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SOCRATIC POLITICS AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE:  
AN INTERPRETATION OF PLATO'S CHARMIDES

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In Plato's *Charmides,* Socrates has a discussion about moderation with two cousins, Charmides and Critias. The conversation shakes the conviction of Charmides, a youth of great beauty and of promise, that he possesses that virtue and persuades him that he must seek it from Socrates, who claims to have learned an incantation or song capable of producing it in one who listens. The end of the dialogue will be the beginning of Charmides' association with Socrates for that purpose. Some thirty years later, Charmides joined his elder kinsman Critias in an oligarchic regime whose rule over Athens was such that in a short time, according to a letter ascribed to Plato, it made the discredited democracy look golden.¹

The *Charmides* thus takes its place beside the *Alcibiades I,* where Socrates has a conversion with the young Alcibiades, then at the eve of his entrance into politics, which convinces Alcibiades that he must begin at once to be concerned with justice. The end of the dialogue will be the beginning of his association with Socrates for that purpose. Yet Alcibiades' later career (during which he played a major part on three different sides in the Peloponnesian war, Athenian, Spartan, Persian), while conspicuous in other respects, does not seem to have been remarkable for its attention to justice. By presenting what appear to be Socratic exhortations to concern for justice and moderation in such settings, Plato invites our wonder about the efficacy of such Socratic exhortations; in this and other ways, he leads us to wonder about their true character and purpose.

I. THE CONTEXT IN WHICH AND THE MANNER IN WHICH 
SOCRATES TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO CHARMIDES

The dialogue is narrated by Socrates to a companion whom he does not address by name. Socrates begins by saying that they (i.e., Socrates and other Athenian soldiers) had come the preceding evening from the army in Potidæa. Since he had been away for some time, he (Socrates) went gladly to his accustomed haunts. (Socrates, who makes no mention of home, was perhaps not yet married.)² In particular, he

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¹ Seventh Letter 324e7–8. (Unless otherwise noted, works cited are by Plato).
² Cf. however Xenophon, Symposium 9.7 with 2.10.
went to the palaestra (wrestling school) of Taureas, which is opposite the Queen’s temple, and found among the many there a few he did not know, but most were known to him. When they saw him enter unexpectedly, they at once greeted him from wherever they were; but Chairephon, inclined as he was even to madness, jumped up from their midst and ran toward Socrates, and taking him by the hand said: “Socrates, how were you saved from the battle?” Before recounting his reply to Chairephon, Socrates pauses to explain to the companion that there had been a battle at Potidaea shortly before they had left there, of which those in the palaestra had recently learned. Socrates does not assume that the companion has any knowledge of or interest in that battle, just as he does not seem to assume that he is familiar with the palaestra in question or with such a conspicuous Athenian as Critias (153c7). The companion, who is a stranger to these things although he knows of Socrates’ companion Chairephon, is perhaps a foreigner led to Athens by his interest in the way of philosophizing practised by Socrates. Socrates repays his interest by narrating to him his encounter with Charmides and Critias. Is that encounter especially revealing with respect to the companion’s interest? That this is so is suggested also by the presence of Chairephon. Chairephon reminds us of the Delphic story of the Apology of Socrates (20c4 ff.). According to that story, the oracle’s response to a question about Socrates, directed to it by Chairephon, was responsible for the change in Socrates’ activity which distinguished him so markedly not only from his fellow citizens but also from other theoretical men. (When Socrates had this meeting with Charmides, though not necessarily when he told the story to the companion, he was quite young, perhaps thirty-eight, almost as young as he was at the time of the *Alcibiades I*: the *Alcibiades I* takes place before, perhaps shortly before, the battle of Potidaea3 and the action of the *Charmides* takes place just after that battle. Whereas Socrates was all but unknown to Alcibiades when he first addressed him, he already had a reputation among the boys at the time of his meeting with Charmides.4)

The companion, if he has indeed travelled to Athens to see Socrates, differs to that extent from him; for Socrates appears never to have left home except to perform his citizen’s duty as a soldier. Perhaps Socrates had more need than other theoretical men to be a citizen.5 Socrates implicitly distinguishes himself in turn from the “mad” Chairephon. Madness is an opposite to moderation (see, e.g., *Protagoras* 323b4–5). Chairephon’s madness seems to have been shown by his excessive joy at the survival of Socrates, rather than by his unrestrained display of that joy before others who may have suffered or fear to

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3 *Symposium* 219e5–6.
4 *Alcibiades I* 104c7–d5; cf. *Charmides* 156a5–8.
5 *Crito* 52e3–53e4; *Meno* 79e7–80b7.
have suffered a recent loss (153b9–c1). It does not, at any rate, consist in an indifference to the city, for Chairephon, who was later to provide Socrates with a link to the Athenian demos and who here brings Socrates to sit down beside the future oligarch Critias, was more political than Socrates. (Consider also Chairephon’s connection with Gorgias, and note here that Socrates appears to share the nameless companion’s indifference to the details of the battle rather than Chairephon’s interest in them.)

After politely fulfilling the curiosity of Chairephon and the rest of the circle around Critias regarding the battle, Socrates in turn asked about things in Athens: about philosophy—how things were now—and about the young—whether any of them were outstanding in wisdom or beauty or both. Critias, looking toward the door, where he saw some youths (who were reviling each other) entering, with another crowd behind them, said: “About the beautiful, Socrates, I think you will know directly; for those now coming in are the forerunners and lovers of the one thought to be most beautiful at present, and he himself appears to me to be already near to entering.” Critias’ partial answer to Socrates’ question brought it about that a youth rather than philosophy, and the youth’s beauty, rather than any wisdom he might possess, commanded the immediate attention of those present. We do not know whether this accorded with the order of Socrates’ concerns. His concern with beautiful youths—about which he was here and elsewhere so open—gave, so far as ordinary Athenians (and perhaps others) were concerned, an only slightly objectionable color to his pursuit of youths; its display may therefore belong, together with his soldiering, to his deference to the city. But this is not to say that he was insensitive to beauty, or that there was no intrinsic connection between that sensitivity and his philosophy.

Soon after, the youth in question, Critias’ young cousin and ward Charmides, entered. Now Socrates is no judge of beauty, as he explains here to the companion, for just about all those of age appear beautiful to him; therefore, although Charmides appeared to him then of wondrous height and beauty, Socrates emphasizes the reaction of the others. All the others seemed to Socrates to be in love with Charmides, so affected and disturbed were they when he entered. The reaction of those to whom Socrates belonged, the men, was less to be wondered at; but Socrates applied his mind also to the boys: not one of them, not even the smallest, looked elsewhere, but everyone gazed at Charmides as if he were a statue. Only Socrates, it appears, looked elsewhere. He was forced, one can say, by his undiscriminating sensitivity to

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6 Apology of Socrates 20c8–21c2.
7 Gorgias 447b2–3 and e9.
8 Charmides 153d4–5, 154b8–e2, 155c5–e3; Protagoras 309b1–b7; Lysis 204b1–e2, 204e1–205a2; Erastai 132a1–3, 133a1–6; Xenophon, Symposium 8.2. Cf. Protagoras 309b7–a2; Xenophon, Memorabilia IV 1.1–2.
beauty, to look away from the beautiful Charmides in order to gauge or confirm that beauty, or his impression of it, by observing the reaction of others; he had to turn from the beautiful to the human response to the beautiful. But from what source did he derive the strength to do this?

Chairephon asked Socrates whether Charmides was fair of face. ‘Supernaturally so,’ I said. ‘If he would be willing to strip,’ he said, ‘he will seem to you to be faceless, so all-beautiful is he in form.’ The others too joined in these assertions of Chairephon.” If Charmides would strip, the beauty of his form would prevent one from observing his beautiful face: it is impossible apparently to behold the two beauties together. His stripping would not diminish or lessen his beauty, but it would in a sense make it less his by concealing the characteristic features of his face. As it is, as Charmides comes into view, his form is concealed by his clothes, by the artifice or convention of clothes.

Socrates proved to be interested in seeing Charmides’ soul rather than, or before, his form. Responding to Chairephon’s and the others’ assertions of Charmides’ beauty, Socrates said: “Herakles, the man, as you speak of him, would be irresistible [not to be fought against],” if only he happens in addition to be of a good nature in his soul. (Did Socrates wish to fight with Charmides?) Passing by Critias’ assertion that Charmides was noble and good in his soul too, Socrates suggested that they strip Charmides’ soul and contemplate it before the form: “for surely, at the age he has reached, he will already be willing to have a conversation [διαλέγεσθαι].” The means of stripping was apparently to be a conversation. Critias, after his fashion, said that Charmides would be willing to converse. Would he be willing if he knew the purpose of the conversation? (Cf. 158e-159b.)

Socrates implied that Charmides’ soul too was concealed, so that its nature would not be visible without a stripping. Since it is not immediately clear what Socrates meant by “a good nature in his soul,” we are forced to look for clarification of this point to the sequel, where Socrates reveals his understanding by deed, by his examination of Charmides. From a very simple reading of that examination it might appear that Socrates wished to find out whether Charmides possessed by nature the virtue of moderation (cf. especially 158b2-4 with 154e1). On a closer look, we might find more plausible the suggestion that Socrates wished to find out whether Charmides was able to resist claiming or believing that he possessed that virtue.9

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9 Since moderation will be spoken of in the Charmides as both beautiful (simply beautiful, most beautiful of all) and good (simply good) and since it will be said to lead to happiness, we feel justified in calling it a virtue. But it is not so called anywhere in the dialogue. Indeed, the term virtue (φρόνησις) occurs only at 158e1, in a reporting of praises composed by poets. Perhaps Plato wished to anticipate, by this act of moderation, the conclusion which the dialogue would reach.
(If Charmides had by nature a good soul in either of these senses, we are tempted to say, he would have been as impossible to fight against as that son of Zeus, Herakles.) The analogy of soul stripping with body stripping is then not quite apt. Socrates seems to seek to discover whether Charmides' soul believes that it is good (cf. 160ε9): soul stripping might uncover a further layer of clothes. But this is not to say that these too might not be stripped. Indeed, it might be impossible to see their importance before they were.

Socrates then asked Critias to call Charmides to him. Although it was not clear from anything Critias had said that Critias had an objection to Socrates conversing with Charmides, Socrates pointed out to him that, even if Charmides were younger, such a conversation would not be shameful in the presence of Critias, his guardian and cousin. Critias then sent his slave to fetch Charmides, with the message that Critias wished to introduce him to a medical man for his sickness. Then Critias explained to Socrates that Charmides had been suffering from headache, and he suggested that Socrates pretend to know a drug for the head. Since Critias had said earlier that Charmides would be most willing to converse, it is not clear why he thought the pretense was necessary. Perhaps he thought that Socrates would not want to reveal to Charmides the purpose for which he wished to converse with him; but perhaps he wished to put an obstacle in the way of the accomplishment of that purpose. Whatever his reasons, Critias, who was later to become his city's ruler, forced Socrates to pretend to a capacity to heal which Socrates did not possess. There may be some correspondence between this occurrence, which the next section elaborates, and what occurs at the very end of the dialogue.

II. WHAT Socrates SUFFERED FROM CHARMIDES AND LEARNED FROM A THRACIAN

When Charmides came, he produced much laughter. For the earnestness or seriousness with which each of those in Socrates' group pushed his neighbor, so as to make room for Charmides to sit by him, forced from their places those sitting at the ends (cf. 154α1–2 λοιδο-ρουμένους). There was something comic to that seriousness about the beautiful.

Charmides sat down between Socrates and Critias. At this point, Socrates lost his former boldness that he would be able to converse with Charmides with ease, and, as he says to the companion, he was at a loss. Socrates' discomfiture was increased by the gaze Charmides turned upon him when Critias presented him as the one who knew the drug, while the crowd pressed around them; it was completed when, as he says to the companion, he saw inadvertently what was within Charmides' cloak, became "inflamed," was no longer in him-
self, and held that Kydias—who in counseling another in verse had compared a beautiful boy to a lion who makes his meal of the approaching fawn—was wisest in erotic matters: Socrates seemed to himself to have been caught by such a beast. On other (later) occasions, Socrates claimed for himself an expertise in erotic matters.  

Here he was led by an apparently overwhelming erotic passion to acknowledge a poet’s superior wisdom in these matters. (There had been an earlier intimation that whereas Critias and Charmides fancied themselves to combine philosophy and poetry, Socrates’ own philosophy was unpoetic, which is not to say that his presentation of that philosophy to the companion is unpoetic. Coincidentally with his succumbing to the attractions of Charmides, Socrates became aware, or more aware, of his audience.) Nevertheless, when Charmides asked if Socrates knew the drug for the head, Socrates managed, with some difficulty, to answer that he did. Socrates resisted that passion. The key to the success of his resistance appears to be his reflection that Kydias was wisest, i.e., that he himself was defective in wisdom. By coming to that conviction (ἐνσήμανον 155d4) at the height of his passion’s intensity, he must have become aware that the passion was not simply overwhelming: it was accompanied by his concern for his wisdom. Socrates was not simply outside of himself; he also thought, he was aware of himself—of how he stood in relation to Kydias with respect to wisdom; that thought was part of the experience, so to speak. And his awareness of all this, together with his concern for his wisdom, gave him some power to resist what had been an irresistible passion because that passion had seemed to point so simply and unambiguously to all that was longed for.

Charmides asked what the drug was. Socrates replied that it was some leaf, but there was a song applying to the drug in such a way that if one sang it at the same time that one used it (the leaf or drug), the drug would make one entirely healthy, but there was no benefit from the leaf without the song. (It was not said whether there was a benefit from the song without the leaf.) Charmides was prepared to write down the song at the dictation of the one who told him of it. But Socrates asked, “If you persuade me or even if you don’t?” (Cf. 176c5–7.) Charmides said with a laugh, “If I persuade you, Socrates.” It thus came to light that Charmides knew Socrates’ name: there was no little talk of him among the youths and Charmides remembered Socrates as a companion of Critias, when he himself was a boy. Socrates

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10 Theaest 128b2–6; Symposium 177a7–8; Phaedrus 257a7–8. (Two of these dialogues happen to mention Charmides: Theages 128a ff.; Symposium 222b1–4.) Cf. Lysis 204b8–12, 205a1–2 and 210a1–5.
11 Charmides 154a8–155b3; cf. Timaeus 20d7–21d3.
12 If Socrates’ purpose was to get Charmides to listen to the “song,” it appears at this point that the Thracian story he is about to tell is superfluous. But perhaps the song required a truly willing listener, one, that is, who knew what he was being subjected to.
was not disconcerted by the revelation that Charmides all along had seen through the disguise which Critias had faced upon him. At any rate, he did not take the opportunity to begin so to speak the conversation anew. He said rather that he would now be more frank with Charmides as to the character of the song, for he had just been at a loss as to how to show him its power. (He admits that there are circumstances in which he is not entirely frank or outspoken; he admits that the present situation is still not altogether free from such circumstances.) Did the explanation of the song require that Socrates reveal to some extent what or who he was?

The explanation proved to entail a comparison of Greek and Thracian medicine. Socrates characterized Greek medicine by describing to Charmides a familiar case. (Since it is not yet identified as Greek, one should perhaps speak here of medicine simply.) If one goes to the good medical men, suffering in one’s eyes, they say that they are unable to cure the eyes alone, but that it would be necessary to minister to the head at the same time, and, again, that it is extremely foolish to think that one can minister to the head by itself to the neglect of the whole body. For this reason, prescribing regimens for all of the body, they undertake to minister to and heal the part with the whole. At this point, Socrates asked for Charmides’ assent both to the accuracy of his characterization of the medical men’s words and to the words themselves and the reasoning; to both Charmides’ assent was emphatic. And Socrates, hearing his praise, took heart again and little by little his boldness came back, and he came to life again, as he says to the companion.

Socrates began the continuation of his explanation by asserting that the case of the song (of which he had already said that it could not make healthy the head alone) was similar to that of the medical procedure he had described. That assertion was insufficient because the procedure in question belonged, as it now appeared, to Greek medicine, while the song, which Socrates had learned from a Thracian medical man, belonged to Thracian medicine. Thracian medicine was distinguished in the first place by its alleged attempt to produce immortality. It understood itself to have been handed down from Zalmoxis, a god who is also a king. The Thracian told Socrates, as Socrates now tells his companion that he told Charmides, that Zalmoxis said that, just as one must not undertake to cure the eyes without the head, or the head without the body, so also not the body without the soul; this was the cause, as Zalmoxis or the Thracian himself went on, of the failure of the Greek medical men in the case of many diseases—the ignorance of the whole to which care must be applied and whose fine state is a condition of the good state of the part.13 For, he said,

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13 Zalmoxis, or the Thracian medical man, appears to regard the body as a part of the soul. See T. M. Robinson, *Plato's Psychology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), pp. 5–7.
all the bad and the good things for the body and all of the human being start from the soul and flow from there to the body. One must then minister to the soul first and above all if the things of the head and of the rest of the body are to be in a fine state. The soul is ministered to, the Thracian continued, by certain songs, and these songs are the speeches which are noble (or beautiful); from such speeches moderation is generated in the souls, the immanence and presence of which makes it easy to provide health to the head and the rest of the body.

"Thracian" medicine then is distinguished from Greek by its attempt to immortalize and by its assertion of the power of the soul over the body. (The self-limitation of the Greek medical men to the body was perhaps connected with their self-limitation regarding immortality.) There is no evil for the body which does not originate in the soul; the soul can be imbued with moderation by the noble speeches; and, when this has been done, the health of the body is easily provided. What we call moral education is the key to health, if not also to immortality. If we were not held back by our ignorance as to what moderation is, we would be tempted to say that Socrates' Thracian teacher was not conspicuous for possessing it. It is perhaps true, on the other hand, that he did not claim to possess moderation; but he claimed to be able to bring it into one's soul, and who, if he possessed such ability, would fail to use it on himself?

After teaching Socrates the drug and the songs, the Thracian bid him not to be persuaded by anyone to minister to that person's head, who had not first provided his soul for Socrates to minister to with the song, "for now this is the mistake regarding human beings, that some undertake to be doctors [medical men] of each separately, moderation and health." Did the Thracian thus inadvertently advise Socrates not to be a doctor (medical man) of moderation without also professing to be one of "health"? Socrates swore an oath to the Thracian and, as he also told Charmides, it was necessary for him to obey. So if Charmides, in accordance with the stranger's injunctions, wanted to provide his soul first to be sung to with the Thracian's songs, Socrates would apply the drug to his head; if not, they would not know what to do for (or with) Charmides. Socrates thus offered to minister to more than Charmides' bodily health, while, on the other hand, he treated Charmides as if Charmides was in need of moderation, or at least as if there was reason to think that he was. Moreover, according to the presentation that he gives, Socrates was forced to proceed in this way by his adherence to Thracian medicine, or by his piety, or both: he did not make such a grave charge, even if only by implication, on his own authority. (Cf. Apology of Socrates 29d2-30a5.)

On the basis of the assumptions underlying Thracian medicine, one is forced to hold that whoever suffers from a bodily ill is or has been defective in his soul in such a way as to need moderation. (It is possible that he has acquired moderation but has not yet been cured in his
body: as the leaf indicates, moderation is only the necessary condition of health.) We may therefore call such a person, if he has not yet acquired moderation, immoderate. This seems to leave open however the possibility that there is an original good state of the soul whose goodness, while securing the health of the body, consists in something other than the possession of moderation (in innocence, for example): moderation would then become necessary to those who have left this state, for the reason that it itself is not recoverable. Whether or not, in the Thracian view, there is such a state and, if so, whether the soul in that state is better or worse off than the moderate soul, the Thracian seems not to have told Socrates, just as he seems not to have taught him what moderation is. (Socrates, despite his possession of the Thracian songs, claims at various times in the dialogue still to be in the dark in that respect.) Perhaps the Thracian thought that it would be difficult to account, consistently with his principles, for the passage from such a state to the defective one. However that may be, since every human being suffers at one time or another from a bodily ill (if only that of aging), everyone comes to be in the need of moderation; moderation is inculcated by songs or speeches: no one is born with a soul sufficient by nature with a view to moderation or another kind of goodness, for even granting the existence of such goodness we are forced to say that it does not last.

There is a certain correspondence between the two ways in which the Thracian view permits us to understand the good or noble state of the soul and the two interpretations of Socrates' phrase "a good nature in his soul" that were suggested above (page 144-5). There it appeared more plausible that Charmides' nature might abstain from claiming or thinking to possess the virtue of moderation than that he possessed such a virtue by nature. If we incorporate the suggestion of the present passage, we are forced to expect that neither Charmides nor anyone else will prove to have a good nature in either of those senses. On the other hand, even by virtue of that very suggestion, this passage holds out the prospect that we may become moderate—whether in the Thracian sense and manner or in some other.

III. THE EXAMINATION OF CHARMIDES

Socrates' Thracian story, culminating as it did in his offer to apply to Charmides the songs which induce moderation, must have put Charmides on the spot. For that offer carried with it, as we have seen, the suggestion that Charmides was not moderate, a suggestion which

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14 Socrates seems to leave open such a possibility at 158b2-3 (note however πολε). But at 158d8, he proposes to examine with Charmides whether Charmides has acquired (καθαρευομαι), and thus possesses, moderation, while at 158e1 he wonders whether Charmides is still (ενημερευομαι) in need in this respect.
would appear to be confirmed if he should accept the offer. Charmides might have replied however that the offer was one which no one could refuse, since it is sensible even for a moderate man to neglect no opportunity to make sure of or strengthen his moderation. He was prevented from making such a reply in the first place by Critias, who saw the implication of Socrates' offer and answered for or in the place of Charmides: the headache would be a fine piece of luck, he said, if the youth will be forced, on account of his head, to become better also in his understanding or mind. (Critias differed from Socrates' Thracian in speaking of the understanding rather than the soul as what was to be imbued with moderation. Perhaps he drew an inference from the suggestion that moderation can be imbued by listening to speeches, without paying sufficient attention to the fact that the Thracian calls those speeches "songs.") But Charmides is already reputed to be far the most moderate of his contemporaries and is in all other respects, so far as his age permits, inferior to no one. Hence, Critias implied, the song is unnecessary. Critias appealed to Charmides' reputation to prevent an action on Charmides' part which, he may have feared, would damage that reputation and therewith his own; but can he be sure that Charmides is sufficiently moderate and that he, Critias, is not standing in the way of his becoming so? But one can also say that Critias had in mind not Socrates' offer regarding moderation, but his intention regarding stripping; and it is perhaps not immediately clear how such a stripping will contribute to Charmides' becoming moderate. Or, perhaps, Critias wished merely to prevent any conversation between Socrates and Charmides which might endanger his own influence over the youth.

Socrates responded, to Charmides, that it was right that he stand out from the others in such respects, for his ancestry would make this the likely or expected thing. And he then spoke of the two "houses" from which Charmides descended. One could perhaps have taken his words to suggest how unlikely it was that a youth with so much to puff him up (not to mention Critias as a guardian) should be moderate in any sense. Socrates surely left it open whether the expected had in fact occurred: "if also with regard to moderation and the other things, in accordance with [Critias'] account, you have been sufficiently endowed by nature, blessedly happy did your mother bear you, dear Charmides." Nature, not ancestry, is decisive with regard to moderation; and moderation in turn appears necessary to happiness. Socrates had departed from his Thracian teacher by his mention of nature and—in letter though perhaps not in spirit—by speaking of happiness. (Does health in the Thracian sense [156^46] take the place of happiness?) He thus underscored the importance of moderation—but also brought into some question his ability to induce it, in all cases, by speeches or songs—before offering Charmides a choice and thus posing his question anew, this time more directly. If Charmides was already sufficiently
moderate, as Critias said, he would have no need of the songs of Zalmoxis or of those of Abaris the Hyperborian, but it would be time to give him the drug for the head; if on the other hand, he thought he was (or seemed to be) still in need of these, one must sing to him first. "Tell me then yourself whether you agree with [Critias] and claim to partake sufficiently of moderation already, or to be in need." It is not clear that Socrates was not in violation of the letter of his oath to the Thracian in giving Charmides this choice; but his adherence to the Thracian spirit is indicated by his reference to the Hyperborians, a people of the far north who might perhaps be called the Thracians' Thracians.

Socrates' question again, and more obviously, put Charmides on the spot. He replied, with a blush, that "It would not be easy in the present circumstances either to agree to it or to deny it: for if I deny being moderate, it is both odd to say such things against oneself, and, at the same time, I will show up both Critias as a liar [or mistaken] and many others, by whom I am reputed to be moderate, by his account; if again I claim [to be moderate] and praise myself, perhaps it will appear offensive." On these grounds Charmides refused to answer: I do not know how I should answer you. He did not answer above all because each of the two answers he considered was in some way offensive: it would be offensive to call Critias and "many" others liars, and it would be offensive for Charmides to reveal that he held a high opinion of himself. Moreover, to deny being moderate would be odd.15 Charmides was prevented by what we can call "good manners" from accepting Socrates' offer or explicitly declining it: he declined it in fact. (Socrates characterizes this response to the companion as not ignoble or low born.) It was not a question either of shame at revealing a defect (cf. τὸν ὑπεροπτικόν: τὸν ἐπιστροφικόν) or on the other hand of a high opinion of himself which Charmides blushed to acknowledge even to himself and which Socrates’ question had threatened to make public.

This account of his action—the one which Charmides wished Socrates to form—was belied in the first place by his blush, of which Socrates says to the companion that it made Charmides still more beautiful, for his sense of shame was becoming to his age. His revealing blush, rather than his concealing, well-mannered words, enhanced Charmides' beauty, as is emphasized by the formulation in the text: "first he became more beautiful... then he answered...." In the second place, Charmides' words were perhaps not so concealing as he may have hoped or supposed. For if he had believed to need Socrates' assistance, would he not have sought a way to accept it without offense to others or embarrassment to himself? But perhaps no way occurred to him.

Socrates' response to Charmides' objection must have been reassuring. What Charmides had said appeared to him fair or plausible.

