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THE *CRATYLUS* TESTIMONY:
MOVING TOWARD PLATO'S ONTOLOGY OF THE HUMAN BODY

by

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PHIL8003: MA Dissertation

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts by Research in the Department of Philosophy

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

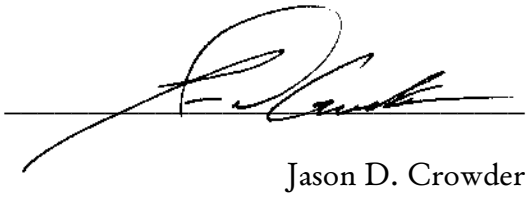
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FOR MY PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE STUDENTS

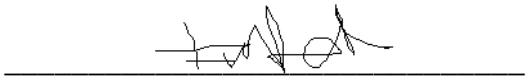
That I May Corrupt Your Young and Impressionable Minds in the Spirit of Socrates

Authenticity Declaration

"I, Jason D. Crowder, declare that the work on which this dissertation is based is my original work, except where citations indicate otherwise. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (by Research) to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Furthermore, I affirm that neither the whole work nor any part of the work has been or will be submitted for another degree or examination at any other higher educational institution."



Jason D. Crowder
15 March 2024



Dylan Brian Futter (Supervisor)
15 March 2024

Abstract

Socrates' etymologies for the term σῶμα (human body) in the *Cratylus* 400b11-c9 excerpt raise a question that is often ignored or under-addressed in Platonic scholarship. That question is the focus of this dissertation. I aim to work out Plato's definition and ontology of the human body as it unfolds and manifests within the *Cratylus* dialogue. My goal is to grasp what precisely Socrates' σῶμα etymologies disclose about Plato's ontological views toward the human body. Only a careful exegetical analysis of those etymologies can unveil such information. In other words, I want to know what the *Cratylus* 400b11-c9 testimony reveals about Plato's ontological views concerning the human body. Hence, my research interest lies in three specific veins: (1) Socrates' σῶμα etymologies in the *Cratylus*, (2) the relationship between a given etymology and a proper definition, and (3) the philosophical significance of these precise etymologies on Plato's ontology regarding the human body. Much more entails each aspect than what appears initially. As the dissertation unfolds, other factors that need attention and require addressing will naturally arise. I propose that a careful and thorough exegetical analysis of the given σῶμα etymologies would reveal not only essential details for moving toward a proper understanding of Plato's ontology of the human body but also proves that the Cratylus is a good entry point into this discussion itself. For such reasons, I shall argue that these etymologies are, in fact, instrumental in establishing the foundation of Plato's overall ontological disposition of the σῶμα and, perhaps, Plato's teleology of the human body too. Socrates' σῶμα etymologies are not straightforward semantic connections but rather heavily influenced by a philosophical-religious perspective. As such, each seems relatively intelligible, and the statements are *prima facie* unproblematic at a precursory glance. While Plato's character Socrates' three σῶμα etymologies appear intelligible and *prima facie* unproblematic upon closer examination, that does not appear to be the case.

Key Concepts:

Plato, *Cratylus*, Definition, Etymology, Forms, Metaphysics, Names, Ontology, Ψυχή, Σῶμα, Σῶμα-Σῆμα

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Foremost, I cannot express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dylan Futter, for agreeing to take on me as a student and supervising my dissertation research. He made countless insights and suggestions, from tweaking my arguments to make them more robust to suggesting additional works to consult. I also need to thank his wife and children for their sacrifice in allowing him to schedule weekend video conferences. But most importantly, without Dylan seeing the significance of my research interest, this dissertation would not exist.

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Furthermore, thank you to Alana Argüello, Jen Johnson, and David Van Bebber Jr. for proofreading the initial chapter drafts for clarity and readability. Each provided beneficial feedback and suggestions. Some of them forced me to rethink aspects of my argumentation and angles I had not previously considered. Additionally, I wish to thank Maria Antonieta Campos Evia for double-checking my unpolished translations of some of Bernabé's materials to ensure that I got the underlying composition of them correct, even though I did not capture all of the nuances of the original Spanish. I also wish to thank Justin Noppe and John O. Soden for assisting me with the reorganization of parts of the project.

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the University of Cambridge system. I also appreciate the library staff at Amherst College, Baylor University, City University of New York, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dominican School of Philosophy & Theology, Graduate Theological Union, Hillsdale College, Houston Baptist University, LeTourneau University, The Library of Congress, Rice University, Sam Houston University, Southern Methodist University, Texas A&M, University of Cambridge, University of Dallas, University of Houston, University of Kansas, University of Oklahoma, Bodleian Libraries of the University of Oxford, University of St. Thomas, University of Texas at Austin, and Wichita State University for either allowing me to use their facilities for research or borrow from their collections via interlibrary loan. I need to also thank ProQuest for their generosity in supporting my research.

Now, I wish to shift attention to my most significant support. But most of all, my gratitude goes to my loving and supportive wife, Rebekah. She encouraged and spurred me to complete this research project and degree, especially after being forced to take 2022 off due to health issues that nearly took my life. This accomplishment is just as much hers as it is mine—if not more so hers. This endeavor would not have been possible without her faithful support and sacrifice. Thank you, Rebekah, for your undeserving patience in allowing me to pursue my dream!

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Abbreviations

A. General

c.	*circa*
edn(s).	*edition(s)*
fr(s).	*Fragment*
om.	*omitted*
Rev.	*revised by or revised*
s.v.	*sub verbo, under the word*
Trans.	*Translated by*

B. Classical Writings

ARISTOPHANES

Ran.	*Ranae (Frogs)*

ARISTOTLE

De an.	*De anima (Soul)*
Gen. an.	*De generatione animalium (Generation of Animals)*
Int.	*De interpretatione (Interpretation)*
Metaph.	*Metaphysica (Metaphysics)*
Top.	*Topica (Topics)*

CICERO

Acad.	*Academica*
Nat. d.	*De natura deorum*

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Protr.	*Protrepticus*
Strom.	*Stromateis (Miscellanies)*

DIO CHRYSOSTOMUS

Orat.	*Orationes*

DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS

Comp.	*De compositione verborum*

HERODOTUS

Hist.	*Historiae (Histories)*

HOMER

Il.	*Iliad*
Od.	*Odyssey*

IAMBLICHUS (Iambl.)

VP	*De vita Pythagorica*

NONNUS

Dion.	*Dionysiaca*

PHILO of Alexandria

Leg. All.	*Legum Allegoriarum*

PLATO

Apol.	*Apologia of Socrates*
Charm.	*Charmides*
Crat.	*Cratylus*
Gorg.	*Gorgias*
Lach.	*Laches*
Leg.	*Leges (Laws)*
Ly.	*Lysis*
Parm.	*Parmenides*
Phd.	*Phaedo*
Phdr.	*Phaedrus*
Phil.	*Philebus*
Prot.	*Protagoras*
Rep.	*De republica (Republic)*
Soph.	*Sophista (Sophist)*
Theaet.	*Theaetetus*
Tim.	*Timaeus*

PLOTINUS

Enn.	*Enneades*

PLUTARCH

Cons. Apoll.	*Consolatio ad Apollonium*
Quaest. Conv.	*Quaestiones conviiales*

XENOPHON

Mem.	*Memorabilia*

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS

Pyr.	*Pyrrhoniae hypotyposes* (*Outlines of Pyrrhonism*)

C. Reference Works

Clem.	Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata*, ed. O Staehlin et L. Fruechtel (Berolini, 1960^{2}).
CGCG	E. van Emde Boas, A. Rijksbaron, L. Huitink, and M. de Bakker. (2019). *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
CGL	J. Diggle, *et al.* (eds.). (2021) *The Cambridge Greek Lexicon*, 2 Vols. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, United Kingdom.
DK	H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edn. (1952).
FGrHist	*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. (1954-64). 15 Vols. Ed. F. Jacoby. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill.
LSJ	H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, H. S. Jones, and R. McKenzie. (1996). *A Greek-English Lexicon with New Supplement*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
Stob.	*Stobaeus, Anthologium, ed. C. Wachsmuth et O. Hense (Apud Weidmannos, Berolini, 1884-1912).*

Chapter 1
Stumbling into the Cave

§1.1 The Scope of the Context and Nature of the Study

Socrates' etymologies for the term σῶμα at *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 raise a question that is often ignored or under-addressed in Platonic scholarship. That question is the focus of this philosophical treatise. I aim to work out Plato's definition and ontology of the human body as it unfolds and manifests within the *Cratylus* dialogue. My goal is to grasp what precisely Socrates' σῶμα etymologies disclose about Plato's ontological views toward the human body. Only a careful exegetical analysis of Socrates' σῶμα etymologies can unveil such information. The query "What is the σῶμα for Plato?"[1] morphs slightly to: what does the *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 testimony reveal about Plato's ontological views concerning the human body?[2]

Individuals routinely make false assumptions and do not necessarily give them a second thought. On a precursory glance at Plato's question-centered dialogues and realizing the amount of scholarship that focuses on the Platonic conception of the soul (ψυχή), a person might conclude that Plato's idea of the human body (σῶμα) is much less significant or, even perhaps, uninteresting. Making such an inference raises concerns regarding its accuracy on at least two accounts: (1) Plato's continual usage of the term σῶμα throughout a select few of his dialogues and (2) the length in which Plato has his protagonist characters discuss the

[1] Asking such a question in the confines of Plato's *Cratylus* is only possible because of the scholarship of Barney (1996; 1998; 2001) and Sedley (1998a; 2003a; 2003b; 2003c). These two scholars changed how many read and view the etymological section of the dialogue, though disagreement remains (Meißner, 2023).

[2] Because of this finessed nuance, the scope of this project prohibits dealing with the entire Platonic corpus, even though the σῶμα motif occurs elsewhere. That said, brief references to other dialogues may occasionally appear in support of claims being put forth in my discussion of Plato's *Cratylus*. These citations function solely as testimonials to the position found elsewhere within Plato's corpus. Any claim made in such cross-references will not be examined in terms of its merit within the broader context of the dialogue in which it appears.

human body.

Concerning the first account, Plato puts forth several distinct conceptions of the human body throughout his dialectic writings. For example, here is a sampling of the depicted imagery attached to the term σῶμα that appears as a recurring theme in four of the dialogues: chains,[3] mistress,[4] obstacle,[5] prison or means of incarnation,[6] shelter,[7] tomb,[8] and vehicle.[9] Such examples imply that Plato believes the human body serves to fulfill some intended function and purpose. In other words, the σῶμα has a role to perform. Thus, perhaps, the σῶμα serves in multiple capacities and to varying degrees—that is to say, the human body may satisfy more than a single purpose or role at any given interval.

Regarding the second account, it seems logical that Plato would not otherwise have various protagonist characters discuss the human body to the lengths he does—especially in its linkage to the ψυχή—if the σῶμα has no metaphysical or ontological necessity or importance. If the σῶμα has no significant value, why mention it at all? It seems counterproductive in that it ultimately is a moot point. Plato could either sidestep the topic or state that the human body is not worth discussing once and move forward with the discourse. He does not do such; instead, he does the opposite—repeatedly bringing the issue of the human body to the forefront in certain circumstances. Even though the topic of the σῶμα is secondary in comparison to other matters of concern within the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Timaeus*, the human body seems to play a pivotal role in how a person ought to comprehend the nature of the human ψυχή. Likewise, the soul aids to some extent in

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[3] *Phd*. 67d. I use the Stephanus numbers throughout the dissertation when citing the Platonic texts. That said, I shall use the corresponding line numbers from the 1995 edition of the Greek text of the *Cratylus* from *Platonis Opera: Vol. 1*. Line number citations for other referenced dialogues come from Burnet's older editions of the *Platonis Opera*.

[4] *Tim*. 34c6.

[5] *Phd*. 66c-67b.

[6] *Phd*. 62b; 81e; 82e; 114c; *Phdr*. 248c-e; 250c.

[7] *Tim*. 73d5-7; 73e1; 74a4-5; 81e1-5.

[8] *Gorg*. 492e-493a.

[9] *Tim*. 44e; 69c.

determining the proper ontology of the human body. As a result, the question emerges: what is the σῶμα for Plato?

While a clear separation between the human body and the soul appears within Plato's thought, ambiguities exist in his approach. Determining what the human body is precisely is not straightforward. Despite being a daunting task, doing so is imperative. It does not help that little scholarship exists concerning Plato's view of the human body compared to other areas of his philosophical thought. Though vital within the entire scope of the Platonic corpus, asking the question "What is the σῶμα for Plato?" is much too broad to tackle here. The question requires further refinement, narrowing its focus even more for this research endeavor. It is this finessed nuance to which I shall give my attention.

