argument (*Met.* IV.6.1011a20–23 and *Rhet.* II.24.1402a23) by Aristotle. Plato's purpose to discuss the MMD is to show the absurdity and

---

<sup>71</sup> This formulation of the MMD is reported in *M.* VII.60 (D.L. 9.51). Slightly different formulation of the doctrine with different words is also found in other ancient sources: Sextus Empiricus, in a passage of his *P.H.* I.216, puts an article, *ho*, before *anthrōpos* ('πάντων χρημάτων εἶναι μέτρον τὸν ἄνθρωπον, τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστιν, τῶν δὲ οὐκ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν'). On this, cf. also Aristocles, fr. 4, line 14–7. Plato (*Theaet.* 151e) adopts *mē* instead of *ouk* in order to indicate 'things that are not' ('πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἄνθρωπον εἶναι, τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστι, τῶν δὲ μὴ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν'). However, these details seem to make no difference for the meaning to the doctrine.

<sup>72</sup> Regarding Sextus Empiricus' interpretation of the MMD, some scholars have suggested that he was independent from Plato's interpretation of it in the *Theaetetus*. In support of this suggestion, for instance, Burnyeat (1976b, 46) argues that Sextus Empiricus characterises Protagoras as a subjectivist "whose view is that every judgement is true *simpliciter*—true absolutely, not merely true for the person whose judgement it is", while Plato understands the sophist as a relativist. However, Burnyeat's argument does not prove that Sextus Empiricus was thus independent from Plato's interpretation of the MMD; it can be simply regarded as Sextus Empiricus' understanding, or commentary, of Plato's interpretation of the doctrine. In fact, Sextus Empiricus adopts many views found in the *Theaetetus*; he interprets the MMD as a relativism of perceptual epistemology (*P.H.* I.216), connects it with the Flux-theory as an ontological basis which occurs only in the *Theaetetus* (*P.H.* I.217; *M.* VII.61–63). When Sextus Empiricus deals with the self-refutation of the MMD, he explicitly mentions Plato as someone who already discussed this, and implicitly agrees with Plato (*M.* VII.388–392). In this regard, most modern scholars have admitted Plato's influence on Sextus Empiricus for his interpretation of the MMD. Levi (1940a, 156), for example, argues that Sextus Empiricus' text on Protagoras "adds nothing substantial to what is said in the *Theaetetus*." On this point, cf. also Versenyi (1962), 178; Donovan (1993), 38; Zilioli (2002), 22, n. 80.

self-refutation of radical relativism of the epistemological claim that knowledge is perception; Sextus Empiricus attempts to distinguish the MMD from Pyrrhonian scepticism; and Aristotle's purpose is to reveal the MMD's logical fallacy, i.e. the violation of the Principle of Non-Contradiction.

Notwithstanding the slightly different purposes of ancient sources in treating the MMD, however, they all agree on one view that the MMD is an epistemological thesis in which perceptual appearance of things to human beings are considered true for them. This common view of the MMD originates from Plato's interpretation of the doctrine in the *Theaetetus* (i.e. the Platonic reading), where he deliberately equates Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception with Protagoras' MMD. It is, however, somewhat doubtful whether the MMD, in its short form as a single sentence, indeed intends to entail such a reading of epistemological relativism, particularly because "the brevity of the fragment [i.e. the MMD] and the absence of direct elaboration by Protagoras gave rise to endless controversy over its meaning," as Versenyi (1962, 178) worries. In addition, it is also a matter of controversy as to whether the Platonic reading of the MMD is the only possible reading of the doctrine—the Platonic reading of the MMD, however, should on a priori ground be regarded as Plato's own philosophical examination of how a claim in which knowledge equals perception arrives at an absurd conclusion, rather than reporting what Protagoras indeed meant by the doctrine. If Plato's is not the only reading for the MMD, then in what manner can we attempt at an alternative reading of the MMD, and through what sources?

If we closely look at Protagoras' MMD, standing outside the Platonic reading of it, and considering it on the grounds of the common senses of the key words (*chrēmata*, *metron*, *anthrōpos* and *hōs*) in the semantics of Protagoras' time or earlier, an alternative reading of the MMD may be possible for us. In this chapter, I will first examine the dramatic formulation of Plato's *Theaetetus* to see whether there is any clue left by the philosopher himself by which we can infer that Protagoras was not the main target of Plato's argument, and why then Plato employs the sophist's MMD in his dialogue. I shall then look at the literal and common usages of those key words in antiquity, and propose an alternative reading of the MMD on the grounds of the literal and common meanings of those words and Protagoras' features as, for instance, pictured in the *Protagoras* (esp. the *Great Speech*, 320c8–328d2). In this reading, I shall suggest that Protagoras' MMD indicates that man as a political being, who shares in the common civic senses (as objective ethical and political principles) for the purpose of preserving the human race and community, and consequently, learns about political virtues, is by himself the measure of all the basic needs for such purpose, i.e. of all

political and ethical actions and speeches that he and others practise in the community; all these actions and speeches are measured as to whether and how they are appropriate to be practised in the light of the civic senses at the primary level, and in the light of political virtues at the secondary level.

### 1. Is the Platonic reading of the Man-Measure Doctrine in the *Theaetetus* Protagorean?

Plato wrote many works concerning significant philosophical issues; needless to say, it is the scholarly consensus that the philosopher wrote most of his works in the form of dialogue. In his dialogues in which the protagonist is mostly Socrates, many different characters appear, advancing philosophical issues that draw Socrates' philosophical attention and involve him in examination (and in most cases, refutation) of them. The form of dialogue has thus been understood as explicitly representing Plato's assessment of the validity of philosophical theses supplied by the thinkers before and in his time, and implicitly—not in a clear way, in many cases, especially when the dialogues end with *aporia*—offering his own views on the issues.<sup>73</sup>

Among Plato's dialogues, the *Theaetetus* is written to seek the definition of knowledge. At the beginning of the dialogue, as soon as Theaetetus answers that 'knowledge is nothing but perception' to Socratic question 'what is knowledge?', Socrates equates this answer with Protagoras' MMD. For this equation, Plato assumes that *metron*, *chrēmata* and *anthrōpos* in the MMD mean respectively 'the standard of truth', 'any things (as objects of perception)', and 'each individual human being with perceptual power'; with this assumption he argues that 'each appearing to me is being for me (ὡς οἷα μὲν ἕκαστα ἐμοὶ φαίνεται τοιαῦτα μὲν ἔστιν ἐμοί)', 'appearance (from 'appearing') is perception (from 'to be perceived') (τὸ δὲ γε φαίνεται αἰσθάνεται ἔστιν)', and thus 'to be perceived by each person (e.g. me) is to be for him (e.g. me) (οἷα γὰρ αἰσθάνεται ἕκαστος, τοιαῦτα ἕκαστω καὶ κινδυνεύει εἶναι)' (*Theaet.* 152a–c, esp. 152b5–7). In this formulation, the Greek verb *einai* in the following *hōs* clauses in the MMD, in connection with *metron*, is understood as 'is the case' or 'is true' in a veridical sense (cf. Kahn, 1966, 250).<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> On the philosophical significance of the form of dialogue in Plato, cf. Gill (2002), 145–70.

<sup>74</sup> Simply, in the Platonic reading of the MMD, the key words in the doctrine, (1) '*chrēmata*', (2) '*metron*', (3) '*anthrōpos*', (4) '*hōs*', and (5) '*einai*', mean respectively as (1) things that appear to men in the case of first-order belief, and further opinions, thoughts and beliefs in the case of second-order belief, (2) the criterion/standard of the truth (as the result of perception that is equivalent to infallible knowledge), (3) an



Through setting up the condition for knowledge that it must be infallible (*apseudes*) and concern what is (being, *to on*) (152c5–6), Plato finally reads the MMD as to meaning that ‘I am the measure, i.e. the standard of truth, of all things that appear to/are perceived by me; whilst you are the measure of all things that appear to/are perceived by you’. A standard illustration of the Platonic reading MMD has been drawn as follows: ‘a thing which appears/is perceived as *F* to/by *a* is *F* for *a*, while the same thing which appears/is perceived as  $\neg F$  to/by *b* is  $\neg F$  for *b*.’ And in this illustration the same thing can be considered—truly to be—both *F* and  $\neg F$  (relatively for *a* and *b*, respectively). To clarify this, Plato gives an example that when the wind *appears cold* to a *perceiver* (or, when a *perceiver perceives* wind to be *cold*), it is *true* (or, *the case*) for him *that* the wind is cold (cf. *Theaet.* 152a6–c6) (for a full analysis and discussion of the Platonic reading of the MMD in the *Theaetetus*, cf. Appendix 3 below).

The Platonic reading of the MMD as an epistemological claim of perceptual relativism is thus supported by his argument for the identification of appearing, perceiving, and being with each other, as well as the assumption regarding the meanings of the key words of the doctrine. However, in the dialogue Plato does not provide any proof of the validity of his assumption and argument; rather he seems to take them for granted. Is it then necessary to accept Plato’s argument and assumption for the reading of the MMD? Or, are they what the MMD indeed implies in itself?

Plato, when writing the *Theaetetus*, may have intended to attempt an extreme thought experiment to show the absurd conclusion of the epistemological claim that only perception is knowledge and what is perceived is what is known. Probably, to Plato’s eyes, the MMD—especially its short form without supplying further context—may have been seen as a good exemplary slogan for the discussion on an epistemological idea of perception. If Plato took the MMD as a good exemplary slogan for an epistemological idea of perception, who are

---

individual human being who has a faculty of perception, i.e. a human perceiver (cf. *Theaet.* 152a, 158a, 161d, e, 166c, 171e, etc.), (4) a relative adverb, i.e. ‘*that*’, and (5) *einai* with a predicate use in the *hōs* clauses to indicate the case of appearances of perceived qualities (i.e. ‘a thing that is *F*, *that* this thing *is F*’, as Plato immediately replace *hōs* with *hoia* in *Theaet.* 152a6 ff.). Sextus Empiricus in *P.H.* I.216 also explicitly clarifies *metron*, *chrēmata*, and *anthrōpos* respectively as *to kritērion* (the standard of truth), *ta pragmata* (things), and *hekastos* (each person).

Regarding *anthrōpos*, one may argue that Plato seems to occasionally understand it as mankind, namely ‘all men’ as well, because Socrates refers to all men, many men, and mass (*hoi polloi*, *to plēthos*, *hapantas*, and *pantōn*) by the word while dealing with the MMD (cf. *Theaet.* 170a, e, and 171a, b, c). But, it seems still more likely to assume that Plato’s initial understanding of Protagoras’ *anthrōpos* is each individual since his basic interpretation of the MMD is taken by exemplifying each individual’s perceptual cognition. In addition, it is also remarkable that what Socrates is trying to mean by mentioning all men, many men, and mass (in the passages above), is those as an individual group with its own and unified perceptual function as compared to other individual groups. This point is more obvious from Socrates’ example of a state in which the right is so as long as it appears so to the state, that is compared to other states in which the right is different (cf. *Theaet.* 166d ff.).

indeed those people who hold fast to such idea, and whom does Plato really mean to dispute concerning the nature of knowledge in the *Theaetetus*? I shall suggest that Plato’s main target in the dialogue, especially the first part of the dialogue where he throughout interprets the MMD as a radical relativism of perceptual epistemology, would be the Megarians.

In Book IX of the *Metaphysics*, where Aristotle discusses ‘potentiality (*dynamis*)’ in relation to change/motion and arts/knowledge, he deals with the Megarian idea of the admission of actuality and the denial of potentiality. He first states that since potentiality has a principal role not only as a starting-point of change/motion but also as an agent or art/knowledge that brings forth certain products (1045b28–1046a36), ‘all arts and all productive kinds of knowledge are potentialities (πᾶσαι αἱ τέχναι καὶ αἱ ποιητικαὶ ἐπιστῆμαι δυνάμεις εἰσίν)’ (1046b2–3); immediately thereafter, he argues against the Megarian conceptualisation of potentiality. In his argument Aristotle shows how the Megarian denial of potentiality arrives at Protagoras’ MMD. He first says that the Megarians claims that a thing can act only when it is acting, and that it cannot act when it is not acting:

<p>εἰσὶ δὲ τινες οἱ φασιν, οἷον οἱ Μεγαρικοί, ὅταν ἐνεργῆ μόνον δύνασθαι, ὅταν δὲ μὴ ἐνεργῆ οὐ δύνασθαι, οἷον τὸν μὴ οἰκοδομοῦντα οὐ δύνασθαι οἰκοδομεῖν, ἀλλὰ τὸν οἰκοδομοῦντα ὅταν οἰκοδομῆ· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων. (<i>Met.</i> 1046b29–32: DK80 A17)</p>	<p>There are some, like the Megarians, who say that a thing can act only when it is acting, and that it cannot act when it is not acting, for instance, if a man is not building, he cannot build, but if a man is building, [he can build] when he is building; and so for all other things as well.</p>
--	---

According to the Megarian school, says Aristotle, a thing’s capacity for doing or being something, i.e. its potentiality for something, exists only in the state of actuality—i.e. a thing which is in a state of actually acting can act and be, but it cannot act and be if it is not in a state of actually acting. A man, for instance, is indeed considered one with the art/knowledge of house-building, i.e. a house-builder and able to build a house actually, only when he is actually building the house at the present moment. As soon as he stops building, he is no longer a house-builder, and his attribute or art/knowledge of building is no longer in him. The Megarians thus claim that potency exists only if there is actuality.<sup>75</sup> Aristotle further states:

<p>καὶ τὰ ἄψυχα δὴ ὁμοίως· οὔτε γὰρ ψυχρὸν οὔτε θερμὸν οὔτε γλυκὸν οὔτε ὄλως αἰσθητὸν οὐθὲν</p>	<p>And [this view is applied] in the same way to inanimate things; for nothing will be either cold</p>
---	--

---

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Ross (1924, vol. II), 243 ff.

ἔσται μὴ αἰσθανομένων· ὥστε τὸν Πρωταγόρου λόγον συμβήσεται λέγειν αὐτοῖς. ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδ' αἴσθησιν ἔξει οὐδὲν ἂν μὴ αἰσθάνηται μηδ' ἐνεργῆ. εἰ οὖν τυφλὸν τὸ μὴ ἔχον ὄψιν, πεφυκὸς δὲ καὶ ὅτε πέφυκε καὶ ἔτι ὄν, οἱ αὐτοὶ τυφλοὶ ἔσσονται πολλάκις τῆς ἡμέρας, καὶ κωφοί. (1047a4–10: DK80 A17)

or hot or sweet or perceptible at all if not perceived; so that those [of this view] will agree with Protagoras' account (*logos*). But, in fact, nothing will possess perception if it is not perceiving and acting. If, then, what is blind does not possess sight although it would by nature [have sight], when it would by nature [have sight] and when [sight] still is, the blind people themselves will be often blind for a day, and also be deaf too.

In the passage above Aristotle states that those who follow the Megarian idea will agree with Protagoras' account (*logos*), arguing that a thing can be cold or hot or sweet or perceptible only when this thing is being perceived so (n.b. its similarity to the argument supplied by Socrates to identify Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception with Protagoras' MMD at *Theaet.* 152a–c, esp. 152b5–7, quoted above). For, if someone says that a thing can be cold or hot or sweet only when this thing is perceived so, he is denying potentiality. A thing is not cold when it is not perceived so; without perception of it, thus, nothing will be either cold or hot or sweet.<sup>76</sup> Here Aristotle seems to argue that such a point in which only perception and perceptual data at the present moment are regarded to be the actual perception and perceptual data must amount to radical relativism of perception, because someone's perception of something at the present moment would be the actual perception only to him

<sup>76</sup> Aristotle's criticism of the Megarian idea goes as follows: there are only two cases possible for a man to acquire and to lose a certain capacity such as an art: the first case is to acquire an art by having learnt it; the second case is to lose it by having forgotten it or by some accident, since it is not possible to lose by the destruction of a thing itself in a soul that lasts forever. If one states that a man who has an art of building has ceased building so that he has no longer engaged in this art, one is claiming that he has lost his art of building without having forgotten it or without any accident. This is a violation of the second case. If one states again that a man, who starts building again, has now an art of building again, one is saying that he has acquired this art without having learnt it. This is a violation of the first case. As only two cases are possible about acquiring and losing a certain art, Aristotle concludes the Megarian viewpoint to be incorrect.

A potentiality is what produces perception of certain qualities. The wind can be potentially cold (or hot as well) even if it is not being perceived so by anyone. If the same argument is applied to this point, it needs to be said that to have an attribute, one thing needs to have acquired it previously, and not to have it, it needs to have lost it before, just like the cases of acquiring and losing an art. Aristotle, on the contrary, implies that it is more likely to think that attributes or predicates of a thing, although they are not actualised since they are not being perceived at the present moment, still potentially exist in the thing (cf. IV.5.1010b33–1011a2 where Aristotle asserts that things which are not being perceived exist prior to perception or being perceived). In addition, this claim results in a point that 'nothing will possess perception if it is not perceiving.' Aristotle points out the absurdity of this claim by stating that in a day people will be blind and deaf on many occasions, as long as they are actualising their perception of sight and hearing—they will be blind while they are not utilising their power to see, for instance, by closing their eyes, but they will become again non-blind as soon as they use their sight opening their eyes and seeing. But, this does not make sense Aristotle insists; rather it is more likely to think that the power of sight, i.e. a visual perception, always exists in a person, as a potential power when it is not utilised and actualised, but as an actual power when it is used.

who is actually perceiving it and this would not be any perception to someone else, or even to himself at a different moment. In this regard, Aristotle claims that the Megarian idea is connected with Protagoras' account (*logos*), which would be the Platonic reading of the MMD according to which each appearing to me is being for me, appearance is perception, and thus to be perceived by me is to be for me, as Plato argues.

Anyone who follows the Megarian idea of the admission of actuality and the denial of potentiality must reach Protagoras' MMD, argues Aristotle. However, Aristotle does not state that those who follow Protagoras' MMD must admit the Megarian idea. The MMD never radically denies that it is possible for one to perceive something in the future because one has a capacity to perceive while not perceiving now. Accordingly, when Aristotle treats the MMD in the *Metaphysics* IV.4.1007b18 ff. (DK80 A19b) and IV.5.1009a6 ff. as an infallibilist claim (that 'everything is true *simpliciter*') and in the *Metaphysics* IV.6.1011a19–25 as a relativist claim (that '*x* is *F* to *a* at *t*<sup>1</sup>'), he there never brings the Megarian idea into discussion. His focus lies chiefly in showing how the MMD as an infallibilist claim violates the Principle of Non-Contradiction (hereafter the PNC)<sup>77</sup> in the former passages, and in revealing that the

<sup>77</sup> Aristotle's PNC which is characterised as the strongest, i.e. the most secure principle (*bebaiotatē archē*) of all (*Met.* IV.3.1005b17–18) is established in the following passages as follows:

τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ ἅμα ὑπάρχειν τε καὶ μὴ ὑπάρχειν ἀδύνατον τῷ αὐτῷ καὶ κατὰ τὸ αὐτό. (IV.3.1005b19–20)	The same thing cannot belong and not belong to the same thing at the same time.
ἀδύνατον γὰρ ὅτινοῦν ταυτὸν ὑπολαμβάνειν εἶναι καὶ μὴ εἶναι. (IV.3.1005b23–24)	It is impossible to hold ( <i>hypolambanein</i> ) the same thing to be and not to be.
ὅτι μὲν οὖν βεβαιοτάτη δόξα πασῶν τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἀληθεῖς ἅμα τὰς ἀντικειμένους φάσεις, ... ἐπεὶ δ' ἀδύνατον τὴν ἀντίφασιν ἅμα ἀληθεύεσθαι κατὰ τοῦ αὐτοῦ. (IV.6.1011b13–20)	The most secure belief is that contradictory statements, no matter what, cannot be true at the same time, ... since it is impossible for opposites to be true of the same thing at the same time.

The first formulation of the PNC treats how the world and things in the world are (i.e. an ontological formulation), while the second discusses what we can think about things in the world (i.e. an epistemological and psychological formulation), and the third deals with the matter of the truth-value of the statements, in relation to the corresponding objects to the statements (i.e. a logical/semantic formulation).

The formulations of the PNC are not entirely independent of one another; as Aristotle himself describes, if all contradictory statements are true, then everything will be one and the same. But it is absurd to consider everything one and the same, thus all contradictory statements are not true. That is, how things are enables a logical/semantic conclusion to be correctly established. Then, he again demonstrates that if the same thing is judged to be and not to be simultaneously, then anything can be both affirmed and denied, and thus everything will be one again. However it is not the case that everything is one and the same. Therefore, it is not the case that anything can be both affirmed and denied of everything. From this point of view, the same thing is not judged to be and not to be at the same time. The logical and semantic truth of a statement is thus indeed truth only when the predicate in a statement is correctly corresponding to and describing the object which occupies the subject position in the statement. This shows that logical/semantic principles, which are established on the basis of ontological considerations, regulate psychological and epistemological principles for human beings: 'ontological formulation' → 'logical/semantic' → 'epistemological and psychological' (Gottlieb claims them to be an ontological formulation, a doxastic version, and a semantic version, respectively). On this, Bonitz (1848)

MMD as a relativist claim does not indeed violate the PNC, if relativised judgements are fully equipped with proper qualifiers in the latter.

Let us now look at Plato's characteristic dramatic formulation of the *Theaetetus*. The dialogue has a form of story-within-a-story structure; Socrates' discussion with his main interlocutors, Theaetetus and Theodorus, the subject of which is, is framed by the conversation between Euclides and Terpsion. Interestingly, these external conversants are representatives of the Megarian school; Euclides is even known to have been the founder of the school. In addition, the location at which their conversation takes place is the gate of Megara. Such a dramatic formulation of the *Theaetetus* enables us to assume that Plato, as a clever and deliberate dramatist, may have hinted to the readers that the characters whose philosophical idea is taken into Plato's consideration in the dialogue are not really (the historical) Protagoras himself, but those who deliver to the readers Socrates' discussion with Theaetetus and Theodorus, i.e. Euclides and Terpsion as the Megarians.<sup>78</sup> Plato may have intended to paradoxically show that those Megarians do not even realise that in fact Socrates aims to discuss and refute their own thoughts—i.e. the admission of actuality and the denial of potentiality which result in radical relativism of perception. By doing so, Plato may have wanted to reveal how absurd the Megarian idea of radical relativism of perception should be. Those who take merely actuality to be as an actual arts/knowledge and admit only what is being perceived at the present moment cannot confide in remembrance, because remembrance (a type of potentiality, according to Aristotle, by which men can have arts/knowledge) and what is now being remembered are not the same as what is being perceived (cf. *Theaet.* 163d–164b and Section 2 in Appendix 3 below for Plato's criticism of this point). Plato cleverly and clearly makes Euclides, who is narrating Socrates' discussion with Terpsion and thus delivering it to the readers of the *Theaetetus* too, refute himself (and thus the Megarian idea as well) by saying that about the discussion he 'later wrote it out while remembering it at leisure (ὕστερον δὲ κατὰ σχολὴν ἀναμνησκόμενος ἔγραφον)' and

---

suggests that the ontological formulation is conditional for the epistemological formulation. Similarly, Łukasiewicz (1970–1, 489–90) argues that Aristotle, regarding the ontological formulation and the logical/semantic formulation to be equivalent, establishes the epistemological on the basis of the logical/semantic formulation. Maier (1896, 43) also understands that Aristotle infers the subjective certainty of the PNC (the epistemological formulation) from the objective truth of the logical/semantic formulation. Ross (1971, 159) says that from the ontological formulation Aristotle concludes the epistemological formulation. For further discussion on the three formulations of the PNC and their relation, cf. Irwin (1977), 210–29; Code (1986), 341–58; Cohen (1986), 359–70 (cited in Gottlieb (1992), 187–98, n. 6, 7, and 8).

<sup>78</sup> Similarly, in the *Euthydemus* Plato clearly alludes to Protagoras' association with the sophist brothers, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, by stating that the sophist brothers once went to Thurii to learn the art of sophistry, for which Protagoras is known to have exercised his influence and established a colonial law, and that they used to be wrestlers as once Protagoras wrote a book entitled *On Wrestling*.

so that he ‘has written almost all of the whole discussion (ὥστε μοι σχεδόν τι πᾶς ὁ λόγος γέγραπται)’ (*Theaet.* 143a1–5). In Plato’s strategy of dramatic framing, the absurdity of the Megarian idea would be shown to the readers (or to the audiences if we remember that this dialogue is a type of play) in the most effective way, when Euclides himself, while fracturing his own philosophical idea, does not realise the situation.

When he wrote the *Theaetetus*, was Plato aware of the Megarian idea concerning the denial of potentiality, as Aristotle was when he wrote the *Metaphysics*? Theaetetus (417–369 BCE) is known to have been a classical Greek Mathematician with many academic contributions like the discovery of irrational lengths and the five regular convex polyhedral. In the outer conversation between Euclides and Terpsion at the beginning of the *Theaetetus*, Theaetetus is illustrated as being badly wounded in a battle, sick and taken to Athens from the camp at Corinth (142a). Two Athenian battles at Corinth are possible, one in 394 BCE, i.e. the Battle of Nemea in the Corinthian war between Sparta and the allied cities of Argos, Corinth, Thebes, and Athens, and the other in 369 BCE between Athenians and Corinthians. The latter seems more reasonable; Euclides says that not long before his death Socrates met and had a talk with Theaetetus who was a boy at that time (142c). If the battle in which Theaetetus is stated by Euclides to have engaged was the battle of Nemea, he was just around 22 years old and presumably too young to have much contributed to mathematics as a famous mathematician. In the later battle in 369 BCE, Theaetetus was about 48 years old, having been finely grown up and presumably accomplished sufficient mathematical contributions. As far as these historical backgrounds are concerned, the dramatic date of the outer conversation between Euclides and Terpsion in the *Theaetetus* would probably be around, or later than, 369 BCE (the dramatic date of the inner conversation between Socrates, Theaetetus and Theodorus would be 399 BCE, as Socrates says at the end of their dialogue (210d1–4) that ‘he must go to the court (*basileus stoa*) to meet the indictment brought against him by Meletus’).

The Megarian school was founded at the beginning of the fourth century BCE by Euclides of Megara (435–365 BCE); Euclides may have founded this school after Socrates’ death in 399 BCE. In the year of Socrates’ death, Euclides was about 34, and in 369–370 BCE, the dramatic date of the *Theaetetus*, around 66 years old, presumably having led the other Megarians such as Terpsion, Ichthyas, Eubulides, and Clinomachus (all from the fourth century BCE). Considering Euclides’ age in the dramatic date of the *Theaetetus* (the composition date of the dialogue would be, of course, no earlier than that), it seems plausible to assume that by that time Euclides had already developed his philosophical positions and Plato (424/3–348/7 BCE), who was about 55 years old at the dramatic date, may have targeted

it in his philosophical discussion. Plato was probably aware of the Megarian philosophical position as Aristotle (384–322 BCE) was.<sup>79</sup>

In the *Theaetetus*, we can find one more passage of Plato’s clever dramatic set-up according to which Plato himself seems to admit that his reading of the MMD is not really referring to (the historical) Protagoras’ idea but to someone else’s. In the passage Socrates, after interpreting the MMD as a radical thesis of epistemological relativism of perception and refuting it, immediately states:

ἀλλά τοι, ὦ φίλε, ἄδηλον εἰ καὶ παραθέομεν τὸ ὀρθόν. εἰκός γε ἄρα ἐκεῖνον πρεσβύτερον ὄντα σοφώτερον ἡμῶν εἶναι· καὶ εἰ αὐτίκα ἐντεῦθεν ἀνακύψει μέχρι τοῦ ἀχένους, πολλὰ ἂν ἐμέ τε ἐλέγξας ληροῦντα, ὡς τὸ εἰκός, καὶ σὲ ὁμολογοῦντα, καταδύς ἂν οἴχοιτο ἀποτρέχων.  
(171c9–d3)

But it is not clear at all, my dear [*sc.* Theodorus], whether we are running along the right path [about what Protagoras said in his MMD]. At any rate, it is indeed likely that he [*sc.* Protagoras], being older than us, is wiser [than us]; and if he forthwith lifted up his head from down there [i.e. underworld] [to here where we are] as far as the neck, he would in all likelihood convict me in many times and ways of talking nonsense [about what Protagoras said in his MMD], and you too of agreeing [with Socrates], and ducked down to rush off again.

Modern commentators have attempted to offer plausible suggestions regarding why Protagoras should appear all of a sudden in this way, popping up only as far as the neck and then sinking down to run off. For instance, Campbell (1883, 109), noticing the dramatic date of the conversation of the *Theaetetus*, claims that Plato portrays Protagoras here as a kind of

---

<sup>79</sup> It may be suggested that Plato’s main target in the *Theaetetus* was not the Megarians but the Cyrenaics founded by Aristippus of Cyrene, appealing both to the textual evidence that they are known to have indeed claimed that all we can know with certainty is instant sense-experiences (Theaetetean definition of knowledge as perception) and that we never reach to knowledge of true nature of the objects that cause our sense experiences (cf. *M.* 7.196–197; D.L. 2.87–88; Reale and Catan, 1986, 274–5; Gill, 2006, 405–6), and to the historical evidence that Theodorus, one of Socrates’ main interlocutors and Protagoras’ pupil was originally from Cyrene. Particularly, according to Sextus Empiricus (*M.* 7.196–197), the Cyrenaics were those who maintained that ‘everyone grasps his own feelings (*pathē*). Whether a particular feeling (*pathos*) comes to him and his neighbour from something white neither he nor his neighbour can say, since neither receives the other’s feelings. Since there are no feelings common to us all, it is rash to say that what appears thus-and-so to me also appears thus-and-so to my neighbour (ἐκαστος γὰρ τοῦ ἰδίου πάθους ἀντιλαμβάνεται, τὸ δὲ εἰ τοῦτο τὸ πάθος ἀπὸ λευκοῦ ἐγγίνεται αὐτῷ καὶ τῷ πέλας, οὐτ’ αὐτὸς δύναται λέγειν μὴ ἀναδεχόμενος τὸ τοῦ πέλας πάθος, οὔτε ὁ πέλας μὴ ἀναδεχόμενος τὸ ἐκείνου. μηδενὸς δὲ κοινοῦ πάθους περὶ ἡμᾶς γινομένου προπετές ἐστὶ τὸ λέγειν ὅτι τὸ ἐμοὶ τοῖον φαινόμενον τοῖον καὶ τῷ παρεστῶτι φαίνεται)’ (trans. Brunschwig, 1999, 254). However, there is no evidence that Theodorus, although coming from Cyrene, indeed joined the Cyrenaic school. It may be possible that Plato did not discern the Megarians from the Cyrenaics; for him they both could seem to have been simply a group of Socrates’ disciples who argued for radical relativism of perception.

stage ghost, rising up on “Charon’s steps”—i.e. a flight of steps from the middle of the stage to the orchestra, used by characters from the underworld in the early Greek theatre. Lee (1973, 249 ff.), pinpointing philosophical importance of the passage, argues that the imagery of the passage proposes Protagoras to be a plant, rooted in a world created by his solipsistic doctrine and unable to “leap out” and join the exchange of other views. Similarly, Burnyeat (1976b, 191–3, n. 23), attributing Protagoras’ silence to the fact that he has no argument to offer to Socrates’ previous interpretation and refutation of the MMD and pinpointing the sophist’s solipsism, claims that Protagoras’ “only reply left amounts to a refusal to submit to dialectical discussion”, and if the sophist “does not speak to the human condition, does not put forward his claim that each of us lives in our own relativistic world as something we can all discuss, and, possibly, come to accept, but simply asserts solipsistically that he, for his part, lives in a world in which this is so, then indeed there is no discussing with him. His world and his theory go to the grave with him, and Socrates is fully entitled to leave them there and get on with his inquiry”.<sup>80</sup>

Despite the value of those suggestions, it is still possible for us to take the passage as a dramatic formulation in a literal sense; Plato has Socrates intend to confess that his reading of the MMD is not really referring to Protagoras’ doctrine. An external authority is required to appear in a scene of the dialogue in order to reprove such an incorrect attribution of the dictum. This authority, if possible, needs to be the one whose dictum is a topic of the discussion. Obviously, the only one who can appear as the appropriate authority in the dialogue is Protagoras since his MMD is under discussion. The authority cannot be replaced with other characters like Theodorus because such a replacement will perhaps make the same problem of attributing the dictum to a wrong person in the discussion recurrent, unless the replacement can fully be representative for the authority. Since he portrayed as already dead, however, Protagoras cannot physically appear in the dialogue. Plato may utilise a clever dramatic device in order to make the external authority appear by making him pop up from the underground as far as his neck. This dead Protagoras does not need to bring his whole

---

<sup>80</sup> McCabe (2000, 46–51 and 90–2) suggests two points regarding the short and limited appearance of dead Protagoras until his neck from the ground, one dramatically, the other philosophically. She says that by having Protagoras appear in such way, Plato sets up a dramatic formulation to show that he “is constructing *historical fictions*” for his own philosophical works, and “uses a (merely) literary device, that is to say, to avoid a direct argument with Protagoras.” At the same time, his dramatic formulation, argues McCabe, reveals the contrast between Socrates’ and Protagoras’ accounts of what it is to believe; Socrates’ account is that belief is “sincere, reflective, public and differential”, while Protagoras’ account is that “belief, like sincerity, is undifferentiated” both logically and epistemologically (in one’s subjectivist world). As an alternative suggestion, Castagnoli (2010, 63–7) views this passage as a further self-refutation argument. On Protagoras’ head popping up until his neck from the ground and rushing off immediately, cf. also Waterfield (1987), 65, n. 1; Ford (1994), 199–218.



body out of the underground in the scene, but only the part by which he can speak and rationalise, i.e. his head.

Plato, however, must make Protagoras' head disappear as soon as the correction is completed; otherwise, the dialogue would be astray between discussing Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception which is read as radical relativism of perception and seeking again what Protagoras indeed intended to say by his MMD. The appearance and disappearance of dead Protagoras' head in the scene in this way successfully meets its dramatic role in the dialogue.

Protagoras' MMD in itself as a slogan in a form of short single sentence does not seem to prove or entail the premiss and argument supplied by Plato for his reading of the doctrine as a claim of perceptual relativism; Plato would have probably taken this slogan for a convenient reason for his discussion on the theory of perceptual relativism, leaving some dramatic clues that (the historical) Protagoras' view is not really taken in the discussion—it is remarkable that besides the *Theaetetus*, Plato does not seem to consider Protagoras a radical relativist in his other works, such as the *Protagoras*, the *Euthydemus* and the *Phaedrus*, as we examined in the previous chapter and will see in the following chapters too. Taking into consideration such character of Plato's dramatic formulation in the *Theaetetus* as discussed above (according to which we can assume that Plato presumably intended to examine the Megarian philosophical idea, not Protagoras' idea),<sup>81</sup> now we may be able to attempt at an alternative reading of the MMD, standing outside the Platonic reading of it, but considering it on the grounds of the primary literal and common senses and Protagoras' features as mostly pictured in the *Great Speech* in the *Protagoras* (320c8–328d2). (I mean by 'an alternative reading of the MMD' a possible reading of it on the basis of Protagoras' ideas found in other sources that seem to give us some clues for understanding it; in this regard, this alternative reading is not necessarily incompatible with its Platonic reading.)

---

<sup>81</sup> When Socrates brings the MMD into discussion as soon as Theaetetus defines knowledge as perception, he says that 'Protagoras said the same thing in a somewhat different way (*tropon tina allon*). For, I suppose (*pou*), he said that "man is the measure of all things, of things that are that/how they are, of things that are not that/how they are not" (τρόπον δέ τινα ἄλλον εἶρηκε τὰ αὐτὰ ταῦτα. φησὶ γάρ που "πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον" ἄνθρωπον εἶναι, "τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστι, τῶν δὲ μὴ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν")' (*Theaet.* 151e8–152a5). The expression and particle adopted in Socrates' saying, *tropon tina allon* and *pou*, according to a general usage of Greek grammar (cf. Smyth's *Greek Grammar* and Denniston's *Greek Particles*), are used to weaken the certainty of the speaker's idea. In this regard, it is also assumable that by adopting the expression and particle, Plato does not really intend to equate Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception with the MMD of (the historical) Protagoras.

## 2. An alternative reading of the Man-Measure Doctrine in the light of the *Great Speech*

### 2.1. *Chrēmata* and *metron*

According to the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG), the words *chrēmata* and *metron* were very common and widely used in antiquity—nearly 3,600 occurrences of *chrēmata* and approximately 305 occurrences of *metron* in various texts from the eighth century BCE Homeric epics to philosophical commentaries such as Clearchus' and Theophrastus' corpus in the fourth century BCE.

The usage of *metron*, usually translated as 'measure', in ancient texts very clearly means 'that by which anything is measured' (cf. LSJ. *s.v.*). The authors in antiquity had employed this word to indicate something that one can use as a means or tool to measure things, mostly for their magnitude or length, sometimes for contents or actions and speeches. For instance, in *Works and Days* 719–721, Hesiod says that 'the tongue's best treasure among men is when it is sparing, and its greatest charm is when it goes in measure. If you speak ill, you may well hear greater yourself (γλώσσης τοι θησαυρός ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἄριστος φειδωλῆς, πλείστη δὲ χάρις κατὰ μέτρον ἰούσης· εἰ δὲ κακὸν εἴποις, τάχα κ' αὐτὸς μείζον ἀκούσαιο)' (trans. West, 1988). Here Hesiod employs *metron* explicitly to indicate a measure by which one's speech is rightly measured to speak. Similarly, Aëtius states (I.22.6: DK87 B9) that 'Antiphon and Critolaus say that time is a thought or measure and not a substance (Ἀντιφῶν καὶ Κριτόλαος νόημα ἢ μέτρον τὸν χρόνον, οὐχ ὑπόστασιν)' (trans. Pendrick, 2002). By comparison with the term, substance (*hypostasis*), *metron* in this sentence clearly means, not a thing that exists in itself, but a thing as a measure by which things can be measured in terms of a sort of length, i.e. the duration of their existence. In Plato's *Timaeus*, *metron* is adopted to indicate a measure by which the fastness and slowness of speed is properly measured and by which the proportions of colours are measured so that things can be called by the names of colours: 'and so that there might be a conspicuous measure of their relative slowness and quickness with which they move along in their eight revolutions (ἵνα δ' εἴη μέτρον ἐναργές τι πρὸς ἄλληλα βραδυτῆτι καὶ τάχει καὶ τὰ περὶ τὰς ὀκτὼ φορὰς πορεύοιτο)' (39b2–4), 'as the fire shines through the moisture with which it is mixed with red and white, we get orange. But it would be unwise to state the proportions among them, even if one could know them. It is impossible, even approximately, to provide a proof or a likely account on these matters (λαμπρόν τε ἐρυθρῶ λευκῶ τε μειγνύμενον ζανθὸν γέγονεν· τὸ δὲ ὅσον μέτρον ὅσοις, οὐδ' εἴ τις εἰδείη, νοῦν ἔχει τὸ λέγειν, ὧν μήτε τινὰ ἀνάγκην μήτε τὸν εἰκότα λόγον καὶ μετρίως ἂν τις εἰπεῖν

εἴη δυνατός)’ (68b5–8) (all trans. Zeyl in Cooper, 1997).<sup>82</sup>

On the contrary, *chrēmata* is not as easily read as *metron*, mostly due to its multiple meanings. The principal meanings of *chrēma* (according to LSJ. *s.v.*), are ‘need’ that ‘a thing that one needs or uses’ or ‘material’ ‘in use by/from which something can be constructed’, and ‘goods and property’, as well as simply ‘money’, i.e. the basic ‘need’ for human life in communities. Yet, this word is also used to mean ‘things’ in a general sense like *pragmata* (cf. Sextus Empiricus’ clarification of this word in relation to the MMD in *P.H.* I.216); and to simply but abstractly mean ‘matter’ or ‘affair’. Sometimes this word is utilised to substitute for *ti*. Despite such multiple meanings of *chrēma*, however, the word in antiquity seems to have mostly been used in any contexts in which the things referred to are related with the meaning of ‘need’ and ‘use’, or ‘material’, of their users, either directly or indirectly. In other words, *chrēmata* always refers to the things that lie in some specific relation with others or their users, basically for the users’ ‘need’ or as their ‘material’ in use. This becomes clearer if we note the etymological connection of *chrēmata* to *chrē* (‘there is need’) and *chraomai* (‘to use’). The understanding of *chrēmata* in this way can easily be found in ancient texts.

In the *Odyssey*, Homer, utilising the word 13 times,<sup>83</sup> adopts it mostly to refer to ‘needs’, ‘wealth’, ‘belongings’, ‘fortune’, and ‘properties’. In book II, for instance, Homer recites that ‘we should simply hound you up and down the town for the restitution of our *needs* till every item was repaid (τόφρα γὰρ ἄν κατὰ ἄστυ ποτιπτυσσοίμεθα μύθῳ χρήματ’ ἀπατιζόντες, ἕως κ’ ἀπὸ πάντα δοθείη)’ (76–78). And in book XIII, he has Odysseus say ‘but now I had better count my *belongings* and make sure that the crew have not robbed me and gone off with anything in their hollow ship (ἀλλ’ ἄγε δὴ τὰ χρήματ’ ἀριθμήσω καὶ ἴδωμαι, μὴ τί μοι οἴχωνται κοίλης ἐπὶ νηὸς ἄγοντες)’ (215–216). Again, a few lines later in the same book, he says ‘and now I have come here myself with all this booty, leaving the other half of my *fortune* to my children (νῦν δ’ εἰλήλουθα καὶ αὐτὸς χρήμασι σὺν τοῖσδεσσι)’ (257–258) (all trans. E. V. Rieu and D. C. H. Rieu, 1946).<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> For *metron* appearing in ancient texts with the reference to Protagoras’ MMD, cf. *Theaet.* 152a3 (DK80 B1), 161c5 (DK80 B1), 166d2 (DK80 A21a); *Crat.* 385e6 (DK80 A13), *Met.* XI.6.1062b14 and b19 (DK80 A19); *P.H.* 216 lines 2 and 4 (DK80 A14), *M.* 60 line 7 (DK80 B1). In Plato, the word appears 40 times; 1 time in the *Cratylus* (38ca1), 13 in the *Theaetetus* (152a3, 160d9, 161c5, 162c5, 166d2, 168d3, 169a3, 170d2, 170e8, 171c2, 178b3, 179b2, 183c1), 2 in the *Statesman* (269c6, 284b1), 4 in the *Philebus* (25b1, 25b2, 56a5, 66a6), 1 in the *Gorgias* (502c6), 3 in the *Republic* (504c1, 504c3, 621a6), 2 in the *Timaeus* (39b2, 68b6), another 13 in the *Laws* (692a8, 698b1, 716c4, 719e2, 744e3, 756b6, 836a6, 843e4, 846c8, 947b2, 957a4, 959a3, 959d6). And, 3 more occurrences of the word in Ps-Platonic corpus; 1 occurrence in the *Definitiones* (411b3), and 2 in the *Spuria* (373c5, 373d8).

<sup>83</sup> II. 78, 203, XIII. 203, 215, 258, 283, 304, 363, XIV. 286, 385, XV. 230, XVI. 389, and XIX. 284.

<sup>84</sup> Sometimes, in Homer *chrēmata* is translated simply as ‘things’, but even in this case, these ‘things’ are what is involved with ‘need’ and ‘use’ like bowl or table; they do not refer to something absolutely apart from ‘need’

There are 5 occurrences of *chrēmata* in Hesiod’s *Works and Days*,<sup>85</sup> and in all cases the word particularly indicates ‘property’, ‘benefit’, and ‘utility’: for instance, ‘*property* is not for seizing, far better God-given (χρήματα δ’ οὐχ ἀρπακτά, θεόσδοτα πολλὸν ἀμείνω)’ (320); ‘twice, three times you may be successful, but if you harass them further, you will achieve nothing [i.e. no *benefit*], all your speeches will be in vain, and however wide your words range it will be no use (δις μὲν γὰρ καὶ τρις τάχα τεύξεαι· ἦν δ’ ἔτι λυπῆς, χρῆμα μὲν οὐ πρήξεις, σὺ δ’ ἐτώσια πόλλ’ ἀγορεύσεις, ἀχρεῖος δ’ ἔσται ἐπέων νομός)’ (401–403); ‘first, a household, a woman, and a ploughing ox, [a chattel woman, not wedded, one who could follow the herds,] *the utilities* in the house must all be got ready, lest you ask another, and he refuse, and you be lacking, and the right time go past, and your cultivation suffer (οἶκον μὲν πρότιστα γυναῖκά τε βοῦν τ’ ἀροτῆρα, [κτητὴν, οὐ γαμετὴν, ἥτις καὶ βουσὶν ἔποιτο,] χρήματα δ’ εἰν οἴκῳ πάντ’ ἄρμενα ποιήσασθαι, μὴ σὺ μὲν αἰτῆς ἄλλον, ὃ δ’ ἀρνήται, σὺ δὲ τητᾶ, ἢ δ’ ὄρη παραμείβηται, μινύθη δέ τοι ἔργον)’ (405–409); ‘and maintain a dog with sharp teeth, not stinting his food, in case a couchbyday [i.e. a burglar who works at night] robs you of your *property* (καὶ κῶνα καρχαρόδοντα κομῆν, μὴ φείδω σίτου, μὴ ποτέ σ’ ἡμερόκοιτος ἀνὴρ ἀπὸ χρήμαθ’ ἔληται)’ (604–605); ‘because *property* is as life to wretched mortals (χρήματα γὰρ ψυχῇ πέλεται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν)’ (686) (all trans. West, 1988).

Even in a tradition of philosophical thoughts, the word still seems to have been employed to indicate more than mere ‘things’ in a general sense, i.e. ‘things that lie in need and use for the production of benefit and usefulness, or that are materials of substances’. For instance, in Simplicius’ *Commentary on Aristotle’s Physics* 155.26–30 (DK59 B1), Anaxagoras is reported to have said that ‘together were all *things*, limitless both in quantity and in smallness—for the small too was limitless. And when all were together, none was clear by reason of smallness; for air and ether covered all things, both being limitless—for in all things these are the greatest both in quantity and in size (ὁμοῦ χρήματα πάντα ἦν ἄπειρα καὶ πλῆθος καὶ σμικρότητα· καὶ γὰρ τὸ σμικρὸν ἄπειρον ἦν. καὶ πάντων ὁμοῦ ἐόντων οὐδὲν ἔνδηλον ἦν ὑπὸ σμικρότητος· πάντα γὰρ ἀήρ τε καὶ αἰθήρ κατεῖχεν ἀμφότερα ἄπειρα ἐόντα· ταῦτα γὰρ μέγιστα ἔνεστιν ἐν τοῖς σύμπασι καὶ πλήθει καὶ μεγέθει)’. And a few lines later, in the same book (*In Phys.* 163.20–24: DK59 B17), Anaxagoras is reported again to have stated that ‘the Greeks do not have a correct view of generation and destruction; for no *thing* is generated or destroyed; rather, they are mingled and dissociated from existing *things*. And for this reason they would be correct to call generation mingling and destruction dissociation (τὸ

---

and ‘use’ like wind or cloud.

<sup>85</sup> 320, 402, 407, 605, and 686.

δὲ γίνεσθαι καὶ ἀπόλλυσθαι οὐκ ὀρθῶς νομίζουσιν οἱ Ἕλληνες· οὐδὲν γὰρ χρῆμα γίνεται οὐδὲ ἀπόλλυται, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ ἐόντων χρημάτων συμμίσγεταί τε καὶ διακρίνεται. καὶ οὕτως ἂν ὀρθῶς καλοῖεν τό τε γίνεσθαι συμμίσγεσθαι καὶ τὸ ἀπόλλυσθαι διακρίνεσθαι) (all trans. Barnes, 2001<sup>2</sup>). Anaxagoras, in whose fragments and testimonies *chrēmata* occurs 23 times,<sup>86</sup> adopts the word particularly to refer to the *homoiomereis* that are what have parts in things like each other and the whole—simply expressed as ‘in everything there is a portion of everything’ (cf. Aristotle’s *On the Heavens* 302a31–b3: DK59 A43; *On Generation and Corruption* 413a18: DK59 A46). The *homoiomereis* are, thus, as Barnes (1982, 322) suggests, read as “stuffs” from which matters can be individually formed, “the *material* of which substances are composed.” The Anaxagorean *chrēmata*, though not directly related with human use, is still not missing its fundamental sense as ‘need’ and ‘use’ for the things in this world to be composed and thus existent; without it, nothing can exist.<sup>87</sup>

Above all, it would be meaningful to observe the usage of this word *chrēmata* by Plato, the first and chief reporter of the MMD, in the *Theaetetus*, since he might have had a certain view on the usage and meaning of the word when treating Protagoras’ doctrine. The word appears approximately 435 times in Platonic corpus, and 11 times in the *Theaetetus*.<sup>88</sup> Let us take some passages from the dialogue in which Plato uses *chrēmata*, outside those passages in which he discusses the MMD, in order to see the Platonic usage of the word (all trans. Levett in Cooper, 1997):

<p>ΘΕΟ. Θεαίτητος, ὃ Σώκρατες, τό γε ὄνομα· τὴν μέντοι οὐσίαν δοκοῦσί μοι ἐπίτροποί τινες διεφθαρκέναι. ἀλλ' ὅμως καὶ πρὸς τὴν τῶν χρημάτων ἐλευθεριότητα θαυμαστός, ὃ Σώκρατες. (144d1–4)</p>	<p>THEOD. His name, Socrates, is Theaetetus. As for the property, that, I think, has been made away with by trustees. All the same, he is wonderfully open-handed about <i>money</i>, Socrates.</p>
--	---

<p>ὁ σοφιστής ... ἄξιος πολλῶν χρημάτων τοῖς παιδευθεῖσιν. (167c7–d1)</p>	<p>The professional teacher [i.e. the sophist]... is worth his large <i>fees</i> [i.e. <i>money</i>] to them [i.e. his disciples].</p>
---	--

<sup>86</sup> A1 line 4; A13 line 6; A45 line 25; A45 line 27; A46 line 15; A46 line 16; A52 line 9; A59 line 4; A60 line 2; B1 line 5; B4 line 8; B4 line 22; B4 line 34; B4 line 40; B7 line 2; B9 line 6; B9 line 7; B12 line 5; B12 line 8; B12 line 11; B12 line 12; B17 line 4; B17 line 5 (all in DK59).

<sup>87</sup> For further discussion on Anaxagoras’ *chrēmata* as ‘stuffs’, i.e. ‘material that is the need for composition and existence of the things in the world’, cf. Barnes (1982), 323–41; KRS (1983<sup>2</sup>), 376–8.

<sup>88</sup> 144d3; 152a3 (reference to the MMD); 153d4 (a quote from *Il.* in interpreting the MMD); 156e6 (interpretation of the MMD); 160d9 (interpretation of the MMD); 161c5 (reference to the MMD); 165e3 (refutation of the MMD); 167d1; 170d2 (refutation of the MMD: self-refutation); 183c1 (reference to the MMD); 201b1.

ΣΩ. Ἡ τῶν μεγίστων εἰς σοφίαν, οὐς δὴ καλοῦσιν ῥήτορας τε καὶ δικανικούς. οὗτοι γάρ που τῇ ἑαυτῶν τέχνῃ πείθουσιν οὐ διδάσκοντες ἀλλὰ δοξάζειν ποιοῦντες ἃ ἂν βούλωνται. ἢ σὺ οἶει δεινούς τινες οὕτω διδασκάλους εἶναι, ὥστε οἷς μὴ παρεγένοντό τινες ἀποστερουμένοις χρήματα ἢ τι ἄλλο βιαζομένοις, τούτοις δύνασθαι πρὸς ὕδωρ συμκρὸν διδάξαι ἱκανῶς τῶν γενομένων τὴν ἀλήθειαν; (201a7–b3)

Soc. The art of the greatest representatives of wisdom—the men called orators and lawyers. These men, I take it, use their art to produce conviction not by teaching people, but by making them judge whatever they themselves choose. Or do you think there are any teachers so clever that within the short time allowed by the clock they can teach adequately the truth of what happened to people who have been robbed *money* or *properties* or assaulted, in a case where there were no eye-witnesses?

Plato evidently utilises the word *chrēmata*, outside the passages in which he refers to or interprets the MMD, in order to indicate goods that are fundamental ‘need’ for human life, such as ‘money’ or ‘property’. Moreover, in a sentence from the *Laws* (IV.716c4–6) in which the main character, the Athenian, states that ‘to us God would be the measure of all things most, and much more so than any man, as they [probably the Protagoreans] say (ὁ δὴ θεὸς ἡμῖν πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἂν εἴη μάλιστα, καὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ ποῦ τις, ὡς φασιν, ἄνθρωπος)’, Plato by *chrēmata* means, not merely things in a general sense such as wind (an example of *chrēmata* in the *Theaetetus*), but things that are somehow connected to human affairs such as justice or moderation as well as all ethical and constitutional matters that must be derived from and ruled by the mighty power, God, of which he is indeed the measure. In this context, it would be highly likely that Plato’s use of *chrēmata* for the most part occurs in the *Republic* (around 100 occurrences) and in the *Laws* (around 90 occurrences), in which he chiefly deals with the ethical and moral and political issues in relation to human affairs in communities under certain normative ideas such as articles of the laws.

Given that the fundamental and common usages of *chrēmata* and *metron* in antiquity, before and after Protagoras’ and Plato’s time, are thus illustrated above, a way for an alternative reading of the MMD along the literal and basic senses of the key words seems now open to us. But, in what context shall *chrēmata* and *metron* in the MMD be read? In other words, in which context is man involved with *chrēmata* so as to be *metron* of it? Unfortunately, the MMD itself, as given as a very short single sentence, does not offer any further promising context regarding what the Protagorean *chrēmata* and *metron* could possibly mean. However, as far as the primary and literal meaning of those words is

concerned, the *Great Speech* in the *Protagoras* can be taken as a literal and contextual source to us for an alternative reading of the MMD. For, in the speech, as we have seen in Chapter II above, Protagoras expresses a clear idea about what the basic ‘need’ is [for human beings to live in human communities, i.e. to survive as human beings], and how man is the measure [of the basic ‘need’].