15 Cf. Protagoras 323a7–c2.
Socrates therefore suggested that they examine in common whether or not Charmides possessed what Socrates inquired about, so that Charmides would not be forced to say what he did not wish, and Socrates would not turn to the medical art without an examination (of Charmides). “If then it is welcome to you, I am willing to examine with you; if not, to let it go.” Charmides apparently would never be required to reveal his belief as to whether he possessed moderation: they would examine only the fact of possession or non-possession. His emphatic assent to Socrates’ offer perhaps reflected his relief at this, together with his interest in the question. He went so far as to say that for his part, Socrates was free to examine in the manner that he thought best. Charmides did not fear the result of that examination.

Socrates’ suggestion as to procedure was based on the following considerations: if moderation is present to Charmides, he will clearly be able to form some opinion about it; for being in him, if it is in him, it will necessarily furnish some perception from which there would be some opinion about it as to what and what sort of thing moderation is; moreover, since Charmides knows how to speak Greek, he would be able to say what it is that appears to him. Charmides responded to these premises of Socrates’ proposal in a way that passed for assent. Whatever might be behind his hesitation, it does appear that they deserve some further scrutiny. For even if we grant that moderation, if it is in one, will furnish some perception about which an opinion may be formed, is it necessary that the opinion will assign to the cause of that perception the name “moderation”? On the other hand, does not “speaking Greek”— and therefore, what one has heard—have more to do with one’s opinion about moderation than Socrates’ formulation allows? By not permitting such questions to arise, Socrates brought it about that Charmides accepted the proposition that an experience, so to speak, of moderation will always make itself known as (or believed to be) such; while he left it in the dark whether there is any other source of opinions—not excluding correct opinions—about moderation. But this very “success” called into question the validity of the procedure for discovering whether or not Charmides is moderate which is about to be proposed. Socrates’ action would be unintelligible then if that procedure did not have other objectives than the one stated.

Having more or less secured Charmides’ assent to his premises, Socrates proceeded at once to ask him—“so that we may guess whether it is in you or not”— to say what moderation was according to his opinion. Now one who, having accepted the Socratic premises, ventures to give an answer to a question so phrased all but admits that he believes he is moderate: he states what, in himself, he believes to be moderation. (Moreover, if his answer or answers should be shown to be incorrect—or if he should be unable to answer at all—he would be led by those same premises to doubt that he is moderate.) But this
is just what Charmides did. At first he held back and was not very willing to answer; then however he did so. Socrates does not tell the companion what further inducements, if any, were necessary to produce this step; he concentrates his attention on the step itself. Socrates had led Charmides, after all, to reveal his belief that he possessed moderation. Did he not intend this all along? For whatever reasons, he was more interested here in discovering (and subsequently shaking) Charmides’ opinion about himself with regard to moderation than in answering the question whether Charmides was moderate or not, to say nothing of any other question (see p. 156 below). But one may object that this presupposes that Charmides was aware of some of the implications of Socrates’ procedure, while being unaware of the difficulties. We must see whether the doubts which this objection may justify are cleared up in the sequel.

Charmides’ answer was to the effect that moderation seemed to him to be doing everything in an orderly and quiet manner, both walking in the roads and conversing and all the rest; that some sort of quietness was what Socrates asked for. Socrates said: “Do you speak well? They say at least, Charmides that the quiet are moderate: let’s see if they have a point.” He implied that the answer reflected what Charmides heard rather than what he felt. Had Charmides really looked into himself? It corresponded however at least to Charmides’ behavior hitherto, especially if we include under “doing quietly” refraining from asserting oneself. Socrates had raised the question whether Charmides “spoke well” or correctly. It thus came to light that they were now to examine the correctness of Charmides’ definition. From what source did Socrates expect to derive the standard to make that determination? (Cf. pp. 200 below.)

The examination began with Socrates asking whether moderation belonged to the beautiful (or noble) things. Charmides said, very much so. Socrates then enumerated activities in which, as he easily got Charmides to agree, slowness was less beautiful than swiftness, if it was not also ugly or base (159d2). (It will be seen that he ignored Charmides’ reference to orderliness and understood quietness in a particular way.)16 Socrates failed to mention activities—e.g., dancing—where a certain kind of slowness may be beautiful.17 He did not raise the question whether some quietness or slowness might not be a presupposition of the swiftness he praised—e.g., sleep for a runner. He thus exalted the swift and sharp, the intense, the easy above the quiet, slow and difficult, in reaching the conclusion that “moderation would

16 Cf. 160e7 where “orderly” (κόσμιος) makes an enigmatic reappearance.
not be some quietness, nor would the moderate life be quiet.” (Cf. *Apology of Socrates* 37\textsuperscript{e}3–38\textsuperscript{a}8.)

Socrates’ list of activities consisted of two parts of eight items each. Although it did not include walking or conversing (cf. 159\textsuperscript{b}4 and 160\textsuperscript{e}6), it made some claims to comprehensiveness (159\textsuperscript{e}13, \textsuperscript{d}4, 160\textsuperscript{b}3–4): the first part (in which he included reading, writing, and cithera playing, perhaps because he started with Charmides’ school activities) consisted, according to the impression given by Socrates’ summary, of bodily activities, the second of activities of the soul. Socrates spoke as if all human activities are activities either of the body alone or of the soul alone. Moreover, the activities ascribed to the soul are all, as we would say, activities of the “mind”: there is no reference to desire, hope, fear, etc., or even to perception (cf. 167\textsuperscript{e}–168\textsuperscript{a}). Can a better case be made for a kind of quietness if one considers our composite nature? After his summary of the first part, Socrates said, “then with respect to the body not quietness but swiftness would be more moderate….” After his second summary, which referred to both the soul and the body, he said, “Then moderation would not be some quietness…,” adding the qualification, “from this argument.” His conclusion was based on the consideration that the slow activities in life are either nowhere or in few places more beautiful than the swift and strong; but even if no fewer of the slow (activities) than of the intense and swift were more beautiful, not even thus would acting quietly be moderation any more than acting intensely and swiftly. Socrates, following Charmides (159\textsuperscript{b}3–4), required that the moderate way of acting be beautiful, even preeminently beautiful, everywhere or always.\textsuperscript{18}

Charmides said that Socrates seemed to him to have spoken correctly. Socrates thereupon urged him to apply his mind again to a greater extent and to look away from everything else into himself; to turn over in his mind what sort of thing moderation makes him to be, and what sort of thing it is that it should work that effect; to reckon up all these things and then to say well and courageously what it appears to him to be. After a manly or courageous examination with regard to himself, as Socrates explains to the companion, Charmides said that moderation seemed to him to produce shame and make the human being such as to feel shame and that it seemed to be what reverence or awe or shame (αἰδος) is. Socrates did not say of this answer that it is what people say. He wished to consider it on the basis of Charmides’ agreement that moderation is (always) good, as in the case of Charmides’ first answer he had proceeded on the basis of Charmides’ agreement that moderation is (always) beautiful or noble.

\textsuperscript{18} Not only must moderation, wherever it is, be beautiful or more beautiful, but they refuse to limit it to certain actions—to say, for example, that to do certain things slowly is moderation. Cf. Findlay, p. 92.
But this time he did not ask for that agreement directly: he acted as if the goodness of moderation, as distinct from its nobility or beauty, were in need of proof; yet that goodness is implied somehow in its nobility. For the "proof" was as follows. Socrates asked whether Charmides had not just agreed that moderation was noble (beautiful). Very much so, he said. From this it seemed to follow that moderate men were good men and that moderation itself was not only noble but also good. The proximate ground of the goodness of moderation would appear to be its responsibility for the goodness of moderate men. (Can this be the ground also of the goodness of the good men, that they make men good?) For some reason or other, this ground was stated initially as a necessary condition of (any) goodness, and then treated as a sufficient condition of the goodness of moderation. Socrates asked, "Would that be good then which did not make men good?"; and on the basis of Charmides' strong denial, he asserted the goodness of moderation. Having established, after this fashion, that moderation is good, Socrates employed the authority of Homer to show that reverence or awe or shame is not always good; it is not good for a needy man. (Socrates was perhaps somewhat more gentle or cautious here than he had been with "quietness.") It followed that moderation would not be reverence or awe or shame. Socrates, together with Charmides, insisted that moderation be simply, always, good. (The needy man referred to by Homer or by the Homeric speaker was Odysseus disguised as a beggar. Odysseus, to whom Socrates occasionally likened himself\(^\text{19}\) had disguised his true need by taking upon himself the appearance of a false one. See page 143 above.)

Charmides readily agreed to the correctness of what had been said and now proposed on his own initiative a new definition for Socrates to examine. "For I just remembered, what I have already heard someone saying, that moderation was doing one's own things; examine this then, whether the speaker seems to you to speak correctly." "Wretch," Socrates says that he said, "you have heard this from Critias or some other one of the wise." (Cf. 174\(b\)1\(i\) where Socrates addresses Critias, immediately after Critias has spoken of a science of the good and the bad, as "wretch." If Charmides had heard this definition from Critias, had not Critias in turn heard it, as he had doubtless heard of a science of the good and the bad, from Socrates? Is one a wretch for repeating what seems to be a Socratic teaching?) Critias denied that Charmides had heard it from him. Charmides then asked Socrates what difference it made whom he had heard it from. None, Socrates said, for what is to be examined is not who said it but whether it is true or not. Charmides, the truster in Homer (161\(a\)2\(\text{--}\)5), said, "Now you speak correctly." Socrates, who responded with a "by Zeus," is

\(^{19}\) See, e.g., the entrance into the house of Kallias in the *Protagoras*, esp. 315\(b\)9 and \(c\)8.
a better guide to the scope or bearing, and therewith the difficulty of
application, of Charmides' principle. Socrates went on to say that he
would be amazed if they were to discover even the meaning of this
definition, for it had the look of a riddle.

It is clear by now that the situation has changed in a number of
respects. When Charmides, referring to the definition he had just
proposed and for which he had denied responsibility, asked Socrates
to examine whether the speaker seemed to him to speak correctly, he
clearly did not mean by that speaker himself. He had perhaps become
so concerned to find an answer to the question what is moderation
that he had forgotten the purpose which his attempting to answer
that question from his own experience had been said to serve. But it
is at least equally likely that he had already formed the wish or
purpose to escape Socrates' examination by provoking Critias (cf.
162c). Did he now regard Socrates' procedure as faulty? He raised no
question about it. Had that procedure and the failure of his first two
answers led him to the conclusion that he was not moderate? The
definition he has just proposed would not tend to support this con-
jecture, since he appears not to regard himself as a busybody (161d11-
e2). Perhaps then he wished either to avoid facing that question or,
at least, to have it resolved in a less public manner. For to continue
the discussion in the way he now proposed was to divorce it from the
Socratic procedure for discovering whether or not he possessed moder-
ation and to that extent to leave that question behind.

Socrates nevertheless accepted Charmides' proposal and not long
thereafter (162a) his replacement as an interlocutor by Critias. What-
ever Charmides' motivation or intention, and whatever Socrates' own
preference or intention, it would have been difficult for Socrates,
especially after the way in which he had introduced the theme of
moderation (see especially 158b4), to avoid taking the lead in a dis-
cussion that professed to aim above all at answering the question what
is moderation, that professed to subordinate all other considerations
to that end. It may also have been difficult for him to avoid allowing
Charmides a way out or Critias the chance to speak he all but demanded
(162c-d). These considerations lead us to wonder whether Socrates
had finished with Charmides or learned from him as yet all that he
wanted to learn, or whether he was not forced in this way to turn aside
from his examination before completing it. But this is not to say that
Socrates, given his Odyssean versatility, might not find a way to com-
plete the examination despite the turn the conversation has now
taken, might not indeed make that very turn serve his purpose.

However that may be, coincident with the apparent change in
purpose of the conversation or in what appears to be at stake, there is a
change in Socrates' treatment of the definition proposed. Whereas he
had been content to "refute" and apparently cast aside the two
earlier definitions, he indicates that the one they are now about to
consider is to be approached as a riddle. This appears to mean that their failure to find for it a reasonable or acceptable meaning will not necessarily be taken to bear on its ultimate validity. It might even be that such an answer as is given in the dialogue to the question, what is moderation, can be understood as a modification or development of the answer now given. (This would not necessarily imply a modification of the intention of the one responsible for the definition, for what he had in mind was not clearly but only enigmatically indicated by what he said [161a1-2].) For we do not mean to say that the dialogue is not concerned to consider and even answer the question, what is moderation.

Doing one’s own things is the famous formula of justice in the Republic (e.g., 433a1-b4). It is understood there in the first place to mean that each man will perform the task of one art; in doing so he will of course serve those who have need of the product or service of his art, just as they will serve him with their arts; indeed as an artisan or knower, as one who is concerned wholly with his “own” art, he is perfectly indifferent to the distinction between “mine” and “thine,” and this has much to do with his justice. The formula, so understood, was the basis on which Socrates, Glaucon, and Adeimantus built their city (433a1-6). Here, on the contrary, Socrates understands the formula to require that one write or read,20 for example, only one’s own name or at the most the names of one’s friends, and not those of one’s enemies; and that an artisan work only for himself—e.g., make only his own cloak, if he is a weaver, or his own shoes, if a shoemaker. (One is tempted to say that whereas in the Republic, Socrates looks at the formula from the point of view of justice, here he looks at it from the point of view of moderation.)21 But to write or read the names of others, at least in school, does not make one a busybody or immoderate.22 And, although a moderately managed city would be well managed, a city which was managed according to the law bidding each to make or do things only for himself would not be well managed. Since the failure to do only one’s own things in this sense does not lead to immoderation for the individual, while the doing by each only of his own things in this sense does lead to immoderation for the city,

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20 161b3-c5; cf. 159c3-6 ff. Socrates began here, as he had in the examination of Charmides’ first answer, with examples from school; in the examination of Charmides’ central answer, Socrates had relied on Homer. In questioning the first and third answers, Socrates could appeal to some extent to Charmides’ experience. But Charmides had not yet come upon a situation where he could understand ἀδίκος to be not good—or, if he had, Socrates did not now wish to call it to his attention. (One might find, however, that the general criticism of ἀδίκος prepared such a step).

21 Cf. Eratosthenes 138b9-c5; Protagoras 323b2-7.

22 At this point, Socrates does not challenge the identification of moderation and minding one’s own business, or at least of immoderation and the opposite of minding one’s own business, but questions a certain understanding of the latter.
doing one's own things in this way and with regard to the sort of activities referred to is not moderation. The exchange between Socrates and Charmides which we thus summarize introduced moderation as belonging to cities (or at least to their management) as well as to individuals into the dialogue. The understanding of moderation (or of the formula) proposed is called into question more with regard to its political consequences than with regard to its consequences for the individual. Sound or moderate politics, more obviously and to a greater extent than a sound or moderate life, require an interdependence or cooperation which Socrates took the literal meaning of doing one's own things to oppose; yet this was accepted, by Charmides at least, as ground for rejecting that meaning as a definition of moderation.23

When the result we have described had been reached and agreed to, Socrates repeated his assertion that the one who said that doing one's own things is moderation was riddling, for he would not have been so naive — or did you hear this from some fool, Charmides? Charmides strongly denied this; the one who said it seemed very much to be wise. Then, according to Socrates, he must have thrown out the formula as a riddle, something difficult to understand. (It was of some importance after all to know the source of the definition: it is worth pondering the enigmatic sayings of the wise). Perhaps, Charmides said. Socrates then asked Charmides whether he was able to say what doing one's own things means. "For my part, by Zeus, I don't know," Charmides said, "but perhaps nothing hinders that not even the one who said it knows what he had in mind." And here, Charmides, who not long ago (in refusing to answer Socrates' question about his moderation) had professed consideration for Critias, laughed gently24 and looked in Critias' direction. He was becoming liberated from his respect for Critias, if not also from the constraints of his good manners.

For it had almost surely been Critias—as Socrates says to the companion in the course of a rather lengthy explanation of the dramatic situation, as we can call it—from whom Charmides had heard that answer about moderation. Wanting Critias rather than himself to give the defense of the answer, Charmides gently provoked him (not, as it appears, without Socrates' help). And Critias, whose anxious striving and yearning for honor before Charmides and the others had long been clear, who had barely held himself in before, was now no longer able to restrain himself. When Charmides concluded, he did not bear it but seemed to Socrates to be angry with Charmides as a poet is angry with an actor who has badly played the poet's lines. Looking

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23 Note, however, the lack of conviction in his answer (οὐ φαίνεται). 162a9; cf. 162a3 and 6.
24 Charmides' previous laughter too (156a4) had been occasioned by what looked like a sort of pretentiousness or boasting: Socrates' professed reluctance to dictate the song unless Charmides persuaded him.
at him, Critias said: "So, Charmides, do you think, if you do not know what he who said that moderation is doing one's own things had in mind, he doesn't know either?" It was now Socrates who came to to Charmides' defense and answered in his place (cf. 157e7 ff.). He excused Charmides before Critias for his ignorance: it is not surprising given his age. (Who had put that ignorance to the test in the first place?) It is on the other hand perhaps to be expected that Critias know, given both his age and his care or practice. If Critias therefore agreed that moderation was what Charmides had asserted it to be and took in inheritance the argument, Socrates would be more pleased to examine with Critias whether what was said is true or not. "But I certainly agree and accept it," Critias said. Socrates, with his highly selective statement as to Critias' qualifications, permits us to wonder whether it is Critias' competence which is responsible for the pleasure of conversing with him.

Before undertaking to examine the definition with Critias, Socrates asked him to accept responsibility for it. (See also 163e6–7.) But Socrates had not spoken of or indicated a desire to examine or strip Critias for all we know, he had done so on some former occasion. It is therefore unimportant that we do not know whether Critias' inheritance of the argument implies that he has taken over the procedural agreements made by Charmides; that we do not know whether Critias' believing to know what moderation is, implies that he believed to possess it. Surely it is never said that Critias' answers are to be based on his experience of moderation. On the other hand, he cannot believe to possess moderation without believing to know what it is, for how otherwise would he know he possessed it? What Socrates claimed to want of Critias was to examine with him the truth or untruth of what had been said about moderation; or, as Charmides had demanded earlier (163e3–7) and as Socrates seems to indicate somewhat later (166d8–e2), the discussion is to be concerned not with "personalities" but with the argument. But will this be possible when Critias is the interlocutor? While the entrance of Critias thus appears to complete the shift in the purpose of the discussion—from examination of Charmides to attempt to answer the question, what is moderation—noted above, it in fact tends to confirm our impression, also noted above, that the character and extent of that shift are not unambiguous. For to the uncertainty as to the intention of Socrates, as he guides the inquiry into moderation, we must now add the uncertainty as to the effect on it which Critias' character, the nature of his abilities, and his experience will have. It becomes still less possible then to assume that the inquiry about to commence, or continue, will be a simply "philosophic" one in our sense, either in its manner or its purpose. In evaluating the suggestions that it may make regarding the truth about moderation, together with those which have already been made, we can never forget the action or drama of the dialogue,
Socrates' deed as it is thus presented to us. (According to the views which have already been rejected, either simply or as stated, moderation is not: quietness; reverence or awe or shame; doing one's own things. This does not in itself mean that moderation is the opposite of these things.)

IV. MODERATION AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE

A. Introduction of the Theme "Self-knowledge"

We have been led to suggest that Socrates' approach to Critias and his examination of Critias' definition of moderation will be determined by Socrates' present intention or aim as that is affected by Critias' character, abilities and experience. The usefulness of that suggestion is however somewhat limited: we cannot at this point be certain of Socrates' aim, and we are not sufficiently familiar with Critias. We have no other recourse than to try to remedy these deficiencies by following the twists and turns of the argument itself.

After Critias affirmed his agreement that moderation is doing one's own things and took over the defense of that definition from Charmides, Socrates began by raising with him the same difficulty that he had raised with Charmides, the difficulty which comes to light particularly in the case of the arts. But whereas with Charmides, Socrates had been most careful to secure his agreement that the artisan in question was "doing something" (161d3, e4, e8), Socrates now asked Critias whether the craftsmen all "make something" (162e9).25 This proved to give Critias an opening. For after he had agreed that the craftsmen make something and also that they make not only their own things but also those of others, he was asked by Socrates whether, in "making" not only their own things, they are moderate. He replied, "What prevents it?" When Socrates objected that this was for the one who defined moderation as "doing" one's own things to assert that nothing prevented those who "do" the things of others from being moderate, Critias suggested that he had not agreed that those who "do" the things of others are moderate if he agreed that those who "make" the things of others are. When Socrates asked him whether he did not call the same thing "making" and "doing," Critias responded at some length. He certainly did not, he said, make that identification, nor that of "working" and "making." For he had learned from Hesiod that no work is a disgrace.26 Critias took this to mean that the obviously disgraceful activities—e.g., shoemaking, selling salt fish, prostitu-

25 The words are respectively πρᾶττειν and ποιεῖν. The shift executed by Socrates is facilitated by the fact that ποιεῖν may also mean "doing."
26 Cf. Xenophon, Memorabilia I 2.56–57.
tion—were not held by Hesiod to be "works" nor being engaged in them "doing" or "working." Hesiod held, as Critias thought, "making" to be different from "doing" and "working"; and what was made to be sometimes a disgrace—whenever it did not come into being with what was beautiful; but a work was never disgraceful. For what was beautifully and beneficially made he called "works," and those sorts of makings he called "workings" and "doings."

If the bearing of Critias' argument to this point is to support or elaborate (with the help of Hesiod's name) his position that craftsmen are not prevented from being moderate by making the things of others, since that "making" is not "doing," his argument would seem to leave open the question whether these craftsmen are not immoderate because they fail to do their own things. If, on the other hand, he means to say that in making the things of others, some craftsmen, those whose making is beautiful (or productive of beauty) and beneficial, may be engaged in working or doing, he would still have the problem that they would be doing the things of others. He therefore went on to say in conclusion that one must say that such things alone—i.e., the things beautifully and beneficially made—are one's own, but all the harmful things are others', so that one must believe Hesiod and any other sensible man to call the one who does his own things moderate.

In this way Critias established that the craftsmen, in making the things of others, may be moderate: they are moderate if their "making," being beautiful (or productive of beauty) and beneficial, is actually a "doing" and if the "things of others," being beautifully and beneficially made, are in fact their own; or, they are moderate if their making of the things of others is in fact a doing of their own things. One could perhaps have objected that Critias thereby withdrew the assertion that had created the problem; but Socrates did not raise that difficulty. He said that he had grasped Critias' point just about at the start of his speech—that Critias would call one's own, and the things of oneself, "good" and the making of the good things "doing." (Socrates had then grasped at least the point he puts first before Critias had stated it. Moreover, he restates that point: he implies that Critias' real intention or wish is to call his own things good rather than the good things his own.) One can hear ten thousand such distinctions from Prodicus. Socrates granted to Critias to dispose of the "names" as he wished; he should only make clear to what he applied the name he said.27 Socrates therefore asked Critias to make his definition again from the beginning with greater clarity. "The doing or making or however you wish to name it, of the good things, is this what you say moderation to be?" (Socrates did not take up Critias' reference

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27 The license Socrates grants has an obvious limit: it comes to a halt before the name "moderation." Cf. 165*2, 175*4.
to the beautiful or noble; and he spoke here of the good rather than the beneficial—but cf. 164b1, 7, 9, ii, c1, 5.) Socrates thus disdained to be concerned with subtleties regarding "names"; he aimed only at the clarity of the argument. But perhaps he had reason to be satisfied with the turn the discussion had taken, a turn which had been made possible by his "mistake" regarding "making" and "doing."

Critias accepted Socrates' revision or restatement of his definition of moderation. Socrates then asked, "The one who does the bad things is then not moderate, but the one who does the good things?" Critias said, "And you, best of men, don't hold that opinion?" Socrates said, "Let it go: for we are not yet examining my opinion but what you now say." Socrates refused to state his opinion. Why had Critias presumed to know it? It seems more likely that he was drawing upon recollections of the time he had spent together with Socrates (156a8) than that he believed himself to be stating a truth so obvious that Socrates could not fail to give it his assent. This remark of Critias gives some confirmation then to the inference we were tempted to draw from the fact that, after giving Critias an opening, Socrates had guessed almost at the outset of Critias' speech the use that Critias was going to make of it: had not Socrates given Critias that opening with a view to getting him to assert that craftsmen may be moderate and above all to replace, in his definition of moderation, "doing one's own things" with "doing the good things," or to understand one's own as good? This is not to assert that the new or revised definition, any more than the old one, represents Socrates' views, or that Critias knew those views—only that Socrates and Critias were on familiar ground and that Socrates chose to exploit that fact in order to move the conversation, for some reason, in this direction.

Critias now restated more completely his revised definition. He made it somewhat clearer than had Socrates' last statement that one must not only do good but also refrain from doing bad things to be moderate. He did not specify in any way which are the good things whose performance is moderation; nor, if all good things are included, did he indicate how the good things are to be distinguished from the bad (unless one is to take as sufficient indication his earlier exclusion of making shoes, selling salt fish, and prostitution).

Having brought the conversation to this point, Socrates said that nothing perhaps prevented Critias from speaking the truth; but he wondered about one point: whether Critias thought the moderate human beings do not know that they are moderate. (As T. G. Tuckey points out, this reminds us of the procedural agreements wrung from Charmides earlier.28 But Socrates makes no effort now to revive those agreements or to explain his question on those grounds.) Critias did

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not think this. Socrates then showed that this admission was incompatible with Critias' revised definition: there is no necessity that those who do the good things and not the bad are aware of their doing so. More precisely, the admission proved to be incompatible with an assertion that an artisan is moderate by virtue of the practice of his art. For while one might say that the doers of good things are moderate only insofar as they know the goodness of what they do, an uncertainty about the goodness of what he does belongs to the artisan as such. He cannot know, without divination, whether his work will have a successful outcome; he does not know as artisan the goodness of the end his art serves (e.g., it is not by his science that a medical man knows the goodness of health); and he does not know by his art the circumstances in which its practice is beneficial. Socrates' refutation of Critias here was made possible then by his leading Critias, who had not asserted that artisans as such are moderate, in the direction of such an assertion. He did so in the following way. He asked Critias whether "shortly before" it had not been said by him that nothing prevented the craftsmen from being moderate even though they make the things of others. Critias was thus led to think that it would be a question of defending his assertion that the craftsmen may be moderate. To that extent he was put on his guard and as result, perhaps, agreed all the more readily to Socrates' suggestions that a medical man, in making someone healthy, "makes" (i.e., does) what is beneficial to himself and the one he cures; that in doing these things he does what needs (or ought) to be done; and that in doing what needs or ought to be done he is moderate. Having agreed to these points, Critias was forced to grant that it isn't necessary for the medical man to know when his curing is beneficial and when not, or for any other craftsman to know when he is to be benefited (cf. 164b8-9 with b1) from the work he does and when not. "But then sometimes the medical man, in acting [doing] beneficially or harmfully won't know himself, how he acts—and yet in acting beneficially, according to your argument, he acts moderately. Or didn't you speak in this way?" Critias agreed. "Then, as it seems, sometimes, acting beneficially, he will act moderately and be moderate but not know himself, that he is moderate."