Notwithstanding, my interest lies in three specific caveats concerning the modified question: (1) Plato's σῶμα etymologies in the *Cratylus*, (2) the relationship between a given etymology and a proper definition, and (3) the philosophical significance of these precise etymologies. Each aspect entails more than what appears initially. As my discussion unfolds, other factors that need attention and require addressing will arise. I propose that a careful and thorough exegetical analysis of the σῶμα etymologies would reveal not only essential details for moving toward a proper understanding of Plato's ontology of the human body but would also prove that the *Cratylus* dialogue is a good entry point into this discussion itself. For such a reason, I shall argue that these etymologies are instrumental in establishing the foundation of Plato's overall ontological disposition of the σῶμα.

Achieving this task will be challenging but essential for Platonic studies. I foremost have an academic goal for this study—to add to the dearth of literature concerning Plato's stance on the purpose and ontology of the human body, including the σῶμα-σῆμα idiom that results from the *Cratylus* σῶμα etymologies. The sad reality is that very minimal scholarship exists concerning Plato's view of the human body and even less for his treatment of the σῶμα-σῆμα expression. For example, a handful of articles focus on Plato's sense of the σῶμα,

primarily focusing on its usage in the *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Timaeus*.[10] Two monographs focus on Plato's conception of the human body.[11] Then, four articles focus primarily either on the σῶμα-σῆμα expression or the σῶμα etymologies of the *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 excerpt.[12] Three book chapters on the σῶμα-σῆμα theory exist as well in the literature of Platonic scholarship.[13] There are several other works where the topic at hand does appear briefly.[14] Naturally, I must admit that additional resources may be available that I am unaware of that investigate the σῶμα etymologies of Plato's *Cratylus* in-depth.

Secondary issues naturally arise from my primary research question, but they lie outside my research scope, forcing me to ignore them here. Consequently, this project can only function as a prolegomenon to Plato's ontology of the human body and, perhaps, Plato's teleology of the σῶμα too.[15] A more comprehensive future research endeavor on Plato's ontology of the σῶμα will hopefully follow, in which I examine more of the Platonic corpus to see if the findings here hold. Regardless of whether this occurs, this treatise will add value to the tomes of Platonic scholarship. Hopefully, it will lead to further research and perhaps encourage a review of Plato's mind-body problem, psychology, and perspectives regarding the soul's immorality.

§1.2 Methodological Approach to the *Cratylus* Testimony

Specific underpinnings emerge as foundational in every research endeavor, whether stated or presuppositional. This dissertation is not an exception to that caveat. However, those

[10] Fierro, 2016: 27-50; Kurič 2005: 90-102; Parry, 2014; Wagoner, 2019: 74-99.

[11] Joubaud, 1991: Zoller, 2019.

[12] Bernabé, 1995: 204-37; Buarque, 2017, 104-18; Ferwerda, 1985: 266-79; Irigaray, n.d.

[13] Bernabé, 2011: 115-43; de Vogel, 1986: 233-48; Ferwerda, 1986: 111-24.

[14] Adams, 1908: 96-8; Alderink, 1981: 56-62; Baxter, 1992: 101-2; Boyancé, 1941: 160; Burkert, 1972: 126 n33; 248 n47; Casadio, 1987: 381-95, specifically 389-91; Casadio, 1991: 123-5; Dodds, 1957: 148-50; Guthrie, 1968: 311; Guthrie, 1975: 305; Guthrie, 1993: 156-8; Linforth, 1941: 147; Linforth, 1944: Lobeck, 1829: Moulinier, 1955: 24-32; Nilsson, 1935: 205-7; Rohde, 1925: 2.130 n2; Rathmann, 1933: 65, 82; Rehrenböck, 1975: 17-31; Tannery, 1901: 313-9; Thomas, 1938: 51-2; Timpanaro Cardini, 2010: 432-3; Valgiglio, 1966: 126-30; von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 1931: 2:199; Ziegler, 1942: 1341-1417.

[15] I need to credit Alana Argüello for pointing out this notion of the teleological aspect in Plato's thought in relation to my research focus.

elements may seem less noticeable compared to others. I desire to clarify these as best as possible to avoid confusion and frustration. The *Cratylus*, after all, is already notoriously difficult and contested. There is no need for me to add to that unnecessarily.

What I present here is principally intended for inaugural purposes only. There are two overarching issues to which I want to devote some attention from the onset. I am going to state each point up front with no explanation first. Then, I shall provide a brief commentary for two of them in the following paragraphs since I will focus on them in much greater detail in forthcoming chapters. Here are the three overarching methodological issues to consider: (1) my rendering of the Greek in the *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 passage and my take on what Socrates' σῶμα etymologies are as stated in the excerpt; and (2) the purpose of Plato's writing of the *Cratylus*.

§1.2.1 Snapshot of the *Cratylus* Testimony of the Σῶμα Etymologies

Turning our attention to the first issue, Bernabé believes that the most popular etymology that populates the *Cratylus* dialogue since antiquity is undoubtedly the Greek term for the human body, σῶμα.[16] Socrates responds to Hermogenes' request to know more about the term σῶμα by providing him with various etymologies as to what the human body is in the *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 excerpt:

> It seems to me that there is much to say. And if one distorted the name even a little, there could be even more to discuss. [400c] For some people claim that the body (σῶμα) is the tomb (σῆμα) of the soul as if the soul is buried in the present life. And because of this reason, the soul indicates by its body whatever the soul indicates; it is also for that reason adequately called sign (σῆμα). But to me, most certainly, those affiliated with Orpheus seem to posit this name (σῶμα) in that they suppose as if the soul is undergoing punishment for something, and they think that the soul has this [the body] as its enclosure—an image of a prison—in order that it may be secure; so this is, as its name implies, "the safe" (σῶμα) of the soul until the penalty [debt] is paid. And not even a single letter of the word needs to be altered.[17]

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[16] Bernabé, 1995: 204.

[17] Anyone who has studied a foreign language extensively knows the hermeneutical challenges and difficulties that emerge during the translation process surrounding the essential ambiguities, nuances, and richness of the original language. Hence, no translation is entirely perfect. Unless otherwise stated, all translations of any

The etymological definitions that Socrates puts forward for σῶμα here serve as the basis of what becomes known as the σῶμα-σῆμα wordplay.

Like much else in the *Cratylus*, scholars even disagree on the precise number of etymologies Plato has Socrates put forward for the above excerpt. That number can range from one to five depending on how an individual interprets the Greek text.[18] I argue that Socrates provides three σῶμα etymologies, with one having two additional nuances that further qualify his depiction of what the human body is. In his response, the language used is purposeful. He purposefully wants to entice vivid imagery and evoke specific memories for Hermogenes and Cratylus. He describes the σῶμα encapsulating the soul as a tomb. Socrates states that the human body functions as a sign (a signifier) of what the soul suggests. Then, he advocates for the σῶμα being an enclosure, giving the imagery that this enclosure resembles both a prison and a safe.

Even though I adhere to the view that the 400b11-c10 passage establishes three distinct σῶμα etymologies, I do not believe the text forbids someone from finding a degree of overlap between the different etymological explanations. This overlap could explain the disagreement regarding the exact number of σῶμα etymologies that Socrates provides. There appears to be an underlying nexus connecting them. More on this point and others introduced here will be forthcoming later. This discussion, however, has an unstated presupposition underpinning it, which I emphasize next.

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foreign language are mine.

Translating the Cratylus is a daunting task with its replete play on words and etymologies that sometimes make it hard to distinguish whether Socrates is serious or comical with them. That said, I often have consulted the translations of Bernabé (1995: 206), Dalimier (1998: 106-7), Fowler (1926: 63), Horan (2023), Jowett (1892: 343), Proclus, (2014: 76), Reeve (1998: 30-1), and Sachs (2011: 178) for orientation and verification of the Cratylus dialogue. Though there are sections where I disagree slightly with how the Greek should be rendered, I do not suggest that these scholars' translations should be dismissed as irrelevant in an individual's study of Plato's Cratylus.

[18] For more on this debate and the various positions, consult Bernabé, 1995: 204-10; Boyancé, 1941: 141-75; Buarque, 2017: 104-18; Dalimier, 1998: 228-9; Ferwerda, 1985: 266-79; Ferwerda, 1996: 111-24; Lodge, 1891: 167-8; Sachs, 2011: 178; Zhmud, 2012: 230

§1.2.2 Plato's Purpose for Writing the *Cratylus*

That underpinning centers around Plato's rationale for penning the *Cratylus*. In other words, what is Plato's purpose for writing the dialogue? Scholars cannot agree on this matter either. However, the scholarship leads someone to conclude that the *Cratylus* concerns itself with linguistics or the philosophy of language as its primary philosophical purpose.[19]

While the dialogue addresses these matters, I do not find it to be Plato's chief purpose for its writing. I propose, foremost, that the *Cratylus* reads as a philosophical conundrum, engaging the reader to contemplate a trifold relationship between specific caveats: (1) names (ὀνόματα), (2) essence (οὐσία) which a given name captures, and (3) Platonic philosophy in its most basic expression—inquiring about the eternal truths for oneself. Consequently, I see the unique dynamic between language and its relationship to epistemology as more central to the formal rationale behind Plato's writing of this dialogue.

Readers should, therefore, consider the dialogue's pinnacle theme, which focuses on the issue of what constitutes the correctness and incorrectness of names. Hermogenes is quite bewildered by Socrates' claim that names can be inaccurate (383a-385e). That said, the natural question is: what does it mean for a name to be incorrect? Its opposing question is also valid: what constitutes a name's correctness?

Reading the *Cratylus* can mislead us to get the impression that names (ὀνόματα) reflect the namegiver's interpretation of reality instead of mirror reality.[20] The namegiver is the one who assigns things their names, which divides the world inevitably. According to van den Berg, "This process of division is also a process of definition: we separate one group of things from the rest by identifying their characteristic quality that sets them apart from all other

[19] Dalimier, 1998: 14; van den Berg, 2008: 1. Dalimier aptly notes that "il y a le *Cratyle* des philosophes et *Cratyle* des philologues."

[20] By the expression ***mirror reality***, I mean the correctness of the given names corresponds to reality exactly as it is or closely to it in that meaning and truth are grounded in ***being***—the realm of Being. See Hestir, 2016: 209-42.

things and that thus defines them."[21] A fundamental and unstated presupposition exists here: an etymology should reveal something concerning its true definition. If such is the case, then that definition should, in turn, say something about a name's ontology. I take up this issue in Chapter 3.

Something at play within the *Cratylus* is much larger than Plato simply putting forward an ancient rendering of a philosophy of language. The *Cratylus* addresses language's relation to both reality and truth. Socrates declares that "a name is an instrument of instruction and discrimination in reality" (388b13). This proclamation is only one in a series of similar claims that weave throughout the dialogue. In some respects, someone could justifiably argue that the purpose of the *Cratylus* is the vindication of Plato's theory of Forms since Plato comes across as more of a metaphysician than a philosopher of language in his dialogues.

The *Cratylus* appears unique compared to the rest of the Platonic corpus. Is it entirely unlike the rest of the Platonic corpus? I say it is not, and I am not alone in this viewpoint. Martinez notes, "What makes the *Cratylus* similar to the other dialogues is its ability to induce the reader to consider a number of elements at once; namely, the interdependence of semantics and ontology, and the presence of metaphysics throughout the whole of language."[22]

§1.2.2.1 Playing the *Cratylus* Game

With rare exceptions, scholars predominantly chose to neglect Plato's *Cratylus* and ignore its philosophical gravity for countless generations. A revival in its interest erupted during the mid-twentieth century and continues now. I should not speculate why avoidance of this philosophical treatise occurred for so long because doing so would be ultimately futile, as I cannot prove the validity of those reasons with complete certainty. I am confident, though, that my inklings would align closely with what others have claimed in this renaissance of renewed interest in this dialectic dialogue, alluding to its perceived complexity and the

[21] van den Berg, 2008: xiv.
[22] Martinez, 1991: 3.

seemingly frivolous nature and treatment of the etymological activities (390e-427d). Plato's dialogue deserves proper attention regardless of the rationale of yesteryear's distaste for it. A fair manta would be—the *Cratylus*, ignored but unforsaken.

I can, however, claim two things about the *Cratylus* from my experience with the dialogue over the past several years. First, this dialogue is a distinctly unique text within Plato's corpus. Plato states his focus upfront, which is a vital interest among the thinkers of his era. Unlike his other dialogues where themes reappear elsewhere,[23] nearly everything in the *Cratylus* appears nowhere else beyond some concise and precise doctrinaire expressions concerning names being vocal indications or signals.[24] It is only within the pages of the *Cratylus* that we know how Plato discusses the correctness of names. Second, this dialogue is exceptionally challenging and frustrating to read and understand compared to the rest of the Platonic corpus. Surprisingly, I have increasingly come to appreciate Plato's *Cratylus* as I continue to read it and grapple with its meaning since beginning my research into Socrates' σῶμα etymologies.