According to the *Great Speech*, the fundamental need for man who can survive and exist as ‘man’ in a community (since outside it no one can survive), is an ability to practise what he should do and to avoid what he should not do in the community; otherwise the community will collapse, and no one will survive and exist. In this sense, Protagoras’ *chrēmata* can be understood as human political and ethical actions and speeches in the community that are the fundamental condition for the preservation and survival of the human race and community.

These political and ethical actions and speeches must be, however, ‘measured’ before being practised so that their practitioner can appropriately preserve his community and human race, and avoid any possible danger to all members, including himself, of his community. In this regard, Protagoras’ *metron* can be understood at the primary level as ‘a sense of what is right (*dikē*) and a sense of shame (*aidōs*), i.e. the civic senses’ by which human political actions and speeches are properly measured, and at the secondary and improved level as ‘political virtues added to the senses’. In other words, measuring an action or speech to find whether it is appropriate to practise in the community, i.e. discerning what should be done from what should not be done, can be primarily accomplished by the civic senses; if a man lacks them, he is unable to distinguish ‘rightdoings’ from ‘wrongdoings’ and commits wrongdoings to others, finally perishes with his community.

As Protagoras highlights the role of education and punishment in a human community throughout the *Great Speech* (esp. 323c8–324b1 and 324d7–325d7), if a man has received proper education in political virtues, or has been suitably punished (i.e. corrected and reformed) for his past misdeeds, his mind and perspective with regard to public affairs and civic life will be improved. In this regard, the education in political virtues plays a significant role for the improvement of *metron*, and Protagoras’ education thus aims to its improvement. The improvement of *metron*, i.e. man’s becoming a better *anthrōpos* (or a better citizen), is achieved through Protagoras’ education in good deliberation concerning how best to manage domestic and public affairs: the good deliberation is accordingly a deliberation that guarantees men more influential or useful and beneficial power to give better counsels on *chrēmata*, i.e. political and ethical actions and speeches as the basic and fundamental need to practise for the preservation of human society and human race, in relation to others in their

city.

In the *Great Speech* Protagoras states that all men with the civic senses in a human community receive education in political virtues as soon as they can understand language, by parents, nurses, neighbours, and teachers, privately at home and publicly at school and the court (*Prot.* 325c6–d5). Education in political virtues aims to widen people’s perspective concerning different factors in their community that affect the application of the civic senses. Those who have received education in different factors by which they have better counsel on political issues, of course, as Protagoras’ professed task emphasises (312d6–7), will become ‘more useful (*ōphelimōteron*)’, ‘more beneficial (*chrēsīmōteron*)’, and ‘most influential (*dynatōtatos*)’ at actions and speeches in relation to political issues (*Prot.* 318e5–319a2). With a widened perspective, men who become more useful, more beneficial, and most influential at actions and speeches in relation to political issues are citizens better suited to handle political matters. The educated men are, in Protagoras’ opinion, improved in this way, as their *metra* are improved; ‘man is himself the measure of all right and wrong actions and speeches that are discerned and encouraged, initially by the civic senses and further by political virtues, to pursue or avoid.’ In this sense, Protagoras’ *metron* is understood at the secondary and improved level as political virtues established on the civic senses through education and punishment for the purpose of preserving a human community and maintaining human survival in a better way.

## 2.2. *Anthrōpos* and *hōs*

There has also been controversy as to what Protagoras exactly means by *anthrōpos* in his MMD; some understand it as individual, others as universal, but both with a power of perception. Another reading is that Protagoras’ *anthrōpos* is the social human being distinguished from man in an individual and biological sense. This reading is divided again into two: an individual social man or the social human beings as a group.

The reading of the Protagorean *anthrōpos* as an individual is first proposed by Plato in the *Theaetetus*: more precisely, Plato limits ‘individual’ to the individual with powers of sense-perception (cf. 152a6–b7, 158c8–160a1, and 170a3–c8). Aristotle’s and Sextus Empiricus’ readings of the Protagorean *anthrōpos* are not much different from Plato’s, since “they are following rather than corroborating Plato on this point.”<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> Donovan (1993), 38. Cf. also Levi (1940a), 156. For the reading of man as individual, cf. Levi (1940a), 150;



The suggestion that *anthrōpos* is the human species, as distinguished from other species, i.e. man in a generic sense, is endorsed by Gomperz. He (1901, 451, cited in Balaban (1999), 299) asserts that “[T]he phrase about man as the measure of things—the homo mensura tenet, as it has been suitably abbreviated—was a contribution to the theory of cognition. Moreover ‘man,’ as opposed to the totality of objects, was obviously not the individual, but mankind as a whole. No unprejudiced reader will require to be convinced that this is at least the more natural and the more obvious meaning.” Levi (1940a, 149), on Gomperz’ behalf, says that for Protagoras things are relative to the “physiological and psychological structure of humanity.”

The reading of *anthrōpos* as the social human being has also been widely suggested by various scholars in modern scholarship on Protagoras. For instance, Nestle (cited in Zeller (1869–81), I, 2<sup>6</sup>, 389, n. 101) once affirms that the Protagorean *anthrōpos* gives “a foretaste of the Aristotelian doctrine that man is by nature a social animal.” Later, Dupréel (1948, 19) also emphasises that “le siohiste d’Abdèra fut, à coup sûr, le moins «individualiste», le plus «social» de tous les penseurs de l’Antiquité,” and that “la phrase sur l’Homme-mesure, ... enveloppe aussi—et c’est l’essentiel—une conception sociologique de la connaissance et de sa valeur.” Similarly, Donovan (1993, 38; cf. also Levi (1940b), 296), despite pinpointing the individuality of *anthrōpos*, argues that Protagoras’ man probably “coexists with at least a social or civic sense.”

Protagoras, as we examined in the previous chapter, expresses his idea of *anthrōpos*, just as he does regarding the ideas of *chrēmata* and *metron*, in the *Great Speech*. The idea of *anthrōpos* expressed by Protagoras himself in the *Great Speech* can be taken as a contextual source to us for understanding what the sophist would probably mean by the word when he stated ‘man’ is the measure. Principally, in the *Great Speech* Protagoras characterises a ‘man’ as a mortal being created by the gods who is given the Promethean gifts, technical wisdom (*entechnon sophia*) and fire (*pyr*), and the Zeusian gifts, a sense of what is right and a sense of shame, i.e. the civic senses (*Prot.* 321b6–322d5), for survival. Protagoras, however, puts more weight on the civic senses than technical wisdom and fire, emphasising the fundamental importance on the Zeusian gifts for human survival.

According to Protagoras, men would not survive if they lack technical wisdom and fire (*Prot.* 321d3–4b). But, although they are equipped with them, they are still unable to survive due to their physical weakness. Men started gathering together to live together, constructing a city, hoping to protect themselves from the wild beasts’ attack. But initially they did not know

---

Guthrie (1971), 188–9; Dherbey (1985), 20; Balaban (1999), 300–3.

how to live all together in the city. So they did wrong to each other, and finally scattered again, facing extinction. In short, without senses concerning how to live all together in a city, they could not survive. For man's survival and thus existence, Zeus gives to all men a sense of what is right and a sense of shame, i.e. the civic senses. Only with these civic senses on how to live together in a city, can men preserve their race, in Protagoras' thoughts discovered in the *Great Speech*.

Protagoras further stresses that man as man who possesses the civic senses can be educated in political virtues. Ever since having learned political virtues from parents and school teachers from the very beginning of their social lives, on the basis of a sense of what is right and a sense of shame, both privately and publicly, all men share in justice and moderation to some extent (*Prot.* 322d5–323a3). Also, anyone who absolutely lacks them is not among men (*Prot.* 323b7–c2). Man is one who punishes others with reason for the sake of the future, while wild animals do this for blind vengeance (*Prot.* 324b). Thus, man is rational, or at least able to receive education in political virtues with reason—i.e. in a rational way—for the sake of future. Even the wickedest man in a city is indeed good at and aware of political virtues, compared to those with no education at all, who are considered by Protagoras not to be human (*Prot.* 327c4–d4).

Although men differ from each other at the level of political virtues due to different circumstances and education, at the level of the civic senses everyone is equal. With this equal foundation of the civic senses they live all together, not differentiating from each other, but sharing a common social life in their community at the primary level; yet, simultaneously, this common social life secures them their survival in their community as well. Taking the discussion in the *Great Speech* into consideration, Protagoras' idea of *anthrōpos* can thus be understood as man as a social being who shares in the common objective civic senses, as well as political virtues learned through private and public education, who can live and coexist with others in a human community. Here, no substantial distinction between man as individual and man in a universal sense is found; rather, as far as man is understood as one living in a human community, such distinction seems pointless, since this man or that man, or all men, are simply man, as long as they all have the same objective civic senses to measure things that are among what is right to do and live together for the purpose of survival.

Protagoras' man is the measure; in the light of *metron*, namely, the civic senses and further political virtues, man as a social being in Protagoras' thought practises his political actions and speeches. His political actions and speeches are measured whether they are appropriate to be practised in his society. They are measured by the civic senses and political

virtues ‘that’ they are (*hōs estin*) proper, i.e. just, courageous, temperate, pious, and needful and so on, to practise, or ‘that’ they are not (*hōs ouk estin*). In this regard, the basic sense of *hōs* in the MMD can be understood as meaning ‘that’.

Yet, *hōs* can be also read as ‘how’; all men have the same objective civic senses by which they can measure their civic activities. This implies that all men can know ‘how’ their political actions and speeches are proper to practise in their community (*hōs estin*), and ‘how’ they are not (*hōs estin*), by measuring them with the civic senses in given political contexts.

Thus, unlike scholars’ debate over the reading of *hōs*, in determining whether it means ‘that’ or ‘how’ Protagoras does not seem to have intended this sort of distinction; rather he may have used *hōs* to mean both the present factual state of *chrēmata* (‘that they are appropriate actions and speeches to practise in the light of the civic senses for the preservation of human society and human race’) and the modal state of *chrēmata* (‘how they are appropriate actions and speeches to practise’). In this understanding, the role of *estin* in the *hōs* clauses is, thus, predicative, since its function in the context is to describe the state, both factual and modal, of *chrēmata* in the light of the civic senses for the preservation of human society and race, i.e. ‘needful (useful/beneficial)’ in a political and ethical context.

On this reading, the reformulated form of the MMD can be conjectured as: ‘*anthrōpos estin metron tōn men ontōn chrēsīmōn*<sup>90</sup> *hōs esti chrēsima, tōn de ouk ontōn chrēsīmōn hōs ouk estin chrēsima* (man is the measure of the things that are needful (i.e. useful/beneficial) that/how they are needful, and of the things that are not needful that/how they are not needful)’, and in this regard, ‘*pantōn chrēmatōn metron estin anthrōpos* (man is the measure of all the needful things)’. And, in the context of the *Great Speech*, Protagoras, by his MMD, thus argues that *man, as a social being, who shares in the common objective civic senses, as well as political virtues learned through private and public education, with others, whoever he is, as far as he lives in a human community with others, is by himself the measure of all the basic needs for his (and others’) survival and the preservation of the community, i.e. of all political and ethical actions and speeches that he and others do and make; all these are measured as to whether and how they are appropriate (i.e. just, courageous, temperate, pious, and needful and so on) things to practise in the light of the civic senses and political virtues.*

---

<sup>90</sup> *Chrēsīmōn*, an adjective form of *chrēmata*, as we saw in the previous chapter, is the key Protagorean term appearing in the *Great Speech* to refer to the result of general education such as musical instruction by means of which one can reach the soundness of soul, like harmony and moderation (cf. n. 52 in Chapter II above). A possible comparison from a structure ‘*metron agathōn tōn ontōn hōs estin*’; in this structure the predicative omitted but clearly attributed by *tōn ontōn* is *agathos*: ‘measure of good things, of the things that are good that/how they are good’.

## Chapter IV

### Epistemology: The *peri theōn* ('on the gods') fragment

Ancient sources report that Protagoras made a pronouncement regarding the gods, known as the *peri theōn* ('on the gods') fragment (hereafter the *PTH* fragment) in which he confesses his ignorance of the gods. According to Diogenes Laertius, the *PTH* fragment was the incipit of Protagoras' book entitled *On the Gods (To Peri Theōn)* which Protagoras first read publicly; Diogenes Laertius (D.L. 9.54) says that 'according to some Protagoras read it in the house of Euripides in Athens, or in the house of Megacleides, as some say, and according to others the sophist might have read it at the Lyceum, where one of his pupils, Archagoras, lent his voice to him for the readings.' Except for the *PTH* fragment, however, the contents of the book are not known to us.

The major part of the *PTH* fragment is quoted in Diogenes Laertius (D.L. 9.51: DK80 A1), while its supplementary parts are reported in Theophilus of Antioch (*Ad Autol.* III.28: C. A23), Sextus Empiricus (*M.* 9.56: DK80 A12), Eusebius of Caesarea (*P.E.* 14.3.7: DK80 B4), and Theodoret of or Cyrrihus (*Gr. aff.* II.112.2–114.1: C. A23). Despite the reports' difference in wording,<sup>91</sup> the fragment generally reads:

περὶ μὲν θεῶν οὐκ ἔχω εἰδέναι οὔθ' ὡς εἰσὶν, οὔθ' ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶν, οὔθ' ὅποιοι τινες ιδέαν· πολλὰ γὰρ τὰ κωλύοντα με εἰδέναι, ἢ τ' ἀδηλότης καὶ βραχὺς ὢν ὁ βίος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

On the one hand, on the gods I am not able to know either that/how they are or that/how they are not, or what they look like in shape. For many are the things preventing me from knowing [the gods]; the obscurity [of the gods]<sup>92</sup> and the shortness of human life.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>91</sup> For the full ancient sources of the *PTH* fragment, cf. Appendix 1 below.

<sup>92</sup> Concerning the 'obscurity' (*adēlotēs*) in the *PTH* fragment, it has been suggested that what is obscure to Protagoras is the subject concerning knowledge of the gods, translating it as 'the obscurity of the subject' (cf. Guthrie, 1971, 234–5), or the matter, as 'the obscurity of matter' (cf. Curd, 2011<sup>2</sup>, 146). This suggestion is, however, not entirely different from understanding it as 'the obscurity of the gods', as the obscurity of the subject or matter regarding knowledge of the gods is to be inferred from the gods' uncertainty, i.e. obscurity. It is somewhat awkward to assume that the subject or matter of the gods is obscure while the gods themselves are not obscure but certain. In addition, there would have been a reference made to a certain obstacle that impedes knowing the gods, separate from the other obstacle indicated as 'the shortness of human life', if Protagoras indeed wanted to mean the obscurity of the subject or matter, distinguishing it from the gods. In this regard, thus, the obscurity is counted as that of the gods, as scholars have discussed why and in what manner Protagoras considered the gods obscure (cf. Section 2 in this chapter for the discussion on the gods' obscurity below).

<sup>93</sup> For the traditional translation of the *PTH* fragment in this way, cf. Gomperz (1901), 457; Dupréel (1948), 58; Untersteiner (1954), 27; Dumont (1969), 46; O'Brien in Sprague (1972), 4; Kerferd (1981a), 166; Barnes (1982), 449; De Romilly (1992), 104; Levett in Burnyeat (1990), 286; Schiappa (1991), 142; Gagarin and Woodruff

The *PTH* fragment consists of two parts. In the first part there are two sentences by which Protagoras confesses the contents of his ignorance of the gods, and in the second part he offers two epistemological obstacles impeding knowledge of the gods. Despite the controversy regarding the interpretation of the fragment in modern scholarship, four points have been traditionally and largely agreed. First, the fragment represents Protagoras' agnosticism about both the gods' existence and nature, not atheism. Second, in his agnostic view Protagoras makes a distinction between a question about the gods' existence by the first sentence of the first part of the fragment (οὐθ' ὡς εἰσίν, οὐθ' ὡς οὐκ εἰσίν) and about the gods' essence or nature by the second sentence (οὐθ' ὁποῖοί τινες ἰδέαν) (cf. Kahn (2003<sup>2</sup>), 302). Third, 'the gods' in the fragment are not objects of human experience (cf. Untersteiner (1954), 27 ff.)—it seems that scholars, in support of their agreement, relate the first and second points to the third point, presuming that Protagoras held an agnostic view of the gods' existence and nature on the grounds that for the sophist the gods are beyond human experience. Lastly, the *PTH* fragment represents Protagoras' own personal opinion that he is unaware of the gods, not a general statement arguing for all human beings' ignorance concerning them in general (cf. Mansfeld (1981), 40; Woodruff (1985), 496; Gagarin (2002), 115–6).<sup>94</sup>

In this chapter, yet, I shall first suggest that Protagoras seems to have expressed his agnosticism only about the gods' nature: his agnostic view regarding the gods' nature is expressed in general by the first sentence, and the gods' shape in particular by the second sentence. I will then show that the sophist does not seem to have taken the gods as something beyond human experience and that the obscurity of the gods results from various human experiences about them. Further, close examination of the obstacles will reveal, I believe, Protagoras' idea that human knowledge of any given object is constructed through previous experiences and judgments of it, namely a type of synthesis through inferences. My interpretation of the epistemological obstacles will also shed light on the point that the fragment needs to be read as a general statement, since no human being, in Protagoras' eyes, is able to escape from such obstacles. Together with this, I shall argue that the sophist's interests were limited to the study of human affairs, since Protagoras seems to have delimited the scope of objects of which human beings can acquire knowledge, separating it from that of

---

(1995), 186; Gagarin (2002), 115; Dillon and Gergel (2003), 3; Kahn (2003<sup>2</sup>), 302; Lee (2005), 25 and 83; Zilioli (2007), 6; Lavery in O'Grady (2008), 31.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. further Dupréel (1948), 58; Untersteiner (1954), 26–8; Dumont (1969), 46; Guthrie (1971), 234–5; O'Brien in Sprague (1972), 4, 6, 7, 10, 15, and 20; Mansfeld (1981), 38–53; Barnes (1982), 449; Gilbert (1985), 15–16; Woodruff (1985), 483–97; Schiappa (1991), 141–2; De Romilly (1992), 104–7; Gagarin and Woodruff (1995), 186; Gagarin (2002), 114–20; Dillon and Gergel (2003), 3, 5, 6, and 21; Lavery in O'Grady (2008), 31.

objects about which human beings cannot know.

## 1. The *peri theōn* fragment

### 1.1. Atheism or agnosticism?

With regard to Protagoras' confession of his ignorance concerning the gods, there has been an ancient tradition according to which the sophist made an atheistic claim, i.e. disbelief in, or denial of, the existence of the gods. Sextus Empiricus (*M.* 9.54–56: DK80 A12) says that there was a group of people who held atheistic views, such as Diagoras, Prodicus, Critias, and Theodorus. Critias, for instance, is reported to have said that the ancient lawgivers invented God as a kind of overseer of the right and wrong actions of men, in order to make sure, through fear of vengeance at the hands of the Gods, that nobody injured his neighbours (cf. DK88 B25). Then Sextus Empiricus states that, according to some, Protagoras agreed with those who held an atheistic view.<sup>95</sup> Eusebius (*P.E.* 14.3.7: DK80 B4) suggests that Protagoras held an atheistic view when he introduced the *PTH* fragment. Among modern scholars, Dumont (1969, 39) seems to understand the sophist as an atheist, as he categorises the *PTH* fragment as an atheistic statement.<sup>96</sup> From a passage of Diogenes of Oenoanda's work (fr. 12c.2.1.19W: DK80 A23), it might be inferred why Protagoras has been counted as an atheist by some sources in antiquity and by some modern scholars. In this passage Diogenes of Oenoanda says that Protagoras said that he did not know if there were any gods, and then argues as follows:

τοῦτο [i.e. μὴ εἰδέναι, εἰ θεοὶ εἰσὶν] δ' ἔστιν τὸ αὐτὸ τῶι λέγειν εἰδέναι ὅτι μὴ εἰσὶν.	This [i.e. not-knowing if there are any gods] is the same as saying that he [ <i>sc.</i> Protagoras] knows that there are no gods.
---	--

This is, however, surely unacceptable. For, as Barnes (1982, 449–50) rightly points out, Diogenes of Oenoanda here seems to rashly conflate a profession of knowledge with a confession of ignorance; the profession of knowledge that I know that not-*P* (e.g. an atheistic

---

<sup>95</sup> It is remarkable that the textual evidence of Protagoras' *PTH* fragment in Theophilus (*Ad Autol.* III.28: C. A23), who considered the sophist to be an atheist, is almost identical with that in Sextus Empiricus (cf. Appendix 1 below).

<sup>96</sup> Cf. also Bolonyai (2007), 247–69.

claim) is not the same as the confession of ignorance that I do not know that *P* (e.g. an agnostic claim).

### 1.2. The *peri theōn* fragment as an agnostic statement

Scholarship on the *PTH* fragment has suggested that Protagoras, making a distinction between the question of the existence of the gods and that of their nature, expresses his agnostic view about both the gods' existence and nature, and that the first sentence of the first part of the fragment (*outh' hōs eisin outh' hōs ouk eisin*) represents the former question and the second sentence (*outh' hopoioi tines idean*) the latter question.<sup>97</sup> In order to support this suggestion, scholars rely on a reading of the Greek verb *eisin* in the *hōs* clauses as working in the existential use. Kahn (2003<sup>2</sup>, 302), for instance, arguing that the *PTH* fragment first distinguished the questions of existence from those of nature in antiquity, asserts that “here in what is perhaps the earliest surviving ‘technical’ use of *eimi* as existential predicate we see that questions of existence are explicitly distinguished from what will later be called questions of essence. And we also see that the latter would typically be formulated by sentences with ‘be’ as copula: *hopoioi eisi idean*.”<sup>98</sup> This distinction between the existence and the essence or nature of the gods corresponds in logical terms to the syntactic contrast between *esti* as existential operator and as first-order copula.” Schiappa (1991, 142) supports Kahn’s reading by arguing that “the construction of Protagoras’ statement identifies two issues: the question of existence (*hōs estin*) and the question of the gods’ *idean*—‘form [i.e. shape]’, ‘nature’, or ‘appearance’. Even a veridical reading would juxtapose the question of whether ‘they are the case’ or ‘they are not the case’ with ‘what they are like in shape.’ Clearly the existence/essence distinction is nascent if not explicit in such a juxtaposition.” These interpreters seem convinced that the verb *einai* in the fragment must be intended in an existential use since the question concerning the gods’ essence or nature is referred to by the following phrase, *hopoioi tines idean*. Most modern scholars, accepting Kahn’s suggestion,

---

<sup>97</sup> Cicero (*De Nat. Deor.* I.12.29: DK80 A23) may probably be regarded as the first to suggest this view on Protagoras’ agnosticism. He writes that ‘nor indeed does Protagoras, who himself denies entirely having clear knowledge concerning the gods, whether they are (or, they exist) or are not (or, they do not exist), and what their nature is, seem to have any concept on the nature of the gods (*nec vero Protagoras, qui sese negat omnino de deis habere quod liqueat, sint non sint qualesve sint, quicquam videtur de natura deorum suspicari*).’ It is noticeable that here Cicero interprets the fragment, with the omission of the conjunction *ut*, which appears in his introduction of the fragment in another passage from the same work (I.23.63) and corresponds to the Greek adverbial relative *hōs*, as Protagoras’ attempt at distinguishing the question of existence from that of nature.

<sup>98</sup> Kahn here restores the omitted verb, *eisi*, in the original phrase of *hopoioi tines idean*, which comes from Eusebius’ evidence.

thus read the first part of the fragment as follows: ‘on the gods I am not able to know whether they exist or they do not exist, or what they are like in nature.’<sup>99</sup>

However, some problems with this suggestion can be pointed out. First, *pace* Kahn, it is not necessary to read the verb *eisin* in the *hōs* clauses in an existential sense simply because the same verb is read as copula in the following sentence, *hopoioi–eisin–tines idean*; the same verb can still be read in the same way in different clauses. In addition, Kahn’s argument seems to partly commit the fallacy of *petitio principii*. He, in support of reading the *einai* in the *hōs* clauses in an existential sense, argues that the same verb in the *hopoioi* clause is used in the copulative sense because it is followed by predication. This argument is based on a premiss that the *einai* must be read as copula when it is followed by predication and as existential without predication. However, this premiss does not seem to be entirely the case, since, for instance, in a sentence ‘how *is* he (*hōs estin autos*)?’, the verb *einai*, though not followed by predication, is not used in an existential sense. Second, the expression *hopoioi tines idean* most likely implies a question of shape (appearance) in a more literal sense, differing from that of nature in general. The Greek word *idea*, which is etymologically connected to *eidōs* (shape), especially in the fifth century BCE, as Untersteiner (1954, 37, n. 39) pinpoints, was used to mean primarily ‘shape’, rather than ‘true nature’ or ‘essence’. In one of Xenophanes’ famous satires, for example, against those who held anthropomorphic views of the gods, the word *idea* surely indicates the physical shape of the gods, not the essence or nature of the gods. This satire goes: ‘if bulls [and horses] and lions had hands so as to draw and perform works of art as human beings do, then horses would draw *the shapes* of the gods like horses, and bulls like bulls, and would indeed make their [*sc.* the gods’] bodies as the bodily frame that each of them has (ἀλλ’ εἰ χεῖρας ἔχον βόες <ἵπποι τ’> ἢ ἐ λέοντες ἢ γράψαι χεῖρεςσι καὶ ἔργα τελεῖν ἄπερ ἄνδρες, ἵπποι μὲν θ’ ἵπποισι βόες δέ τε βουσὶν ὁμοίας καὶ <κε> θεῶν ιδέας ἔγραφον καὶ σώματ’ ἐποίουν τοιαῦθ’ οἷόν περ καὶ τοὶ δέμας εἶχον <ἕκαστοι>’)’ (Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies (Stromata)*, V.110 (II.400.1.St.): DK21 B15). It is apparent that in the satire Xenophanes refers to the exterior shape of the gods by the word *idea*. It is not difficult to find the use of *idea* to refer to the shape or the appearance of things in other Greek texts in this period.<sup>100</sup> Thus it does not seem conclusive that

---

<sup>99</sup> On scholars who support Kahn’s reading, cf. Dumont (1969), 46; Guthrie (1971), 234; O’Brien in Sprague (1972), 4; Barnes (1982), 449; De Romilly (1992), 104; Levett (1990), 286; Schiappa (1991), 142; Gagarin and Woodruff (1995), 186; Gagarin (2002), 115; Dillon and Gergel (2003), 3; Lee (2005), 25 and 83; Zilioli (2007), 6; Lavery in O’Grady (2008), 31.

<sup>100</sup> For the same, or similar at least, usage of *idea* to refer to the gods’ ‘shapes (appearances)’ in antiquity, cf. Plutarch, *On the Birth of the Spirit in Timaeus* 1023c10 ff. and *Summary of the Birth of the Spirit in Timaeus* 1031b1 ff.; Clemens Romanus (Pope Clement I) et Clementina Theol., *Homily XVI.10.4.2.* ff.; Hippolytus,



Protagoras employed the word *idea* in order to refer to essence or nature, or to raise a question concerning that of the gods. If Protagoras, a father of Greek grammar and the correct usage of language, indeed had wanted to express his ignorance of the whole ‘nature’ of the gods, he then would have rather employed the word which refers to it more naturally, literally and directly (in accordance with his emphasis on the correct use of language):<sup>101</sup> for example, *hopoioi tines (pasan) physin eisin*.<sup>102</sup>

The *idea* (shape) of one thing is, of course, a part of its nature. However, still a particular question concerning a single part of gods’ nature, i.e. the question of their shape, cannot fully be counted as equivalent to a general question concerning their whole nature. Shape is just one aspect of the nature which the gods hold. Besides the shape, there must be other aspects of nature of the gods such as their characters or divine powers. As far as this point is concerned, it is not adequate to take the first part of the sentence to be a question concerning the gods’ existence simply because a question concerning a part of the gods’ nature immediately follows.

Ancient sources report that Protagoras had learned and spoken of the gods in various ways (cf. D.L. 9.55: DK80 A1; V.S. 1.10: DK80 A2; and *Prot.* 320c8–322d5: DK80 C1). It does not seem quite likely to assume that someone who has learned about the gods (especially by the professional religious teachers such as Persian Magi in Protagoras’ case) and spoken about them too completely doubts the gods’ existence, even though the possibility for him to be ignorant of the gods’ nature still remains. He can say something about the gods’ nature to some extent as much as he knows, but at the same time he can admit that he is ignorant of the gods’ whole nature as long as he does not fully know about it. In this respect, I

---

*Refutation of all Heresies* V.7.22.5 ff.; Proclus, *Platonic Theology* III.65.24 ff. and III.98.1 ff. and *Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus* III.103.10. For more examples of the use of *idea* to mean ‘physical exterior shape’ of things in ancient Greek texts, cf. *I.* I.80.15–20 (ὡς δὲ οἱ πάντες διετετάχματο, παραίνεσε τῶν μὲν ἄλλων Λυδῶν μὴ φειδομένους κτείνειν πάντα τὸν ἐμποδῶν γινόμενον, Κροῖσον δὲ αὐτὸν μὴ κτείνειν, μηδὲ ἦν συλλαμβανόμενος ἀμύνηται. Ταῦτα μὲν παραίνεσε, τὰς δὲ καμήλους ἔταξε ἀντία τῆς ἵππου τῶνδε εἵνεκεν κάμηλον ἵππος φοβέεται καὶ οὐκ ἀνέχεται οὔτε τὴν ιδέην αὐτῆς ὀρέων οὔτε τὴν ὁδμὴν ὀσφραϊνόμενος); Hippocrates, *On Airs, Waters and Places* 24.48–50 (αἱ μὲν ἐναντιώταται φύσιές τε καὶ ιδέαι ἔχουσιν οὕτως· ἀπὸ δὲ τουτέων εκμαιρόμενος τὸ λοιπὰ ἐνθυμέεσθαι, καὶ οὐχ ἀμαρτήση); *Ph.* 109b4–7 (εἶναι γὰρ πανταχῆ περὶ τὴν γῆν πολλὰ κοῖλα καὶ παντοδαπὰ καὶ τὰς ιδέας καὶ τὰ μεγέθη, εἰς ἃ συνερρηκέναι τό τε ὕδωρ καὶ τὴν ὀμίχλην καὶ τὸν ἀέρα); and *Prot.* 315d6–e1 (παρεκάθηγτο δὲ αὐτῷ [*sc.* Prodicus] ἐπὶ ταῖς πλησίον κλίναις Πausανίας τε ὁ ἐκ Κεραμέων καὶ μετὰ Πausανίου νέον τι ἔτι μειράκιον, ὡς μὲν ἐγῶμαι καλόν τε κάγαθὸν τὴν φύσιν, τὴν δ’ οὖν ιδέαν πάνυ καλός). Cf. further *I.* IV.109.1–5; Aristophanes, *The Birds* 999–1003; Andocides, *On the Mysteries* I.100; Diogenes of Apollonia, in Simplicius’ *In Phys.* vol.9, 153.9–13 (DK64 B5). Of course, *idea*, in later usage, acquires the meaning of nature or essence, especially in philosophical works such as Plato’s. The point that I make here is that Kahn’s suggestion is not the sole viable interpretation regarding the wording of the fragment

<sup>101</sup> For the sources of Protagoras’ correct use of language and my analysis of it, cf. Chapter V below.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. *Lg.* IV.715e7–716a2 (DK1 B6): ὁ μὲν δὴ θεός, ὥσπερ καὶ ὁ παλαιός λόγος, ἀρχὴν τε καὶ τελευτὴν καὶ μέσα τῶν ὄντων ἀπάντων ἔχων, εὐθεία περαίνει κατὰ φύσιν περιπορευόμενος; *M.* IX.19 (DK68 B166): ὅθεν τούτων αὐτῶν φαντασίαν λαβόντες οἱ παλαιοὶ ὑπενόησαν εἶναι θεόν, μηδενὸς ἄλλου παρὰ ταῦτα ὄντος θεοῦ [τοῦ] ἄφθαρτον φύσιν ἔχοντος.

propose that Protagoras may have not intended to question about the gods' existence in his fragment; rather the sophist attempted to bring a question concerning the gods' nature by the *hōs* clauses and a question concerning the gods' shapes by the *hopoioi* clause, as Kerferd (1981a, 167) carefully argues that "all that can properly be inferred from Protagoras' surviving words is that he gave expression to the view that it was not possible to discover the nature of the gods."

After confessing to be ignorant of the gods' nature, confessing again to be ignorant of the gods' shape may sound somehow redundant. Presumably, however, confession of ignorance of the gods' shape would be as striking and discomfoting as that of ignorance of the gods' nature to those who live in strong religious culture, building up many religious arts and works of the gods such as their statues, like the Greeks (of course including the Athenians) in antiquity; their religious works and arts would probably be dependent upon their certain ideas on the physical and exterior shape of the gods. In this case, the confession of the ignorance of the gods' shape might have been considered a serious provocation to attack their ideas about the gods' shape that are believed to be certain and utilised all the time for such art and religious works. People who lived in Greek religious culture, for example, would take it insulting and impious if someone said 'I am not able to know who he is' when he was looking at a statue that wears a crown and holds a trident or a statue that holds in his left hand a shining sceptre, on top of which an eagle perches, ready to take off at any moment and do the god's bidding. Questioning or confessing ignorance of the gods' shape, in this regard, is not necessarily taken to be redundant, but rather emphasising and strengthening the question of the gods' nature. Accordingly, again, there remains some scope for believing that Protagoras questions the gods' nature in a general sense by the first sentence and the gods' shape in a particular sense by the second sentence.

## 2. The epistemological obstacles

In the second part of the *PTH* fragment, Protagoras introduces the things that prevent him from knowing the gods, i.e. the so-called 'epistemological obstacles'.<sup>103</sup> He says that the obstacles are many (*polla ta kōluonta*), but presents only two such obstacles, the obscurity of the gods and the shortness of human life. It is dubious whether two obstacles can be

---

<sup>103</sup> On the term 'epistemological obstacles' regarding Protagoras' ignorance of the gods, cf. Mansfeld (1981), 38–53.

considered many. It would seem possible to assume that there were indeed more than two obstacles offered by Protagoras when he read in public (the book in which) the *PTH* fragment (was its incipit), yet these others have been omitted in the transmission. This assumption, however, may well be gratuitous; we should rather depend solely on the remaining testimonies. Mansfeld (1981, 40, n. 6) gives a plausible suggestion in this regard, arguing that the phrase ‘*polla ta kōluonta*’ appears to have been an idiomatic expression, perhaps best rendered as ‘there is more than one thing in the way’.

## 2.1. The obscurity (*adēlotēs*) of the gods

### 2.1.1. Are the gods objects of human experience?

Regarding the first epistemological obstacle, the obscurity of the gods, scholars have suggested that the gods are not objects of human experience and thus obscure to Protagoras. Untersteiner (1954, 26–8), for instance, proposes that the gods are obscure to Protagoras because in Protagoras’ eyes the gods by their nature are not objects of human (‘perceptual’ or ‘sensory’) experience. He then argues that Protagoras who cannot experience the gods due to their nature beyond human experience cannot know about them. Untersteiner, taking ‘the obscurity’ in the *PTH* fragment to mean ‘the impossibility of having an experience of the gods’, concludes that as the gods are obscure, Protagoras has to confess that he himself is “not in position to experience the gods’ phenomenal existence or otherwise, nor their nature with regard to their external manifestation.” The suggestion that the gods are not objects of human experience because they are beyond human experience, then, means that they have never been experienced by men, and also will never be experienced by them at all, in accordance with their nature. Gomperz (1901, 457) similarly suggests that “hitherto no one has seen gods; but human life is too short, and the field of our observation too restricted, to affirm or deny with certainty the traces of their activity in the world of nature and man. Accordingly, Protagoras withheld his verdict” on the gods.

The expression ‘beyond human experience’ in Untersteiner’s suggestion, however, needs further clarification in two regards; experience could mean either all types of experience, both direct and indirect, or only direct experience; likewise, ‘beyond human experience’ can mean either (a) ‘beyond all types of experience, both directly and indirectly’, in general, or (b) ‘only beyond direct experience’ in particular. Let us take a passage from the *Apology* 20e8–21a7 as an example to explain the difference between direct and indirect experiences of

the gods: ‘this man [*sc.* Chaerephon] was my [*sc.* Socrates’] friend from youth ... and went to Delphi at one time and ventured to interrogate the oracle and, ... he asked if any man was wiser than I [*sc.* Socrates], and the Pythian replied that no one was wiser (οὗτος ἐμός τε ἐταῖρος ἦν ἐκ νέου ... καὶ δὴ ποτε καὶ εἰς Δελφοὺς ἐλθὼν ἐτόλμησε τοῦτο μαντεύσασθαι καί, ... ἤρετο γὰρ δὴ εἴ τις ἐμοῦ εἴη σοφώτερος. ἀνεῖλεν οὖν ἡ Πυθία μηδένα σοφώτερον εἶναι).’<sup>104</sup> From this passage we can explicitly see two different types of experiences of the gods. It would amount to a case of indirect experience of the gods that Chaerephon and Socrates heard of the god’s saying from the Pythian oracle that Socrates was the wisest among human beings; while the oracle’s direct interaction with the god would be considered a case of direct experience of the gods.

Taking this difference between a direct experience of the gods and an indirect one into consideration, if Untersteiner’s expression ‘beyond human experience’ concerns case (a), then his suggestion means that Protagoras argues that the gods are beyond all types of human experience, both directly and indirectly. On the contrary, if his expression concerns case (b)—Untersteiner seems to clearly mean this—then, he means that Protagoras argues that the gods are beyond only human direct experience and that it is still possible to experience the gods indirectly but impossible to know something through indirect experience.

It does not seem plausible to apply case (a), ‘beyond all types of experience, both directly and indirectly’, to Protagoras, since it is not congruent with ancient sources’ reports that the sophist received education about the gods by the professional religious teachers (cf. *V.S.* 1.10: DK80 A2) and that he was well aware of ancient mysterious religions and prophecy as well those in his time (cf. *Prot.* 316d–e). In addition, Protagoras seems to express his views on the gods, when offering the second epistemological obstacle impeding knowledge of the gods, i.e. the shortness of human life. The concept ‘shortness’ is acquired in comparison with others in length or duration; Protagoras would gain the concept of the shortness of human life, I propose, probably in comparison with something of ‘longer’ (or ‘permanent’) duration, particularly with the gods’ long or permanent life.<sup>105</sup> From this point

---

<sup>104</sup> On human direct and indirect contact with the gods in Attic period, cf. Coulet (1999), 78–9.

<sup>105</sup> The human life can be considered short in relation with the difficulty of the task of knowing the gods, not with the longer or permanent length of the gods’ life. For instance, fully understanding Plato’s philosophy or knowing the political system and history in the UK, or in the history of human race, is a difficult task, and thus someone might say that he is not able to know it, acknowledging it to be a difficult task. Nevertheless, he will not blame the shortness of human life for his inability to know it; rather he will simply and evidently blame the difficulty of the task. In other words, the difficulty of a task does not necessarily make him say that *human life is too short* to know it, but that *the given task is too difficult* to know it, no matter how long his life is. If the difficulty of the task is the reason for him to be unable to know the task, the shortness of human life is no longer an obstacle at all. Protagoras would have said that he was not able to know the gods because of the difficulty of

of view, Protagoras seems to express at least a certain idea about the gods that they have a longer or permanent life (than that of human beings'). If the sophist had a certain type of concept of the gods, i.e. the concept of their longer (or permanent) life duration, he would not take them to be absolutely beyond all types of human (or at least his) experience, both direct and indirect.

Applying case (b), 'only beyond direct experience', to Protagoras also does not seem appropriate. This case means that in the *PTH* fragment Protagoras argues that the gods are beyond human direct experience and thus it is impossible to know them, although it is still possible to experience them indirectly through hearing about them from poets or prophets, or learning about them from religious teachers. Thus, this case pinpoints that in Protagoras' view acquiring knowledge of something is possible only through direct experience of it, such as direct interaction with it by seeing or hearing it; while it is impossible to know it through indirect experience, like hearing about it from someone else like teachers or educators.

This case, however, at the same time, seems to attempt to demolish Protagoras' feature as a teacher, although such demolition may not be Untersteiner's purpose as he repeatedly emphasises Protagoras' role as an educator (cf. Untersteiner (1954), 3–5 and 64–5), because direct experience is taken to be the only source for knowledge in this case. As we have seen in the previous chapters, Protagoras is said to have professed to teach political virtues, i.e. 'good deliberation concerning domestic affairs, how best to manage one's household, and concerning the affairs of the city, how to be the most influential in the affairs of the city, both in action and speech (τὸ δὲ μάθημά ἐστιν εὐβουλία περὶ τῶν οἰκείων, ὅπως ἂν ἄριστα τὴν αὐτοῦ οἰκίαν διοικοῖ, καὶ περὶ τῶν τῆς πόλεως, ὅπως τὰ τῆς πόλεως δυνατώτατος ἂν εἴη καὶ πράττειν καὶ λέγειν)' (*Prot.* 318e5–319a2). Also, the historical event that Protagoras, having kept a close relationship with Pericles, had advised him about political affairs and taken a task to establish a colonial law for Thurii at the request of the politician (Heraclides Ponticus, fr. 150 and D.L. 9.50: DK80 A1),<sup>106</sup> seems to fairly prove Protagoras' role as an expert of political virtues.<sup>107</sup> As far as his profession and task are concerned, it is surely right to assume that Protagoras both claims to be and is a professional in doing and teaching political

---

the task, if he really thought it to be an obstacle, instead of offering the shortness of human life as an obstacle. Even if it is possible for someone to say that the human life is too short to know a difficult task, in this case still he obviously expresses some views about the task, such as its toughness or inaccessibility, i.e. difficulty. If he does have no views at all about the task, he cannot take the task to be difficult.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Muir (1982), 17–24; Barrett (1987), 10; De Romilly (1992), viii and 21. Cf. also Section 1 in Chapter I above.

<sup>107</sup> For the genuine character of Protagoras' profession, cf. *Men.* 91d–92a; Maguire (1977), 104–5 in Zilioli (2007), 94, n. 12; Kerferd (1981a), 25–6.

art and political affairs in the city. If so, then, how can one who emphasises direct experience of any given object as the only source for knowledge and neglects the role of indirect experience in constructing knowledge, profess to teach such issues? Protagoras professes to educate his disciples in political virtues, that is to say, he promises them knowledge of political virtues, by means of offering indirect experiences of such subject to them. Taking this point of view into consideration, Protagoras does not seem to intend to make such distinction between direct experiences and indirect ones with regard to reaching knowledge.

Despite his profession of teaching, one may conjecture, Protagoras may insist upon the importance of direct experience about certain types of objects, such as political virtues, and emphasise that only by the direct experiences of political virtues men can acquire knowledge of how to manage public affairs and be good citizens. However, no extant textual evidence of Protagoras supports such conjecture. In addition, as we have briefly looked at above, this conjecture does not seem to fit what Protagoras professes; he is illustrated to have simply professed that, unlike other teachers who have abused their students by forcing them to learn what they do not want to learn, he will teach only what his pupils want to learn from him, that is to say, political art and how to be a good citizen. (cf. *Prot.* 318d7–319a2: DK80 A5). Protagoras' profession here does not seem to entail that the sophist indeed admits that some political knowledge can be acquired only through direct experience.

Furthermore, the second obstacle, the shortness of human life, offered by Protagoras in the *PTH* fragment, again implies that if human beings had a longer (or permanent) life they could know the gods.<sup>108</sup> If Protagoras indeed intended to mean by 'obscurity' human innate impossibility of experiencing the gods due to their nature beyond human experience, then the second obstacle becomes, of course, entirely hollow, since he could not yet know their nature even if the human life were longer, or even permanent (cf. the following section of this chapter for the detailed discussion on the role and meaning of the second obstacle). Inasmuch as the second obstacle is to be taken as an obstacle to knowledge of the gods, in Protagoras' eyes the gods are found as something that still lies in the realm of human experience.

Regarding the gods' obscurity, instead of suggesting that the gods are beyond human experience, Guthrie (1971, 234) proposes a relativist reading of the *PTH* fragment in the light of the Platonic reading of the *MMD* in the *Theaetetus* 151d–186e, i.e. a relativist

---

<sup>108</sup> Against this implication, one may argue that although human life is not short but long enough, still Protagoras cannot know the gods. However, this argument works only if it is fairly assumed that Protagoras would admit other types of obstacles that may possibly prevent him from knowing the gods, such as human limited rationality. Yet, Protagoras does not offer any other obstacles than those that he introduced in the *PTH* fragment.

epistemological claim, arguing that “some believed in gods and some did not, and so, in accordance with the ‘man the measure’ principle, gods existed for some and not for others; but for Protagoras himself suspension of judgement was the only possible course.” In Guthrie’s argument the gods are existent or good for those to whom they appear existent or good, while they are not existent or good for those to whom they do not appear existent or good.

This proposal may be a convenient way to understand Protagoras’ agnosticism of the gods, but indeed inappropriate and careless, if we take into account the distinctive meaning and structure of the *PTH* fragment in comparison with the MMD. The MMD runs that ‘man is the measure of all things, of things that are that/how they are and of things that are not that/how they are not (πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστιν, τῶν δὲ οὐκ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν)’, and its Platonic reading is that a thing which appears/is experienced as  $F$  to/by  $a$  is  $F$  for  $a$  (at  $t^1$ ), while the same thing which appears/is experienced as  $\neg F$  to/by  $a$  is  $\neg F$  for  $a$  (at  $t^2$ ). If we apply the Platonic reading of the MMD to the *PTH* fragment, it is inferred that the gods’ nature which appears/is experienced as  $F$  to/by Protagoras is  $F$  for him (at  $t^1$ ), and the gods’ nature which appear/is experienced as  $\neg F$  to/by him is  $\neg F$  for him (at  $t^2$ ). In this case, however, his judgements about the gods are rather a profession of knowledge or certain belief than a confession of ignorance. Paradoxically the relativist reading of the *PTH* fragment in the light of the MMD makes the fragment unable to be agnostic, as Gomperz (1901, 457, cited in Guthrie (1971), 234, n. 2) points out that “if Protagoras had believed, as Plato said he did, that ‘every man’s truth is the truth which appears to him’, he could not have said what he did about the gods.”<sup>109</sup>

### 2.1.2. The obscurity as a result of various experiences of the gods

Yet, Protagoras said what he did about the gods, clearly confessing his ignorance of them. If Protagoras took the gods not to be beyond human experience but to be objects of human experience, and if he did not proceed with a relativist viewpoint concerning the gods, why did Protagoras then not claim his profession of knowledge or certain belief of the gods in the *PTH* fragment, rather than confessing that ‘I am not able to know (*ouk echō eidenai*)’ them? In seeking an answer to this question, it would be helpful to review Woodruff’s suggestion (1985, 496). Woodruff first admits that for Protagoras man can have experiences of the gods.

---

<sup>109</sup> On this point, cf. also Levi (1940a), 167; Kerferd (1981a), 166; Dherbey (1985), 15–16.

Then, distinguishing ‘what is not experienced [his term, ‘perceived’] yet’ from ‘what is not experience-able [his term, ‘perceivable’]’ and applying the former to the case of Protagoras’ *PTH* fragment, he argues that since the gods have never appeared to and thus been experienced by Protagoras, they are obscure to him. The implication here is that the gods are obscure to those who have no experience of them, while to those who have experienced them they are not obscure, but apparent. Hence Woodruff concludes that Protagoras can say “I don’t know the gods” because he has had no experience of the gods yet.

His suggestion, especially the expression ‘what is not experienced yet’ in particular, however, seems to result in the same problem as Untersteiner’s suggestion did above; Woodruff’s suggestion can mean either (a) that Protagoras had no kind of experience of the gods yet, both directly and indirectly, and thus the sophist was not able to know the gods, or (b) that Protagoras had merely indirect experiences of them, through, for instance, hearing about them from poets or prophets, or learning about them from religious teachers, but no direct experience of the gods and thus was unable to know the gods—like Untersteiner, Woodruff also seems to consider case (b). And, like Untersteiner’s suggestion, Woodruff’s expression in both cases does not seem plausible: again, Protagoras’ education that he received about the gods by the professional religious teachers (cf. *V.S.* 1.10: DK80 A2) and his knowledge about ancient religion and prophecy (cf. *Prot.* 316d–e) become incongruent with case (a); and under case (b), Protagoras’ profession of teaching (cf. *Prot.* 318e5–319a2) becomes meaningless, ironically against Woodruff’s high evaluation of the sophist’s education in political virtues (2005, 158–9 and 195–201; 2007, 1–11).

Further, the phrase ‘I don’t know (*ouk oida*)’, which Woodruff adopts as Protagoras’ expression of ignorance,<sup>110</sup> in fact differs in meaning from the expression ‘I am not able to know (*ouk echō eidenai*)’ in the fragment. Although both specify someone’s ignorance of something at a certain moment, the latter refers to his inability to attain knowledge of it, whereas the former points to the mere fact of his present ignorance. The former does not impinge on his capability of coming to know the thing at some other times. Inasmuch as in the fragment Protagoras states that ‘I am not able to know’, he most likely intends by this to convey both his ignorance at the moment of making his claim and his inability to acquire knowledge of the gods.

In view of the discussion above, Woodruff’s suggestion notwithstanding, it remains plausible that Protagoras himself had experiences, either direct or indirect, of the gods to

---

<sup>110</sup> Note that among the reports of the *PTH* fragment in ancient sources, only two, Eusebius and Theodoret, who categorised Protagoras as an atheist, employ ‘*ouk oida*’ expression. Cf. Appendix 1 below.



some extent, while confessing his ignorance of them. The question immediately arises here on what grounds he may make his confession of ignorance, ‘I am not able to know’, concerning the gods. The compatibility between a view that Protagoras has experience of the gods and a view that he confesses to be ignorant of them also needs to be addressed. As for a possible answer to these matters, I shall exemplify two relevant cases, the gods’ different character and shapes when they appear to human beings at different times.

If a thing is experienced by someone in different ways and shapes at different times, he must have difficulties to attain certainty, or knowledge in a general sense, about the thing. In other words, if a person experiences a thing  $x$  as  $F$  at  $t^1$  and as  $G$  at  $t^2$ , it is difficult for him to know in which way he should determine  $x$ , whether as  $F$  and as  $G$ , on account of its uncertainty, namely, its ‘obscurity’. The obscurity brought from different—and perhaps sometimes conflicting—experiences may lead him to a state of ignorance in which he cannot be sure about the thing at all. We can easily find this sort of obscurity applying to the gods in ancient texts, especially in epics and poems. In the *Odyssey*, for instance, mortals do not experience the gods in merely one shape or character. Telemachus experiences the goddess Athena appearing as a stranger from another country at one time, and as Mentor, one of Telemachus’ friends, at the other. Once, Telemachus sees her flying away from his house in the shape of an eagle. Odysseus encounters the same goddess appearing as a little girl. Likewise, at one time the goddess appears good, generous and caring, while appearing strict, harsh and threatening at the other times.<sup>111</sup> When Athena appears generous in the shape of a stranger from another country to Telemachus, he must have an experience of her character and shape as she appears, so then he will probably have a view on her character and shape as a generous stranger from another country at that time. But when Athena appears strict in the shape of Mentor to Telemachus, it is obvious that he experiences her character and shape as she appears, so he must have a view of her shape and character as strict Mentor that time. With two different views regarding the goddess’ character and shape, Telemachus, if asked

---

<sup>111</sup> Respectively, *Od.* I.113, II.267, I.319, and VII.31–33. Indeed, according to some, Protagoras is said to have been well aware of epics and poems. In one place (*Prot.* 338e6–339a3, 339a6 ff.), Protagoras emphasises the importance of poems for education, saying that ‘the greatest part of a man’s education is to be skilled in poetry; that is, to be able to understand the words of poets, what has been rightly and what wrongly composed, and to know how to distinguish them and to give an account when questioned (ἄνδοι παιδείας μέγιστον μέρος εἶναι περὶ ἐπῶν δεινὸν εἶναι· ἔστιν δὲ τοῦτο τὰ ὑπὸ τῶν ποιητῶν λεγόμενα οἷόν τ’ εἶναι συνιέναι ἅ τε ὀρθῶς πεποιήται καὶ ἅ μὴ, καὶ ἐπίστασθαι διελεῖν τε καὶ ἐρωτώμενον λόγον δοῦναι)’ and quotes a poem of Simonides for elaborated discussion. In another place (*Poet.* 19.1456b15: DK80 A29), he criticises Homer for his incorrect use of moods (τί γὰρ ἄν τις ὑπολάβοι ἡμαρτησθαι ἅ Πρωταγόρας ἐπιτιμᾷ, ὅτι εὔχεσθαι οἰόμενος ἐπιτάττει εἰπὼν "μῆνιν ἄειδε θεά"; τὸ γὰρ κελεῦσαι, φησὶν, ποιεῖν τι ἢ μὴ ἐπιτάξις ἐστίν). Protagoras is also said to have indulged in literary criticism of Homer (cf. Ammonius, *Scholium on Homer* (POxy II no. 68) col. XII.20 on *Iliad* XXI.240: DK80 A30).

about it, may suspend his decision about it, and then confesses his ignorance of it. Simply, he is not able to determine her shape and character due to her different appearances at different times.

### 2.1.3. Synthesis in Protagoras' epistemology

From the point of view that one's various experiences of a given object lead one to a state of ignorance, we can infer an interesting but significant aspect in Protagoras' epistemology, which I call a 'synthesis', that is not found in the Platonic reading of the MMD in the *Theaetetus*. This synthesis is an epistemological result of judgements, i.e. a newly constructed intelligent judgement from previous judgements and beliefs gained through experiences.