As we will see shortly, Critias cannot accept this result; he would rather give up his definition than grant that a human being is moderate while not knowing himself. If Socrates had had reason (drawn perhaps from his prior acquaintance with Critias) to suppose that Critias would insist on the connection between moderation and self-knowledge, then he made it likely that Critias would abandon his definition of moderation as doing the good things when he chose, as the example of doing good, the practice of the arts. He thus brought

29 Cf. Xenophon, Memorabilia I 1.6–8; Charmides 173e3–7.
it about that self-knowledge replaced rather than refined or modified
the understanding of moderation as doing the good things. But he
had also brought it about that "doing the good things" had replaced
"doing one's own things" in Critias' definition, and he might as easily,
it would seem, have led the discussion to self-knowledge from "doing
one's own things" as from "doing the good things." (Cf. Alcibiades I
133e18–e3; cf. 131a5–b9.) It looks then as if Socrates introduced "doing
the good things" into the discussion in order to have it rejected in this
context.

How are we to understand that step? We must begin by raising the
question of the link between "doing the good," self-knowledge, and
moderation. Socrates seems to insist that an awareness of his moderation
belongs to the moderate human being. As is pointed out by Tuckey,
this is not yet to insist that the moderate human being (fully) knows
himself.31 It means, according to what is said in the present context,
that the moderate human being is aware of or knows the goodness of
his actions, for moderation is doing the good things. Tuckey was thus
led to ask "how far the consciousness of the rightness of one's action
demanded by Socrates' words in 164b coincides with self-knowledge."32
This question points to the prior question of why Socrates "demanded,"
in the case of moderation, an awareness of the goodness of one's
actions.33 Would he have demanded that such an awareness or knowl-
edge be an ingredient (or necessary accompaniment) of the possession
of the other virtues? Yet the other virtues too can be defined as "doing
the good things": is not each of them, at any rate, believed to consists
in or to cause the doing of good things? (Socrates said of Critias' revised
definition, which made moderation to be the doing of the good
things, and of no other definition in the dialogue, that nothing perhaps
prevented Critias from speaking the truth [164a1]). To this extent
then moderation is indistinguishable from the other virtues, or virtue
is one. But in the case of the "other" virtues, the belief, unaccompanied
by knowledge, that one possesses the virtue and is acting virtuously
and doing good things is not thought to impugn one's possession of
the virtue. If a courageous or just man believes that what he does

31 Tuckey, p. 25.
32 Tuckey, p. 24.
33 To this prior question, Tuckey's answer, repeated throughout his book, is as
follows: "The question which Plato is asking himself is evidently this: 'if
virtue is knowledge, and if, as this implies, no man can habitually and con-
sistently do good without knowing that he is doing good, how is a man to know
that he is doing good? . . . ?'" (p. 22; cf. p. 107). This answer, as Tuckey himself
indicates, presupposes that Plato believed he knew what moderation or virtue
is: satisfied as to this, the main point, he moved on to examine an implication
of the understanding of virtue he had accepted. But this is to ignore the context
in which Socrates' demand is made: an attempt to discover what moderation is.
And more generally, how can one reasonably assume, prior to an examination
of the Charmides itself—even on the basis of other Platonic dialogues or letters—
that this great question was settled for Plato, and settled in a certain way?
is good without knowing it to be so, he may still be just or courageous. From the point of view of moderation, however, such a belief, unaccompanied by knowledge, must come to sight as boasting; and boasting, especially of such a character, seems to be incompatible with possession of moderation.34 Moderation then, as distinguished from the other virtues, would require that one have knowledge of the goodness of one’s actions, if it should prove to be true that—to restate an earlier suggestion—“by nature” no one fails to claim or believe to be virtuous or to do good things in this sense. But, to repeat with Tuckey, “how far [does] the consciousness of the rightness of one’s action . . . [coincide] with self-knowledge?”

Critias’ response to Socrates’ refutation (of the assertion that a moderate human being as Critias had defined him would not be unaware of his moderation) was in the form of his longest speech yet. He began by saying that what Socrates had suggested—that a human being might be moderate but not know himself, that he was moderate—would never occur. If Socrates thought that this was a necessary result of Critias’ earlier agreements, Critias would rather alter something of them, and would not be ashamed to say that he had spoken incorrectly, rather than ever grant that a human being, while not knowing himself, is moderate. For this was just about the very thing that he asserts moderation to be: knowing oneself.

Seeking to compensate for this beginning, Critias then stated his agreement with the author of the famous inscription (“Know thyself”) at Delphi. For it seemed to Critias that that writing was offered as a greeting by the god to those who entered the temple in place of Χαῖρε (the traditional or usual form in which people greeted one another, the literal translation of which would be something like “Rejoice”), on the ground that this was not a correct greeting—“Rejoice”—nor ought human beings to recommend this to each other, but rather, “Be moderate.” Thus, as it seemed to Critias that the author of the inscription thought, does the god address those entering the temple, in a way different from human beings: to know oneself is not to rejoice.35 “He says to the one who enters nothing other than, ‘Be moderate,’ he says.” (It is not clear that Critias’ agreement with the author in question extends to both the correctness of the new greeting and its ascription to the god.) But he spoke like a prophet, in a riddling form; for “Know thyself” is the same as “Be moderate.” as Critias and the inscription say, but one might perhaps think it to be something else. This, according to Critias, was what happened to the authors of the later inscriptions. Taking “Know thyself” to be a counsel rather

34 Cf. Republic 560e5–d4; Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1123b5. Cf., on the other hand, the ambiguous testimony of Protagoras 323b7–b7, which refers however to what one says rather than to what one thinks, and where Protagoras is the speaker.
35 Cf. Thales, DK 1.71, as quoted in Tuckey, p. 9.
than the god's greeting for the sake of those entering the temple, they added their own useful counsels. Had they understood that "Know thyself" stood for "Be moderate," Critias suggests, they would not have made that mistake: one would not have taken an exhortation to a virtue to be merely a matter of imparting some useful advice.

Having invoked not just Hesiod, but the most famous Delphic saying, and spoken of some errors of others, Critias returned to his point. All that he had said was said to indicate to Socrates that he gave up to him all that had gone before, "for perhaps in some respect you spoke more correctly about those things, perhaps I, but nothing of what we said was very clear." But now Critias was willing to give Socrates an argument if Socrates did not agree that moderation was knowing oneself.

Socrates took Critias' last remark to accuse him in effect of claiming to know concerning the things he raised questions about (cf. Apology of Socrates 22e6–23a5) and of being able, then, if he wanted, to agree with Critias. This was not the case: Socrates sought with Critias for what was at any time proposed because he himself did not know. (The word used for knowing in these two cases is εἰδέναι, whereas the word used in the phrase "Know thyself," or oneself, was γνωσκεῖν [164c1, 6, d2, 4, e7, 165a4, b4; cf. 164b3, b7].) He was willing, after his examination, to say whether he agreed or not, and he asked for Critias' forbearance while he examined. Critias' response, too, indicated that the examination was to be Socrates'. Did Critias feel no need for such an examination? After the understanding of moderation as doing the good things had been replaced by self-knowledge, Socrates went beyond his former refusal to state his opinion (163e6–7: note however πω) both by his admission or profession of ignorance and by his promise to state later, after examination, whether he agreed with Critias or not: the latter promise balances or compensates for the former admission. The examination is apparently to remedy Socrates' ignorance of moderation sufficiently to enable him to determine whether he agrees. But was this the first time that Socrates had looked into the question of moderation? And was there any reason to have a greater expectation of this investigation than of former ones?

B. A Knowledge of What One Knows and Does Not Know

Socrates began his examination by asking Critias whether it was clear that if moderation is γνωσκεῖν ὑμῖν (that is, knowing in some loose sense or recognizing something) it is ἐπιστήμη τῆς καὶ τινὸς (that is, some science and a science of something). "It is," Critias said, and he added, "of oneself." By collapsing, with Critias' agreement, the distinction between recognizing or knowing in some loose sense and science, Socrates prepared the way for treating any knowing with the strictness
belonging to science, or for treating science with special looseness, or, at various times, for both these procedures.

Socrates now began by raising the question of the product of a "science of oneself" rather than by looking at that science, before making clear the precise character of that science. He asked whether medicine too was a science—of the healthful. Very much so. "If then you should ask me, 'Medicine, being a science of the healthful, is in what respect useful to us and what does it produce [διηγαζόμεθα]? I would say that it produces not a small benefit, for it produces health, a beautiful [or noble] product [or work]—if you accept this." Critias did. "And if then you should ask me with respect to house-building, being a science of building houses, what product I say it produces, I would say that it produces houses. And so on for the other arts." The models chosen by Socrates for the elaboration of Critias' suggestion are productive arts, which as arts (τέχνα) share with sciences the knowing of something, or are sciences; but they are distinguished more by what they produce or bring about than by what they know. Two arts, with their products and what they know, are mentioned; but they are not in every respect similar. The product of house-building is not called, like that of medicine, beautiful or noble.36 Could this be due, paradoxically, to the fact that while the "product" of medicine is natural, that of house-building is not, so that although guided to some extent by natural needs—supplying the shelter we require next only to food—house-building is easily expanded to the building of beautiful (or noble) and great houses, to say nothing of temples? (Cf. Republic 369d1–4; 410b5–6; 394a4–5; consider Critias' calling, or wishing to call, his own things [οἶκεῖα] good or noble—163e3–6 and d2–3; cf. also 157e2.)

Socrates next said that it was therefore incumbent on Critias, since he said that moderation was a science of oneself, to be able to answer the question, "What beautiful work does it produce for us worthy of the name?" By assimilating, as we have seen, the sciences to productive arts, Socrates was able to proceed on the assumption that moderation too, as a science, has a work or product and perhaps also that the product is useful or beneficial. But the heterogeneity of his models precludes his asserting on their authority that the product of moderation is beautiful. That the product or work of moderation is beautiful (or noble) would seem to be guaranteed or promised by the name "moderation" (cf. page 166 above). Names are not so unimportant as, in an earlier exchange with Critias, Socrates seemed to suggest (163d1–e2). Their importance may be partially understood by comparing Socrates' reference here to the name "moderation"

36 Critias' former insistence on the beauty of every work or product has been silently dropped without his noticing it, or at any rate without a murmur of protest on his part. Cf. 163b4–c4.
with a still earlier exchange, between Socrates and Charmides (158c6–
159e10). In that passage, Socrates seemed to suggest that such words
as moderation merely label what we know from experience, what we
have felt or can feel and know. If that were unambiguously true, a
conversation about moderation would require, to be adequate, the
participation of moderate men, as in the Lysis Socrates speaks about
friendship with two boys who, as it appears at least, are friends. But
is this requirement fulfilled in the Charmides, where Socrates, who at
times claims not even to know what moderation is, speaks with the
future oligarchs Charmides and Critias? Is it fulfilled in any of the
other dialogues devoted to a virtue (Euthyphro, Laches, Republic,
Theages)? Its non-fulfillment could lead us to wonder whether the
name “moderation” might not be as much an indication of what we
seek or think to find in experience or in ourselves as it is of what we
have found there. (Cf. 175b2–4.) But in question here is not moderation
itself but its product. It is better then to ask of that product whether
it is beautiful as health is beautiful or as a noble house or temple is
beautiful. More precisely still, the question concerns the product of
moderation understood as a “science of oneself.” By pointing to a
product of a science of oneself, Socrates perhaps meant to suggest that
it is due to that science, or something like it (cf. 169e6–7; one must make
allowance here for the fact that Socrates has collapsed the distinction
between recognizing or knowing in a loose sense and science), that
we can recognize our need for medicine on the one hand or that we
conceive a need for “house-building” on the other (cf. Alcibiades I
133c1–24). (The medicine contrasted here with “house-building” is
of course not “Thracian medicine.”)

But in his reply, instead of seeking for some product, Critias found
fault with Socrates’ question. Socrates had based his inquiry on the
assumption that the sciences are similar to one another (165d6); but
“this one” (it is not clear whether Critias thinks of moderation or of
a science of oneself) is not by nature similar to the other sciences nor
they to each other. For example, Socrates would not be able to show
such a work or product of the logistic art or geometry as there is of
house-building and weaving and of many arts. (The sciences are not
then totally dissimilar; they fall at least into certain classes.) Socrates
granted that he was not able to show such a product of logistics or
geometry. But he asserted that he was able to show what each of these
sciences is “of,” the object in question being something else than the
science itself. For example, logistics is of the even and the odd, how
they are in respect of multitude towards themselves and towards one
another, the even and the odd being other than logistics itself; while
the weighing art37 is of the heavier and the lighter, the heavy and light

37 Socrates speaks of the weighing art where Critias had spoken of geometry
(165e6). Does he substitute, as more appropriate to Critias, an oligarchic art for
an aristocratic—or perhaps democratic [Aristophanes, Clouds 202–205]—one?
being other than the weighing art itself. (We note that each of these two arts is "of" a pair of things, as is emphasized especially by the comparatives "heavier" and "lighter". We note also that logistics is distinguished not only or sufficiently by its being of distinct objects but also by its being of a certain aspect of them, their relations in respect of multitude toward themselves and one another: it seems to be rather logistics' unmentioned companion art arithmetic which is of the objects themselves in respect of multitude).38 When Critias had granted these points, Socrates asked him what moderation was a science "of," the object in question being other than moderation itself. In other words, a universal characteristic of the sciences having come to sight in otherness with relation to their objects (if not in production), even if moderation is like logistics, geometry and the weighing art rather than the productive arts, it must have an object other than itself, which Critias might reasonably be asked to state. But had he not already done so in saying that moderation is a science of "oneself"? (See 165c7 and Socrates' acknowledgment of this answer at 165e1.) Socrates' insistence that the object of moderation be other than the science itself comes despite the fact that the answer which has been given appears to satisfy that requirement.39 Had Socrates forgotten that answer? Critias at any rate did not choose to remind him of it. It turned out, he explained, that Socrates, in seeking (again) for a non-existent similarity of moderation to the other sciences, had come to precisely that in which it differs from them. While the others are all sciences of something else, but not of themselves, moderation alone is a science of the other sciences and of itself.

The surprising development for which Critias thus took responsibility was explained or justified by him in no other way than to say that these things were far from escaping Socrates, "but I think that what you just now denied doing, this you do: for you attempt to refute me, neglecting that which the argument is about." In the statement which Critias apparently took to be a disavowal of the intention to refute, Socrates had denied knowing whether or not moderation is knowing oneself and had said that it was on account of his ignorance that he investigated with Critias what was at any time proposed (165b5–c2): he had not spoken of refutation. Accordingly, he now responded to Critias by denying that there is such a simple opposition between refuting and learning as Critias had implied: however much Socrates may refute Critias, he does it for no other purpose than that for which Socrates would search himself as to what he says, fearing that it might escape him that he thinks he knows something but does not know. Does this mean that Socrates' refutation of Critias is to aid Critias in

38 Cf. Gorgias 451a–c and, for a more competent discussion of these references to logistics and arithmetic, Jacob Klein, Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1968), pp. 17–25.
39 Cf. Tuckey, pp. 33 and 38.
this way or that it, together with Socrates’ self-examination, belongs to Socrates’ attempt to keep himself from such error? Is it perhaps necessary to Socrates that he refute others? Now then as well, Socrates continued, he claimed to do this, to examine the argument especially for the sake of himself but perhaps also for the others who are suitable (or friends)—or did not Critias think it to be a common good for just about all humans, that it become clear, with regard to each of the beings, how it is? (After stating the concern not to think he knew what he did not know, Socrates spoke of the “common good” for just about all humans that there come to be clarity about each of the beings. Not to think one knows what one does not know is to be prepared to that extent to strive for clarity about the beings. Is it to be prepared also in the sense that it is especially when one is so disposed that such clarity comes to sight as, or becomes, preeminently good?) In response to Socrates’ question, Critias could not fail to say that he did indeed consider such clarity to be good. Socrates thereupon exhorted him to be bold in answering what was asked in the way it appeared to him: let it go whether Critias or Socrates is the one being refuted, but applying the mind to the argument itself, see how it will turn out, being refuted. I will do so, Critias said, for you seem to me to speak with measure. Critias obviously did not share Socrates’ concern for discovering what he might think he knew but not know—at least, not so far as to welcome a public discovery. Socrates was therefore forced, in order to secure his continued cooperation in the discussion, to direct his attention away from his possible refutation and toward the examination or refutation of the argument. That cooperation was still necessary, it seems to me, because Critias had entered the discussion as more or less of an authority for Charmides: Charmides might well regard his own refutation as indecisive, so long as he could continue to look up to one who remained unrefuted.40 As we may already suspect then, and the sequel confirms, the argument to which Critias’ attention is directed, will be the vehicle for his refutation. But as we will also begin to see in this context, “refutation”—and therefore Socrates’ deed in refuting Charmides/Critias—is connected with the themes with which the argument is concerned: self-knowledge and moderation. Nor is Socrates prevented by his intention to refute from conducting a discussion which, while refuting, will illuminate (for the companion, e.g., and others) that connection and those themes.

Having brought the discussion to this point and having somewhat conciliated Critias, Socrates asked him to state (again) his position regarding moderation. Critias said that it alone is a science of itself and the other sciences. Socrates asked whether it was not then a science also of non-science (non-knowing [ἄνεπιστημονοῦντι]), if it was of science. Critias readily accepted this addition, although he had spoken

40 Cf. Theaetetus 162a5–6, 166a6–b1, and 169d10–e3.
of a science of the other sciences and itself rather than of science. Socrates then made the following statement:

The moderate man alone, then, will himself know \([\gamma \gamma \nu \kappa \omega \sigma \kappa \varepsilon \epsilon \nu]\) himself and will be able to put to test what he happens to know \([\varepsilon \delta \varepsilon \nu \alpha \alpha]\) and what not, and will in like manner have the power to examine in the others what one knows and thinks—if he knows—and what he himself \(\text{[mss. BT at 167a4]}\) thinks he knows but does not know. No one else. And it is this, to be moderate and moderation as well as to know oneself: to know what one knows and what one does not know.—Is this what you say?

Critias accepted Socrates’ statement as his own. The statement makes clear that the new or altered definition was not meant to imply an abandonment of the identification of moderation with self-knowledge. But while it appears from its beginning that in possessing a science of science one is moderate and knows oneself, it appears from its end that to know oneself and to be moderate is to know what one knows and does not know. A science of science might prepare a knowledge of what one knows and does not know. But is Critias’ acceptance of Socrates’ statement sufficient indication that this was the purpose for which he introduced a science of the other sciences and itself? (Cf. 169\(^d\)9–e5.) Does that statement itself point unambiguously to this solution to the difficulty it poses? The possessor of a science of science will know himself but be able to examine himself as to what he knows and does not know; but to know what one knows and does not know is to know oneself (cf. 169\(^d\)6–8 with 169\(^e\)6–8)

A science of the other sciences and itself replaces or explains Critias’ suggestion of a science of “oneself.” When Critias, after accepting Socrates’ identification of recognizing or knowing in some loose sense and science, had gone so far as to speak of a science of oneself, but had denied in effect that that “science” has a product, Socrates raised the question of the otherness of various sciences with regard to their objects. He seemed to imply that that otherness is everywhere where there is science. Thereupon Critias ceased to speak of a science of oneself and began to speak of a science of the other sciences and itself. The reason may have to be traced to the following considerations: if a science is always other than its objects, the objects will be known as other; but “oneself” is an object which cannot be known as other—indeed, speaking strictly, it is an “object” whose being depends on the recognition of something as not being other by the act of knowing or thinking, or which comes to be in that act.\(^{41}\) It may be true then that wherever there is knowing, something knows which is not just knowing: it does not necessarily follow that that something can know or think itself as itself. As for the significance of this, it is sufficient to begin with to

\(^{41}\) In other words, one cannot speak even of “oneself” as merely an object of a science of oneself, any more than of a house as merely an object of a house-building science.
remember that self-knowledge, in the sense in which we usually understand the term, is knowledge of or about ourselves. It presupposes therefore the grasp or recognition of oneself which it seeks to clarify or deepen. When we ask, What am I, we already grasp something to which we give the name “I.” What Socrates has pointed to, is the difficulty of understanding how such a grasp (and hence such a question) is possible.

He did so in response to Critias’ denial that there is a product of knowing oneself. It is as if Socrates had replied, “Perhaps then one cannot know oneself in this sense.” Then Critias made a suggestion as to how this is possible, a suggestion which Socrates saw fit, for the time being, to accept: one who has the science which Critias described will know himself. But Socrates in turn on his own initiative immediately pointed out—changing somewhat the description of Critias’ science for this purpose—that possession of that science will enable one to examine himself and others as to what one knows and does not know. And he indicated (contradicting himself in the manner we observed) that it is a knowledge of what one knows and does not know, rather than a science of science or of the other sciences and itself, that is self-knowledge. The contradiction may be explained or justified if the sort of self-knowledge whose possibility Critias has attempted to explain is more the basis or prerequisite of self-knowledge as we usually understand the term than that very knowledge. It would be in need then of a supplement. It would need a supplement all the more if it gave rise to such a product as tended to obstruct our view of our true condition, i.e., if we had such a reaction to knowing ourselves in this sense as led us to hide from ourselves that condition. That Socrates has referred to the product of knowing oneself as noble (\(165^{a}4^{b} \text{--e}2\)) does not necessarily contradict this suggestion.

A further hint as to the basis of the claim of a knowledge of what one knows and does not know to be, or rather to be necessary for, the full or fuller self-knowledge is supplied by what Socrates next said: “Back then—the third to the Savior [Zeus]—as if from the beginning, let us examine first if it is possible or not for this to be, to know what one knows and what one does not know, that one does not know; then if it is granted to be possible, what would be the benefit for us in knowing it?” The words, “back . . . as if from the beginning,” together with the number “three,” link the new theme to a prior new beginning; they point to \(163^{d}7\), where the words, “back from the beginning,” are also to be found. There a new beginning was necessary because Critias wished to call one’s own things good, or only good things one’s own, so that his definition of moderation became “doing the good things.”

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42 We will consider later why the primary self-examination is at a later stage supplemented by examination of others, as the mss. at \(167^{a}4\) indicate. Cf. \(166^{c}7^{d} \text{--d}4\).
rather than "doing one's own things." They were to begin the examination of that revised or new definition. The first new beginning failed to find satisfactory the definition it considered because, as it seemed to Critias, one may do the good things without knowing them to be good, but a moderate man would not be ignorant of his moderation. As a result "doing the good things" was replaced by self-knowledge. We believed to be able to follow that step to this extent: we saw that a moderate man, given the universality of the pretension to virtue, would have to know the goodness of what he did. But what is the connection or relation between that knowledge and self-knowledge simply? Here a new beginning has become necessary, a final new beginning as Socrates' reference to the final libation at a feast indicates, because self-knowledge has been said to be knowledge of what one knows and does not know. A knowledge of what one knows and does not know may be as close as one can come to knowing the goodness of what one does, in the required sense. In speaking then, at the end of the section marked out by references to new beginnings (163d7–167b1), of a knowledge of what one knows and does not know, Socrates may be returning to the point, or almost to the point, he reached toward its beginning. But will a self-knowledge linked to a knowledge of what one knows and does not know have as strong a claim to the name "moderation" (of whose demands Socrates has just reminded us) as a self-knowledge linked to a knowledge of the goodness of what one does would have had?

V. SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND MODERATION

No longer concerned to change or modify Critias' definition of moderation, Socrates turned to the examination of the definition which had been reached. A knowledge of what one knows and does not know must be possible as well as beneficial or good—sufficiently good [cf. 158b4, 176a1, and the reference in the present context to savior Zeus]—if it is to be accepted as moderation. (Cf. 169b1–5.)

When Critias agreed that an examination was required, it looked for a moment as if Socrates would turn that task over to him, the reason being that Socrates, as he professed, was at a loss. But without waiting for Critias to respond to this invitation or command, Socrates offered to tell Critias where he was at a loss. Charmides was thus given the opportunity to see whether Critias was able to solve the difficulties Socrates raises, i.e., to see whether Critias was any the less at a loss than Socrates.

Socrates first secured Critias' agreement to the proposition that "all these things would be, if there exists what you just now were saying, some one science which is not a science of anything else than of itself and of the other sciences as well as—this same one—of non-science."
That is, following the plan indicated in the opening remark of this section, Socrates turned first to the question of the possibility of knowing what one knows and does not know. More precisely, he speaks of the condition for the being of "all these things": he has not forgotten the question of that primary self-knowledge which constitutes our first knowledge or thought of ourselves; the ensuing remarks treat that question as well as the other, if with a certain reserve or reticence.

Socrates then asked Critias to observe how strange was the thing they attempted to say. If Critias would examine the same thing in other cases, it would seem to him, as Socrates thought, to be impossible:

"For consider whether there seems to you to be some seeing which is not a seeing of the things of which the other seeings are seeings but is a seeing of itself and of the other seeings, and likewise of non-seeings; and even though it is a seeing, it sees no color but [sees] itself and the other seeings. Does there seem to you to be some such seeing?"

"No, by Zeus, not to me at least."

"But what about a hearing, which hears no sound but hears itself and the other hearings?"

"Not even this."

"Examine collectively concerning all the perceptions whether there seems to you to be some perception of perceptions and itself, which perceives nothing of what the other perceptions perceive?"

"Not to me, at least."

"But there seems to you to be some desire which is a desire of no pleasure but which is [a desire] of itself and of the other desires?"