As the dialectical discourse unfolds, it cries out for its reader to find its meaning and purpose, which lurks in all its twists and turns. It becomes addictive, like your favorite game to play as a child. Ironically, that is how we should see the *Cratylus*—a game to play, trying to conquer the riddles hidden within its pages. Plato's *Cratylus* is, after all, a puzzle of sorts—a philosophical labyrinth to solve.

Discovering Plato's intent for writing the dialogue is not straightforward. We must contemplate what its author desires to convey and means. Even though the arguments between the three interlocutors develop along structured lines, Plato shows us the dialogue's

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[23] Our knowledge of some of Plato's chief philosophical points would not be hindered or impaired if some of his dialogues were missing or never written. Take, for example, the *Symposium*. We could still glean Plato's thoughts about the nature of love (ἔρως) from the dialogue *Phaedrus*. Likewise, we could gather his theory of Forms from the *Phaedo*. The philosophical topics discussed in the *Meno* appear elsewhere in the corpus. It offers little insight into things we cannot find in another dialogue.

[24] *Leg.* 792a; *Soph.* 261e1-5; 262a3-6.

chief points rather than telling them to us.[25] Listening to the words themselves will not suffice; Plato requires more of us. We must seek what is happening behind the scenes—beyond the face value of the characters' expressions and phrases. Oddly, with the *Cratylus*, starting at the end with a portion of Socrates' conclusion seems to make perfect sense: "But surely no human being who has any sense would put oneself or one's soul at the mercy of names to provide for one's well-being" (440c3-5). The result of everything discussed within the confines of the dialogue is that names are not to be trusted fully, at least in the vein in which Hermogenes and Cratylus assume. Their line of thought is only one caveat to consider and work through in the realm of possibilities. This reality soon becomes apparent when Socrates joins the conversation.

With this notion in the forefront of our minds, we ought to consider something else that Socrates says shortly before stating this conclusion that makes choosing to ignore the issue of names altogether unviable. Socrates confidently declares, "We must play the game and investigate these questions vigorously" (421d7-8). In other words, no excuses are allowed to dismiss the questions once they begin; we must address them until the other party gives up (421d8-e4). Perhaps, more importantly, give credence to Socrates' first admiration: ***we have no choice but to play the game***.

Two questions should immediately arise for the reader of the *Cratylus* after reading Socrates' declarations. First, what is the game that Socrates refers to? Second, what are these so-called questions that we must probe thoroughly? To know the answer to these questions, one must recall the beginning of the dialogue. After all, that is where Socrates points us back to where he gets invited to join the debate in which Hermogenes and Cratylus are engaged over the correctness of names.

Such is only part of understanding the gravity of the game. What Aristotle implies in two

[25] For a discussion on Plato's use of dialogue, see Moors, 1978: 77-93.

of his works alludes to another vital nuance of playing the game we need to know.[26] Guthrie summarizes Aristotle's overarching, thematic sentiment well when he pens: "For those who wish to find answers, it is a real step forward even to ask the right questions."[27] In other words, asking the right questions is fundamental to getting accurate results. Even if you are confident of the right questions, knowing which one to ask at the proper interval is a quandary in playing the game. Prematurely asking a question could cause even further dilemmas to emerge along the way or delays in solving the ruse. You still may be capable of solving the philosophical labyrinth of Plato's ***Cratylus***.

Who wants to play a game? Oh my, wait, how silly of me to ask that. You do not have a choice in the matter, according to Socrates (421d7-8). We all must play. So, let us participate in playing this game. Remember, though, it is not any game you are joining but the ***Cratylus*** game: what is in a name (ὄνομα)?[28]

§1.2.2.2 Grasping the Context of the *Cratylus*

In the opening section of the dialogue (383a-384e), Hermogenes is in a feud with Cratylus over the nature of names and invites Socrates to join the conversation. Cratylus maintains that everything has a name that naturally suits it, whereas Hermogenes doubts that such is the case. He argues that things are given correct names only upon agreement with convention. As Socrates begins questioning Hermogenes, he quickly learns that Hermogenes disagrees with the sophists Protagoras and Euthydemus. The former holds the position that things are as they seem to each individual, while the latter believes all attributes belong to all

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[26] Aristotle, *Metaph*. 1.1; *Top*. 8.4.

[27] Guthrie, 1993: 1. I must thank Anthony Preus for confirming my suspension to the precise reference of Guthrie's quotation for Aristotle.

[28] Despite my usage of name(s) throughout the dissertation, as that is Plato's language in the *Cratylus*, we should think of the Greek (ὄνομα; ὀνόματα) as corresponding to the equivalent English concept behind the term ***word(s)***—even though Plato could have easily used the Greek term for word (ῥῆμα) instead. Richard Robinson draws attention to this fact well: "In English names are primarily proper names like 'Socrates', and to call 'man' a general name is a little peculiar, though it is done and the dictionary recognizes it; but in Greek 'man' is every bit as good an ὄνομα as 'Socrates'" (1955: 221-2). Cf. Beekes, 2010: 2:1084-5, s.v. "ὄνομα"; LSJ, 1996: 1232, s.v. "ὄνομα."

things equally. Socrates gets Hermogenes to agree with him on one point soon after his joining the dispute: there must be some natural stability regarding the things spoken about (385a-386e).

The discourse between Socrates and Hermogenes is far from over. Socrates continues by comparing speaking with other actions that must be artfully performed if they are intended to accomplish any purpose. Once again, Hermogenes concedes that given names must be crafted in a particular manner to build the forms of things that resemble the material of letters and syllables (386e-390e).

Socrates does not stop there; he tests this concession further with Hermogenes. Socrates turns to Homer to examine the potential correctness of specific names. Homer seems a wise choice since he provides many instances of proper names given differently by the gods and either humans or different groups of humans in his poetry. After all, the poet's evidence regarding the names' origins or the character of those named appears as correct. Socrates realizes, and makes sure Hermogenes does as well, that Homer leaves room for more possible variations in the letters and syllables that his valid names convey (391a-396d).

In the subsequent section (396d-400d), Hermogenes remarks how Socrates' fluency and assurance seem a result of divine inspiration. Socrates agrees and blames Euthyphro for it since he spent the morning with him. He continues to tell Hermogenes not to trust this inspiration, however, but that they should see what else it may bring about in their dialogue, which shifts from proper names of humans to the names of such beings as gods, demiurges, heroes, and humans. Hermogenes speaks up and asks Socrates to elaborate on the etymologies for the names "soul" and "body," and the philosopher obliges.

Socrates continues explaining the gods' various names at Hermogenes' request. He gives a preliminary disclaimer to the forthcoming discussion: the only thing these names make evident is an agreement in human opinion on the matter. Hermogenes insists that Socrates

tell him more about the god Hermes out of personal curiosity. After all, his name originates from Hermes. Socrates happily obliges. He tells Hermogenes that the names of Hermes and his son Pan unveil something about the nature of speech itself (400d-408d).

Hermogenes does not wish to stop as he suggests there is no blasphemy in them discussing other entities that people sometimes regard as deities, such as the sun, moon, air, or earth. Naturally, Socrates humors him. He attributes a foreign origin to some of these named things (408d-410e). After this banter, Hermogenes asks about a few things more abstract, the names of the virtues of intellect and character. Socrates immediately claims that such things involve references to motion and flux. Before Hermogenes realizes it, Socrates has intertwined into the explanation words related to male, female, and growth aimlessly. This action causes Hermogenes to note how many others lack the smoothness Socrates exhibits when talking. Socrates protests: he states that the passage of time has distorted and buried many names. He urges Hermogenes to be wary of anything too farfetched (411a-415a).

Section 415a-419b highlights Socrates' zenith moment. He finally reaches the pinnacle of the matters he has been claiming to Hermogenes that there is a consistent principle underlying the correctness and incorrectness of names. He notes an apparent exception that causes a change in spelling over time. Socrates' claim does not discourage Hermogenes. He requests Socrates to continue explaining such names related to pleasure, pain, desire, and even opinion. Hermogenes volunteers to contribute more to the dialogue by giving explanations to the names for what is necessary or voluntary (419b-420e). Then, Hermogenes wants to know more about the names surrounding things such as greatest, beauty, truthfulness and falsehood, being, and even names themselves. Once again, Socrates gratifies his curiosity (421a-c).

Now, Socrates turns the table on Hermogenes and questions him about how original names could carry meaning. Returning to a point he made previously, Socrates restates that it seems proper to require that auditory sounds of separate letters and syllables somehow reflect how

things are. Ironically, Socrates struggles to find good examples to support his claim. We find Socrates laughing at himself. He concludes that understanding the derivative names is pointless if they cannot comprehend the original (421c-427d).

In the next portion (427d-432d), Cratylus finally joins the discourse. He adamantly claims every name correctly reveals some nature of the named thing. Socrates argues that his friend, Cratylus, treats names as if they were mere numbers, which cease to be what they initially are when something is added to or subtracted from them. Socrates further notes a basic underpinning assumption undergirding Cratylus' position—the assumed images can be perfect representations or matches for their originals.

Cratylus does not back down. He stands his ground by affirming that even if names could be incorrect, they teach the nature of things correctly. If you want proof, Socrates, here it is. The proof lies in the fact that they are all in harmony with Heraclitus' teaching that everything is in flux. Socrates naturally rebuts Cratylus' claim by providing several names that appear to indicate the exact opposite. Cratylus admits a few exceptions to the rule exist, but he stands firm that most names adhere to his position. The original dispute finally centers on whether we can learn anything about the nature of things that do not depend directly on the correctness of an object's name. Socrates claims that the testimony of names as to whether all things are in flux is contradictory and requires further examination. Cratylus considers the matter closed since he claims to have already completed sufficiently such an examination (432d-440e).

Now that I have completed the overall summary of Plato's *Cratylus*, it is time to focus on the more comprehensive, immediate context surrounding the excerpt in which I am doing the exegetical analysis. Socrates informs Hermogenes before his account of the philology of σῶμα-σῆμα idiom that it is much harder to understand why humans are called such than heroes, which are demigods (398d1-e5). Then, shortly after, Socrates responds to Hermogenes' request to address the names of the soul and the body, which is where the

discussion below picks up.

> Socrates: The name ***man*** [ἄνθρωπος, human being] signifies that the other animals do not investigate or reflect [as in reason] about anything they see, nor do they look up at anything closely. But a human being no sooner sees something—that is to say, ὄπωπε—then he observes what he sees closely and contemplates upon it. Thus, of all of the animals, human-animal [ἄνθρωπος] alone is justly named ***anthrōpos***—he observes what he has seen [ἀναθρῶν ἃ ὄπωπε].
>
> Hermogenes: Of course. May I tell you what I would like to have explained next?
>
> Socrates: Certainly.
>
> Hermogenes: It seems to me to be the natural next word following those you have discussed. We speak of the ***soul*** [ψυχὴν] and ***body*** [σῶμα] of a human being.
>
> Socrates: Yes, of course.
>
> Hermogenes: Then, let us try to analyze these names as we did the previous words.
>
> Socrates: Are you saying that we ought to consider ***soul*** [ψυχή] and see why that name correctly names it, and likewise do the same with the ***body*** [σῶμα]?
>
> Hermogenes: Yes.
>
> Socrates: Speaking off the top of my head, I think that those who gave the soul its name had something like this in mind. They abstracted that when the soul is present in the body, it causes the body to be alive, giving it [the body] the power to breathe and reviving it [ἀναψῦχον], and when this revitalization fails, the body dies and comes to an end. For this reason, I think they called it ***soul*** [ψυχὴν]. But please hold on for a moment, if you do not mind. I can imagine that Euthyphro and his followers may despise this attempt and deem it crude. Now, I can ponder something they will find more accurate. Let me know your thoughts.
>
> Hermogenes: I am listening.
>
> Socrates: When you consider the whole nature of the body, what—besides the soul—do you think sustains and supports it so that it lives and moves?
>
> Hermogenes: No, there is nothing else.
>
> Socrates: Well, then, do you not believe the doctrine Anaxagoras that it is the mind or soul that orders and sustains the nature of everything else?
>
> Hermogenes: I do.
>
> Socrates: So then, an admirable practice to call this power that supports and sustains [ὀχεῖ καὶ ἔχει] all of nature [φύσιν], ***nature-sustainer*** [φυσέχην]. And this [name] may, therefore, be refined further and pronounced ψυχή.
>
> Hermogenes: Absolutely, and I think that this explanation is more scientific than the other.