Protagoras (or Telemachus), by merely juxtaposing the judgements from his experiences about Athena that he gained through hearing the *Odyssey* (or via Telemachus' direct interactive experiences of her in the text), could have stated that he is able to know her shape and character. However, Protagoras ends up confessing his ignorance. This type of ignorance is a sort of result of synthesis of previously gained various judgements. This synthesis is not a mere juxtaposition of judgements and experiences, because, concerning Athena's shape or character there has been no Protagoras' (or Telemachus') experience at all which coincides with his final statement that 'I am not able to know her shape or character'; that is to say, no experiential situation corresponds to such confession of ignorance. The confession of this type of ignorance derives neither from an individual and single judgement (e.g. ' $x = F$  (at  $t^1$ )' or ' $x = G$  (at  $t^2$ )'), nor from mere juxtaposition (e.g. ' $x = F + G$ '); it is rather inferred from two or more different statements made through previous experiences, namely, a synthesis of various statements like ' $x = F$ ' and ' $x = G$ '. The difference between a statement ' $x = F$ ' and a statement ' $x = G$ ' brings forth a new statement ' $x = ?$ ', which does not correspond to any particular experience. This point can be briefly explained as follows:

- (1) ' $x$  is  $F$ '. (a case of a particular experience of  $x$ )
- (2) ' $x$  is  $G$ '. (another case of a particular experience of  $x$ )
- (3) Therefore, ' $x$  is  $F$  and  $G$ '. (a case of expanded knowledge of  $x$  via a juxtaposition of (1) and (2))
- (4) Or, ' $x$  is ...?'. (a case of ignorance of  $x$  via a synthesis of (1) and (2))

Case (3) is composed through juxtaposing (1) and (2) and thus, of course, includes the

contents of (1) and (2) in it, corresponding the cases (1) and (2) particularly as well; whereas case (4), albeit composed also via synthesising (1) and (2), is newly concluded from the contents of (1) and (2), not corresponding to the cases (1) and (2). After synthesising previous judgements, one comes to reach a conclusion of ignorance. Again, ignorance of something, a unique cognitive state, results from the synthesis of previous different judgements about it.

The implication here is that neither Telemachus, having direct experiences of Athena, nor Protagoras (or the readers of the *Odyssey*), having indirect experiences of her, can identify Athena's character and shape, on account of her capricious manifestations to mortals in different shapes at different times. This sort of obscurity can be fairly applied to one of Protagoras' statements regarding the gods.

As seen above in Chapter II above, Protagoras presents the Myth in the *Protagoras* to explain the origins of living creatures and human societies. There he characterises Zeus as a just and generous god caring for human beings and distributing to them a sense of what is right (*dikē*) and a sense of shame (*aidōs*) to save them from extinction. At the same time, however, in Greek mythology Zeus is also illustrated as an immoderate god satisfying his own desires by, for example, having an affair with Io, and also an unjust god by cheating on Hera, his wife (cf. *Pr.* 589–592, 640–686). In this case it is not easy for human beings to hold a certain and concrete judgment about the nature and character of Zeus.<sup>112</sup>

Moreover, it is also remarkable that Protagoras is said to have been born in Abdera in Thrace under Persian culture and spent his youth with education by the Persian magi (*V.S.* 1.10: DK80 A2; cf. also Section 1 in Chapter I above), and later travelled much not only around Greece but also in Asia and Persia during his adult life. He would, presumably, have been exposed to, and thus accumulated, a number of different ideas about different types of gods, encountering various and contradictory views concerning them with the Hellenic gods characterised as good, just, and generous by the Greeks, while as evil, unjust, and hostile by the Persians, and vice versa (cf. *Pers.* 350). Under such circumstance, the most likely way to make a statement about the gods for Protagoras would probably be to confess that 'I am not able to know them' on account of various experiences of their uncertain and obscure shapes and nature.

---

<sup>112</sup> Not only the case that in some passages of a poem a god might be said to be *F*, but in other passages of the same poem, *Y*, but also the case of learning about the gods through hearing different poems of different poets, will be regarded in the same way. A poet might speak about a god as *F*; on the contrary another poet might speak about the same god as *G*. In this case too, of course, *F* and *G* can refer not only to the gods' shapes but also to their characters or nature. We can apply the same interpretation to the case of oracles as well. Although oracles interact with the gods directly and play a role as messengers (or mediums) in delivering the gods' voice to people, this does not mean that they thus have knowledge of them.

Two or more various judgements may result not in ignorance but in juxtaposed and extended knowledge, namely, ' $x = F + G + \dots$ '; in relation to the case of knowing Athena, for instance, Protagoras' (or Telemachus') knowledge of the goddess' character and shape would presumably amount to the judgement that she is both good and strict, and has both the shapes of a stranger and Mentor. Likewise, his knowledge of Zeus could result in the judgement that the god is sometimes just and generous, and at other times is unjust and greedy. Protagoras would thus have had to say that 'I (am able to) know the gods', expressing extended knowledge of them acquired through his previous and extensive experiences and judgements about them. But, as we know from the *PTH* fragment, Protagoras does not profess knowledge of the gods. Why not? Does synthesis in Protagoras' epistemology all the time result only in ignorance?

To gain an answer to these matters, I shall argue that Protagoras may intend to divide objects into two realms; the objects of which human beings can attain knowledge, for instance, the subjects that Protagoras professes to teach such as political virtues, and the objects of which human beings cannot obtain knowledge, while having some judgements of them on the basis of their experience of them, for example, the gods. This division seems to be caused in Protagoras' eyes by the difference between those things which can be sufficiently synthesised and those which are insufficiently synthesised, for a construction of knowledge through human experiences about them. Hence, when aiming at the objects in the knowable realm, of course, synthesis in Protagoras' epistemology helps people to reach a positive level of certainty or knowledge. On what grounds, then, does Protagoras design such division? Or, by what criteria does Protagoras discern the possibility of sufficient synthesis from that of insufficient synthesis? As I shall clarify shortly, the division seems grounded on the second epistemological obstacle, the shortness of human life.

## 2.2. The shortness of human life (*brachys ōn ho bios tou anthrōpou*)

Protagoras' use of obscurity, however, does not only apply to the case of the gods. Whatever is experienced by man in different ways at different times is naturally obscure. In fact, Protagoras is not likely to have said that there are some things of which man can have experiences always only in one certain and single way. In this regard, everything is considered obscure. Even political virtues would probably be experienced differently by

different men under different circumstances in different cities and times.<sup>113</sup> But Protagoras does not claim that he is not able to know political virtues; rather he claims to know them, professing to teach them to his disciples. For Protagoras, thus, there seems to be a division between things that man can know and things that man cannot know. Such division is, I suggest, made on a condition of the shortness of human life.

In clarifying the term ‘shortness’ more closely, it may help us to compare it with ‘redness’. These two differ from each other, though they both are acquired from experience: the latter is conceived absolutely and independently, while the former is conceived from comparison under a certain condition (e.g. the length or duration in the case of shortness) between two or more things; that is, ‘short’ is a relative of some kind (cf. *Cat.* VII.6a37–8b24). Let us consider the case of an apple that is experienced to be small and red. In this case, one who sees the apple can directly experience its redness by itself. On the contrary, one will not be able to directly experience its smallness without reference to other items. One can experience, and further cognise, the smallness of the apple only when comparing it in size with something bigger than the apple, such as other bigger apples or watermelons; one can experience the bigness of the same apple as well when comparing it with something smaller than it, such as small strawberries.<sup>114</sup>

Likewise, the ‘shortness’ of human life is what is cognised not from direct experience but from comparison with other things in length or duration. Then what should we think Protagoras compares human life with to confirm it to be short in length? It would be most probable that in the fragment Protagoras indeed makes a case for the shortness of human life, in comparison with, if implicitly, the long, or likely permanent, length of the gods’ life—in this respect, Protagoras is seen to hold a clear and positive idea of the length of the gods’ life. It sounds much less plausible that the sophist is confessing that he is not able to know about the gods since human life is shorter than a turtle’s life—he does not seem to argue that he cannot know the gods while turtles can.

Regarding the shortness of human life, this epistemological obstacle literally implies that human beings do not live long enough to know the gods, and thus that human beings would be able to know them if their lives were long enough, particularly as long as the duration of the gods’ life—in Protagoras’ thought, however, no human being can live as long as the gods do, since human beings were designed as mortals when they were created by the

---

<sup>113</sup> On this point, cf. Section 3, esp. 3.2, in Chapter II above, where I present my analysis of the *Great Speech* for the Protagorean objectivism regarding the civic senses (*dikē* and *aidōs*) and relativity of the application of those senses to particular political cases in different communities.

<sup>114</sup> On Protagoras’ use of relative concepts, cf. *Prot.* 334a–c and d–e; *Rhet.* II.24.1402a23.

gods (cf. *Prot.* 320c8–d1). In order to attain knowledge of an object, in the *PTH* fragment Protagoras implicitly but evidently argues that the length of human life must be as long as, or capable of covering, the duration of the object. Even though all things are experienced by men, only things that last shorter than, or as long as, the length of human life, can be *known*—by synthesising various data and judgements of them previously attained through experiences, as Protagoras’ confession of ignorance itself paradoxically proves.

On the contrary, of things that last longer than human beings, such as the gods, the universe, and the natural things investigated by natural philosophers or astronomers, human beings cannot reach certainty or knowledge. In Protagoras’ opinion, the length of human life would probably not be sufficiently long and thus fails to reach a certain position to collect all the different types of judgements for a proper and full synthesis. In making such division, Protagoras seems to quite possibly draw a sharp line of demarcation between things which are knowable and things which are unknowable, while at the same time claiming that anything longer than human beings’ lives, although we can experience it, is unknowable to us; in case of the gods’ shapes and character, as well as their other attributes and nature such as their being just and generous, although we can experience them, they are too many and wide to be fully collected and synthesised, so that no human being can acquire knowledge of them.

Synthesis, however, does not always result in ignorance. In relation to things that human beings can know, such as political virtues, synthesis seems to guarantee knowledge in Protagoras’ thought. Protagoras professed that he himself knew political virtues and was able to teach them to those who came to him, and make them good citizens. His profession of teaching political virtues would be grounded in the various experiences that he had gained around many areas in Greece and Asia, while having associated with professional politicians. In this respect, the Protagorean synthesis can further be characterised as a type of knowledge which Protagoras intends to teach through various experiences and inferences that can offer human beings suitable judgements, namely good deliberation (*euboulia*), in each situation in human life. In doing so Protagoras seems to have founded the warrant for knowledge of the subjects of his teaching; yet such a kind of teaching or knowledge about those subjects is counted as a mere type of inductive conviction, i.e. a type of *epagōgē* (cf. *Rhet.* I.2.1356b8 and *Top.* VIII.156a4), whose boundary lies in the range of human experiences in human life.

Human life, which is considered relatively short, has a twofold meaning: an individual human life and the sum of the life of all human beings in human history. Both are regarded as short in comparison with the length of the gods’ life. As well known, Protagoras’ interest lies

mostly in human matters in human communities. Human affairs such as political virtues can be accessed through direct practice (e.g. personally engaging in political actions) and indirect experience (e.g. learning about them from teachers). While it is not possible for anyone to attain knowledge of the gods, it is possible for man to attain knowledge of things related to human affairs that have lasted as long as human history.

### 2.3. A personal opinion or a general statement?

As previously mentioned, some scholars, noticing that the omitted subject in the *PTH* fragment, the first singular ‘I (*egō*)’, refers to Protagoras himself, suggest that the fragment was designed to express the sophist’s personal opinion regarding the gods, applying it only to his own individual ignorance, not to make a general statement applying to all men.<sup>115</sup> They argue that it is not man in general, but Protagoras himself in particular, who is not able to know about the gods, and thus demand that the fragment should not be treated as a general philosophical statement. Indeed, in the fragment, taking ‘I (*egō*)’ as a subject, Protagoras confesses his ignorance of the gods, while in the MMD he employs a word which refers to man in general, *anthrōpos*, to indicate the subject of the doctrine.

The character of the two epistemological obstacles which justify his ignorance, however, proves that the *PTH* fragment should be understood as a general epistemological statement. The gods’ obscurity, i.e. the fact that they appear differently at different moments, is their character which is not a private epistemological obstacle that applies only to Protagoras. It is not true that the gods are experienced in a certain single shape and with a certain character by every human being except for Protagoras, whereas they are experienced in an obscure way only by the sophist. Protagoras, as we have seen above, although he says that he himself is not able to know the gods, implicitly emphasises that the reason for his ignorance lies not in his own inability to know them, but in the gods’ characteristic obscurity. Such obscurity of the gods is in Protagoras’ view an obstacle that objectively and universally applies to all human beings in general. Also, the shortness of human life is not something applicable only to Protagoras, but to all men, since this shortness of human life, as discussed above, is the concept acquired in comparison with the very long or eternal life of the gods. As the term ‘shortness’ of human life is compared with the length of the gods’ life, this obstacle turns out to be a human intrinsic impediment to knowledge of the gods. Protagoras clearly expresses

---

<sup>115</sup> On this suggestion, cf. Mansfeld (1981), 40; Woodruff (1985), 496. Cf. also Gagarin (2002), 115–6.

the shortness of ‘human (*anthrōpou*)’ life in a general sense, not the shortness of ‘my (*emou*)’ life in a private sense. No human being can have a long life in comparison with the gods.

To sum up, the epistemological obstacles, which equally apply to all human beings, are thus considered, at least to Protagoras’ eyes, a universal and objective epistemological condition; no one can know the things beyond this condition. In this regard, it seems, therefore, most reasonable to believe that in the *PTH* fragment Protagoras argues for the human intrinsic inability of knowledge of certain objects, here the gods.<sup>116</sup>

### 3. Protagoras’ attempt at anthropological concerns

Despite Protagoras’ confession of his ignorance of the gods in the *PTH* fragment, some modern scholars have endeavoured to extract from the fragment a positive point, the so-called Protagorean anthropological concerns, according to which the sophist encourages a sort of humanist study focusing on human affairs, turning people’s interest into them. This positive point is first proposed by Jaeger (1947, 176), who calls it an ‘anthropological attempt’. He argues that the first part of the fragment in which Protagoras states that ‘on the one hand, on the gods I am not able to know either how they are or how they are not, or what they look like in shape’ points to the sophist’s intention to change the aim and object of human study and interest from physical and cosmological and theological concerns to the consideration of human affairs, encouraging “an anthropological fact to be understood in the light of its meaning and function in human civilization and social structure.” Schiappa (1991, 145–6) adds two more points in support of Jaeger’s suggestion: first, Protagoras at his time had contributed, along with Socrates and his followers, towards the beginning of a new epoch of philosophy, namely a conversion from natural philosophy to philosophy concerning human affairs; second, since he claimed in the fragment that there are many—but, two as all in fact (cf. n. 116 above)—obstacles impeding knowledge of the gods, the study of the gods is a fruitless attempt which does not bring any benefit to men in Protagoras’ view.

More scholars have emphasised Protagoras’ anthropological concerns drawn from the *PTH* fragment. Dupréel’s attempt (1948, 58) to read a positive point from the fragment focuses on Protagoras’ intentional emphasis upon human educational practice. Although he

---

<sup>116</sup> These ‘two’ epistemological obstacles whose characters are considered in Protagoras’ view a universal and objective epistemological condition can be counted as ‘all’ the obstacles that prevent human beings from knowing the gods. Protagoras may have described them as ‘many (*polla*)’ in the *PTH* fragment, since they are, albeit two in number, indeed all.



does not explicitly use the term ‘anthropology’ in his argument, he suggests that what Protagoras indeed insisted on through the fragment and what followed it must have been the important role of pedagogy concerning human affairs, not about things that are unknowable to human beings, such as the gods. Barnes’ suggestion (1982, 450) regarding the positive anthropological point of the *PTH* fragment is grounded on Greek linguistic usage. Observing that the fragment begins with the particle *men*, he suggests that the first words of the fragment, *peri men theōn* (‘on the one hand, on the gods ...’), enable us to presume that the discussion may have continued with a sentence introduced by *de* (‘on the other hand, on ...’). Then he stresses that “the significant part of the fragment is the part we do not possess”, that is to say, the ‘*de* clause’. The content of this supposed subsequent part must be a matter of speculation; but from the familiar use of *men* and *de* we can legitimately suppose that there Protagoras may have dealt with human affairs or other things of which he himself would say ‘I am able to know’. Barnes thus presumes that the *de* clause which is answering to the *men* clause “asserted the possibility of knowledge about men: ‘Of the gods I know nothing; about men I speak thus.’” Finally he proposes that in the original complete work Protagoras announced that “theology is to be abjured, and replaced by anthropology,” and that as an anthropologist he aimed at explaining “the origins of man, and more particularly, the origin of human skills, of human customs, and of human social and moral conventions.” Recently, Lavery in O’Grady (2008, 39), arguing that the *PTH* fragment “appears not to be irreligious or radically sceptical, even if it rules out speculative theology,” similarly posits a positive position, namely, a Protagorean study on human’s own affairs. Boys-Stones’ proposal (2009, 1–8) to read the *PTH* fragment as a practically, not theoretically and analytically, atheistic claim, on the grounds that Protagoras does not intend to utilise “the language of God” in his occupation and activities, can be also seen in relation to the sophist’s attempt of anthropological concerns.

Indeed, in the light of the practice of humanism, i.e. human activities such as political virtues, domestic science, and human language, it seems very likely that Protagoras would probably intend to accentuate and encourage anthropological concerns through the *PTH* fragment, rather than a study of natural philosophy or the gods. Certainly, Protagoras’ anthropological concerns resonate with his profession that he is in charge of making people clever at speaking (as Socrates and Hippocrates portray the sophist’s profession in this way in the *Protagoras*), and that unlike other teachers who teach subjects which their students do not want to learn, he only teaches the subjects that his pupils want to learn from him, namely good deliberation (*euboulia*) concerning domestic affairs and the affairs of the city, how to be

the most influential, both in action and speech, i.e. political art and how to be a good citizen and politician (cf. *Prot.* 312d3–8 and 318d7–319a2: DK80 A5, respectively). It is obvious that in Protagoras' view these practical subjects producing benefit are experienced throughout human life, and the accumulated judgements and ideas about them enable human beings to arrive at knowledge of them for a better life in a human community, as the sophist emphasises in the *Great Speech*.

## Chapter V

### Linguistics: The correct use of language

According to some ancient sources, Protagoras is said to have paid much attention to the study on language, laying down his interest in the correctness of words and names (*orthoepia*) and correct linguistic and grammatical usage. Modern scholars, crediting him with the status of being the first Greek theorist of grammar and linguistics,<sup>117</sup> have valued Protagoras' insights on language. In this chapter, I will first present the sources of the sophist's interest in the correct use of language, and then examine its character and propose Protagoras' purpose of the linguistics.

#### 1. The ancient sources of Protagoras' interest in the correct use of language

Some ancient sources have reported Protagoras' interest in language. According to the sources, his concerns for this topic lie not only in systematic grammatical consistency, but also in the correct use of words and names, i.e. collectively language, about objects, in accordance with their nature.

Plato speaks about Protagoras' profession of the correctness of words (*orthoepia*). In a passage from a dialogue on the nature and correctness of words, the *Cratylus* 391c2–4 (DK80 A24), Plato briefly mentions that Protagoras taught the correctness of words.<sup>118</sup> And later in a passage from a dialogue on the true meaning and function of rhetoric, the *Phaedrus* 266d7–267d4 (DK80 A26), where Socrates and Phaedrus talk about the art of speaking and the specialist of speeches, Plato says again that the sophist was a specialist in the same topic:

ΣΩ. Τὰ δὲ Πόλου πῶς φράσωμεν αὐτῶν μουσεῖα λόγων—ὡς διπλασιολογίαν καὶ γνωμολογίαν καὶ εἰκονολογίαν— Soc. And what shall we say about Polus' gallery of discourse (*logoi*)—speaking with repetition, speaking in maxims, and speaking in images—

---

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Steinthal (1891), 136; Porzig (1950), 353; Di Cesare (1996<sup>2</sup>), 100–4; Dillon and Gergel (2003), 341, n. 10.

<sup>118</sup> In Plato's works, in fact Prodicus, who is said to have been one of Protagoras' pupils (*Suda*, s.v. Prodikos: DK84 A1; *Onomatol. bei Schol. Plat. De Rep.* 600c: DK80 A3), is more often described to be associated with this topic on the correctness of words. On this, cf. *Crat.* 384b (DK84 A11); *Prot.* 337a–c (A13); *Men.* 75e (A15); *Euthyd.* 277e–278a (A16); *Laches* 197b–d (A17); *Charmides* 163b–d (A18); *Phrd.* 267b (A20).

ὀνομάτων τε Λικυμνίων ἃ ἐκείνῳ ἐδωρήσατο  
πρὸς ποιήσιν εὐεπείας;

ΦΑΙ. Πρωταγόρεια δέ, ὧ Σώκρατες, οὐκ ἦν  
μέντοι τοιαῦτ' ἄττα;

ΣΩ. Ὅρθοέπειά γέ τις, ὧ παῖ, καὶ ἄλλα  
πολλὰ καὶ καλά.

and Licymnius' words (*onomata*) that he gave to  
him for making eloquence?

PHDR. But Socrates, were there not some similar  
things of Protagoras?

Soc. Yes, correctness of words, my boy, and  
other many wonderful things too.

In the *Rhetoric* III.5.1407b6–9 (DK80 A27), Aristotle says that Protagoras distinguished the gender of words:

Πρωταγόρας τὰ γένη τῶν ὀνομάτων διήρει,<sup>119</sup>  
ἄρρενα καὶ θήλεα καὶ σκευή· δεῖ γὰρ ἀποδιδόναι  
καὶ ταῦτα ὀρθῶς· "ἡ δ' ἐλθοῦσα καὶ διαλεχθεῖσα  
ᾗχετο".

Protagoras has divided the kinds of words,  
masculine, feminine, and neuter: these also must  
be correctly accounted. 'She, having come and  
having conversed, went away'.

And in the *Sophistical Refutations* XIV.173b16–25 (DK80 A28), Aristotle states that Protagoras said that some female nouns, such as *mēnis* (wrath) and *pēlēx* (helmet) should be 'corrected' into masculine nouns:

Σολοικισμὸς δ' οἷον μὲν ἐστὶν εἴρηται πρότερον·  
ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο καὶ ποιεῖν καὶ μὴ ποιοῦντα  
φαίνεσθαι καὶ ποιοῦντα μὴ δοκεῖν, καθάπερ, ὃ  
Πρωταγόρας ἔλεγεν, εἰ "ὁ μῆνις" καὶ "ὁ πήληξ"  
ἄρρενά ἐστιν· ὁ μὲν γὰρ λέγων "οὐλομένην"  
σολοικίζει μὲν κατ' ἐκεῖνον, οὐ φαίνεται δὲ τοῖς  
ἄλλοις, ὁ δὲ "οὐλόμενον" φαίνεται μὲν, ἀλλ' οὐ  
σολοικίζει.

It has been said earlier what sort of thing  
solecism is. It is possible both to commit it, and  
to seem to do so without doing so, and to do so  
without seeming to do so. Let us suppose that  
*mēnis* and *pēlēx* are masculine, as Protagoras  
used to say: according to Protagoras, a man who  
calls *mēnis* a 'destrucress (*oulomenē*)' commits  
a solecism, although he does not seem to do so to  
other people, whereas a man who calls *mēnis* a  
'destructor (*oulomenon*)' seems to commit  
solecism, but he does not indeed.

Again, in the *Poetics* XIX.1456b15–18 (DK80 A29), Aristotle says that Protagoras censured Homer for using grammatical moods in an inappropriate way:

τί γὰρ ἄν τις ὑπολάβοι ἡμαρτηῆσθαι ἃ For who could see the fault in a passage [from

<sup>119</sup> Here Aristotle's use of the imperfect form of the verb διήρει shows us that Protagoras' concern about the kinds of names is not a single occurrence but a continuous interest.

Πρωταγόρας ἐπιτιμᾷ, ὅτι εὐχεσθαι οἰόμενος ἐπιτάττει εἰπὼν "μῆνιν ἄειδε θεά"; τὸ γὰρ κελεύσαι, φησὶν, ποιεῖν τι ἢ μὴ ἐπιτάξις ἐστίν.

Homer] in which [the poet has] a prayer use the imperative mood when saying “Sing, goddess, the wrath”, which Protagoras censures? Because to order one to do or not, he says, is a command.

Diogenes Laertius in 9.52 (DK80 A1) describes Protagoras as the first who distinguished the tenses of verbs, and in 9.53–54 (*ibid.*) reports that the sophist divided discourse (*logos*) into four, or even seven according to some, types:

καὶ πρῶτος μέρη χρόνου διώρισε...

Also [Protagoras] was the first to distinguish the tenses of verbs...

διεἶλέ τε τὸν λόγον πρῶτος εἰς τέτταρα: εὐχολίην, ἐρώτησιν, ἀπόκρισιν, ἐντολήν (οἱ δὲ εἰς ἑπτὰ: διήγησιν, ἐρώτησιν, ἀπόκρισιν, ἐντολήν, ἀπαγγελίαν, εὐχολίην, κλήσιν), οὗς καὶ πυθμένας εἶπε λόγων.

[Protagoras] was the first to divide discourse (*logos*) into four types: entreaty, question, answer and command (others say, into seven types: narration, question, answer, command, report, entreaty, and invitation), and he called them the foundations of discourse.

We see that Diogenes Laertius uses an expression ‘*merē chronou*’ in 9.52. This expression which literally translates ‘the parts of time’ could have various meanings, but most modern scholars have agreed that Protagoras meant by the expression ‘the tenses of verb’. Pfeiffer (1968, 280–1) argues that in order to mean ‘the division of the tenses of verbs’ this requires the plural ‘*μέρη χρόνων*’ rather than the singular ‘*μέρη χρόνου*’. However, this argument does not seem correct, if we understand that the division of the tenses of verbs is grounded on the fact that there are parts of time, the past, the present, and the future. A thing which has parts in it can be divided into parts without requiring the plural form. For example, it is not necessary to say ‘*μέρη ἀνθρώπων*’ in order to mean that there are parts of a human being such as legs and arms and a head—simply by saying with the singular form ‘*μέρη ἀνθρώπου*’, it can be meant that a human being has parts. Dunn (2001, 547–50) suggests that Protagoras’ division of the tenses of verbs is not a formal grammatical idea but a general epistemological distinction between the past, the present, and the future, and that Protagoras might have insisted that man has “direct experience of the present, limited memory of the past, and no access whatever to the future.” This suggestion, however, does not seem convincing.

In a passage from the *Clouds* 658–679 (DK80 C3), where Socrates and Strepsiades have a talk about the correct word-endings on the basis of the natural gender of things,

Aristophanes satirises Protagoras' correctness of words:

ΣΩ. ἀλλ' ἕτερα δεῖ σε πρότερα τούτου μανθάνειν, τῶν τετραπόδων ἅττ' ἐστὶν ὀρθῶς ἄρρενα.	SOC. But you must learn other things before these, like which quadrupeds are correctly masculine.
ΣΤ. ἀλλ' οἶδ' ἔγωγε τᾶρρεν', εἰ μὴ μαίνομαι· κριός, τράγος, ταῦρος, κύων, ἀλεκτρυών.	STREP. But I know the masculine ones, if I am not mad: ram, billy goat, bull, dog, fowl ( <i>alektryōn</i> ).
ΣΩ. ὀρθῶς ἂ πάσχεις; τὴν τε θήλειαν καλεῖς ἀλεκτρυόνα κατὰ ταυτὸ καὶ τὸν ἄρρενα.	SOC. See what is happening? You are calling the female a fowl and the male the same thing.
ΣΤ. πῶς δὴ, φέρε;	STREP. How? Tell me.
ΣΩ. πῶς; ἀλεκτρυών κάλεκτρυών.	SOC. How? Like this: fowl and fowl.
ΣΤ. νῆ τὸν Ποσειδῶ. νῦν δὲ πῶς με χρὴ καλεῖν;	STREP. By Poseidon, I am doing! But now how should I call them?
ΣΩ. ἀλεκτρυάιναν, τὸν δ' ἕτερον ἀλέκτορα.	SOC. She-fowl ( <i>alektryaina</i> ) for one, he-fowl ( <i>alektror</i> ) for the other.
ΣΤ. ἀλεκτρυάιναν; εὖ γε νῆ τὸν Ἄερα· ὥστ' ἀντὶ τούτου τοῦ διδάγματος μόνου διαλιπώσω σου κύκλω τὴν κάρδοπον.	STREP. She-fowl? By Aër, how great! For this lesson alone I will fill your barely bowl to the brim.
ΣΩ. ἰδοὺ μάλ' αὖθις, τοῦθ' ἕτερον. τὴν κάρδοπον ἄρρενα καλεῖς θήλειαν οὔσαν.	SOC. See, you are doing it again! You call the bowl ( <i>tēn kardopon</i> ) masculine, although it is feminine.
ΣΤ. τῷ τρόπῳ; ἄρρενα καλῶ ἡγὼ κάρδοπον;	STREP. But how? Am I calling it masculine?
.....	
ΣΩ. ὅπως; τὴν καρδόπην, ὥσπερ καλεῖς τὴν Σωστράτην.	SOC. How? The she-bowl ( <i>tēn kardopēn</i> ), just like the way you call the she-Sostrates.
ΣΤ. τὴν καρδόπην θήλειαν;	STREP. The she-bowl, feminine?
ΣΩ. ὀρθῶς γὰρ λέγεις.	SOC. You are [now] speaking correctly.

In this satire Aristophanes has only Socrates and Stepsiades as interlocutors for discussion on the correctness of words, and these interlocutors do not even mention Protagoras in their conversation; no Protagorean character is presented. For this reason of the absence of Protagoras from the scene in the satire, some recent editions of the Protagorean fragments, such as Dillon and Gergel's edition in 2003, or recent introductions of Protagoras, such as Lavery in O'Grady in 2008, exclude it. Nonetheless, it seems clear that the linguistic niceties in the passage can hardly be attributed to Socrates himself. Guthrie (1971, 221) says that Aristophanes' play "contains, under the name of Socrates, an attack on Protagoras' claim ... about names, which of them are masculine and which feminine." In this regard, Rademaker (2007, 1) also argues that "[W]hat Aristophanes seems to have done is to produce a—

comically distorted—amalgam of various elements of Sophistic thought, and attribute it all to the most notorious sophist around in Athens about 423 BCE. In case of Socrates’ theory of word genders, there seems to be some reason to think that Aristophanes may have been parodying linguistic ideas from Protagoras; in some of the ‘serious’ sources on Protagoras’ ideas on language, Protagoras is indeed credited with a theory of word genders.”<sup>120</sup>

On account of the ancient sources on Protagoras’ linguistic interest quoted above, modern scholarship, valuing the sophist’s idea of the correct linguistic and grammatical usage, have labelled him the first Greek scholar of grammar and linguistics. For example, Steinthal (1891, 136) describes Protagoras’ distinction between the word genders as “the discovery of the first grammatical fact”; Porzig (1950, 353) calls Protagoras as “the first scholarly student of language”; Di Cesare (1996, 104) calls the sophist as “the founder of grammatical research”; Dillon and Gergel (2003, 341, n. 10) likewise describe him as “substantially the father of Greek grammar”. But, on what grounds did Protagoras attempt to pursue research on language and grammar, and what was Protagoras’ exact claim regarding this topic?

## 2. The naturalism of language

Plato’s statements regarding Protagoras’ correct use of language, as quoted above, show that the sophist was concerned with linguistic issues, using an art of language called ‘the correctness of words (*orthoepia*)’. His statements, however, do not clearly reveal what the art exactly was. Aristotle’s testimonies seem to offer some clues about Protagoras’ correctness of words, more vividly addressing the sophist’s observation of the distinction between the word genders. Aristotle says that Protagoras divided the kinds of words into masculine, feminine, and neuter (*Rhet.* III.5.1407b6–9), and provides an example of the sophist’s clarification of the gender of words; ‘ἡ δ’ ἐλθοῦσα καὶ διαλεχθεῖσα ὄχρητο (she, having come and having conversed, went away)’. Aristotle offers one more example, the correction of genders of the nouns *mēnis* (wrath) and *pēlēx* (helmet) into masculine (*Soph. Elen.* XIV.173b16–25), and explains that according to Protagoras someone who calls *mēnis* a destructress commits a solecism because of the incongruence between *mēnis* and its feminine modifier (*oulomenē*), whereas someone who calls *mēnis* a destructor does not on the grounds of the congruence between the word and its masculine modifier (*oulomenon*). In this example

<sup>120</sup> Cf. also Kanavou (2010), 78–9, where she suggests that Aristophanes in this passage is indeed targeting not only Protagoras but also Prodicus.

Aristotle clearly shows that Protagoras indeed thought that *mēnis* which was commonly accepted as a feminine word on the grounds of customary background should be corrected into a masculine word.

Aristophanes' satire, as quoted above, seems to hint at Protagoras' criterion of determination of the gender of words. Aristophanes satirises those who maintain the correctness of words (and Protagoras secretly standing behind them), by stating that they strive to correct fowl (*alektyōn*) into 'she-fowl (*alektryaina*)' and 'he-fowl (*alektor*)', and bowl (*tēn kardopon*) as 'she-bowl (*tēn kardopen*)'. In this satire, the speakers endeavour to correct the words in accordance with their natural genders, by correcting their word-endings. The correct word-endings are provided by the speakers on the grounds of the morphological consistencies between female endings and male ones.

Inspecting the ancient sources on Protagoras' interest in language, we can assume that the sophist mainly concerned 'the grammatical genders on the basis of natural genders of things' and 'the morphological consistency' of the words based on their grammatical genders.<sup>121</sup> Aristophanes' satire exemplifies 'the grammatical genders on the basis of natural genders of things'; a female fowl is by her nature female, while a male one is male by his nature. The correct word for a female fowl must be consistent with its female gender, and thus have a feminine form, *alektryaina*. This is the same for the correct word for a male fowl, *alektor*. Also, as Aristotle testifies, Protagoras said that the feminine *mēnis* (wrath) and *pēlēx* (helmet) should be corrected into masculine nouns; Protagoras probably viewed that *mēnis* and *pēlēx* are naturally 'unfeminine' in character, being especially associated with the male gender,<sup>122</sup> thus these words should be masculine 'ὁ μῆνις' and 'ὁ πῆληξ'.<sup>123</sup> Protagoras' criticism of Homer for using an incorrect mood also reveals a similar point; the sophist points

---

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Lana (1950), 56 ff.; Kerferd (1981a), 68–9.

<sup>122</sup> Indeed these words were mostly used with reference to male warriors, especially in epic tradition; for example, as well known even as a famous simile, *mēnis* went with a male hero in Homer's *Iliad*, Achilles, and *pēlēx* was what male soldiers wore in battles.

<sup>123</sup> Regarding Protagoras' correction of *mēnis* and *pēlēx*, Lougovaya and Ast (2004, 274–7) suggest that *Mēnis* would probably be a personal name and Πῆληξ could mean a citizen from the Attic deme Peleces. And further they argue that in that case, Aristotle's phrase 'Let us suppose that *mēnis* and *pēlēx* are masculine, as Protagoras used to say (καθάπερ, ὁ Πρωταγόρας ἔλεγεν, εἰ "ὁ μῆνις" καὶ "ὁ πῆληξ" ἄρρενά ἐστιν)' seems to simply state something that was indeed used in the actual world, not a theory of language according to which Protagoras seriously tried to correct wrong linguistic and grammatical usages; "if you call Mr. *Mēnis* *oulomenos*, the whole world will suppose that you made a mistake while in fact you did not, and if you call him *oulomenē*, you make a grammatical mistake that escapes notice (cf. Rademaker, 2007, 2)." The suggestion proposed by Lougovaya and Ast, however, does not explain other examples of Protagoras' correct use of language, such as the division of the tenses of verbs and the correction of Homer's usage of moods (both are from Aristotle's testimonies). In addition, although it is admitted that Πῆληξ could mean a person from the Attic deme Peleces, the person does not have to be only a (male) citizen of the deme; even a woman who is originally from the deme can be called a Πῆληξ. A mere point that there are some male citizens from the Attic deme Peleces does not support a general linguistic idea of solecism.



out that the poet uses the imperative mood in saying ‘Sing, goddess, the wrath (*mēnin aeide thea*)’, and emphasises that it should not be a command but a prayer, using the optative mood. Protagoras’ criticism, then, seems to be grounded on a view that human beings are by nature inferior to the gods and thus they should not issue commands to the gods; something whose nature is inferior should not command but pray, and the correct mood for a prayer, Protagoras argues, is not ‘imperative’ but ‘optative’. Here Protagoras seems to insist upon ‘the grammatical genders on the basis of natural gender’.

The examples of ‘the morphological consistency’ of the words based on their grammatical genders are found first in Aristotle’s example of Protagoras’ division of genders (ἡ δ’ ἐλθοῦσα καὶ διαλεχθεῖσα ᾗχετο), and then in Aristophanes’ satire again (the correction of τὴν κάρδοπον into τὴν καρδόπην). In Aristotle’s example, the participles (ἐλθοῦσα and διαλεχθεῖσα) have feminine forms, and are corresponding to their subject (the feminine article ἡ, which is used as a feminine pronoun). Likewise, a word κάρδοπον, which is indeed a feminine word, has a more typically masculine ending (-ον) and does not morphologically correspond to its feminine article τὴν. In order to make the word morphologically consistent with its article, the masculine ending should be modified into a feminine ending (-ην) and thus as ‘τὴν καρδόπην’. These examples of grammatical congruence between the articles and the corresponding words clarify Protagoras’ views that the morphology of words must be used correctly in accordance with their grammatical genders.<sup>124</sup>

Protagoras’ interest in language can simply be understood as a linguistic research on the grounds of observation of the nature of things. Protagoras seems to have believed that things have objective and universal natural features, such as natural genders or superior and inferior natures. The morphological consistency of words is also grounded on the natural genders of words—the gender of κάρδοπον (bowl) was probably believed to be feminine in Protagoras’ opinion, because this was what usually women used in the house. Diogenes Laertius’ report about Protagoras’ division of the tenses of verbs (9.52) and discourse (*logos*) into four types (entreaty, question, answer and command) (or seven types: narration, question, answer, command, report, entreaty, and invitation) (9.53–54), although he does not explicitly state in

---

<sup>124</sup> In the light of ‘the consistency of morphology’, Protagoras’ correction of *mēnis* (wrath) and *pēlēx* (helmet) (*Soph. Elen.* XIV.173b16–25) may perhaps be understood as a correction of these words by giving them word-endings that are unequivocally masculine. However, this does not seem to match with Aristotle’s explanation that ‘according to Protagoras, a man who calls *mēnis* a ‘destructress (*oulomenē*)’ commits a solecism, although he does not seem to do so to other people, whereas a man who calls *mēnis* a ‘destructor (*oulomenon*)’ seems to commit solecism, but he does not indeed.’ In this explanation, Protagoras clearly points out that the solecism occurs by the violation of ‘the grammatical genders on the basis of natural gender’ on the basis of nature of things, not by the violation of the morphological consistency.

what sense Protagoras thus divided them, can also be understood in a similar way. Protagoras would probably argue that what happened in the past should be described by using the past tense of verbs, because this is the correct way to describe what happened in the past by its nature; what happened in the past is naturally a past event and does grammatically correspond to the past tense of verbs. The sophist would also perhaps argue that the types of discourse must be distinguished on the basis of their purpose; if one asks a question one must use a discourse type of question, and if one gives an answer one must use a discourse type of answer. A question is by its natural character different from an answer. In addition, as Aristotle's report of Protagoras' criticism of Homer (*Poet.* XIX.1456b15–18) shows, the division of the discourse types reflects on the sophist's concerns about language on the basis of the nature of things.<sup>125</sup> One whose nature is inferior (e.g. a human being) should not command someone whose nature is superior (e.g. a goddess) to do or not to do, but pray. In this regard, it seems fair to believe that as Plato mentions Protagoras by name in the middle of discussion on the naturalism of language in the *Cratylus*,<sup>126</sup> the sophist's linguistic interest

---

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Rademaker (2007), 2. Regarding Aristotle's understanding of Protagoras' criticism of Homer, he suggests that "Aristotle's point in this passage is that the poet, unlike the performing artist, does not need specialised knowledge concerning the σχήματα τοῦ λόγου or text types [i.e. discourse types]. The thought seems to be that the performing artist runs the risk of making mistakes in reciting the text if he does not take account of differences between text types, and the various performance styles connected with them; the poet, on the other hand, as a competent native speaker of his language, will not make serious mistakes in this respect in composing his poetry."

<sup>126</sup> In fact, we can find Plato's contradictory references to Protagoras in the *Cratylus*. In 385e4–386a4 of the dialogue, Socrates, listening to Hermogenes' idea about names on the basis of the conventionalism of language according to which each city has their conventions to give names to things, asks him whether 'he holds fast to the same position regarding also things that are (*ta onta*), accepting that 'the essence (*ousia*) [of each] of them is private for each person, as Protagoras tells that man is "the measure of all things"—as things are to me as they appear to me, and are to you as they appear to you (ἰδίᾳ αὐτῶν ἢ οὐσία εἶναι ἐκάστῳ, ὥσπερ Πρωταγόρας ἔλεγεν λέγων "πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον" εἶναι ἄνθρωπον—ὡς ἄρα οἷα μὲν ἂν ἐμοὶ φαίνηται τὰ πράγματα [εἶναι], τοιαῦτα μὲν ἔστιν ἐμοί· οἷα δ' ἂν σοί, τοιαῦτα δὲ σοί).' And Hermogenes, who maintains the conventionalism of language immediately rejects Protagorean idea. In this passage, Plato seems to state that according to Protagoras' MMD, names of things would be relativised by the users of those names, whoever they are. On the basis of the Platonic reading of Protagoras' MMD in the *Theaetetus*, Sedley (2003, 54–5) argues that "[I]t must be made very clear that in no way is it insinuated that Hermogenes' linguistic conventionalism entails Protagorean relativism, so that the rejection of relativism will lead to that of conventionalism. ... the rejection of Protagoreanism will entail that things have their own intrinsic natures and hence that there are naturally correct and incorrect ways of acting with regard to each of them." Such radical relativism of language, however, is quite different from Plato's reference to Protagoras' correctness of words on the basis of naturalism of language in the passage quoted above (390d7–391c4). On Plato's contradictory references to Protagoras in the dialogue, Sedley (*ibid.*, 77) proposes that "what Socrates is about to try his hand at is *the* current intellectual fashion. But we must not assume that this small army of intellectuals were all attempting the same kind of systematic approach as Socrates offers. There is every reason to assume that Prodicus and Protagoras meant by 'correctness of words' something closer to an improved command of vocabulary than research into words' hidden origins." However, Sedley's proposal does not really solve Plato's contradictory references to Protagoras in the dialogue. If Plato simply wanted to show that the sophists were interested in language issues but did not consider any systematic theory of language, he might have not needed to refer to Protagoras when talking about the correctness of words on the basis of naturalism of language; Plato could have just mentioned any other sophists than Protagoras by name, such as Prodicus who is also described by Plato as endeavouring to distinguish names and words (cf. *Men.* 75e2–3), instead of taking a risk by contradictory references. While Plato clearly mentions Protagoras'

lies in the naturalism of language. And, Protagoras' concerns regarding the correctness of words, 'the grammatical genders on the basis of natural gender' and 'the morphological consistency' of the words based on their grammatical genders, seem to be established on the grounds of this basic idea of the naturalism of language.<sup>127</sup>

### 3. Serious linguistics or an epideictic performance of rhetoric?

Some modern scholars have doubted the seriousness of Protagoras' linguistics; they suggest that the sophist's linguistic interest would probably be an epideictic performance of rhetoric in order to dazzle his audiences. For instance, Robins (1997<sup>4</sup>, 32) argues that although Protagoras' views on language may have triggered the study of language for its own sake, the sophist himself made his observations on language mostly within the framework of his views on rhetoric. Robins' view implies that Protagoras did make some observations on grammar and language as an instrument of persuasion, but was not interested in a systematic theory of language for its own sake. Fehling (1965, 214) also argues, even in a stricter way, that the sophist's division of grammatical usages was not really any kind of systematic treatise on language but simply a sample of his criticism of poetry, and this was "developed even there in a cursory manner." In support of his argument, Fehling points out that both Protagoras' distinction between the word genders and his criticism of Homer are illustrated by examples taken from the very first verse of the *Iliad*, and implies that it would be an effective rhetorical way of dazzling or persuading audiences if Protagoras took the well known passages in order to attack. Rademaker (2007, 3–4) emphasises that considering the sophist's interests in

---

correctness of words on the basis of the naturalism of language in his second reference to the sophist (390d7–391c4), in his first reference to Protagoras, Plato does not explicitly states that Protagoras indeed argued for radical relativism of language; he simply states that the sophist says that things that are (*ta onta*), not names (*onomata*), are as they appear to each person, and according to this idea one may argue that names can also be given to things as they appear right to each person (385e4–386a4). In this regard, I propose that although he knew about Protagoras' correctness of words on the basis of the naturalism of language (second reference), Plato may have intended to say that if one really takes the conventionalism of language in a radical way (as Hermogenes' suggestion implies that names of things which are taken to be correct by each city on the grounds of their own conventions), this would amount to a relativist viewpoint about language, as Protagoras by his MMD says that 'things are to me as they appear to me, and are to you as they appear to you' (first reference). In the first reference, Plato does not really mention any Protagorean ideas on language, and thus Plato's two references to Protagoras in the dialogue are not contradictory in this sense. For a construction of radical relativism of language in the *Cratylus* and Socrates' and Hermogenes' rejection of it, cf. Sedley (*ibid.*, 54–8); Barney (2001, 28–33).

<sup>127</sup> On Protagoras' interest in language, cf. further Steinthal (1891), 135–9; Porzig (1950), 353–5; Guthrie (1971), 205 and 219–21; Kerferd (1981a), 68–9.; Schiappa (1991), 57 and 164; Donovan (1993), 43–6; Di Cesare (1996), 87–118; Woodruff in Long (1999), 295 and 309, n. 3.

natural language, even though he made some serious observations concerning grammar and language, Protagoras' linguistic concerns "may belong to an epideictic piece of Homeric criticism."

The suggestions of Protagoras' linguistic interest as an epideictic performance of rhetoric are supported basically by two main points: first, the sophist did not develop the substantial body of theory of language; second, the sophist took the examples of incorrect linguistic and grammatical usages only from Homeric works. Both points, however, seem doubtful. It is true that we do not have a systematic body of linguistic theory that is fairly attributed to Protagoras by the ancient sources; nevertheless, the absence of direct evidence for Protagoras' theory of language in our hands does not necessarily prove that he never established some conceptualisation of it. Given that all his works have not survived and we do now have only few fragments, we cannot know whether Protagoras did not actually develop his ideas on language. It is not entirely impossible to conjecture that Protagoras may have established a theory of language and even written a book about it, but this book too is lost as the other books are. Or we may perhaps assume that in a book entitled *The art of Eristic* (*Technē Eristikōn*), or in another book entitled *On Learning* (*Peri tōn Mathēmatōn*), that Diogenes Laertius attributes to Protagoras (9.55: DK80 A1), the sophist might have discussed his ideas on language in a substantial way.

In addition, although Protagoras' correction of the imperative mood into the optative mood indeed comes from the very first verse of Homer's *Iliad*, at the same time other testimonies prove that Homer's texts were not the only exemplary cases of the sophist's correct use of language and grammar. The example from Aristophanes' *Clouds* (*alektryaina* and *alektror*) and the example from Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations* (*mēnis* and *pēlēx*, albeit these words were used also by Homer in his poems) were not necessarily believed to be extracted only from Homeric corpus. Even though it were true that all the examples of Protagoras' linguistic interest were indeed from the Homeric corpus, it does not necessarily mean that Protagoras really intended merely to perform an epideictic performance while criticising the poet. If Homer's poems were the chief and most significant texts of general education (especially for the people of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE in Greece), observing the linguistic and grammatical problems in the texts and attempting to correct those problems would be the most effective method of a theory of language. In this case, a rhetorical effect would accompany that method (as a sort of by-product), but not be the primary or only purpose. Protagoras' criticism of Homeric usage of language and grammar can be understood in this way too.

Protagoras' *orthoepia* is provided to correct wrong linguistic and grammatical usages. Correcting is based on his naturalism of language, that is to say, correcting words and grammar is supported by the nature of things. Any attempt to use wrong language is an attempt to violate the nature of things. It is apparent that one whose linguistics lies in the correct usage of language according to the objective nature of things must be reflecting an objectivist view of language. Indeed, Protagorean linguistic correction does not require any human artificial or individually relative modification upon it; as Woodruff (2005, 158–9) strongly points out, “a radical relativist” who values every judgement in a way of relativising it on the basis of his own standard of truth “would encourage students to use language as they pleased, and Protagoras did not do that,” but encouraged his students “to use language correctly”. Protagoras' encouragement thus seems to be grounded on the nature of things. And one who insists on the naturalism of language should emphasise the objectivist usage of language. Protagoras' ideas of the correct use of language, in this respect, seems to be a linguistic-normative claim by which the sophist endeavours to set up certain linguistic norms that everyone should objectively follow in order to correctly use language according to the nature of objects.

Why then did Protagoras argue for such naturalism of language according to which he expressed the objective linguistic and grammatical usage on the basis of the nature of things? Unfortunately, we do not have any textual evidence which directly sheds light upon Protagoras' purpose of his linguistic interest. A passage from the *Great Speech* in the *Protagoras*, however, provides us with a clue from which we can infer, albeit indirectly, why the sophist emphasised the importance of the correct use of language. As we have examined earlier in Chapter II, at 321b6–322b1 of the *Protagoras* (the ‘Myth’ part), Protagoras says that Prometheus' gifts, i.e. technical wisdom and the use of fire enable human beings to develop the use of articulate speech, namely language.

Then, at 325d2–326e1 (the ‘*Logos*’ part), when Protagoras emphasises the importance of the laws of a city as a method of maintaining the city well preserved, he argues that as soon as children in a human community begin to understand language, adults in the community try to implant political virtues into the children's minds by every word (and deed) that this is right, and that wrong, this praiseworthy and that shameful, this holy and that unholy, and by saying ‘do this’ and ‘do not do that’ (esp. 325d2–5, and cf. pages 37–9 above). Perhaps, in Protagoras' thought, it is important that people should be able to understand what is said and written, namely language, in a correct way, i.e. the way in which all people in a community can correctly communicate about and educate in political virtues, keeping themselves away

from misunderstanding and misleading one another; if people tend to use language relatively, such communication about and education in political virtues would be impossible. The best manner of using language correctly would probably be the way of using it in accordance with the nature of things, without any human artificial or individually relative modification upon it. Protagoras would probably have insisted upon the importance of grammatical and linguistic correctness on the grounds of the naturalism of language, avoiding relative usages of language, for such a purpose.

## Chapter VI

### **Rhetorical Sophistry: The *ouk estin antilegein* ('it is not possible to contradict') doctrine**

An ancient claim, the so-called *ouk estin antilegein* doctrine which states that 'it is not possible to contradict' (hereafter the *OEA* doctrine), has been transmitted by ancient sources (Isocrates, *Helen* 1; *Euthyd.* 285e9–286a3; *Top.* I.11.104b12–21, *Met.* V.29.1024b32–4; D.L. 9.53 and 3.35). According to some of those sources, the doctrine is said to have been used by Protagoras (cf. *Euthyd.* 286c6–7; D.L. 9.53), according to others, by Antisthenes (cf. *Top.* I.11.104b19–21 and *Met.* V.29.1024b32–34).

In modern scholarship, due to conflicting reports in antiquity, three different assumptions have been made: first, the *OEA* doctrine must be attributed to Protagoras who made great use of it (cf. Kerferd (1981a), 89–90); second, although it is not certain that the doctrine must be attributed to Protagoras, it is obvious that he made use of it (cf. Taylor (1926), 96; Levi (1940a), 166; Schiappa (1991), 134; Lavery in O'Grady (2008), 31 and 40); and third, the doctrine should not be attributed to Protagoras who did not really use it (cf. DK80; Untersteiner (1954), 49 ff.; Gomperz (1965), 225ff.; Dupréel (1948), 39; Lee (2005), 72–3).

Those who support the first and second assumptions, again, have suggested three interpretations of the *OEA* doctrine. The first and the most dominant one is to read the *OEA* doctrine as a relativist claim in which it is argued that since every judgement is true to its maker no contradiction occurs, in connection with the Platonic reading of Protagoras' MMD in the *Theaetetus*. According to this interpretation, Protagoras would have claimed that if every judgement is relatively true, then no judgement can be false, and thus that every judgement is incorrigible and not to be corrected, therefore no one is contradicted by others and contradiction is impossible (cf. Levi (1940a), 166; Kerferd (1981a), 88; Lavery in O'Grady (2008), 40). The second interpretation is that Protagoras' *OEA* doctrine implies Heraclitus' theory of the unity of opposites (cf. again Levi (1940a), 166, n. 1; Guthrie (1971), 182, n. 2; Diels in DK80 A19). The last interpretation is that the *OEA* doctrine is an anticipation of Aristotle's Principle of Non-Contradiction (cf. Schiappa (1995), 138).

In this chapter, I first examine whether or not there is any plausibility in those ancient sources that says that Protagoras utilised the *OEA* doctrine. Then, I shall analyse the doctrine and the argument in its support as presented in the *Euthydemus* 285e9–286a3, revealing the

objectivist assumption of the argument for the *OEA* doctrine. Finally, I will propose that the *OEA* doctrine is a Protagorean rhetorical device, in connection with the sophist's other rhetorical fragments, such as the weaker/stronger *logoi* fragment and the two-*logoi* fragment.