"No indeed."

"Nor a wanting, as I think, which wants nothing good, but wants itself and the other wantings."

"Certainly not."

"Some love, you'd say there is of this sort, [a love] which happens to be love of nothing beautiful, but of itself and of the other loves?"

"Not I," he said.

"Some fear you've observed before now, which fears itself and the other fears, but fears not even one of the terrible things."

"I haven't observed one," he said.

"An opinion, which is an opinion of opinions and itself but opines nothing of what the others opine?"

"Not at all."

"But, as it looks, we say there is some science of this sort, which is a science of no learning matter, but a science of itself and the other sciences."

"We do say so."

As these exchanges suggest, seeing and hearing, as well as the perceptions generally, and desiring, wanting, loving, fearing and opining are directed to objects other than those motions themselves. Socrates spoke first of seeing and hearing (and the perceptions collectively), then of some of what we call the passions, then of opinion. In a partial repetition (168\textsuperscript{d} ff.), he speaks of hearing and seeing, and then of a motion which moves itself and a heat which kindles itself. At least the former
of the new items may refer to soul. If so, soul replaces in the enumeration the passions and opinion: soul is above all the passions and opinion (we remain what we are without the ability to see and hear, but not without the ability to desire, want, love, fear and think). It is better to say that soul is the common source of the passions and opinion, of feeling and thinking: but it is a source which, it could seem, manifests itself only as the motions in which it issues. There is at any rate no sense or perception of soul. How then can the soul have feelings toward itself? Moreover, the motions in which it issues are severally directed outward toward objects which are other rather than toward themselves; and the otherness of the objects remains even where the motions have each other as objects. The question whether a soul can know itself at all could seem to rest then on the question whether knowing, as opposed to the other motions in which the soul issues, can be directed toward itself. We come back then to Critias' suggestion.

According to that suggestion, it is by possession of a science which knows itself that one knows oneself (see 169\textsuperscript{d}9–\textsuperscript{e}5). The list of motions which has been offered by Socrates as analogues to that science suggests that it is to be understood in this context as a knowing, an act of knowing, which knows itself, i.e., the very knowing that it is (as well as other acts of knowing). If the analogy holds, as there is reason to suspect, there is no such knowing; knowing, like the other motions, is such as always to be called forth by or in relation to something other; knowing or awareness is always of something other as other.

Nevertheless, a human soul may come to know, and in a sense experience itself, in a manner indicated by an unobtrusive correction which Socrates, on a suitable occasion, makes of Critias' suggestion. According to the new formulation, one will know oneself when one possesses what knows itself, or, perhaps, something knowing the self or selfness (169\textsuperscript{d}6–8; cf. mss. at 170\textsuperscript{a}1; cf. Alcibiades I 129\textsuperscript{a}7–\textsuperscript{b}3, 130\textsuperscript{e}5–\textsuperscript{d}6). The meaning of this suggestion, so far as I can understand it, is as follows. As we have to some extent already seen, we may mean by the term "self-knowledge" two related but different things. We may mean the knowledge of a being which knows, more or less fully, the very being that it is; or we may mean the knowledge of a being which knows itself as some being, which knows that it is some being. In the latter case, we might call what the being knows its selfness, its possession of the characteristic or character of being a self. Selfness in this sense is nothing but being other from other things; it does not differ from other-

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44 Nor is there, as Robert R. Wellman suggests, an awareness of knowing, or of the fact that "we" know, that accompanies knowing. "The Question Posed at Charmides 165\textsuperscript{a}–166\textsuperscript{e}," *Phronesis*, IX (1964), 112. In our ordinary experience of knowing, there is awareness only of the object as other. Cf. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, nos. 16 and 17.
Let us grant that a human soul is such a being as possesses the character of selfness, and moreover that, as human, it knows somehow that character or knows somehow what it is to be a self. How will it know that character as its own, or know its selfness in that character? Showing itself, as it seems, only as motions which are severally directed outward from themselves, the soul knows what it knows as other. The other, however, as an exchange in this vicinity might remind us (168b2 ff.), is always other than or from another. If the objects of knowing are known as other, a sense of otherness from those objects must accompany or be an ingredient of the act of knowing: by that sense of otherness, the soul which thinks manifests itself in, and not just as, the act of thinking. Now in the case before us, the object of thought is selfness, i.e., otherness; as an object it is and will be known as other; a sense or feeling of otherness from it will be present. But it is the articulation, it is the character of that very sense. It will not then be known simply as other; in knowing selfness, i.e., otherness, a human soul will know itself, or will know its selfness.

It is thus through such a thought, by this account, that a human soul comes to know itself in the indicated sense and indeed to experience itself, that it becomes capable of saying and thinking "I." However that may be, it is this capacity which enables all of us not only to wonder about ourselves but more generally to become objects of our cares, wants and fears, open to experiences or passions to which we would otherwise be closed—for example, a fear of fear, i.e., a concern for "our" future, and corresponding wants, hopes and wishes. Other passions, love for example, are perhaps transformed. Because we know ourselves in this sense, that is, we are different selves than we would otherwise have been. This, it seems, is the necessary background for the consideration of a knowledge of what one knows and does not know, to which we now return.

Socrates had reminded Critias of what he was "just now saying"—that there is some one science which is not a science of anything else than of itself and of the other sciences as well as, this same one, of non-science—above all in order to suggest that this science is the condition for the being of a knowledge of what one knows and does not know. This is perhaps the reason why in repeating Critias' words, Socrates altered them. Where Critias had spoken of a science which is "of itself" (166e3, 6; cf. 169e1, 4; cf. 165b4; cf. also 167a1 and 169e7; cf. on the other hand 164d4, 7 and 160d7; 167a6 is disputed in the mss.), Socrates spoke of a science which is "of itself" (167e1, 168a7; cf. 167e2; cf. however 168d6, 9, 9, and 169a4–5 as well as 168d1 and e5); Socrates

45 The significance of this is suggested by a remark which Socrates makes in this context: "will not whatever has its own power [the power of itself] toward itself have the being toward which its power is?" (168a1–3).
added, as he had before (166e7, just before the introduction of a knowledge of what one knows and does not know), that the science in question is also of "non-science"; and he required, as Critias had not, that the science be of nothing else than itself, the other sciences, and non-science (cf. 168a7). The consequence of a science's knowing itself (that it would become "itself" or a self that is known by itself) is not in this context at issue; but the science must have some access to non-science. The meaning of the last mentioned change is not yet clear.

In the meantime we have seen that Critias' science, understood in a certain way, appears to be impossible. But there may be another way to understand it, a way suggested by the very terms in which Critias first described his science. This alternative comes to sight if we have recourse to kinds or classes of sciences—that is, if we consider whether there are, not only particular sciences, knowings by a particular being of one or more objects, but also kinds of sciences, or classes of sciences comprising all knowings of a particular kind: "medicine," for example, as opposed to the particular knowledge of a particular doctor. If there are kinds of sciences, there might be a knowing of those kinds, or a science which has as its objects the kinds of sciences—which they are, how they are distinguished from one another—the kind that it is among others. But for a science of the kinds of sciences to be as such a sufficient condition of a knowledge of what one knows and does not know, it would seem to be required that there be exhaustive knowledge of all the possible kinds of sciences (and therefore of what are not sciences) and that the pretensions most requiring discovery be those to fake or non-sciences. Such exhaustive knowledge is not likely to be available. It might be more helpful then to turn to a science which would be akin to that science and indeed a prerequisite of it: the possessor of a science of the kinds of sciences, if he is to know which are sciences and which not, would have to know to begin with what science or knowing is, just as a doctor must know somehow what "the healthful" is in order to know the healthful things. It is a science of science (and of its opposite) which would seem to be required if we are to test ourselves, or others, as to what we know and do not know.

Socrates had already spoken once of a science of science and non-science (166e7–8); and he has again added non-science to the objects of Critias' science (167b10–e2). He further draws our attention to a science of science by a slight variation in his treatment of the cases which are supposed to cast light on Critias' science. When speaking of the particular perceptions and of the passions, he frames his questions in this manner: is there some seeing, for example, which sees (or is of) itself and the other seeings ...? But in the cases of the perceptions generally and opinion, he asks about some perception of perceptions and itself, an opinion of opinions and itself. That is, he reverses the

46 Cf. 171b4–5 with 170e7 and 171a9.
order of the objects and drops the article and the qualification "other." (Cf. also \(168^b\text{io–i1}\) with \(c^4\text{–}6\).) He thus seems to point to an act of knowing which knows the class comprising all knowings or sciences, or the character that makes them a class, and hence knows in a sense the acts of knowing and itself, since it too is an act of knowing. This science too, as we see, is in a sense a science of the sciences (\(170^c\text{6}\); cf. \(174^d\text{4–}5\) and \(9\)). It is a question then whether it is to be taken as an alternative to Critias' science or a new way of understanding that science. (At \(168^a\text{6–}8\), Socrates still speaks of a science of itself and the other sciences.) However that may be, so gradually does Socrates lead us and Critias to accept it as the science Critias meant, that it comes to the point where, dropping the formula "a science of the other sciences and itself," he can speak exclusively of a science of science or of the sciences without ever seeming to have departed from a consideration of Critias' suggestion (see especially \(169^b\text{5–}7\)). In this way, science comes to be a theme of the latter part of the dialogue. It comes up in the course of the consideration of what is necessary to a knowledge of what one knows and does not know; it thus seems to be wholly subordinate to that theme.

Continuation of the investigation as to the being of Critias' science having been agreed to (\(168^a\text{io–}b\text{I}\)), Socrates now turned to the question of a science of science in particular. He has dropped, for some reason, his insistence that Critias' science be also of non-science. (This requirement is dropped, as far as the above illustrative cases are concerned, after the first two, and is not brought back otherwise until \(169^b\text{7}\); cf. \(168^a\text{6–}8\) and \(169^b\text{I}\).) On the other hand, to judge again partly from the illustrative cases, the requirement that Critias' science be of nothing but itself and the other sciences is retained (cf. \(168^a\text{7}\)).

Socrates began by asking whether "this science" is a science of something and has some such power as to be of something. He speaks of "this science," as he had spoken before of some science (\(168^a\text{6}\)) and even of "some one science" (\(167^b\text{II}\)). But by way of illustration, he spoke next of "the bigger." The bigger too has some such power as to be bigger than (or of) something, something smaller, if it will be bigger. "If therefore we should find something bigger, which is bigger than [or of] the bigger things and itself, but bigger than none of the things the other bigger things are [bigger than or] of, by all means, surely, this would belong to it, if it would be bigger than itself, to be also smaller than itself." The example suggests that the character of "the bigger" is controlling as to what is possible or necessary with regard to a particular bigger thing: it is because "the bigger" must always be bigger than something smaller, that a bigger thing cannot be bigger than itself. But this would mean that there is a bigger which is of the other bigger things (whether or not it is also of itself) without—except incidentally, insofar as they are also bigger things—being of any of the
things which they are bigger than. This is "the bigger," or the class comprising all bigger things, or the character which makes them a class.\textsuperscript{47} In the same way, "science," or the class comprising all sciences or knowings, would be of those sciences or knowings, including those of which, according to our supposition, it is the object; for it was to such a science that we looked as the object of a science of science.

In the succeeding examples, however, Socrates ceased referring, even obliquely, to the relation between kinds or classes of things and the things comprising those classes. This proves to have the consequence that the class "science" can no longer be conceived of as merely an object. Socrates spoke, it is true, of some double, which is of the other doubles and itself; but he failed to add the requirement that this double not be of any of the things the other doubles are doubles of, and he did not refer to "the double." "Double is not, surely, of anything else than half" (\textsuperscript{168\textcircled{o}6-7}; this is more emphatic than the corresponding statement about bigger at \textsuperscript{168\textcircled{p}8}). He then spoke of (a) more than itself, (a) heavier (than itself) and (an) older (than itself), without referring to the other more, the other heaviers, and so on. This prepared the consideration of the following rule: will not whatever has its own power (literally, the power of itself) toward itself also have the being toward which its power is? Applying this to the science with which we are concerned, we come first to the thought that a science, if it is really to know something, must know something that is; a science "has its power toward" things which are. "Science," then, or the class comprising the sciences, which we supposed as the object of a science of science, must be. But according to Socrates' rule, it is that which has its power toward itself which must be; or what is (in this case) must have the power which is directed toward it. "Science," the class "science," must know.

In this way, Socrates directs our thoughts to the difficulty underlying the notion of a science of science, to what must be if there is to be such a science. "Science," or the class "science," if it is to be the object of a science, must be; but if it is to be science, it seems, it must know. Can the class "science" (can classes of sciences)\textsuperscript{48} know? It is at this point that Socrates speaks, by way of illustration of the proposed rule,

\textsuperscript{47} "... There is in the earliest dialogues nothing whatever which Socrates' audience (or even we, with the Republic before us) could reasonably interpret as implying any belief in transcendental Forms.... A good example of the early approach is the Charmides.... Not a word, not a hint about Ideas. The same absence of compromising expressions...." G. M. A. Grube, Plato's Thought (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 7. We may grant that Socrates does not use the term "form" (ἐδοξε) or "idea" (ἰδέα) in the technical sense (but cf. 154\textsuperscript{a}5, 6, 158\textsuperscript{b}1, 175\textsuperscript{d}7) without being forced to grant that the thoughts which lead to the introduction of these terms are altogether absent from the Charmides.

\textsuperscript{48} This is not meant to rule out that the kinds or classes of sciences, e.g., medicine, which we once supposed as objects of Critias' science, might have a somewhat better claim to being than the class "science." If there is no "science" or "knowing" by itself, must not knowing or science be all the more inseparable from its various objects? Cf. 171\textsuperscript{b}5-\textsuperscript{b}5 and Theaetetus 146\textsuperscript{d}7-\textsuperscript{d}2.
of hearing and seeing. "The hearing, we say, is not hearing of anything else than sound . . . ." "The seeing," if it will itself see itself, must have some color, for seeing never sees anything colorless. Seeing and hearing, it seems, are always of things which have color or sound, i.e., of particular bodily things. Are not they too always particular and linked to body? Socrates' use of the article (at 168d3 and 9; cf. d10) seems to emphasize this point: "the seeing," in other words, being always of color, is always a seeing or this seeing. If this is correct, we have example of motions always particular and linked to body which are of what is particular and bodily. On the other hand, in "the bigger," which is related to "the smaller" and also to the bodily biggers, we have something neither particular nor bodily which is of both what is and what is not particular and bodily. Is there something—a motion—always particular and linked to body, which is of both what is and what is not particular and bodily? We have been led to wonder whether this is not the case of science. (Consider 169a8–b1 [γενέσθαι . . . εἶναι] as well as 169d3–4; cf. the earlier 167b10 [ἕπτην].) If so, the only science is that which we, or thinking beings, have. This would be a more important conclusion than the denial that a science of science, as it is understood here, is possible: there might still be some understanding of science or of what it means to know something which is sufficient for the purpose of a knowledge of what one knows and does not know. It would point to the importance of accounting for the coming to be of science in us.

Having cast doubt on the possibility of a science of science but not proved that it is impossible, Socrates now prepared to call upon Critias, whom he addressed here by name (168e3), to defend "his" suggestion. (The spirit in which Socrates approached Critias here is best indicated by his injunction to him to show not so much the possibility of a science of science as the possibility of his demonstrating—i.e., his capacity to demonstrate—that possibility. [Socrates plays on the ambiguity of δουλευτικός—169b7 and b8—as one sees if one retains the words excluded by Burnet at the suggestion of Heindorf.] Or, as Socrates indicates in the next sentence, the issue is also, if not primarily, the correctness of what Critias says [169e1–2; cf. 166e5–6, d8–e2].) If our suspicion is correct, a science of science is not absolutely necessary for a knowledge of what one knows and does not know: when Socrates professes in this context not to know whether a science of science is possible, he does not seem to doubt that he knows that he doesn't know this. On the other hand, some understanding of science, of what it is to know something, does seem to be required. And, given the deliberate looseness which Socrates has been permitting himself in the use of the term "science," the name "science of science" might well be applied to such an understanding if, for other reasons (e.g., the discomfiture of Critias), it served Socrates' purpose to do so.

This explanation is however to an extent premature, since Socrates
did not at once speak here of a knowledge of what one knows and does not know. By forgetting about that knowledge for a moment, he was able to take a “science of science” as the definition of moderation (169a6–7 and b5–7). This in turn enabled him to raise the question of the goodness, as well as the possibility, of such a science. In this connection, by way of preparing to ask Critias to speak to both of these questions, Socrates made the following statement:

I don’t trust myself to be adequate to determine these things; therefore neither am I able to insist as to whether it is possible for this to come to be, that there be a science of science, nor—if it is granted that it is possible [or exists]—do I accept that it is moderation before I examine whether it would benefit us in some way, being of such a sort, or not. For I divine that moderation is something beneficial and good.

He was thus enabled to call attention to the contrast between his doubts as to the existence of a science of science and his confidence, not to say faith, in the goodness of moderation, as well as to the related contrast between his distrust of his ability to settle the question of possibility and his apparent confidence in his ability to examine the question of benefit.49 In a similar statement (regarding a knowledge of what one knows and does not know) in an earlier context, Socrates had not spoken of divination and he had left it open whether his difficulties did not extend equally to the examination of both questions—goodness as well as possibility. (167a9–b7; cf. however b7–c4.)

Socrates began by pointing out that in some of the cases they had gone through it appeared impossible, in others doubtful, that they had their own powers toward themselves. Magnitudes and multitudes and such things belonged to the impossible cases; hearing, seeing, motion, heat, and presumably also the passions and opinion, to the doubtful, or perhaps not so doubtful, ones. “It requires some great man, friend, to determine this adequately in all cases, whether none of the beings is of a nature to have its own power itself toward itself—except science—but towards another, or some are and some not; and again, if there are those which themselves have it [or are] toward themselves, is science, which we say is moderation, among these?” The word we translated “determine” has a primary meaning of “divide.” Socrates calls in

49 George Grote points out, regarding an earlier passage, that it is inconsistent for “Plato” to insist on the beauty of moderation before determining what moderation is, “for we shall come to other dialogues wherein he professes himself incompetent to say whether a thing be beautiful or not until it be determined what the thing is....” Plato and the Other Companions of Socrates (London: J. Murray, 1865), I, 496. This is true as well of Socrates’ confidence here that moderation is good; but that confidence has the special function in the Charmides of demonstrating the common failing Grote speaks of at I, 495–96 as well as in his Preface (I, v ff.). Grote’s failure to consider this possibility may be related to his view that “the dramatic art and variety of Plato [is] charming to read, but not bearing upon him as a philosopher,” (I, 484, n. 1; cf. I, 492).
effect for a division, in particular of the doubtful cases, into two classes according to their natures: those, if any, which have their powers toward themselves, and those which do not. The determination of the possibility of a science of science is said to depend on such a division (and the subsequent placing of science in the proper class): "I don't trust myself to be adequate to determine [or divide] these things; therefore neither am I able to insist as to whether it is possible for this to come to be, that there be a science of science..." And yet Socrates has indicated, in a somewhat awkward way—suited however to his purposes—that both the possibility and impossibility of a science of science are compatible with either outcome of such a division. For either (1) none of the beings has its power, or is directed, toward itself, except science (retaining the words at 160a4 excluded by Burnet at the suggestion of Schleiermacher); or, (2) some of the beings have this, including science; or, (3) some of the beings have this, but not science; or, we can therefore add, (4) none of the beings—not excepting science—have this. How then does the division called for by Socrates help to settle the question? It could seem that Socrates intended to lead his "great man" on a wild goose chase of considerable proportions. This uncharitable suggestion however would not be entirely correct.

The division which Socrates calls for presupposes, and thus calls our attention to, a more elementary division which consists in our dividing the disputed cases or motions from one another in the first place. For we cannot deliberate as to where seeing, for example, belongs, until we have to an extent separated seeing from the other motions so as to be able to focus our attention upon it. But among the motions from which it is separated or divided in this way, and which is in its turn set apart from the others, is science. And to separate science from the other motions is in a sense to know it. By speaking of "dividing" then, Socrates calls our attention to an elementary "science" of science (and non-science) which seems to be both possible and more accessible than the one he gives the appearance of looking for.

We can now see that the suggestion of this science of science was already contained in his listing of various motions, including science, which we are capable of (see page 174 above). That list was constructed with exceeding care. It begins, as we have seen, with seeing and hearing and the perceptions generally, goes on to what we call the passions, or some of them, and ends with opinion and science. Our attention had been called on an earlier occasion to the close relation between perception and opinion (159b1-3); here, as we see, the passions intervene. The relations among the motions listed are further indicated by differences and similarities of grammatical details in their presentation, which have no apparent direct relation to the sense. For example, in six of the nine cases, Socrates spoke of some seeing, some desire, etc.; but in three cases—hearing, wanting and opinion—he omitted "some." These happen also to be the only three cases where his questions omitted a
main verb. In three cases again—perception, fear and opinion—what the motion is to be of is mentioned before what it must not be of. In another three—love, fear and opinion—the name of the motion begins the sentence (and is in the accusative case). In two—desire and science—the name of the motion is the second word in the sentence, while the first is “But” (Ἀλλά). In three cases—seeing, as it is first presented, perception and opinion—the usual object of the motion is not specified. But this variation seems to be meaningful in itself: it seems to point to the comparative comprehensiveness of the motions in question as to objects, as is perhaps confirmed by the fact that Socrates repeated his question about seeing and then specified an object (color), seeing being the least comprehensive of the three motions. A verb from the same root as opinion (δοξάω) is used to form questions regarding seeing, perception and desire, which points to the fact that some of the motions may have other motions as objects. We should also note that different motions may in some cases share an object—for example, a wanting and an opinion of a good thing. There are other linkings of the motions—for example, only hearing and opinion are used three times as substantives, twice as verbs and only wanting and fear twice as substantives, twice as verbs—but the ones we have mentioned above are perhaps the most obvious, and at any rate are sufficient to indicate the frequency with which they involve opinion, together with the motions which directly or indirectly affect it.

The problem of opinion seems to be called to our attention because, for one reason or another, it is the most difficult of the motions to separate from science. For while we seem to separate opining from knowing at times, there are cases where we fail to do this. There are, it seems, certain opinions which are so precious to us that we wish to, and come to, regard them as knowledge, or perhaps divinations of the truth (169b4–5; cf. Republic 505a11–63), where we do not employ the awareness of the difference between knowing and opining which seems, otherwise, to be available to us. In those cases, apparently, we are not simply open to the truth or the question of our openness to the truth may be raised. It would be wrong however to conclude that this is because the truth is of no concern to us there: there could be no temptation to conceal what is of no concern to us. Rather it is in just those cases that the truth is most obviously of concern to us—so much so, that one is led to wonder about the other cases, where (to begin with at least) we are indifferent or merely curious. How does knowing in those cases (cases which seem to include most comprehensive truths), a knowing whose pleasure seems always to coexist with sadness, a knowing in which we seem somehow to die (Phaedo 64a4–6)—how does knowing there come to be of such concern to some that they want or desire above all to engage in it?

But this understanding of the problem of opinion, in tracing that problem to the failure to apply a “science of science” which is in our
possession, presupposes that such a "science" is generally possessed or available. Is there evidence that this is so? When this question comes up again (p. 190 below), the development of the argument will have cast new light on its significance.

Socrates' confession that he was at a loss regarding the question of the possibility of a science of science was not designed to point unambiguously to such a simple suggestion as we have made. It was designed primarily to place a most imposing task on Critias, "son of Kallaischros," as Socrates now addressed him (169b5)—and yet a task which it would be difficult for Critias in particular to refuse. (The name of Critias' father means something like beautiful-ugly or ugly-beautiful one. Critias himself is beautiful insofar as his speech is enriched by his association with Socrates; he is ugly in that he doesn't know what he says. Taken together with his self-assertiveness, these two characteristics make him a most fitting interlocutor of Socrates in a dialogue in which secrets are to be spilled cautiously: he can't follow up properly what he proposes, and Socrates can hold him at arm's length, appearing to take no responsibility for "Critias'" proposals, even where, those proposals not having gone far enough, the finishing touch is openly applied by Socrates himself [167a1-7; cf. however 169d7, as well as 171d2-5, 172c8-9 and 175d3-4, with 169b5-7]. But as this also suggests, in referring to Critias as "son of Kallaischros," the beautiful-ugly Socrates may be referring to himself.) When Critias heard what Socrates said and saw that Socrates was perplexed, he, too, like those who yawn because they see others yawning, seemed to Socrates to be forced by Socrates' perplexity to be himself taken by perplexity. As Socrates intimates to the companion, Critias' experience or consciousness of perplexity did not go very deep; he did not see a problem; he had merely been made to feel flustered. Inasmuch, then, as he had a reputation to uphold, he felt shame before those present; and he was unwilling to concede to Socrates that he was not able to determine (divide) those things Socrates had challenged him to, and he said something not at all clear, covering over his perplexity.