> Socrates: Yes, it is. Nevertheless, it sounds absurd when calling it by its proper name.
>
> Hermogenes: Now, what are we going to say concerning the next word?
>
> Socrates: Do you mean *body* [σῶμα]?
>
> Hermogenes: Yes.
>
> Socrates: It seems to me that there is much to say. And if one distorted the name even a little, there could be even more to discuss. Thus, some people claim that the body (σῶμα) is the tomb (σῆμα) of the soul as if the soul is buried in the present life. And because of this reason, the soul indicates by its body whatever the soul indicates; it is also for that reason adequately called sign (σῆμα). But to me, most certainly, those affiliated with Orpheus seem to sign this name (σῶμα) in that they suppose as if the soul is undergoing punishment for something, and they think that the soul has this [the body] as its enclosure—an image of a prison—in order that it may be secure; so this is, as its name implies, the safe (σῶμα) of the soul until the penalty [debt] is paid. And not even a single letter of the word needs to be altered (*Crat*. 399c1-400c10).

The extended, preceding context around the discourse of Socrates' σῶμα etymologies discloses potentially two additional terms that could impact our understanding of them. The first word is ἄνθρωπος, whereas the second is ψυχή.

Because Socrates presents ἄνθρωπος (human being) and ψυχή (soul) as means of introduction to his σῶμα etymologies, I wish to highlight a handful of observations here concerning these two etymologies. The question emerges whether they could be instrumental in establishing Plato's thoughts on the σῶμα since they introduce the topic. We should assume nothing about their proximity, though. There might be some contribution, while the opposite may be the case.

First, ἄνθρωπος expresses what it means to be a human being. The basic concept behind the expression is that of a *generic* member of the species in contrast to the animals or even the gods and demiurges. Someone can further elaborate on the precise meaning of the term based on what Hermogenes says at 399d1-3: "We speak of the soul and body of a human being."[29] We need to note that Hermogenes' claim is a presupposition of the account, not a definitional

[29] Cf. *Phd*. 79b; 102b-107b (emphasis at 105c9-12 and 106e); *Phdr*. 246c5-6; *Rep*. I 352d-354a; *Tim*. 47e; 69a-92c.

one.

Second, Socrates' ἄνθρωπος etymology establishes the infrastructure for a metaphysical distinction between orders of reality, revealing that the ψυχή and σῶμα are separate substances or entities. This metaphysical dichotomy infrastructure is more complex than merely the equation ψυχή + σῶμα = ἄνθρωπος. For example, what constitutes the real Socrates? Another way to ask this question follows: is Socrates identical to Socrates' soul, or is Socrates identical to Socrates' body? The *Cratylus* does not answer such issues, but it is addressed in the *Apology* and *Phaedo*. However, this differentiation becomes more evident in proceeding two etymologies. It is as if they are a footnote to ἄνθρωπος.

Third, Socrates provides Hermogenes with two etymologies for the term ψυχή. The first account says the ψυχή derives its name because of two vital functions that it performs. Therefore, "it causes the body to be alive, giving it [the body] the power to breathe and reviving it [ἀναψῦχον]" (399d10-e1), "and when this revitalization fails, the body dies and comes to an end" (399e1-3).

Socrates' first account of the meaning of ψυχή supports the conventional understanding of the Greeks.[30] Since the writings of Homer, Greek thinkers have held the position that the presence of the ψυχή distinguishes a living human body (δέμας) from a corpse (σῶμα).[31] According to Nussbaum, "Without ψυχή, a man cannot live; it is the single factor the presence or absence of which differentiates the living man from the corpse."[32] In other words, the soul's presence is a necessary condition for human life, but it is not a sufficient condition for it.

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[30] Peters, 1967: 166-76.

[31] For the notion of σῶμα referencing a corpse rather than a living human body (δέμας), consult Adkins, 1970: 21; Lehrs, 1882: 86-7, 160; LSJ, 1996: 1749, s.v. "σῶμα, ατος, τό"; Renehan, 1979: 269-82; Snell, 1982: 5-8.

[32] Nussbaum, 1972a: 1.

Despite there being some etymological testimony that σῶμα refers to a corpse, two points, nevertheless, require mention. First, an individual can rightfully agree that such either implies that the σῶμα is alive at some point in time or leaves the question of animation as indeterminate. Secondly, suppose σῶμα originally refers only to a corpse or dead body.[33] In that case, it is, at best, strenuous to explain the semantic development of how σῶμα morphs to reference a living body. That said, it would be inappropriate and unfair to assume that σῶμα never means corpse or references a living body before Plato. Furthermore, the lack of the etymological roots for σῶμα does not prevent an individual from discovering a proper meaning of the term during the ancient Greek world.[34]

An individual might infer that the term ψυχή means life or life-force.[35] However, the Presocratics and those before them lack a central core equivalent—a catholic term—for the notion of the soul. They often would interchange a variety of other words to replace the term ψυχή. For instance, these writers and thinkers would alter their phrasing by using the following expressions: θυμός (seed, spirit, the principle of life, feeling, thought, or passion);[36]

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[33] Beekes, 2010: 2:1439-40, s.v. "σῶμα"; CGL, 2021: 2:1352-3, s.v. "σῶμα"; Cunliffe, 1924: 372, s.v. "σῶμα"; Groves, 1836: 550, s.v. "σῶμα"; LSJ, 1996: 1749, s.v. "σῶμα"; Montanari, 2015: 2073, s.v. "σῶμα."

[34] Hesiod, *Megala Ergo*, 539-40; Homer, *Il*. 3.23; *Od*. 12.66-8. Cf. Renehan, 1979: 271-3.

Consider the two examples from Homer. In the first incident from the *Iliad*, σῶμα appears in a simile where μέγα σῶμα corresponds to Paris (*Il*. 3.21-9). It seems clear that Paris is alive here and remains so as the story unfolds. Second, scrutiny arises in the *Odyssey*, where Homer tells of the dangerous sailing past the Wandering Rocks (*Od*. 12.66-8). It is reasonable for a reader to believe that all crew members did not immediately die in the shipwreck. The language allows this natural conclusion since the waves toss the survivors around as they will. In this context, σώματα may refer to those ***facing death*** instead of those already dead. Similar language occurs in Book V when Odysseus is on the sea-tossed raft and does not die (5.327-30). While Homer may prefer using the Greek word δέμας over σῶμα, we ought not to infer that the latter only deals with non-living human bodies.

Hesiod, who is a near contemporary of Homer, customarily uses σῶμα for a living human body: "Wrap a garment around yourself so that your hair may stay still and not stand on end and bristle all over your body [σῶμα]" (*Megala Erga*, 539-40). It is illogical to expect a dead person to wrap a garment around oneself to control one's hair.

[35] Beekes, 2010: 2:1671-2; CGL, 2021: 2:1521; Cunliffe, 1924: 424; Dihle, 1964: 9:608-17; Groves, 1836: 611; Harder, 1986b: 3:376-9; LSJ, 1996: 2008, s.v. "ψῦχόω, (ψυχή)"; Montanari, 2015: 2409-10.

[36] Beekes, 2010: 1:564; Büchsel, 1964: 3:167-8; CGL, 2021: 1:695; Cunliffe, 1924: 192-3; LSJ, 1996: 810; Montanari, 2015:954-5.

νοῦς (sense, discretion, or mind);[37] φρήν and its plural form φρένες (diaphragm or midriff—the seat of intellectual or spiritual activity);[38] and καρδία with its variants and synonyms κραδίη, κήρ, and ἦτορ (all of which mean heart, more specifically the seat of emotions)[39] to replace the Greek term ψυχή.[40]

Socrates discards the first etymology and proposes an alternative explanation for the term ψυχή that, he claims, better encapsulates its essence. This second account refines the etymology further to be more precise and consistent with a doctrine Anaxagoras taught, which we should understand as the ***nature-sustainer*** (400b2). Hermogenes even remarks that he finds the latter alternative "more scientific (τεχνικώτερον) than the other" (400b4-5). This comment is both Socratically comic and ironic as it seems to contain much truth.

While the second account might be preferred, could someone potentially argue that it affirms the basic tenets of the former explanation and that one simply misunderstands and miscommunicates what occurs? The individual would be mistaken since the identification of the soul as the mind seems to be a genuine addition to his etymology. Anaxagoras advanced three metaphysical principles that had their roots grounded in one fundamental concept: the νοῦς was the motive cause of the cosmos.[41] These metaphysical principles are: (1) everything-

[37] Beekes, 2010: 2:1023, s.v. "νόος"; Behm, 1964b: 4:951-8; CGL, 2021: 2:971, s.v. "νόος"; Cunliffe, 1924: 281, s.v. "νόος"; Groves, 1836: 408, s.v. "Νόος, νοῦς, νόου, and Νοῦς"; Harder, 1986a: 3:122-4; LSJ, 1996: 1183; Montanari, 2015: 1404, s.v. "νόος."

[38] Beekes, 2010: 2:1590-1; Bertram, 1964: 9:220-4; CGL, 2021: 2:1478; Cunliffe, 1924: 411-2; Groves, 1836: 594; LSJ, 1996: 803; Montanari, 2015: 2306.

[39] Beekes, 2010: 1:644; Behm, 1964a: 3:608-9; CGL, 2021: 2:744; Groves, 1836: 314; LSJ, 1996: 780; 877; 948; Montanari, 2015: 1035; Sorg, 1986: 180-1.

[40] These terms often describe actions that either the entire person or at least a more substantial portion of an individual than one may think as they do in the later philosophical and theological advancements. The earliest users of these terms are less interested in theorizing about the soul than those who followed them (Long, 2015: 21). Consequently, one does not find an accurate notion of the concept carrying a psychological or intellectual understanding. It is only later in antiquity that ψυχή morphs into its modern-day conceptions. (Consult Renehan, 1980: 105-38 for the Greek origins of the concepts of incorporeality and immateriality).

[41] Freeman, 1977: 84-5 (frs. DK 59B12; DK 59B13).

in-everything,[42] (2) no smallest or largest,[43] and (3) no becoming or passing away.[44] Since everything except for the νοῦς partakes in a ***portion*** of everything,[45] not only is there no single ἀρχή-χρῆμα (beginning or origin source—such as water, air, fire, or being), but also there is no pure ἀρχή-χρῆμα either.

> Things were together, infinite in number and smallness. For the Small also was infinite. And since all were together, nothing was distinguishable because of its smallness. For Air and Aether dominated all things, both of them being infinite. These are the most important (*Elements*) in the total mixture, both in number and size.[46]

Hence, what someone discerns as birth and death are the mixing and separating of ingredients rather than something becoming or passing out of existence.

Fourth, the σῶμα appears subsidiary to that of the ψυχή for Plato throughout his corpus. Socrates' treatment of ἄνθρωπος makes it clear that the human-animal involves the composition of both a body and soul. It is for such reason that Plato's ontology of the human body may depend to some degree on his depiction of the ψυχή. At a precursory reading, someone might think it would not. Socrates' wording, however, does furnish a little insight, especially when taken together with his etymological explanations for ἄνθρωπος and σῶμα. Plato's Socrates may reveal much more than that with his provided philology, and additional questions may arise.

The nature of the ψυχή[47] unveils that it has certain entities—such as inherent potentiality of

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[42] Freeman, 1977: 83-4 (frs. DK 59B1, in part; DK 59B8; DK 59B10; DK 59B11, in part).

[43] Freeman, 1977: 83-4 (frs. DK 59B3; DK 59B6).

[44] Freeman, 1977: 85 (fr. DK 59B17).

[45] Freeman, 1977: 84 (fr. DK 59B12).

[46] Freeman, 1977: 83 (fr. DK 59B1).

[47] While I raise the question of whether the ψυχή aids in determining the body for Plato, this dissertation will not allow an extensive discourse on Plato's conception of the soul and its contrast to early Greek teachings on the subject. Many articles, books, dissertations, and theses address that topic well. Here is a minute sampling of the literature available on that issue: Apolloni, 1996: 5-32; Archer-Hind, 1881: 120-31; Bailey, 2011; Beck, 1999; Bett, 1986: 1-26; Bett, 1999: 425-49; Blankenship, 1971; Blyth, 1997: 185-217; Boeri, 2018: 153-76; Bostock, 1999: 404-24; Bostock, 2001: 241-62; Boys-Stones, 2004: 1-23; Brown, 1986: 3.686-9; Brown, 1997: 211-38; Brown, 2012: 53-73; Burkert, 1916: 235-59; Carpenter, 2010: 281-303; Claus, 1981; Coombs, 2017; Demos, 1939: 78-98; Demos, 1968: 133-45; Dodds, 1978: 206-29; Drake, 1950; Elton, 1997: 313-6; Frede, D., 1978: 27-41; French, 1964; Furley, 1956: 1-18; Gerson, 2014: 37-59;

independent existence and full functionality—apart from the human body. By abstraction of what the ψυχή is, we may learn something regarding what the σῶμα is for Plato. I suggest that we can draw out at least five additional conclusions[48] from this relatively modest etymology for ψυχή beyond that the soul brings life to the human body (σῶμα).[49] In other words, the soul functions as the animator of the human body. First, as the giver and sustainer of life, the ψυχή must be incapable of admitting death within living human beings. Second, nothing in Socrates' description given to Hermogenes suggests that the ψυχή is anything other than a singular, non-material quintessence. Third, as such, the ψυχή is simple.[50] Fourth, the ψυχή, therefore, must also be both indecomposable and indestructible if it is simplistic in its nature. Lastly, the ψυχή must be seen as immortal because of it being indecomposable and indestructible.