### 1. Protagoras' use of the *ouk estin antilegein* doctrine

As briefly stated above, due to the discordance in ancient sources, it has been a matter of controversy in modern scholarship as to whether the doctrine should be ascribed to Protagoras, or whether the sophist even used it. The first reporter of the *OEA* doctrine in antiquity, Isocrates, who is about a decade earlier than Plato, while discussing the doctrine in his *Helen* 1.1–10, does not refer to its users by name:

εἰσὶ τινες οἱ μέγα φρονοῦσιν, ἣν ὑπόθεσιν ἄτοπον καὶ παράδοξον ποιησάμενοι περὶ ταύτης ἀνεκτῶς εἰπεῖν δυνηθῶσι· καὶ καταγεγηράκασιν οἱ μὲν οὐ φάσκοντες οἷόν τ' εἶναι ψευδῆ λέγειν οὐδ' ἀντιλέγειν οὐδὲ δύο λόγῳ περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν πραγμάτων ἀντειπεῖν, οἱ δὲ διεξιόντες ὡς ἀνδρία καὶ σοφία καὶ δικαιοσύνη ταυτὸν ἐστὶν καὶ φύσει μὲν οὐδὲν αὐτῶν ἔχομεν, μία δ' ἐπιστήμη καθ' ἀπάντων ἐστίν, ἄλλοι δὲ περὶ τὰς ἔριδας διατρίβοντες τὰς οὐδὲν μὲν ὠφελούσας, πράγματα δὲ παρέχειν τοῖς πλησιάζουσιν δυναμένας.

There are some who take great pride in being able to discuss in a tolerable manner any out of the way or paradoxical subject they may propose to themselves; and men have grown old, some asserting that it is impossible to say what is false, to contradict, or even to give two opposite accounts of the same things, others declaring that courage, wisdom, and justice are identical, and that none of them are natural qualities, but that one kind of knowledge alone is concerned with them all; while others waste their time in discussions that are perfectly useless, and whose only effect is to cause annoyance to their followers. (trans. Freese, 1894)

Later, however, some sources, such as Plato (*Euthyd.* 286c) and Diogenes Laertius (taking Plato as his source, as he clearly refers to the philosopher and the dialogue when introducing the doctrine in the section on Protagoras) (D.L. 9.53), say that Protagoras made use of the doctrine. Other sources, like Aristotle (*Top.* I.11.104b12–21 and *Met.* V.29.1024b32–34; cf. also D.L. 3.35), report that Antisthenes, not Protagoras, stated the doctrine. With conflicting records of the ancient sources, as stated earlier, three assumptions have thus been made. Let us first see the textual evidence on which those who support the third assumption rely:



έσις δέ ἐστιν ὑπόληψις παράδοξος τῶν γνωρίμων  
τινὸς κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν, οἷον ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν  
ἀντιλέγειν, καθάπερ ἔφη Ἀντισθένης. (*Top.*  
I.11.104b19–21)

A thesis is a paradoxical assumption of some  
people eminent in philosophy; for instance, the  
view that it is not possible to contradict (*ouk  
estin antilegein*), as Antisthenes said.

διὸ Ἀντισθένης ὤετο εὐήθως μηθὲν ἀξιῶν  
λέγεσθαι πλὴν τῷ οικείῳ λόγῳ, ἐν ἐφ' ἐνόσ· ἐξ  
ᾧ συνέβαινε μὴ εἶναι ἀντιλέγειν, σχεδὸν δὲ  
μηδὲ ψεύδεσθαι. (*Met.* V.29.1024b32–34)

Hence Antisthenes foolishly thought that nothing  
is worthy to be spoken of except by its  
proprietary *logos*, one [*logos*] for one [thing];  
from which it resulted that it is not possible to  
contradict (*mē einai antilegein*), and nearly so  
that it is not possible to speak falsely (*mēde  
pseudesthai*).

Diogenes Laertius' report (D.L. 3.35) on an episode in which Antisthenes is mentioned as a user of the doctrine also seems to strengthen the third position:

λέγεται δ' ὅτι καὶ Ἀντισθένης μέλλων  
ἀναγινώσκειν τι τῶν γεγραμμένων αὐτῷ  
παρεκάλεσεν αὐτὸν παρατυχεῖν. καὶ πυθομένῳ τί  
μέλλει ἀναγινώσκειν, εἶπεν ὅτι περὶ τοῦ μὴ εἶναι  
ἀντιλέγειν.

And it is said that Antisthenes, when he was  
about to read in public something of what he had  
composed, demanded him [*sc.* Plato] to attend.  
And hearing the question about what he was  
about to read, Antisthenes said that it concerned  
the impossibility of contradiction.

Here both Aristotle and Diogenes Laertius clearly say that it was Antisthenes who stated the doctrine. On the basis of these texts, Diels and Kranz seem not to regard the doctrine as Protagoras'. As they collected and arranged the fragments and testimonies on Protagoras from ancient sources, they did not list the doctrine as an authentic Protagorean one; rather they put just two references about the doctrine into the 'Life and Teaching' section (DK80 A1, A19). Untersteiner and Gomperz do not discuss the *OEA* doctrine in their research on Protagoras, assuming that this doctrine is not a tenet of Protagoras himself, since Aristotle presents it as an inference from what he said.<sup>128</sup> Dupréel and Lee make a stronger denial of Protagoras' use of the doctrine, arguing that the doctrine clearly originates with Antisthenes. Dupréel (1948, 39) asserts that "[I]mpossibilité de la contradiction (οὐκ ἔστιν ἀντιλέγειν) est une thèse qu'on trouve soutenue par Antisthènes," not by Protagoras; "et les Cyrénaïques ont exploité l'idée de l'isolement radical des connaissances." Lee (2005, 72–6), briefly

<sup>128</sup> On this suggestion, cf. Guthrie (1971), 182, n. 3.

discussing the *OEA* doctrine in an appendix, argues that “[T]he slogan ‘it is not possible to contradict’ is securely attributed to Antisthenes, but the evidence for attributing it to Protagoras as well is weak.”

However, the third assumption seems somewhat dubious. Of course it can be admitted that to Aristotle’s eyes Antisthenes is the most important name for the *OEA* doctrine. Nonetheless, although Aristotle says that Antisthenes stated the doctrine, as Kerferd (1981a, 89) points out, he does not assert that Antisthenes is the doctrine’s originator or the only user. Nor does the passage from Diogenes Laertius (D.L. 3.35) support the third assumption; it just pictures an episode involving Plato and Antisthenes, without attributing the origin of the doctrine to Antisthenes. Had Diogenes Laertius thought that the doctrine was originally from Antisthenes, one might have expected him to have mentioned it in the section on Antisthenes’ life and works (D.L. 6).

Kerferd argues for the first assumption that the *OEA* doctrine must be attributed to Protagoras who made great use of it. He primarily relies on a passage from Plato in support of this assumption. He begins with citing the *Euthydemus* 286c where Plato has Socrates say that he has heard “this argument [i.e. the argument for the *OEA* doctrine] from many people on many occasions—for Protagoras and those associated with him used to make great use of it, as did others even earlier than him (οὐ γάρ τοι ἀλλὰ τοῦτόν γε τὸν λόγον πολλῶν δὴ καὶ πολλὰκις ἀκηκῶς ἀεὶ θαυμάζω καὶ γὰρ οἱ ἀμφὶ Πρωταγόραν σφόδρα ἐχρῶντο αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ ἔτι παλαιότεροι)” (trans. Kerferd (1981a), 89). Kerferd adds some more textual evidence to support his argument. According to him, a statement in the *Cratylus* 429c9–d3, which says that ‘there are many both now and in the past who say that it is impossible to say false things (ἄρα ὅτι ψευδῆ λέγειν τὸ παράπαν οὐκ ἔστιν, ἄρα τοῦτό σοι δύναται ὁ λόγος; συχνοὶ γὰρ τινες οἱ λέγοντες, καὶ νῦν καὶ πάλαι),’ hints at Protagoras’ paternity of the *OEA* doctrine. He uses two additional sources to strengthen his account, the *Commentary on Aristotle’s Categories* 81.6–8 by Joannes Philoponus, a Christian philosopher and Aristotelian commentator (ca. 490–570), and a passage from a papyrus commentary on the *Ecclesiastes*.

Some questions can be raised about Kerferd’s account. First, the passage from the *Euthydemus* simply states that Protagoras and those associated with him ‘used to make great use’ of the *OEA* doctrine (and the argument in its support), not that it originated from the sophist. In fact the passage explicitly says that even people earlier than Protagoras had used the *OEA* doctrine. Secondly, the passages from the *Cratylus* and the *Commentary on*

*Aristotle's Categories*<sup>129</sup> both talk about the impossibility of falsehood, not about the impossibility of contradiction, hence Kerferd needs to prove that falsehood and contradiction are entirely equivalent to each other in Protagoras' view; otherwise he commits the fallacy of *petitio principii* (for the difference between the impossibility of falsehood and that of contradiction, cf. Appendix II below). Moreover, the passage from the *Cratylus* does not refer to anyone by name with regard to the *OEA* doctrine, so it is hard to accept this passage as crucial evidence for the first assumption.

A passage from a papyrus commentary on the *Ecclesiastes*, which is believed to have been written by Didymus the Blind, an ecclesiastical writer in the fourth century CE, discovered in 1941, published by G. Binder and L. Liesenborghs (1966, 37–43), and reprinted with a revision by C. J. Classen (1976a, 452–62), reads:

παρ[άδοξ]ός τις γνώμη φέρεται Προδίκου ὅτι  
 ‘οὐκ ἔστιν [ἀν]τιλέγειν’. [πῶς] | λέγει τοῦτο;  
 παρὰ τῆ[ν γν]ώμην καὶ τὴν δόξαν τῶν πάντων  
 ἐστίν· πάντες γὰρ δι[αλέ]γονται ἀντιλέγουσι[ν  
 κ]αὶ ἐν τοῖς βιωτικοῖς καὶ ἐν τοῖς φρονουμένοις.  
 δογματικῶς [λέγει] | ἐκεῖνος ὅτι ‘οὐκ ἔστιν  
 ἀ[ντι]λέγειν’. εἰ γὰρ ἀντιλέγουσιν, ἀμφοτέροι  
 λέγουσιν· ἀδύνατον [δέ] | ἔστιν ἀμφοτέρους  
 [λέγει]ν εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ πρᾶγμα. λέγει γὰρ ὅτι μόνος  
 ὁ ἀληθεύων καὶ ὡς ἔχ[ει τὰ] | πράγματα  
 ἀγγέλλων αὐτὰ οὗτος λέγει. ὁ δὲ ἐνα[ν]τιούμενος  
 αὐτῷ οὐ λέγει τὸ πρᾶγμα οὐκ α·……[?]

A paradoxical thought that it is not possible to contradict is brought by Prodicus. How does he say this? This is contrary to the thought and opinion of all men; for all men discuss and contradict both in everyday matters and in matters of thought. But he says dogmatically that it is not possible to contradict. For if they contradict, they both speak; yet it is impossible for both of them to speak in regard to the same thing. For he says that only the one who is saying the truth and who is reporting things as they really are speaks of them. The other, who is opposing to him, does not speak of that thing  
 ……

Here the passage explicitly states that the *OEA* doctrine is ‘brought by Prodicus’. Prodicus is

<sup>129</sup> In fact, the passage from Joannes Philoponus that refers to Protagoras is not 81.6–8, but 103.31–104.3. Here Philoponus says that according to Protagoras it is not possible for people to speak falsely, since each one has what appears and seems (*phainomenon kai dokoun*) to him about the things: τινὲς δὲ ἐκ διαμέτρου τούτοις ἔχοντες πάντα τὰ πράγματα πρὸς τι ἔλεγον, ὧν εἷς ἦν Πρωταγόρας ὁ σοφιστής· ἔλεγε γὰρ οὗτος ὅτι οὐδὲν τῶν πραγμάτων ὀρισμένην ἔχει φύσιν, διὸ καὶ ἔλεγεν ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι τινὰ ψευδῆ λέγειν· ἕκαστος γὰρ κατὰ τὸ φαινόμενον αὐτῷ καὶ δοκοῦν περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων ἀποφαίνεται οὐκ ἔχόντων ὀρισμένην φύσιν ἀλλ’ ἐν τῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς σχέσει τὸ εἶναι ἔχόντων. The passage Kerferd quoted for his account, 81.6–8, is about the capacity of a *logos* and a *doxa* to be either true or false: ὁ γὰρ λόγος ὁ λέγων ‘Σωκράτης κάθηται,’ εἰ μὲν τύχοι καθηήμενος ὁ Σωκράτης, ἀληθεύει, ἀναστάντος δὲ πάλιν αὐτοῦ ὁ αὐτὸς οὗτος ψεύδεται. ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἡ δόξα ἢ περὶ καθημένου Σωκράτους, εἰ μὲν τύχοι καθηήμενος, ὀρθῶς δοξάζει, ἀναστάντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἢ αὐτῇ ψευδῶς δοξάζει. ὥστε ὁ αὐτὸς λόγος καὶ ἡ αὐτῇ δόξα ἐν καὶ ταυτὸν μένοντα δεκτικά εἰσιν ἀληθείας καὶ ψεύδους.

said to have been a pupil (*mathētēs*) of Protagoras.<sup>130</sup> From this point of view, Kerferd (1981a, 89–90) seems to believe that the document of the papyrus commentary on the *Ecclesiastes* “vindicates completely the attribution of the doctrine that it is not possible to contradict to the sophistic period in general and in particular to Protagoras and his followers.” It may be true to assume that Prodicus, as a pupil of Protagoras, must have been influenced by the sophist in many ways. However, the mere fact that Prodicus was a pupil of Protagoras does not necessarily imply that all statements and thoughts of Prodicus can be fairly ascribed to Protagoras. There is no need to believe that all of Plato’s philosophical thoughts must be attributed to Socrates since Plato was a pupil of Socrates. In addition, it is also remarkable that, as Dillon and Gergel (2003, 362, n. 2) point out, although Prodicus was credited by some later ancient sources as a pupil of Protagoras (cf. n. 130 above), “he is not portrayed as such by Plato, or any other authority.” The lack of Platonic evidence that Prodicus associated with Protagoras as his pupil at some stage indeed weakens further Kerferd’s argument in support of the first assumption.

Our textual evidence on the issue as to whether the *OEA* doctrine must be attributed to Protagoras is inconclusive; nevertheless, this evidence seems sufficient to assume that Protagoras made use of the doctrine. Since Aristotle and Diogenes Laertius do not state that the doctrine originated from or was used only by Antisthenes, while connecting the doctrine with him, the possibility that both Antisthenes and Protagoras used it cannot be excluded. Plato, at the *Euthydemus* 286c, utilising a Greek preposition ‘ἀμφὶ’ in order to refer to someone by name and to his followers or those like him, clearly states that Protagoras and those associated with him (οἱ ἀμφὶ Πρωταγόραν) made much use of the *OEA* doctrine (and the argument for it). Diogenes Laertius (D.L. 9.53), although he seems quite dependent upon Plato’s *Euthydemus*, too states that ‘also the argument of Antisthenes which attempts to prove that it is not possible to contradict, he [*sc.* Protagoras] had first discussed it (καὶ τὸν Ἀντισθένην λόγον τὸν πειρώμενον ἀποδεικνύειν ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν ἀντιλέγειν οὗτος πρῶτος διείλεκται)’—again, Diogenes Laertius’ reference to Antisthenes here would be based on his idea that the doctrine was mostly used by Antisthenes, not that it was created or used only by him. As far as these texts are concerned, only the second assumption that Protagoras used the *OEA* doctrine remains safely acceptable.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Cf. *Suda*, s.v. Prodikos (DK84 A1); *Onomatol. bei Schol. Plat. De Rep.* 600c (DK80 A3).

<sup>131</sup> Against the second assumption, Lee (2005, 73) argues that it seems possible to understand that Plato’s purpose in the passage of the *Euthydemus* 286c is to discredit Euthydemus and Dionysodorus by claiming that they got all their arguments from other people. Her suggestion, yet, immediately meets the following questions. Why did Plato have to show that their arguments were not original? Why not in other passages such as 275d7

The multiple usage of the Greek word ‘ἀμφὶ’ can be taken as a counterargument to the second assumption. The phrase ‘Protagoras and those associated with him’ in the *Euthydemus* 286c translates the original Greek phrase ‘οἱ ἀμφὶ Πρωταγόραν’. There is another possible way to translate this phrase: ‘the people around Protagoras’ or ‘the followers of Protagoras’. According to its usage, the word ‘ἀμφὶ’, when it takes the accusative, could be translated either so as to refer to someone whose name is mentioned in the accusative after ἀμφὶ together with his followers, for instance, ‘οἱ ἀμφὶ Χειρίσοφον’ (cf. Xenophon, *Anabasis* IV.3.21) as ‘Chirisophus and his men’; or, so as to indicate only his followers, excluding the one whose name appears after ἀμφὶ, for example, ‘οἱ ἀμφὶ Εὐθύφρονα’ (cf. *Crat.* 399e) as ‘Euthyphro’s friends’. And, according to Smyth’s *Greek Grammar* (1920, 372, section 1681.3; cf. also the relevant section in the LSJ. *s.v.*), the former usage is common in the Homeric period, but rare in Attic Greek. Indeed, many translators of the *Euthydemus* have translated the phrase οἱ ἀμφὶ Πρωταγόραν as ‘the followers of Protagoras’, excluding Protagoras himself from those who used the doctrine.<sup>132</sup> Thus, one may argue that the phrase in the *Euthydemus* 286c does not decisively prove that the sophist even used the *OEA* doctrine.

However, if we notice that Plato uses ‘οἱ ἀμφὶ’ again in the *Euthydemus* 305d in order to refer both to someone whose name follows it and to his followers, such counterargument will appear unacceptable. There he writes that ‘they [*sc.* those who attack philosophy and are lying in the boundary between philosophers and politicians] think they really are the wisest, but whenever they are entangled in private conversations, they are thwarted by *Euthydemus and his followers* (or, *Euthydemus and those like him*) (ἡγοῦνται ... εἶναι μὲν γὰρ τῆ ἀληθείᾳ σφᾶς σοφωτάτους, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἰδίῳις λόγοις ὅταν ἀποληφθῶσιν, ὑπὸ τῶν ἀμφὶ Εὐθύδημον κολουέσθαι).’ In fact, this passage is part of a conversation between Socrates and Crito on the day after Socrates had discussed various sophisms with Euthydemus and Dionysodorus.

---

where Euthydemus and Dionysodorus begin their sophisms? And why did it have to be Protagoras while there were other sophists like Gorgias or Prodicus whose names are as much mentioned as that of Protagoras in the Platonic corpus? It is plausible to accept the suggestion that Euthydemus and Dionysodorus got their arguments by associating with others. However the suggestion that this passage is designed by Plato to show that they are not original in their arguments does not give any proper answer to those questions. Although Plato does not explicitly say that they were disciples of Protagoras or they learnt their sophisms from him, he leaves some clues in the dialogue, which aid us to notice that they and their arguments are strongly influenced by Protagoras. For instance, it is remarkable that Euthydemus and Dionysodorus once went out as colonists to Thurii (*Euthyd.* 271c, 283e). According to Heraclides of Pontus, Thurii, one of the last Greek colonies in Italy, is known as a place where Protagoras established a colonial law at the request of Pericles (D.L. 9.50: DK80 A1). This scene enables readers of the dialogue to assume that Plato’s purpose is to establish a relationship between Protagoras and Euthydemus and Dionysodorus. In addition, this aspect seems to fit the character of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus that they learnt their arts late in life (*Euthyd.* 272b), assuming that they were able to learn the eristic art when they went to Thurii.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Lamb (1964), 431; Dumont (1969), 36; O’Brien in Sprague (1972), 13; Sprague in Cooper (1997), 723; Dillon and Gergel (2003), 19.

Thus, when Socrates makes this conversation with Crito, Euthydemus is already out of the scene. One might argue that due to the absence of Euthydemus in the scene, it is not necessary to determine the use of ‘ἀμφὶ’ here as referring to both Euthydemus and his followers, but only to the followers of Euthydemus. However, it must be recalled that the dialogue was written to examine Euthydemus’ and Dionysodorus’ sophisms. The targets of Socrates’ examination and refutation in this dialogue are obviously the eristic arguments suggested by Euthydemus and Dionysodorus as well as their followers. Plato would probably have utilised ‘περὶ’ instead of ‘ἀμφὶ’, as οἱ περὶ Εὐθύδημον, if he really wished to mean only the followers of Euthydemus, as he says ‘the followers of philosophy (τοὺς περὶ φιλοσοφίαν ἀνθρώπους)’ by adopting περὶ at 305d of the same work, just a few lines before the above passage. The same usage of ‘ἀμφὶ’ by Plato is found again in the *Theaetetus* at 170c6, where Socrates says ‘τις τῶν ἀμφὶ Πρωταγόραν’ in order to mean ‘anyone of the followers of Protagoras or even Protagoras himself’. This expression appears in the passage where Socrates, revealing the problems of the MMD, attempts to refute it. Thus, it is obvious that Protagoras himself, who is chiefly responsible for the doctrine as its originator, must be included among those who are referred to. Although the usage of ‘οἱ ἀμφὶ *x*’ to refer both to *x* himself and to *x*’s followers (or those like *x*) was rare in Attic Greek, this does not mean that there was no use of the phrase in such way at all. From this point of view, now it seems plausible to assume that in the *Euthydemus* at 286c Plato intends to refer both to Protagoras and to his followers by ‘οἱ ἀμφὶ Πρωταγόραν’ as those who made great *use* of the *OEA* doctrine.<sup>133</sup> Taking this point into consideration, although the passage from the *Euthydemus* does not clarify whether the *OEA* doctrine should be ascribed to Protagoras, it is still likely that the sophist indeed made use of it. Therefore, the second assumption remains acceptable.

## 2. The *ouk estin antilegein* doctrine in Plato’s *Euthydemus*

The *OEA* doctrine and an argument in its support are presented by Dionysodorus in Plato’s *Euthydemus*. The dialogue aims to distinguish the philosophical ideas and practice of Socrates from the sophists’ art of eristic (*technē eristikōn*), pointing out some logical fallacies of the arguments established by sophists. The *Euthydemus* has the form of story-within-a-story; Socrates tells Crito about the discussion he had in the previous day with Euthydemus,

---

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Zilioli (2007), 6, n. 18.

Dionysodorus, Ctesippus, and Cleinias. Socrates' main interlocutors are the sophist brothers, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus—the latter is older than the former, and presumably both are older than Socrates.<sup>134</sup> They are described as having started learning their art of eristic relatively late in life (*geronte onte*) in Thurii (272b–c), where Protagoras is said to have established its colonial law at Pericles' request (cf. Section 1 in Chapter I and n. 131 above).

## 2.1. The impossibility of contradiction

In the *Euthydemus* 285d7–8, Dionysodorus asks Ctesippus whether he is assuming that contradiction exists when he says that 'abuse' is different from 'contradiction', and Ctesippus assents. Then, Dionysodorus immediately proposes an argument for the *OEA* doctrine in order to show that such a thing as contradiction does not exist and thus it is not possible to contradict (286a4–b6):<sup>135</sup>

Πότερον οὖν, ἢ δ' ὅς, ἀντιλέγοιμεν ἂν <τὸν><sup>136</sup>  
τοῦ αὐτοῦ πράγματος λόγον ἀμφοτέροι λέγοντες,  
ἢ οὕτω μὲν ἂν δήπου ταυτὰ λέγοιμεν;

Συνεχώρει.

Ἄλλ' ὅταν μηδέτερος, ἔφη, τὸν τοῦ πράγματος  
λόγον λέγη, τότε ἀντιλέγοιμεν ἂν; ἢ οὕτω γε τὸ  
παράπαν οὐδ' ἂν μεμνημένος εἶη τοῦ πράγματος  
οὐδέτερος ἡμῶν;

Καὶ τοῦτο συνωμολόγει.

Ἄλλ' ἄρα, ὅταν ἐγὼ μὲν τὸν τοῦ πράγματος  
λόγον λέγω, σὺ δὲ ἄλλου τινὸς ἄλλον, τότε  
ἀντιλέγοιμεν; ἢ ἐγὼ λέγω μὲν τὸ πρᾶγμα, σὺ δὲ  
οὐδὲ λέγεις τὸ παράπαν; ὁ δὲ μὴ λέγων τῷ  
λέγοντι πῶς <ἂν> ἀντιλέγοι;

Καὶ ὁ μὲν Κτήσιππος ἐσίγησεν·

Now, he [*sc.* Dionysodorus] said, would we  
contradict [each other] if we both speak the *logos*  
of the same *pragma*, or in this way we would  
surely say the same [*pragma*]?

He [*sc.* Ctesippus] agreed.

But when neither of us, he [*sc.* Dionysodorus]  
said, speaks the *logos* of a *pragma*, at that time  
then would we contradict [each other]? Or even  
in this way would neither of us be making  
mention of the *pragma* at all?

He [*sc.* Ctesippus] agreed to this too.

[Ctesippus said] But then, if I speak the *logos* of  
a *pragma* whereas you speak another [*logos*] of  
another [*pragma*], at that time do we contradict  
[each other]? Or I speak of the *pragma*, while  
you do not even speak [of it] at all, right? Then  
how would a person who does not speak [of it]  
contradict someone who does speak [of it]?

And then Ctesippus held silent.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Sprague (1972), 295; Hawtrey (1981), 14.

<sup>135</sup> In order to scrutinise the structure of the argument for the *OEA* doctrine, I will not translate two important words, *logos* and *pragma*, here; the translations and problems of these words will be discussed in Section 3 in this chapter below.

<sup>136</sup> τὸν add. Heindorf.

At the end of the argument, as we see, Ctesippus holds silence and does not know how to respond to Dionysodorus' argument for the *OEA* doctrine. Here Dionysodorus establishes three possible cases of human linguistic performance. These three cases are:

- (1) Two speakers both speak the [same] *logos* of the same *pragma*.
- (2) Neither speaker speaks the *logos* of a given *pragma*, keeping silent regarding it.
- (3) Of two speakers, one speaks the *logos* of one *pragma*, while the other speaks another *logos* of another *pragma*; the latter therefore does not speak at all of the *pragma* of which the former speaks.

In none of these three cases does contradiction occur, argues Dionysodorus. (1) It is very obvious that contradiction between two speakers cannot happen if they speak the same *logos* about the same *pragma*. (2) It is also manifest that there can be no contradiction if no speaker speaks of a given *pragma*. They do not even share anything to create contradiction. (3) If the objects of which two different speakers speak are different, although they speak different *logoi*, i.e. they speak differently from each other, contradiction does not occur.

## 2.2. The impossibility of speaking of what is not (*to mē on*)

Dionysodorus established three cases of communicative exchange in which human beings engage when speaking about given things (*pragmata*), and showed that in all three cases contradiction is impossible. Are only these three cases possible? Are there not any other possibilities? Generally it is said that contradiction occurs when two or more speakers speak differently—more specifically, contradictorily—about the same thing. This sort of case could be counted as a fourth case of human linguistic performance. However, there is no such case in Dionysodorus' list of possibilities, and Ctesippus does not contest this. Why do Dionysodorus and Ctesippus not take the fourth case into consideration when arguing for the *OEA* doctrine?

The reason for this lies in Dionysodorus' argument proposed just before the argument for the *OEA* doctrine. There Dionysodorus argued that human *logos* concerns only what is (*to on*), and no one can speak of what is not (*to mē on*) (285e9–286a3):

Τί οὖν; ἢ δ' ὅς· εἰσὶν ἐκάστῳ τῶν ὄντων λόγοι;      Well then what? He [*sc.* Dionysodorus] said, are



Πάνυ γε.

Οὐκοῦν ὡς ἔστιν ἕκαστον ἢ ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν;

Ὡς ἔστιν.

Εἰ γὰρ μέμνησαι, ἔφη, ὃ Κτήσιππε, καὶ ἄρτι ἐπεδείξαμεν μηδένα λέγοντα ὡς οὐκ ἔστι· τὸ γὰρ μὴ ὄν οὐδεὶς ἐφάνη λέγων.

there *logoi* for each of the things that are?

[Ctesippus said] Certainly.

[Dionysodorus said] Then [are those *logoi*] as each is or as [it] is not?

[Ctesippus said] As [each] is.

Ctesippus, he [*sc.* Dionysodorus] said, if you remember also a moment ago (284c2–5) we displayed that no one speaks [of a thing] as it is not; for it was apparent that no one speaks of what is not (*to mē on*).

Dionysodorus says that ‘there are *logoi* for each of the things that are (*eisin hekastōi tōn ontōn logoi*)’. That is to say, the *logoi* have each of the things that are, i.e. what is (*to on*), as their objects. As it is not possible to speak of what is not (*to mē on*), each of the things that are is always spoken of as it is (*hōs estin*) by these *logoi*; speaking of something as it is not (*hōs ouk estin*) is the same as speaking of what is not. In this case contradiction cannot be possible. For instance, a *logos* of *F* as it is (*F*) does not contradict another *logos* of *G* as it is (*G*) (but as it is not (*F*)) (the third case of human linguistic performance listed by Dionysodorus). Two (or more) different or opposite *logoi* about one and the same thing (i.e. a possible case of human linguistic performance as the fourth case in which contradiction occurs) are not possible, because, as Dionysodorus argues, *logoi* of something as it is not are impossible since speaking of what is not is impossible. Accordingly, human beings are able to speak of each of the things that are, namely, of what is, only as it is.

Dionysodorus’ claim that ‘there are *logoi* for each of the things that are’ means that “everything has its own *logos*”<sup>137</sup> by which its object is spoken of as it is, not as it is not. No *pragma* can be spoken of by a *logos* of another *pragma*. Only one *logos* corresponds to one *pragma*. Human beings, when they succeed in speaking about the same thing, use one and the same linguistic expression, i.e. the same *logos* as explained in the case of the first linguistic performance (286a), and hence do not contradict each other. The same *pragma* thus admits only one and the same *logos* by which the *pragma* is spoken of as it is: *hēn kai autos logos peri hēn kai autou pragmatos hōs esti*.

Therefore, on the basis of the argument above, the cases of human linguistic performances must be set up only as Dionysodorus established. The fourth case in which two speakers speak differently of the same *pragma* is equivalent to the case in which one person

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Sprague (1962), 17. Gifford (1905, 33) reads this as “all things have their proper definition (*logos*).”

speaks of what is as it is (*hōs estin*), while the other speaks of it in a different way from the former, namely, as it is not (*hōs ouk estin*). As already shown, however, Dionysodorus argues that speaking of what is as it is not is impossible, because, in this case one who speaks of what is as it is not, in fact speaks of what is not, and not speaking at all; this case is the third case of human linguistic performance involving two speakers, one speaks the *logos* of one *pragma*, while the other speaks another *logos* of another *pragma*—the latter therefore does not speak at all of the thing of which the former speaks. The *OEA* doctrine and its argument are established in this way, driving Ctesippus into silence.

The *OEA* doctrine and its argument are thus established on the basis of the idea that what is not cannot be spoken of, as Dionysodorus argues that ‘it is apparent that no one speaks of what is not.’ As Taylor (1926, 96) suggests, the *OEA* doctrine thus denies the possibility of approaching what is not. No human being does or can speak of what is not in any case. Since speaking of what is not is excluded all along, what is is only described as what is. In this regard, the possibility of the fourth case of human linguistic activity is excluded from the *OEA* doctrine and its argument.

The idea of the impossibility of speaking of what is not is, however, not new in the history of philosophy. A similar, albeit not identical, idea is found in Parmenides’ fragments:

<p>εἰ δ' ἄγ' ἐγὼν ἐρέω, κόμισαι δὲ σὺ μῦθον ἀκούσας, αἵπερ ὁδοὶ μοῦναι διζήσιός εἰσι νοῆσαι· ἢ μὲν ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι, πειθοῦς ἔστι κέλευθος (Ἀληθείη γὰρ ὀπηδεῖ), ἢ δ' ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς χρεῶν ἔστι μὴ εἶναι, τὴν δὴ τοι φράζω παναπευθέα ἔμμεν ἀταρπόν· οὔτε γὰρ ἂν γνοίης τό γε μὴ ἐὼν (οὐ γὰρ ἀνυστόν) οὔτε φράσαις. (<i>In Tim.</i> 1.345. 18–27; <i>In Phys.</i> 116.28–32: DK28 B2)<sup>138</sup></p>	<p>Come now, I will tell you the story, and listening to it you should carry away as to preserve what the only ways of enquiry are for thought. The one is as it is and as it is not possible not to be, and is a path of persuasion (for it follows the truth); the other, as not to be and as to be necessary not to be, I tell you, is a path that is wholly unknown; for you can neither know what is not (<i>to mē eon</i>), for it is not possible, nor tell it.</p>
---	--

<p>χρὴ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' ἐὼν ἔμμεναι· ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι, μὴδὲν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν· τά σ' ἐγὼ φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα. (<i>In Phys.</i> 86.27–28: DK28 B6)</p>	<p>It is necessary for what is to be in order to speak and think of [it], for it is to be, but nothing is not; I command you to heed these things.</p>
--	--

<sup>138</sup> In Coxon’s edition (1986, 52–3): εἰ δ' ἄγε, τῶν ἐρέω, κόμισαι δὲ σὺ μῦθον ἀκούσας, αἵπερ ὁδοὶ μοῦναι διζήσιός εἰσι νοῆσαι· ἢ μὲν, ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι, πειθοῦς ἔστι κέλευθος, ἀληθείη γὰρ ὀπηδεῖ, ἢ δ', ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς χρεῶν ἔστι μὴ εἶναι, τὴν δὴ τοι φράζω παναπευθέα ἔμμεν ἀταρπόν· οὔτε γὰρ ἂν γνοίης τό γε μὴ ἐὼν, οὐ γὰρ ἀνυστόν, οὔτε φράσαις.

<p>οὐδ' ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἔασσω φάσθαι σ' οὐδὲ νοεῖν·  οὐ γὰρ φατὸν οὐδὲ νοητὸν ἔστιν ὅπως οὐκ ἔστι.  (<i>In Phys.</i> 78.21–22: DK28 B8)</p>	<p>I shall not let you speak or think from what is  not, for it is neither spoken nor thought of  inasmuch as it is not.</p>
--	--

In the above fragments Parmenides warns not to speak or think of what is not, but only of what is (*to eon*), since what is not cannot be spoken or thought of at all. Dionysodorus seems to have implicitly utilised Parmenides' ideas of the sole possibility of speaking of what is and the impossibility of speaking of what is not, in order to facilitate his argument for the *OEA* doctrine. Plato also seems to have been aware of this connection, as he says that 'also Protagoras and his followers have made much use of it [i.e. the *OEA* doctrine and the argument for it], *as well as people earlier than Protagoras* (καὶ γὰρ οἱ ἀμφὶ Πρωταγόραν σφόδρα ἐχρῶντο αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ ἔτι παλαιότεροι)' (286c2–3), as soon as Dionysodorus finishes displaying the doctrine. Those who also are said by Plato here to have used the doctrine are, as Sprague (1962, 17), Hawtrey (1981, 110–1), and Rankin (1981, 25) affirm, Parmenides and his followers, i.e. the Eleatic thinkers. Observing this point of view, Sprague (1962, xiii) further suggests that the Eleatics and their ideas had some influence on some sophists' views such as Protagoras as well as Euthydemus and Dionysodorus as presented in the *Euthydemus*, and further strongly argues that such sophists utilising the *OEA* doctrine were indeed a sort of "neo-Eleatics".<sup>139</sup>

However, it is very doubtful whether those sophists were really influenced by the Eleatic thinkers and could be fairly called 'neo-Eleatics'. The *OEA* doctrine does not seem to follow the Parmenidean view on the denial of the otherness and difference. According to Parmenides, briefly speaking, otherness and difference occur when motion is assumed to come to be. Motion brings change into one and the same [being], and makes it other and different. The exclusion of motion and change makes everything one and the same [being]. Thus in his world, only the One is, and plurality is entirely denied. Yet Dionysodorus does not assert that only one thing is; rather he seems to admit plurality, by referring to 'each of *the things that are* (*hekaston tōn ontōn*)'. The Parmenidean influence upon the sophists and the *OEA* doctrine, if such influence really exists, seems to be only adopted in a sophistic and rhetorical way for the establishment of the argument for the *OEA* doctrine; each of the things that are is spoken by its own *logos* as it is, on the basis, of course, of the Parmenidean idea of the impossibility of speaking of what is not. But, there is no Parmenidean ontological odour in the *OEA* doctrine, and the plurality that Parmenides evidently denied is clearly presupposed

---

<sup>139</sup> Similarly, Cornford (1935, 67) suggests that Plato regarded Zeno of Elea as a sophist.

in the argument.

In addition, if Eusebius' report is reliable, Protagoras is also said to have attacked the Eleatic thinkers. A passage from Eusebius' *P.E.* X.3.25 (DK80 B2) testifies that 'in a passage [of plagiarisms, *klopas*] that I [*sc.* Prosenes, the character speaking], by chance, came upon while reading Protagoras' book *On What Is* (*Peri tou Ontos*), I find him [*sc.* Protagoras] using an argument in the opposite way against those who propose what is as one [*sc.* the Eleatic thinkers] (ἐγὼ δ' οὖν, ἧ κατὰ τύχην περιπέπτωκα, Πρωταγόρου τὸν Περὶ τοῦ ὄντος ἀναγινώσκων λόγον πρὸς τοὺς ἐν τὸ ὄν εἰσάγοντας τοιαύταις αὐτὸν εὐρίσκω χρώμενον ἀπαντήσεσιν).'<sup>140</sup> Furthermore, we do not have any sources which will support that Protagoras and the sophist brothers seriously took the influence from Parmenidean philosophy. In this respect, *pace* Sprague, the sophists are hard to be taken as 'neo-Eleatics'—as Schmitt (2007, 121) argues that the sophists' reception of the Eleatic ideas would be merely superficial; rather they seem to have been cunning adopters of the Parmenidean idea of what is not, i.e. non-being, as well as other ancestors' ideas, simply for their own success of arguments in a rhetorical and sophistic way.

### 2.3. The objectivist use of *logos* in the *ouk estin antilegein* doctrine

Besides the argumentative structure of the *OEA* doctrine as examined above, it should also be noticed that in the doctrine *logos* is utilised in an absolutely objective way to speak of a *pragma* that corresponds to it as it is. In other words, a *logos* about a *pragma* is always objectivised, not relativised with qualifiers. As seen above, according to the *OEA* doctrine, only one *logos* corresponds to one *pragma*, and human beings speak of it through one and the same *logos* that is spoken of it only as it is. In this regard, contradiction is absolutely impossible. For instance, regarding a *pragma*, my *logos* and your *logos*, if they are really one and the same *logos* that corresponds to the *pragma*, are always the same. There is no difference between my *logos* and your *logos*. A *logos* is completely objectivised on the basis of its object, and does not ask for any qualifiers, such as 'by/for me' or 'by/for you', to be correct and true about the object.

Dionysodorus' argument for the *OEA* doctrine, which assumes a similar idea to the Parmenidean view on what is not, means that if someone uses a *logos*, then his *logos* is always about what is as it is under a condition that only one *logos* corresponds to one *pragma*.

---

<sup>140</sup> In fact, the passage comes from a series of quotations by Eusebius from Porphyry's *Lecture on Literature* (book 1). On this, cf. Lee (2005), 28.

According to the argument for the *OEA* doctrine, thus, the only way to contradict this *logos* is through another *logos* which is about what is not, but speaking of what is not is impossible. Here, no contradiction occurs in any case of human linguistic performance. The argument for the *OEA* doctrine is thus reformulated briefly as:

- (1) Only one *logos* corresponds to one *pragma*.
- (2) It is not possible for a *logos* to be of what is not (*to mē on*) (or to speak of what is as it is not).
- (3) A *logos* is always one and the same when applied to a *pragma* which is what is (*to on*), speaking of it only as it is (*hōs estin*).
- (4) Therefore, contradiction is impossible.

Protagoras is, of course, most known for his MMD in which he asserts that *anthropōs* (man) is *metron* (measure) of *panta chrēmata* (all things), of *ta onta* (things that are) *hōs esti* (that/how they are) and of *ta mē onta* (things that are not) *hōs ouk estin* (that/how they are not). The interpretation of the MMD has been controversial for scholars both in antiquity and modern times; however, according to a standard illustration of the doctrine which has been widely admitted ever since Plato's *Theaetetus* where Protagoras' MMD is first closely examined in the history of philosophy, the doctrine is believed to be an epistemological view expressing perceptual relativism. On this view, the MMD declares that each individual man is the criterion of the truth of a judgement about a given thing that appears to him as he perceives it. In other words, a thing which appears/is perceived as *F* to/by *a* is *F* for *a*, while the same thing which appears/is perceived as  $\neg F$  to/by *b* is  $\neg F$  for *b*. The same thing can be considered (to be truly) both *F* and  $\neg F$  (relatively for *a* and *b*, respectively) (cf. Appendix 3 below for my analysis of Plato's interpretation of the MMD in the *Theaetetus*). In this case, both judgements about the same thing, which are opposite to each other, are equally true for those who made the judgements. Taking notice of this point, some modern scholars have proposed to read the *OEA* doctrine as argued in the *Euthydemus* as a radical relativist claim in the light of the MMD as interpreted in the *Theaetetus*. They argue that if all judgements are true, then no judgement can be false; and if all judgements are incorrigible then they are not to be corrected, and therefore no one is refuted or contradicted by others; that is to say, contradiction is impossible, as Protagoras insists by the *OEA* doctrine and the argument in its

support.<sup>141</sup>

As Protagoras' main philosophical position is believed to have been a form of relativism, the reading of the *OEA* doctrine as a radical relativist claim in relation to his MMD may seem to be a probable and convenient approach. Indeed, the fact that those two doctrines both argue for the impossibility of contradiction seem to strengthen this reading. However, if we bear in mind a significant difference between the *OEA* doctrine (and its argument) and the MMD (and its standard interpretation), it is not hard to reject the validity of this reading.

As already examined above, the argument for the *OEA* doctrine shows that the doctrine appears to hold fast to an objectivist use of *logos* in which a *logos* that is made to speak of a *pragma* by anyone who speaks of it is not relativised, but absolute—there is only one *logos* for one *pragma*, and this *logos* is spoken of the *pragma* as it is in any circumstances. My *logos* and your *logos*, or my *logos* at one time and my *logos* at another time, about a *pragma* always amount to one and the same *logos*. Under this argument, thus, the *OEA* doctrine claims that contradiction is impossible. On the contrary, the Platonic reading of the MMD argues that the truth of a *logos* is always relativised to its holder; for example, 'it is *the case* that *x is F* for *a*' or 'it is *the case* that *x is ¬F* for *b*'. In this case, every judgement made of a thing is taken to be true, but only relatively, and such a judgement (*logos*) is not the only one and the same corresponding one to the thing.

Both the *OEA* doctrine and the MMD argue that it is not possible to contradict. Their arguments for the impossibility of contradiction, however, are entirely different; the former utilises an objectivist assumption to show such impossibility, while the latter utilises a relativist one. As far as this different feature in their arguments is concerned, the *OEA* doctrine in the *Euthydemus* and the (Platonic reading of the) MMD in the *Theaetetus* should not be taken in the same relativist way; the reading of the former as a radical relativist claim in the light of the latter, although convenient for scholarship on Protagoras, is invalid, and a result of focusing merely on the literal expression 'impossibility of contradiction'.

### 3. Fallacies of the *ouk estin antilegein* doctrine

Dionysodorus utilises a strategy to block the possibility of contradiction, by arguing that contradiction is impossible, because speaking a *logos* of something as it is not is impossible

---

<sup>141</sup> On this suggestion, cf. Levi (1940a), 166; Kerferd (1981a), 88; Rankin (1981), 30–1; Lavery in O'Grady (2008), 40.

since speaking of what is not is impossible. In this case, his strategy is that it is not possible to speak of what is not and speaking of what is not is the same as speaking of something as it is not (cf. (2) in the reformulation of Dionysodorus' argument for the *OEA* doctrine above).

However, it is not valid at all to equate speaking of something just as it is not with speaking of what is not. The Greek word '*einai*', as Kahn (1966, 245–65) points out, has multiple senses, the predicative sense (e.g. 'Socrates *is* wise'), the existential sense (e.g. Socrates *exists*'), and the veridical sense (e.g. 'it *is the case* that two plus two is four'). As *einai* has multiple senses, its negation '*mē (ouk) einai*', of course, means both 'not to be' (predicative) (e.g. 'Socrates *is not* vicious'), 'not to exist' (existential) (e.g. 'Socrates *does not exist*'), and 'not to be true' (veridical) (e.g. 'it *is not the case* that two plus two is five') too. And evidently, Dionysodorus seems to utilise the equivocation of the negation of *einai*, conflating 'not to be' with 'not to exist'.

The negation of 'a thing (that is) to exist (*einai*)' (in the existential sense) is 'a thing (that is) not to exist (*mē einai*)', namely, 'a thing that does not exist'. According to Dionysodorus' argument, it is impossible to speak of a thing that does not exist, because speaking of such thing is the same as speaking nothing and amounts to not speaking at all. However, the negation of 'a thing (that is) to be (*einai*)' (in the predicative sense) is 'a thing (that is) not to be (*mē einai*)' (the same as the thing), i.e. 'another thing (that is) to be'. This 'another thing (that is) to be' is, of course, a different thing (from the thing). Speaking of a different thing as it is not the same as something else (*mē einai hauton tōi pragmati*), that is to say, speaking of it as it is different from something else (*einai heteron tou pragmatos*), is not impossible. In this case contradiction can happen. Therefore, the *OEA* doctrine works only when the equation of speaking of what is as it is not with speaking of what is not is valid under the existential sense of *einai*, and in this regard Dionysodorus clearly commits the fallacy of equivocation of *einai*.<sup>142</sup>

---

<sup>142</sup> Such fallacy of the equivocation of *einai* for the argument, however, is not pointed out by Plato in the dialogue; he simply has Socrates utilise *argumentum ad hominem* in order to refute the *OEA* doctrine in 286b7–288a7, after equating it with the impossibility of falsehood (cf. Appendix 2 below for Plato's equation of the *OEA* doctrine with the impossibility of falsehood). Socrates' refutation targets the following points:

- 1) The *OEA* doctrine and the argument in support of it is already used by Protagoras (Euthydemus' and Dionysodorus' teacher) and his followers, as well as those earlier than Protagoras—thus, the doctrine and the argument are not genuinely of the sophist brothers', and they simply adopt someone else's doctrine for their own sake.
- 2) (If the *OEA* doctrine, as equated with the impossibility of falsehood, is right,) False judging (*doxazein*), false judgement (*doxa*), ignorance (*amathia*), and ignorant people (*amatheis*) do not exist—but, this is very unlikely.
- 3) Refutation does not exist if the impossibility of falsehood (as equated with the *OEA* doctrine) is right—thus, Dionysodorus' order to Socrates to refute Dionysodorus self-refutes.
- 4) If making mistakes (*hamarthanein*) does not exist (since there is no false judging, false judgement,

One more logical fallacy of the *OEA* doctrine also needs to be addressed; like the Greek verb *einai*, the Greek words *logos* and *pragma* have various senses. First, *logos* can mean either ‘statement or proposition’ (e.g. ‘Socrates is wise’ or ‘Socrates is a wise Athenian’) or ‘description’ (e.g. ‘wise Socrates’ or ‘wise Athenian Socrates’), or even ‘word or name’ (e.g. ‘Socrates’ or ‘wisdom [of Socrates]’). And, *pragma* can mean simply ‘a thing’ (e.g. Socrates or wisdom [of Socrates] as a single thing) or ‘a state of affairs (or a fact)’ (e.g. a case (or fact) that Socrates is wise or that Socrates is a wise Athenian).

The argument for the *OEA* doctrine, as examined above, operates with a condition that only ‘one *logos* corresponds to one *pragma*’. If *logos* means only ‘word or name’ and *pragma* refers to ‘a single thing’ that indeed exists, then the argument for the *OEA* doctrine fairly works. About Socrates or wisdom [of Socrates] as a thing, there is only one *logos*, ‘Socrates’ or ‘wisdom [of Socrates]’ that corresponds to the thing. Other *logoi*, such as ‘Plato’ or ‘viciousness’, will certainly correspond to something else than Socrates or wisdom [of Socrates] as the thing—in this sense, the translations of *logos* and *pragma* for the success of the argument for the *OEA* doctrine can be suggested as ‘word or name’ and ‘a (single) thing’

However, bearing in mind the multiple senses of *logos* and *pragma*, if *logos* means ‘description’ or ‘statement or proposition’ and *pragma* ‘a state of affairs (a fact)’, there can be an absurd situation in which one *logos* does not correspond to any existing *pragma*. For example, if there is a *logos* as a description ‘vicious Socrates’ or a *logos* as a statement ‘Socrates is vicious’, this *logos* must be corresponding to a thing (*pragma*) viciousness [of Socrates] or a state of affairs (*pragma*) that Socrates is vicious, as long as it exists as a *logos*. But, if such *pragma* is not the case at all, then it does not exist, and thus is not an existing *pragma*. Here a *logos* ‘Socrates is vicious’ or a *logos* ‘vicious Socrates’, which does not

---

ignorance, or ignorant people, as the *OEA* doctrine as equated with the impossibility of falsehood is accepted), Euthydemus and Dionysodorus who have claimed to be excellent in teaching cannot teach anything to anyone—thus, the sophists contradict what they have claimed to be.

All the points above made by Socrates for the refutation of the *OEA* doctrine, as McCabe (1998, 155) notices that the impossibility of falsehood “does not directly imply its own falsehood ... it needs, indeed, a more complex dialectical context to be overthrown”, tackle the context of the sophist’s claim such as their claim to be teachers and Dionysodorus’ order to Socrates to refute him, rather than attacking the problem of equivocation of (the negation of) *einai* (i.e. the total identification of speaking of what is not with speaking of something as it is not) which the doctrine details in itself.

On Socrates’ refutation of the *OEA* doctrine (and the impossibility of falsehood) in the *Euthydemus*, cf. Sprague (1962), 16–20; Hawtrey (1981), 109–18; Chance (1992), 100–7; Burnyeat (2002), 40–60; Castagnoli (2010), 32–40.

Plato’s criticism of the ambiguous use of *einai* appears in the *Sophist*, 263d ff., where he endeavours to define falsehood. There he makes an ontological distinction between the meanings of *mē einai*, ‘not being’ and ‘being different’, and argues that falsehood occurs if one makes a wrong combination of predicates (verbs: *rhēmata*) and subjects (names: *onomata*) in cases of speaking of different things as the same things and speaking of what is not as what is.



corresponds to any existing *pragma*, happens to exist—this does not coincide with the condition of the *OEA* doctrine at all. In this case, the only *pragma* about which the *logos* ‘vicious Socrates’ or ‘Socrates is vicious’ is will be Socrates (as a thing) which exists, not viciousness [of Socrates] (as a thing) or the fact that Socrates is vicious (as a state of affairs) which both do not exist; still the *logos* does not correspond to the *pragma*. As far as such equivocation of *logos* and *pragma* is concerned, contradiction is not impossible.<sup>143</sup>

In fact, in the *Euthydemus*, such ambiguity of *logos* and *pragma* is also found; when Ctesippus said that he wanted his beloved Cleinias to be wiser, Dionysodorus accused Ctesippus of wishing Cleinias to be dead. Listening to Dionysodorus’ accusation, Ctesippus said that such state of affair (*pragma*) did not exist, and he wished that death may fall onto the sophist’s head (283e1–6). In this case, Dionysodorus’ *logos* that ‘Ctesippus wants Cleinias to be dead’ is a *logos* that does not correspond to any *pragma* (as Ctesippus denied). And in order to defend Dionysodorus, Euthydemus intervenes and switches the meaning of *pragma* as a state of affair into its meaning as a single thing (283e9–284a5); he argues that speaking has to always be about a *pragma*, and this *pragma* must be considered one of the things that are and distinct from other things, thus must be what is (*to on*) (Πότερον λέγοντα τὸ πρᾶγμα περὶ οὗ ἂν ὁ λόγος ᾖ, ἢ μὴ λέγοντα; Οὐκοῦν εἴπερ λέγει αὐτό, οὐκ ἄλλο λέγει τῶν ὄντων ἢ ἐκεῖνο ὅπερ λέγει; Ἐν μὴν κάκεινό γ' ἐστὶν τῶν ὄντων, ὃ λέγει, χωρὶς τῶν ἄλλων. Οὐκοῦν ὁ ἐκεῖνο λέγων τὸ ὄν, ἔφη, λέγει;).<sup>144</sup> This passage where the sophist is altering the sense of *pragma* is therefore the very moment of utilising the ambiguity of the Greek word.

#### 4. A rhetorical device

In the *Euthydemus* 286c, Plato states that Protagoras and his followers made great use of the *OEA* doctrine and the argument in its support. Why did Protagoras use such doctrine and argument? In other words, what was Protagoras’ purpose in utilising them?

A passage from Plato’s *Theaetetus* 152c–157d, provides a clue to the secret but close connection between Protagoras’ and Heraclitus’ philosophy in which the sophist’s epistemology (interpreted by Plato as a radical relativist thesis based on perception) is diagnosed to entail a famous Heraclitean ontological claim, the Flux-theory. Noticing this

<sup>143</sup> On the logical fallacies of the argument for the *OEA* doctrine, cf. Denyer (1991), 8–19.