Socrates does not report to the companion the unclear things that Critias said: bad or unclear arguments of Critias are not as fruitful as bad or unclear arguments of Socrates, for they do not disgrace and therefore point to an underlying clarity.50 He says: "And I, so that

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50 This suggestion should not be taken to imply that we look for a meaning above or beneath the text. For we share Grote's disinclination to ascribe to "Plato any purpose exceeding what he himself intimates," (I, x)—in particular, to try "to divine an ulterior affirmative beyond what the text reveals," (I, ix; cf. I, 270-71)—as well as his intention to study each dialogue "as it stands written," (I, x). But having readily granted this much, we must be allowed to pay the closest attention we can to what is written, in all its complexity: for example, to Socrates' very ambiguous statement of the results of the investigation. (Cf. our Conclusion below with Grote, I, 491-92.)
the argument would proceed for us, said, 'But, if this is the decision, Critias, now let us concede this, that it is possible for a science of science to come to be; but hereafter we will examine whether it is so or not.'" It seems that Socrates had paused to confront Critias where he did not because the argument had reached a climax, but because the place was convenient for purposes of refutation; for in proceeding, he emphasizes to the companion the unfinished character of the argument. We do not know whether the refutation of Critias had now been completed to Socrates' satisfaction—that is, whether Charmides had been able to see through Critias' efforts to cover his perplexity. The argument, which is in the service of Socrates' deed, is also to an extent independent of it. This will enable the argument in the present case to explain that deed, while the deed in turn illustrates the argument.51

"Come then," Socrates continued, "if it is granted that this [i.e., a science of science] is possible, how is it [or one] more able to know what one knows and what not? For this, surely we said to be knowing oneself and being moderate, did we not?" At an earlier stage of the argument (167b10–c2), Socrates himself had brought forward the suggestion that a science of itself and the other sciences as well as non-science is the condition for a knowledge of what one knows and what one does not know. He now seems to call into question whether a science of science (and non-science) is even useful in that regard. Intervening developments have prepared us to doubt whether a science of science is a sufficient condition for a knowledge of what one knows and does not know, by leading us to question whether it is always applied for that purpose—Socrates' questioning of what he had appeared to grant would seem to give some confirmation to that doubt. Nor are we surprised to see that it was in this context that Socrates, taking advantage of an opening given to him by Critias, chose to correct Critias' understanding of how one comes to know oneself (in the first place). For Critias, who had not objected to Socrates' identification of a science of science with moderation (169b1–2 and 5–7), now easily overlooked Socrates' reintroduction of a knowledge of what one knows and does not know. Replying to Socrates as if he had asked how a science of science brings it about that one knows oneself, he said:

Certainly, and so it happens, surely, Socrates. For if one has a science which itself knows [γνωσκειν] itself, he would be of such a sort as what he has is. Just as whenever one has swiftness, he is swift, and whenever one has beauty, he is beautiful, and whenever one has knowledge [γνωσις], he is knowing; and whenever one has knowledge [γνωσις] itself of itself, surely he will then be himself knowing [γνωσκω] himself.

51 One might consider here Socrates' different purposes in conversing with Charmides (and Critias) on the one hand, and in narrating that encounter to the companion on the other.
(Note that whereas Critias spoke of oneself knowing oneself, Socrates, who was referring to a different kind of self-knowledge, spoke of knowing oneself.) But Socrates has questioned not just the sufficiency of a science of science to bring about a knowledge of what one knows and does not know, but even its usefulness in that regard. When he had appeared to grant that some such science is sufficient for this purpose, he had spoken of a science of itself and the other sciences (167b10–12; cf. 166e7–167a5, where it is not a question of a sufficient condition). Has the evolution, so to speak, of that science into a science of science deprived it of all usefulness for a knowledge of what one knows and does not know?52

Socrates’ response to Critias’ statement was as follows: “It is not this I dispute, that whenever one has what knows itself [or, something knowing the self or selfness], one will oneself know oneself—but what necessity is there for the one having this to know what he knows and what he does not know?” The second “this” is ambiguous: the immediate context suggests that it means a knowledge of oneself, or a knowledge which leads to this knowledge; while the broader argument (which has been interrupted to an extent by Critias’ misunderstanding) suggests that it means a science of science (see 169d2–7 and what follows here). Both meanings make sense: it is doubted on the one hand whether possession of a knowledge of oneself (in the primary sense), and on the other whether possession of a science of science, leads necessarily to a knowledge of what one knows and does not know (which is or prepares a knowledge of oneself in a fuller sense [167a5–7, 160a6–8]). According to the second meaning, Socrates restates the question he had raised prior to Critias’ statement, the question which Critias had failed to grasp. But he confines himself now to questioning the necessity that a science of science bring about a knowledge of what one knows and does not know. Does this mean that the usefulness of that science is no longer at issue? One gets the impression from the subsequent argument that this is not the case; that argument deals with usefulness more obviously than it does with necessity. To what connection between the question of usefulness, which (explicitly at least) he raised first, and

52 The question which Critias believed to have been asked but was not asked, is never explicitly raised by any participant in the dialogue either about a science of science or about a knowledge of what one knows and does not know. Perhaps Critias’ slip was due in part to the fact that—to his credit—he was somehow aware that it very much needs to be asked (in both cases). For, if the Charmides is worth studying at all, it will not do to say that, “Knowledge of oneself” can readily be expanded as ‘knowing what one knows and what one does not know’... which is relatively simple and sounds Socratic...” M. Dyson, “Some Problems Concerning Knowledge in Plato’s Charmides,” Phronesis, XIX (1974), 104. As it turns out, we may get some help, regarding the relation of a knowledge of what one knows and does not know to self-knowledge, from following Socrates’ treatment of the question he did ask: the relation of a science of science to a knowledge of what one knows and does not know.
the question of necessity, which he now puts in its place, does Socrates point?

Critias made this reply to Socrates' question: "Because, Socrates, this [or the self or selfishness, if one reads τὸ ἄλοχον at 170a1 with mss.BT instead of τὸ ἄλοχον with Cornarius] is the same as that." He seems to mean that knowing oneself is the same as knowing what one knows and does not know, or that one's self is nothing but the sum, so to speak, of one's knowledge and ignorance—as his understanding of self-knowledge as it developed in this conversation may well have implied. "Perhaps," Socrates said, "but I run the risk of being always of a similar sort: for I don't understand how it is the same to know what one knows and to know what someone does not know." Socrates' response can be understood as an explicit denial of Critias' suggestion. It is more easily read and understood as a denial that knowing what one does not know is the same as knowing what one knows. This however requires in turn that one understand Critias' remark to have suggested that they are the same (which is perhaps a possible reading of his remark; Cornarius' τὸ ἄλοχον makes it easier). Or does it? (Note Critias' puzzlement at Socrates' response.) By ascribing to Critias the suggestion that possession of a science of science will necessarily lead to a knowledge of what one knows and does not know, providing that to know what one does not know is the same thing so to speak as to know what one knows, Socrates is enabled to explain his denial of that necessity by a denial that these things are the same, by an assertion, that is, of the uniqueness (of the unique difficulty, as it will prove) of knowing what one does not know.

Critias was so puzzled by Socrates' remark—which, as Socrates indicates, he must have heard once or twice before—that he said, "What do you mean?" It was especially the meaning of the remark in the context which puzzled him. Socrates began his reply with, "The following..." What follows most manifestly does not explain the difference between knowing what one does not know and knowing what one knows (cf. 175e4–8). It is rather the light cast by that difference that enables one to make sense of what follows. It is in this way that "the following" makes clear the meaning of Socrates' remark in the context.

The first part of Socrates' argument went like this. A science which is of science would be able to determine (divide) no more than that "of these things," this is science, that not science. But sciences and non-sciences of different objects are themselves different. The examples Socrates uses are science and non-science of what is healthful, science and non-science of what is just: one is medicine, one politics, one nothing but science. (Socrates seems to mean by the last, the science whose object is science.) Now if one doesn't know in addition the healthful and the just, but only science, having a science only of this, one would likely know, "both regarding oneself and regarding the
others,” that one has some science. But one will not know, “by this science,” what one knows. For it is by medicine, not moderation (i.e., a science of science), that one knows the healthful; by music and not moderation that one knows the harmonic; by house-building and not moderation that one knows what pertains to house-building, and so on in all cases. “By moderation,” if indeed it is only a science of “sciences,” one will not know that one knows the healthful or that one knows what pertains to house-building. (Socrates thus completes his return to the use of technical examples, examples belonging to the generally accepted arts or disciplines, from which he had made what is for this dialogue a very rare departure by the introduction of politics and the just if not also music [cf. 165c–d and 161e6–13, 164a9, 173b1–c2, as well as 173c3–7]. This is not to deny that, in this dialogue at least, the example of medicine is not always a purely technical one.) Then the one who is ignorant of “this” will not know what he knows but only that he knows—and being moderate as well as moderation is reduced from knowing what one knows and what one does not know to knowing that one knows and that one does not know only. (170a6–d4)

The cause of this reduction appears to be the reduction of Critias’ science of the sciences, i.e., of the kinds of sciences (which Socrates’ occasional use here of the plural in science of “sciences” [170a6] reminds us of), to a science of science (cf. 171a3–9 and 175b7–c3). A science which knows only what science is would no more be able to identify or separate from one another the particular sciences than a science of “the bigger” would be able to tell us anything further, about the objects it identifies as bigger, than that they are bigger. But granting this, let us see on a closer look whether it has the consequence which has been laid to it.

The first part of Socrates’ argument concluded as follows: nor then will this one (i.e., the moderate person) be able to examine “another,” who asserts he knows something, as to whether he knows what he says he knows or does not know it; but, as it looks, he will know this much only, that he (the other) has some science; as to what it is of, at any rate, moderation will not make him knowledgeable. This conclusion serves most pointedly to remind us that Socrates had been speaking of what the possessor of a science of science might know “both regarding himself and regarding the others” (170b9–10). Indeed, it indicates that the emphasis, in the portion of the argument just prior to the conclusion, is on what such a one might know of himself. Socrates was asserting there that he will not know what, but only that he knows. The crucial step in the argument (as one might perhaps see also from Critias’ response [cf. 170c11 with e5]) occurred when Socrates, dropping the qualification “by this science” (170b12) or “by moderation” (170c6), said, “Then the one who is ignorant of this will not know what he knows but only that he knows.” The statement is on the whole clear enough; there is only a little darkness regarding “this”: to what
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does it refer? If, as seems likely (cf. 170b6–8), it refers to the healthful or to what pertains to house-building, we have the argument that the one who does not know the healthful, or what pertains to house-building, will not know that these are the things he knows—which is true, but his ignorance is not due to the fact that a science of the sciences has been reduced to a science of science. If, on the other hand, it refers to the knowledge (on the part of one who does know these things) that one knows the healthful or what pertains to house-building, it is true that one who lacks such knowledge will not know what he knows: but the argument has not shown that a moderate man (who knows these things) will suffer this lack. It has shown at most only that he will not know “by moderation” that these are the things he knows; but he will know that by medicine and house-building (which of course he possesses too), while by moderation, according to this argument, he will know that his medical and house-building knowledge is knowledge. But this means that a “science of science” is essential to a knowledge of what one knows and does not know. Without such a “science,” one would be unable to determine that “of these things” (170b7), i.e., of these opinions, this one is science, this one is not science; one might regard all one’s opinions as true; one would not know any of them to be true.

But the significance of a science of science does not become clear with regard to the generally accepted disciplines, and as it confirms for us that we know what we know. It becomes clear if one applies it to such a controversial science and subject as politics and the just (or indeed, moderation) and becomes aware thereby of what one does not know—that one does not know it (167b2–3). According to our contention, the Charmides is nothing but a gloss on the experience which follows when this application and the inquiry it demands are made. For as we cannot help thinking, that experience is of unrivalled significance for the ordering of one’s life—becoming, so to speak, the touchstone of our pleasures and concerns, admitting, elevating those that retain their power in its hard light. But perhaps we deceive ourselves, and the strength of the experience derives not so much from the experience itself as from our interpretation of it. In ascribing to it such strength,

58 For a helpful discussion of this and other difficulties of this passage, see Tuckey, pp. 54 ff. (esp. p. 57). Cf. also Findlay, p. 94. Dyson (p. 108) attempts to avoid this difficulty by reading 170b6–10 as if Socrates were speaking of what a science of science knows, instead of, as the words clearly indicate, what a man who possesses only such a science knows. (Note the phrase “having a science,” where “science” is in the accusative case; cf. also 170b12 and 6, where Socrates speaks of what one knows “by this science” or “by moderation”—not of what this science “by this science” knows.) Dyson wished to show that “Plato is not guilty of this rather obvious contradiction,” (p. 108). Apparently convinced on the one hand that Plato would not contradict himself in an obvious way, even intentionally, and on the other that Plato was either uninterested in (“...Plato’s cavalier attitude towards precise formulae, nowhere demonstrated more clearly than in this dialogue...” p. 107 n.) or perhaps incapable of truly tight argument, Dyson is satisfied to find flaws which are compatible in his view with the argument’s “undoubted brilliance,” (p. 111).
do we not think to know what we do not know? (See 167a4–5—reading αὐτὸς with mss. BT—and preceding context.) Moreover, it could not maintain its strength if it were not necessary, nor perhaps maintain it steadily if it were not known to be necessary; but this too, we do not know. One is thus forced to seek confirmation for one’s experience, and one’s understanding of it, in the experience of others. Some confirmation might be found if it could be shown that all men, or perhaps all men of a certain type, take certain fundamental things for granted, that they are convinced of the truth of certain opinions, without knowing them to be true, and that the direction of their lives depends on that conviction. This could be shown, to the extent possible, if one could shake such opinions in as many as one found occasion to converse with in this way—that is, if one could (partially) “strip” them—and if their reaction to such stripping were such as to reveal the importance those opinions had for them, if, for example, even young men like Alcibiades, who thought that they cared very little about justice, discovered as the result of a conversation with Socrates that they cared above all about it.54 Socrates would have been forced then, if this argument is correct, even in the absence of other inducements, to conduct political conversations or refutations of this type, having first engaged in a sort of political inquiry himself. (Apology of Socrates 21b)55 But to show that such opinions are so to speak universally held, is not yet to show that it is necessary that they be called into question. Does not the experience of many of Socrates’ interlocutors show to the contrary that it is not necessary, that one can avoid that questioning to begin with, that it can be rather easily forgotten? However that may be, such questioning would be necessary in effect if possession of a science of science led necessarily to its being applied in this way. It was the question of this necessity that Socrates raised when he asked whether possession of a science of science leads necessarily to a knowledge of what one knows and does not know (169b6–8).

If possession of a science of science leads necessarily to its being applied in this way, i.e., against all our opinions or the most important of them, it will be so applied wherever possessed. The question of the necessity of its application could be clarified then if the question of its possession could be clarified. Socrates has been speaking, despite some hints to the contrary (above, pp. 182 183–4), as if that possession were rather limited, and this manner of speaking reaches its peak in the second part of his argument in this subsection (170a1–171c10). Not only does he say that “we gave” understanding of science to moderation alone (170e9–10), without ever having indicated that moderation is widely possessed, but he speaks of the moderate man as an artisan, a craftsman (171c8–9): to possess a science of science is to be an expert,

54 Cf. Alcibiades I 105b6 ff. and 113a1–8 with 135d7–e5.
55 Cf. Gorgias 521b6–8; Xenophon, Oeconomicus 6.12–17.
to have an area of competence like the other experts, but different from theirs as theirs are different from each other. The rarity of knowledge of what one knows and does not know (Apology of Socrates 23⁰6–⁷) might plausibly be traced then to the rarity of the possession of this type of expertise—a science of science—which however, when acquired, must necessarily be applied to that end. Yet it is in just this part of his argument that Socrates leads us to question this understanding of how widely a science of science is possessed.⁵⁶

Elaborating on the insufficiency of moderation, as a science of science, for testing others, Socrates is concerned to show that the moderate man will be unable to distinguish (separate) one who "pretends" to be, but is not, a medical man from a true medical man. (Does Socrates wish to show incidentally how easy it is to pretend to be a medical man, even or especially a Thracian medical man?) He makes the very sensible point that it will be necessary for the moderate man, or any one else who wishes to know the true medical man from the false, to converse with (διαλέγεσθαι) him not about "medicine" but about the healthful and its opposite. But he gives two different reasons for this. The first is that the medical man knows nothing about medicine, which as a science is the province of moderation alone (170⁰6–171⁰2); the second is that medicine is "in" the healthful and its opposite (171⁰11–b6). A shift in the purpose of conversing and in the role of the moderate man goes along with this. At first it is said that the moderate man will know of the individual to be tested that he has some science (the alternative, that he has no science at all, being forgotten about); but he will need to inquire about the objects of that science to test which science it is (171⁰3–10). But then it develops that it cannot be ascertained whether the alleged medical man has any science until it is ascertained whether in the healthful things and their opposites he speaks truly and acts correctly: that is, this cannot be ascertained without medicine or by anyone else than a medical man (171⁰11–c3). As a result, the role of the moderate man—except insofar as he is himself the possessor of an art—is reduced to nothing in distinguishing (separating) a medical man or any other knower who knows his art from someone who does not know, "whether professing or thinking" to know; while the role of the arts is correspondingly raised (171⁰4–10).

Now the latter part of this conclusion corresponds to our ordinary experience, for it is especially to artisans or experts that we look to test the competence of their fellow experts. (It suggests incidentally that Socrates would have been unable to test others regarding political matters, if he had not become a sort of political expert himself [cf.

⁵⁶ That it is the question of such possession which is at issue here may be indicated also by the one explicitly positive result of Socrates' otherwise negative argument: the possessor of a science of science is given the capacity to determine of others only this—whether or not they possess a science of science (171⁰8–⁹).
But is it true, as might seem to be implied (cf. 172b7–8), that the experts can do this without themselves possessing a science of science, at least in the sense that we have been speaking of it? The movement of the argument forces us at least to raise this question. In testing others, the experts make use of their particular expertise, examining the alleged fellow experts as to whether they speak truly and act correctly in matters of the art in question. In order to apply the standards of true speech and correct action, they must know them; they must themselves possess the art. But one does not truly possess an art without knowing its limits: we expect a medical man to be able to tell us when he cannot cure us; a shoemaker who is competent in all other respects but believes he knows how to make shoes that will last forever or that will enable the wearer to fly, is not a shoemaker, nor can he be relied upon to test another's possession of that art. The artisan as artisan must somehow know then what it is not to know, as well as what it is to know something. Moreover, he is protected from exclusive reliance on words or teaching by the necessity, here alluded to, to test the dogmas of his art against the deeds it is supposed to perform. The artisan as artisan then possesses a science of science of some sort. (If what has been suggested earlier about the class "science" is true, one could not know "science" without first possessing some particular science or without first knowing some [other] thing.) This is not to say however that he is enabled by this science (together with his particular expertise) to tell of another with certainty that the other possesses the science he claims to possess (cf. 171a3–4). One can at best make the inference that such true speech and correct action as the other shows are unlikely to result from opinion and lucky guessing alone. One can more surely tell of another that he does not possess a particular science, not least in the case where he claims to know as true what is not or claims to know more than can be known. (If there should be an area of alleged expertise which admits of no expertise, it might be said of one who has examined that area that he knows only that he knows nothing, or that his expertise consists in a science of science alone [cf. 171b1–2]. In that case at least, Socrates would seem to be justified in speaking of the possessor of a science of science as a particular artisan or craftsman different from the others.)

57 Tuckey doubts whether this was necessary for Socrates, to enable him to discover the ignorance of others. "Socrates knew... that Euthyphro did not know ὑπὲρ ἔρωτος, but he made no profession of knowing it himself. It was his ability to detect logical inconsistency which enabled him to find out that men did not know what they professed to know, irrespective of the objects of their supposed knowledge. His knowledge... of ignorance, was based therefore on his ability to think clearly and consistently." (P. 67; cf. p. 69.) Something of this sort may well be true in many cases, but is it true in all? And does not clear thinking, especially as it is applied to the testing of others, require some knowledge of the matters thought? Tuckey's citation (p. 69) of Apology of Socrates 21a3–4 does not necessarily prove that Socrates was not an "expert" in the manner indicated at the end of the paragraph in our text to which this note is attached.
The artisans then who are truly artisans both possess a "science of science" and apply it as a matter of course in the practice as well as the acquisition and development of their arts. They apply it as a matter of course to what they know, so to speak. Its application is not limited in principle however to what they know. For while it may require expertise to confirm or deny the possession of similar expertise in another, it requires no expertise but only a "science of science" and a suitable application of it to tell us, regarding our own opinions which are mere opinions, that they are not knowledge—whether or not they admit of being transformed into knowledge. (In the case of the artisans, this requires only that they draw the appropriate conclusion from the contrast between the solidity of their technical competence and the lack of solidity of other things.) Possession of a science of science should lead necessarily then to a knowledge of what one knows and does not know. It would do so if to know what one did not know were the same as to know what one knows, if, that is, application of a "science of science" to all one's opinions were as "morally" easy as that application is in technical matters and others of that kind. That it is not so easy, the case of the artisans, above all others, shows. For since, in the practice of their arts, they show in a particularly impressive way that they know something and know what it is to know, and not to know, something, when they too prove to "think" they know what they do not know (Apology of Socrates 22c9–e1), it can be concluded that this results from a failure to apply the "science of science" which is available to them. It is not in this way then that the questioning we are concerned with can be shown to be necessary, and Socrates' doubt that possession of a science of science leads necessarily to a knowledge of what one knows and does not know appears to be justified.

But "necessity," as Socrates used it in expressing that doubt, is ambiguous. There may be necessities which admit of evasion but work their will by exacting a price for it, as well as those which are more simply inexorable. Socrates' words may also be taken then to have raised the question whether some necessity of this kind does not impel those who possess a science of science as well as a knowledge of oneself toward the kind of questioning which has been indicated.

The kind of questioning which leads to a knowledge of what one knows and does not know would be necessary for us if that knowledge were good, or the good for us. Socrates is able to consider the goodness of a knowledge of what one knows and does not know because, as we perhaps need to be reminded at this point, that knowledge has been asserted to be moderation; and Socrates turns now to an examination

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58 If moderation is a science of science alone, the artisans are moderate by virtue of possession of their particular arts.
59 Cf. Charmides 171e7 with 170e1.
of the benefit to be derived for us from moderation as the discussion has presented it (a science of science or a knowledge of what one knows and does not know). This is more or less in accordance with the explicit plan of the section, which called for an examination first of the possibility of knowing what one knows and does not know, and then of the benefit for us in knowing it (167a9–b4). The question of benefit, we recall, was raised because Socrates, divining that moderation is something beneficial and good, would not accept as moderation anything which did not benefit us (169b1–5)—a position consistent with the point of view expressed throughout the dialogue not only by Socrates, but by Charmides and Critias as well (e.g., at 157a3–b1, 158b2–4, 160e6–13, 162a4–6, 163c3–8 and 163e1–164a1). But Socrates' consideration of the goodness of a knowledge of what one knows and does not know compels him to deny that it is good. This conclusion would not be different if in his consideration here he had been more open about what he means by a knowledge of what one knows and does not know: while it is necessary to assert that moderation is a knowledge of what one knows and does not know (above pp. 164–5, 173), it is equally necessary—from the point of view indicated—to deny that a knowledge of what one knows and does not know is moderation (p. 173 above). This would seem to leave open however that such knowledge might be good in a lesser degree than is required of a virtue (cf. 172b1–e4). But, as it seems to me at least, Socrates hesitates to assert that this is so. His hesitancy may have to be traced to the fact that what we can perhaps call immoderation appears, in some form or other, to be inevitable for us: we must either take certain fundamental things for granted, or, impelled by the experience which follows the knowledge of our ignorance of them, seek clarity "about each of the beings" (166c7–d6) above all things; a simple acceptance of our limits appears to be impossible, our nature refusing, as it seems, to allow us to be unconcerned by those limits. But doesn't this mean that a knowledge of what one knows and does not know is good at least for Socrates and those like him (Apology of Socrates 22e1–5)? The answer to this difficult question may perhaps be somewhat clearer after a consideration of why the questioning which leads toward that knowledge is necessary. As it turns out, in considering the goodness of moderation as the discussion has presented it, Socrates gives us a demonstration which illuminates that necessity.

(This development was foreshadowed by a departure which Socrates made earlier from the explicit section plan he here reminds us of. The question of the possibility of a knowledge of what one knows and does not know was to be considered on the basis of the agreement that such knowledge would exist if a science of itself and the other sciences exists [167b10–c3; cf. 166e7–167a5]. The first part of the examination focused therefore on that science. When its possibility was conceded—if only that the argument might proceed—the examination should have
turned to the question of the benefit for us from a knowledge of what one knows and does not know. Instead, Socrates made an issue of what he had appeared to grant—the relation of a science of science to a knowledge of what one knows and does not know—asking first whether that science is able to contribute to or bring about such knowledge, and then whether there is any necessity that it bring it about [169d2–e8]. The ensuing discussion led us to the thought that a science of science would be unable to contribute to or bring about the knowledge if there were not some necessity that it be applied in questioning of this kind. It was the consideration of the goodness of a knowledge of what one knows and does not know that Socrates displaced to bring this difficulty to our attention.)

Addressing Critias by name, as he will do frequently in this context, Socrates first asked what benefit there would be for us from moderation as the argument has presented it. Since the argument had ostensibly reached the conclusion that there is little or no connection between a science of science and a knowledge of what one knows and does not know, and since Socrates had chosen to understand this as meaning that moderation was said to be a science of science (170e6, d1–3, 171c4–5; cf. 172b1–3), the question concerned the benefit from moderation as a science of science. But instead of waiting for Critias to answer it, Socrates went on to describe how greatly beneficial “we say” it would be for us to be moderate if, “as we posited from the beginning,” the moderate man knew both what he knew and what he did not know—of the former that he knows it, of the latter that he does not know it—and was able to examine another who was similarly placed:

For both we ourselves and those who have moderation and all the others, as many as were ruled by us, would go through life without error. For neither would we ourselves attempt to do what we did not know [ἐπισταθαι]—but finding out the knowers [ἐπιστάμενοι] we would give it over to them—nor would we permit the others, whom we ruled, to do anything else than what, in doing, they would be likely to do correctly; and this would be what they had a science [ἐπιστήμην] of. And in this way a household managed by moderation would be likely to be nobly managed, and a city governed, and everything else moderation should rule. For when error is taken away and correctness is guiding, it is necessary for those so disposed to do nobly and well in every doing and for those who do well to be happy.

Critias readily, eagerly agreed that this was what they meant or said when they said what a good it would be to know what someone knows and what he does not know. Moderation secures an error-free life—a life, that is, in which the sciences, whether our own or others', guide all the doings which affect our lives as well as the lives of those who are

60 171d1, 172a4, d5, 173d5, 174c3, e9, 175a9. Cf. 172b8 and 174b11. Cf. the absence of such addresses between 167b6 and 168a3 (cf. 167c4 and 168a9) and between 169d3 and 171d1.
ruled by us. Thus understood, moderation comes into its own as a ruling art: the working of its full benefit presupposes that knowers in all fields are at its disposal, if not also that non-knowers are prevented from acting. One might therefore conclude that the need for political reform to bring about the rule of moderation (which is not necessarily the rule of moderate men) is at least as pressing as the need to acquire moderation oneself.