Therefore, the following seven compulsory inferences concerning what the ψυχή reveals about the σῶμα can be established. First, the human body cannot give or sustain life by its own nature; something from outside itself must do so. A related point or question is whether the σῶμα is responsible for its own character or whether it derives such from the soul. This issue is the second inference and could be the most challenging to find an adequate answer.

Giannakopoulou, 2002; Goetz and Taliaferro, 2011: 6-19; Guthrie, 1978: 230-43; Hoermann, 1960; Huffman, 2009: 21-43; Jaeger, 1947: 77-89; Jaeger, 1959: 135-47; Johansen, 2000: 87-111; Karasmanis, 2006: 1-6; Ladikos, 2008: 93-109; Lisi, 2007: 105-18; Lorenz, 2008: 245-66; Mason, 2010: 99-117; 278-93; Miller, 2014; Miller Jr., 2006; Moore, 1931: 15-33; Moore, 2006; Muncy, 1992; Olshewsky, 1976: 391-404; Patterson, 2018: 205-09; Reynolds, 2004; Robinson, 1990: 103-10; Robinson, 1995; Robinson, 2012: 247-9; Rohde, 1925; Schofield, 1991: 13-34; Sedley, 2009: 145-61; Sedley, 2018: 210-20; Shields, 2001: 137-56; Shields, 2014: 15-38; Silverman, 2003: 130-144; Simson, 1889; Stocks, 1915: 207-21; Stone, 2014; Taylor, 2001: 51-67; Topping, 2007; Wagner, 2001: 69-88; Woods, 1987: 23-47; Yeager, 1981; Young, 2007.

[48] These inductions exclude any account concerning the soul that Socrates may imply about it when he deals directly with the proper meaning of the σῶμα.

[49] This conclusion may raise whether the soul must exist before its embodiment in the human body and its immortality. Nothing exists within Socrates' etymological explanation to indicate a definitive response either way per the *Cratylus* text.

[50] This ultimate oneness of the ψυχή, for Plato, appears to be more axiomatic (*Rep*. X 611b-612a) than composite or unitary (*Phd*. 78b-80b). Considering the affinity argument from *Phaedo* 78b-84b and all of the ascent stories in the Platonic corpus, one could advocate that the collective whole involves moments from multiplicity to unity and wholeness. Think also of the unity of the virtues as an ideal. To be sure, this notion is an ethical ideal. However, Plato's view is that the ethical ideal is possible ***only*** because of the metaphysical simplicity and unity of the ψυχή.

Third, something other than the soul causes the body's demise, resulting in death. Fourth, the σῶμα must be a material substance as there is no need for a non-material quintessence to indwell in a like entity. Fifth, unlike the soul, the σῶμα is complex. Sixth, if the ψυχή is immortal, but the human body is not, what does that imply for the nature of the human σῶμα? Lastly, the human body is both decomposable and destructible, as it can experience death.

Finally, the ψυχή is qualitatively distinct in all aspects from that of the human body. Discounting the soul's interrelationship with the σῶμα because of its distinctive uniqueness seems inappropriate to seeking Plato's ontology of the human body, particularly when considering that the ψυχή serves as the ***nature-sustainer*** that carries the essential property of the σῶμα. That said, this ontology cannot be solely built upon what the ψυχή attributes. It must be grounded in Socrates' σῶμα etymologies.

§1.3 Proceeding Ahead

My primary concern in my dissertation centers around a single issue of interest: what does the *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 testimony reveal about Plato's ontological views concerning the human body? The crux of the dissertation lies within the second and third chapters, with the opening and closing chapters functioning as their bookends. Behind my pinnacle question lies two others since they encompass fundamental dyadic components. These give rise to more questions, however—just like so much else within Plato's *Cratylus*. My goal for each of these two middle chapters is to approach them uniquely as if they were to stand on their own as individual essays. Consequently, the following two chapters address a single, overarching question of focus to determine Plato's ontology of the human body from the *Cratylus* testimony.

In the second chapter, I address the question: what is Socrates' preferred etymology of the σῶμα in the *Cratylus*? This issue is only half of the crux of this dissertation. Here, I will scrutinize the devil in the details within the 400b11-c10 excerpt. In other words, I do a deep

dive into an exegetical analysis of Socrates' σῶμα etymologies themselves. Such a task is challenging enough, but more involves this matter than someone may initially anticipate. I must remember that I cannot divorce Socrates' discussion of the human body from the overshadowing philosophical discord of the *Cratylus* itself—the nature of names or words and their connection to absolutes and reality. Likewise, I wonder if Plato's philosophical predecessors may have influenced what he has Socrates' character put forth in the σῶμα etymologies at 400b11-c10 excerpt since Socrates appears to weave elements of the Orphic and Pythagorean traditions into his vernacular definitions of what the human body is. However, some aspects of those traditions do not originate within themselves; they adopt them from mythical tales, which the ancient Greeks deem part of their history. I present a case for what I see as the nexus that interconnects Socrates' σῶμα etymologies as illustrated in the *Cratylus* toward the end of the exegetical analysis.

Whereas in the third chapter, I focus on the second of the fundamental components involved in my primary research interest: what makes this etymology a sufficient guide to the being of the σῶμα? Answering this question requires dealing with others, such as whether an etymology yields a definition. After all, the namegiver makes words suitable for things, so the given name should be seen as an instrument for communicating about things and representing their Forms. If only the issue were that straightforward. I must handle the difficulty of transitioning from a so-called etymological definition of a named thing to that named thing's ontology. If the etymology is correct, it should reveal something about the named thing's ontology. Here is where Plato's theory of Forms enters the equation. It is impossible to get to this latter stage without tackling the various caveats covered in the first half, especially the exegetical analysis of the etymologies.

I wrap things up in the closing chapter. While my arguments may accurately portray Plato's perspective on what the human body is within the *Cratylus* itself based on its internal testimony, they may not hold sufficiently to the rest of the Platonic corpus. Further inquiry would be required to discover their applicability elsewhere.

§1.4 Let There Be No Confusion

The question as to the possibility of deriving an understanding of reality from names (ὀνόματα) not only permits but encourages such an inquiry as I seek within Plato's *Cratylus*. If the dialogue is more metaphysical at its core than people wish to admit, then Smith would appear to be accurate in her assessment that if scholars take Socrates' claim seriously that names are tools, then "tools in general can only function successfully if they exhibit the relevant structural, compositional and (to some extent) material properties. Since Socrates claims that names are a class of tools and not merely like tools in some respects, as many have supposed, then what holds for tools in general must also hold for names."[51]

It is important to know that since Plato writes question-centered dialogues, the account that I give will, strictly speaking, be that of the figure of Socrates as he appears in the *Cratylus*. For this reason, I will formulate my exegesis regarding what Socrates thinks—not the historical figure but the outspoken protagonist character. That said, I should highlight a point that Reeve makes concerning Plato's character Socrates compared to the historical prototype Socrates. "The historical Socrates was exclusively interested in ethics; the Socrates of the *Cratylus* is interested in metaphysics, epistemology, and the philosophy of language."[52]

Within Plato's dialectic *Cratylus*, we find his character Socrates separating the Forms from the sensible, particular substances (439b-440e) and drawing upon the theory itself as if it is something he is pretty familiar with (386d-391a). This characteristic is unique compared to Aristotle's testimony.[53] While several difficulties arise in determining the relationship between the author and the dramatic character, my project focuses on the conception of the human body in the *Cratylus*—not the hermeneutical relationship between Plato and the protagonist character of Socrates in the dialogue.[54]

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[51] Smith, 2014: 75.

[52] Reeve, 1998: xii.

[53] Aristotle, *Metaph*. 13.1086b2-5.

[54] For more on this issue, consult Allen, 2010; Annas, 1981: 9; Arieti, 1991: 4; Asmis, 2007: 338-64; Benson, 1992: 4-6; Cherniss, 1935; Cherniss, 1944; Cherniss, 1962; Cohn, 2001: 489-92; Fine, 2007: 200-26; Frede,

It is logical to conclude that Plato wants to say something as an author, which is an example of why he presents various abstract ideas in literary form. What Cooper states in his introductory notes rings so true:

> Although everything any speaker says is Plato's creation, he also stands before it all as the reader does: he puts before us, the readers, and before himself as well, ideas, arguments, theories, claims, etc. for all of us to examine carefully, reflect on, follow out the implications of—in sum, to use as a springboard for our own further philosophical thought.[55]

To think that Plato has nothing to say is a troubling thought since Western philosophy builds upon his philosophy.[56] To apply this notion to my dissertation is to say Socrates' σῶμα treatments convey something about Plato's ontological views concerning the human body.

D., 2007: 425-63; Frede, 1992: 201-19; Frede, M., 2007: 397-424; Friedländer, 1969a: 110, 126-36; Griswold, 1988; Kahn, 1981: 305-20; Klagge and Smith, 1992; Kraut, 2007: 312-37; Kraut, 2008; Kraut, 2022; Morgan, 2007: 227-47; Plato, *Second Letter* 314c; Plato, *Seventh Letter* 341c; Press, 2000: 27-38; Press, 2010: 147-8; Rutherford, 1995; Saunders, 2007: 464-92; Strauss, 1978: 59; Tarrant, 2000: 67-80; Vlastos, 1991: 45-80; West, 2000: 99-111; White, 2007: 277-310

[55] Cooper, 1997: xxii.

[56] More believes that Plato's philosophy is not only vital to the civilization of the Western world, but it serves as "the inspiration of innumerable poets and prophets who have called upon men to rise above ephemeral interests to the contemplation of all time and all being" (1917: 270). Then, Whitehead claims "the safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato" (1985: 39). Granted, Whitehead's *footnotes* metaphor might make some scholars unsettled, but they readily admit Plato's primal influence in the development of Western philosophy, nonetheless. Emerson affirms, "Plato is philosophy, and philosophy, Plato" (1850: 44).

Chapter 2
Scrutinizing the Devil in the Details

§2.1 Breakdown of the 400b11-c10 Excerpt

Below is the relevant passage in the Greek with my translation immediately below it:

> Πολλαχῇ μοι δοκεῖ τοῦτό γε· ἂν μὲν καὶ σμικρόν [400c] τις παρακλίνῃ, καὶ πάνυ. καὶ γὰρ σῆμά τινές φασιν αὐτὸ εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς, ὡς τεθαμμένης ἐν τῷ νῦν παρόντι· καὶ διότι αὖ τούτῳ σημαίνει ἃ ἂν σημαίνῃ ἡ ψυχή, καὶ ταύτῃ "σῆμα" ὀρθῶς καλεῖσθαι. δοκοῦσι μέντοι μοι μάλιστα θέσθαι οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα, ὡς δίκην διδούσης τῆς ψυχῆς ὧν δὴ ἕνεκα δίδωσιν, τοῦτον δὲ περίβολον ἔχειν, ἵνα σῴζηται, δεσμωτηρίου εἰκόνα· εἶναι οὖν τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦτο, ὥσπερ αὐτὸ ὀνομάζεται, ἕως ἂν ἐκτείσῃ τὰ ὀφειλόμενα, [τὸ] "σῶμα," καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖν παράγειν οὐδ' ἓν γράμμα.
>
> It seems to me that there is much to say. And if one distorted the name even a little, there could be even more to discuss. [400c] For some people claim that the body (σῶμα) is the tomb (σῆμα) of the soul as if the soul is buried in the present life. And because of this reason, the soul indicates by its body whatever the soul indicates; it is also for that reason adequately called sign (σῆμα). But to me, most certainly, those affiliated with Orpheus seem to posit this name (σῶμα) in that they suppose as if the soul is undergoing punishment for something, and they think that the soul has this [the body] as its enclosure—an image of a prison—in order that it may be secure; so this is, as its name implies, "the safe" (σῶμα) of the soul until the penalty [debt] is paid. And not even a single letter of the word needs to be altered.