<sup>144</sup> This strategy by Euthydemus is taken in the argument for the impossibility of falsehood (283e7–284c6). On my analysis of the impossibility of falsehood and the argument in its support, cf. Appendix 2 below.

philosophical connection between those two thinkers, some modern scholars, such as Diels in DK80 A19, Guthrie (1971, 182, n. 2) and Levi (1940a, 166, n. 1), have proposed that Heraclitus' other ideas such as a theory of the unity of opposites might have greatly influenced Protagoras; and moreover, on this proposal, they have argued that in Protagoras' philosophy, everything, including every judgement, indeed concerns the same and unitary one without conflict. Seemingly contradictory aspects of things and the judgements about them are in fact not contradictory because they all indeed are part of the unity of all opposites in the world. In this case no real contradiction occurs; things and judgements are merely seen to contradict each other in a superficial way. When Protagoras' *OEA* doctrine is read as a unity thesis in the light of the Heraclitean theory of the unity of opposites, as the scholars who propose this reading insist, the theory guarantees the contradictory-less unity and single identity of conflicting and opposing things. They further argue that those anonymous people who are described by Plato to 'have used the *OEA* doctrine and the argument for it before Protagoras' (*Euthyd.* 286c) are indeed Heraclitus and his followers, not Parmenides and the Eleatics.

A problem for this reading, however, must be pointed out. The account of the Heraclitean unity of opposites is that the seeming conflict in the world is not really contradiction between things since they are controlled by a fundamental entity that gathers and combines them into a unit. In brief, Heraclitus is known to have held a view that this fundamental entity lies in divine fire-like *Logos* which is/exists (*tou de logou tout' eontos*) (*M.* VII.132: DK22 B1), and to have claimed that indeed all is one (*hen panta einai*) (Hippolytus of Rome, *Refutation of all Heresies* IX.9: DK22 B50). All opposites gather together, and from the quarrellings there comes the finest harmony (*antixoun sympheron kai ek tōn diapherontōn kallistēn harmonian*) (*Eth. Nic.* 1155b4: DK22 B8) under the rule of the *Logos*. The Heraclitean theory of unity of opposites is thus grounded on the thinker's assumption of an absolute ontological entity. On the contrary, as examined above, the *OEA* doctrine, which argues that a *logos* of a *pragma* is spoken of it as it is (n.b. the different usages of *logos* in each position), does not entail any such ontological view, especially regarding what is (*to on*), the object of speech. In this respect, it seems that those who suggest this reading go somewhat too far by trying to expect or extract a definite ontological account from the *OEA* doctrine in which no such account is really found or suggested, in order to set up a connection of it with another theory (the Heraclitean theory of unity of opposites).

Moreover, Heraclitus is not reported to have clearly been committed to an idea of the impossibility of speaking of what is not (which secures the argumentative success for the

*OEA* doctrine and the impossibility of falsehood)—he is rather known to have violated the Principle of Non-Contradiction (hereafter the PNC). Thus, it still remains more likely to understand ‘those earlier people who have used the *OEA* doctrine and its argument’ as Parmenides and the Eleatics who are indeed known to have adopted the idea of the impossibility of speaking (and thinking) of what is not through the same expressions as those found in the *OEA* doctrine and its argument, at least to Plato’s eyes. In addition, it also must be noticed that a closer connection, provided by Plato at the relevant passage in the *Theaetetus*, between Protagoras’ epistemological relativism and Heraclitus’ ontology refers to the connection of the MMD with the Flux-theory, not the MMD with the unity of opposites. The tenet of Heraclitus’ unity of opposites is in fact not found at all in the *Theaetetus* (or even in any of Protagoras’ thoughts).

Schiappa (1995, 138), attempting to read the *OEA* doctrine as anticipation of Aristotle’s PNC, suggests that this was Protagoras’ logical accomplishment. According to the *OEA* doctrine, says Schiappa, no one can make two true but contradictory judgements about the same thing at the same time; the same judgement cannot be both true and false at the same time to the judgement maker. Thus, he suggests that “in fact, the principle of non-contradiction espoused by Aristotle was, in a very preliminary way, anticipated by Protagoras... Aristotle’s principle of non-contradiction apparently fleshed out the rationale underlying Protagoras’ own statement *ouk estin antilegein*.”

The suggestion above implies that Plato, whose *Euthydemus* (in which the *OEA* is discussed) deals with various types of sophisms, was aware of such a point or the logical connection between the doctrine and the PNC. However, as Lee (2005, 74–5) properly points out, Plato, whom Schiappa considers to be a reliable source for ascribing the *OEA* doctrine to Protagoras, does not seem aware of that, nor does he treat the *OEA* doctrine in the dialogue as an antecedent of the PNC; he, instead, as seen above, just turns it immediately into the impossibility of falsehood (286c). Later, Plato himself presents a version of the PNC in the *Republic* 436b, 436e–437a, and 439b where Socrates says that ‘the same thing cannot do or undergo opposite things, at any rate, in the same respect, and also in relation to the same thing, at the same time (ταὐτὸν τάναντία ποιεῖν ἢ πάσχειν κατὰ ταὐτόν γε καὶ πρὸς ταὐτὸν οὐκ ἐθελήσει ἅμα).’ Even in these passages, Plato does not treat the PNC in connection with the *OEA* doctrine, nor does he give any hint of any connection.

Besides, in the *Metaphysics* V.29.1024b ff., Aristotle, whom Schiappa criticises for supposing that Protagoras rejected the PNC, although he was aware of the *OEA* doctrine, associates it with Antisthenes, and when he introduces the doctrine he does not discuss the

PNC. In the *Metaphysics* IV.4.1007b19–1011b23, where Aristotle discusses the PNC regarding Protagoras, he criticises Protagoras for the reason that the sophist’s MMD, according to which every judgement and appearance is true, infringes the PNC. There the *OEA* doctrine is not discussed.<sup>145</sup>

Moreover, it is worth noting that in fact the *OEA* doctrine and the PNC are not dealing with the same issues. Aristotle formulates the PNC as ‘the same thing cannot at the same time belong to and not belong to the same thing in the same respect (τὸ αὐτὸ ἅμα ὑπάρχειν τε καὶ μὴ ὑπάρχειν ἀδύνατον τῷ αὐτῷ καὶ κατὰ τὸ αὐτό)’ (*Met.* IV.3.1005b19–20). The subject and the object in this formulation, both *to auto*, are different from each other in meaning; the verb in the formulation, *hyparchein*, reveals this difference. As translated literally, *hyparchein* means that something ‘belongs to’ the something. If here the subject, the same thing, *to auto*, indicates the same thing as what the object, the same thing, *to auto*, refers to, then the meaning of the verb becomes awkward; because it could mean, for example, that *X* belongs to *X*. In this case, the qualifiers, ‘at the same time’, *hama*, and ‘in the same respect’, *kata to auto*, would be meaningless. The phrase ‘something belongs to (*hyparchein*) something else’, therefore, means that a thing, or an object, has (*echein*) its attributes or properties and furthermore means that an attribute or property is predicated (*katēgoreisthai*) of a thing, or an object. Thus this formulation claims that the same attribute cannot both belong to and not belong to the same thing at the same time and in the same respect.<sup>146</sup> The argument for the *OEA* doctrine, however, as seen above, does not concern itself with such a point. Rather it seems explicit that Aristotle’s focus in relation to the PNC is not the *OEA* doctrine, but surely the MMD.

Regarding the question why Protagoras used such a doctrine and argument, I suggest that the sophist used it for a rhetorical reason. As we have examined above, the *OEA* doctrine does not seem to maintain any promising philosophical-ontological ideas. In addition, it does not seem to absolutely pursue the impossibility of contradiction. If contradiction is really impossible, as Socrates points out immediately after the argument for the *OEA* doctrine at 286b7–288a7 in the dialogue (cf. n. 142 above), Protagoras and the sophist brothers

<sup>145</sup> It is also noticeable that here Aristotle’s own term for ‘contradiction’ is ‘*antiphasis*’, not ‘*antilegein*’.

<sup>146</sup> Like Aristotle’s PNC, Plato’s version of it (*Rep.* 436b, 436e–437a, and 439b) also concerns the attributes and properties that things hold. At *Republic* 436c he adopts the cases of ‘moving (*kineisthai*)’ and ‘standing still (*estanaï*)’ in order to describe the opposite things that the subject, i.e. the same thing, cannot undergo at the same time: ‘it is not possible for the same man to stand still and move at the same time in the same respect (ἑστάναι καὶ κινεῖσθαι τὸ αὐτὸ ἅμα κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ ἄρα [οὐκ] δυνατόν).’ It is apparent that in this phrase ‘moving’ and ‘standing still’ are not the existent things themselves, but certain attributes of things. While proposing his version of PNC in the *Republic*, Plato does not take the *OEA* doctrine into discussion.

(Dionysodorus and Euthydemus) must abandon their teaching occupation, because no one needs to learn from them. Yet, none of them seems to indeed pursue it; also, as the sources of the historical activities of Protagoras prove (cf. Section 1 in Chapter I above), the sophist himself does not seem to have tried to discard his role as a teacher.

Protagoras is known to have been influential not only in politics (by teaching political virtues and associating with politicians) but also in rhetoric (by teaching the art of eristic and speech and making people clever at speaking) (cf. Guthrie (1971), 181–2). The ancient sources do not exactly state how Protagoras expressed his rhetorical skills and what type of skill he actually taught to his pupils. Nevertheless, the sophist’s interest in rhetoric is still found in some fragmentary passages; Diogenes Laertius (9.55: DK80 A1) reports that the sophist wrote *The Art of Eristic* (*Technē Eristikōn*) and *Opposing Arguments* in two books (*Antilogiōn A B*), and Aristotle and Eudoxus report that Protagoras was capable of ‘making a weaker argument (*logos*) stronger (τὸ τὸν ἥττω δὲ λόγον κρείττω ποιεῖν)’ (the weaker/stronger *logoi* fragment) (*Rhet.* II.24.1402a23: DK80 A21, B6b; Eudoxus, fr. 307 Lasserre in Stephanus Byzantius, *Ethikon s.v. Abdera*: DK80 A21). Again, Diogenes Laertius says that Protagoras was the first to say that ‘on all issues there are two arguments (*logoi*) opposed to each other (δύο λόγους εἶναι περὶ παντὸς πράγματος ἀντικειμένους ἀλλήλοις)’ (the two-*logoi* fragment) (9.51: DK80 A1 and B6a; Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* VI.65 and Seneca, *The Moral Letters to Lucilius* 88.43: DK80 A20).<sup>147</sup>

In Protagoras’ time people in Athens all the time contradicted each other, bringing different and contradictory opinions for a counsel on political issues in the Assembly. Writers and thinkers expressed different ideas, attacking and blaming each other, and teachers who came to Athens from other city states professed to educate young people in something new

---

<sup>147</sup> Plutarch (*Per.* 36: DK80 A10, Stesimbrotos, FGrHist. 107 F 11 ii 519) reports an episode that once Protagoras and Pericles spent a whole day discussing when a pentathlete accidentally killed a counter player (Epitimus the Pharsalian) with a javelin in a contest, according to the most correct argument (*kata ton orthotaton logon*) where the legal responsibility (*aitia*) for the players’ death should lie; whether in the pentathlete or in the javelin or in the judges of the contest (πεντάθλου γάρ τινας ἀκοντίῳ πατάξαντος Ἐπίτιμον τὸν Φαρσάλιον ἀκουσίως καὶ κτείναντος, ἡμέραν ὅλην ἀναλωσάμενος μετὰ Πρωταγόρου διαποροῦντα, πότερον τὸ ἀκόντιον ἢ τὸν βαλόντα μᾶλλον ἢ τοὺς ἀγωνοθέτας κατὰ τὸν ὀρθότατον λόγον αἰτίους χρῆ τοῦ πάθους ἡγεῖσθαι). We may perhaps assume that in this episode Protagoras was trying to demonstrate that whatever legal responsibility is taken as the subject matter, he could make a stronger argument (for Protagoras’ association with Pericles, cf. Muir (1981), 19; O’Sullivan (1995), 15–23). Similarly, Aristophanes’ *Clouds* 889–1104, where Fair argument (*Dikaios logos*) and Unfair argument (*Adikos logos*) appear, can be seen in this way of rhetorical sophistry. In this passage, Fair argument is characterised as ‘stronger (*kreittōn*)’, Unfair argument ‘weaker (*hēttōn*)’; the latter claims that it can make any arguments stronger than Fair argument’ common and strong beliefs. For instance, against Fair argument’s view that there is a sense of what is right (*dikē*) with the gods, Unfair argument asks ‘how has Zeus not perished for chaining up his father, if there is indeed a sense of what is right? (πῶς δῆτα δίκης οὐσίας ὁ Ζεὺς οὐκ ἀπόλωλεν τὸν πατέρ’ αὐτοῦ δήσας;)’ (904–906). For a similar idea to the two-*logoi* fragment, cf. the so-called *Twofold Arguments* (*Dissoi Logoi*).

and different from traditional customs. In such a situation (and even now) people would certainly consider an argument in which contradiction is impossible really weak (or even nonsense). Or, they would probably think that there could not be an argument for the impossibility of contradiction. As Protagoras said that there are two opposing arguments on all issues, however, there was also an argument to be used for the *OEA* doctrine (as opposed to an argument for the possibility of contradiction which people would normally adopt), and this argument made Ctesippus silent and unable to know what to say (*Euthyd.* 286b4)—such a weak argument became stronger. After reporting Protagoras’ making a weaker argument stronger, Aristotle adds that ‘hence people were rightly annoyed at Protagoras’ profession (καὶ ἐντεῦθεν δικάϊως ἐδυσχέρανον οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὸ Πρωταγόρου ἐπάγγελμα)’ (*Rhet.* II.24.1402a23: DK80 A21). Ctesippus’ silence can be counted as a type of one’s figure who is very annoyed at Protagoras’ argument.

In a field where fierce battles of argument continue, making an interlocutor silent and unable to know what to say is a very effective rhetorical device to gain a victory. In this respect, as Rankin (1981, 26) suggests, the *OEA* doctrine can be considered a forceful rhetorical weapon, “which no well equipped eristic or dialectician could afford not to have,” namely, “an argument-choker”, in Protagoras’ rhetorical skills. Understanding Protagoras’ use of the *OEA* doctrine in the light of his rhetorical purposes seems to befit Plato’s hostile view on the sophists that they, including Protagoras, attended debates in order to secure argumentative victories and persuade audiences, while seeking money;<sup>148</sup> whereas Socrates was willing to argue with his interlocutors in order to seek, and ultimately arrive at, the truth and real knowledge. In fact, in the *Euthydemus* after the argument for the *OEA* doctrine is proposed by the sophist brothers, Socrates does not point out its logical fallacies; instead he attempts to turn it into another argument, i.e. the impossibility of falsehood (cf. Appendix 2 below) and tries to refute it merely by utilising *argumentum ad hominem* (cf. n. 142 above). In this regard, the *OEA* doctrine, despite its fallacies, thus seems to show argumentative virtuosity in a general sense, and be a powerful rhetorical device to stifle opponents’ arguments in a particular sense.

---

<sup>148</sup> Cf. *Men.* 91d–e (DK80 A8); D.L. 9.52 (DK80 A1).

## Chapter VII

### Conclusion: Protagorean Objectivism

Having scrutinised the ancient evidence for Protagoras, we are now at the end of this research on the sophist's views on politics and ethics, education, epistemology, language, and rhetorical sophistry. In this research I have attempted to show that in Protagoras' fragments and the arguments in their support he seems to hold fast to a position of a certain kind of objectivism, rather than that of relativism. In this position of objectivism, Protagoras claims that the things that are related to human affairs such as political virtues can and should be taught on the basis of the civic senses (the *Great Speech* and the MMD), because they are what human beings can and should know and taught through the human objective epistemological condition and a process of synthesis of human experiences (the *PTH* fragment), in a correct linguistic and grammatical manner (the correct use of language). Protagoras' thoughts can be briefly summarised as below:

**Political-Ethical Claims:** In the *Protagoras* 318e5–319a2, Protagoras professes to teach good deliberation (*euboulia*) concerning domestic affairs, i.e. how best to manage one's household, and concerning the affairs of the city, i.e. how to be the most influential in the affairs of the city, both in action and speech, namely, political virtues. In the *Great Speech* (*Prot.* 320c8–328d2: DK80 C1) Protagoras demonstrates that political virtues can and should be taught, expressing his ideas on the objective civic senses and the relativity of the application of those senses.

According to the *Great Speech*, in order to gain political virtues one must be equipped with a sense of what is right (*dikē*) and a sense of shame (*aidōs*), i.e. the common objective civic senses. Zeus equally distributes these senses to all human beings so that all men can construct a community and live together with others, protecting themselves both from outer attacks of wild beasts and from inner misdeeds. Without these senses, asserts Protagoras, human beings cannot avoid the extinction of their race. The civic senses enable men to discern what they should do from what they should not do and practise the former and avoid the latter in their society. For Protagoras a sense of what is right (*dikē*) is considered an active and encouraging political criterion by means of which men measure right things to do for the preservation and security of a community, while a sense of shame (*aidōs*) a reactive (or passive) and regulative political criterion by means of which men measure shameful things

to avoid for the same purpose and they feel ashamed whenever they commit something unjust.

In this regard, for Protagoras the civic senses are the fundamental political and ethical principles by means of which human beings are able to produce and acquire political virtues (excellence), e.g. justice, regarding political issues in their community, and thus necessary conditions to bear political virtues. These principles are entirely objective; if they were given to human beings relatively, not only the construction of human community but also human survival would be impossible.

As people live in different areas with various cultural backgrounds in different times, the civic senses, however, cannot be always applied in the same way. To apply the civic senses to particular political cases in an appropriate and better way, people need to have knowledge of different types of cultural and geographical backgrounds in their community. The application of the civic senses in a better and more appropriate way produces political and ethical benefits in the community. This knowledge is viewed as Protagoras' idea on good deliberation concerning domestic affairs, i.e. how to manage one's household, and concerning the affairs of the city, i.e. how to be influential in the affairs of the city, both in action and speech; hence in Protagoras' view such knowledge is knowledge of political virtues and fairly teachable. Education in political virtues makes men good citizens with good deliberation, and they come to run their city well, securing their survival and the preservation of their city; better education makes men better citizens with better deliberation, and the best education, of course, the best citizens with the best deliberation.

Through experiencing a broad range of various cultures and religions, one will gain more knowledge of different types of cultural and geographical backgrounds, i.e. knowledge on how to apply the civic senses to particular political cases in different areas in a better way; and one with the most experience would become the best and most influential. In this regard, one's largest number of experiences about various situations reflects on one's profession to teach 'how *best* to manage one's household, and how to be the *most influential* in the affairs of the city, both in action and speech' on political issues into people and a community. In Protagoras' thought one who knows more about the different factors and hence is able to educate people about them, is thus a better and wiser teacher of political virtues; one who knows most about them is, of course, the best and wisest teacher of political virtues.

A reading of the MMD (*Theaet.* 152a3–4 and *M.* 7.60: DK80 B1; *Crat.* 385e6–386a1: DK80 A13; *Met.* X.1.1053a35 and XI.6.1062b12: DK80 A19; *P.H.* 1.216: DK80 A14; D.L. 9.51: DK80 A1) in the light of the *Great Speech* suggests the doctrine itself to be read as a political-ethical claim. On this reading, the key terms in the MMD, *chrēmata*, *metron*, and



*anthrōpos*, are understood respectively as ‘human actions and speeches in the community’, ‘a sense of what is right and a sense of shame, i.e. the civic sense, by which human political actions and speeches are properly measured, and further political virtues educated on the basis of the civic senses’, and ‘man as a social being who shares in the common objective civic senses, as well as political virtues learned through private and public education, who can live and coexist with others in a human community’. Thus, the MMD whose form is simply that ‘of all things the measure is man, of the things that are that/how they are, of the things that are not that/how they are not’ is now in this suggestion read as follows: ‘man, as a social being, who shares in the common objective civic senses, as well as political virtues learned through private and public education, with others, whoever he is, as far as he lives in a human community with others, is by himself the measure of all the basic needs for his (and others’) survival and the preservation of the community, i.e. of all political and ethical actions and speeches that he and others do and make; all these are measured as to whether and how they are appropriate (i.e. just, courageous, temperate, pious, and needful and so on) things to practise in the light of the civic senses and political virtues.’

**Epistemology:** in the *PTH* fragment (D.L. 9.51: DK80 A1; *Ad Autol.* III.28: C. A23; *M.* 9.56: DK80 A12; *P.E.* 14.3.7: DK80 B4; and *Gr. aff.* II.112.2–114.1: C. A23), Protagoras confesses his ignorance of the gods, stating that ‘on the gods I am not able to know either that/how they are or that/how they are not, or what they look like in form’. Protagoras introduces two epistemological obstacles as a reason of his ignorance, the obscurity of the gods and the shortness of human life. From these epistemological obstacles, it is possible to infer the sophist’s intention to demarcate the area of what can be known to human beings from that of what cannot be known to them. The standard of the demarcation is the range of the objects of human experience in the length of human life. This standard, as equally applying to all human beings, is considered, at least to Protagoras’ eyes, a universal and objective epistemological condition; no one can know the things beyond this standard. Through a filter of the universal and objective epistemological condition, man can acquire knowledge only of what lasts shorter than or as long as the amount of human experience in human life.

It is also possible to infer from the *PTH* fragment Protagoras’ two ideas, namely, the role of ‘synthesis’ in acquiring knowledge and the importance of ‘anthropological concerns’. A single experience of an object always leads man to making a judgement about the object in a certain way, such as a judgement that ‘*x* is *F*’ or that ‘*x* is *G*’. A single experience neither yields a type of judgement that ‘I am not able to know either that/how *x* is *F* or that/how *x* is

*G*’, nor directly corresponds to a judgement of ignorance. Things are experienced by man in various, and thus obscure, ways in different times. Hence Protagoras’ ignorance of the gods can be understood as a result of a process of synthesis of his (two or more) various and obscure experiences about them, not as a straight response to his experience about them. However, if human beings are able to accumulate a good number of different experiences and judgements about the objects compared to which human life is not considered short, they can know about them, bringing forth a new synthesised judgment about it. In this regard, the role of synthesis in the Protagorean epistemology is characterised as a type of knowledge about which Protagoras believes to teach and learn.

Protagoras further encourages human beings to abandon studies on cosmology, natural philosophy or theology, but turn their attention into anthropological concerns, i.e. a humanistic study that only concerns the human affairs in human life and community. Regarding the gods, for instance, on the one hand, human life is too short to accumulate a good number of experiences and judgements of them to bring forth a new synthesised judgment, i.e. knowledge about them. The things that are related to human affairs, on the other hand, can be known to human beings through enough accumulated experiences and judgements for a production of a newly synthesised judgement. These things are not anything but that of which Protagoras himself professes to teach suitable judgements, namely good deliberation (*euboulia*), in each situation in human life, such as political virtues. Political virtues cannot last longer than the length of human life since they are human devices for the preservation of human community and race, and thus are knowable and teachable. In Protagoras’ view these practical subjects producing benefit (*ōphelimon*) in a human society are experienced throughout human life, and the accumulated judgements and ideas about them enable human beings to arrive at knowledge of them.

**Linguistics:** the idea of the correct use of language is also provided by Protagoras to correct wrong linguistic and grammatical usages. Correcting is based on the sophist’s naturalism of language, that is to say, correcting words and grammar is supported by the nature of things. Protagoras’ naturalism of language concerns not only the consistency of the gender of words but also that of morphological figures. In this regard, his correct use of language can be understood as ‘the grammatical genders on the basis of natural genders of things’ and ‘the morphological consistency’ of the words based on their grammatical genders.

Protagoras’ linguistic interest in the correct usage of language according to the nature of things reflects an idea of objectivist view of language. Indeed, Protagorean linguistic correction does not require any human artificial or individually relative modification upon

language. Protagoras' correct use of language is hence understood as a linguistic-normative claim by which the sophist endeavours to set up certain linguistic norms that everyone should objectively follow in order to correctly use language according to the nature of objects, avoiding relative usages of language.

**Rhetorical Sophistry:** the *OEA* doctrine (DK80 A1: D.L. 9.53, and also DK80 A19) and the argument in its support (*Euthyd.* 285e9–286a3) are proposed by Dionysodorus on Protagoras' behalf in Plato's *Euthydemus*, in order to prove that it is impossible to contradict. The sophist, adopting and utilising a Parmenidean idea of impossibility of speaking and thinking of what is not (*to mē eon*) (frs. 2, 6, and 8), demonstrates that only what is (*to on*) can be spoken of as it is (*hōs esti*), while what is not cannot be spoken of because speaking of what is not (*to mē eon*) is impossible and speaking of what is as it is not (*hōs ouk esti*) is equated to speaking of what is not. With such demonstration, the sophist, establishing the only three cases of human linguistic performance, concludes that it is impossible for anyone to make a description that contradicts not only someone else's description but also one's own. According to the *OEA* doctrine, contradiction is absolutely impossible because everyone is entirely banned from speaking of what is not; hence, it is universally and objectively applied to all human beings and their linguistic activity that only what is can be spoken of and just as it is. As long as everyone speaks of what is only in the same way as it is, i.e. as 'what is', no qualifier such as 'to or by someone', 'in the case of someone speaking', 'under this circumstance', or 'at this time' is needed for *logos* to be true.

The *OEA* doctrine, however, does not seem to be taken by Protagoras as a serious philosophical claim, as it holds no serious ontological or epistemological issue and commits logical fallacies (i.e. the equivocation of the Greek words *einai*, *logos*, and *pragma*). The doctrine rather seems to be Protagoras' rhetorical sophistry to show that he is able to make two opposing arguments about any issues (the two-*logoi* fragment) (D.L. 9.51: DK80 A1 and B6a; Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies (Stromata)* VI.65 and Seneca, *The Moral Letters to Lucilius (Ad Lucilium epistulae morales)* 88.43: DK80 A20) and a weaker argument (e.g. that 'it is impossible to contradict') stronger at which people of his time were much annoyed (the weaker/stronger *logoi* fragment) (*Rhet.* II.24.1402a23: DK80 A21, B6b; Eudoxus, fr. 307 Lasserre in Stephanus Byzantius, *Ethikon s.v. Abdera*: DK80 A21), as the sophist made Ctesippus silent and unable to know what to say (*Euthyd.* 286b4).

Under the discussion on Protagoras' thoughts above, the sophist's fragments are classified under certain topics as follows:

- Political-Ethical fragments:

The *Great Speech*: μεγάς λόγος.

Protagoras' teaching subject (DK80 A5: *Prot.* 318e5–319a2): εὐβουλία περὶ τῶν οἰκείων, ὅπως ἂν ἄριστα τὴν αὐτοῦ οἰκίαν διοικοῖ, καὶ περὶ τῶν τῆς πόλεως, ὅπως τὰ τῆς πόλεως δυνατώτατος ἂν εἴη καὶ πράττειν καὶ λέγειν.

Good deliberation concerning domestic affairs, how best to manage one's household, and concerning the affairs of the city, how to be the most influential in the affairs of the city, both in action and speech.

The Man-Measure Doctrine: πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστιν, τῶν δὲ οὐκ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν.

Of all things the measure is man, of the things that are that/how they are, of the things that are not that/how they are not.

- Fragments on education and practice in relation with Political-Ethical fragments:

A fragment on education (1) (DK80 B3: *Anecdota Parisiensia* I.171.31): φύσεως καὶ ἀσκήσεως διδασκαλία δεῖται, ... ἀπὸ νεότητος δὲ ἀρξαμένους δεῖ μάθάνειν.

Teaching requires nature and practice ... one must start learning from early youth.

A fragment on education (2) (DK80 B11: Plutarch *On Practice* 178.25): Education does not sprout in the soul unless one goes to a great depth. (The original Greek is lost, the English version translated by O'Brien in Sprague (1972, 24) is a translation of a German translation of a Syriac version by J. Gildemeister and F. Bücheler.)

A fragment on art and practice (DK80 B10: Stob. iii (Flor.) 29.80): μηδὲν εἶναι μήτε τέχνην ἄνευ μελέτης μήτε μελέτην ἄνευ τέχνης.

Art is nothing without practice and practice nothing without art.

- Epistemological fragment<sup>149</sup>

---

<sup>149</sup> The new alleged Protagorean fragment from Didymus the Blind's *Commentary on Psalms* 3, 222.21–22, if this fragment can be fairly attributed to Protagoras, would be categorised as an epistemological fragment:

σοφιστής δὲ ἦν ὁ Πρωταγόρας—λέγει, ὅτι τὸ εἶναι τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν τῷ φαίνεσθαι ἐστίν. [λ]έγει ὅτι φαίνομαι σοὶ τῷ παρόντι καθήμενος· τῷ δὲ ἀπόντι οὐ φαίνομαι καθήμενος· ἄδηλον εἰ κάθημαι ἢ οὐ κάθημαι.

Protagoras was a sophist—he says that for things that are, being is in appearing. He says that for you who are present, I appear as sitting, but for someone who is not present, I do not appear as sitting; whether I am sitting or not sitting is obscure.

The *peri theōn* fragment: *περὶ μὲν θεῶν οὐκ ἔχω εἰδέναι οὔθ' ὡς εἰσὶν, οὔθ' ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶν, οὔθ' ὁποῖοί τινες ἰδέαν· πολλὰ γὰρ τὰ κωλύοντα με εἰδέναι, ἢ τ' ἀδηλότης καὶ βραχύς ὢν ὁ βίος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.*

On the one hand, on the gods I am not able to know either that/how they are or that/how they are not, or what they look like in shape. For many are the things preventing me from knowing [the gods]; the obscurity [of the gods] and the shortness of human life.

- Linguistic fragments

The correct use of language (*logos*) and grammar (DK80 A1: D.L. 9.52): ὀρθοέπεια, ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων (the correctness of words and names). (For the contents, cf. *Phdr.* 267c4–d4: DK80 A26; *Crat.* 391c2–4: DK80 A24. Cf. also *Rhet.* III.5.1407b6–9: DK80 A27; *Soph. Elen.* XIV.173b16–25: DK80 A28; *Poet.* XIX.1456b15–9: DK80 A29; and Aristophanes, the *Clouds* 658–679: DK80 C3)

- Rhetorical-Sophistic fragments

The *ouk estin antilegein* doctrine: οὐκ ἔστιν ἀντιλέγειν.

It is not possible to contradict.

The weaker/stronger *logoi* fragment (DK80 B6b and A21: *Rhet.* II.24.1402a23; Eudoxus, fr. 307 Lasserre in Stephanus Byzantius, *Ethikon s.v.* Abdera: DK80 A21): τὸ τὸν ἥττω δὲ λόγον κρείττω ποιεῖν.

Making a weaker argument (*logos*) stronger.

The two-*logoi* fragment (DK80 B6a: D.L. 9.51; DK80 A1; Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies (Stromata)* VI.65 and Seneca, *The Moral Letters to Lucilius (Ad Lucilium epistulae morales)* 88.43: DK80 A20): δύο λόγους εἶναι περὶ παντὸς πράγματος ἀντικειμένους ἀλλήλοις.

[Protagoras was the first to say that] on all issues there are two arguments (*logoi*) opposed to each other.

To sum up, according to Protagoras, only the things that properly belong to the range of the objects of human experience and the length of human life can be fully synthesised and known through human objective epistemological means (the *peri theōn* fragment). The things that are related to human affairs can be known, as the subjects of Protagoras' teaching, like political virtues, on the grounds of the common objective civic sense. Political and ethical actions and speeches in human communities are practised on the basis of the universal and objective principles, i.e. the civic senses, which are equally shared by all human beings at a fundamental level; and better political and ethical practice will be promised if people possess

political virtues that are established on the basis of the civic senses at a secondary and improved level (the *Great Speech* and the MMD). As Protagoras emphasises the importance of the laws of a city as a method of maintaining the city as well preserved (cf. *Prot.* 325d2–326e1), it is important that people should be able to understand what is said and written in a correct way in order to properly practise such actions and speeches; Protagoras insists upon grammatical and linguistic correctness on the grounds of the naturalism of language, avoiding relative usages of language (the correct use of language). Even in utilising rhetorical sophistry, Protagoras, adopting the objectivist use of human *logos* which is universally given to all human beings who have a function to speak, argues that it is possible to speak of each of the things that are, namely, what is, only as it is, and thus contradiction is impossible (the *ouk estin antilegein* doctrine). In this aspect, Protagoras strongly advocates a certain type of objectivism, namely ‘Protagorean objectivism’, holding a coherent ‘epistemological’-‘political and ethical’-‘linguistic’ position according to which his political and ethical ideas are supported by the objective views of epistemology and naturalism of language.

However, it needs to be admitted that Protagorean objectivism does not entail any philosophically and systematically structured views on metaphysical, ontological, or epistemological details as other philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, do—as Kerferd himself (1981a, 173) who devoted his research to a study on the sophists admits, the few fragments (and some related arguments in their support) of Protagoras must be philosophically “unimpressive in comparison with the mighty edifices of Plato and Aristotle which survive intact or virtually intact.” Protagoras objectivism merely presents some objectivist viewpoints at an immature level (especially, compared to those philosophers’ ideas), providing no full theoretical account about them. The immaturity of Protagoras’ objectivism can chiefly be pointed to in three places. First, human language must be in use in accordance with the nature of things—however, he does not give an account on the nature of things, yet he seems to simply take it for granted along with common traditional sense; for instance, the noun ‘wrath’ fits the masculine nature because usually men have wrath, and human beings need to use the optative mood whenever they ask for something from the gods because ‘the gods’ are superior to human beings. Second, by experiences and a process of synthesis human knowledge is acquired about the things that do not go beyond the objective epistemological obstacles—yet, Protagoras does not detail why experience must be the necessary, much less the sufficient, source of knowledge, nor does he clarify the exact amount of experiences necessary for acquiring knowledge via a process of synthesis. Third, the common objective civic senses enable human beings to be political—but, in Protagoras’

political-ethical viewpoint the objectivity of the civic senses is not demonstrated epistemologically or ontologically; the sophist simply states that they are given to all human beings by Zeus and work as the political and ethical principles by means of which human beings can measure things to do and avoid and further produce and establish political virtues. Yet, they are not the objects of knowledge, and the entity and existence of the senses are not theoretically discussed but entirely dependent upon divine authority, i.e. Zeus.

Despite its philosophical weaknesses, still it should be noted that in the cultural Greek and Athenian tradition of thought, Protagoras, as distinguished from the traditional understanding of the sophist as a radical relativist both in antiquity and modern times, seems to have tried to hold fast to an objectivist position, advocating traditional concepts of ethics, politics, and epistemology. Protagorean objectivism, presumably as a part of the sophistic movement in his time, may be understood as an attempt to turn peoples' attention from theological and cosmological concerns into humanistic studies, emphasising the importance of the traditional ethical and political principles and political virtues for a better life in a human community. It is remarkable that Protagoras, albeit admitting the human epistemic limit concerning theology and natural philosophy, never abandoned the possibility of knowledge; Protagorean knowledge, as based on human experience, is probably counted as a type of inductive conviction, namely a kind of *epagōgē*, whose boundary lies in the range of human experiences. But in such knowledge, believes Protagoras, people can have sound discussion on the issues about human affairs, using languages to describe things correctly, and further deliberating a better, or the best, way of preserving their survival and community.

## Appendix 1: The ancient sources for the *peri theōn* fragment

According to Diogenes Laertius (9.51 and 9.54), the first of Protagoras' books was *On the Gods* (*To Peri Theōn*) (cf. the section about Protagoras' life and works in Chapter I above). Unfortunately the entire contents of the book are not known to us, but it is said that the opening statement of the book is his confession of ignorance concerning the gods, also known as the *PTH* fragment. Unlike the other parts of the book *To Peri Theōn*, a number of ancient sources record the *PTH* fragment:

- (a) In the *Theaetetus* 162d6–e7 (DK80 A23), where Socrates criticises Protagoras by stating that man could be as wise as the gods if man were the measure of all things, Plato illustrates what Protagoras would have said concerning the gods if he had been still alive, implying that the sophist would not be happy to drag the gods into the argument: ὃ γενναῖοι παῖδές τε καὶ γέροντες [*sc.* Theaetetus for *paides*, Theodorus and Socrates for *gerontes*], δημηγορεῖτε συγκαθεζόμενοι, θεοὺς τε εἰς τὸ μέσον ἄγοντες, οὐς ἐγὼ [*sc.* Protagoras] ἔκ τε τοῦ λέγειν καὶ τοῦ γράφειν περὶ αὐτῶν [*i.e.* θεῶν] ὡς εἰσὶν ἢ ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶν, ἐξαίρω. This passage is the oldest piece of evidence we can find in relation to Protagoras' statement about his ignorance of the gods.
- (b) Cicero, in his treatise *On the Nature of the Gods*, introduces Protagoras' doubt about the gods: *velut in hac quaestione plerique, quod maxime veri simile est et quo omnes fere*<sup>150</sup> *duce natura venimus, deos esse dixerunt, dubitare se Protagoras, nullos esse omnino Diagoras Melius et Theodorus Cyrenaicus putaverunt* (I.1.2). And Cicero again reports in the same work: *nec vero Protagoras, qui sese negat omnino de deis habere quod liqueat, sint non sint qualesve sint, quicquam videtur de natura deorum suspicari* (I.12.29: DK80 A23). And then later, in the same work, he reports that Protagoras was banished from Athens and his books were burnt in a public assembly by order of the Athenians, and he then explains these disastrous happenings by reference to the fragment: *Abderites quidem Protagoras sophistes temporibus illis vel maximus, cum in principio libri sic posuisset de divis neque ut sint neque ut non sint habeo dicere, Atheniensium iussu urbe atque agro est exterminatus librique eius in contione combusti* (I.23.63: DK80 A23).
- (c) In *On Piety* (col. 22 Gomperz's *Herculanische Studien* II (Leipzig, 1866), 22: DK80 A23),

---

<sup>150</sup> *fere* Plasberg: *sese* ω



Philodemus suggests that Protagoras would probably be one of those who are ignorant of the gods: ἢ τοὺς ἄγνωστον εἶ τινές εἰσι θεοὶ λέγοντας ἢ ποῖοί τινές εἰσιν.<sup>151</sup>

Afterwards, during the second and third centuries CE, some writers mention Protagoras' statement about the gods in their works again:

- (d) The Epicurean Diogenes of Oenoanda, who discusses the history of atheistic views, considers Protagoras an atheist: Πρωταγόρας δὲ ὁ Ἀβδηρείτης τῆι μὲν δυνάμει τὴν αὐτὴν ἤνεγκε Διαγόραι δόξαν, ταῖς λέξεσιν δὲ ἐτέραις ἐχρήσατο, ὡς τὸ λείαν ἰταμὸν αὐτῆς ἐκφευξούμενος. ἔφησε γὰρ μὴ εἰδέναι, εἰ θεοὶ εἰσίν· τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶν τὸ αὐτὸ τῶι λέγειν εἰδέναι ὅτι μὴ εἰσίν (fr. 12c.2.1.19W: DK80 A23).
- (e) Maximus of Tyre, in his *Dialexeis*, refers briefly to Protagoras' view on the gods: κἂν ἄγνοεῖν τι φῆς [concerning the gods], ὡς Πρωταγόρας (11.V.4–5: C. A23).
- (f) Theophilus of Antioch, when composing a book on the history of Christianity and the defence of it in *To Autolycus*, reports the *PTH* fragment: τί δ' οὐχὶ καὶ Κριτίας καὶ Πρωταγόρας ὁ Ἀβδηρίτης λέγων· Εἶτε γὰρ εἰσιν θεοί, οὐ δύναμαι [*sc.* Protagoras] περὶ αὐτῶν (i.e. θεῶν) λέγειν, οὔτε ὅποιοί εἰσιν δηλῶσαι· πολλὰ γὰρ ἐστὶν τὰ κωλύοντά με (III.28: C. A23).
- (g) Sextus Empiricus, in dealing with some ancient atheistic views, reports that Protagoras says he cannot speak about the gods due to many obstacles: περὶ δὲ θεῶν οὔτε εἰ εἰσίν οὔθ' ὅποιοί τινές εἰσι δύναμαι λέγειν· πολλὰ γὰρ ἐστὶ τὰ κωλύοντά με (*M.* 9.56: DK80 A12). Then, like Cicero's report, he adds that because of this claim the Athenians demanded the death penalty for Protagoras.
- (h) Flavius Philostratus, in his report about the lives of the various sophists, says: τὸ δὲ ἀπορεῖν φάσκειν, εἶτε εἰσὶ θεοὶ εἶτε οὐκ εἰσὶ, δοκεῖ μοι [*sc.* Philostratus] Πρωταγόρας ἐκ τῆς Περσικῆς παιδείσεως παρανομῆσαι (*V.S.* 1.10: DK80 A2). He then suggests that Protagoras seems to have made this outrageous statement regarding the gods because of his Persian magi teachers, who hid their religious belief from people: μάγοι γὰρ ἐπιθειάζουσι μὲν οἷς ἀφανῶς δρῶσι, τὴν δὲ ἐκ φανεροῦ δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ καταλύουσιν οὐ βουλόμενοι δοκεῖν παρ' αὐτοῦ δύνασθαι (*ibid.*).

---

<sup>151</sup> Omitted in Dumont's edition (1969), 39.

- (i) Diogenes Laertius delivers the best known form of the *PTH* fragment: *περὶ μὲν θεῶν οὐκ ἔχω [sc. Protagoras] εἰδέναι οὐθ' ὡς εἰσὶν, οὐθ' ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶν· πολλὰ γὰρ τὰ κωλύοντα εἰδέναι, ἢ τ' ἀδηλότης καὶ βραχυὸς ὢν ὁ βίος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* (D.L. 9.51: DK80 A1, B4).
- (j) Marcus Minucius Felix, in his dialogue on Christianity between Octavius Januarius the Christian and Caecilius Natalis the pagan, gives a very short reference to Protagoras' banishment from Athens and his books being burnt by the Athenians in a public place due to his statement about the gods: *Abderiten Pythagoram* (read 'Protagoram') *Athenienses viri consulte potius quam profane de divinitate disputantem, et expulerint suis finibus, et in concione eius ecripta deusserint* (Octavius 8.3: C. A23).
- (k) Lactantius reports Protagoras' doubt about the gods in two of his works, *The Divine Institutions: Sed et antea Protagoras, qui deos in dubium vocavit* (D.I. 1.2: C. A23), and *On the Wrath of God: Primus omnium Protagoras extitit, temporibus Socratis, qui sibi diceret non liquere, utrum esset aliqua divinitas, necne. Quae disputatio eius adeo impia et contra veritatem et religionem iudicata est, ut et ipsum Athenienses expulerint suis finibus, et libros eius in concione, quibus haec continebantur exusserint. De cuius sententia non est opus disputare, quia nihil certi pronuntiaverit* (Ir.D.9: C. A23).

In the fourth and fifth centuries CE, we find other sources for the *PTH* fragment:

- (l) Eusebius of Caesarea, in his *Preparation for the Gospel*, including Protagoras in the group of those who held atheistic views, introduces the *PTH* fragment when talking about Plato's exposure of the feud of Protagoras, Heraclitus, and Empedocles with Parmenides and his school: *ὁ μὲν γὰρ Δημοκρίτου γεγωνὸς ἐταῖρος, ὁ Πρωταγόρας, ἄθεον ἐκτίσατο δόξαν· λέγεται γοῦν τοιαῦδε κεχρηῆσθαι εἰσβολῇ ἐν τῷ Περὶ θεῶν συγγράμματι· Περὶ μὲν θεῶν οὐκ οἶδα οὐθ' ὡς εἰσὶν οὐθ' ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶν οὐθ' ὅποιοί τινες ἰδέαν* (P.E. 14.3.7: DK80 B4).
- (m) Epiphanius of Salamis briefly mentions Protagoras' statement of the gods: *Πρωταγόρας ὁ τοῦ Μενάνδρου Ἀβδηρίτης ἔφη μὴ θεοὺς εἶναι, μηδὲ ὅλως θεὸν ὑπάρχειν* (*Adversus Haereses* III.16: C. A23).
- (n) Theodoret of Cyrhus, in his *Cure of the Greek Maladies*, while discussing those who held views against the gods, introduces Protagoras' view on them: *οὕτω γὰρ τις καὶ τῆς παλαιᾶς καὶ τῆς καινῆς θεολογίας τὴν ξυμφωνίαν ὀρῶν, θαυμάσεται τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ φεύξεται μὲν Διαγόρου τοῦ Μιλησίου καὶ τοῦ Κυρηναϊκοῦ Θεοδώρου καὶ Εὐημέρου τοῦ Τεγεάτου τὸ*

ἄθειον· τούτους γὰρ ὁ Πλούταρχος ἔφησε μηδένα νενομικένας θεόν· φεύζεται δὲ καὶ τῶν Στωϊκῶν τὴν ἀπρεπῆ περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ δόξαν· σωματοειδῆ γὰρ οὗτοι τὸν θεὸν ἔφασαν εἶναι· βδελύζεται δὲ καὶ Πρωταγόρου τοὺς ἀμφιβόλους περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἀπίστους λόγους· ἐκείνου γὰρ ἐστὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα· Περὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν θεῶν οὐκ οἶδα, οὔτε εἰ εἰσὶν, οὔθ' ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶν, οὔθ' ὅποιοί τινες τὴν ἰδέαν εἰσὶν (*Gr. aff.* II.112.2–114.1: C. A23).

During the later periods, two more sources for the *PTH* fragment are found:

- (o) Hesychius of Miletus, in his *Onomatologus* in Scholia on Plato's *Republic* 600c (DK80 A3), also makes a short reference to Protagoras' books being burnt by the Athenians, presumably due to his *PTH* fragment: ἐκαύθη δὲ τὰ τούτου βιβλία ὑπ' Ἀθηναίων. εἶπε γὰρ περὶ θεῶν οὐκ ἔχω [*sc.* Protagoras] εἰδέναι οὔθ' ὡς εἰσὶν, οὔθ' ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶν.
- (p) In *Suda* (*Lexicon*), Protagoras is described as one who stated about the gods: περὶ θεῶν οὐκ ἔχω [*sc.* Protagoras] εἰδέναι, οὔτε ὡς εἰσὶν, οὔτε ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶ (letter Π, 2958, line 14: C. A3a). And the lexicon also reports that this impious statement about the gods outraged the Athenians and so they burnt the books of Protagoras and expelled him.<sup>152</sup>

In the ancient sources for the *PTH* fragment, some different wordings are found. Among those, the most controversial one is the question about the gods' shape and the part about the epistemological obstacles. Philodemus (c), Theophilus (f), Sextus Empiricus (g), Eusebius (l), and Theodoret (n) add into the *PTH* fragment the phrases 'how they are (*poioi tines eisin*)', 'of what sort they are (*hopoioi eisin*)', 'what they are like (*hopoioi tines eisin*)', 'what they look like in shape (*hopoioi tines idean*)', and 'what their shapes are (*hopoioi tines tēn idean eisin*)' respectively, as a part of Protagoras' ignorance of the gods. Again, Theophilus (f) and Sextus Empiricus (g) present the epistemological obstacles by adding the words, '*polla gar esti ta kōluonta me*', and Diogenes Laertius (i) explicitly reveals what these epistemological obstacles are, i.e. the obscurity (*adēlotēs*) of the gods and the shortness of human life (*brachys ōn ho bios tou anthrōpou*). Other sources, on the contrary, do not include these

<sup>152</sup> Dates of our sources for the *PTH* fragment, in chronological order, are as follows: Plato (424/423–348/347 BCE); Cicero (106–43 BCE); Philodemus (probably first century BCE); Diogenes of Oenoanda (probably second century CE); Maximus of Tyre (probably second century CE); Theophilus of Antioch (second century CE, died probably between CE 183 and 185); Sextus Empiricus (second to third century CE, probably CE 160–210); Flavius Philostratus (CE 170–247); Diogenes Laertius (between second and fifth century CE, probably flourished in the first half of the third century); Marcus Minucius Felix (presumably, second century CE); Lucius Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius (CE 240–320); Eusebius (CE 263–339); Epiphanius of Salamis (CE 310/320–403); Theodoret of Cyrhus (CE 393–457/460); Hesychius of Miletus (probably flourished in the sixth century CE at Constantinople); *Suda* (tenth century CE).

words.<sup>153</sup>

With regard to this aspect of the question concerning the gods' shape and the epistemological obstacles, it might be conjectured that these words could have been added to the fragment by later sources, although the original statement Protagoras made did not contain them. However, it does not seem plausible to assume that the later sources attached a whole new point that Protagoras did not consider at all. In addition, if the point about the epistemological obstacles was indeed added by the later sources, then the original fragment, when it was read in public, would have been meaningless and considered empty by those who heard it. For this point plays a role in the *PTH* fragment which justifies Protagoras' ignorance of the gods and persuades his audiences. If the sophist did not offer any persuasive and justifying reason to take his statement seriously, who would have been willing to pay a large fee to learn from him? This would not fit Protagoras' role as a teacher, if he had made a declaration without proposing any explanation or support for it.

In this regard, I presume that despite the chronological gaps between the dates of Protagoras and our sources, (c) (f) (g) (i) (l) and (n), this part of the *PTH* fragment, especially the epistemological obstacles, which function as a justification of Protagoras' ignorance of the gods, formed part of the sophist's original statement. Modern scholars too have widely suggested that the question of the shape of the gods and the second part of the fragment stating the epistemological obstacles, although they have been often omitted in ancient testimonies, are likely to have been parts of the original *PTH* fragment (cf. Kerferd, 1981a, 166; De Romilly, 1992, 104).

To sum up, despite the different wordings in the ancient sources, I suggest that the original form of the *PTH* fragment can be conjectured to be—its major part is quoted in

---

<sup>153</sup> Besides this, three minor differences are also found in our sources. First, Plato (a), Cicero (b), Diogenes Laertius (i), Lactantius (k), Eusebius (l), Theodoret (n), Hesychius (o), and *Suda* (p) employ *hōs* (or *ut*), in order to address the contents of Protagoras' ignorance of the gods; while Philodemus (c), Diogenes of Oenoanda (d), Theophilus (f), Sextus Empiricus (g), and Philostratus (h) use *ei/eite*. However, there does not seem a significant change in meaning of contents in the *PTH* fragment; it is rather a possible interchange between an adverbial relative *hōs* (*ut* in Latin) and a conjunction *ei/eite*. Second, Eusebius (l) and Theodoret (n), who categorised Protagoras as one holding fast to an atheistic view, employ 'ouk oida' expression; while the rest uses 'ouk echo eidenai' expression. As discussed in Section 1.1 in Chapter IV above, however, it seems more plausible to count Protagoras as an agnostic. And lastly, Plato (a), Cicero (b), Theophilus (f), and Sextus Empiricus (g), employ verbs of speaking and writing, and report that Protagoras says that he is not able to *speak* (*legein, dicere*) or *write* (*graphein*) of the gods; whereas others such as Diogenes of Oenoanda (d), Diogenes Laertius (i), Eusebius (l), and Hesychius (o), adopting verb of knowing, report that the sophist says he is not able to *know* (*eidenai*) the gods. It seems that in antiquity, speaking (*legein*) and knowing (*eidenai*) were used interchangeably. For instance, in Parmenides' fragments 6 and 8, what is spoken (and thought) of is considered the same as what is known. Similarly, Aristotle also frequently uses the phrase 'I say (*legō de*)' (cf. *Cat.* 1a24, 7a25, 8b25, and *Met.* 984a22, 985a5, 986a8, etc.) in order to indicate the speaker's state of knowing and understanding about a given matter. The interchangeable usage of speaking with knowing in the sources of the *PTH* fragment can be understood in this respect.

Diogenes Laertius (i), while Theophilus (f), Sextus Empiricus (g), Eusebius (l), and Theodoret (n) report its supplementary parts—as follows:

περὶ μὲν θεῶν οὐκ ἔχω εἰδέναι (or λέγειν) οὔθ' ὡς εἰσὶν, οὔθ' ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶν, οὔθ' ὅποιοί τινες ἰδέαν·  
πολλὰ γὰρ τὰ κωλύοντα με εἰδέναι, ἢ τ' ἀδηλότης καὶ βραχὺς ὢν ὁ βίος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.<sup>154</sup>

---

<sup>154</sup> This reading is thus generally accepted as the original form of the *PTH* fragment by most modern scholars. Cf. Gomperz (1901), 457; Dupréel (1948), 58; Untersteiner (1954), 27; Dumont (1969), 46; Guthrie (1971), 234; O'Brien in Sprague (1972), 4; Kerferd (1981a), 166; Barnes (1982), 449; De Romilly (1992), 104; Levett in Burnyeat (1990), 286; Schiappa (1991), 142; Gagarin and Woodruff (1995), 186; Gagarin (2002), 115; Dillon and Gergel (2003), 3; Kahn (2003<sup>2</sup>), 302; Lee (2005), 25 and 83; Zilioli (2007), 6; Lavery in O'Grady (2008), 31. Capizzi's suggestion (1955, 101–2, n. 2, and 207) to add 'hekaston touton' before *eidenai* on the grounds that these added words are quoted by Eusebius referring to Aristocles is not confirmed in Aristocles' evidence (fr. 4, line 2 ff., and 14 ff.).