Their hopes from moderation thus understood appeared to be checked, at least temporarily, by the fact that, as Critias must admit, no such "science" has anywhere appeared. Socrates therefore asked whether "what we now find moderation to be, to know science and non-science," might not have some lesser good:

...that the one having this [ταντανο, feminine, to agree with moderation or perhaps science] whatever else he learns, will learn it more easily and everything will appear to him clearer, inasmuch as he will be seeing science in addition to each thing that he learns; and he will examine the others more nobly with regard to whatever he himself should learn, while those examining without this [ταντανο, neuter or masculine, antecedent ambiguous] will do this more weakly and poorly?

(He thus indicated in passing why a science, of the sort he had just supposed a knowledge of what one knows and does not know to be, had nowhere appeared: it will not appear before an expertise which enables one to examine other experts in their fields without knowing their fields, appears.) These benefits from a science of science require more clearly than those claimed for a knowledge of what one knows and does not know that one possess that science oneself (note Socrates' switch here to the third person). On the other hand, they may apparently be enjoyed in full by one who leads a private life in a poorly governed city (which does not necessarily mean that they can be enjoyed only in such a city). However that may be, the decisive consideration is, as Socrates indicates, their limited character: "Are such things as these, friend, what we will enjoy from moderation, but we look to something bigger, and seek that it be something bigger than it is?" "It might be so," Critias replied. As his response indicates, he hesitates to give up all hope of the greater benefits they had ascribed to the greater, so to speak, moderation.

Was it this that induced Socrates to suggest another look at those benefits? He seems to have already taken such a look himself: he wonders whether they sought or searched for nothing good; strange things appear to him regarding moderation if it is of such a sort. The question was apparently not moot, for though they had been unable, as Socrates reminds us here, to show that they knew even a science of science to be possible, they had also, as it appears, failed to show that a knowledge of what one knows and does not know, as it is now understood, is impossible. Socrates therefore had ground for suggesting that they grant the possibility of a science of science and grant that it (cf.
175b7 ff.), or moderation, knows what one knows and what one does not know, in order that they might examine "still better" whether, being of such a sort, it helps us in any way. "For," as he adds, "what we were just now saying, that moderation would be a great good if it were of this sort, guiding the management of household and city—we don't seem to me to have nobly [i.e., properly] agreed to this, Critias."

It was difficult for Critias to see how their agreement could have failed to be noble (172a6, e1, e3). Socrates appears to have meant by this that they had agreed too easily that it was some great good for human beings, if each of us should do what they know and give over what they don't know to others who know (172d7–10), as well as that the substance of the agreement was not correct (172e6–173a1). For Socrates, "by the dog," (he used his characteristic oath here) must have shared Critias' attachment to that agreement if (ms.B at 172e4) he said that when he looked at it then and now strange things appeared to him and that he feared that they did not examine correctly (172e4–6). But that very attachment would have prevented him from taking the agreement too lightly, from accepting it too easily, without a close look, so to speak. And when he took such a look, it "truly" did not seem to him at all clear that moderation, if it is granted to be this sort of thing, produces a good for us. Socrates became aware, that is, at the same time, that he did not know it to be such a good as they thought, and that there was some reason for doubting that it was. "How?" Critias asked. "Speak so that we too may know what you mean." So far as we have observed, Critias had never before in the dialogue shown this sort of interest in what Socrates was saying. "I think I am being foolish," Socrates replied, "nevertheless, it is necessary to examine what has appeared, and not pass idly by, if someone cares for himself even a little." "You speak nobly," Critias said.

The necessity which drives us to apply such a science of science as we possess in questioning our cherished opinions is our very self-concern, coupled with the importance we place on those opinions. To treat those opinions with the seriousness demanded by our reliance on them is on the one hand to take the question of their truth seriously: to wish them to be true, to wish to know their truth or to be convinced of it—wishes indeed that for the most part induce us to think or believe we know what we do not know. But it is on the other hand to wish certain things to be true. The more seriously we take the opinions in question, the more strictly will we insist on these things. But we can't help, then, becoming aware, at some time or other, of difficulties regarding these things. In becoming aware of these difficulties, we become aware that we did not know what we thought we knew. It becomes an urgent matter to seek to transform our opinions into knowledge. We must follow up the difficulties. In the course of the investigation, we may become aware of other problems: these too must be followed up and investigated, "if one cares for oneself even a little." There is no neces-
sity, perhaps for more than one reason, that such investigations lead to complete wakefulness. We may perhaps again and again believe we know what we do not know. But to take those beliefs seriously is to come up necessarily, again and again, against the same difficulties, to be compelled again and again toward the same questioning. The necessity in question then, however it may fall short of guaranteeing wakefulness, is sufficient, at least for some, to prevent a peaceful sleep. And given this fact, if there is an activity which makes a life of wakefulness bearable, some might prefer its austere joys, even if they don't completely make up for the loss of an apparent bliss, to any available alternative.

The difficulty, to continue, which Socrates had discerned regarding the rule of moderation, as it is now defined, was as follows. That rule would bring about nothing else than that everything would be done for (or by) us in accordance with science or art. Socrates referred to three or four arts in particular—first to piloting, medicine, and generalship:

...and neither would someone asserting to be, but not being, a pilot, deceive us, nor would a doctor, nor a general, nor anyone else, pretending to know what he did not know, escape our notice. Would anything else result for us from these things, then, than to be healthy in our bodies more than now, and to be saved on the sea and in war [more than now]...?

Moderation is, after all, the key to health—but not in the Thracian manner. As a result, no more is claimed for it than that it leads to our being more healthy, more saved than now: one can't be of perfect health, or be saved forever. Socrates next spoke of prophecy:

If you wish, let us grant that the prophetic art too exists, a science of what is to come to be, and that moderation, ruling it, turns away the boasters and establishes the true prophets as foretellers for us of the things to come.

Were it not for this concession, they might have been forced to take a different view of how far boasting extends. Socrates at any rate thus found occasion to confirm our impression that moderation is to be understood as an antidote to (conscious or unconscious) boasting. But if we leave things at this fairly sober view of sobriety, if moderation is to be understood as no more than this, can it still, given what we expect of virtue, be understood as a virtue? (Cf. Apology of Socrates 41c8–d2.) "When the human race is so equipped," Socrates concluded, "I follow that it would do and live scientifically—for moderation, being on guard, would not let non-science creep in to be our fellow worker—but that in doing scientifically we would do well and be happy, this we are not yet able to learn, friend Critias."

Critias attempted to raise an objection to Socrates' conclusion; but his words, at least as interpreted by Socrates, contained the germ of a new suggestion regarding doing well, if not happiness, which may be
particularly fitting in light of the development that has taken place. "But, indeed, you will not easily find some other end of doing well if you dishonor 'scientifically.'" As Socrates easily discovered or demonstrated, Critias did not mean either that the practice of any art or science (as opposed to the enjoyment of the products of the arts and sciences) or that knowing or science as such makes one happy. But in the process, Socrates put on record the not easy question of the scientific life and happiness (173e6–7, 174a4–11).

Pressed, in order to defend the thesis that Socrates was ascribing to him, to find a particular science which makes the knower of it happy, Critias said it was especially that by which one knows the good and the bad. (Cf. Republic 505b5–c5.) "Wretch," Socrates said (cf. 161b8), "from long ago you have been dragging me around in a circle, hiding the fact that it wasn't 'living scientifically' that made one do well and be happy—not as to all the other sciences—but as to this one only [or alone], the science regarding the good and bad...." Socrates then "proved" by use of the science or art of good and bad that there is no benefit whatsoever from the other arts and sciences when this science is taken away from them. This is an exaggeration—defensible perhaps by reference to the blinding effect which looking toward happiness may have on our capacity to see lesser goods—of the fact that the thesis, that only a science of good and bad makes one happy, is equivalent to the thesis, that all other arts and sciences, alone or together, are insufficient to make us happy. In this way, moderation is shown to be non-beneficial: "How then will moderation be beneficial, being craftsman of no benefit?" "In no way, Socrates, as it seems at least." In other words, it is not simply non-beneficial. In calling into question such goods as moderation had seemed to be, a science of good and bad bears a curious resemblance to a knowledge of what one knows and does not know.

VI. CONCLUSION

Socrates now chose to summarize and conclude the discussion. In the course of a single long speech, he addressed first Critias and then Charmides. He first drew back for a moment from the suggestion that moderation is not beneficial. The conclusion they had reached is evidence rather of his inability as an examiner:

You see, then, Critias, that plausibly did I fear from long ago, and justly did I blame myself for conducting an examination of no worth regarding moderation: for surely, what at any rate is agreed to be most noble [beautiful] of all—this would not have appeared to us non-beneficial [or non-beneficial for us] if there were some benefit from me in regard to searching nobly. But now—for we have been beaten in every direction, and we are not able to discover on whichever of the beings the lawgiver placed this name, "moderation"....
Interpretation

Moderation, as is generally agreed, is most noble of all; hence it must be beneficial (cf. 160\textsuperscript{e}6-161\textsuperscript{b}2). What we call "moderation" is one of the beings, i.e., something natural, not due to any human making or convention. But it owes its name to the "lawgiver." Does the agreement as to its nobility stem from its being or from its name? (Cf. 158\textsuperscript{e}7-159\textsuperscript{a}7, 165\textsuperscript{a}8-e2 and pages 152 and 167-8 above.) This is not to say that the lawgiver could ascribe to the being in question something our nature did not in some way divine or want or long for (cf. 169\textsuperscript{b}4-5 and pages 172, 176 and 181 above). This mixed character of "moderation" may explain the mixed character of the investigation as to what it is. That investigation is not unmindful of perception or experience; but it also, and even primarily, is conducted through arguments which are not simply attempts to describe accurately some perception or experience (cf. 176\textsuperscript{a}3-4). Virtue, one can perhaps say, is not simply the perfection or health of the soul; but that perfection wishes to be understood in the light of virtue.\textsuperscript{61}

By accepting responsibility for the failure of the investigation, Socrates seemed to imply that Critias could not have been expected to make a serious contribution to it. This was as close as he came to stating the lesson which his examination of Critias was meant to convey to Charmides, and which Charmides, as we will soon see, has not failed to appreciate (see 176\textsuperscript{a}6-b4, noting Charmides' switch to the second person singular). Socrates suggested two views of the failure, each of which is compatible with deference to the position of the lawgiver and/or general agreement: they have found moderation, but have been unable to understand its genuine beneficence; or what they have found, which is truly non-beneficial, cannot be moderation. Each view, incidentally, makes some concession to the validity of the investigation and hence to Socrates' ability as an examiner.

Socrates seemed to be on the point of adopting the latter view but to be checked by an unlikely consideration: the many concessions they had made, beyond what the argument strictly permitted, to reach that view of moderation. (He had in mind their conceding that a science of science exists, their conceding to this science the knowing [\gamma\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\kappa\alpha\nu]\ of the works of the other sciences—so that the moderate man would become for us a knower [\epsilon\pi\sigma\tau\iota\mu\omega\nu]\ of what he knows, that he knows, and of what he does not know, that he does not know—and above all, in connection with this, their failure to investigate the impossibility of knowing [\epsilon\delta\sigma\varepsilon\varsigma\iota\varsigma]\ somehow what one does not know at all. It would be difficult to see how this last problem could be as serious as Socrates suggests, if a knowledge of what one did not know amounted to no more than knowing which of the generally accepted arts and sciences one did not know.) Socrates seemed to regard these concessions as

reason for concluding that they had found moderation. The difficulty
must then lie in their failure to understand its genuine beneficence. But
while perhaps alluding to this alternative, Socrates did not now return
to it; the considerations which would seem to demand such a return were
apparently not conclusive for him. He said that what they had posited
to be moderation had "very hybristically" appeared as non-beneficial.
Since the immediate sequel at least seems to show that Socrates regarded
that appearance as true, the hybris which Socrates ascribes here to
moderation itself does not seem to consist in the untruthfulness of its
present appearance. However that may be, the reason for these steps
may be found in the fact that Socrates was about to address Charmides
directly once more. He wished him to feel that the argument had not
prevented them from understanding moderation as they wished—so
that he might feel all the more the argument’s failure to find the good-
ness of what they took moderation to be.

"For my part, I am less indignant; but on your behalf Charmides,"
Socrates said, turning to him, "I am very indignant, if you, being of
such a sort in your form, and in addition to this most moderate in your
soul, will not be helped from this moderation, nor will it in any way
benefit you in your life, being present." Socrates almost seemed to ac-
cept Charmides’ moderation as a fact; he no longer doubted that Critias’
definition of moderation was correct. He only insisted that this moder-
dation did not appear to be beneficial. But if one accepts this, and if the
thought that moderation is not good is unbearable, one will be forced
to reject Critias’ suggestion (a step which Critias' embarrassment at the
hands of Socrates has made easier than it would otherwise have been).
And, as Socrates delicately suggests, the fall of Critias’ authority re-
garding moderation undermines, to say the least, his credibility as wit-
ness to Charmides’ moderation, which is less obvious and therefore in
greater need of such testimony than his beautiful form. (Cf. 158a7–b6.)

"Still more," Socrates went on, "am I indignant on behalf of the song
which I learned from the Thracian, if, though it pertained to a matter
of no worth, I learned it with much seriousness." As this remark in-
dicates, it was not a deficiency of self-concern which caused Socrates
to be less indignant in his own case than in that of Charmides about
the worthlessness of moderation: did he not believe to know that
Charmides would be deeply moved if his confidence that he was mo-
derate was shaken? (Cf. pp. 189–90 above.) It was this question at any
rate that Socrates now attempted to resolve.

He did so by suggesting that he did not very much think this account
of these things to be so—but rather that he is a poor searcher, since he
thinks moderation to be "some great good" and Charmides, if indeed
he has it, to be blessedly happy. "But see if you have it and are in no

\[62\] Cf. 155b9–c4 and page 145 above. The seriousness, of which we were forced
to make so much, is in a sense not Socrates’ last word.
need of the song: for if you have it, I would rather advise you to consider me to be foolish and unable to search for anything through speech, but yourself, the more moderate you are, the more happy." For if Charmides regards moderation as a great good, as the key to happiness, this advice of Socrates to be unconcerned by such a challenge to moderation's goodness as has been made, is just what he will be unable to accept. He must take that challenge to mean—contrary to what Socrates has been saying—that they have not found moderation. But if they have not found moderation, how can he know that he is moderate? (The premise of Socrates' initial procedure in testing Charmides, according to which a failure to know, or have an opinion about, moderation is indicative of a failure to possess it, is a deliberate exaggeration of this conclusion, to which a Socratic refutation is meant to lead.) On the other hand, Socrates would not raise such questions unless he knew or was able to discover—contrary to other of his assertions—what moderation is (Apology of Socrates 23a3–5, Charmides 165b5–7): is not his Thracian story, with its offer of the application of a song to make one moderate, serious at least to this extent? It becomes of the utmost importance then to associate with Socrates, for the purpose of acquiring moderation or at least learning what it is, for as long as Socrates considers it to be necessary. And this is, in fact, the gist of Charmides' response, which is strengthened by an oath. (Cf. 158ε7–δ6.)

Critias then seconded Charmides' intention: he will take it as a sign that Charmides is moderate if he submits to Socrates' singing and does not leave Socrates for even a little. Charmides in turn promised to obey his guardian: he will begin his association with Socrates from this very day (cf. Alcibiades I 135d9–10, e4–5). But Socrates did not, as he had when Alcibiades had expressed a similar intention, express the wish that the intention in question would be carried out to its conclusion. This did not now deter Charmides, as it might have earlier. The combination Critias-Charmides, which foreshadowed their association in the rule of the thirty tyrants, threatened to force Socrates somehow to continue in (as Critias had forced him to adopt) his Thracian role, beyond what he would otherwise have wished, beyond perhaps what he was capable of. But it is not clear whether what was threatened came to pass. In the Theages, Socrates reports that he once warned Charmides on the authority of the daimonion, not to undertake a course of training (which involved stripping) for a certain race. Charmides disobeyed that advice, apparently to his sorrow; but there is no indication that Socrates was involved in that training. Charmides is mentioned also in the Symposium, by Alcibiades in his speech about Socrates. According to Alcibiades, Charmides too was treated hybristically by Socrates—that is, deceived into thinking that Socrates was in love with him, while Socrates rather made himself the beloved. Charmides is the

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63 Cf. 156a4, 158d1–4 and 162b9–11.
first of the two individuals mentioned by name in that connection. Charmides appears again in the *Protagoras* (where Alcibiades and Critias also appear); he is mentioned as being in the train of Protagoras; he is not with Critias.\(^{64}\) Plato is much more reticent than Xenophon as to Socrates' association with Charmides, or he makes less of it.\(^{65}\)

However that may be, Socrates responded here to the playful threat of force by saying that if Charmides—who has just successfully withstood attempts to do something using force, no human being will be able to withstand him. This graceful, if hybristic, allusion to Socrates' almost inhuman continence brings the *Charmides* to a fitting close.

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\(^{64}\) *Theages* 128\(^d\)8–129\(^a\)1; *Symposium* 222\(^a\)7–b\(^4\); *Protagoras* 314\(^b\)3–315\(^a\)2 and 316\(^a\)3–5.

\(^{65}\) Xenophon, *Memorabilia* III 6.1, III 7 (cf. *Hellenika* II 4.19) and *Symposium* 1.3, 2.15–19, 3.1–2, 3.9, 4.8, 4.27–28, 4.32, 8.2.
NIETZSCHE'S LAMENT OF ARIADNE

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Were someone to write a history of the Dionysian movement, tracing the power and eventual exhaustion of the impulse in prose, poetry and visual art from the 1890s down to about 1914, his effort would entail a good bit of self-deception. The Dionysian exuberance was an outlet for an upper-middle class which had struck its colors and which, under the guise of bringing forth its very own definition of 'being alive,' was searching for some means of uplift; memory of this has long since vanished. Who today is familiar with the host of fin-de-siecle dithyrambs, masked balls, neo-romantic bacchanalia and ecstatic visions of the future? There remains only the forerunner and instigator of the movement, Nietzsche, asserting himself with ever greater force in our historical awareness as the last prophet of the mad god, a god whose name rose from his lips as madness transported him from the world of our understanding.

What is the authentic nature of the Dionysian in Nietzsche's poetry and philosophy? This question should be posed to his poetry as well as to his philosophy, even rather more to his poetry, since the Dionysian makes its presence felt at the boundary where Nietzsche the poet begins his transformation into Nietzsche the philosopher, or where Nietzsche's philosophizing turns into the Dithyramb—that is, once all his faculties have cohered into a whole, in and through the variousness of their powers depending on, struggling with, mirroring, deceiving, masking, revealing, overpowering, transfiguring one another—in biographical terms, subsequent to Nietzsche's Zarathustra period.

Beginning in the summer of 1877, we find Nietzsche breaking through

* Karl Reinhardt (1886–1958), the author of penetrating analyses of Greek literature and philosophy, is a master of German twentieth-century prose. He unites philological acumen and thoroughness with Nietschzean intensity and flair. To the historicism of the nineteenth century he opposed an awareness of the limitations of method and categorization; he never supposed that he was superior to the authors he brought to life. In an essay on 'Nietschze and History' Reinhardt showed how Nietschze's forays into history were an essay in self-experience, precious because Nietschze possessed 'the breadth, the depth, the possibilities to make this finding of himself a concern not to himself only but to us.' In a much more discreet and gentle manner, Reinhardt's books and essays perform a similar task. Reinhardt never escaped the spell of the antipode of Nietschze, Wilamowitz, but, as Wolfgang Schadewaldt puts it, "philology, celebrated by Wilamowitz as a goddess who demanded the strictest terms of duty, became for Reinhardt the Ariadne, who at best illuminates Theseus' path, and hands him the thread, as he makes his way into the labyrinth."

Reinhardt's article originally appeared in 1935, in Die Antike; it is here translated and reprinted by permission of Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt.
to poetic fulfillment. Not that writing poetry had not always been an avocation; but only now does he cease to invoke goddesses such as Melancholy and Friendship; a "sweetly warbling bird" no longer comforts the "poor wayfarer man" ... The fetters imposed by his models snap, juvenile tones are cast off, his own melody and rhythm assert themselves; for the first time landscape speaks to him in his own voice, and nature is no longer a mere backdrop from which feelings of loneliness can be evoked; from now on, no "vision" in the "wilderness of rock," no more is heard of "the fog curling around my window," of "sudden lightning flares," nor do we hear the cry "That is what I am." "All this is what I am—with a shudder I rehearse it in my feelings—a butterfly gone astray, a lonely flower ..." Nature, the things themselves find their voices, raise questions, are silent, tempt and attempt, all in Nietzsche's tongue:

O Frucht des Baums,
Du sitterst, fällst?
Welch ein Geheimnis lehrte dich
Die Nacht,
Dass eiser Schauder deine Wange,
Die purpurwange deckt?—
Du schweigst, antwortest nicht?
Wer redet noch?—

(Fruit of the tree, you quiver, fall? What was the lesson of the night, that an icy shuddering should conceal your cheek, the cheek of crimson? Silence? No answer from you? Who still speaks?)

Nonetheless, all that is still latent in this comes to be set free and realized only in the Zarathustra period, after 1883. Nietzsche no longer confronts landscape as the Other to which his inner self poses questions, as something on the outside, set beside or against the questioner; now the constituents of landscape pour into his speech like air into lungs and pores. Nature, the visible, merge with destiny, all things press with a tender insistence towards the image; and the voices of the inner self, instead of announcing, as they did formerly: "we are flowers, birds ..." truly become these entities. Previously Nietzsche would say: "there is thinking" ("es denkt").

Da überläuft
Es schaudernd, wie
Ein Glitzern, das Gebirg,
Da denkt es rings—
Und schweigt—

(Like a glimmer of light, a tremulous thrill passes through the mountainous terrain, all around there is thinking—and being silent—)

Exactly what is being thought had not yet passed into the poem. Now, however, man's entire being, on whatever level, sounds, resounds—incorporating everything that he is, the whole of his existence.

Hence Nietzsche's poetry, at the same time it gains in immediacy,
becomes allegorical, philosophical, freighted with a sense of destiny. The Dithyrambs in particular are songs of destiny—destiny, however, in an internal rather than an external sense; not death, love, friendship, mastery, in short, those aspects which adhere to our animalian or social being; and not a political destiny or one of divine origin. Rather, insofar as destiny is a unity in duality (or plurality), it signifies here the tragic contradiction of powers which work out and intensify their struggles within the human being, and yet (so Nietzsche would have it) not in any particular case; rather the tragedy is brought about by the multiform I, as it affirms and denies, sacrifices and vanquishes itself, a multiformity as it arises in authentic man, i.e. the entire extent of humanity or in the active man, ever since man existed. It is at this time that the unique and the universal, the most and least personal, merge into one. No longer do we have a single voice; quite spontaneously the poetry becomes many-voiced and dialogical; what had been a prose conversation between the Wayfarer and his shadow turns into a Dithyramb, calling forth, lamenting, cursing blessing... And at the same time, beyond even the plurality of voices, there appears a fundamental tension between the emotional stances, an intrusion, as it were, of a new tempo added to the established one, a play of disguising, submerging, glossing over, transvestism, flickering lights; ambiguity and contradictions between the surface and the depths, an opposing play of movement from below to the surface and, simultaneously, from the surface downwards. Nietzsche not only becomes a many-stringed instrument, but there are, as it turns out, six different way of producing each note, and, accordingly, the tone may be coarser or more gentle, freer or more damped... Around this time Nietzsche's own favorite metaphors for this wealth of variation are, for example, his "spring," or his "ladder": "The ladder of my feelings is a long one, and I'm not shy of sitting on its lowest rung." "While climbing never yet have I counted the number of steps up to myself."

Evidence for the elemental force of the new dithyrambic mode exists in the fragmentary state of many of the poems (the appendix to Zarathustra offers a fine sample). Some of what had been the utterance of a solo singer is recast into Zarathustra's use of simile. As for poems that were completed in the dithyramb form, these Nietzsche himself in 1888, not long before his collapse, assembled for publication in book form under the title he eventually chose, Dionysos Dithyrambs. Included were revised versions of poems which had already seen the light in the fourth section of Zarathustra as interludes "for singing." At first the title is enigmatic. These songs, viewed with regard to "form and content," appear to lack all the attributes of the genuinely Dionysian. No Dionysian visions, images, metaphors, symbols! No "O Bacchus" rising up from frenzied lips like those of the crazed figure in Hofmannthal's Kleines Weltheater. There is scarcely anything which would seem to be a less apt candidate for the characterization of "approaching
ancient form.” Elsewhere in his poetry Nietzsche likes to remain loyal to the genres: maxim, idyll, song, hymn... But these genres derive from German classicism. Is it then the case that nothing of the Dionysian remains apart from the title? No, for there is an exception, a poem moreover that obviously sets its stamp on the collection, one with Dionysian symbolism—one only, but that one decisive: the “Lament of Ariadne.” Yet it seems that one riddle only gives way to another! For the Dionysian symbolism was subsequently, one is almost tempted to say, artificially, affixed to the poem. In its original form the lament appears in the fourth section of *Zarathustra*, as a song delivered by the Nietzschean sorcerer—not even as the lament of a woman, and with no hint of either Dionysos or Ariadne.

Set the texts side by side: The most striking change is that masculine endings are replaced by feminine:

*Kein Hund—dein Wild nur bin ich,*
*grausamster Jäger*
*dein stolzester Gefangener*

becomes:

*deine stolzeste Gefangene...*

Similarly:

*gib mir, dem Einsamsten,*
*den Eis, ach! siebenfaches Eis*
*nach Feinden selber,*
*nach Feinden schmachten lehrt,*

becomes:

*gib mir, der Einsamsten,*
*die...*

The case may well be unique in the history of literature. What sort of a drama can this be in which roles are interchanged in such airy fashion?

Besides this change, the distribution of lines is different, and the clauses are jerkier and shorter. Nietzsche carries this to such lengths that it contributes palpably to the dislocation of the dominating, full, haunting tone the song previously had. The earlier version reads:

—*Nein, komm zurück,*
*Mit allen deinen Marnern!*
*Zur letzten aller Einsamen*
*O komm zurück!*
*All meine Tränen—Bache laufen*
*Zu dir den Lauf!*
*Und meine letzte Herzesflamme—*
*Dir glüht sie auf!*
*O komm zurück,*
*Mein unbekannter Gott! Mein Schmerz!*
*Mein letztes—Glück!*
(No, with your torments, come back! Come back to the last of all solitary men! All the streams of my tears flow down to you! And the last flame of my heart blazes up for you! Come back, my unknown god! My pain! My last—happiness!)