The Greek text for the *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 excerpt has five natural divisions based on its thought structure. If someone were to make the divisions based on the grammatical punctuation of the Greek, then there would be seven. For example, the first division (S^1) and fourth (S^4) would each be two if divided along with grammatical punctuation structure.[57] For my purposes, the breakdown along the thought structure suffices just fine. They are as follows, where [a] and [b] indicate the first or second portion of the lines, respectively, after

[57] Punctuation is an editorial insertion that initially did not appear in original Greek manuscripts; their placement often depends on the editor's interpretation of the text.

the occurrence of either the semicolon or period:

> **S[1]:** Πολλαχῇ μοι δοκεῖ τοῦτό γε· ἂν μὲν καὶ σμικρόν [400c] τις παρακλίνῃ, καὶ πάνυ (400b11-c1[a]).
>
> **S[2]:** καὶ γὰρ σῆμά τινές φασιν αὐτὸ εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς, ὡς τεθαμμένης ἐν τῷ νῦν παρόντι· (400c1[b]-c2[a]).
>
> **S[3]:** καὶ διότι αὖ τούτῳ σημαίνει ἃ ἂν σημαίνῃ ἡ ψυχή, καὶ ταύτῃ "σῆμα" ὀρθῶς καλεῖσθαι (400c2[b]-c4[a]).
>
> **S[4]:** δοκοῦσι μέντοι μοι μάλιστα θέσθαι οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα, ὡς δίκην διδούσης τῆς ψυχῆς ὧν δὴ ἕνεκα δίδωσιν, τοῦτον δὲ περίβολον ἔχειν, ἵνα σῴζηται, δεσμωτηρίου εἰκόνα· εἶναι οὖν τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦτο, ὥσπερ αὐτὸ ὀνομάζεται, ἕως ἂν ἐκτείσῃ τὰ ὀφειλόμενα, [τὸ] "σῶμα," (400c7[b]-c9[a]).
>
> **S[5]:** καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖν παράγειν οὐδ' ἓν γράμμα (400c9[b]-c10).

We need to see S^1 and S^5 functioning as bookends to Socrates' σῶμα etymological treatment. These segments have similar thought structures, though not entirely parallel, regarding the alternation of spelling of σῶμα. We find Socrates's etymological explanations for σῶμα contained within the three middle segments. Each of those sections includes a single σῶμα etymology.

Socrates begins his explanation of the σῶμα etymologies by acknowledging that there is much to say about the term itself. He adds that much more could be said if someone distorted the word's spelling even the slightest (400b11-c1[a]). He does not, however, go into detail on how exactly someone could alter the spelling to create further possibilities to elaborate upon in response to Hermogenes' inquiry about the σῶμα. From what follows in the excerpt, it appears that Socrates believes that it is likely the term σῶμα originates from two etymological possibilities: the noun σῆμα or a derivation from the verb σῴζηται—more on these options to follow as the exegesis unfolds. Socrates closes his treatment of the σῶμα etymologies by declaring that "not even a single letter of the word needs to be altered" (400c9[b]-c10). This declaration seems to imply that what directly precedes it is his preferred etymology for the term σῶμα because someone does not have to alter the word's spelling in any manner,[58] which happens to be the explanation contained within S^4.

[58] This declaration seems to be an additional positive caveat for the Orpheus etymology being preferred over

§2.2 Socrates' First Σῶμα Etymology

In lines 400c1[b]-c2[a], Socrates gives Hermogenes his first etymological suggestion for σῶμα. Socrates acknowledges that "some people claim that the body (σῶμα) is the tomb (σῆμα) of the soul as if[59] the soul is buried [or entombed: τεθαμμένης][60] in the present life." He suggests that the Greek term σῶμα might derive from the Greek word σῆμα, which means that the word "body" may derive from the word for "tomb" because the soul is ***entombed*** in the body. Implicitly, then, the etymology derives its justification from a purported similarity that obtains between bodies and tombs. Just as a dead body, a corpse, is enclosed in a tomb, so also, on this view, the soul is enclosed in a body. Socrates immediately traces out a reason for this association: those who name the body σῶμα did so because they thought of it as a σῆμα or tomb. Thus, "the body is the tomb of the soul."

Accepting this etymology outright without further inquiry could be argued as reckless. Furthermore, to assume that this etymology has no difficulties is to err.[61] Who are the "some

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the previous two, not necessarily the primary reason that Socrates prefers it. Compare 400c7[b]-c9[a] to 393d: "But it does not matter whether the same thing is signified by the same syllables or by different ones. And if a letter is added or subtracted, that does not matter either—so long as the being or essence of the thing is in control and is expressed in its name."

[59] Some Platonic scholars may question my choice to translate ὡς + the participle τεθαμμένης in the manner I do. Those scholars could argue that the expression could be rendered as "since," "after (all, implied in some cases)," or "because." However, I would argue that doing so would be improper since these renderings would confuse the particle + participle construction with that of ὡς functioning as a simple conjunction construct. The particle + participle may be rendered appropriately in the following ways: "as," "as if," "just as if," "with the avowed intention of," or "on the grounds that." Someone could argue that the particle + participle is a causal or comparative conjunction construct, and I would agree that is the intended implication here in the ***Cratylus*** text. Cf. CGCG, 2019: 652-4; Goodell, 1902: 244-6, §§593c-594; 268-71, §§632-6; Goodwin, 1889: 334-5, §838; 342-3, §864; 344-5, §869; Groton, 2013: 159.

I could be overthinking the ὡς + participle construction and may be complicating the argument unnecessarily since ὡς + participle gives the subjective reason (i.e. the reason of the subject of the sentence, tines). "Because, as they assert, …."

[60] This verb derives from θάπτω, meaning to bury. For further details, consult Beekes, 2010: 1:534; CGL, 2021: 1:673-4; Montanari, 2015: 925; LSJ, 1996: 784.

[61] To some extent, these dual claims depend on an account of what it means for an etymology to be correct. I will take up this topic in the following chapter. Even if the etymology is ultimately deemed incorrect, that is not to say that there are truths that cannot be gleaned from it in assisting in the discovery of Plato's ontology of the human body, nor does it mean there are not any obstacles to overcome so that its meaning can be understood.

people" that Socrates attributes as the source of this etymology? [62] How does a tomb express what the human body is? Why use the imagery of the tomb? What does it mean to say the body is the soul's tomb? What implications are a consequence of the body being the soul's tomb? Can we determine a more definitive answer to this etymology beyond a mere expression, which seems to have religious overtones?

These inquiries illustrate a sampling of the obstacles I must overcome during the exegetical

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[62] Despite raising numerous difficulties, I cannot address all of them, unfortunately, due to the primary scope of my thesis. Some of these questions are secondary or peripheral issues, not primary. Unfortunately, the issue of who "some people" refer to is such a case.

Socrates refers to "some people" (τινές) in line 400c1 and "those affiliated with Orpheus" (οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα) in line 400c5. Most Platonic scholars think that the wording refers to two distinct groups of individuals, which is entirely reasonable if Socrates draws a contrast after concluding the σῆμα etymology (μέντοι). Since he is specific when mentioning "those affiliated with Orpheus," the question is who the "some people" might refer to. There is nothing within the text of the *Cratylus*, however, to suggest whom he has explicitly in mind.

Naturally, Plato's readers could see these references as referring to two distinct groups of individuals. Must they? Once again, the Greek language does not prevent the possibility that Socrates refers to the same people in two methods: an undifferentiated general category, "some people," and a more definite way with a direct reference to Orpheus, "those affiliated with Orpheus." We tend to do the same in both verbal and written language today to make our communication not seem redundant and monotone. Consequently, Socrates' language divides Platonic scholars on this issue. One camp of scholars believes his reference to "some people" refers to the Pythagoreans (Burkert, 1972: 246-9, especially 248 n87; Dodds, 1957: 169-70 n87; Ferwerda, 1985: 270; Ferwerda, 1986: 114; Linforth, 1941: 147-8; Thomas, 1938: 51-2; von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 1931: 2:199). In contrast, another camp of Platonic scholars concludes that Plato's Socrates does not distinguish between two groups but only mentions one differently for stylistic purposes (Bernabé, 1995: 208; Bianchi, 1976: 66; Boyancé, 1941: 160; Casadio, 1987: 390; Casadio, 1991: 124 n9).

The debate primarily centers around (1) τινές φασιν, (2) καὶ διότι αὖ, and (3) οἱ ἀμφί Ὀρφέα from the *Cratylus* excerpt and τῶν σοφῶν from *Gorgias* 492e3-493d3. For details on the issues involving the debate, consult Adler, 1989-94: 3:564-7, s.v. "Ὀρφεύς"; Aristotle, *De an*. I.5 410b28; Aristotle fr. 7 R^3; Aristotle fr. 60; Aristotle, *Gen*. *an*., II.1 734a18-9; Bernabé, 1995: 229-30; Betegh, 2017: 157; Burkert, 1972: 230 n53, 248; Casadio, 1991: 124 n9; Cicero, *Acad.*, II.31; Cicero, *Nat. d.*, I.38.107; Claudianus Mamertus, *De statu animae* II.7; Clem. *Strom.* 3.3.10; Cornelli, 2013: 107-16; de Vogel, 1966; Dodds, 1959: 300-1; Ferwerda, 1985: 270; Ferwerda, 1986: 114; Frank, 1962: 301, 331-5; Freeman, 1946: 1; Freeman, 1977: 1, 76 (fr. DK 44B14); Gobry, 1973: 54-6; Grote, 1872: 1.19 n2; Guthrie, 1985: 199, 310-1, 329-33; Guthrie, 1993: 57-9; Herodoros, *FGrHist* 31 F 42; Herodotus, *Hist.* II.53, II.81; Huffman, 1993: 404-6; Huffman, 2013: 237-70; Iambl. *VP*: 69-70; Iambl. *VP*: 229; Jaeger, 1962: 128-31; Kahn, 2001: 50; Kerenyi, 1940: 20; Lamb, 1925: 414 n2, 415 n3; Lodge, 1891: 167-8; Mojsik, 2023: 11-27; Olympiodorus, 1998: 207-10; Philoponus, 1897: 186, lines 24-6; Plutarch, *Quaest. conv.* V.8.2; Rohde, 1925: 345; Ross, 1952: 41; Rose, 1886: 70-1; Sachs, 2008: 81; Stace, 1960: 31-9; Thesleff, 1961: 92-3; Thompson, 1871: 96-9; Timpanaro Cardini, 2010: 310-3; von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 1920: 2.89; Waterfield, 2008: 155; West, 1983: 21 n53; Woolsley, 1869: 190-1; Zhmud, 2012: 230, 387-94; Ziegler, 1942: 1380.

analysis of Socrates' first σῶμα etymology. Not all of them are answerable immediately, while some remain elusive. That said, such barriers, however, still may not prevent it from advancing some insight into what the σῶμα is for Plato and moving toward being able to develop his definition of what the human body is and its ontology—perhaps even its teleology. The question becomes whether these obstacles are too overwhelming to surmount any astuteness into Plato's understanding of what the σῶμα is. It is paradoxical to think of the human body as a tomb.

Naturally, such an assertion raises a variety of questions. Does such mean that the first etymology is dependent on an analogy? In other words, does the namegiver's naming activity require employing analogy and metaphor? Plato loves using analogies and metaphors throughout his literary dialogues. So, as the exegetical analysis progresses, I will have to ponder this matter further and consider it more seriously. Answering these questions will require discussing how etymology works in the dialogue and antiquity versus today. I shall take this issue up in the next chapter. For the moment, and to anticipate my results and further elaboration in Chapter 3, Socrates' account of etymology relies on analogy. Σ is called by the name τ because τ is related to Σ, which means φ, and χ is φ.

Socrates' etymological account says that the name of something derives from another name, which is assigned correctly ***if and only if*** an etymological analysis of them discloses their referents' natures. We must begin by unpacking the meaning of σῆμα itself, an ambiguous and perplexing concept in the Greek language. After all, that would be the Platonic thing to do. Plato's Socrates presents Hermogenes with his first etymological explanation for the term σῶμα by stating, "the body (σῶμα) is the tomb (σῆμα) of the soul."

The primary meaning of σῆμα revolves around the notion of a sign, something enabling recognition as a distinguishing feature or mark. Its scope of definition grew to incorporate symbols on shields, emblems for ships, evidence or proof of something, a token, a signal for action, and omens from heaven. Σῆμα came eventually to refer to either a tombstone or a

mound used to mark a grave. In this case, the Greek word shifts from its original, primary usage as a mark or sign to a tombstone to reference a tomb itself.[63] Given that σῆμα means tomb, why would somebody apply this word to the human body (σῶμα)?

I want to begin my discussion of this etymology by looking briefly at another passage in Plato where the idea that the human body is a tomb (σῆμα) appears. The passage is from the *Gorgias* at 493a1-3. My analysis seeks to see how Plato appropriates the tomb motif within the immediate context of the *Gorgias* excerpt to see if there is anything to glean from it that illuminates how we should grasp it in the *Cratylus* text.