## Appendix 2: Plato's equation of the *ouk estin antilegein* doctrine with the impossibility of falsehood in the *Euthydemus*

### 1. The equation

In the *Euthydemus* Plato equates the *OEA* doctrine (and the argument in its support) with the impossibility of falsehood argued for by Euthydemus. The argument for the impossibility of falsehood appears before that of the *OEA* doctrine in the dialogue. As Dionysodorus finishes his argument for the *OEA* doctrine, Plato has Socrates immediately turn it into the impossibility of falsehood, stating that ‘the argument [i.e. the argument for the *OEA* doctrine] implies (*dynatai*) it [i.e. (the argument for) the impossibility of falsehood]; since [the *OEA* doctrine] is not anything but that it is not possible to speak falsely (*ἄλλο τι ψευδῆ λέγειν οὐκ ἔστιν· τοῦτο γὰρ δύναται ὁ λόγος*)’ (286c6–7).<sup>155</sup>

At 283e1–6 in the dialogue, as Ctesippus wishes his beloved, Cleinias, to be wiser, Dionysodorus accuses him of wishing Cleinias to be no longer who he is now, i.e. to be dead and gone. Ctesippus, being upset by such state of affair (*toiouto pragma*) as the sophist’s false accusation, says that such *pragma* may fall ‘onto your [*sc.* Dionysodorus’] head (*soi eis kephalēn*)’. Euthydemus then intervenes and argues that it is not possible to speak falsely, in order to defend Dionysodorus from Ctesippus’ charge (283e7–284c6):

#### Part I

Τί δέ, ἔφη, ὃ Κτήσιππε, ὁ Εὐθύδημος, ἦ δοκεῖ σοι οἷόν τ' εἶναι ψεύδεσθαι;	Well then, said Euthydemus, Ctesippus, does it seem possible to you to speak falsely?
Νῆ Δία, ἔφη, εἰ μὴ μαίνομαί γε.	Oh god, yes, he [ <i>sc.</i> Ctesippus] said, if I am not

<sup>155</sup> Plato’s philosophical consideration seems to lie more in the impossibility of falsehood than the *OEA* doctrine itself in his works including the *Euthydemus*. As we will see shortly, the impossibility of falsehood argues simply that every *logos* is true, so that there is no falsehood. If Plato admitted such idea, then he would not be able to take a definite stance in the conflict between the true *logos* of those who seek the truth (like Socrates) and the false *logos* of those who are insidious and eager for victory from the battle of argument and persuasion with honeyed words (like Protagoras and the sophist brothers as well as wicked politicians, at least to Plato’s eyes, at his time). To dissolve this difficulty, Plato seems to have gone through a number of passages in several dialogues such as *Euthydemus*, *Theaetetus*, and *Sophist*, seeking the definition of falsehood. First, he understands that falsehood occurs when speaking or judging of what is not (*Euthyd.* 283e–284c); later he draws a distinction between false judgement and judging things that are not (*Theaet.* 189b), and finally, defining falsehood, he arrives at the solution by making an ontological distinction between the meanings of *mē einai*, ‘not being’ and ‘being different’, and arguing that falsehood occurs if one makes a wrong combination of predicates (verbs: *rhēmata*) and subjects (names: *onomata*) in cases of speaking of different things as the same things and speaking of what is not as what is (*Soph.* 263d ff.). Cf. Schiappa (1995), 135–6; Burnyeat (2002), 40–1.

Πότερον λέγοντα τὸ πρᾶγμα περὶ οὗ ἂν ὁ λόγος ἦ, ἢ μὴ λέγοντα;

Λέγοντα, ἔφη.

Οὐκοῦν εἴπερ λέγει αὐτό, οὐκ ἄλλο λέγει τῶν ὄντων ἢ ἐκεῖνο ὅπερ λέγει;

Πῶς γὰρ ἂν; ἔφη ὁ Κτήσιππος.

Ἐν μὴν κάκεῖνό γ' ἐστὶν τῶν ὄντων, ὃ λέγει, χωρὶς τῶν ἄλλων.

Πάνυ γε.

Οὐκοῦν ὁ ἐκεῖνο λέγων τὸ ὄν, ἔφη, λέγει;

Ναί.

Ἀλλὰ μὴν ὃ γε τὸ ὄν λέγων καὶ τὰ ὄντα τάληθῆ λέγει· ὥστε ὁ Διονυσόδωρος, εἴπερ λέγει τὰ ὄντα, λέγει τάληθῆ καὶ οὐδὲν κατὰ σοῦ ψεύδεται.

## Part II

Ναί, ἔφη· ἀλλ' ὁ ταῦτα λέγων, ἔφη ὁ Κτήσιππος, ὃ Εὐθύδημε, οὐ τὰ ὄντα λέγει.

Καὶ ὁ Εὐθύδημος, τὰ δὲ μὴ ὄντα, ἔφη, ἄλλο τι ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν;

Οὐκ ἔστιν.

Ἄλλο τι οὖν οὐδαμοῦ τά γε μὴ ὄντα ὄντα ἐστίν;

Οὐδαμοῦ.

Ἐστὶν οὖν ὅπως περὶ ταῦτα, τὰ μὴ ὄντα, πράξειεν ἂν τίς τι, ὥστε καὶ εἶναι ποιήσειεν ἂν καὶ ὅστισοῦν τὰ μηδαμοῦ ὄντα;<sup>156</sup>

mad at least.

[Euthydemus said] When speaking of the *pragma* which the *logos* would be about, or when not speaking [of it]?

When speaking [of it], he [*sc.* Ctesippus] said.

[Euthydemus said] Then if someone speaks of this [*pragma*], he does not speak of any other of the things that are than the very that [*pragma*] that he is speaking of, does he?

How would he do that? Said Ctesippus.

[Euthydemus said] And that [*pragma*] he is speaking of is indeed one of the things that are, and distinct from other things.

[Ctesippus said] Certainly.

[Euthydemus said] Well then, isn't he who is speaking of that [*pragma*] speaking of what is?

[Ctesippus said] Yes.

[Euthydemus said] But really a person who is speaking of what is and also of things that are is speaking the truth; so that Dionysodorus, if he speaks of things that are, then speaks the truth and does not speak falsely against you.

Yes, he said; but Euthydemus, a person who is speaking of these things does not speak of things that are, said Ctesippus.

And things that are not surely are not? Said Euthydemus.

[Ctesippus said] They are not.

[Euthydemus said] Then are things that are not nowhere?

[Ctesippus said] Nowhere.

[Euthydemus said] Then is it possible that someone could do something about these things, things that are not, so that he and also anyone would make things that are nowhere also be?

<sup>156</sup> Hermann's emendation. On the contrary, T Vind goes with the marginal conjecture: '[T]hen is it possible that someone could do something about these things, things that are not, so that he and also anyone would make them things that are nowhere? (Ἐστὶν οὖν ὅπως περὶ ταῦτα, τὰ μὴ ὄντα, πράξειεν ἂν τίς τι, ὥστ' ἐκεῖνα ποιήσειεν ἂν καὶ ὅστισοῦν τὰ μηδαμοῦ ὄντα;)'.

Οὐκ ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ, ἔφη ὁ Κτήσιππος.  
Τί οὖν; οἱ ῥήτορες ὅταν λέγωσιν ἐν τῷ δήμῳ,  
οὐδὲν πράττουσι;  
Πράττουσι μὲν οὖν, ἦ δ' ὅς.  
Οὐκοῦν εἴπερ πράττουσι, καὶ ποιοῦσι;

Ναί.  
Τὸ λέγειν ἄρα πράττειν τε καὶ ποιεῖν ἐστίν;

Ὁμολόγησεν.  
Οὐκ ἄρα τά γε μὴ ὄντ', ἔφη, λέγει οὐδεὶς! ποιοῖ  
γὰρ ἂν ἤδη τί· σὺ δὲ ὠμολόγηκας τὸ μὴ ὄν μὴ  
οἶόν τ' εἶναι μηδένα ποιεῖν! ὥστε κατὰ τὸν σὸν  
λόγον οὐδεὶς ψευδῆ λέγει, ἀλλ' εἴπερ λέγει  
Διονυσόδωρος, τάληθῆ τε καὶ τὰ ὄντα λέγει.

It does not seem so to me, said Ctesippus.  
[Euthydemus said] Well then, do the rhetoricians  
do nothing, when they speak in public?  
No, they do [something], he [*sc.* Ctesippus] said.  
[Euthydemus said] Then if they do [something],  
do they not also make [something]?  
[Ctesippus said] Yes.  
[Euthydemus said] Is speaking, then, doing and  
making?  
He [*sc.* Ctesippus] agreed.  
Then, he [*sc.* Euthydemus] said, no one speaks of  
things that are not, since he would be already  
making something; and you have agreed that no  
one is able to make what is not, so that according  
to your account, no one speaks falsely; yet if  
Dionysodorus really speaks, then he speaks the  
truth and of things that are.

Euthydemus' argument for the impossibility of falsehood has two main parts. Each part arrives at the conclusion that speaking falsely is impossible. The first part is briefly summarized as follows:

- (1) When you speak falsely, you must speak of a *pragma* which your *logos* is about.
- (2) When you speak of a *pragma* which your *logos* is about, the *pragma* you are speaking of is to be one of the things that are (*hen tōn ontōn*) and distinct (*chōris*) from other things.
- (3) Then, you are speaking of what is (*to on*).
- (4) And speaking of 'what is (*to on*)' and 'also things that are (*kai ta onta*)' is the same as speaking 'the truth (*alēthē*)'.
- (5) Therefore, speaking falsely is impossible.

When the first part of the argument ends, Ctesippus objects that one who speaks of the things such as those of which Dionysodorus speaks does not speak of things that are. Against Ctesippus' objection, Euthydemus now takes the second part of the argument for the impossibility of falsehood as follows:

- (6) Things that are not (*ta mē onta*) not only are not (*ouk estin*) but also are nowhere (*oudamou*).



- (7) Doing is making, and you cannot do (*prattein*) or make (*poiein*) anything that is not.
- (8) Speaking is doing and making.
- (9) So, then, speaking of what is not is impossible. (from (7) and (8) above)
- (10) Hence even one who speaks of the things such as Dionysodorus speaks of does speak of things that are, therefore Dionysodorus does not speak falsely and speaking falsely is still impossible.<sup>157</sup> (from (9) and (4) above)

In order to establish the impossibility of falsehood, Euthydemus utilises the fallacy of equivocation of the Greek verb ‘to be (*einai*)’. This verb has several uses, such as the existential use, the veridical use, and the copulative (predicate) use. In the existential use, the verb indicates the existence of the subject; while in the veridical use, it indicates that something is the case. This verb can also be used to indicate the subject-predicate connection in the copulative use. In (1) Euthydemus presupposes that speaking has always to be about a *pragma*, and in (2) he again clarifies that this *pragma* is one of things that are and is distinct from other things. As far as a *pragma* is considered one of the things that are, it then must be what is.<sup>158</sup> Then, he argues in (4) that ‘speaking of what is and also things that are’ is ‘speaking the truth’, and thus concludes in (5) that Dionysodorus, as long as he was speaking of things that are, does not accuse (i.e. speak) falsely. When Ctesippus agrees with Euthydemus that speaking is always about what is, he seems to understand it (*to on*, i.e. the present participle neutral nominative and accusative singular form of *einai*) in the existential sense, namely, speaking of something that exists; otherwise he would have disagreed with Euthydemus. However, when the argument arrives at (4), Euthydemus alters the sense of *einai* from the existential sense to the veridical sense, arguing that speaking of things that are is nothing but speaking the truth. In Greek usage, speaking of things that are (*legein ta onta*) can be taken by itself to mean speaking the truth (*legein alēthē*) on the grounds that the Greek expression ‘*ta onta*’ has itself the meaning of ‘the truth’ in the veridical sense of *einai*. On this basis of the equivocation of the Greek verb *einai* Euthydemus leads the argument to the conclusion that it is not possible to speak falsely.<sup>159</sup>

Here Euthydemus’ argumentative strategy of replacing ‘a *pragma*’ with ‘what is (*to on*)’

---

<sup>157</sup> Hawtrey (1981, 99) suggests that behind this argument lies Parmenides’ ‘*ἤρη τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ’ ἐὸν ἔμμεναι* (what can be spoken of and thought must be)’ (DK28 B6). For the formulation of the argument, cf. Denyer (1991), 8–10.

<sup>158</sup> Here Euthydemus clearly commits the fallacy of ambiguity of the Greek word *pragma*. On this cf. Section 3 in Chapter VI above.

<sup>159</sup> For Euthydemus’ use of equivocation of *einai* (switching its meaning from ‘existential’ to ‘veridical’) in this argument, cf. Sprague (1962), 14–16; Hawtrey (1981), 98–9; Chance (1992), 87–8.

and ‘things that are (*ta onta*)’ is found in the argument for the impossibility of falsehood. In order to lead the argument to the point of speaking of ‘things that are’, which is identified with speaking ‘the truth’ in the veridical sense of *einai*, Euthydemus needs first to bring ‘what is’ into the argument, considering speaking of ‘what is’ equivalent to speaking of ‘things that are’. For this, he tries to show that that speaking of ‘a *pragma*’ is speaking of ‘what is’. As shown above, at the beginning of the argument Ctesippus, abusing Dionysodorus, says that speaking of ‘*toiouto pragma*’ (i.e. Ctesippus’ wish that Cleinias be dead) is accusing (i.e. speaking) falsely. Euthydemus then argues that speaking of ‘a thing’ is the same as speaking of such ‘this (*auto*) [*pragma*]’ or such ‘that (*ekeino*) [*pragma*]’, and finally speaking of ‘what is’. Euthydemus asks Ctesippus whether, if one speaks of ‘this’ or ‘that’, what he speaks of is what is, and Ctesippus agrees. However, at this stage, he does not bring ‘things that are’ into the argument straight off; rather, he takes several further steps for this. He first says that ‘if one speaks of this [*pragma*], then one speaks of the very that [*pragma*] that one is speaking of, not any other thing among things that are (*oukoun eiper legei auto, ouk allo legei tōn ontōn ē ekeino hope legei*).’ This sentence, while proving that one who is speaking speaks of what is, does not necessarily entail yet that one is speaking ‘the truth’. Thus, Ctesippus seems to feel safe in agreeing to this. As soon as Ctesippus agrees to this, Euthydemus straightaway concludes that ‘speaking of what is and also things that are is the same as speaking the truth’ and thus speaking falsely is impossible.

Nonetheless, Ctesippus raises an objection to Euthydemus’ conclusion, insisting that one who speaks of the things in the way in which Dionysodorus speaks does not speak of things that are. From Ctesippus’ objection, the argument continues on to the second part. At the beginning of the second part of the argument, Euthydemus characterises ‘things that are not (*ta mē onta*)’, the negation of things that are (*ta onta*), as both ‘are not (*ouk estin*)’ and ‘nowhere (*oudamou*)’. This characterisation shows that Euthydemus is here utilising the existential sense of *einai*, not the veridical use, and applying it to the whole second part of his argument for the impossibility of falsehood.<sup>160</sup> It may be suggested, of course, as De Vries (1972, 47) argues, that those two phrases, *ouk estin* and *oudamou*, do not guarantee in themselves that the existential use of *einai* is necessarily in play; they could still carry the veridical or the copulative sense, and be understood as ‘not truly’ and ‘in no way’. However, it seems more reasonable to assume that here Euthydemus uses the existential meaning of *einai*, namely, ‘things that are not existent’ and ‘nowhere existing’, as Chance (1992, 243, n.

---

<sup>160</sup> Again, cf. Sprague (1962), 15; Hawtrey (1981), 99–100; Chance (1992), 88–9.

25) states, “as we discover when Euthydemus caps it by submitting a locus before people (in public, *en tōi dēmōi*),”<sup>161</sup> that is, something existing in space.

Moreover, the employment of the existential use of *einai* in the argument can be more easily clarified through Euthydemus’ very next words, doing (*prattein*) and making (*poiein*). Euthydemus introduces the notion of doing and making into the argument in (7), and treats speaking (*legein*) as a case of doing and making in (8). Doing and making take certain objects that exist; otherwise, neither doing nor making ever happens, as Euthydemus insists that ‘no one can do anything about things that are not, so as to make things that are nowhere also be.’<sup>162</sup> The treatment of speaking as a case of doing and making enables the sophist to demonstrate that if one speaks, then one is thereby doing and making something, so that there must be an existing object of one’s speech. If one tries to speak of what is not (existing) (*to mē on*), then one’s action of speaking is nothing but an attempt to do or make things that are nowhere [existing], but this is not possible. Therefore, speaking of what is not is impossible, only speaking of what is is possible. The outcome of the second part of the argument requires us to go back to (4) in the first part, in which speaking of what is and also things that are is regarded as the same as speaking the truth. Consequently, again, speaking falsely is impossible.<sup>163</sup>

In the whole argument for the impossibility of falsehood, it is remarkable that, just as in the *OEA* doctrine, the ‘*logos* (a noun corresponding to *legein*), is characteristically used in an objectivist way. Anyone who speaks of what is speaks of what is and things that are (first part of the argument), since no one is able to speak of things that are not (second part of the argument). Thus, everyone, as far as he is speaking, no matter who he is and no matter what context he takes to speak, speaks always and objectively the truth. According to the argument, in order to speak falsely, one needs to speak differently from another who speaks of what is. However, speaking differently from speaking of what is is accomplished only by speaking of what is not; but, this is not possible. Therefore, a *logos* of what is, so long as it is to be about what is, without asking for situational context such as qualifiers, is always true. My *logos* of what is is always the same as your *logos* of what is, and there is no difference between our

---

<sup>161</sup> On this point, cf. also Burnyeat (2002), 54.

<sup>162</sup> De Vries (1972, 47) argues that the notion of doing and making is not necessarily taken into the argument for the emphasis of the existential sense of *einai*, as *ouk estin* and *oudamou* can be still entailing the veridical or copulative sense, translating ‘not truly’ and ‘in no way’. But ‘doing and making not truly’ and ‘doing and making in no way’, of course, cannot be understood as doing and making at all, and this is not obviously what Euthydemus means in the argument.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. Sprague (1962), 15–16.

*logoi*. The *logos* is not relativised in the argument for the impossibility of falsehood.<sup>164</sup>

## 2. Problems of the equation

One question needs to be raised about the argument for the impossibility of falsehood. In the first part of the argument, Euthydemus argues that whenever one speaks, speaking is always of a *pragma*, stating it as what is (*to on*) and things that are (*ta onta*), then concludes that speaking falsely is impossible. However, there seems to be an illogical identification of what is (*to on*) with things that are (*ta onta*) in this part of the argument. It is acceptable that a thing is taken as *to on* (singular) in the argument, but taking it as *ta onta* (plural), i.e. the identification of [speaking of] *to on* with [speaking of] *ta onta*, needs explanation.

The term *ta onta* is brought into the argument in (4). Before then, the argument was about speaking of a single thing, i.e. *to on*; Ctesippus' only agreement with Euthydemus' argument until (3) is that a thing which is spoken of is what is (*to on*), and distinct from other things. The term *ta onta* was not yet introduced in this step. After identifying speaking of a thing with speaking of *to on*, in (4) Euthydemus all of a sudden adds '*ta onta*' to the argument, arguing that one who speaks of *to on* 'and also (*kai*) *ta onta*', speaks the truth. We see that Ctesippus, when the argument arrives at (5), objects to Euthydemus by insisting that one who speaks of the things such as Dionysodorus speaks of does not speak of *ta onta* (not *to on*). Ctesippus' objection would be awkward if speaking of *to on* and speaking of *ta onta* were to be considered entirely identical without any explanation. For in (2) and (3), Ctesippus has already agreed with Euthydemus that one must speak of one of *ta onta*, i.e. of *to on*, not *ta onta*, whenever one speaks of a thing. It is not possible for one to speak nothing whenever speaking. However, speaking of *to on* in itself does not imply speaking the truth, while speaking of *ta onta* does. Or, if speaking of *to on* implied in itself speaking the truth, then Euthydemus and Ctesippus would have reached agreement on the impossibility of falsehood in (4) without adding *ta onta*. This is why Euthydemus deliberately, but without a proper explanation, adds *ta onta* into the first part of his argument, and the identification of (speaking of) *to on* with (speaking of) *ta onta* plays a key role in the success of the argument.

Arguing that there is no difference between 'a table' and 'tables' when speaking of

---

<sup>164</sup> Like the *OEA* doctrine, the impossibility of falsehood commits the same fallacies, i.e. the equivocation of *einai* and the ambiguity of *logos* and *pragma*. I will not discuss the same fallacies here again; instead, cf. Section 3 in Chapter VI above.

tables, one may suggest that *to on* can be taken without difficulty to be the same as *ta onta* and thus no explanation is necessarily needed. But this is not the case. For, unlike the case of speaking of ‘a table’ and ‘tables’, the change from *to on* to *ta onta* is not merely a change in the number of the objects of speech, from the singular to the plural, but also implies a possible but significant change of meaning, from speaking of something (existing) to speaking the truth. In other words, *to on* is taken to mean an existing object (of a *logos*), while in the argument *ta onta* is taken to indicate truth.<sup>165</sup> An explanation of such equation of *to on* with *ta onta* thus needs to be provided in the argument.<sup>166</sup>

One more problem regarding the notion of making in the second part of the argument can be pointed out. Making (*poiein*) is a case of doing (*prattein*),<sup>167</sup> and speaking (*legein*) is a case of making and thus also a case of doing. But doing is not a case of making and making is not a case of speaking. In this respect, speaking is not treated bi-conditionally with making and doing. However, as just seen, Euthydemus, utilising the existential sense of *einai* in the argument, argues that as making requires something existing as its object, speaking, which is always of *ta onta* also requires something existing as its object.<sup>168</sup> Finally, he concludes that,

---

<sup>165</sup> The different usages of the singular *to on* and the plural *ta onta* are also observed in Plato’s works. When discussing the matter related to the impossibility of falsehood, including the passage from the *Euthydemus* quoted above, Plato generally employs the plural form, *ta onta*; at 429d5–6 in the *Cratylus*, for instance, he says that ‘speaking falsely is speaking of *things that are not* (or, speaking not of *things that are*) (τὸ ψευδῆ λέγειν ἔστιν τὸ μὴ τὰ ὄντα λέγειν).’ It is obvious that the negative form of *ta onta* (things that are), *ta mē onta* (things that are not), is still implicated with the matter of falsehood as far as *ta onta* refers to ‘the truth’. Plato thus takes up *ta mē onta* in discussing the impossibility of falsehood in other dialogues as well. At 167a7–b1 in the *Theaetetus*, he argues that ‘it is not possible to judge *things that are not*, nor to judge something else than what one would experience, and the things [that one would experience] are always true (οὔτε τὰ μὴ ὄντα δυνατόν δοξάζσαι, οὔτε ἄλλα παρ’ ἃ ἂν πάσχη, ταῦτα δὲ ἀεὶ ἀληθῆ).’ At 188d3–5, Plato argues again that ‘a man who about anything whatsoever judges *things that are not*, inevitably judges falsely (ὁ τὰ μὴ ὄντα περὶ ὅτουσὺν δοξάζων οὐκ ἔσθ’ ὡς οὐ ψευδῆ δοξάζσει).’ On the contrary, he adopts the singular form, *to on* (what is), and its negative form, *to mē on* (what is not), when needing to deal with the impossibility of speaking of what is not, without relating it to the matter of truth and falsehood. At 477a1 in the *Republic*, for example, he asks ‘how would *what is not* be known (πῶς ἂν μὴ ὄν γέ τι γνωσθεῖν).’ He also argues that ‘no one is able to either think of or speak of *what is not*, because *what is not* never partakes of being (τὸ μὴ ὄν οὔτε διανοεῖσθαι τινα οὔτε λέγειν· οὐσίας γὰρ οὐδὲν οὐδαμῆ τὸ μὴ ὄν μετέχειν)’ at 260d2–3 in the *Sophist*.

<sup>166</sup> Some modern scholars seem to have noticed this problem; Badham rejects τὰληθῆ, leaving the phrase ‘one who speaks of *to on* speaks also of *ta onta*.’ Gifford, however, rejects this suggestion, explaining that “the alteration is unnecessary, since the extension of *to on* into *kai ta onta* is justified by the comprehensive phrase that ‘the thing one is talking about (περὶ οὗ ἂν ὁ λόγος)’ at 283e9” (on Badham’s suggestion and Gifford’s rejection, cf. Gifford, 1905, 29). However, the problem of the repetition still remains unsolved, so thus later Schleiermacher again omits *ta onta* in his edition in 1973. But Schleiermacher’s omission cannot explain how speaking of *to on* is directly identified with speaking the truth and why Ctesippus agrees with Euthydemus on this here.

<sup>167</sup> Plato seems to have believed that doing and making cannot be equivalent to each other, and to be aware of the difference between doing and making in meaning, discussing this difference in the *Charmides* 162e–163d. There Plato implies that such a distinction of the two words comes from Prodicus, by having Socrates say that he himself has heard Prodicus’ discourse upon the distinction of words a hundred times. Cf. also *Men.* 75e2–3.

<sup>168</sup> Hawtrey (1981, 101) further suggests that the meaning of making for *poiein* seems more suitable to Euthydemus’ purpose to emphasise the existential sense of *einai* in the argument, utilising the presence of the meanings ‘doing’ and ‘making’ in *poiein*.

as no one can make things that are nowhere [existing], no one can speak of things that are not. It is simply impossible to speak of things that are not, insofar as it is impossible to make things that are not.

It is somewhat doubtful whether the idea of making can be taken to be valid for the success of the argument. Making takes existing objects, but also it produces products (from the objects). In the case of making a (wooden) table, for example, the product is, of course, the table that is made, but the object of this action of making is not the table but the wood. If the object and the product in the case of making a table were both the same table—namely, the same what is, *to on*—, then this would not really be making; rather, it would be leaving an object as it is without doing anything to it. Simply making *X* (from) *X* is not an action of making at all but that of leaving *X* as it is (i.e. doing nothing to it, and not-making). Thus, making, if it really needs to be an action of making, must take objects and produce products that are no longer the same as the objects; namely, making *X* (from) *Y*.

However, making *X* (from) *Y* is exactly what Euthydemus himself earlier denied to be possible, arguing that this is nothing but an attempt to make what is not (cf. *Euthyd.* 283e). For instance, if the object is wood and the product is a table in the case of making a (wooden) table, then it is the same as making what is not. For, while wood is what is, the table that is made of wood is no longer what wood is, i.e. what is different (from what it was) as what is not (as it was). This is the same case as Dionysodorus' argument that wishing Cleinias to become wise is not different from wishing him to be gone and dead (from what he is—alive—now), for which he was criticised by Ctesippus. By utilising the idea of making in the argument for the emphasis on the existential sense of *einai*, Euthydemus clearly contradicts himself.

The argument for the impossibility of falsehood shares with the argument for the *OEA* doctrine the basic idea that speaking of what is not is entirely impossible, and they both adopt an objectivist use of *logos* to speak of its object as it is; the *logos* of something is not relative to its user. Also they both commit the fallacies of the equivocation of the Greek verb *einai* (by utilising this verb both in the predicative and existential senses) and the Greek words *logos* and *pragma*. These similarities may make us believe that they are the same argument, as Socrates turns the former immediately into the latter as soon as the latter is proposed. However, the problem of equation of these two arguments was examined above and I suggested that the *OEA* doctrine is not really equated with the impossibility of falsehood. The argument for the impossibility of falsehood is established on the conditions of (a) the identification of *to on* with *ta onta*, (b) the adoption of a notion of making (for the emphasis

of the existential sense of *einai*), and (c) the equivocation of the Greek verb *einai* (by switching the sense of this verb from the veridical sense to the existential sense). Yet these conditions are not needed at all for the establishment of the argument for the *OEA* doctrine. The terms of such conditions, i.e. ‘things that are (*ta onta*)’, ‘doing (*prattein*)’ and ‘making (*poiein*)’, are neither adopted nor even implied in the argument for the *OEA* doctrine. As Socrates says, ‘the *OEA* doctrine may *imply* (*dynatai*) the [same conclusion as that of the] impossibility of falsehood’; yet it is not the case that ‘the *OEA* doctrine is not anything but that it is not possible to speak falsely’, unless those conditions for the argument for the impossibility of falsehood are correctly attributed to that for the *OEA* doctrine, or necessarily required for its establishment.<sup>169</sup>

---

<sup>169</sup> For Plato’s refutation of the impossibility of falsehood (as equated with the *OEA* doctrine), cf. n.142 in Chapter VI above.

### Appendix 3: The Platonic reading of the Man-Measure Doctrine in the *Theaetetus*

In the *Theaetetus* Plato has Socrates aim at the definition of knowledge and examine three suggested definitions, in a *reductio ad absurdum*—thus *aporetic* in the end—and dialectical way. The dialogue can be divided into four parts. The introductory part (145c–151d) establishes the main question of the dialogue, ‘what is knowledge (*ti estin epistēmē*)?’, and represents Socrates’ occupation as a form of intellectual midwifery. The other three parts examine three suggested definitions of knowledge: the first (151d–186e), in which Protagoras’ MMD is introduced and examined by Socrates, begins with Theaetetus’ definition of knowledge as perception (*aisthēsis*); the second (187a–201c) opens when Theaetetus suggests another definition according to which knowledge is true judgement (*alēthēs doxa*); the last (201d–210a) examines Theaetetus’ final definition that knowledge is true judgement with an account (*alēthēs doxa meta logou*). In each part Socrates carefully scrutinises Theaetetus’ suggested definitions, but they all are in the end refuted, and the dialogue ends in *aporia*. As far as Protagoras’ MMD is concerned, I will examine the passages in the first part in which the doctrine is discussed.

#### 1. Interpretation

##### 1.1. Theaetetus’ definition of knowledge as perception and the Man-Measure Doctrine

At the beginning of the first part, Theaetetus says that ‘one who knows something perceives that which one knows (*ho epistamenos ti aisthanesthai touto ho epistatai*),’ and then defines knowledge as nothing other than perception (*ouk allo ti estin epistēmē ē aisthēsis*) (151e2–3). Socrates, as a midwife who cares for the soul, is happy with this non-trivial account (*ou phaulon logon*) of knowledge as perception, and proposes to examine it in order to see whether it is merely a wind-egg or a fertile idea. He comments that, indeed, Theaetetus’ definition of knowledge as perception is nothing but what Protagoras too used to say in his MMD, although their expressions differ somehow (*tropon tina allon*) (151d7–152a5). This passage goes as follows:



ΘΕΑΙ. ... δοκεῖ οὖν μοι ὁ ἐπιστάμενός τι αἰσθάνεσθαι τοῦτο ὃ ἐπίσταται, καὶ ὡς γε νυνὶ φαίνεται, οὐκ ἄλλο τί ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη ἢ αἴσθησις.

ΣΩ. Εὖ γε καὶ γενναίως, ὃ παῖ· χρὴ γὰρ οὕτως ἀποφαινόμενον λέγειν. ἀλλὰ φέρε δὴ αὐτὸ κοινῆ σκεψώμεθα, γόνιμον ἢ ἀνεμιαῖον τυγχάνει ὄν. αἴσθησις, φῆς, ἐπιστήμη;

ΘΕΑΙ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Κινδυνεύεις μέντοι λόγον οὐ φαῦλον εἰρηκέναι περὶ ἐπιστήμης, ἀλλ' ὄν ἔλεγε καὶ Πρωταγόρας. τρόπον δέ τινα ἄλλον εἶρηκε τὰ αὐτὰ ταῦτα. φησὶ γὰρ πού πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἄνθρωπον εἶναι, τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἐστὶ, τῶν δὲ μὴ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἐστὶν. ἀνέγνωκας γάρ που;

ΘΕΑΙ. Ἀνέγνωκα καὶ πολλάκις.

THEAET. ... Well, then it seems to me that one who knows something perceives that which one knows, and so, at least for now, it appears that knowledge is nothing other than perception.

Soc. Well and also nobly [said], my boy; for one ought to speak in that way when displaying [one's own thoughts]. But come now, let us examine this together, whether it is fertile or barren. You say that perception is knowledge, right?

THEAET. Yes.

Soc. Well, you venture a non-trivial account of knowledge, but something which Protagoras also said. But he said the same things in a somewhat different way. For, I think, he said that 'man is the measure of all things, of things that are that/how they are, of things that are not that/how they are not'. You have probably read [this], right?

THEAET. I have read [this], and often indeed.

Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception is no sooner offered than Socrates claims that it is equivalent to the MMD. In support of the equation of Theaetetus' definition with the MMD, Socrates offers an argument at 152a6–c6 that identifies 'aisthanetai (it is perceived)' from Theaetetus' definition with 'einai (to be)' in the MMD, passing through the identification of the former with 'phainetai (it appears)':

1) ὡς οἷα μὲν ἕκαστα ἐμοὶ φαίνεται τοιαῦτα μὲν ἐστὶν ἐμοί, οἷα δὲ σοί, τοιαῦτα δὲ αἶ σοί.

2) ἄρ' οὐκ ἐνίοτε πνέοντος ἀνέμου τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὁ μὲν ἡμῶν ῥιγῶ, ὁ δ' οὐ; καὶ ὁ μὲν ἠρέμα, ὁ δὲ σφόδρα;

3) πότερον οὖν τότε αὐτὸ ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ τὸ πνεῦμα ψυχρὸν ἢ οὐ ψυχρὸν φήσομεν; ἢ πεισόμεθα τῷ Πρωταγόρᾳ ὅτι τῷ μὲν ῥιγῶντι ψυχρὸν, τῷ δὲ μὴ

1) As each thing appears to me, so it is for me, and [as it appears] to you, so it is again for you.<sup>170</sup>

2) When the same wind is blowing, one of us shivers and the other not, right? And one of us [shivers] more, the other [shivers] less?

3) Well then, will we say that the wind itself, by itself, is cold or not cold? Or shall we be persuaded by Protagoras that [the wind] is cold

<sup>170</sup> Theaetetus' answers to Socrates' questions in this passage which mostly mean just 'yes' are omitted in the quotes above.

οὐ;	for the one who shivers, while [it] is not for the other who does not?
4) οὐκοῦν καὶ φαίνεται οὕτω ἑκατέρῳ;	4) Then, isn't this also how it appears to each [of us]?
5) τὸ δὲ γε φαίνεται αἰσθάνεται ἔστιν; <sup>171</sup>	5) But 'it appears' is 'it is perceived', right?
6) φαντασία ἄρα καὶ αἴσθησις ταῦτόν ἐν τε θερμοῖς καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς τοιούτοις.	6) Thus, appearance is the same as perception in the case of hot and things like that.
7) οἷα γὰρ αἰσθάνεται ἕκαστος, τοιαῦτα ἕκαστῳ καὶ κινδυνεύει εἶναι.	7) For, as each [man] <i>perceives</i> , things would also happen to <i>be</i> so for him.
8) αἴσθησις ἄρα τοῦ ὄντος αἰεὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἀψευδὲς ὡς ἐπιστήμη οὕσα.	8) Perception, then, is always of what is and is infallible, as if it were knowledge.

The steps from (1) to (7) show how Socrates interprets Protagoras' MMD. In (1) Socrates identifies *phainetai* (it appears) with *esti* (it is), in saying that as one thing *appears*, so it *is* for the person to whom it appears. And then, again, he replaces *hōs* in the MMD with *toiauta*, to indicate the cases of things appearing and thus being in a certain way, and at the same time 'man (*anthrōpos*)' each individual such as '[to] me (*emoi*)' and '[to] you (*soi*)'. Thus, even from the first step of the interpretation, Socrates seems to reveal his idea of the doctrine as a form of epistemological relativism. Each thing *is* for each one as it *appears* to him; something *is* for me as it *appears* to me, and it *is* for you, as it *appears* to you. And in (2) and (3), Socrates introduces the famous example of the wind in understanding how our perceptions relatively to each other operate regarding the same object. Then in (5) Socrates equates 'it appears (*to phainetai*)' with 'it is perceived (*aisthanetai*)', and so in (6) he also counts 'appearance (*phantasia*)' and 'perception (*aisthēsis*)' as identical. By doing so, Socrates can safely arrive at connecting *aisthanetai* with *esti* as well in (7).

On the basis of the argument that *to phainetai* is interchangeable with *aisthanetai*, Socrates attempts to equate Theaetetus' definition with Protagoras' MMD. The proof goes as follows; first, (1) if something *appears* in a certain way to someone, then it *is* so for him, and second that (5, 6) something *appears* to someone is the same as that it *is perceived* by him, and thus last, (7) if something *is perceived* by someone—so, if someone *perceives* something in a certain way, then the thing *is* so for him.<sup>172</sup> And in this process, Socrates attempts to read

<sup>171</sup> New OCT emendation; αἰσθάνεται ἔστιν Faehse: αἰσθάνεται Berl.: αἰσθάνεσθαι ἔστιν βΤW.

<sup>172</sup> Burnyeat (1990, 9–11) argues for this point that Theaetetus, defining knowledge as perception, "will have to adopt a Protagorean epistemology," because "'it appears' means 'he perceives it' or, rephrasing in the material mode, to perceive something is to have it appear to one" and "*x* appears *F* to *a* if and only if *a* perceives that *x* is *F*." Thus, Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception and Protagoras' MMD are taken to be identical on the assumption that 'appearing', 'being perceived' and 'is' are all linked bi-conditionally: *phainetai* ⇔ *esti*;

the MMD as meaning that how things are [for man] (*hōs estin*) is the same as how they appear [to man]. Thus, ‘appearing’ and ‘being perceived’ are equivalent to each other, and this makes the MMD mean that how things are [for man] is how they are perceived by man. To state how man perceives things is the same as to state how man knows them, according to Theaetetus’ definition of knowledge as perception. Consequently, as Sedley (2004, 38–9) indicates, Socrates, acquiring “a complete identity between knowledge and perception” as a result,<sup>173</sup> arrives at identifying Theaetetus’ definition of knowledge as perception with Protagoras’ MMD.<sup>174</sup>

Kahn (1966, 245–65, esp. 250) suggests that the use of *einai* in *hōs* clause of the MMD has the meaning that *it is the case that/how something is*. According to him the fundamental use of *einai* in the fifth century BCE is not to refer to the existence of something (*X* ‘exists’), which we call the existential use, but to express that ‘it is the case’, using the veridical sense.<sup>175</sup> Kahn’s suggestion seems congruent with (2); for a perceiver, not that it is the case that the wind exists to him, but that *it is the case that/how the wind is cold* to him. Accordingly, the Socratic interpretation of the doctrine goes as follows; it is the case that something is [for me] as it appears [to me] (i.e. is perceived [by me]). In the MMD, then, man is the measure not of the fact that a certain thing exists to him, but of *that/how a certain thing is for him*. On this suggestion, Kerferd (1981a, 87) points out that the Platonic reading of the MMD advocates an epistemological criterion, or a criterion of judgement, to show how to apply correctly the predicates to the subjects when a judgement is made by each perceiver, namely ‘that/how things are’, not to show that the predicates really exist for each perceiver.

Furthermore, in (8) Socrates comments on two conditions of knowledge; it is always

---

*phainetai* ⇔ *aisthanetai*; thus *aisthanetai* ⇔ *esti* (n.b. this process is valid only when they are all bi-conditional). In the light of this interpretation, therefore, the MMD, as determined to be a perceptual epistemology thesis, also satisfies the condition that all perceiving is knowing, and all knowing is also perceiving. Cf. also McDowell (1973), 117–20; Chappell (2004), 58–9; Sedley (2004), 38–9. On the dialectical process from Theaetetus’ definition of knowledge as perception to Protagoras’ MMD, cf. Cornford (1935), 29–36; Levi (1940a), 151–2.

<sup>173</sup> On a counter-argument that Theaetetus’ definition of knowledge as perception is logically independent from Protagoras’ MMD, cf. Sayre (1969), 61–2, where he claims that since knowledge and perception are both infallible, Theaetetus’ definition and Protagoras’ MMD are topically linked, although they are logically independent. Cf. also White (1976), 160.

<sup>174</sup> However, we can see that in Socrates’ argument for the equation of Theaetetus’ definition with the MMD he uses a non-proved premiss by which the doctrine indeed entails that when someone perceives—and thus judges—the wind to be cold it is the case for him that the wind is truly as it appears so to him, i.e. the premiss that, like knowledge to be infallible and about what is (152c5–6), *metron* and *chrēmata* in the MMD mean respectively the standard of truth and any things so that the Greek verb *einai* in the following *hōs* clauses, which is originally utilised as the predicative use (that/how they ‘are’), could mean ‘the case’ or ‘true’ in the light of the meaning of *metron* (it is ‘the case’ that/how they are), as well as *anthrōpos* to mean each individual.

<sup>175</sup> Similarly, Burnyeat (1976, 187–91) points that since perception defined as knowledge is always of what is and infallible, ‘the wind does or does not appear cold to someone’ means ‘the real wind is or is not cold for that someone’ from which Plato’s reading of Protagoras’ MMD is determined as a relativism of perception. Cf. also McDowell (1973), 117–20; Burnyeat (1990), 9–11; Chappell (2004), 58–9; Sedley (2004), 38–9.

about what is (*to on*) and infallible (*apseudes*).<sup>176</sup> Each individual, since he is the measure of all he perceives, assures himself of the truth of his own judgement about them. This guarantees perceptual infallibility. Furthermore, since the implication of this notion would be that there is no possibility for the same object to appear as it is and as it is not to the same person at the same time, and also for one to perceive it as it appears and as it does not appear at the same time, perception always accompanies infallibility concerning its objects. In his view, it seems implied that it is not possible for anyone to know or perceive what is not (*to mē on*) (as knowledge must be about what is and equivalent to perception), since either what is not would not appear at all or perceiving what is not is the same as perceiving nothing, and again not-perceiving. From this point of view, thus, Socrates seems to be able to assert that ‘perception is always of what is and is infallible’. What we can confirm through the Socratic interpretation of the MMD is that he understands the doctrine as a relativistic epistemological claim.

Socrates, in his example of the wind, seems to draw a distinction between the wind and the coldness that a perceiver perceives (percept, *aisthēton*) from the wind.<sup>177</sup> Then what exactly does one perceive when perceiving? The coldness or the wind? Socrates does not explicitly say what we perceive, and his illustration in (2) is vague; ‘one of us shivers when the wind blows, and the others do not.’ But he gives some hints about this question. In (3) Socrates closes the possibility for us to perceive how the wind itself is. The thing I can perceive is the coldness relativised only to me, which appears to me when the wind is blowing; the wind itself is not perceived, thus not known. What man can perceive and thus

---

<sup>176</sup> The condition of ‘being about what is’ is about the state of objects, and the condition of ‘infallibility’ is about the state of subject. These conditions must be taken to be necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge, otherwise we would have a logical fallacy as follows:

- (1) If a thing is knowledge, then it must be infallible and of what is.
- (2) *X* is infallible and of what is.
- (3) Therefore, *X* is knowledge.

However, this formulation is committing the fallacy of affirming the consequent, like:

- (1) If a thing is man, then it must be rational.
- (2) *X* is rational.
- (3) Therefore, *X* is man.

But, *X* can be something rational other than man, like the gods. In order to avoid this logical fallacy, Plato must take ‘knowledge’ and ‘something that is infallible and of what is’ to be bi-condition (i.e. necessary and sufficient condition); if something which is of what is and is infallible, then it is knowledge, and if something is knowledge, then it is of what is and is infallible. Plato again comments upon these two conditions in the *Republic* (476e ff.) in defining knowledge. There he refers to ‘to on’ by expressions ‘*to gnōston*’ (and sometimes by ‘*ta noēta*’, both as distinguished from ‘*to doxaston*’), and to ‘infallibility’ by ‘*to anhamartēton*’. Cf. also *Theaet.* 146a4 and 200e4 –5.

<sup>177</sup> Cornford (1935, 33) calls the perceived objects (*aisthēta*) (e.g. the wind) ‘physical object’, and the perceived quality (*aisthēton*) (e.g. the coldness [of the wind]) ‘sense-object’.

know is the quality of a thing, i.e. the coldness of the wind. And again in (6) he explicitly confirms that appearance is the same as perception in the case of ‘hot’ and all things like that, not in the case of a hot thing (*to thermon*). Similarly, he states again at 156e7–8 that ‘and thus others like *hard, hot* and *all* [qualities] have to be understood in the same way (καὶ τᾶλλα δὴ οὕτω, σκληρὸν καὶ θερμὸν καὶ πάντα, τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ὑποληπτέον)’.

If what is perceived is only a quality of a thing, not the thing itself, how can a perceiver connect the perceived quality with its bearer, i.e. the thing from which the quality is perceived in his judgement (e.g. ‘the wind is cold’)?<sup>178</sup> The answer to this question will be found in the following argumentative stages where Socrates introduces the Secret Doctrine, i.e. the Flux-theory, and a theory of perception to interpret the MMD.

## 1.2. The Secret Doctrine: the Flux-theory

An epistemological claim needs to be supported by a proper ontological perspective; without an ontological basis, no epistemology can be established. After interpreting the MMD as a relativism of perceptual qualities, Socrates now introduces a certain ontological viewpoint into the discussion as an ontological basis of the MMD. This ontological basis has been labelled ‘the so-called Secret Doctrine’, since Socrates states that Protagoras did not express this ontological idea in public, but ‘told the truth of it *in a secret way* only to his pupils (τοῖς δὲ μαθηταῖς ἐν ἀπορρήτῳ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἔλεγεν)’ (152c8–10).<sup>179</sup> The Secret Doctrine, entailing a form of the Flux-theory according to which everything is (in) motion runs as

<sup>178</sup> This question is simply understood as a question that among the qualities or the things from which the qualities are perceived, what the object of perceptual knowledge is. On this question, On this issue, modern scholars’ suggestions have been divided into three positions: (1) there is no wind at all, but two private winds, my wind which is cold and your wind which is not cold; (2) there is a public wind but it is neither cold nor warm, and the coldness of the wind only exists privately for me when I have the feeling of the cold—thus the wind itself exists independently of my perceiving it but its coldness does not; and (3) the wind in itself is both cold and warm—warm and cold are two qualities which can co-exist in the same physical object, and I perceive one, you perceive the other. Cf. Kerferd (1981a), 86–7, n. 3.

<sup>179</sup> Why secretly, even though Protagoras is said to have opened his lectures to everyone, so anyone could hear his claims, not having had his own school (cf. Cornford, 1935, 36)? Plato, who founded his own *Academy*, in his corpus, especially in the later works, is believed to have been concerned about establishing his own philosophical position and examining the philosophical views given by his predecessors and contemporaries. In this respect, it would be plausible to conjecture that the connection between the Secret Doctrine and the MMD is Plato’s own philosophical project. Sedley claims (2004, 38–40) that Socrates “introduces a historical fiction”, not a historical fact, “about Protagoras, indicating its fictional status by suggestion that what he is about to formulate is what Protagoras (long dead at the dramatic date of the dialogue, 399 BCE) used to tell his pupils in secret.” Besides, it is also remarkable that Theodorus, who is described by Plato as having associated with Protagoras (*tou hetairou sou Prōtagorou*, 160b7; *philos anēr* [sc. Protagoras], 162a4) but not with Heraclitus and the Heracliteans (*ou gar soi hetairoi* [sc. the Heraclitean] *eisin*, 180b7), does not speak at all against such connection. The word ‘secret’ seems thus to imply fictional Platonic philosophical concern—albeit a necessary philosophical connection for Plato, not historical Protagorean position. On this, cf. also Chappell (2004), 62–3.

follows (152d2–154b8):<sup>180</sup>

9) ἄρα ἔν μὲν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ οὐδέν ἐστιν, οὐδ' ἄν τι προσείποις ὀρθῶς οὐδ' ὅποιονοῦν τι.

10) ἀλλ' ἔάν ὡς μέγα προσαγορεύης, καὶ σμικρὸν φανεῖται, καὶ ἔάν βαρὺ, κοῦφον, σύμπαντά τε οὕτως, ὡς μηδενὸς ὄντος ἑνὸς μήτε τινὸς μήτε ὀποιουοῦν.

11) ἐκ δὲ δὴ φορᾶς τε καὶ κινήσεως καὶ κράσεως πρὸς ἄλληλα γίνεταί πάντα ἃ δὴ φαμεν εἶναι, οὐκ ὀρθῶς προσαγορεύοντες· ἔστι μὲν γὰρ οὐδέποτε' οὐδέν, ἀεὶ δὲ γίνεταί.

9) Nothing is in itself one, and you could not call it something or something of any sort (any sort of thing).

10) If you call a thing large, then it will appear small, and if you call it heavy, [then it will appear] light, and so on with everything, since nothing is one or anything or any sort of thing.

11) From movement and change and blending with each other all things of which we say that they are (*einai*), speaking incorrectly, become (*gignetai*); for nothing ever is, but [everything] always becomes.

In short, Socrates introduces the primary point of the Secret Doctrine that ‘nothing is in itself one (9) or can be called in a definite way (10), thus to say that something is (*esti*) is indeed wrong, and we have to say that it comes to be (*gignetai*) all the time, since it is generated through movement (*phora*), change (*kinēsis*), and blending (*krasis*) with other things: nothing ever is, everything is always coming to be (11).’

After this, Socrates adds that according to the Secret Doctrine, change causes ‘being (*to einai*)’ and ‘coming to be (*to gignesthai*)’, while a state of rest (*hēsychia*) brings forth ‘not-being (*to mē einai*)’ and ‘passing away (*to apollysthai*)’ (ἐπεὶ καὶ τάδε τῷ λόγῳ σημεῖα ἰκανά, ὅτι τὸ μὲν εἶναι δοκοῦν καὶ τὸ γίγνεσθαι κίνησις παρέχει, τὸ δὲ μὴ εἶναι καὶ ἀπόλλυσθαι ἡσυχία).’ Everything is in a state of constant change or flux, so that everything is also the result of change.

Socrates applies this Flux-theory to the case of the constant change of the quality that is

---

<sup>180</sup> We see Socrates calling it ‘the truth’. If we assume that Plato emphasises the hidden-underlying meaning of the MMD by calling it *the truth* [of Protagoras’ MMD which would probably be an incipit of his book *Truth (Alētheia)*], then it is probable to infer that he indeed believes that the Secret Doctrine had a philosophically cardinal role as *the alleged truth* in building up the MMD in a firmer way. Thus, it is safer to think that Plato was indeed aware of a philosophical—not necessarily historical—relation between the MMD and the Secret Doctrine, and so had Socrates introduce the latter into the interpretation of the former. Under a similar understanding, Burnyeat’s ‘Reading B’ suggests (1990, 8–10) that “Plato does not accept the theories of Protagoras and Heraclitus. Theaetetus is made to accept them because having defined knowledge as perception, he is faced with the question, What has to be true of perception and of the world for the definite to hold good? The answer suggested is that he will have to adopt a Protagorean epistemology, and that in turn will commit him to a Heraclitean account of the world.” (On the contrary, ‘Reading A’ which Burnyeat rejects (*ibid.*), explains the structure of the *Theaetetus* as follows; “Plato himself accepts the theories of Protagoras and Heraclitus, subject to certain qualifiers: in particular the theories must be restricted to perception and the world of sensible things. Sensible things are, Plato agrees, in a perpetual flux of becoming, and in perception each of us has a “measure”, i.e. an incorrigible awareness, of the sensible qualities whose coming and going constitute that flux.”)

perceived, namely, the percept (*aisthēton*) (153d8–154a2):

12) κατὰ τὰ ὄμματα πρῶτον, ὃ δὴ καλεῖς χροῶμα λευκόν, μὴ εἶναι αὐτὸ ἕτερόν τι ἔξω τῶν σῶν ὀμμάτων μηδ' ἐν τοῖς ὀμμασι μηδέ τιν' αὐτῷ χώραν ἀποτάξις· ἤδη γὰρ ἂν εἴη τε δήπου ἐν τάξει καὶ μένον καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐν γενέσει γίγνοιτο.

13) ἐπώμεθα τῷ ἄρτι λόγῳ, μηδὲν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ ἐν ὄν τιθέντες· καὶ ἡμῖν οὕτω μέλαν τε καὶ λευκόν καὶ ὀτιοῦν ἄλλο χροῶμα ἐκ τῆς προσβολῆς τῶν ὀμμάτων πρὸς τὴν προσήκουσαν φορὰν φανεῖται γεγενημένον, καὶ ὃ δὴ ἕκαστον εἶναί φαμεν χροῶμα οὔτε τὸ προσβάλλον οὔτε τὸ προσβαλλόμενον ἔσται, ἀλλὰ μεταξύ τι ἐκάστῳ ἴδιον γεγονός.

12) First, regarding the eyes, what you call a white colour is not itself something else [i.e. a distinct entity] either outside your eyes or in your eyes, and you should not assign a specific place to it; for it would already be somewhere in a [certain] place and remain [as it is] and would not become in [process of] becoming.

13) Let us follow what has been just stated, and establish that nothing is in itself one being. And so it will appear to us that black and white and any other colour come into being from the impact of the eyes on the appropriate movement, and what we call each colour will be neither what strikes nor what is struck, but something which comes into being between the two and is private (*idion*) to each individual.

What we call white is neither in our eyes nor outside our eyes, nor can it occupy a certain place; otherwise, it would be in a state of changeless rest as a definite thing, violating the primary point of the Flux-theory. When we see a thing white, whiteness comes into being from the impact between our eyes and an external object which happens in a middle location (*metaxy*) between them. Thus, in (12) it is stated that this sort of percept is not in itself characterised as an independent entity which occupies a certain fixed place. This view seems consistent with that according to which when the wind is blowing one shivers and the other not, since it is cold for the one who shivers and not cold for the other who does not, and not because the wind itself, by itself, is cold (cf. (2), (3) above). Socrates explains again in (13) the MMD's epistemological relativist point by clarifying the qualifier of the judgement made by each perceiver as 'to me (*moi*)' or 'to you (*toi*)'; perception and the qualities that are perceived—i.e. the percepts—such as 'whiteness' and 'sweetness' are particular and private (*idion*) to each perceiving subject and external object. The quality that I perceive is particular and private only to me.

This constant change of qualities is, however, not independent, but happens only in relation to other things, as Socrates argues at 154c1–155c7, presenting the so-called dice puzzle. The puzzle tells that if you place 6 dice next to 4 dice, then 6 dice are *more* than 4

dice (half as many), but if you place them next to 12 dice, then they are *less* than 12 dice (half). Thus, 6 dice, which are not being increased or decreased in themselves, come to be *more* and *less*, i.e. change, only in relation to other dice.