Nietzsche felt the tripartite and strophic structure to be too gentle, too rounded; the result is:

\begin{align*}
\textit{Nein!} \\
\textit{Komm zurück!} \\
\textit{Mit allen deinen Martern!} \\
\textit{Alle meine Tränen laufen} \\
\textit{Zur dir den Lauf} \\
\textit{und meine letzte Herzensflamme} \\
\textit{dir glüht sie auf.} \\
\textit{O komm zurück,} \\
\textit{mein unbekannter Gott: mein Schmerz!} \\
\textit{mein letztes Glück!}
\end{align*}

Finally, during revision the "Lament" comes to have appended to it a dramatic epilogue, the epiphany of Dionysos, about which more in a moment.

Consider, what has happened to the meaning? In the former version, we get a mimicking performance. A game, no doubt, but a game whose fascination lies in the something serious that lurks behind it, in the circumstance that the desires and the conscience in it are divided against themselves; that it is not something pure, free, light, but rather the song of the old sorcerer, who is no other than Nietzsche's (and the higher human being's) actor—i.e. the personification of the temptation that besets the artist. Appropriate to this idea are the tone of pathos, the play-acting, the surrender of shame, the exaggeration:

\begin{align*}
\textit{Wer wärmt mich, wer liebt mich noch?} \\
\textit{Gebt heisse Hände!} \\
\textit{Gebt Herzens-Kohlenbecken!} \\
\textit{Hingestreckt, schaudernd,} \\
\textit{Halbtotem gleich, dem man die Füsse wärmt—} \\
\textit{Geschüttelt, ach! von unbekannten Fiebern...}
\end{align*}

(Who still warms, still loves me? Hot hands over here! Braziers of your heart over here! Stretched out, shuddering, as one half out of this life, people warming your feet, convulsed by unheard of fevers...)

Finally, the context is uniquely appropriate:

But when he had run up to the spot where the fellow lay on the ground, he found an old man, trembling, eyes staring vacantly; no matter how great an effort Zarathustra made to raise the man and get him back on his feet, there was nothing for it. [Passages like this demand symbolic interpretation]. The unfortunate man seemed [!] not to notice that there was somebody close by; instead he would look around, tossing off pathetic gesticulations, like [!] somebody abandoned by the whole world and left to his own devices. At last, however, after a deal of trembling, twitching, writhing this way and that, he launched into his cry of woe.
Uniquely and exclusively appropriate to this in the “Lament” itself is the whimpering “stretched out . . . as one half out of this life . . . I lie, contorted, writhing . . .” and so on. How could this be taken and placed in the mouth of the “lamenting Ariadne”? The transference would appear enigmatic, bizarre and senseless if it were not possible to establish a link with a broader process, a necessary path of change in Nietzsche’s later philosophizing in the period following Zarathustra.

Scrutinizing only the images and motifs of the “Lament,” one will find little—though it may be spoken in a different tone, used or introduced in a different way—which does not recur throughout Nietzsche’s work. Of the poems, the most closely related Dithyramb is “Between Birds of Prey.” At no great distance either is the second song of the Sorcerer, familiar also from the Dithyramb “Only a fool, only a poet.” For example, the former poem takes up the images of the sick man, the cold man, the dead man:

An jedem Froste kalt...
Ein Kranker nun,
Der an Schlangengift krank ist...
Ein Leichnam...

(No frost but you’re cold . . . diseased now, diseased from snakes’ venom . . . a corpse)
so in the “Lament”:

Halbtotem gleich...
Zitternd vor spitzen Frostpfeilen...

(As one half-dead . . . trembling at sharp, icy darts of freezing cold)
There recurs the picture of the prisoner:

ein Gefangner nur,
der das harteste Los sog:
in eigner Schachte
gebückt arbeitend...

(a prisoner, now, one who drew the harshest lot: laboring stooped over in the mine-shaft of himself)
so in the “Lament”:

Deine stolzeste Gefangene...
Wie?
Lösegeld...

(Your proudest prisoner . . . What? A ransom . . .)
The images of the hunter, the prey, the executioner, recur:

Von dir selber gejagt,
deine eigene Beute...
in eignen Stricken gewürgt,
Selbsthemmer!
Selbsthemmer!
(You hunted yourself down, turned into your own prey ... throttled in nets of your own devising, you self-knower! self-executioner!)

so in the "Lament":

\[\begin{align*}
\text{du Folterer,} \\
\text{du Henker-gott...} \\
\text{dein Wild nur bin ich,} \\
\text{grausamster Jäger!}
\end{align*}\]

(you tormenter, you headsman-god ... your game, only yours am I, most savage of hunters!)

The image of stealing in in the first poem:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Was schleichts du dich ein} \\
in dich—in dich?...
\end{align*}\]

(Why the stealthy entry into yourself—into yourself? ...)

is repeated in the "Lament":

\[\begin{align*}
\text{du schleicht heran} \\
bei solcher Mitternacht?... \\
\text{Wozu die Leiter?} \\
\text{Willst du hinein,} \\
\text{ins Herz, einsteigen...}
\end{align*}\]

(on a midnight like this you stealthily creep in? ... What is the ladder for? Do you want to climb inside, into the heart ...)

There remains, notwithstanding, a decisive difference: in the first poem, "Between Birds of Prey," a self appears; in the second, the god makes his entrance. A transfer of roles has taken place: In the first poem it is an active, an overpowering being, a self, which—whether it is imposing itself or joining in—is suffering; in the second, we are in the presence of a passive, overpowered being. At the close of the "Lament" there is a sea-change from torment and hate to love and longing; in "Between Birds of Prey" the change has already taken place, but as a change in the active self, which hurls itself down from its heights, rather than as a change in the one who receives, accepts, wards off:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Und jüngst noch so stolz,} \\
auf allen Stelzen deines Stolzes! \\
\text{Jüngst noch der Einsiedler ohne Gott,} \\
\text{der Zweisiedler mit dem Teufel,} \\
\text{du scharlachner Prinz jedes Übermuts!}
\end{align*}\]

(And just now still so proud, on all the stilts of your pride! Just now the solitary without God, you made a twosome with the Devil, scarlet-hued prince of insolence!)

Now it is not true to say that what in the one case was called self has here acquired the name God. It is also incorrect to say, as does
Klages, that the two halves correspond to the opposition of spirit to soul (Geist-Seele). Yet in both poems there takes place an analogous type of dramatic movement:

Jungst Jäger noch Gottes,
das Fangnetz aller Tugend,
du Pfeil des Bösen!
Jetzt—
von dir selber erjagt,
deine eigene Beute,
in dich selber eingebohrt…

(Just now still hunter of god, the trap-net of every virtue, the arrow [shot at] evil! Now—you are hunted by yourself, your own prey, piercing into your very self . . .)

Here, truly, knowledge becomes tragedy: the plunge from hubris to despair, together with the plunge from appearance to Truth—as in Sophocles’ Oedipus, only here being endured in his own self!

Zwiesam im eigenen Wissen
zwischen hundert Spiegeln
vor dir selber falsch . . .
ein Wissender!
Ein Selbsterkenner!
der weise Zarathustra! . . .
Du suchtest die schwerste Last:
da fandst du dich—,
da wirfst dich nicht ab von dir . . .

(The knowledge of yourself a thing divided, in the midst of a hundred mirrors, false to yourself . . . a man of knowledge! who knows himself! Zarathustra the wise! You sought the heaviest burden: yourself you found; no casting off the burden of yourself . . .)

A drama, then—but one inhabited by a cast of two? And not, rather, three? Doesn’t the voice of the scornful bird, doesn’t the landscape too have a place?

tust der Tanne es gleich?
Die schlägt Wurzeln, wo
der Fels selbst schaudernd
zur Tiefe blickt—

(are you vying with the pine-tree? It strikes roots where the cliff itself gasps as it gazes down into the deep—)

Is it possible for the spectator, for the contemptuous figure, to be absent as the third in the cast? Granted the force of this question, what might soul or spirit mean? Is not the instinct towards truth, insofar as it must conquer, must overpower things,—soul as much as anything

* Die psychologischen Errungenschaften Nietzsches (1926), 114 f.
else? (In this case, something which makes its attempt on truth, but at other times, on other kinds of prey?) And the victim—perhaps man himself at the abyss? And that derisive figure, as voice of the γνώθι σεαυτόν, would behave under these circumstance like the oracle—the injunction of the daemon under whose watchful eye a single destiny is created from both—from that which overpowers and from that which is overpowered.

Taking this as a point of comparison, how are the roles distributed in the "Lament"? It is true that the scornful eye, that Thought, are present:

*Von dir gejagt, Gedanke!*
*darniederblitzt von dir,*
*du höhnisch Auge, das mich aus dunklem anblickt.*

(Hunted by you, thought! brought down by your lightning, you scornful eye, gazing at me from dark depths).

Yet what is acting violently here is the god: "not tired of beholding human suffering." The conquering force and the spectator merge into the figure of the unknown, who chooses the human being as his victim at the very moment that he conveys his demands to him.

Evidently the roles, as in a theater which relies on stock roles, can remain similar or identical in their dynamic core, yet mutate as regards costume, content, destiny, success or abject failure. This goes to explain why, though once again we view the role of the subjugator celebrating his triumph, brought low by his hubris, struck by evil glances from a stark landscape, hissed at by scornful voices,—nonetheless, a different instinct can appear. So in "*Nur Narr! Nur Dichter!*" (Only a fool! Only a poet!):

*Der Wahrheit Freier—du? so höhnen sie—*
*nein! nur ein Dichter!*
*ein Tier, ein listiges, raubendes, schlendendes,*
*das lügen muss,*
*das wissentlich, willentlich lügen muss,*
*Nach Beute lüstern,*
*bunt verlurt,*
*sich selbst zur Beute,*
*das-der Wahrheit Freier?...*

(The truth's suitor—you? scornfully they chant—no! only a poet! a beast, a sly, rapacious, crawling thing, that needs must lie, must lie knowingly and willingly, coveting prey, in gay disguise, a prey for yourself, which—the truth's suitor?...)

Here too, as previously, rapine, prey, one's own self! But the tragic initiative, that which demands the victim, is here the contrary of what it is in "Between Birds of Prey": the poetic instinct, the instinct towards the lie! And still, how eagle-like:
Dann
plötzlich
geraden Flugs
gesuchten Zugs
auf Lämmer stossen,
jack hinab...

(Then, suddenly, diving abruptly straight down, quivering in flight, to strike the lambs...) 

The peripety of the drama of the Gottesrufer, the god-invoker, the reversal from No to Yes: No! Come back! appears a few years earlier, in the identical words, though intentionally more superficial, trivial, in jest, in "Rimus remedium, oder wie kranke Dichter sich trösten" (Rhyme's the remedy, or, how the sick poet comforts himself). It is true that the cry of longing, No! Come back! is directed at a being of considerably lower rank, at the fever. And yet here, too, something of the same inner discord is present, only it still remains within the bounds of self-irony, still within the domain of poetry...

A search in Nietzsche’s writings for the origin and progress of his inner tragedy would have to begin at an early point. As early as "Thoughts out of Season," there is no dearth of prophetic passages: here, for example, one from "On the Benefits and Drawbacks of History," dating from 1873: "The fact that he [the upright man] now resembles that daemon [of knowledge], though he never was anything other than a puny human being and, that above all, at each moment he is forced to pay with his own substance the penalty of being human, and that he consumes himself at the fire of an impossible virtue—all this sets him apart on a solitary height." In hindsight, the passionate description in the fourth of the "Thoughts out of Season" of the inner destiny and process whereby there originates the greatest sorcerer and benefactor of mankind, the "dithyrambic dramatist," (here still conceived of in the person of Wagner), reads like a self-characterization: although "engaged in combat with a recalcitrant world," this combat, however, "is so frightful and uncanny for him only...because he hears this world, this hostile temptress, speaking out of his own self and because there dwells within himself a mighty daemon of recalcitrance." Later Nietzsche will interpret his own struggle with decadence in identical terms. Clearly such an inner tragedy, beginning early, growing ever more intense, furnishes him with the explosive force he then turns outward.

But it is only during the period in which Zarathustra was gestating that Nietzsche seems to have become aware of this as being no longer his personal destiny, no longer the agony, victory and triumph of his personal Yes, but rather the ultimate drama of Being itself. Reaching over the whole of his sceptical period back to the "artist’s metaphysics" of his earliest work, its sermonizing, its glorification of the Dionysian, Nietzsche from now on is at work on a type he introduces at this time
and on whom he bestows the name of his god: the type of the Dionysian philosopher. At the same time, the drama of overpowering and of being overpowered begins to be acted out in his prose too, sometimes covertly between the lines, at other times surfacing in the text. The "will to power" would bring about its own death from lack of nourishment were it not to spring forth at its prey. Let it make its entrance in the form or mask of psychological, historical, biological or whatever insights, what Nietzsche predicates of every instinct holds for the instinct: "Each instinct seeks to gain mastery, and as such attempts to philosophize."

Listen to the psychologist:

The entire previous history of the soul and of its still unexhausted possibilities: for the born psychologist and friend of the 'big hunt,' the preordained hunting preserve... The trouble with sending forth scholars is that they become useless precisely at the point where the 'big hunt,' and the big danger, begins.

Listen to the genealogist of morals:

This covert act of self-violence, this artists' savagery, this joy taken in endowing one's own heavy, resistant, enduring matter with Form, in branding in a will, a critical stance, a contradiction, contempt, a 'No'—this eery and awful-pleasurable labor of the soul that wills to be in discord with itself, which brings itself to suffer from the joy it takes in bringing about suffering, this whole energetic "bad conscience" has finally, as—try to guess it—as the authentic womb of ideal and imaginative acts brought to light an abundance of novel and unconventional beauty and yea-saying and, perhaps for the first time, beauty itself... (Gen. of Morals, 2, 18).

Or listen to the legislator:

In man creature and creator are joined: in man there is matter, fragmentation, overflow, clay, mud, meaninglessness, chaos; but in man there is also creator, sculptor, hammer-hardness, spectator-divinity and the seventh-day—do you grasp the contradiction? And grasp the fact that your compassion should reach out to the "creator in man," that which demands to be formed, smashed, forged, torn in pieces, burned, tempered, refined—to that which of necessity must suffer and ought to suffer. (Beyond Good and Evil, 225).

Or hear the unmasker of knowledge:

At the least one ought to reflect that the seeker after knowledge, in forcing his mind—against the mind's inclination and often enough against the heart's wishes—to pursue knowledge, forcing it to say No when he would like to say Yes, like to love and to worship—that he is acting as an artist, one who transfigures cruelty; every effort at depth and thoroughness amounts in itself to an act of violence, to a desire to do hurt to the fundamental desire of a mind that tends incessantly to the appearance and surface of things—mingled within every desiring-to-know is a drop of cruelty (Beyond, 229).

Or the interpreter of Geist as "homo Natura":

...that continual pressure and craving of a productive, creative, mutable force; in this the mind takes pleasure in the variety of masks at its disposal, in its
In each instance there is an active element (though, to be sure, not always one seeking knowledge) and a passive one, always “this eery and awful-pleasurable work of the soul that wills to be in discord with itself.” It would be a mistake to assign purely negative predicates to the overpowered, passive part: “the extent of ‘progress’ is measured even by the dimensions of all that had to be sacrificed to it” (Gen. Morals). And what gardens in bloom, concealing their readiness for self-sacrifice, what islands of the blessed there are included in the tally!

The way Nietzsche has of experiencing himself as an inner drama determines already the nature of his heroism. It may be convenient to use the conventional reductive tactics and resolve this enigmatic duality by tracing it back either to his Protestant heritage or to his psychological makeup, and so on. But how much will this explain? Enough—the inner drama begins with his perception of being one with the drama of the world and of Being.

From the first page of Beyond Good and Evil speaks a seductive voice, allusively, covertly, one that doesn’t let itself go; it speaks in mysterious and hallowed tones, such as have not previously been heard, even from Nietzsche, of a “new desire,” of “hopes which haven’t yet a name,” of a “new will,” “new currents”—more and more it speaks in the accents of one who is preparing for the appearance of a god; indeed the next-to-last section (295) amounts virtually to a Hymnos kletikos; though it does not begin with the name of the god who is being invoked, it offers instead an all the more curious assortment of attributes: from “the genie of the heart” to the point where the speech breaks off:

Who is it of whom I’m speaking to you? Did I so far forget myself as not even to reveal his name? Well, perhaps you’ve already guessed by yourselves who this most curious spirit and god, who wishes his praises to be sung in this manner, is... no less than the god Dionysus, that mighty god who is an enigma, the tempter-god, to whom, as you know, I once brought my first-born as an offering...

Yet how transformed in appearance is he since the “Birth.” What novel names he sports! the “Tempter,” “Philosopher,” “Discoverer”! “The very fact that Dionysus is a philosopher, with its corollary that gods too philosophize, seems to me to be a novel teaching, one not without its subtle dangers...”

From the Dionysos of the “Birth” there had been altogether lacking the distinctive feature of the new one: Dionysian activity! Pleasure and suffering were the exclusive determinants of the earlier figure, and in this there is no change right down to the drunken song of the Zara-
thustra period. "Dionysian art seeks to persuade us of the uninter-
ruped pleasure of existence... The raging prods of these agonies pierce
us through and through at the very moment in which we have become
as one with the boundless ultimate pleasure in existence, and in which,
through the Dionysian ecstasy, we are made aware that this pleasure
is imperishable and eternal." How differently the god now expresses
himself:

Once he said: "Given the proper circumstances I like human beings"—an allu-
sion to Ariadne, who happened to be present: "in my eyes man is an endearing,
courageous, inventive animal who has not his equal on earth, one that can find
his bearings in any labyrinth whatever. I'm well-disposed towards him; I often
reflect on how I can impel him forwards and make him stronger, more evil,
deeper than he is." "Stronger, more evil, deeper?" I asked terror-stricken. "Yes,"
he said once more, "stronger, more evil, deeper; more beautiful, too!"—at which
the tempter-god smiled.

But can this still be right? Does not this deification of the ultimate in-
stinct come down to a dramatization of the Ass's Litany of the Fourth
Part of Zarathustra? How vigorously Nietzsche once kept at arm's
length the possibility of such deifications (1882)!

Weltspiel das herrische
Mischt Sein und Schein—
Das Ewig-Närrische
Mischt uns hinein!...

(The imperious world-drama confounds Being and Appearance—the
Eternally-Foolish mixes us—right in!)

And that would seem to be Nietzsche's last word, right down to the
posthumous Fifth Book of the "Gay Science" of 1886 (374):

Once more we shudder—but who would want again to go right out and, in
approved ancient fashion, deify this monstrous piece of unknown world? And, I
suppose, from now on to worship that which is unknown in the guise of "him
who is unknown?" There are too many ungodlike possibilities of interpretation
set down in the account of this unknown, too much interpretative deviltry,
stupidity, folly, our every own human, all-too-human interpretation, which we
do know...

Yet the "desire," here still held at arm's length, proves ever more
enticing. To be sure, his Zarathustra remains an atheist: "Zarathustra
himself, I admit, is nothing but an old atheist; he believes neither in
gods old or new. Zarathustra says he would—but Zarathustra won't...
You must understand him correctly... (Will to Power, 1038). But how
contemptuously, and from hindsight, does the remark "is nothing but"
come. And, on the other hand, how attractive-sounding this is: "And
how many new gods are still possible! For me, in whom the religious,
that is, god-forming instinct now and then—sometimes at the wrong
time—takes on life..."
Nietzsche's Lament of Ariadne

This formulation of the "Gay Science" (370, in 1886) still holds for the aesthetic domain: "The demand for destruction, change, becoming can be an expression of burgeoning power, pregnant with the future (as you know, my term for this is the word 'Dionysian')," but at the very time that Nietzsche speaks in this way, he is already passing beyond the boundaries of the aesthetic: "I name that pessimism of the future—Dionysian pessimism." And siren-like is the voice of the Will to Power (1036): "You all are afraid of the line of reasoning: 'from the world we know might be proved the existence of an entirely different god—one not humanitarian.' Would this god differ at all from the one who wishes to make men "more evil," "deeper," "more beautiful'? And more and more that "World-drama," that "Eternally-foolish" becomes the ultimate tragedy and comedy of the god! "Around the hero all becomes tragedy, around the demigod all becomes satyr-play; and around the god all becomes—what? perhaps ' 'world' ' (Beyond, 150).

"On the day, however, when with all our hearts we cry 'forward! our old morality also belongs to comedy!' we shall have discovered a new complication and possibility for the Dionysian drama of the 'destiny of the soul' and, you may depend on it, he will be right there to make use of it, the great old eternal poet of the comedy of our existence" (Preface to Genealogy, July 1887).

Why, if philosophy is the "most spiritual will to power," the will to "the creation of the world," to the "causa prima" (Beyond, 9), is not the "Dionysian" philosopher provided with a warrant by the "philosophizing" god? There is no room for doubt: Dionysos as philosopher is the foretaste of a new myth, one which replaces, surpasses and sublates the "over-man" Zarathustra. For even if Zarathustra, according to the extant notes on his death, changes more and more from being a tragic figure who perishes to a blessed figure who passes into the beyond, nevertheless he remains too much the man who has overcome himself, too little the god who can announce the Dionysian world, the Dionysian philosophy or the philosophizing Dionysos—unless one were to re-interpret his sufferings so that they became those of a god. But now—is there any quarter from which the god does not set out to entice those who denied him? For instance, in the hierarchy of philosophers above the domain of anything which had previously existed, there appears the god with a hint that he is the completion of the upper part of the line:

I would even permit myself a hierarchy of the philosophers, arranging them with an eye to the reach of their laughter—up to those who are capable of the golden laughter. And, supposing that gods too philosophize, a conclusion to which quite a few reasons have driven me—, I have no doubt but that they will be laughing in a more-than-human and novel way—one to be drawn on the account of all the earnest things! (Beyond, 294).

The ladder which leads upwards beyond man at the same time leads back, downwards to the fundamental données of man. Dionysos, the
god who philosophizes, becomes the epiphany which points to the future of the ancient god of tragedy and comedy: "To be able to remove the hidden, undiscovered, unwitnessed suffering from the world and genuinely negate it, one was virtually compelled at that time to invent gods and intermediate beings of every height and depth, in short, what has its haunts in secret places, that sees in the dark too and is unlikely to let an interestingly painful performance slip away from it ..." Every kind of trouble the sight of which affords satisfaction to a god is justified: "such was the prehistoric—indeed, not only the prehistoric—logic of the feelings. The gods conceived of as partial to savage dramatic performances—how far this ancient idea intrudes still into our civilized European existence." (Genealogy of Morals II, 7). But is anything lacking from this performance to give us—the "Lament of Ariadne"? Doesn't the Ariadne-drama, the drama of the spectator-god and his victim, become a piece of secret, ancient, and then again futuristic theology—a species of mystery play? Is not every component of the "Lament" ready at hand to round out the play—save for its driving force, the god? Rounded and filled out at least for one who "desires to have it again and again as it is and was, to all eternity," for one "who is calling da capo insatiably, not only to himself, but to the play as a whole, and not only to a play, but rather au fond to one who needs precisely this drama—and who makes it necessary: because he continues to need himself— and makes himself necessary—What? and this would not be—circulus vitiosus deus?" (Beyond, 56)

The seducer-voice of the seducer-god—what does it mean? Is this god genuinely a god? or a poetic symbol? or what is known as a high-flown simile? or no more than a witty façon de parler? Notes left by Nietzsche allow no doubt as to the intention of the god's prophet: "The refutation of God:—in truth only the god of morality is refuted" (XIII, p. 75, from 1886). "You call it the disintegration of God:—he is only sloughing off his moral skin. And soon you'll meet him again—beyond good and evil" (XII, 329, of uncertain date). Indeed, is this Dionysian world not directed towards a god of precisely this nature, as the Christian world is directed towards a Christian deity?

This Dionysian world of mine, a world in which the self is eternally creating and eternally destroying itself, this mystery-world of ambiguous desires, this my "beyond good and evil"... would you like a name for this world? A solution to all your riddles? A light for you, too, you who are hidden most deeply, the strongest, the least timid, most nearly creatures of midnight?—this world is the will to power—and nothing besides! And you yourselves are this will to power—and nothing besides! (Will to Power, end.)

That, to be sure, is the formulation of the Will to Power. But is not the will to power, taken as the lone subject on to which all these predicates shower not a thing too reduced, too stripped? If "world-mystery" and the secret consciousness of the nature of those "hidden most deeply" turn out to be identical, is this unity, or better: The assurance, what
is external to me as that in which I have my being and which causes me to shudder—is this not something to which no Greek, no pupil of Empedocles or Heraclitus, would have hesitated to give the name of god? For is not the relation of the Dionysian in the realm of art to the Dionysian of the world comparable to that which the pre-Socratics conceived to exist between the microcosmic and the macrocosmic? “The phenomenon ‘artist’ is still the easiest to see through—from there to turn one’s gaze to the fundamental instincts of power, of nature, etc! of religion and morality, too!” (Will to Power, 797) In the myth of the mystery-religion, Dionysus is dismembered by the Titans; according to Nietzsche, he destroys and renews himself, becoming the symbol not only of the new human being, but in the literal sense the god of the future—“promise,” “justification of suffering” (Will to Power, 1052). Forgotten is the deed of the Titans (the ultimate ancestors of men) who devoured the god as a sacrifice, forgotten as well the preservation of the god’s heart by Zeus and Athena—in short, the tension between the forces of preservation and those of destruction.... As regards his reflexive character, Nietzsche’s god is not the god of the ancient myth; perhaps he recalls more the speculative re-interpretation undertaken as early as the Stoics, and later by the neo-Platonists. Late antiquity interpreted Zagreus as the world-soul, engaged first in dismembering, then piecing himself back together to wholeness: nihil aliud Bacchum quam animam mundi intellegendum asserentes; quae ut ferunt philosophi quamvis quasi membratim per mundi corpora dividatur, semper tamen se redintegrare videtur, corporibus emergens et se formans (O. Kern, Orphicorum fragm. 213). (asserting that Bacchus is to be understood as none other than the world-soul; which, according to the philosophers, though it be divided limb by limb, as it were, through the bodies that compose the world, is nevertheless recomposing itself unceasingly, emerging from bodies and endowing itself with form.) Or might there possibly be a second being apart from the god? And does the mysterious allusion of the Ecce: “Who apart from me knows what Ariadne is’ hint at such a riddle?