It is worth noting that Plato portrays the soul-body dichotomy differently in two separate passages within his *Gorgias* dialogue. Earlier in the *Gorgias*, Plato's Socrates informs Gorgias that the soul governs the human body (465c-d), where the former is the natural ruler from within the σῶμα.[64] His claim here is a stark antithesis to what he later professes to Callicles in lines 492e7-493a3. These lines of text from the *Gorgias* are part of Socrates' rebuttal to Callicles' proposition that argues the need for the total liberation of the passions when pursuing things of pleasure by introducing a verse from Euripides—"Who knows whether if to live is death, and being dead is to live?"[65]—to lead to a brief statement on how the body

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[63] Beekes, 2010: 2:1323, s.v. "σῆμα"; CGL, 2021: 2:1263, s.v. "σῆμα"; Cunliffe, 1924: 359-60, s.v. "σῆμα"; Groves, 1836: 514, s.v. "σῆμα"; LSJ, 1996: 1952, s.v. "σῆμα"; Montanari, 2015: 1906, s.v. "σῆμα." Cf. LSJ, 1996: 1761, s.v. "τάφος"; Woodhouse, 1950: 371, s.v. "grave"; 879-88, s.v. "tomb"; Yonge, 1849: 488, s.v. "tomb." Such is striking when comparing the etymology of σῆμα to σῶμα, which has no convincing etymology, historically, in the Greek language. The body can range from a "heap," "what is stiff," or even "to flow, get stiff" (Beekes, 2010: 2.1440). What is more paradoxical is how Socrates seems to equate the good and being with "what flows" in the dialogue (e.g., 411d), a touch of the Heraclitean subtext. Prier argues otherwise: "Unquestionably the most common usage of σῆμα is to mean 'tomb' or 'burial mound'—an indication or symbol, I could argue, of the hidden mythical force of the dead or perhaps some control of a negative power emanating from them" (1978: 93).

[64] *Crito* 47d-48a; *Lach*. 185e, 190b, 192c; *Prot*. 312c, 313a-314b, 351a-b. Cf. Dodds, 1959: 231; Levin, 2014: 20-1

[65] Euripides' verse is eerily similar to Heraclitus' fr. 62: "ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες." The translation reads: "Mortals are immortals, and immortals are mortals; the one living the other's death, and the dying the other's life" (Freeman, 1977: 29, fr. DK 22B62).

(σῶμα) is our tomb (σῆμα) because we are now dead.[66]

However, I want to pick up the dialogue a few lines further back to aid in establishing the scene. The full text of *Gorgias* 492e3-493d3 reads:

> Socrates: So, the idea that people who need nothing (self-sufficient) are happy is wrong?
>
> Callicles: Yes, otherwise, there would be nothing happier than stones or corpses.
>
> Socrates: But even the life of those you are talking about is also awful. And indeed, I would not be shocked if what Euripides says is true: "Who knows whether if living is being dead, and being dead is to be alive?" ***In our present state, maybe we are already dead! I have heard one of our wise sages say that we are now dead and that the body is our tomb***, and that part of the soul where the desires reside is characterized by its susceptibility and instability. Some ingenious fellow, a storyteller, probably some Sicilian or Italian, invented this tale, playing with its name, called this part of the soul a jar as it is so easily enticed. In the same vein, he calls the thoughtless uninitiated. He claims the self-indulgent element in this part of the soul, where the desires are in the foolish, would be a perforated jar because it can never be satisfied. This man does not represent your way of thinking, Callicles: for he indicates that the most wretched ones in the realm of Hades—by which I mean the unseen, invisible world—would be these uninitiates, being condemned to pour water into a vessel that is full of holes out of a sieve that is similarly perforated. According to my source, the storyteller's sieve is the soul; he uses the image of the sieve to imply that the souls of fools are leaky—in the sense that they cannot retain their contents because of their fickle and forgetful nature. And while pretty extraordinary stuff, they represent what I want to get across to you—that is if I can persuade you to change your position. Instead of the insatiable and intemperate life, choose a life in an orderly condition that is always in a state of sufficiency and contentment with the things at hand. Well, am I persuading you at all? Are you coming around to my opinion that orderly people are happier than those who indulge themselves without restraint? Or would you not be inclined to change your course even if I were to tell you story after story with the same moral lesson? (emphasis added)

Why does Socrates introduce the σῶμα-σῆμα motif here? Evidently, it is his response to Callicles' claim that those who have no needs are not happy since they are akin to stones and corpses (νεκροὶ).

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[66] Socrates is vague about the motto's authorship, attributing it to something he heard from one of the sages. Socrates further states this a few lines later: "some clever fellow, a teller of stories, a Sicilian, perhaps, or an Italian." In other words, this person is an *ingenious* man. Whether he refers to the same wise man or a different individual is a question that the text is not entirely clear.

Ironically, Socrates' joking response ignores the reference to stones and focuses on the idea of death implied by Callicles' uses of corpses. His response is this: perhaps the dead *are* happy. The reason for this suggestion comes out in the equation of death, not with insensibility but with substantiality. Such is then an inversion of the idea that the dead are shades, fleeting and insubstantial. It is instead that we, who think we are living, who are insubstantial on account of the shiftiness of our desires.

Socrates intentionally introduces the σῶμα-σῆμα schema into the dialogical conversation with Callicles. Socrates says: "And perhaps in reality, we are actually dead; once I heard one of the wise men [τῶν σοφῶν][67] say that we are now dead and that the body [σῶμα] is our tomb [σῆμα]." From the text, we can infer that the soul may give life to the body, but it does more than that, as it also shares in a certain lifelessness—death. Such a state may be an evil one because the soul is separated from the σῶμα it experiences genuinely being alive. When entombed in the human body, the soul experiences its death through participation in lifelessness.

We should not concern ourselves with the superficial level of the myth of Danaids that Socrates uses as an instrument to persuade his interlocutor to change his stance.[68] We should expound upon what it means for us to be *dead* or, at minimum, participate in the sense of lifelessness, what the tomb is, and, more importantly, what it means for the body to be a *tomb*. Additionally, we should consider whether the σῶμα to be a cause of evil.

Note that we are *said to be dead*. Could it be that we are so because our souls share in lifelessness? Such a thought may seem at odds with what we read in the *Phaedo* concerning Plato's final argument for the soul's immortality (105d-e), primarily if no distinction exists between death and lifelessness. The text does not say that we are dead in reality. Immanent

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[67] See page 29 n62.

[68] For interpretation of this part of the text, consult Blank, 1991: 22-36; Bonner, 1900: 27-36; Bonner, 1902: 129-73; Linforth, 1944: 295-314. Ironically, Sachs believes that the parable is Socrates' own invention instead of a retelling of the myth of Danaids (2008: 81).

matter is lifeless. Perhaps the claim here that the soul partakes existence in lifeless matter is not a claim that lifelessness can be ***predicated*** for an entombed soul. Instead, it is a claim about the soul's entombed presence in the σῶμα—that which gives life experiences a death, a temporary death, a death of lifelessness, nonetheless, because the σῶμα is lifeless on its own accord apart of the presence of the soul. In other words, the ψυχή participates in the realm of Becoming.

Socrates identifies the tomb we carry around: it is our grave. This grave is our human body—the σῶμα. In a sense, we are in the dark, the unseen, invisible world of Hades, when the soul is entombed—enslaved—to the confines of the human body.[69]

While Socrates identifies what the tomb is, such a description fails to tell us what "the body is our tomb" genuinely means. It fails to tell us why the σῶμα should be understood or seen as being a tomb or grave—at least for the modern-day reader. Socrates' reference to the body being a tomb is not a novel.

Thus, it is reasonable that both Callicles and Hermogenes heard it previously and understood to some extent what Socrates meant. For example, Philolaus associates the idea of the σῶμα as being the grave of the soul: "The ancient theologians and seers [soothsayers] also bear witness that because of certain punishments [debts] the soul is yoked to the body and buried in it as [in] a tomb."[70] A handful of observations within the fragment should be pretty evident to readers. Foremost, Philolaus does not appear to express his personal insights or thoughts on the topic. He instead acknowledges a tradition that is known to him and possibly others because of his attribution to "ancient theologians and seers." Whether Philolaus agrees or disagrees with the ideas revealed in the fragment is unknown. He also fails to elaborate on with whom these individuals associate.

[69] Olympiodorus, 1998: 206-7.

[70] Freeman, 1977: 76 (fr. DK 44B14). This translation is Freeman's.

Philolaus' fragment, DK 44B14, appears contradictory with fragment DK 44A22, in which he speaks of the soul-body relationship. Freeman translations that fragment as

> The soul is joined to the body through Number and the immortal and likewise incorporeal Harmony... The body is loved by the soul because, without it, it cannot use the senses. When the soul has been separated from the body by death, it lives an incorporeal existence in the world.[71]

The philosopher claims the soul loves the human body in this fragment, whereas the two entities appear at odds with the previous fragment, DK 44B14, since the body entombs the soul until it pays off its debt.

For us, we do not know the cultural context. So, answers to vexing questions remain. What is Socrates' rationale behind calling the human body a tomb? What is his purpose for doing such?

In the broader context in which Socrates introduces the σῶμα-σῆμα motif, it seems to have an ethical-apocalyptic theme underpinning it. For now, note this theme since it may aid in understanding the expression "the body is our tomb" here in the *Gorgias*.[72] I am more significantly concerned whether it substantiates anything to how we should grasp Socrates' first σῶμα etymology of the *Cratylus*.

A presumption undergirds this quite questionable mindset: must the σῶμα as a tomb of the soul be a negative thing? Nearly every scholar associates the expression in a negative light. However, suppose there is an ethical-apocalyptic theme underpinning the σῶμα-σῆμα wordplay in Plato's mind. In that case, the silent philosopher may have something else in mind than the tomb being a sinister entity for the soul. Ponder this notion, as I will return to it shortly.

Despite wanting to avoid bringing in other Platonic dialogues into the exegetical analysis,

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[71] Freeman, 1977: 77 (fr. DK 44A22).

[72] Gatti, 2012: 261-88.

the phrase "we are actually dead" from the *Gorgias* 493a1-3 text resembles "the soul is buried in the present life" in the *Cratylus* 400b11-c2 excerpt. The *Cratylus* passage implies that some sort of death occurs when the soul is buried in the human body. When someone dies, we put that individual's body into a tomb (coffin) to protect it to ensure animals do not eat it, the body does not decay prematurely, and it does not get stolen. Hence, the tomb has a specific function—namely, protecting the corpse and keeping it in its place. More importantly, in Greek antiquity, the tomb had a memorial function. It was customary for relatives to visit the deceased's tomb on the third, ninth, and thirtieth days after the first year of the person's death and specific festivals as a means of propitiation to the spirits of the dead.[73]

To say that the body is the soul's tomb means that the person is dead. What does death mean here? If it means that only a shade is left, an insubstantial thing, then the tomb's function, in the sense of the body's function, would be to protect it and keep it inside. Such seems to connect with the idea of the desires being held in a leaky jar part of the soul. The jar cannot hold its contents, so we are never whole—at least in this present life. It is only after the soul's release from its entombment in the σῶμα that it will admit its actual existence.[74]

The Platonic texts are elusive as to what this death may be precisely, though Socrates appears to be inverting the definition of death as the separation of body and soul. He seems to be saying that death is the bringing together of body and soul so that humanity's current condition is a state of being dead. Plato's Socrates seems to draw an element of Heraclitean paradox into his first etymological explanation of what the human body is: "ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες."[75] The primary image is of a life lived in death or a depiction of an afterlife as an avenue for talking

[73] Alexiou, 2002: 7-10; Garland, 1988: 104-20; Garland, 2009: 174-9; Kurtz and Boardman, 1971: 68-141; Mirto, 2012; Morris, 1989; Morris, 1996: 126-55; Sourvinou-Inwood, 1996: 108-297.
[74] Woolsley, 1869: 190.
[75] Freeman, 1977: 29 (fr. DK 22B62).

about the present life.[76] Such a notion makes sense as it follows the doctrine of the *Phaedo*. Additionally, if the ψυχή is the principle of life, then it would be most what it is when it is alone by itself.[77] The σῶμα is a place where the soul goes to be ***interred in the present life***.

In contrast, Linforth notes that the conception of the body as a tomb (σῶμα-σῆμα) is "barren and irrational. If the body is a tomb, the soul within it must be dead,—and nothing can be made of that."[78] That said, on two grounds, Linforth's objection may be unfounded, if not unwarranted. First, there is an issue with his claim that "nothing can be made of that." Why not? Plato is playing around with the idea of death. For Plato, death is imprisonment in the body. Perhaps death is a lack of wholeness; when the body dies, it cannot preserve itself intact. Secondly, he fails to realize a fundamental teaching of Plato's, illustrated in his Cave Allegory.[79] In the Cave, Plato describes a group of individuals who have lived shackled to the cave wall all their lives, facing a blank wall. They watch projected shadows on the wall from objects passing in front of the fire behind them, giving names to the shadowy objects. These shadows are the prisoner's reality, which does not accurately represent the real world outside of the cave. The shadows only represent the fragment of reality that can be perceived through the five human senses. In contrast, those objects under the sun represent the actual Forms of objects that can only be perceived through the intellect. The idea behind the allegory is that this life is a kind of death compared with true life. Being *in* the body is being separated from one's true, actual being. The matter is self-alienation. By ***matter***, I refer to the notion that a material or bodily manifestation of the soul is a self-alienated manifestation of it. Things in the cave are self-alienated inasmuch as they appear as shadows; the shadow of something is not the whole thing but a partial presentation of it. Thus, we are separated from our being. Furthermore, Linforth's conception parallels that of the Dionysian environment better than that of the Pythagoreans.[80] Again, such a notion is contestable.