Socrates suggests three principles concerning identity (155a2–b2): first, nothing can become either greater or less, either in size or in number, so long as it remains equal to itself; second, anything to which nothing is added and from which nothing is taken away, neither increases nor decreases, but remains the same; third, what was not before cannot be later without becoming. But, these three principles seem to produce a conflict<sup>181</sup> in the case of the dice puzzle. When being placed next to 4 dice, 6 dice are what they were not before (*more* than 4 dice), without being increased. If being placed next to 12 dice, 6 dice are again what they were not before (*less* than 12 dice), without being decreased. However, the 6 dice cannot become more or less since they have remained the same as and so equal to themselves, given that nothing has been added to or taken away from them. Again, Socrates introduces a similar puzzle into the discussion (155b5–c1): ‘Socrates was taller than Theaetetus last year, but is smaller than him this year, without having become smaller or taller than himself. He cannot have become taller or smaller since he has remained the same and so equal to himself, given that nothing has been added to or taken away from his height.’<sup>182</sup>

The dice puzzle illustrates that the same thing comes to have opposite qualities *without its own change*. If one, by perceiving *more* when 6 dice are placed next to 4 dice and *less* when they are placed next to 12 dice, judges that the same 6 dice are both *more* and *less* at the same time, one’s judgements about the same 6 dice are self-contradicting. This problem, however, can be solved by relativising everything in constant flux; since the *more* and *less* of 6 dice are constantly coming into being and passing away in relation to other dice, the 6 dice become more and less, so they change continuously, without being increased or decreased, or being added or taken away. In this manner the dice puzzle answers to a question how the

---

<sup>181</sup> For a suggestion that unlike Socrates’ argument, these three principles are indeed incompatible with each other, cf. McDowell (1973), 133–6.

<sup>182</sup> Runciman suggests (1962) that the dice puzzle is an allusion of Plato’s theory of Forms, explaining the changes in a similar way to the *Phaedo* 102b–103a where Socrates argues that Phaedo was smaller than Socrates last year, but is taller this year, because he partook in the Smallness last year and the Largeness this year. Accordingly, Runciman argues that 6 dice is more than 4 dice because it partakes in the Largeness (a Form for being more) when it is compared to 4 dice, and is less than 12 dice because it partakes in the Smallness (a Form for being less) when compared to 12 dice. It may seem possible to assume that Plato would probably have intended to show by this puzzle that an epistemological claim established without the ontological basis of absolute and universal entities such as Platonic Forms must encounter these types of problem of identity described in the puzzle. However, Runciman’s suggestion does not explain the role of the Flux-theory and why this theory is introduced in the dialogue. The Flux-theory has an ontological ground for the change of qualities which undergo constant movement. Plato has Socrates initially attempt to solve the dice puzzle on the grounds that ‘everything is in a state of constant change’, and later, as we will see, refute this viewpoint.



same wind can be both cold and not-cold (warm); when it interacts with one perceiver (me), then I perceive coldness, and when it interacts with another perceiver (you), then you perceive not-coldness (warmness). That is why Socrates earlier said that ‘we cannot say that the wind itself, by itself, is cold, but that it is cold for the one who shivers (152b5–7)’.

Every quality of things is always in a state of constant change, and relativised only in relation to each perceiving subject and external object, as Socrates says at 157a8–b1 that ‘nothing is in itself one, but comes into being always for somebody (or something) (οὐδὲν εἶναι ἐν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό, ἀλλά τιτι ἀεὶ γίγνεσθαι).’ Socrates further states that ‘nothing is, but always becomes good, beautiful and all what we have passed through (τὸ μὴ τι εἶναι ἀλλὰ γίγνεσθαι ἀεὶ ἀγαθὸν καὶ καλὸν καὶ πάντα ἃ ἄρτι διήμμεν)’ (157d7–8). It is noticeable that Socrates here mentions *agathon* and *kalon* (predicates and qualities), not *to agathon* and *to kalon* (substantial nouns and things), to emphasise the becoming of qualities which are predicated in propositions, not the thing itself which would reveal those qualities to its perceiver in relation to that perceiver. So far only the constant change of qualities seems to have been included and focused on in his interpretation of the MMD (cf. 156e7–8, (6) in the above quote, and the suggestion (2) in n. 178 above).

Having confirmed that the percepts, i.e. qualities, are in a state of constant change, Socrates further clarifies the Flux-theory by putting the perceiving subjects and the objects—i.e. literally ‘everything’—into the state of constant change: ‘we should not leave it [*sc.* the interpretation of the MMD] with anything incomplete (μὴ τοίνυν ἀπολίπωμεν ὅσον ἐλλεῖπον αὐτοῦ)’ (157e1). Socrates argues that ‘everything’, like the qualities in a state of constant change, is in endless motion, becoming, and the result of movement. In support of this point, Socrates brings the cases of ‘dreaming’ and ‘awake’, ‘insane’ and ‘sane’, and ‘Socrates healthy’ and ‘Socrates ill’ into discussion (157e2–160a6):

14) ὁρᾷς οὖν ὅτι τό γε ἀμφισβητῆσαι οὐ χαλεπόν, ὅτε καὶ πότερόν ἐστιν ὕπαρ ἢ ὄναρ ἀμφισβητεῖται, καὶ δὴ ἴσου ὄντος τοῦ χρόνου ὄν καθεύδομεν ᾧ ἐγρηγόραμεν, ἐν κατέρῳ διαμάχεται ἡμῶν ἢ ψυχῇ τὰ ἀεὶ παρόντα δόγματα παντὸς μᾶλλον εἶναι ἀληθῆ, ὥστε ἴσον μὲν χρόνον τάδε φαμὲν ὄντα εἶναι, ἴσον δὲ ἐκεῖνα, καὶ ὁμοίως ἐφ' ἐκατέρους δισχυριζόμεθα.

14) You see, then, that it is not difficult to dispute, when it is disputed whether this is reality or a dream, and as our periods of sleeping and waking are indeed equal [in length], and as in each period our soul contends that the opinions (*dogmata*) [of the period] are rather true, so that we say in one equal period things are like these, and in the other equal period like those, and we affirm equally each of two.

15) οὐκοῦν καὶ περὶ νόσων τε καὶ μανιῶν ὁ

15) Then, isn't there the same account (as (14)

αὐτὸς λόγος, πλὴν τοῦ χρόνου ὅτι οὐχὶ ἴσος;

16) λέγωμεν δὴ ἐμέ τε καὶ σέ καὶ τᾶλλα ἤδη κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον, Σωκράτη ὑγιαίνοντα καὶ Σωκράτη αἰσθενοῦντα. ... καὶ ἕτερον [ὅλον ὅλῳ τῷ ὑγιαίνοντι Σωκράτει] ἄρα οὕτως ὡσπερ ἀνόμοιον;

17) καὶ καθεύδοντα δὴ καὶ πάντα ἃ νυνδὴ διήλθομεν, ὡσαύτως φήσεις;

18) ἕκαστον δὴ τῶν πεφυκότων τι ποιεῖν, ἄλλο τι, ὅταν μὲν λάβῃ ὑγιαίνοντα Σωκράτη, ὡς ἐτέρῳ μοι χρήσεται, ὅταν δὲ ἀσθενοῦντα, ὡς ἐτέρῳ;

19) ὅταν δὴ οἶνον πίνῃ ὑγιαίνων, ἡδύς μοι φαίνεται καὶ γλυκύς;

20) ὅταν δὲ ἀσθενοῦντα, ἄλλο τι πρῶτον μὲν τῆ ἀληθείᾳ οὐ τὸν αὐτὸν ἔλαβεν; ἀνομοίῳ γὰρ δὴ προσῆλθεν.

21) οὐκ οὐκ ἐγὼ τε οὐδὲν ἄλλο ποτὲ γενήσομαι οὕτως αἰσθανόμενος; τοῦ γὰρ ἄλλου ἄλλη αἴσθησις, καὶ ἄλλοιον καὶ ἄλλον ποιεῖ τὸν αἰσθανόμενον·

above) about the cases of disease and madness, except that the period is not equal [in length]?

16) Well, let us now say about the other things according to the same account, [for example] about Socrates healthy and Socrates ill. ... And is he [*sc.* Socrates ill as a whole] thus different from [Socrates healthy as a whole], in so far as they are unlike?

17) And you will say in the same way, about a case of sleeping and all the cases we have just went through?

18) Then, [consider] each of the naturally active factors, when it takes Socrates healthy it will be related with one different me [*sc.* Socrates healthy], and when it takes [Socrates] ill, with another different me [*sc.* Socrates ill]?

19) Now when I [*sc.* Socrates healthy] being healthy drink wine, it appears pleasant and sweet to me?

20) But when [the active factor takes] me [*sc.* Socrates] being ill, then, first of all, is it not the case that in truth it has not taken the same man [as me/Socrates being healthy]? Because it has indeed come to something unlike.

21) Thus I shall never again become percipient in this way of anything else. For a perception of something else is another [perception], and makes another and a different percipient.

Just as in the dice puzzle above, it might be assumed that someone contradicts himself if he makes two opposite judgements about the same object; he contradicts himself if he judges that the wine is sweet, and that the (same) wine is bitter, i.e. not-sweet. Socrates here takes a slightly different argument from that of the dice puzzle in order to resolve the self-contradicting problem. He evaded the self-contradiction in the dice puzzle, as we saw above, through the argument about placing an object in a relational state with others, from which relativised and changing qualities result: 6 dice are *more when they are placed next to 4 dice*, and are *less when they are placed next to 12 dice*. 6 dice in this argument remain the same 6 dice. And now Socrates avoids the problem of self-contradicting by making the person

perceiving sweetness (of the wine) different from another person perceiving bitterness (of the same wine); ‘everything itself is in itself becoming and changing.’ In (16) Socrates explicitly states, with Theaetetus’ agreement, that Socrates who is ill is different from Socrates who is healthy. The key to this process of making Socrates healthy different (*heteron*) from Socrates ill is ‘their being unlike (*anomoion*) as a whole’. They are different because they are unlike. How can one then *become* wholly unlike oneself? The reason for the perceiving subject’s unlikeness, i.e. difference, of course, is the constant change and movement of the perceiving subject: the perceiving subject, just like the qualities, is in motion, and thus it continually changes and becomes unlike itself, thereby different from itself. In this sense the Flux-theory really constitutes the strong claim that ‘nothing is really in itself one and ever is, but everything becomes from movement and change and blending with each other.’

Socrates applies the expanded view of the constant change of perceiving subjects to almost all cases in steps from (14) to (18): Socrates awake is unlike, and thus different from, Socrates asleep and dreaming, Socrates insane from Socrates sane. Hence, if you make a judgement about a thing while you are awake, then that judgement is true only for you when awake, and the same account is applied to the case of another judgement that you make about the thing while you are asleep and dreaming. This account is equally applied to the case of two opposite judgements made by an insane perceiver and a sane one, or a healthy one and an ill one, as Socrates shows in (19) and (20): Socrates healthy has a judgement that the wine is sweet, while Socrates ill makes another judgement that the (same) wine is not-sweet (i.e. bitter). As illustrated in (21), the perception of a subject is different from the perception of another different subject. Then, in each state of perceiving subject, the problem of self-contradiction no longer remains, since each judgement can simply be considered equally true for its maker.

### 1.3. A theory of perception

Socrates now turns to explaining how the process of perception occurs. He says that there have been two groups of thinkers; one includes those who believe that nothing exists besides the things which they can grasp with their hands, while the other includes those who understand that everything is movement (*kinēsis*). The former group is portrayed as the ‘uninitiated’, the latter as the ‘subtle’. Socrates, implying that those who hold Protagoras’ MMD and the Flux-theory belong to the latter group, now tries to tell ‘a story (*mythos*, 156c4)’ about what exactly the movement and change are and how the movement and change

work in relation to the occurrence of perception.<sup>183</sup> The story goes as follows (156a2–157c3): movement is innumerable, and of two kinds, active powers and passive powers. These movements are called ‘parents’, and always paired whenever perception occurs. And from the interaction of each member of this pair with the other, twin offspring are generated in a middle location between the parents. The twin offspring, just like their parents, are [in] movement too, also innumerable, and constitute a pair as perception (*aisthēsis*) and percept (*aisthēton*) corresponding to each other. That is, perception always occurs with its twin, i.e. what is perceived. Some perceptions have names such as seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, feeling cold, feeling hot, and pleasure, pain, desire; some do not. Among the movements, the parents are ‘slow’, and do not undergo spatial movement but moves in one and the same place;<sup>184</sup> while the twin offspring move ‘fast’ and through space. And again, among parents, the parent that becomes what is perceiving takes passive movement, whereas the other parent that becomes what is perceived has active movement. For instance, when a visual perception occurs, an eye (i.e. passive and slow movement) and an object like a stone (i.e. active and slow movement) which is commensurate with (*symmētron*) the eye, constitute themselves as a pair as parents and generate their twin offspring, i.e. vision and whiteness respectively. This twin offspring move very swiftly through space between their parents, and through their impact, the eye is filled with vision and becomes a white-seeing eye, while the stone which is commensurate the eye is filled with what is commensurate with the vision, i.e. whiteness, and becomes a white stone (156d6–e5).<sup>185</sup>

---

<sup>183</sup> This theory of perception seems to be a Platonic philosophical explanation for how the perception process occurs on the basis of the MMD and the Secret Doctrine, rather than an original philosophical theory of Protagoras, or Heraclitus if the Secret Doctrine, i.e. the Flux-theory, can be attributed to him. Two reasons can be supplied for this: first, neither Protagoras nor Heraclitus (cf. DK22) are said to have given any account of this theory of perception; second, Socrates counts the theory of perception not as a *logos* in which a genuine philosophical or argumentative point of the originator of the theory must be implied, but as a *mythos* by which Plato can be released from the responsibility of the correct representation of others’ thoughts. cf. Chappell (2004), 48–9 and 73, n. 53.

<sup>184</sup> On the meaning of the idea that the parents move in one and the same place, scholars have argued in two ways: first, as Bostock suggests (1988, 62–4), the parents do not move through space but merely rotate in one and the same place by themselves; second, as Cornford (1935, 49) and McDowell (1973, 138) suggest, the parents do not perform any spatial movement but undergo their quality changes constantly. Both answers, yet, seem implausible. First, the rotation movement in one and the same place does not need to be considered as slow movement—it can still be fast, and indeed the parents do not rotate. (One may argue that some parents do rotate, but such few examples shall not rashly be generalised.) Second, the parents whose interaction generates twin offspring also need to be in a state of constant movement in every respect, thus if they are assumed to take only the quality changes and not spatial movement, then they are both in a state of change in one sense and in a state or rest—as we will clearly see later at 181b–183c, it violates the Flux-theory. Regarding this expression, I assume that Plato may have expressed himself in this way in order to emphasise the parents’ slow movement compared to the offspring’s very swift movement. The parents indeed move through space, but they look to be at rest in one and the same place when their slow movement is compared to that of their twin offspring’s which is extremely fast.

<sup>185</sup> By an analogy of tap, Crombie (1963, 21) argues that the water which is flown from a tap fills a jar, not the

However, a problem still remains. In this answer no explanation of direct interaction between the eye and the stone is suggested. In other words, by the vision the eye encounters, not the stone, but the colour that is generated by the stone, and likewise, the stone encounters, not the eye but the vision generated by the eye. Then, how can the eye be sure that the whiteness originates from the stone, when the eye becomes the white-seeing eye? In order to solve this problem, Socrates seems to adopt two significant agents by which the parents and twin offspring are bound, kinship (*syngenē*: 156b7–c3), and necessity (*anangkē*: 160b6–10):

22) τὸ δ' αὖ αἰσθητὸν γένος τούτων ἐκάσταις ὁμόγονον, ὅψεσι μὲν χρώματα παντοδαπαῖς παντοδαπά, ἀκοαῖς δὲ ὁσαύτως φωναί, καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις αἰσθήσεσι τὰ ἄλλα αἰσθητὰ συγγενῆ γιγνόμενα.

23) ἐπεὶπερ ἡμῶν ἡ ἀνάγκη τὴν οὐσίαν συνδεῖ μὲν, συνδεῖ δὲ οὐδενὶ τῶν ἄλλων οὐδ' αὖ ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς. ἀλλήλοις δὲ λείπεται συνδεδέσθαι. ὥστε εἴτε τις εἶναι τι ὀνομάζει, τινὲ εἶναι ἢ τινὸς ἢ πρὸς τι ῥητέον αὐτῷ, εἴτε γίνεσθαι·

22) And again, the race of what is perceived is born at the same time/twin (*homogonon*) to each of them, there are all kinds of colours for all kinds of seeings, all kinds of sounds for all kinds of hearings, and all kinds of what is perceived for all kinds of perceptions in kinship (*syngenē*).

23) For necessity (*anangkē*) ties our being (*ousias*) [*sc.* parents], but it ties [our being] to none of the other things nor again to ourselves. Thus it remains that we are tied to each other. Hence, whether someone says that something is or becomes, he must say [that it 'is' or 'becomes'] 'for somebody (something)' or 'of somebody (something)' or 'relative to somebody (something)'.

According to (22), perceptual information is possible when perceptions and the qualities with which the perceptions are commensurate are generated as twins in kinship (*syngenēs*). Vision operates only with what is seen such as colour since vision and what is seen are akin just like hearing is akin with what is heard; vision cannot work with what is heard, i.e. sound, or what is touched, e.g. hardness. This kinship binds the perceptions with the relevant and correct qualities—i.e. percepts—in cases of perception; in the case of an eye seeing a white stone, vision only works with whiteness, not with hardness.<sup>186</sup> And in this case, so long as vision

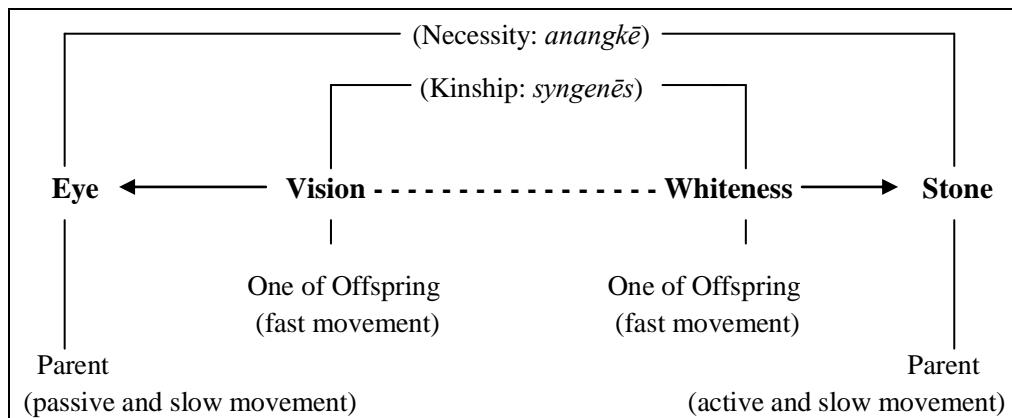
---

tap itself. His argument is questioning, then, how an eye and a stone can be filled with vision (of white) and whiteness respectively, since the twin offspring are generated in a middle location between their parents. An answer is possible as follows: the offspring, i.e. vision and colour, after being generated by their parents, i.e. an eye and a stone, move through the space between their parents, and have an impact with each other in the middle spot. At the moment of the impact, vision becomes the vision of white and colour the whiteness, and move back to their own parents, filling them up. Thus the eye which is filled with the vision of white becomes the white-seeing eye, the stone filled with the whiteness the white stone.

<sup>186</sup> In the *Meno* 76c7–d5, Socrates says that according to Empedocles (who is listed among those taking the side

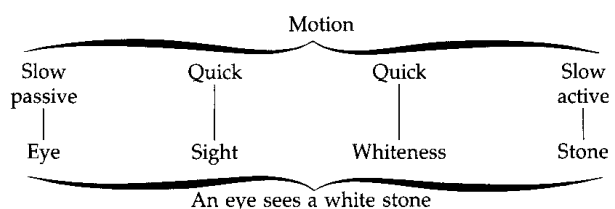
and whiteness are tied up tightly together, this vision cannot be wrong about it (this satisfies one condition of knowledge to be infallible). In (23) Socrates explains the relation of an eye with a stone. It never happens for someone who is perceiving to perceive nothing, and if he perceives nothing (*to mē on*), then he is not-perceiving. Whenever one perceives, therefore, one's perception must be about what is (*to on*), i.e. an external object. Perceiving subject and the external object are uniquely bound by necessity (*anangkē*) which leads them into a role of parents to generate twin offspring when perception occurs—this satisfies another condition of knowledge, that it is of what is. For example, if my body which is tied to the wind by necessity interacts with the wind when perception occurs, they generate twin offspring, my tactile perception of coldness and coldness, that are bound with each other by kinship, and then through the impact of those offspring, my body is filled with the tactile perception of coldness and the wind with the coldness, and finally the former becomes a cold feeling body in relation to the wind and the latter a cold wind for me. In this regard, I can truly but relatively judge that the wind is cold for me, or that it is a cold wind for me. The whole process of the occurrence of perception in this theory can be briefly pictured as follows:

The case of an eye seeing a white stone<sup>187</sup>



of perceptual relativism on a flux ontological basis, together with Protagoras and Heraclitus, in the *Theaetetus* 152e) there are effluvia of things and channels through which the effluvia make their way when perception occurs; in this case, some effluvia fit (*ἀρμόττειν*) some of the channels, while others do not, thus, for example, colour which is an effluvium from shapes is commensurate with (*σύμμετρος*) vision and perceived. In this passage Socrates probably intends to mean ‘kinship (*syngenēs*)’ by ‘fitting (*harmottein*)’ and ‘being commensurate with (*symmetros*)’. *Symmetron* also appears in the discussion on the case of an eye seeing a white stone (*Theaet.* 156d3–4). Cf. also Chappell (2004), 78.

<sup>187</sup> Cf. Burnyeat’s schema (1990), 16:



To sum up, according to this whole way of interpreting the MMD, Socrates clarifies that we have to think that nothing is in itself as it is, everything comes to be through the interaction with other things in a state of constant change and motion. Since my perception is always a perception of what is, and is also always true for me, I can safely be a measure of things that are how they are and of things that are not how they are not (the Flux-theory → the MMD). And I know the things that I perceive and I perceive the things that I know too, since I am always right about them (the MMD → Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception) (cf. Burnyeat's 'Reading B' (1990, 8–10) and n. 180 above). By making them coincide with each other, Socrates concludes his interpretation of the MMD as a claim of epistemological relativism in which knowledge equated with perception is private to each perceiver in a world of radical flux.

## 2. Refutation

Having established a whole argument for the MMD combined with the Secret Doctrine and a theory of perception, now Socrates examines it. The examination is first made of the MMD, and then the Secret Doctrine, and finally Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception—my research focuses on the first examination. The first examination divides into three parts: first, a preliminary stage of the refutation; second, Socrates' defence of the MMD on Protagoras' behalf; last, a more serious stage of the refutation including the self-refutation charge against the MMD.

### 2.1. Refutation of the Man-Measure Doctrine 1

Socrates raises three paradoxical cases which will occur if the MMD is taken to hold good; one concerning wisdom (161c–162a), one concerning foreign languages which have never been learnt (163b–c) (these two cases turn into the problem that one does and does not know at the same time, if knowledge is perception), and one concerning memory and remembering (163d–164b).

According to the MMD, every judgement about everything made by each individual is true for him. Then, there can be no one wiser or less wise than anyone else. Protagoras who proclaims the MMD cannot be wiser than anyone or even than a baboon or a pig that has

perceptions too, nor can he be less wise than the gods.<sup>188</sup> Protagoras then does not deserve to be called ‘a wise man (*sophos*) with wisdom (*phronēsis*)’, and no one needs education from him, since he claims that everyone’s judgement is true. No matter what subject, Protagoras’ teaching profession thus becomes meaningless.<sup>189</sup>

Since knowledge is defined as perception in the MMD, one would not have any difficulty in knowing (*eidēnai*)—and thus understanding (*manthanein*)—foreign languages that have never been taught to one, if one perceives (*aisthanesthai*) them. This brings the paradoxical conclusion that one knows and does not know at the same time. When you encounter and see or hear the language that you have never met before, you have to say that you know it so long as you are seeing or hearing, namely perceiving, it; but, simultaneously you have to admit that you do not know it because you do not understand it at all.<sup>190</sup> This, however, does not seem acceptable. To this problem, Theaetetus replies that we hear and see, i.e. perceive and thus know the sounds and the shapes and the colours of the foreign languages spoken and written, but we do not perceive their meanings, and this is why we know (the sounds, the shapes, the colours) and do not know (the meanings) simultaneously.

---

<sup>188</sup> Concerning the problem about the gods, Socrates says that Protagoras would probably have said that ‘you [*sc.* Socrates] drag in the gods which I exclude from all discussion, written or spoken, about them how they are or how they are not (δημηγορεῖτε συγκαθεζόμενοι, θεοὺς τε εἰς τὸ μέσον ἄγοντες, οὓς ἐγὼ ἔκ τε τοῦ λέγειν καὶ τοῦ γράφειν περὶ αὐτῶν ὡς εἰσὶν ἢ ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶν, ἔξαιρῶ)’ (162d6–e2), and does not discuss this problem anymore in the dialogue. On the discussion about Protagoras’ views on the gods, i.e. the *PTH* fragment, cf. Chapter IV above.

<sup>189</sup> Here, Socrates’ sarcastic criticism of Protagoras that he is not even wiser than a baboon surely enables us to infer an implication of Plato’s epistemological idea that in human cognitive state the level of perception is different from that of knowledge (cf. *Men.* 98a; *Alc. Ma.* 117b). Probably, one of Plato’s purposes is to show in the dialogue that one who takes the MMD to be true cannot be a teacher of any subject, Protagoras thus claims something meaningless, entirely wrong or lies to everyone.

<sup>190</sup> This paradox, nonetheless, does not seem congruent with the theory of perception in which parents and twin offspring are explained to be bound by necessity and kinship: the eyes and a stone are tied to one another by necessity, vision and whiteness by kinship. Likewise, eyes and a foreign language need to be tied to one another by necessity, vision and shape of the language by kinship (in a case of seeing the language), or ears and a foreign language by necessity, hearing and sound of the spoken language by kinship (in a case of hearing it). In the light of this theory, thus, an object (a foreign language) which generates its meaning as one pair of twin offspring must be tied to a perceptual (or cognitive) organ, i.e. a perceiving subject, which generates its perception (or cognition) as another pair of twin offspring. And the object and perceptual (or cognitive) organ must be tied to one another by necessity, their twin offspring by kinship. Simply:

- ‘eyes – vision : white – a stone’
- ‘ears – hearing : high pitch – a bird’

Likewise:

- ‘eyes – vision : shape – a foreign language’
- ‘ears – hearing : sound – a foreign language’
- ‘? (a perceptual organ) – ? (a certain type of perception) : meaning – a foreign language’

However, what is commensurate with the meaning of the language is not discussed in the paradox; Socrates here does not seem to take this point into consideration, or it may be that it is clearly an implicit problem for the epistemological theory of perception, if Plato tries to insist that it is not a perceptual organ but something else like soul or mind (*psychē* or *nous*; cf. 185a–e where soul is described to function through itself, not by any other sensory organs, and 189ea–190a where it is said to have a talk with itself about any subjects which it considers, i.e. *dianoia*), which is commensurate with the meaning of the language.



Socrates and Theaetetus end up agreeing that we neither perceive nor know by seeing or hearing what schoolmasters and interpreters tell us (163c2–4). This agreement seems to have the implication that according to the epistemological state of the MMD, teaching is impossible. What schoolmasters and interpreters do is to teach the (foreign) languages, but through perception no one can grasp their teaching. According to Socrates, the Protagoras who himself professes to *teach* is now unable to teach according to his own epistemological claim. Socrates says that some objections to Theaetetus' reply could be raised, but he does not explicitly say what they are. One of the objections would perhaps be that it is not possible for anyone to see or hear the meanings, and thus knowledge should not be defined as perception— i.e. not all knowledge is perception.

For the paradoxical case of remembering, Socrates argues that one would come both to know and not know something simultaneously again if one now remembers something which one perceived or learnt before. One knows it because one remembers it now, and one does not know it because one does not perceive it now. This paradox could also entail that one can remember something without knowing it—because knowing is perceiving, and you do not perceive it now.<sup>191</sup> In order to avoid these absurd cases, Theaetetus admits the difference between memory that occurs at the present time about the past things and sense-perception that occurs at the present time about the present things, saying that no one remembers anything exactly as one before perceived it.

The paradoxical cases of foreign languages and remembering can be presented again as follows (165b–e): it is agreed that it is not possible for anyone not to know what he knows. And one cannot see with the eyes covered, but can with the eyes uncovered. One can have one eye covered and the other eye uncovered, so one can both see and not see at the same time. Since seeing is knowing and not seeing is not knowing, it is possible to know (see) what one does not know (not see), and this situation surely violates the agreement—after this,

---

<sup>191</sup> This refutation based of the function of memory and remembering also could bring two controversies into discussion: first, here Socrates seems to take for granted that memory and remembering are (at least a part of) knowledge and knowing, and is always right, i.e. infallible. It has not, however, been argued yet, and so is not sure at this stage; second, Socrates, as seen above, seems to mean by the Greek word *aisthēsis* only sense-perception (cf. 166b3 where Socrates distinguishes perception from memory). In this regard, some scholars have labelled the MMD respectively as 'Narrow Protagoreanism/perceptual relativism' when it claims that whatever each individual *perceives* is so as he perceives it, narrowing down the meaning of *aisthēsis* to sense-perception and the objects to sensible ones; and as 'Broad Protagoreanism/Global relativism' when it entails that whatever each individual man *judges* is true for him, expanding the objects into ethical-social ones. On this, cf. Fine in Gill and McCabe (eds.) (1966), 106–7; McDowell (1973), 172–3 (his term 'a modified Protagorean doctrine'); Fine (2003), 134–5 and 161–2; Sedley (2004), 49–53; Chappell (2004), 118–20 (his term 'restricted Protagoreanism'). But it is not necessary for *aisthēsis* to be narrowly so, since this word was used in ancient Greece with a much wider meaning, including sensing, feeling, dreaming, remembering, calculating, than mere sense-perceiving. On this, cf. 156b2–7; Beare (1992), esp. 202–3.

Socrates at 165d alludes to some other similar paradoxical cases such as cases of knowing something clearly and dimly, knowing near at hand and not from a distance, and knowing something both intensely and slightly.

Knowledge has been regarded as infallible (*apseudes*) and about what is (*to on*). At this preliminary stage of the refutation, Plato adds some more conditions for knowledge. Wisdom must be derived not from perception but from knowledge, and a technical and professional cognitive state of knowledge must not be reduced to the level of sense-perception (from the paradoxical case of wisdom); knowledge must contain the possibility of understanding meanings and of teaching them to others (from the paradoxical case of foreign languages); and memory and remembering must take an important position in (establishing) knowledge (from the paradoxical case of memory and remembering).

## 2.2. Socrates' Defence of the Man-Measure Doctrine on Protagoras' behalf

Has Socrates refuted the MMD in a fair way? Socrates himself asks to pay more attention to what has been said and to what Protagoras would genuinely say; otherwise Protagoras would say that 'when you [*sc.* Socrates] are examining some of my [*i.e.* Protagoras'] ideas through questioning, if the one who is questioned is tripped up while answering as I would answer, then I am refuted, but if [he is answering something] different [from what I would answer], then he is refuted (ὅταν τι τῶν ἐμῶν δι' ἐρωτήσεως σκοπήῃς, ἐὰν μὲν ὁ ἐρωτηθεὶς οἷάπερ ἂν ἐγὼ ἀποκρινάιμην ἀποκρινάμενος σφάλληται, ἐγὼ ἐλέγχομαι, εἰ δὲ ἄλλοῖα, αὐτὸς ὁ ἐρωτηθεὶς)' (166a6–b1), Socrates imagines. Socrates first tries to defend the MMD on Protagoras' behalf in order to avoid the opponent's examining traps, and says that the sophist would have replied to the above paradoxical cases as follows (166b–c): first, one's present memory of something that one experienced in the past is not of the same type as one's experience in the past; second, it is possible for the same man to know and not to know the same thing at the same time; third, one who is in process of becoming unlike and different is not the same person as one was before.

Socrates does not explicitly say by means of what arguments Protagoras would have defended the replies above. However, as Sedley (2004, 55) suggests, it is possible to conjecture that the first and second replies are possible within the MMD if the doctrine takes memory and remembering to be types of perception and provides the correct qualifiers to the perceiving subjects in the case of perceiving things. Remembering a thing is (a form of) perceiving it, thus one who remembers perceives and so knows. But this type of perception

does not need to be necessarily the same as another type of perception like seeing, in the same way as seeing is also different from hearing. Thus, when one remembers something one knows it in the way of remembering (the correct qualifier), but one does not know it in the ways of seeing or hearing.

Similarly, the case that the same man can and cannot know the same thing simultaneously could be admitted to happen if the correct qualifiers are applied. If one has one eye uncovered and the other eye covered, then one see something with the eye uncovered and does not see that something with the eye covered. The proper qualifiers, ‘with the eye uncovered’ and ‘with the eye covered’, need to be applied, as Socrates has already put everything in a radical flux state so that each perceiving subject differs from each other. And the third reply is a reminder that perceiving subjects are in a state of constant change; a man who is in process of becoming unlike is not the same as he was before, thus Socrates ill is the result of becoming unlike from Socrates healthy, and the former is not the same as the latter (cf. 157e–160a).<sup>192</sup>

Subsequently, Socrates provides a defence on Protagoras’ behalf concerning the problem of wisdom (166c–167d). Socrates says that according to Protagoras, no one judges falsely: so long as everything is perceived truly and privately, everyone is true in his judgement. Judging falsely is the same as judging things that are not (*ta mē onta*), and ‘it is not possible to judge things that are not, or to judge anything other than what one is immediately experiencing, and what one is immediately experiencing is always true (οὔτε γὰρ τὰ μὴ ὄντα δυνατόν δοξάσαι, οὔτε ἄλλα παρ’ ἃ ἂν πάσχη, ταῦτα δὲ ἀεὶ ἀληθῆ)’ (167a7–b1). Hence there is no difference in the truth of judgements between different perceivers, and no wiser man regarding the matter of truth. Yet, still there is the difference of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ between perceivers or judges. No one judges in a truer way, but some people judge in a way good/better than others.<sup>193</sup> From this point of view, Protagoras goes on to suggest the possibility of wiser men who can bring about better judgements than others, i.e. change others’ judgements. Doctors are wise men in relation to the case of bodies and health (they cause the change of bodies by drugs to make

<sup>192</sup> In this respect Aristotle claims in the *Metaphysic* IV.6.1011a19–25 that the MMD as a relativist claim (that ‘*x* is *F* to *a* at *t*<sup>1</sup>’) does not violate the PNC, if judgements are fully equipped with proper qualifiers.

<sup>193</sup> In this Defence Protagoras would probably mean by ‘better’, as the literal meaning of *chrēmata* in the doctrine may imply, ‘more useful and beneficial (*ōphelimōteron* and *chrēsīmōteron*)’ or ‘most influential (*dynatōtatos*)’ (cf. *Prot.* 318e5–319a2). One’s good/better judgement is the judgement that produces more useful and beneficial results in one’s life in a community by which one becomes able to act and speak in a better way (cf. Section 3 in Chapter II above). From this point of view, some scholars have suggested that the Protagoreanism illustrated in the Defence is the first pragmatic or utilitarian claim in the history of philosophy, and is almost the same as modern pragmatism. On this, cf. Schiller (1907), 1; Cornford (1935), 73, n. 1; Levi (1940b), 287–8; Cole (1966), 111; Oehler (2002), 207–14. On the contrary, Burnyeat (1990, 23–5) argues against the above view on the grounds that a pragmatic claim does not require the truth of judgements.

men act and live in a better way), gardeners with regard to plant-life, sophists in relation to souls (they cause the change of souls by *logoi* to make men judge and live in a better way), and rhetoricians with regard to public affairs. The wisdom of these experts is not a matter of truth, but of experience of what is better; the more experience about a certain issue, i.e. a type of *technē* (cf. Section 2 in Chapter II above for the Protagorean experience and *technē* in the *Great Speech*) one has, the more chances to be wise and wiser about the issue one has (167b).

Now Socrates' Defence applies Protagorean relativism to the ethical and social realms. The Protagorean wise man is one 'who makes things appear, and thus be, good to people by effecting a change in them when they appears, and thus are, bad to them (αὐτὸν τοῦτον καὶ λέγω σοφόν, ὃς ἂν τιτι ἡμῶν, ᾧ φαίνεται καὶ ἔστι κακά, μεταβάλλων ποιήσῃ ἀγαθὰ φαίνεσθαί τε καὶ εἶναι)' (166d7–8). For example, the wise rhetoricians, or sophists in each city, are those who 'make beneficial things, instead of harmful things, seem and be just to their cities, so they replace harmful things which used to be for them, with beneficial things by making them seem and be just to people in their cities (σοφούς τε καὶ ἀγαθοὺς ῥήτορας ... πόλεις τὰ χρηστὰ ἀντὶ τῶν πονηρῶν δίκαια δοκεῖν εἶναι ποιεῖν, ... ἀντὶ πονηρῶν ὄντων αὐτοῖς ἐκάστων χρηστὰ ἐποίησεν εἶναι καὶ δοκεῖν)' (167c3–7). Taking this role of wise men in the cities into consideration, sophists who are able to educate their pupils are wise men, and are worth their large fees, Socrates emphasises on Protagoras' behalf.<sup>194</sup>

Despite Socrates' effort to defend the MMD, still a significant problem remains; as Burnyeat (1990, 23–55; cf. also Chappell, 2005, 106–7) correctly points out, in the Defence Protagoras' MMD "becomes an objective matter that one of two states of mind is more beneficial than the other", and "an equally objective, non-relative question whether experts exist." As initially examined, in Protagoras' thought, if all judgements are true, then all judgements regarding those judgements that are judged to be beneficial must be true. These sorts of true judgements would not change, so long as one takes them to be true. Meanwhile,

---

<sup>194</sup> Some scholars have attempted to ascribe this part of the Socratic Defence of the MMD to historical Protagoras. On this attempt, cf. Campbell (1883), xviii–xxx; Schiller (1908), 9 ff.; Cornford (1935), 72; Untersteiner (1954), 102–3; Versenyi (1962), 180, n. 5; Kerferd (1981a), 105; Zilioli (2007), 66–9. However, the whole Socratic interpretation of the MMD in the *Theaetetus* is based on the equation of knowledge with perception and with Plato's own interpretation of the doctrine (i.e. the Platonic reading of the MMD), and so the Defence is also believed to be constructed on the basis of them too, having a relativist structure that 'what appears good to someone is indeed good to him'. In so far as this equation cannot be surely attributed to the historical Protagoras, so is the Defence. Moreover, it does not seem appropriate to assume that Plato suddenly represents the historical Protagoras' genuine view point only in this part, while neglecting it in the earlier part of defence against the paradoxical cases of 'memory', 'knowing and not-knowing', and 'becoming unlike' (166b–c). For further discussion against the Protagorean authenticity of the Defence, cf. Burnet in Gillespie (1910), 471 ff.; Levi (1940b), 302; Cole (1966), 7; Nill (1985), 36–7; Allen (1996), 101–2. On the suggestion that the question should be left open, cf. Gillespie (1910), 471 ff.; McDowell (1973), 165 and 172–3; Burnyeat (1990), 22, n. 30.

some people's (the laymen's) judgements about what is beneficial must be in conflict with others' (the wise men's) judgements about the same issue. In this case, Protagoras' attempt to change one's judgements about what is beneficial is indeed meaningless unless he admits the universal belief that what is beneficial is not relative. This, however, contradicts Protagoras' relativistic position earlier made by Socrates, thus the Defence of the MMD on Protagoras' behalf is not really successful in the dialogue.

### 2.3. Refutation of the Man-Measure Doctrine 2

Now Socrates proposes again to examine the MMD. At this stage, Socrates asks to change his interlocutor from Theaetetus to Theodorus. Socrates was required to make a distinction between refuting Theaetetus and refuting Protagoras (166a6–b1), so that he seems to want to discuss with someone who can act more directly on behalf of Protagoras, i.e. Theodorus who is described as old enough (like Protagoras) and as having associated with Protagoras as his friend and pupil (cf. 160b7, 162a4).<sup>195</sup> This is because Socrates wants to avoid the possibility of wrong examination since he was criticised by the phantom of Protagoras for addressing his arguments to a young man (*pais*), i.e. Theaetetus, and exploiting this young man's fear in order to argue controversially against Protagoras' ideas (168c9–d2). Having Theodorus as his interlocutor, Socrates now goes on to refutation of the MMD again.

#### 2.3.1. The self-refutation

Socrates has earlier said that regarding wisdom (*phronēsis*) Protagoras claimed that there is no 'truer' or 'more false', but only 'better' or 'worse' in judging. The wise man in Protagoras' view is one who makes things appear, and thus be, good and better to people by effecting a change in them when they appear, and thus are, bad and worse to them (166d7–8). For instance, a wise rhetorician, or a wise sophist in a city, is one who replaces pernicious things with beneficial things by making them appear and be just to people in their city (167c6–7). The wise man is thus the one who is in charge of making a good/better and

---

<sup>195</sup> It may be a Platonic device of dramatisation for a more effective refutation of the MMD that Theodorus was associated with Protagoras, rather than a historical fact, as no ancient sources prove their association except for the *Theaetetus*. Theodorus (340–250 BCE) the atheist who is stated by Cicero (*De. Nat. Deor.* I.1.2) and Sextus Empiricus (*M.* 9.54–56: DK80 A12) to have joined an atheist group with Protagoras is certainly different from Theodorus the mathematician (the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE) in the *Theaetetus*.

beneficial and useful judgement, not a true judgement. Theodorus agreed with Socrates on his defence.

Socrates asks Theodorus again to examine the defended MMD in the shortest way (*hōs dia brachytatōn*) as to whether Protagoras or anyone would disagree with Socrates—as well as Theodorus since he agreed with Socrates—on it. As a result of the examination, it turns out that the MMD has the serious problem that it refutes itself. The argument for this examination has been thus labelled as ‘self-refutation (*peritropē*) argument’<sup>196</sup> by scholars, and falls into two parts. According to Socrates, the self-refuting problem of the MMD is caused both by ordinary people’s general belief that wisdom and ignorance exist and are respectively true thinking and false judgement (in the first part) and the specific anti-Protagorean disagreement with the MMD that the doctrine is false (in the second part). The first part goes as follows (170a3–c8):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1) τὸ δοκοῦν ἐκάστῳ τοῦτο καὶ εἶναί φησί που ᾧ δοκεῖ;</p> <p>2) οὐκοῦν, ὦ Πρωταγόρα, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνθρώπου, μᾶλλον δὲ πάντων ἀνθρώπων δόξας λέγομεν, καὶ φαιμέν οὐδένα ὄντινα οὐ τὰ μὲν αὐτὸν ἠγεῖσθαι τῶν ἄλλων σοφώτερον, τὰ δὲ ἄλλους ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ ἐν γε τοῖς μεγίστοις κινδύνοις, ὅταν ἐν στρατείαις ἢ νόσοις ἢ ἐν θαλάττῃ χειμάζωνται, ὥσπερ πρὸς θεοὺς ἔχειν τοὺς ἐν ἐκάστοις ἄρχοντας, σωτῆρας σφῶν προσδοκῶντας, οὐκ ἄλλῳ τῷ διαφέροντας ἢ τῷ εἰδέναι· καὶ πάντα που μεστὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ζητούντων διδασκάλους τε καὶ ἄρχοντας ἑαυτῶν τε καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ζῶων τῶν τε ἐργασιῶν, οἰομένων τε αὖ ἱκανῶν μὲν διδάσκειν, ἱκανῶν δὲ ἄρχειν εἶναι. καὶ ἐν τούτοις ἅπασι τί ἄλλο φήσομεν ἢ αὐτοὺς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἠγεῖσθαι σοφίαν καὶ ἀμαθίαν εἶναι παρὰ σοφίαν.</p> | <p>1) I suppose, he [<i>sc.</i> Protagoras] says that what seems (<i>to dokoun</i>) to each one also is for him.</p> <p>2) Well, then, Protagoras, we are also talking about the judgement of men, or rather of all men, and we say that there is no one who does not believe that he himself is wiser than others in some matters, while others are wiser than him in other matters, and that in the case of great dangers, when they are distressed in the battlefield, or in sickness, or in the sea, they consider their leaders as gods, and expect [them] as their saviours since they are distinguished in nothing else than knowing. And, I suppose, all human affairs are full of those who look for teachers and leaders for themselves and other living creatures and the [human] works, and again full of those who think that there are some who are capable of teaching, and others who are capable of leading, and in all these cases, we</p> |
|---|--|

<sup>196</sup> The word *peritropē* is etymologically connected to the verb *peritrepein* (‘to turn around or over’) and literally means ‘a turning around’. In the context of ancient philosophy, this word was used to indicate ‘turning an opponent’s arguments against himself’ (cf. LSJ. *s. v.*). Sextus Empiricus, dealing with the self-refutation of the MMD, also adopts this word (*M.* VII.389–390). For this term, cf. Burnyeat (1976a), 44–69, esp. 47–9; Castagnoli (2010), 41, n. 31 and 95. The argument for the MMD’s self-refutation has been referred to by scholars in various terms (as ‘self-defeat’, ‘self-referential incoherence/inconsistency’, ‘reversal’, ‘pragmatic paradox’, ‘self-contradiction’, ‘performative contradiction’, ‘self-stultification’, ‘self-destruction’, ‘recoil’, ‘turning the tables’, ‘retorition’).

3) οὐκοῦν τὴν μὲν σοφίαν ἀληθῆ διάνοιαν ἡγοῦνται, τὴν δὲ ἀμαθίαν ψευδῆ δόξαν;

4) τί οὖν, ὦ Πρωταγόρα, χρῆσόμεθα τῷ λόγῳ; πότερον ἀληθῆ φῶμεν ἀεὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους δοξάζειν, ἢ τοτὲ μὲν ἀληθῆ, τοτὲ δὲ ψευδῆ; ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων γάρ που συμβαίνει μὴ ἀεὶ ἀληθῆ ἀλλ' ἀμφοτέρα αὐτοὺς δοξάζειν. σκόπει γάρ, ὦ Θεόδωρε, εἰ ἐθέλοι ἄν τις τῶν ἀμφὶ Πρωταγόραν ἢ σὺ αὐτὸς διαμάχεσθαι ὡς οὐδεὶς ἡγεῖται ἕτερος ἕτερον ἀμαθῆ τε εἶναι καὶ ψευδῆ δοξάζειν.

cannot say anything else but that men themselves believe that both wisdom (*sophia*) and ignorance exist (*amathia*) among themselves.

3) Well, then, they believe that wisdom is true thinking (*alēthēs dianoia*), while ignorance is a false judgement (*pseudēs doxa*), right?

4) How then, Protagoras, are we to treat your doctrine? Are we to say that men always judge what is true, or sometimes what is true but sometimes what is false? For, from both, I suppose, it follows that they do not always judge what is true, but both [what is true and what is false]. For, examine, Theodorus, if someone of Protagoras' followers, or you yourself, would want to maintain that no one thinks that anyone else is ignorant and judges what is false.

At (1) Socrates first confirms the basic notion of the MMD that what seems to each one also is for him, thus false judgement is impossible. Then, through (2) and (3), Socrates presents a general belief accepted by people that everyone believes that wisdom and ignorance exist, and the former consists in true thinking and the latter in false judgement. At (4) Socrates presents a dilemmatic situation which Protagoras' MMD must encounter according to the general belief. The situation is that either men always judge what is true according to the MMD, or they sometimes judge what is false; either way there have to be false judgements; thus the MMD is false. These steps briefly go as follows:

Premises:

- (1) According to Protagoras' MMD, what seems to each one also is for him; accordingly, no false judgement exists.
- (2) Everyone believes that he is better than others in some respects, but worse in other respects, thus that wisdom and ignorance exist.
- (3) (Many or most) men believe that wisdom is true thinking, ignorance is a false judgement.
- (4) Thus, everyone believes that (many or most) men believe that false judgements exist. (from (2) and (3))

Dilemmas:

- (a) Men always judge what is true according to the MMD; then, false judgements exist, since

the widespread judgement that false judgements exist must also be true. (from (1))

- (b) Men sometimes judge what is false; then, of course, false judgements exist.
- (c) Whether (a) or (b), false judgements exist.
- (d) Therefore, the MMD is false. (against (1))

At (2) Socrates appeals to people's general belief that wisdom and ignorance exist. This general belief is proved, not by an argument, but by people's practice, based on a belief that wisdom is valuable, of looking for experts, teachers, and leaders whom they believe to be wiser in their specialties than any men. Thus, *many* or *most* men (except for Protagoras) believe that wisdom is true thinking, ignorance a false judgement, since the former is provided by specialists, the latter by non-specialists (3).

However, it may be disputed whether Protagoras himself would admit the general belief. Earlier, in the Defence, both Socrates and Protagoras agreed that wisdom is attributed to those who are capable of *good* judgements by making good things appear and be just, not of true judgements. Protagoras says that wisdom is not true thinking, but a good judgement, and, of course, then, ignorance not a false judgement, but a bad/harmful judgement (166d2–8).

Although Protagoras admits the general belief above, still a problem remains regarding Socrates' argument. At (1) Protagoras explicitly claims that 'what seems to each one also is *for him*.' Thus, Protagoras needs to admit the general belief in a relativised way; wisdom and ignorance exist, not for Protagoras himself, but for those who believe them to exist, and wisdom and ignorance are true thinking and false judgements respectively, not for Protagoras himself, but again for those who believe them to be. The dilemmas then need to be corrected as (a) 'men always judge what is true according to the MMD; then, false judgements exist *for those who believe them to exist*, since the judgement that false judgements exist must also be true *for them*', and as (b) 'the belief that men sometimes judge what is false is true *for those who believe so*; then, false judgements exist *for those whose belief that men sometimes judge what is false is true*.' From these corrections, then, it follows that 'false judgements exist *for those who believe them to exist*'. The dilemmatic situation is no longer dilemmatic, since the absolute existence of false judgements in general does not result; neither horn of the dilemma concludes the falsehood of the MMD in the argument. Here Socrates surely commits the fallacy of *ignoratio elenchi* in constructing the argument, by dropping the qualifiers.

After the self-refutation argument based on this general belief, Socrates takes the second part to continue his refutation. In this part, he discusses the self-refuting problem of the MMD on the grounds of the anti-Protagorean disagreement. Socrates shows that Protagoras



must be refuted by his own doctrine since he needs to admit that some believe the MMD to be false. The second part runs as follows (170d4–171c7):

5) ὅταν σὺ κρίνας τι παρὰ σαυτῷ πρὸς με ἀποφαίνῃ περὶ τινος δόξαν, σοὶ μὲν δὴ τοῦτο κατὰ τὸν ἐκείνου λόγον ἀληθὲς ἔστω, ἡμῖν δὲ δὴ τοῖς ἄλλοις περὶ τῆς σῆς κρίσεως πότερον οὐκ ἔστιν κριταῖς γενέσθαι, ἢ ἀεὶ σὲ κρίνομεν ἀληθῆ δοξάζειν; ἢ μυρίοι ἐκάστοτέ σοι μάχονται ἀντιδοξάζοντες, ἡγούμενοι ψευδῆ κρίνειν τε καὶ οἶεσθαι;

6) τί δὲ αὐτῷ Πρωταγόρα; ἄρ' οὐχὶ ἀνάγκη, εἰ μὲν μηδὲ αὐτὸς ᾤετο μέτρον εἶναι ἄνθρωπον μηδὲ οἱ πολλοί, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ οἴονται, μηδενὶ δὴ εἶναι ταύτην τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἣν ἐκεῖνος ἔγραψεν; εἰ δὲ αὐτὸς μὲν ᾤετο, τὸ δὲ πλῆθος μὴ συνοίεται, οἷσθ' ὅτι πρῶτον μὲν ὄσῳ πλείους οἷς μὴ δοκεῖ ἢ οἷς δοκεῖ, τοσούτῳ μᾶλλον οὐκ ἔστιν ἢ ἔστιν.

(ΘΕΟ. Ἀνάγκη, εἴπερ γε καθ' ἐκάστην δόξαν ἔσται καὶ οὐκ ἔσται.)

7) ἔπειτά γε τοῦτ' ἔχει κομψότατον ἐκεῖνος μὲν περὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ οἰήσεως τὴν τῶν ἀντιδοξάζοντων οἴησιν, ἢ ἐκεῖνον ἡγοῦνται ψεύδεσθαι, συγχωρεῖ που ἀληθῆ εἶναι ὁμολογῶν τὰ ὄντα δοξάζειν ἅπαντας.

8) οὐκοῦν τὴν αὐτοῦ ἂν ψευδῆ συγχωροῖ, εἰ τὴν τῶν ἡγουμένων αὐτὸν ψεύδεσθαι ὁμολογεῖ ἀληθῆ εἶναι;

9) οἱ δὲ γ' ἄλλοι οὐ συγχωροῦσιν ἑαυτοῖς ψεύδεσθαι;

10) ὁ δὲ γ' αὖ ὁμολογεῖ καὶ ταύτην ἀληθῆ τὴν δόξαν ἐξ ὧν γέγραφεν.

5) When you have decided something by yourself, and express a judgement about it to me, then let it be true for you according to that account [i.e. the MMD]. But isn't it possible for the rest of us to become judges (*kritai*) about your decision, or do we always decide that you judge the true? Or, aren't there on every occasion thousands men who fight with you making counter judgements, believing that you decide and think what is false?

6) Then, what for Protagoras himself? Isn't it necessary that, if he himself did not think that man is the measure, and the many did not either, as indeed they do not, then this *truth* which he wrote is [true] for no one? Whereas, if he did think [it to be so], but the masses do not agree, then, you know that first, the more numerous those who do not think [it to be so] are than those who think [it to be so], so much the more [it] is not [so] than [it] is [so].

(THEOD. It is necessary, if it will be and not be according to each individual judgement.)

7) Second, it [i.e. the MMD] has this subtlest feature: he [*sc.* Protagoras] admits, I suppose, the opinion of those judging contrary to his own opinion, in which they think he says the false, to be true, since he agrees that all men judge things that are (*ta onta*).