The enigma posed by Nietzsche’s renaming of the sorcerer’s lament, so that it became the “Lament of Ariadne,” if not completely solved by the consideration of this last turn in his thinking, does become considerably less obscure. The renaming belongs together with the mysterious, retrospective self-interpretations which abound in this, his last period. Why, in this very last Ecce-period even the apostate Zarathustra is transfigured utterly by the light of the new god! “So does a god, a Dionysos, suffer. The answer to such a dithyramb of the sun’s isolation in the light would be Ariadne.... Apart from me who knows what Ariadne is.... Nobody before this had the solution to riddles like this; I doubt whether anybody here even noticed that riddles existed.” Yet for this very reason the differences come as so much more of a shock! In Zarathustra, the reply of the master to the false singer is a cudgelling: “At
this Zarathustra could restrain himself no longer; taking up his staff he struck out with all his force at the groaning man." In the Dithyramb there appears in his stead the god, to the accompaniment of lightning flashes, in "smaragd-like" beauty! Instead of earning a beating, the suppliant who invokes the god is heard! Yet heard, saved, not through any encounter of the body, or through divine epiphanies, or songs, or myths, but rather—through a re-interpretation! A masculine ending comes to be replaced by a feminine. Here too, the change of roles has a lengthy pre-history: "Assuming that truth is a woman—" (Preface to Beyond), that is, false, vain, fond of appearances, of the mask—and for that very reason so alluring. "Her great art is the lie, her most urgent concern appearance and beauty" (Beyond, 232). Whence the destiny of the seeker after truth: "Never does a labyrinthine man seek the truth, only his Ariadne—whatever he may tell us" (XII, p. 259). That is to say, though he calls it his truth, it is what surrenders to him, what he desires, what seduces him and leads him astray.... Then again, Nietzsche likes to think of "life" as the female of the species, taking it (as in the case of truth) as the passive with respect to the active—Nietzsche's conception of the vita femina. "Yet perhaps we have here life's most powerful allure: over it lies a veil, shot through with gold, a veil of beautiful possibilities, promising, resisting, bashful, jesting, compassionate, seductive. Yes, life is the female" (Gay Science, 339, from 1886). And already in Zarathustra something similar (II, "The Song of the Dance"). Of special importance is the sketch of an Ariadne-allegory dating from 1887 or '88—a satyr-play, in which the god, Dionysos, triumphs over the hero, Theseus, where a Dionysos calmly assured in his love confronts a Theseus bewildered, destined for his doom. For the hero, Ariadne becomes a labyrinth, for the god, she becomes his beloved, yet loved "without jealousy...." To repeat, there is no dearth of passages which prepare for the exchange of roles in the "Lament of Ariadne." And yet, the behavior demanded by the new role is oddly inappropriate to the model of the feminine, understood as one recognized, comprehended, loved, sacrificed by the god. For the female, the being who invokes the god, becomes genuine because her appearance has its roots in a deeper level, one wholly distinct from that of the sorcerer. The alternative would be that this possibility might reveal a faint glimmer of Nietzsche's ambiguity—that the blows of Zarathustra's cudgel strike Nietzsche's own truth! And that Zarathustra's denial of deity was merely the suppression of a hidden, and therewith all the more passionately longing entreaty.

Yet almost stranger than all this are the words of the saviour-god. Dithyramb signifies a powerful eruption and flow of words. The setting of the dithyramb—according to the stage-directions—is the epiphany: "A lightning-flash; Dionysos becomes visible in smaragd-like beauty"—what an imposition on the audience, who are meant to get a feeling of something like this from the words of the poem. This is the case even
Nietzsche's Lament of Ariadne

if we concede that in contrast to the Christian god, this god must speak "inhumanly," "without shame," and as a "seducer." Yet his words are no more than abbreviations of Nietzsche's own paths of thought. What a contrast they form to the pathetic gestures of Ariadne!

Sei klug, Ariadne!...
Du hast kleine Ohren, du hast meine Ohren:
Steck ein kluges Wort hinein!—
Muss man sich nicht erst hassen,
enfen man sich lieben soll...
Ich bin dein Labyrinth...

(Be wise, Ariadne!... You have tiny ears, you have my ears: set a wise word in them!—Must one not first hate, before one can love?... I am your labyrinth...) 

"Be wise... you have tiny ears" is a rejection of the "Ass's Litany": "What hidden wisdom has he, that he sports long ears...?" in Zara-thustra, IV; and in Beyond Good and Evil, 8: "In every philosophy there arrives a moment where the 'conviction' of the philosopher strides on to the stage; or, to put it in the words of the ancient mystery:

adventatit asinus
pulcher et fortissimus."

"Why, I venture to assert that I have the tiniest ears... I am the anti-ass par excellence, and therewith a world-historical prodigy" (Ecce). Nonetheless, for the god Ariadne's ears are at times—but enough: another version may be found in "The Twilight of the Idols": "Man believes that the world is overflowing with beauty—he forgets that he is the cause... who knows how he would fare in the eyes of a nobler judge of taste?" "O Dionysos, why do you, a god, keep tugging at my ears?" Ariadne asked her philosophical lover during one of those famous tête-à-têtes on Naxos. 'I find something comical in your ears, Ariadne; why aren't they even longer?"

To make them speak forth and convey their message would require a complete commentary on Dionysos' statements about hate and about love. If Christ brings love, Dionysos brings love out of hate, that is, hate as the ground out of which love first grows. "I believe that the man who has divined something of the most fundamental conditions of all growth in love will understand how Dante came to write over the gate of his Inferno: 'I too was created by eternal love.'" (Will to Power, II, 1030). Or: "That however, is truly the event: from the trunk of that tree of vengeance and hate, Jewish hate—the deepest and most sublime hate, which generates ideals, destroys and re-creates 'values,' the like of which had never yet appeared on earth—there grew something equally incomparable, a new love, the deepest and most sublime of any kind of love—and? I ask, out of what other trunk could it have grown? (Genealogy of Morals, I, 8) To be sure, in other respects too the love
offered by Dionysos is different from Christian love in that it has more about it of amor fati: "The highest condition to which a philosopher can attain: to assume towards existence a Dionysian stance—my formula for this is amor fati (Will to Power, 1041). Above all, to comprehend Nietzsche's "love" it would be necessary to uncover its hidden relationship to Nietzsche's "affirmation," which is similar to the connection between Nietzsche's "hate" and his "denial." Nietzsche's Yes also almost always carries the day from a previously given No; his Yes is always the cry of victory...

A hint more furtive still occurs in the god's final word, in which he bears self-witness: "I am your labyrinth." Might we say that this contradicts the Johannine "I am the truth"? Perhaps contradicting also the last words of the last of the Dithyrambs: "I am your truth." Still, what does that mean? One would have to gain admittance to Nietzsche's labyrinth merely to make the dark visible as dark. To be sure, here too hints are not lacking, for instance, Beyond 29: "He [the man who, without having to be so, is independent] thereby enters a labyrinth, he multiplies a thousandfold the dangers which life by itself brings with it; not the least danger is that nobody sees plainly how and where he has taken the false step, become isolated, and is in a way of being torn apart limb by limb by some cave-dwelling minotaur of conscience." But, to put it in neo-Platonic terms, the labyrinth of the "Lament" stands in the same relation to this as does the ultimate ground of Being to Appearance. One would be constrained to go into the teaching of the "great danger," of the "courage for the forbidden," of "the predestination to the labyrinth" (Preface to Antichrist); beyond this into the whole intricate Ariadne-problem of the mask which holds itself as mask, of the text which interprets itself as interpretation, of the thread which winds out into one's own hand; in short, in order to decipher the meaning of the mystery, one would have to unravel the whole late problem of the "circulus vitiosus deus." But no less telling is the halt Nietzsche makes at this hint, the fact that it is inadmissible to invoke the new myth. The lament of Ariadne ends on a gnostic note. In contrast to the myths of Plato, whose origins too lie in philosophic problems, there open up no marvellous new fields of vision.

Yet does this observation not bring us to the destiny of Nietzsche's final Dionysian visions? Speech is inadequate. Where the hymn seeks to break loose, the word is silenced. We are left with mysterious allusions or exclamations: "Dionysos is a judge!—Do you understand me?" or "Dionysos against the crucified one..." The Greek cult too is transformed into a Nietzschean mystery: "To this entire light and color ladder of happiness the Greeks—not without the grateful shudder of those who have been initiated into a mystery, not without due caution and pious silence—gave the name of a god: Dionysos" (Will to Power, 1051). In place of the "Dionysian power of the German soul," in place of "the earthquake, with a primal force pent up for ages, at
long last breaks forth” (Gay Science, 370), at the end what an astonishing show! How unvisionary the visionary is! What a tone for a god to assume! “Hey, you rat-catcher, what are you up to? You demi-Jesuit and minstrel—almost a German!” (Prefatory material, 1885–88).

Nietzsche converses in the style of the satyr-play, of uncouth people, about things which rightfully should require the language of myth. He speaks in the manner of a literary gossip, almost in that of the “Journal des Goncourts”: Ariadne can’t endure it any longer:—“the events here related took place during my first visit to Naxos: ‘My dear sir,’ she said, ‘you speak German like a pig!’ ‘Leave the pig out of it, my dear goddess! You underestimate the difficulty of uttering subtilties in German!’ ‘Subtilties!’ cried an outraged Ariadne… Where is all this going to end?’—as she impatiently toyed with the renowned thread which once guided Theseus through the labyrinth. Thus it came to light that Ariadne was two thousand years behind in her philosophic education” (XIII, p. 250). Ariadne two thousand years behind! Yet does this not amount to an explication of her destiny for the present age? The destiny, namely, that she herself, as the myth which she must be, has arrived on the scene late by two thousand years?

Of his Zarathustra period Nietzsche could say: “Incidentally, I have remained a poet up to the very limits of the notion, even though I have been industrious in tyrannizing myself with the contrary of all poeticizing.” At this time, his destiny would seem to have been sealed with the words of Zarathustra: “Ah, my soul… that I bade you sing, behold, that was my last deed!” (Zarathustra, III). Nonetheless, the last four years of his lucid life brought no burst of song. The Ecce-impulse, which dammed itself up in him with ever greater force, the eruption of his legislative and destructive talents, his mounting impatience to hurl challenges at the time from behind his post of time beyond time, to assault it, to constrain it to face necessary decisions, the attitude of the hammer and the assassinations, not least the contradictions between the end and his means, between prophecy and publicity—all this comes more and more to displace in him the poet in favor of his rival, the legislator. It is enlightening that not a single one of the Dithyrambs, no, nor one of the poems, was composed in his last years. Even the poem usually displayed as evidence of a final flight into song: “Venice, on the Bridge” had been composed earlier (proof for this would carry us too far afield). The levels of meaning, the charm, terror, the manifestations of sorrow and of happiness grounded in a securely ensconced diversity vanish behind a more and more topical will to intervene and to display power; save for an afterglow of reminiscences, the language itself turns tempestuous and unequivocal, foregoing the play of glancing light and tremulous color, becomes tough, and, calling out in drastic, cynical, defamatory, commanding tones bears witness to a master of the stark lighting effect… Euphoria drives him to the Ecce, elevates him to self-deification, but ceases to regenerate itself in images
and songs. So Ariadne too remains his secret. Instead of a new myth, we get only a re-interpretation, a late transfiguration intelligible to him alone. In revenge, the act of renaming becomes symbolic, the renamer himself becomes a myth, but one he himself no longer composes.

Nietzsche philology and Nietzsche dilettantism have appropriated the riddle of Ariadne and used their methods to solve it. As evidence they have stepped forward with a couple of incoherent notes written by an already benighted man. Ariadne is revealed to be Cosima, Dionysos as Nietzsche himself, Theseus as Wagner. But is this not precisely the sign of disease, when thinking gives up its symbolic functions, when meaning and person are no longer kept distinct, when association takes the place of inferences? The dimensions of a sense of hearing for which such madness rings forth as the deepest voice of revelation cannot stand in comparison even with the largest ears about which Nietzsche ventured to dream. Within Nietzsche’s realm even fools and asses go out to do combat with gods and devils. But here? Were these interpreters to prove correct, then Nietzsche would have worn his god’s mask amid the procession of masks of his time. This essay has attempted to demonstrate that his god means more than this.
THE MORAL LEGITIMACY OF GOVERNMENTS

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What makes governments morally legitimate? This question could be regarded, as indeed it has been traditionally, as a special case of the more general question: what makes something morally right? It is often remarked that Lord Devlin (The Enforcement of Morals), treats this last question with profound skepticism. From the point of view of the lawmaker at least, he argues, what matters is not whether a moral belief is true but whether it is commonly held. Such moral beliefs provide society with a cohesion without which it cannot exist. This de facto positive morality of society, though worthy of legal enforcement, may yet be mistaken. Here is, then, a democratic empiricist doctrine designed to buttress a certain conservative view of society and of legislation without, however, claiming that the morality in question is rational and valid.

Professor Hart, Lord Devlin’s chief antagonist, is a legal positivist insofar as he recognizes as legal any system of rules which exhibits that characteristic interaction between primary and secondary rules that his theory requires. Nevertheless, he leaves room for a domain of autonomous moral judgments outside the law and holds that this domain must be taken into account by the legislator, whose task thus goes beyond that accorded to him by Lord Devlin, i.e., the enacting into law of moral beliefs commonly held.

Professor R. S. Downie, in his Roles and Values, raises the question with which I opened this note.¹ In his attempt at an answer he makes use of both Devlin’s democratic-empirical notion of morality and Hart’s doctrine of primary and secondary rules. This answer, which I propose to criticize here, is interesting: it employs Devlin’s purely descriptive democratic-empirical criterion as one of moral justifiability, arguing that a government is morally legitimate if its subjects have actually consented to Hart’s secondary rules. I shall argue that Downie fails to justify the moral legitimacy of governments in this way. I shall also indicate why I think that Max Weber’s doctrine of legitimacy is still preferable to that of Downie on both theoretical and empirical grounds.

Professor Downie distinguishes between legitimacy in the legal sense and legitimacy in the moral sense. A government, or rules made by a government, is legitimate in the legal sense if it satisfies the second-order rules of legal validity which are taken as given. But from this, Downie rightly argues, nothing can be inferred about moral legitimacy.

Fortunately, I need not argue here the question of whether the whole theory of first-order and second-order rules is viable or not. The late A. Harari has offered what seem to me conclusive arguments to the effect that it is not. Moreover, it seems that Downie himself has misgivings about the adequacy of the version of the theory under which he operates. For example, it is at least doubtful whether a rule of change which prescribes the ways in which first-order rules must be altered or modified is that much different from any other first-order rule. The case does not seem to be different from that of the spelling of the word "spelling," which is not a case, as Wittgenstein remarked, of second-order spelling. However, I think it can be shown that Downie's account of what constitutes moral legitimacy is, in principle, not only inadequate but useless. As I understand it, this is his argument. Moral legitimacy cannot be made to rest on actual power to govern nor on a fictional contract: if it is to make good sense, its source must be located in consent. Logically enough, Downie's main effort is then directed at giving precise sense to the term "consent": a government rules by consent if and only if it is a necessary condition of its having a right to govern that those governed have expressed a wish or have otherwise indicated acceptance that it should govern. Consent is essentially the granting to someone the permission to do something he would not have a right to do without such permission; and government by consent therefore implies that the government's right to govern (not its power to do so, not its actual policies) is created by the expression of the wishes of the subjects.

It is perfectly clear that what Downie is seeking here is an empirical criterion by which the moral legitimacy of any government can be established. This will be done by deciding whether or not the right of a government to govern was created by an actual expression or other clear indication of the wishes of its subjects. This point is important for Downie, for he specifically wants to exclude such governements as that of Elizabethan England, whose subjects tolerated and approved Elizabeth's rule but had no opportunity to express their approval. It is important for Downie to have a criterion which "fits the moral attitudes and views of our society," and it is for this reason that he insists on "the strict sense of consent."

Downie's next problem is to establish what it is that the people consent to. He says: "A government governs by consent, or is morally legitimate, when its people consent to the constitution, or (in other words) to the secondary rules operative in their society. A government, then, has authority, or is legitimately in authority, if but only if it is rightly constituted in terms of the constitution or the secondary rules, and if but only if the bulk of the people consent to the secondary rules."

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2 Ibid., p. 81.
3 Ibid., p. 85; italics added.
It will be noted that there are two conditions here. The first, namely, that the government must be constituted in terms of the constitution, is the criterion of legal legitimacy; the satisfaction of the second, the consent of the bulk of the people, constitutes moral legitimacy.

Now the first and most obvious objection to this approach is that it is very difficult to envisage what such an expression of consent to the secondary rules could be like. Does Downie mean that there must be an actual expression of consent to all four kinds of secondary rules he lists? For example, there is a second-order rule that "empowers the Home Secretary to authorize policemen." Do subjects ever express anything about that? Of course, it is quite possible that subjects may have something to say about the Home Office in general, but when they do, they do not say it in any special way which is specifically appropriate to second-order rules but in the ordinary way in which they express their opinions about the government in office and about its opposition. Indeed, it would be very hard to find examples where there is a special expression of opinion, consent or otherwise, about second-order rules as such.

Perhaps the best example of such an expression of consent would be a referendum in a newly established state, in which people vote about a draft constitution. But even here one would have to be certain that the constitution indeed contains nothing but second-order rules and not substantive ones as well. Alternatively, even if it be argued that this distinction is a tenuous one in any case, and even if we accept this "constitutive" constitutional referendum as an expression of consent that fits Downie's bill, it would still be useless as a support for the claim to moral legitimacy of that government which is in office by virtue of the constitution approved by that referendum. Such a referendum is a once-and-for-all exercise. Governments will come and go in conformity with the second-order rules contained in the said constitution; their policies may become increasingly oppressive and may cause large-scale disaffection among the people: and yet, it could be claimed, on this interpretation of Downie, that their rule is morally legitimate. But if this were argued, what would this argument amount to but to a historical version of the contract theory? Would Downie hold that because a constitution was held morally legitimate, say, in 1848, when it was approved by referendum, the government which operates today in terms of that constitution is, therefore, also morally legitimate?

In established states, of course, not even this sort of thing can happen. There may be referenda on constitutional amendments, but many constitutions, notably that of the United Kingdom, have no provisions for such public performances. However, even where a referendum about a constitutional amendment is possible, it takes place within the legal framework of the constitution as a whole. That is, a person who wishes to dissent altogether from the second-order rules
implicit in the constitution has no opportunity to indicate his stand. He may withhold his consent from the proposed constitutional amendment but not from the constitution as such. Hence on the grounds of Downie’s test, it would never be possible to say of a long-established political order that it is morally legitimate or that it is not.

Downie’s theory is obviously meant as an alternative to Max Weber’s theory about the three sources of, or three kinds of explanations for, the existence of authority. Specifically, he departs from Weber in his notion of moral legitimacy (as far as legal legitimacy goes, his thinking is pretty much in line with Weber’s comments about legal-rational authority). The concept of moral legitimacy is meant to displace Weber’s traditional and charismatic authority, presumably because it does not fit “the moral attitudes and views of our society.” The difference here is philosophically radical. Weber did not ask what criteria must be satisfied before we can assent to the moral legitimacy of a government: rather, as a social scientist, he noted that some authorities are accepted as legitimate, and he gave an account of the kinds of grounds on which such acceptance can be explained. He did not think it his task to sit in judgment about the moral legitimacy of any government. It is not clear whether or not Downie is aware of or is concerned with this distinction between describing and judging moral legitimacy, but it is clear that his main aim is to enable us to make judgments about the moral legitimacy of governments. Downie’s own criterion is empirical-descriptive, with, as it were, an evaluative application. His meaning is this: “If you want to make up your mind about whether to accept, as a person imbued with ‘the moral attitudes and views of our society,’ a given government as legitimate, then check to see whether the bulk of the population has consented to the secondary rules under which that government operates.”

It has already been shown that such a test is impossible to apply. Now I want to add that Weber’s purely descriptive classification is actually more helpful in making judgments about the moral legitimacy of governments than Downie’s test, although the latter was designed for that very purpose. Our first step, as social scientists, should be to ask where the authority and presumed legitimacy of the government in question come from. We would find that it derives from tradition or would note that the leader is seen as a person having charisma. If we then wanted to deny legitimacy on these grounds, we could reject the tradition or argue that those who say that the leader has charismatic qualities suffer from mistaken perception because he is, in reality, a fraud. Note that we would agree that the leader’s qualities are perceived by the bulk of the population as charismatic, yet we would deny that such a perception is accurate and thus is a ground for his legitimacy. So Weber’s theory could be put to use.

Possibly Downie thinks that Weber’s theory is not in accordance with “the moral attitudes and views of our society,” but if so, this, as
I have tried to show just now, rests on a misconception of what Weber's theory is meant to do. At any rate, there seems to be no reason to prefer Downie's theory to Weber's, for even in the exceptional case where it seems, at least, that Downie's theory can be used, such as that of the government coming to power by way of a constitutional referendum, it will not give us what we want. We might find that even though the secondary rules have been consented to, a few years later the government in question is not accepted as morally legitimate. This is certainly odd. Weber, on the other hand, could explain the situation quite well by saying that the government has no legitimacy in the eyes of the governed because it is not perceived as having tradition or because the leader is not perceived as having charismatic qualities. The only disadvantage of Weber's theory is that from a moral point of view undesirable governments may be described as legitimate. But on this point Downie fares no better either. We have just seen how his test would force him to declare as legitimate a government which is not so regarded by the bulk of the population and which is thus, presumably, morally not quite acceptable.

Weber's theory does not aim at answering the question of what conditions need to be satisfied for a government to be accepted as legitimate, as Downie's seems to. This is just as well, for historical experience teaches that the most varied kinds of governments have been recognized as legitimate and also that other governments with the very same kinds of attributes have not been so recognized. The question of recognition—by subjects, not by philosophers imbued with the moral attitudes of our society—is quite independent of any specific factor, be it consent or any other morally approved circumstances. Hitler's regime was recognized as legitimate while the Weimar Republic was not. Admiral Horthy's rule over Hungary was recognized as legitimate; that of the present communist leadership is very likely not so recognized generally. It is not surprising that this should be so. Moral decisions are individual, as is the decision or tacit acceptance that goes into a subject's accordance of moral legitimacy to his government. Decisions and political attitudes in general are not governed by universal and rational rules, even though Downie thinks that they should be. Undoubtedly, it would be nicer if they were, especially if the rules involved were also agreeable. The great advantage of Weber's theory is that it accepts the fact that decisions and political responses are what they are and asks only what kinds of things can be said, in a manner significant for social science, about attitudes that exist.

The question of whether a particular government is morally legitimate or not is a political question of the first order. Here the role of the political philosopher is no different from the role of the moral philosopher considering an actual moral problem. He can explain, analyze, and perhaps even help along a decision, but he can no more pronounce upon the moral legitimacy of a particular government than
the moral philosopher can tell us what to do here and now. It might
be objected that Downie's test is universal and not directed at partic-
ular cases. But if a universal test cannot be applied in particular cases,
then it is not much of a test. What reason is there to take seriously a
criterion like the one offered by Downie? If I wanted to deny moral
legitimacy to a government, I would not be impressed if I were told
that the secondary rules have been consented to. I could say that they
were not understood when the vote was taken, that the people were
misled, that had the people known what kind of first-order rules were
going to be made on the basis of the second-order rules agreed upon
they would not have consented, etc., etc. I could argue that the sec-
dary rules that have been consented to are not being observed. Or,
more important, I could say that the secondary rules, although con-
settled to, are morally evil. These are political and not philosophical
arguments. Thus Downie's test does not put an end to political argu-
ments about legitimacy. There are many moralities, but my moral
judgment about any government does not derive from any of them.
Downie's concern with the moral attitudes and views of our society
dimly suggests that his criterion may have been meant politically, i.e.,
that he is expressing his commitment to a particular kind of govern-
ment and inviting his readers to follow him. It is difficult to be certain
about this, but if this is the right interpretation, his point should be
stated more clearly and elaborated in much more detail than has been
done so far.

If there is a general conclusion to be drawn from these critical re-
marks directed at Downie's theory, it is perhaps that the term 'legiti-
macy' may not be a particularly useful one to indicate the conceptually
elusive yet perfectly recognizable phenomenon that some governments
—irrespective of their legal and political antecedents and present
modes of operation—are recognized by the governed as acceptable
(sometimes even as the natural order of things), while others are viewed
as impositions. Downie knows only too well that this distinction cannot
be made with the help of the legal notion of legitimacy; otherwise, he
would not have needed to call upon a moral notion. But if my argu-
ments are correct, the moral notion of legitimacy cannot do the job
either. Downie's moral legitimacy is defined by him as the legitimacy
of the legal legitimacy in cases in which the question of whether the
first legitimacy obtains would have to be decided empirically. But
since the consent to the second-order rules would have to be expressed
in an already existing social, and most likely political, context, there
must therefore exist some other set of rules in terms of which this ex-
pression of consent must be organized. So, in addition to the previous
objections, we also have the logical problem of infinite regress and the
philosophical problem of the need to postulate a state of nature in which
the second-order rules can freely,—i.e., without interference from
existing order,—be consented to. In fact, we know that there is no
state of nature and that analysis does not commit us to infinite regress. Infinite regress stops not at the apparently empirical, yet, upon analysis, mythical expression of consent but at something which seems mythical yet is often clearly discernible: the actual feelings and attitudes of the governed. As has often been said, moral judgments are not made by counting heads. Hart cannot be turned into Devlin, and Weber still holds the field.
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