8) Well then, would he not admit his [opinion] to be false, if he agrees that the opinion of those thinking that he says the false is true?

9) On the other hand, the others do not admit that they themselves say the false, right?

10) But, again, he also agrees that this opinion [of theirs] is true, according to what he has written.

11) ἐξ ἀπάντων ἄρα ἀπὸ Πρωταγόρου ἀρξαμένων ἀμφισβητήσεται, μᾶλλον δὲ ὑπὸ γε ἐκείνου ὁμολογήσεται, ὅταν τῷ τάναντία λέγοντι συγχωρῇ ἀληθῆ αὐτὸν δοξάζειν, τότε καὶ ὁ Πρωταγόρας αὐτὸς συγχωρήσεται μήτε κύνα μήτε τὸν ἐπιτυχόντα ἄνθρωπον μέτρον εἶναι μηδὲ περὶ ἐνὸς οὗ ἂν μὴ μάθη. οὐχ οὕτως;

12) οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὴ ἀμφισβητεῖται ὑπὸ πάντων, οὐδενὶ ἂν εἴη ἡ Πρωταγόρου Ἀλήθεια ἀληθής, οὔτε τινὶ ἄλλῳ οὐτ' αὐτῷ ἐκείνῳ.

11) Therefore, it [i.e. the MMD] will be disputed by all men, starting with Protagoras, or rather, it will be agreed by him [*sc.* Protagoras], when he concedes to the one speaking oppositely that he judges what is true, at that time even Protagoras himself will admit that neither a dog nor anyone who you might encounter on the street by chance is the measure of any single thing which he has not learnt. Isn't that so?

12) Then, since it will be disputed by all men, the *Truth* of Protagoras will be true for no one, neither for someone else nor for himself [*sc.* Protagoras].

At (5) Socrates alludes to the case in which a number of people are against a certain belief, believing that it is false. And at (6) and (7) Socrates suggests two possibilities for the MMD to be false: first, if no one, including Protagoras himself, believes that the MMD is true, then this doctrine is, of course, not true for anyone; second, although Protagoras himself believes the MMD to be true, if the masses do not agree with him on this, then either the MMD is not true more than it is true, or Protagoras himself must admit the belief that the MMD is not true to be true, on account of the MMD that every judgement is true. The first point is too obvious to argue; Socrates gives much more attention to the second point, pointing out that Protagoras' MMD has the subtlest (*kompsoaton*) feature that it is self-refuting, contradicting its holders, including Protagoras himself. At (8) Socrates concludes that Protagoras needs to admit that his MMD is false, because Protagoras has to accept his opponents' belief about it to be true too. Socrates says that Protagoras himself must admit that that they are true in believing that the MMD is false, at (9) and (10), due to the doctrine's own claim. And thus, at (11) and (12), Socrates confirms again that the MMD, being disputed by all men including Protagoras himself, would be true for no one. The argumentative steps are briefly formulated as follows:<sup>197</sup>

- (I) There are some who judge that the MMD is false.
- (II) According to the MMD, every judgement is true.
- (III) According to the MMD, the judgement that the MMD is false is true.

<sup>197</sup> The term 'the MMD' here in the formulation is interchangeable with the term 'Protagoras'.

- (IV) Then, Protagoras himself admits that the MMD is false. (from (3))
- (V) Those who judge that the MMD is false will dispute the MMD.
- (VI) Thus, Protagoras will also dispute the MMD. (from (4))
- (VII) Therefore, the MMD is self-refuting.

If there are those who judge that the MMD is false, then their judgement that it is false is also true according to the MMD's very own claim that every judgement is true. And those who judge that the MMD is false will, of course, dispute it; it is the same as that the MMD itself will participate in those disputing it since it is also taking itself to be false. In this case, not only those who believe that the MMD is false, but also the holders of the MMD themselves, will dispute it. Hence, the MMD itself is self-refuting, and so is Protagoras by his own thesis.

A problem, however, can be also raised about the second part of the argument. Socrates has earlier interpreted the MMD as a thesis of epistemological relativism. The truth of each judgement is thus limited to its judger relatively. As far as the qualifiers are concerned in relation to the truth of the judgements, some propositions need to be corrected with restoration of the missing qualifiers: (II') 'according to the MMD, *each judgement made by each person is true for them*', (III') 'according to the MMD, the judgement that the MMD is false is true *for those who made this judgement*'. Thus, in (IV'), what Protagoras himself needs to admit is not the general fact that the MMD is false, but the relativised case that 'the MMD is false *for those who judge it false*'. Consequently, in (VI'), the conclusion needs to be re-stated as follows: 'not Protagoras, but only *those who judge it false* dispute the MMD', since only those who judge that the MMD is false will dispute it (from (V)), and it does not absolutely follow that it is false (from (IV')). Therefore, (VII') 'the MMD is *not* self-refuting'. Although Protagoras' opponents keep trying to argue against Protagoras by refusing to concede that the judgement that the MMD is false is true only for them, he can continue to add the qualifiers to their judgements, denying the case that the MMD is false for him. Again, this shows that the self-refutation argument does not prove the absolute falsehood of the MMD. Thus, Socrates, just as in the first part of the argument for the self-refutation of the MMD, again, seems to be guilty of *ignoratio elenchi* in the second part.<sup>198</sup>

---

<sup>198</sup> For discussion that Socrates is fully guilty of *ignoratio elenchi*, cf. Grote (1875), Kerferd (1949), Vlastos (1956), Runciman (1962), Sayre (1969), Zilioli (2007). For the suggestion that Socrates is guilty of *ignoratio elenchi*, but still the MMD itself is problematic although the missing qualifiers are restored, cf. Lee (1973), McDowell (1973), Guthrie (1978), Newman (1982), Waterfield (1987), Bostock (1988), Polansky (1992), Chappell (1995, 2004), Bailey (1997), McCabe (2000). For suggestion that Socrates is not guilty of *ignoratio elenchi* since the readers of this dialogue are required to supply the missing qualifiers implicitly to the argument and will find that the MMD is still self-refuting, cf. Burnyeat (1976b and 1990, 29–31), Denyer (1991), Gottlieb

Some commentators, reconstructing the self-refutation argument from the dialogue, have suggested (cf. Burnyeat, 1976b, and 1990, 29–31) that Socrates is in fact not guilty of *ignoratio elenchi*. Burnyeat even argues that it is in fact Plato’s deliberation that Socrates drops the qualifiers in arguing against Protagoras, and that Plato wishes the readers of his *Theaetetus* to realise that they can still obtain a sound argument against Protagoras’ MMD when they restore all the missing qualifiers. According to Burnyeat’s reading, Protagoras cannot grant the judgement that the MMD is false for those who judge it false, without also admitting that his doctrine is false *simpliciter*. He (1976b, 172, and 181–2) says that “Protagoras’ theory is, after all, a theory of the truth and a theory of the truth must link judgements to something else—the world, as philosophers often put it, though for a relativist the world has to be relativised to each individual. ... each of us lives in a private world constituted by a succession of momentary appearances, all of which are true in that world quite independently of what happens next in a given world,” that is, he clarifies the MMD as a “subjectivist thesis”. In his understanding, a thing which seems to  $x$  (as)  $F$  (since  $x$  believes it to be  $F$ ) and so is  $F$  for  $x$ , is  $F$  in  $x$ ’s private world. When we apply this to the case of the self-refutation argument, it follows that ‘the MMD which seems to Protagoras’ opponents (as) false and so is false for them, is false in their private world.’ Since Protagoras claims that every judgement is true in its holder’s own world, he in his own world must admit that his opponents’ judgement that the MMD is false is true in their worlds. Accordingly, not only those who believe the MMD to be false but also Protagoras, who believes it to be true, must admit that the MMD is false.<sup>199</sup>

However, it is disputable whether this suggestion properly depicts Protagoras’ MMD, since it does not seem likely that ‘being true for  $x$ ’ indeed signifies ‘being true in  $x$ ’s world’

---

(1992), Emilsson (1994), Sedley (2004). For the suggestion that Socrates is not guilty of *ignoratio elenchi* since the argument indeed works without the qualifiers, cf. Arthur (1982), Ketchum (1992), Fine (1998a and b). For the view that the self-refutation argument indeed aims at the infallibilism of Protagoras’ doctrine, cf. Waterlow (1977), Cooper (1990), Lee (2005). And for alternative discussion on Plato’s self-refutation argument, cf. Cornford (1935), Tigner (1971), Haden (1984), White (1989), Nancy (1995), Rezendes (2001), Bemelmans (2002), Long (2004), Castagnoli (2004) and (2010).

<sup>199</sup> Burnyeat’s suggestion is briefly formulated as follows (cf. Castagnoli, 2004, 16):

- (1) Protagoras believes that all men judge what is the case <for them>.
- (2) Protagoras admits that his opponents judge that the MMD is false.
- (3) Protagoras must concede that it is true <for his opponents> that the MMD is false. (from (1) and (2))
- (4) Protagoras must concede that the MMD is false <for his opponents>. (from (3))
- (5) Protagoras’ opponents do not concede that their own judgement about the MMD is false.
- (6) Protagoras must admit that his opponents’ judgement that their own judgement about the MMD is not false is true <for them>. (from (1) and (5))
- (7) Since (a) Protagoras has conceded that it is true <for his opponents> that the MMD is false, (b) he must admit that the MMD is false (*simpliciter*).

For the arguments in support of Burnyeat’s suggestion, cf. Emilsson (1994), 136–49; Sedley (2004), 57–62. And for the arguments against Burnyeat, cf. Wedin (2005), 171–91; Castagnoli (2004), 3–32 and (2010), 40–67.

in the MMD. According to the MMD as interpreted so far by Socrates as an epistemological form of relativism, truth is relative to the individual. Yet, the interpreting ‘true for  $x$ ’ as meaning ‘true in  $x$ ’s world’ requires an assumption that the MMD in fact admits that there is an objective conception of the truth. For, as Bostock (1988, 90–1; cf. also Chappell, 2004, 113–4) points out, according to Burnyeat’s reading, Protagoras’ relativist claim is “taken to be ‘true for  $x$ ’ if and only if it is a description of  $x$ ’s world which is true (of that world) in an absolute and objective way.” Then, unlike Socrates’ (or Plato’s) reading of the MMD in the *Theaetetus*, this suggestion does not treat the Protagorean truth as a fully relativist one. Socrates has shown that Protagoras’ MMD maintains that simply the same public thing, not some private thing in an individual’s world which other people cannot grasp by their perception, appears differently, i.e. relatively, to different people, i.e. in relation to each perceiver, because this thing, and also each perceiver, is in constant change. That is to say, the MMD connected with its ontological basis, i.e. the Flux-theory (153d8–154a2), is understood as a relativist epistemology in which the percepts of perceived objects, not the objects themselves, are private to each perceiver.

Moreover, even if the MMD indeed entailed a form of subjectivism, it would seem still possible for Protagoras to ‘subjectivise’ his opponents’ belief that the MMD is false within their own private worlds, not within his world. For, Protagoras would probably simply argue that Protagoras’ judgement that his opponent’s judgement that the MMD is false is true in the opponent’s world is true in Protagoras’ world. Thus, the MMD is false only in his opponent’s world, not in Protagoras’ world, not ‘self-refuting’ in Protagoras’ world. In this regard, taking Socrates’ interpretation of the MMD as a subjectivist thesis in order to support the self-refutation argument seems inappropriate.

### 2.3.2. The impossibility of ‘wisdom’ and ‘future benefit and usefulness’

After discussing the self-refutation of the MMD, Socrates tries to refute the doctrine from the points of view of ‘wisdom’ and that of ‘future benefit and usefulness’. From the first viewpoint, he says that Protagoras at least admits that some are wiser and some are not: ‘at the moment, then, we should say that anyone would admit at least this, that some men are wiser than others, and some more ignorant (καὶ δῆτα καὶ νῦν ἄλλο τι φῶμεν ὁμολογεῖν ἂν τοῦτό γε ὄντινοῦν, τὸ εἶναι σοφώτερον ἕτερον ἑτέρου, εἶναι δὲ καὶ ἀμαθέστερον)’ (171d5–7).

At this stage, the concept of ‘wiser’ is limited to making things better and beneficial to people in certain fields like medicine or politics. Many things that provide perceptual

information to men (e.g. what is hot, what is sweet, what is dry, and so on) are as they are to men for just as long as they appear so to them. But in other cases—e.g. what is good/better and bad/worse, i.e. what is beneficial and useful and what is harmful—there are experts who are supposed to be wiser than others. For instance, about what is good/better, i.e. beneficial and useful, in the case of medicine, doctors are wiser. This case is equally applicable to political and ethical issues. Let us concede that concerning things that can and cannot be done, just and unjust, pious and impious, each city is the measure of them. What appears to the city is true for that city at the time when it seems that way and for just as long as it so seems to it. And the city establishes them as law and convention.<sup>200</sup> However, in making laws that benefit or harm a city, there is a distinction between experts in the truth of their judgements: ‘one adviser differs from another, and the judgement of one city differs from another, in respect of the truth (σύμβουλόν τε συμβούλου διαφέρειν καὶ πόλεως δόξαν ἑτέραν ἑτέρας πρὸς ἀλήθειαν)’ (172a7–8). That is, there are some people who are wiser and superior in establishing laws for a city. Socrates argues that Protagoras will have to agree on this point, since he has professed to be able to teach about these issues. In all these cases, thus, neither a patient, nor an individual citizen, nor another city can claim wiser judgements concerning health and political issues, but a doctor or a wise politician.

As shown above, Socrates says that the experts are superior in making judgements in specific fields, ‘in respect of the truth (*pros alētheian*)’. As Cornford (1953, 80–1) asks, if Protagoras needs to admit this, it is worth asking where the distinctions between the experts and the laymen in making judgements and the superiority of the experts lie. In the Defence Protagoras explicitly maintains that in respect of the truth there is no difference between men, but in respect of good/better and bad/worse there is. The expression, ‘in respect of the truth’, which must imply the Socratic or Platonic idea that being good and bad also requires a certain standard (criterion, or *metron*) to be judged so, does not seem to belong to Protagoras’ idea. At the beginning of the dialogue, Socrates identifies wisdom (*sophia*) with knowledge (*epistēmē*), and says that knowledge is to know an object rightly, not wrongly (145d–e). Thus, here Socrates requires Protagoras to admit that even in the sophist’ view, doctors and wise politicians, i.e. the experts, need to *know* what is good in health and political affairs in order to make better judgements in each case, and this *knowledge* is the same as knowing the objective truth. If a man does not have knowledge of what good is when maintaining that what seems to each person is true for him, then there is no way for that man to be an expert in

---

<sup>200</sup> Note the difference between the ethical relativism presented in this passage and the form of relativity of the application of the objective civic senses argued in Section 3 in Chapter II above.

any case. The Protagorean wise man (*sophos*), if he claims to make good things seem and be just without respect to the truth, has no place to stand to be wise. The wise man must have power (*dynamis*) to lead people into a better state, and this sort of power must be knowledge about the truth concerning the beneficial and harmful. Knowledge of what is good/better and beneficial and useful must be knowledge of the truth concerning these matters (cf. 166c–167d).<sup>201</sup>

Secondly, Socrates proceeds with the refutation from the point of view of ‘future benefit and usefulness’. He reminds Theodorus that in a relativist view of ethical and political issues whatever a city decides and establishes to be just and right as its law, actually is what is just and right *for that city and for as long as it remains so established* (177d). Socrates then argues that laws and customs are about what is beneficial at the present moment, while the establishment of them indeed aims at what will produce beneficial and useful effects in the future (178a8–10): the political experts establish laws, looking at what will be in the future. In the light of this point, Socrates poses a question (178b9–c2): ‘does man have in himself the standard of things that will be in the future, and things that would be thought to be going to be, will these things happen to him who thought so (καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἔσεσθαι ἔχει τὸ κριτήριον ἐν αὐτῷ, καὶ οἷα ἂν οἰηθῆ ἔσεσθαι, ταῦτα καὶ γίγνεται ἐκείνῳ τῷ οἰηθέντι)?’ Protagoras’ MMD concerns perception which always occurs only at the present moment, and cannot be about the future. The doctrine is thus not able to give any answer to this question. The real experts, whatever subjects they are experts in, are the best judgement makers about what will be and seem in their field in the future.

Now Socrates ends his refutation of the MMD, emphasising the role of knowledge. According to the MMD, anyone is a measure. But what is the case is that one who is wiser than another must be the measure (in a field where one is expert in, e.g. establishing laws in a city), the other who lacks knowledge can never be a measure (in establishing laws). Here Socrates insinuates that knowledge which must be of the truth ought to be a power to produce benefit in the future, and that without such knowledge, no one can be the measure of certain objects when they are related to producing benefit. Finally, at 179b6–9, Theodorus (on Protagoras’ behalf) admits that in this respect Protagoras’ MMD is most convicted (ἐκείνη μάλιστα ἀλίσκεσθαι ὁ λόγος), and so refuted.

---

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Chappell (2004), 118–20.

## Bibliography

- Adam, J. and Adam, A. M. (1893), *Platonis Protagoras: With introductions, notes, and appendices by J. Adam and A. M. Adam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Adkins, A. W. H. (1973), ‘ἀρετή, τέχνη, Democracy and Sophists: *Protagoras* 316b–328d’, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 93: 3–12.
- (1980), ‘The Greek Concept of Justice from Homer to Plato (Review Article about E. A. Havelock’s *Greek Concept of Justice from Its Shadow in Homer to Its Substance in Plato*)’, *Classical Philology* 75: 256–68.
- (1990), ‘Myth, Philosophy, and Religion in Ancient Greece’, in Reynolds, F. E. and Tracy, D. (eds.), *Myth and Philosophy*: 95–130.
- Adams, F. (1881), *Hippocrates: On Airs, Waters and Places*, at MIT Classics Archive (rep. by Kessinger Publishing in 2009).
- Algra, K. A., Barnes, J., Mansfeld, J., and Schofield, M. (eds.) (1999), *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Allen, R. E. (1996), *Plato: Ion, Hippias Minor, Laches, Protagoras*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Angehrn, E. (2007), *Anfang und Ursprung: Die Frage nach dem Ersten in Philosophie und kulturwissenschaft*, Berlin and New York: Colloquium Rauricum Band 10.
- Annas, J. and Barnes, J. (1985), *The Modes of Scepticism: Ancient Texts and Modern Interpretations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2000), *Sextus Empiricus: Outlines of Scepticism* (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Annas, J. and Rowe, C. J. (eds.) (2002), *New Perspectives on Plato, Modern and Ancient*, Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Arends, F., Bartels, M., Van Berkel, T., De Beus, T., Caspers, C., Notomi, N., Van Raalte, M., Rademaker, A., and Stolwijk, J. (eds.) (forthcoming), *Sources for Protagoras*, The National Protagoras Society.
- Arnaoutoglou, I. (1998), *Ancient Greek Laws: A Sourcebook*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Arthur, E. P. (1982), ‘Plato, *Theaetetus* 171 A’, *Mnemosyne* 35: 335–37.
- Bailey, A. R. (1997), ‘Is Man the Measure?’, *Philosophical Inquiry* 14: 71–84.
- Balaban, O. (1987), ‘The Myth of Protagoras and Plato’s Theory of Measurement’, *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 4: 371–84.
- (1999), *Plato and Protagoras: Truth and Relativism in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Barnes, J. (1982), *The Presocratic Philosophers* (rev. and ed. in one paperback volume), London:



- Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- (ed.) (1984), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- (2001<sup>2</sup>), *Early Greek Philosophy*, London: Penguin Classics.
- Barney, R. (2001), *Names and Nature in Plato's Cratylus*, London and New York: Routledge.
- (2006) 'The Sophistic Movement' in Gill, M. L. and Pellegrin, P. (eds.), *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy* (Blackwell Companions to Philosophy): 77–97.
- Barrett, H. (1987), *The Sophists*, Novato, California: Chandler and Sharp Publisher.
- Baltzly, D. (1999), 'Aristotle and Platonic Dialectic in *Metaphysics* Γ 4', *Apeiron* 32: 171–202.
- Beare, J. I. (1992), *Greek Theories of Elementary Cognition: From Alcmaeon to Aristotle* (rep. of the 1906 edition), Oxford at the Clarendon Press: Thoemmes Press.
- Bemelmans, R. (2002), 'Why Does Protagoras Rush Off? Self-Refutation and Haste in Plato, *Theaetetus* 169a–171d', *Ancient Philosophy* 11: 199–224.
- Beresford, A. (2009), 'The Story in the *Protagoras*: Sketching a Naturalistic Ethics', forthcoming in *Protagoras of Abdera, The Man, His Measure (Philosophia Antiqua Series)*, Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Bertman, M. (2007), 'Protagoras and Modern Conventional Political Theories', *Protagoras of Abdera* (Protagoras Conference, July, 2007, Leiden): 1–8.
- Bett, R. (1989), 'The Sophists and Relativism', *Phronesis* 34: 139–69.
- (2005), *Sextus Empiricus: Against the Logicians* (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Binder, G. and Liesenborghs, L. (1966), 'Eine Zuweisung der Sentenz ouk estin antilegein an Prodikos von Keos', *Museum Helveticum* 23: 37–43.
- Blumenberg, H. (1979), *Arbeit am Mythos* (English trans. by Wallace, R. M. as *Work on Myth*, Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1985), Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Bolonyai, G. (2007), 'Protagoras the Atheist', *Rhizai* 4: 247–69.
- Bonitz, H. (1848), *Aristotelis Metaphysica*, Bonnae: A. Marcus.
- Bostock, D. (1988), *Plato's Theaetetus*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Boys-Stones, G. R. (2009), 'The Philosophy of Religion in Classical Antiquity (Introduction to Volume 1: Ancient Philosophy of Religion)', in Oppy, G. and Trakakis, N. (eds.), *The History of Western Philosophy of Religion, Vol. I: Ancient Philosophy and Religion*: 1–22.
- Brisson, L. (1975), 'Le mythe de Protagoras. Essai d'analyse structurale', *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 20: 7–37.
- Brochard, V. (1954), *Études de Philosophie Ancienne et de Philosophie Moderne*, Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin (6, Place de la Sorbonne).
- Brunschwig, J. (1999), 'Introduction: the Beginning of Hellenistic Epistemology', in Algra, K. A., Barnes, J., Mansfeld, J., and Schofield, M. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*: 229–59.

- Burnet, J. (ed.) (1900–7), *Platonis Opera*, 5 Vols (Oxford Classical Texts), Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burnyeat, M. (1976a), ‘Protagoras and Self-Refutation in Later Greek Philosophy’, *Philosophical Review* 85: 44–69.
- (1976b), ‘Protagoras and Self-Refutation in Plato’s *Theaetetus*’, *Philosophical Review* 85: 172–95.
- (1976c), ‘Plato on the Grammar of Perceiving’, *The Classical Quarterly* 26: 29–51.
- (1990), *The Theaetetus of Plato: with a Translation of Plato’s Theaetetus by M. J. Levett and revised by Myles Burnyeat*, Indianapolis: Hackett.
- (2002), ‘Plato on How Not to Speak of What is Not: *Euthydemus* 283a–288a’, in Pellegrin, P. and Canto-Sperber, M. (eds.), *Le Style de La Pensée: Recueil de Texts en Hommage à Jacques Brunschwig*: 40–66.
- Bury, R. G. (1933), *Sextus Empiricus: Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (Loeb Classical Library), Harvard University Press.
- (1936), *Sextus Empiricus: Against the Physicists, Against the Ethicists* (Loeb Classical Library), Harvard University Press.
- Campbell, L. (1973), *The Theaetetus of Plato*, New York: Arno Press.
- Capizzi, A. (1955), *Protagora: Le Testimonianze e I Frammenti, Edizione Riveduta e Ampliata con Uno Studio su La Vita, Le Opere, Il Pensiero e La Fortuna* (aka C.), Firenze: G. C. Sansoni-Editore.
- Castagnoli, L. (2004), ‘Protagoras Refuted: How Cleaver is Socrates’ “Most Clever” Argument at *Theaetetus* 171a–c?’, *Topoi* 23: 3–32.
- (2007), ‘“Everything is True”, “Everything is False”: Self-Refutation Arguments from Democritus to Augustine’, *Antiquorum Philosophia* 1: 11–74.
- (2010), *Ancient Self-Refutation: The Logic and History of the Self-Refutation Argument from Democritus to Augustine*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Cerroni, A. (2001), ‘Beliefs and Ideas: Socio-Cognitive Relativity beyond Relativism’, *Scipolicy* 1: 356–65.
- Chance, T. H. (1992), *Plato’s Euthydemus: Analysis of What is and is not Philosophy*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Chappell, T. (1995), ‘Does Protagoras Refute Himself?’, *The Classical Quarterly* 45: 333–38.
- (2004), *Reading Plato’s Theaetetus*, Indianapolis and Cambridge, Hackett.
- (2006), ‘Reading the περιτροπή: *Theaetetus* 170c–171c’, *Phronesis* 51: 109–39.
- Chilton, C. W. (1962), ‘An Epicurean View of Protagoras: A Note on Diogenes of Oenoanda Fragment XII(W)’, *Phronesis* 7: 105–9.
- Classen, C. J. (ed.) (1976a), *Sophistik*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- (1976b), ‘The Study of Language amongst Socrates’ Contemporaries’, in Classen, C. J. (ed.),

*Sophistik*: 306–11.

- Code, A. (1986), 'Aristotle's Investigation of a Basic Logical Principle: Which Science Investigates The Principle of Non-Contradiction?', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 16: 341–58.
- Cohen, S. M. (1986), 'Aristotle on the Principle of Non-Contradiction', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 16: 359–70.
- Cole, A. T. (1966), 'The Apology of Protagoras', *Yale Classical Studies* 19: 101–18.  
(1972), 'The Relativism of Protagoras', *Yale Classical Studies* 22: 19–45.
- Conacher, D. J. (1998), *Euripides and the Sophists: Some Dramatic Treatments of Philosophical Ideas*, London: Duckworth.
- Cooper, J. M. (1970), 'Plato on Sense Perception and Knowledge: *Theaetetus* 184 to 186', *Phronesis* 15: 123–46.
- Cooper, J. M. (1990), *Plato's Theaetetus*, London and New York: Garland.  
(1997), *Plato: Complete Works*, Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Cornford, F. M. (1935), *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Cook, J. W. (1999), *Morality and Cultural Differences*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Coulet, C. (1999), *Communiquer en Grèce Ancienne: Ecrits, Discours, Information, Voyages*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Coxon, A. H. (1986), *The Fragments of Parmenides: A Critical Text with Introduction, Translation, the Ancient testimonia and a Commentary*, New Hampshire: Van Gorcum.
- Crombie, I. M. (1963), *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines*, Vols. 1 and 2, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Crowley, S. (1989), 'A Plea for the Revival of Sophistry', *Rhetoric Review* 7: 318–34.
- Crubellier, M. and Laks, A. (eds.) (2009), *Aristotle: Metaphysics Beta—Symposium Aristotelicum*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Curd, P. (2011<sup>2</sup>), *A Presocratic Reader: Selected Fragments and Testimonia, Edited, with introduction, by Patricia Curd, Translation by Richard D. McKirahan and Patricia Curd*, Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett.
- Davison, J. A. (1953), 'Protagoras, Democritus, and Anaxagoras', *The Classical Quarterly* 3: 33–45.
- De Hass, F. A. (2009), 'Aporiai 3–5', in Crubellier, M. and Laks, A. (eds.), *Aristotle: Metaphysics Beta—Symposium Aristotelicum*: 73–104.
- De Romilly, J. (1992), *The Great Sophists in Periclean Athens* (English trans. by Lloyd, J.), Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- De Sélincourt, A. (1954), *Herodotus: The Histories*, London: Penguin Classics (rev. in 1972 and 2003).
- De Vries, G. J. (1972), 'Notes on Some Passages in the *Euthydemus*', *Mnemosyne* 25: 42–55.
- Denyer, N. (1991), *Language, Thought, and Falsehood in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, London and

- New York: Routledge.
- (2008), *Plato: Protagoras* (Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Di Cesare, D. (1996), 'Die Geschmeidigkeit der Sprache. Zur Sprachauffassung und Sprachbetrachtung der Sophistik', in Schmitter, P. (ed.), *Sprachtheorien der abendländischen Antike* (the First Edition in 1991): 87–118.
- Diels, H. and Kranz, W. (eds.) (1951–2), *Die Fragmente Der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edition. 3 vols (aka DK), Zurich: Weidmann.
- Dillon, J and Gergel, T. (2003), *The Greek Sophists*, London: Penguin.
- Dodds, E. R. (1973), *The Ancient Concept of Progress and Other Essays on Greek Literature and Belief*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Donovan, B. R. (1993), 'The Project of Protagoras', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 23: 35–47.
- Dooley, W. E. and Madigan, A. (1992), *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On Aristotle Metaphysics 2 & 3*, London: Duckworth.
- Duke, E. A., Hicken, W. F., Nicoll, W. S. M., Robinson, D. B., and Strachan, J. C. G. (eds.) (1995), *Platonis Opera*, Vol. I (Oxford Classical Texts), Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dumont, J-P. (1969), *Les Sophistes: Fragments et Témoignages*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Dunn, F. M. (2001), 'Protagoras and the Parts of Time', *Hermes* 129: 547–50.
- Dupréel, E. (1948), *Les Sophistes: Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus, Hippias*, Neuchatel: Éditions Du Griffon.
- Emilsson, E. K. (1994), 'Plato's Self-Refutation Argument in *Theaetetus* 171 A–C Revisited', *Phronesis* 39: 136–49.
- Epps, P. H. (1964), 'Protagoras' Famous Statement', *The Classical Journal* 59: 223–26.
- Evans, J. D. G. (1974), 'Aristotle on Relativism', *Philosophical Quarterly* 24: 193–203.
- (1977), *Aristotle's Concept of Dialectic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fagles, R. (1990), *Homer: The Iliad*, London and New York: Penguin.
- (1997), *Homer: The Odyssey*, London and New York: Penguin.
- Farrar, C. (1988), *The Origins of Democratic Thinking*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ferrarin, A. (2000), 'Homo Faber, Homo Sapiens, or Homo Politicus? Protagoras and the Myth of Prometheus', *The Review of Metaphysics* 54: 289–319.
- Fehling, D. (1965), 'Zwei Untersuchungen zur griechischen Sprachphilosophie', *Rheinisches Museum* 108: 212–29.
- Fine, G. (1966), 'Conflicting Appearance: *Theaetetus* 153A–154B' in Gill, C. and McCabe, M. M. (eds.), *Form and Argument in Late Plato*: 105–34 (rep. in Fine, G. (2003), *Plato on Knowledge and Forms: Selected Essays*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 160–83).
- (1998a), 'Plato's Refutation of Protagoras in the *Theaetetus*', *Apeiron* 31: 201–34.

- (1998b), 'Relativism and Self-Refutation: Plato, Protagoras, and Burnyeat', in Gentzler, J. (ed.), *Method in Ancient Philosophy*: 137–63.
- (2003), *Plato on Knowledge and Forms: Selected Essays*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Freese, J. H. (1894), *Orations of Isocrates: with introduction and notes*, Vol. 1, London: George Bell and Sons.
- Ford, A. (1994), 'Protagoras' Head: Interpreting Philosophic Fragments in *Theaetetus*', *The American Journal of Philology* 115: 199–218.
- Fowler, H. N. (1928), *Plato: Theaetetus, Sophist*, (rev.) (Loeb Classical Library), Harvard University Press.
- Gagarin, M. (1968), *Plato and Protagoras*, Yale University (Ph.D. Thesis).
- (1969), 'The Purpose of Plato's *Protagoras*', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 100: 133–64.
- (1986), *Early Greek Law*, Berkley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.
- (2002), 'Protagoras' New fragment: Thirty Years Later', *Noctes Atticae: Studies Presented to Jørgen Mejer on his Sixtieth Birthday March 19, 2002*: 114–20.
- Gagarin, M. and Woodruff, P. (1995), *Early Greek Political Thought from Homer to the Sophists*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gallop, D. (1991), *Parmenides of Elea: A Text and translation with an introduction*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Gentzler, J. (ed.) (1998), *Method in Ancient Philosophy*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gerson, L. P. (2009), *Ancient Epistemology*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gifford, E. H. (1905), *The Euthydemus of Plato*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gilbert, J. (2003), 'The Sophists' in Shields, C. (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to Ancient Philosophy*: 27–50.
- Gill, C. (2002), 'Dialectic and the Dialogue Form', in Annas, J. and Rowe, C. J. (eds.), *New Perspectives on Plato, Modern and Ancient*: 145–70.
- (2005), 'In What Sense are Ancient Ethical Norms Universal?', in Gill, C. (ed.), *Norms, Virtue, and Objectivity: Issues in Ancient and Modern Ethics*: 15–40.
- (ed.) (2005), *Virtue, Norms, and Objectivity: Issues in Ancient and Modern Ethics*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- (2006), *The Structured Self in Hellenistic and Roman Thought*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gill, C. and McCabe, M. M. (eds.) (1966), *Form and Argument in Late Plato*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gill, M. L. and Pellegrin, P. (eds.) (2006), *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy* (Blackwell Companions to Philosophy), West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing.
- Gillespie, C. M. (1910), 'The Truth of Protagoras', *Mind* 19: 470–92.

- Glidden, D. K. (1975), 'Protagorean Relativism and Physis', *Phronesis* 20: 209–27.
- Gomperz, T. (1901), *Greek Thinkers: A History of Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. I (rep. in paperback, London, 1964), London: John Murray.
- Gomperz, H. (1965), *Sophistik und Rhetorik: Das Bildungsideal des eu legein in seinem Verhältnis zur Philosophie des 5. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft.
- Gottlieb, P. (1992), 'The Principle of Non-Contradiction and Protagoras: The Strategy of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* IV 4', *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 8: 183–98.
- Griffith, M. (1983), *Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound (Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics)*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gronewald, M. (1968), 'Eine neues Protagoras-Fragment', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 2: 1–2.
- Grote, G. (1875), *Plato and the Other Companions of Sokrates*, Vol. 3, London: Murraray, vol. II.
- Guthrie, W. K. C. (1956), *Plato: Protagoras and Meno*, Middlesex: Penguin Classics.
- (1971), *The Sophists* (also in *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 3: *The Fifth Century Enlightenment*, 1969), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1978), *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 5: *The Later Plato and the Academy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Haden, J. (1984), 'Did Plato Refute Protagoras?', *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 1: 225–40.
- Hammond, M. (2009), *Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War, With an Introduction and Note by P. J. Rhodes* (Oxford World's Classics), Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hans-Albrecht Koch (1971), 'Protagoras bei Platon, Aristoteles und Sextus Empiricus', *Hermes* 99: 278–82.
- Havelock, E. A. (1969), 'DIKAIOSUNE: An Essay in Greek Intellectual History (In tribute to George Grube, the distinguished author of *Plato's Thought*)', *Phoenix* 23: 49–70.
- (1978), *The Greek Concept of Justice: From its Shadow from Homer to its Substance in Plato*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Hawtrey, R. S. W. (1981), *Commentary on Plato's Euthydemus*, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society.
- Heijdra, M. (2007), 'Protagoras of Abdera in Classical Modern Philosophy: On Subjectivity and Anti-Metaphysical Tendencies', *Protagoras of Abdera* (Protagoras Conference, July, 2007, Leiden): 1–21.
- Heinimann, F. (1945), *Nomos und Physis: Herkunft und Bedeutung einer Antithese im Griechischen Denken des 5. Jahrhunderts (Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft 1)*, Basel: Verlag Friedrich Reinhardt.
- Hicks, R. D. (1972), *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers, Vol. I and II* (Loeb Classical Library), Harvard University Press.

- Hornblower, S. and Spawforth, A. (1996), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- House, D. K. (1980), 'The Life of Sextus Empiricus', *The Classical Quarterly* 30: 227–38.
- Hubbard, B. A. F. and Karnofsky, E. S. (1982), *Plato's Protagoras: a Socratic Commentary, with a Foreword by M. F. Burnyeat*, London: Duckworth.
- Irwin, T. (1977), 'Aristotle's Discovery of Metaphysics', *Review of Metaphysics* 31: 210–29.  
(1988), *Aristotle's First Principle*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Jaeger, W. (1947), *Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kahn, C. H. (1966), 'The Greek verb "to be" and the concept of being', *Foundations of Language* 2: 245–65.  
(1996), *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
(2003<sup>2</sup>), *The Verb 'Be' in Ancient Greek: With a New Introductory Essay (the First Print in 1973)*, Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Kanavou, N. (2010), *Aristophanes' Comedy of Names: A Study of Speaking Names in Aristophanes*, Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG.
- Kattsoff, L. O. (1953), 'Man is the Measure of all Things', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 13: 452–66.
- Kennedy, G. A. (2007<sup>2</sup>), *Aristotle: On Rhetoric, A Theory of Civic Discourse*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kenny, A. (1967), 'The Argument from Illusion in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (Γ. 1009–10)', *Mind* 76: 184–97.
- Kerferd, G. B. (1949), 'Plato's Account of the Relativism of Protagoras', *Durham University Journal* 42: 20–6.  
(1953), 'Protagoras' Doctrine of Justice and Virtue in the *Protagoras* of Plato', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 73: 42–5.  
(1981a), *The Sophistic Movement*, Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.  
(ed.) (1981b), *The Sophists and their Legacy*, Wiesbaden: Hermes, Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH.
- Ketchum, R. J. (1992), 'Plato's "Refutation" of Protagorean Relativism: *Theaetetus* 170–171', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 10: 73–105.
- Kirk, G. S., Raven, J. E., and Schofield, M. (1983<sup>2</sup>), *The Presocratic Philosophers (aka KRS)*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kirwan, C. (1971), *Aristotle's Metaphysics Books G, D, and E (Translated with Notes)*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Lamb, W. R. M. (1964), *Plato: Laches, Protagoras, Meno, Euthydemus (Loeb Classical Library)*, Harvard University Press.

- Lana, I. (1950), *Protagora*, Torino: Tip. Torinese.
- Lawson-Tancred, H. (1998), *Aristotle: Metaphysics (Translated with Introduction)*, London: Penguin.
- Lee, E. N. (1973), 'Hoist With His Own Petard: Ironic and Comic Elements in Plato's Critique of Protagoras (*Tht.* 161–171)', in Lee, E. N., Mourelatos, A. P. D. and Rorty, R. M. (eds.), *Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy presented to Gregory Vlastos*: 225–61.
- Lee, E. N., Mourelatos, A. P. D. and Rorty, R. M. (eds.) (1973), *Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy presented to Gregory Vlastos*, Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Lee, Mi-Kyoung (2000), 'The Secret Doctrine: Plato's Defence of Protagoras in the *Theaetetus*', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 19: 47–86.
- (2005), *Epistemology after Protagoras: Response to Relativism in Plato, Aristotle, and Democritus*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Levi, A. (1940a), 'Studies on Protagoras–The Man-Measure Principle: Its Meaning and Applications', *Philosophy* 15: 147–67.
- (1940b), 'The Ethical and Social Thought of Protagoras', *Mind* 49: 284–302.
- Loenen, D. (1940), *Protagoras and The Greek Community*, Amsterdam: N. V. Noord-Hollandche Uitgevers Maatschappij.
- Long, A. (ed.) (1999), *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2004), 'Refutation and Relativism in *Theaetetus* 161–171', *Phronesis* 49: 24–40.
- Loomis, W. T. (1998), *Wages, Welfare Costs and Inflation in Classical Athens*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Lougovaya, J. and Ast, R. (2004), 'Menis and Pelex. Protagoras on Solecism', *The Classical Quarterly* 54: 274–77.
- Łukasiewicz, J. (1970–1), 'On the Principle of Contradiction in Aristotle (1910 in Polish) (trans. Wedin, M. V.)', *Review of Metaphysics* 24: 485–509.
- Maguire, J. (1977), 'Protagoras ... or Plato? II: The *Protagoras*', *Phronesis* 22: 103–21.
- Maidment, K. J. (1941), *Minor Attic Orators Vol. 1: Antiphon, Andocides* (Loeb Classical Library), Harvard University Press.
- Mansfeld, J. (1981), 'Protagoras on Epistemological Obstacles and Persons', in Kerferd, G. B. (ed.), *The Sophists and their Legacy*: 38–53.
- Manuwald, B. (2007), 'Protagoras' Great Speech in Plato's *Protagoras*—Fiction or Testimony?', *Protagoras of Abdera* (Protagoras Conference, July, 2007, Leiden): 1–11.
- Margolis, J. (1991), *The Truth About Relativism*, Cambridge and Oxford: Blackwell.
- McCabe, M. M. (1998), 'Silencing the Sophists: the drama of the *Euthydemus*', *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 14: 139–68.
- (2000), *Plato and his Predecessors: The Dramatisation of Reason*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



- McCoy, M. (2008), *Plato on the Rhetoric of Philosophers and Sophists*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McDowell, J. (1973), *Plato: Theaetetus*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- McKirahan, Jr. R. D. (1994), *Philosophy before Socrates*, Indianapolis: Hackett.
- McNeal, R. A. (1986), 'Protagoras the Historian', *History and Theory* 25: 299–318.
- Mejer, J. (1972), 'The Alleged New Fragment of Protagoras', *Hermes* 100 (rep. in Classen, C. J. (ed.), *Sophistik*, 1976a, 306–11): 175–78.
- Moore, S. (1988), 'Democracy and Commodity Exchange: Protagoras versus Plato', *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 5: 357–68.
- Morgan, K. (2000), *Myth and Philosophy from the Presocratics to Plato*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Morrison, J. S. (1941), 'The Place of Protagoras in Athenian Public Life (460–415 B.C.)', *The Classical Quarterly* 3: 1–16.
- Muir, J. V. (1982), 'Protagoras and Education at Thourioi', *Greece & Rome* 29: 17–24.
- Narcy, M. (1995), *Platon: Théétète* (2<sup>e</sup> édition corrigée), Paris: Flammarion.
- Nestle, W. (1931), *Platon Ausgewählte Schriften*, Vol. IV: Protagoras (*Text with introduction and commentary*), Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner.
- (1942), *Vom Mythos zum Logos*, Leipzig: Teubner.
- Newman, J. (1982), 'The Recoil Argument', *Apeiron* 16: 47–52.
- Nill, M. (1985), *Morality and Self-Interest in Protagoras, Antiphon and Democritus*, Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Notomi, N. (2007), 'A Protagonist of the Sophistic Movement?: Protagoras in Historiography (Draft)', *Protagoras of Abdera* (Protagoras Conference, July, 2007, Leiden): 1–18.
- Nussbaum, M. (rev. and ed.) (2001), *The Fragility of Goodness*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Oehler, K. (2002), 'Protagoras from the Perspective of Modern Pragmatism', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 38: 207–14.
- O'Grady, P. (2008), *The Sophists: An Introduction*, London: Duckworth.
- Okrent, M. (1984), 'Relativism, Context and Truth', *The Monist* 67: 341–58.
- O'Meara, D. and Dillon, J. (2008), *Syrianus: On Aristotle Metaphysics 3–4*, London: Duckworth.
- Oppy, G. and Trakakis, N. (eds.) (2009), *The History of Western Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. I: *Ancient Philosophy and Religion*, Stockfield: Acumen Publishing.
- Osborne, C. (1987), *Rethinking Early Greek Philosophy*, London: Duckworth.
- Ostwald, M. (1956), *Plato: Protagoras*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.
- O'Sullivan, N. (1995), 'Pericles and Protagoras', *Greece & Rome* 42: 15–23.
- (1996), 'Written and Spoken in the First Sophistic', in Worthington, I. (ed.), *Voice into Text: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece* (*Mnemosyne* Suppl. 157): 115–27.

- Owen, G. E. L. (ed.) (1968), *Aristotle On Dialectic, The Topics: Proceedings of the Third Symposium Aristotelicum*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Pellegrin, P. and Canto-Sperber, M. (eds.) (2002), *Le Style de La Pensée: Recueil de Texts en Hommage à Jacques Brunschwig*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Pfeiffer, R. (1968), *History of Classical Scholarship: From the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age*, Oxford : Clarendon Press.
- Polansky, R. M. (1992), *Philosophy and Knowledge: A Commentary on Plato's Theaetetus*, Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, London and Toronto: Associated University Presses.
- Porzig, W. (1950), *Das Wunder der Sprache: Probleme, Methoden und Ergebniss der modernen Sprachwissenschaft*, München and Bern: Sammlung Dalp.
- Rademaker, A. (2007), 'ἅττ' ἐστὶν ὁρθῶς ἄρρενα: Protagoras on Language and Grammar', *Protagoras of Abdera* (Protagoras Conference, July, 2007, Leiden): 1–8.
- Rankin, H. D. (1981), 'Ouk estin antilegein', in Kerferd, G. B. (ed.), *The Sophists and their Legacy*: 25–37.
- (1983), *Sophists, Socratic and Cynics*, London and Canberra: Croom Helm; Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books.
- (1986), *Anthisthenes Sokratikos*, Amsterdam: Adolf M. Makkert Publisher.
- Reale, G. and Catan, J. R. (1986), *A History of Ancient Philosophy: From the Origins to Socrates*, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Reynolds, F. E. and Tracy, D. (eds.) (1990), *Myth and Philosophy*, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Rezendes, P. M. (2001), '... A Footnote to Plato: An Introduction to Plato's Theaetetus', *The Examined Life (On-Line Philosophy Journal)* 2.
- Rieu, E. V. (trans.), Rieu, D. C. H. (rev. and trans.), and Jones, P. (introd.) (1946), *Homer: The Odyssey* (Penguin Classics), London: Penguin Books (rev. and trans. by Rieu in 1991; rep. with new Preface and updated Further Reading in 2003).
- Robins, R. H. (1997<sup>4</sup>), *A Short History of Linguistics*, London and New York: Longman.
- Robinson, R. (1950), 'Forms and Errors in Plato's Theaetetus', *Philosophical Review* 59: 3–30.
- Rogers, B. B. (1961), *The Complete Plays of Aristophanes*, New York: Bantam Classics (re-issued in 1968, 1971, 1981, and 2006).
- Romeyer Dherbey, G. (1985), *Les Sophistes*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Ross, W. D. (1924a), *Aristotle: Metaphysics, Volume I and II: A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary by W. D. Ross*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- (1924b), *Aristotle: Topics, Metaphysics* (Loeb Classical Library), Harvard University Press.
- Rowe, C. (1978), *Essential Hesiod: Theogony 1–232, 453–733, Works and Days 1–307* (Edited with Introduction and notes by C. J. Rowe), London: Bristol Classical Press.
- (2007), *Plato and the Art of Philosophical Writing*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Runciman, W. G. (1962), *Plato's Later Epistemology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ryle, G. (1990), 'Logical Atomism in Plato's *Theaetetus*', *Phronesis* 35: 21–46.
- Saupe, H. and Towel, J. A. (1889), *Plato's Protagoras: With the Commentary of*, Boston and London: Ginn & Company.
- Sayre, K. (1969), *Plato's Analytic Method*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Scoters-Zapico, J. (1993), 'The Case for the Sophist', *Rhetoric Review* 11: 352–67.
- Schiappa, E. (1991), *Protagoras and Logos*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Schiller, F. C. S. (1908), *Plato or Protagoras? Being a Critical Examination of the Protagoras Speech in the Theaetetus with Some Remarks upon Error*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- (1911), 'The Humanism of Protagoras', *Mind* 20: 181–96.
- (1970), *Studies in Humanism*, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.
- Schleiermacher, F. (1973), *Platons Werke*, 3rd ed. 6 Vol., Berlin: Reimer.
- Schmitt, A. (2007), "Parmenides und der Ursprung der Philosophie", in Angehrn, E. (ed.), *Anfang und Ursprung: Die Frage nach dem Ersten in Philosophie und kulturwissenschaft*: 109–40.
- Schmitter, P. (ed.) (1996<sup>2</sup>), *Geschichte der Sprachtheorie, Sprachtheorien der abendländischen Antike* (Vol. 2) (the First Edition in 1991), Tübingen: Narr.
- Schofield, M. (1986), 'Euboulia in the *Iliad*', *The Classical Quarterly* 36: 6–31.
- Schofield, M. (ed.) and Griffith, T. (trans.) (2010), *Plato: Gorgias, Menexenus, Protagoras* (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sedley, D. (1996), 'Three Platonist Interpretations of the *Theaetetus*', in Gill, C. and McCabe, M. M. (eds.), *Form and Argument in Late Plato*: 79–103.
- (2003), *Plato's Cratylus*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2004), *The Midwife of Platonism: Text and Subtext in Plato's Theaetetus*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- (2006), 'Plato's *Cratylus*', Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu>).
- Shields, C. (ed.) (2003), *The Blackwell Guide to Ancient Philosophy*, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Siep, L. (2005), 'Virtues, Values, and Moral Objectivity', in Gill, C. (ed), *Virtue, Norms, and Objectivity: Issues in Ancient and Modern Ethics*: 83–98.
- Slings, S. R. (ed.) (2003), *Platonis Rempublicam* (Oxford Classical Texts), Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, N. D. (2001), 'Some Thoughts about the Origins of "Greek Ethics"', *The Journal of Ethics* 5: 3–20.
- Solmsen, F. (1979), 'Review Article of E. A. Havelock's *Greek Concept of Justice from Its Shadow in Homer to Its Substance in Plato*', *The Classical World* 72: 430–1.
- Sprague, R. K. (1962), *Plato's Use of Fallacy: A Study of the Euthydemus and Some Other Dialogues*,

- London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- (ed.) (1972), *The Older Sophists*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Steinthal, H. (1891), *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Logik*, I-II, Berlin: F. Dümmler.
- Stern, P. (2002), 'The Philosophic Importance of Political Life: On the "Digression" in Plato's *Theaetetus*', *American Political Science Review* 96: 275–89.
- Taylor, A. E. (1927), *Plato: The Man And His Work* (rep. by Dover Publications in 2001).
- Taylor, C. C. W. (1991), *Plato: Protagoras* (Translation with Notes by C. C. W. Taylor, rev. with New Material with Oxford University Press), Oxford: Oxford University Press (the First Edition in 1976).
- (1996), *Plato: Protagoras* (Oxford World's Classics), Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- (2007), 'Nomos and Phusis in Democritus and Plato', *Social Philosophy and Policy* 24: 1–20.
- Tigner, S. S. (1971), 'The "Exquisite" Argument at *Th.* 171 A', *Mnemosyne* 24: 366–9.
- Thomson, G. (1932), *Aeschylus: The Prometheus Bound* (Edited with Introduction, Commentary and Translation by George Thomson, M. A.), London: Cambridge University Press.
- Untersteiner, M. (1954), *The Sophists* (English trans. by Freeman, K., 1996), Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Vellacott, P. (1961), *Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound and Other Plays* (Translated with Introduction by Philip Vallecott), London: Penguin Books (Penguin Classics).
- Vernant, J. P. (1965), *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs. Etudes de psychologie historique*, Paris: Flammarion.
- Vernant, J. P. and Detienne, M. (1974), *Les Ruses de l'intelligence: la Mètis des Grecs* (English trans. by Lloyd, J. as *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), Paris: Flammarion.
- Versenyi, L. (1962), 'Protagoras' Man-Measure Fragment', *The American Journal of Philology* 83: 178–84.
- Vlastos, G. (ed.) (1956), (*Introduction to*) *Plato: Protagoras* (with B. Jowett's translation extensively revised by Ostwald, M.), Indianapolis and New York: Liberal Arts Press.
- Ward, A. (1991), 'Statesmanship and Citizenship in Plato's Protagoras', *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 25: 319–33.
- Waterfield, R. A. H. (1987), *Plato: Theaetetus*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Waterlow, S. (1977), 'Protagoras and Inconsistency: *Theaetetus* 171a6–c7', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 59: 19–36.
- Wedin, M. V. (2005), 'Animadversions on Burnyeat's *Theaetetus*: on the logic of the exquisite argument', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 29: 171–91.
- Weiss, R. (1985), 'Socrates and Protagoras on Justice and Holiness', *Phoenix* 39: 334–41.
- West, M. L. (1988), *Hesiod: Theogony and Works and Days* (A new translation by M. L. West), Oxford: Oxford University Press (Oxford World's Classics) (Reissued as an Oxford World's

Classical paperback 1999, Reissued 2008).

- White, F. C. (1989), 'Self-Refuting Propositions and Relativism', *Metaphilosophy* 20: 84–92.
- White, N. (1976), *Plato on Knowledge and Reality*, Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Williams, B. (1993), *Shame and Necessity*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Williams, C. J. F. (1992), 'Theaetetus in Bad Company', *Philosophy* 67: 549–51.
- Wolfsdorf, D. (1998), 'The Historical Reader of Plato's *Protagoras*', *The Classical Quarterly* 48: 126–33.
- Wolz, H. G. (1963), 'The Protagoras Myth and the Philosopher-Kings', *The Review of Metaphysics* 17: 214–34.
- Woodruff, P. (1985), 'Didymus on Protagoras and Protagoreans', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 23: 483–97.
- (1999), 'Rhetoric and Relativism: Protagoras and Gorgias' in Long, A. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy*: 290–310.
- (2001), *Reverence: Renewing A Forgotten Virtue*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- (2005), *The First Democracy: The Challenge of An Ancient Idea*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- (2007), 'Euboulia: How Might Good Judgment Be Taught?', *Protagoras of Abdera* (Protagoras Conference, July, 2007, Leiden): 1–11.
- Worthington, I. (ed.) (1996), *Voice into Text: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece* (*Mnemosyne* Suppl. 157), Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Zaslavsky, R. (1982), 'The Platonic Godfather: A Note on The *Protagoras* Myth', *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 16: 79–82.
- Zeller, E. (1869–81), *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (rep. by Nabu Press in 2010), Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (L.W. Reiland).
- Zilioli, U. (2002), *The Epistemology of The Sophist: Protagoras*, Durham University (Ph.D. Thesis).
- (2007), *Protagoras and the Challenge of Relativism: Plato's Subtle Enemy*, Aldershot: Ashgate.