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[76] This motif reappears in Socrates' third σῶμα etymology.

[77] See §1.2.2.3 for more details on the nature of the soul.

[78] Linforth, 1944: 296.

[79] ***Rep***. VII 514a-520a.

[80] Aristophanes, ***Ran.*** 420. Cf. Harrison, 1959: 363-453; Riccardelli Apicella, 1992: 27-39; Rus'ajeva, 1978: 87-104; Segal, 1990: 411-9; Tortorelli Ghidini, 1995: 79-85.

Dilman illustrates the essence of this distinction well when reflecting on the latter part of the *Gorgias* when he writes,

> The idea of what we are like in the eyes of death is equivalent to the idea of our spiritual state at the time of our death. This is one reason why Socrates speaks of death as the separation of the soul from the body, for with death all the disguises that belong to life are taken away, leaving the soul naked and without the protection of the things that count in life for many of us. If we have lived well we shall not fear losing this protection, we shall not be afraid to give up what belongs to the body.
>
> When it comes to death, Socrates suggests, we are all the same, and whether we are clever or not, rich or poor, loved or forgotten counts for nothing. The only thing that counts is whether we lived well or badly. That this does count is the most important part of Socrates' faith; and so of what belongs to the soul, is a moral one.[81]
>
> But if the idea of 'temporal reward or punishment *after* death' is incoherent, this doesn't mean that we can't make sense of the idea of 'eternal reward or punishment'. The reason why it is conjoined to the idea of death is (a) that death transfixes a life so that it can be seen *as* a *whole*, and (b) that death separates from a life everything that is irrelevant to a man's deserts according to which he is judged. Socrates puts these two points in the following words: 'Death, it seems to me, is nothing but the divorce of two separate entities, body and soul, and, when this divorce takes place, each of them is left in much the same state as it reached during the man's life ([*Gorgias*] 524). In this sense we could say that the thought of death becomes a vehicle for contemplating one's life. When one thinks of death the many things that one attaches importance to—pleasure, possessions, status, etc, lose their importance.[82]

For argument's sake, assume that the word σῆμα does mean tomb in *Cratylus* 400c1[b]-c2[a]. One cannot resist raising the question as to what the precise meaning of the σῶμα-σῆμα wordplay could be after Socrates presents his first etymological suggestion for the term σῶμα. Remember that Socrates acknowledges that "some people claim that the body (σῶμα) is the tomb (σῆμα) of the soul as if the soul is buried in the present life." Again, the philosopher implies that the Greek term σῶμα might derive from the Greek word σῆμα. In other words, the word "body" may derive from the word "tomb" in the sense of a *tomb* because the soul is *enclosed* in the body. Thus, the σῶμα is called "body" because it is, or is like, a tomb, and the word "tomb" is similar to—in some sense—the word "body."[83]

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[81] Dilman, 1979: 179-80.

[82] Dilman, 1979: 182-3. Cf. Bénard, 1892: 79-81; Stauffer, 2006: 167-76.

[83] When I use the phrase *in some sense*, I intentionally am emphasizing the fact that that the sense is the letters are similar. Someone can easily derive the one term from the other by modifying the letters ever so slightly.

Implicitly, then, the etymology derives its justification from a purported similarity that obtains between bodies and tombs as opposed to souls as bodies. Just as a dead body, a corpse, is enclosed in a tomb, so also, on this view, the soul is enclosed in a body. Socrates immediately traces out a reason for this association: those who name the body σῶμα did so because they thought of it as a tomb. Therefore, "the body is the tomb of the soul."

So, it looks like a metaphor underpins Plato's Socrates' first etymology. What does this imply? Well, while the question seems straightforward, it is anything but that. Addressing this inquiry becomes all the more challenging when we consider its relation to the early Greek conception of the soul because it leans toward an unnatural reading of Pythagoras' understanding of the ψυχή since it has the nature of air. A ψυχή, therefore, does not reside permanently in a person; it comes and goes as a person breathes.[84] The implication is that any soul can freely enter any individual at any time. The ψυχή does pay penalties in Hades for a short time after a person dies.[85] There is nothing within Pythagoras' philosophy to suggest that the ψυχή is interred in the σῶμα as he believes in a *free soul*.

Unfortunately, the current evidence does not aid us much in grasping the precise meaning behind Socrates' first etymology: the human body is the tomb of the soul. Understanding it as the philosopher claims seems too simplistic and naïve. While discussing the *Gorgias* passage to see if it could contribute anything to understanding the first etymology proper, I said there seems to be an ethical-apocalyptic theme underpinning it. I wish to return to that notion now, as it may be the crux to solving the mystery of its real meaning. Conceptually, what does this etymology mean?

Attempting to answer this question requires further unpacking an element that weaves throughout Plato's dialogues that I have yet to mention. Plato is no different than anyone teaching in higher education today. He neither ignores his predecessors nor philosophizes in

[84] Rohde, 1925: 375, 395 n35.

[85] Rohde, 1925: 375. Cf. Bremmer, 1983; Jaeger, 1947: 73-89.

"an intellectual vacuum."[86] He morphs what he finds compelling in the philosophical thoughts of others into his own creation. This realization is ever-so-evident in the silent philosopher's presentation of the first σῶμα explanation—and I would guess that such will appear again in the other two treatments as well—which scholars deem as Socrates' σῶμα-σῆμα wordplay. After all, Plato's strategy contributes to what Bernabé deems as the "mayores confusiones en el análisis del pasaje del *Crátilo*" ("major confusion in the analysis of the passage from the *Cratylus*").[87] Plato ascribes to either the Orphics or Pythagoreans the use of the term σῶμα that is purely his personal formation based upon his interpretations of crucial tenets of their teachings. Socrates' first σῶμα etymology appears thoroughly grounded in the mystery dogma of either philosophical-religious sect.

Hence, the reason why there seems to be an ethical-apocalyptic theme underpinning the etymological explanation. In other words, Plato interjects foreign elements from another group into his philosophical musings. According to Diès, who coined the unique discipline, such behavior is a transposition.[88] Plato transposes the thoughts of proceeding philosophers into his abstract inklings.

Plato's purposeful practice of transposition makes someone wonder if specific texts should be read allegorically or symbolically, especially with how he employs etymological word games by emphasizing a term's ambiguity. If so, he will follow an enriched tradition that begins in works like the Derveni papyrus and branches into Homer and Hesiod. However, employing such an allegorical or symbolic interpretation of ancient texts to give them new life and meaning is a common practice of Neoplatonism and the early Church Fathers. An allegorical-symbolic hermeneutic allows, for example, an individual to grasp the mythical worldview, which is more lucid. The whole point is not to take the myths or stories literally but to search out their underlying significance (ὑπόνοια).[89]

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[86] Guthrie, 1975: 32.

[87] Bernabé, 1995: 231.

[88] Diès, 1927: 432-49. Cf. Bernabé, 1995: 231-4.

[89] CGL, 2021: 2:1436-7, s.v. "ὑπόνοια ᾱς"; LSJ, 1996: 1890, s.v. "ὑπόνοια, ἡ (ὑπονοέω)"; Montanari, 2015:

Returning to the *Cratylus* 400c1[b]-c2[a] text, a question still lingers. What lies behind Plato's character Socrates' explanation of the first σῶμα etymology that can lead us to its real meaning? If Plato is transposing the teachings of either the Orphics or Pythagoreans into this etymological explanation, it would account for the hint of an ethical-apocalyptic theme that seems to be present. Such a motif implies that we should not see the body as the soul's tomb as a horrible thing. On the contrary, the opposite should be the case; we should see the body as a tomb of the soul in a positive light. The etymology suggests that the body functions as the soul's attendant while it exists in the realm of becoming, buried in its present life in the confines of the human body. Such notions suggest that the body as a tomb has an ethical duty to protect the soul in the present life. Likewise, the body is to prepare the soul for its ultimate liberation from the tomb (its resurrection, ***per se***), which points to the apocalyptic aspect of Plato's transposition of the teachings of the Orphics and Pythagoreans. It is still too early to determine firm conclusions on the precise meaning of Socrates' first σῶμα etymology, as his other two treatments may reveal more about how we should grasp its true meaning. For argument's sake, assume that the material body is the tomb of the soul and the Orphics are the doctrine's origin instead of the Pythagoreans.[90] Could a more direct connection exist between what Socrates says at *Cratylus* 400b11-c2 and 400c4-9? Additionally, remember that while the human-animal consists of body and soul, this association might not be its essential condition. Likewise, the σῶμα resembles something in which the ψυχή resides only temporarily by implication of Socrates' statements in *Cratylus* 400c4-9.

Given the preceding difficulties regarding the σῆμα meaning the tomb of the soul, one naturally would conclude that such an interpretation rests upon an unstable foundation, as Ferwerda argues.[91] Whether the σῆμα meaning the tomb of the soul brings any clarity to Plato's ontology of the σῶμα appears, therefore, very doubtful—at this juncture of the exegetical analysis. However, the notion arouses more questions than a straightforward

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2227-8, s.v. "ὑπόνοια -ας, ἡ (ὑπονοέω)."

[90] See page 29 n62.

[91] Ferwerda, 1985: 272; Ferwerda, 1986: 116.

answer, which reveals that Socrates' etymological statement is much more complex than initially thought. Thus, for Socrates, the σῶμα-σῆμα exposes a paradoxical relationship between the soul and the body. It is time to shift the focus to another claim within the *Cratylus* passage: the body is the sign of the soul's presence in this present life.

§2.3 Socrates' Second Σῶμα Etymology

Plato's Socrates presents Hermogenes with an alternative σῶμα etymological explanation for him to ponder. In his second account, Socrates goes on to give a second etymology to Hermogenes from the term σῆμα: "And because of this reason, the soul indicates (σημαίνει) by its body whatever the soul indicates; it is also for that reason adequately called sign (σῆμα)" (400c2[b]-c4[a]). On this account of the σῶμα, Socrates suggests that the Greek term σῶμα might derive from the Greek word σῆμα, which means the word "body" may derive from the word for "sign" because the soul indicates by its body whatever it indicates. Here is the etymology I would have expected for Socrates to begin his response to Hermogenes' inquiry into the matters of the soul and the human body.[92] However, we should not always expect a more common meaning to appear in an etymology. Etymologies are often given in terms of arcane and infrequent word meanings. Furthermore, we cannot always expect Socrates to do what is expected. After all, he likes to keep us guessing.

Before proceeding too much further, it may prove beneficial to examine the verb σημαίνω from which σημαίνει derives, as it may aid in us better grasping what Socrates means by his usage of calling the body the ***sign*** of the soul. The Greek verb σημαίνω has a range of meanings that depend on the context for its proper translation. We should not allow the multitude of possibilities in the range of meanings to overwhelm us. We could easily make two broad categories for all our options: (1) to explain or illuminate and (2) to command.

Here are the options in their respective category:

[92] Beekes, 2010: 2:1323, s.v. "σῆμα"; CGL, 2021: 2:1263, s.v. "σῆμα"; Cunliffe, 1924: 359-60, s.v. "σῆμα"; Groves, 1836: 514, s.v. "σῆμα"; LSJ, 1996: 1592, s.v. "σῆμα"; Montanari, 2015: 1906, s.v. "σῆμα."

> (1): indicate or point out by visible signs; indicate by language; to explain or communicate; to declare, announce, reveal, or signify; make a signal, give a signal, be a sign; to identify, mark out, mark with a sign, a distinguishing mark, or mark with a seal
>
> (2): be in charge, to command, to act as a master; to guide or direct the actions of."[93]

Naturally, there is a significant difference between explaining and commanding something. On the first concession, the implication is that the soul potentially uses the body as its instrument to inform others of something vital through various measures. On the second concession, there is a sense that the soul has more of an authoritative role over the human body; it controls the actions of the σῶμα. This second thought parallels what I previously said in §1.2.2.2. Both nuances appear in Socrates' etymology.

This question *of how words signify* underlies the whole dialogue. For example, does a word imitate the thing that it names, as Cratylus seems to believe? Should Socrates' etymology here be understood in terms of this general question of signification? The body is a necessary condition for intentionality and "aboutness" since we use the tongue and vocal cords to make sounds that imitate things.

Implicitly, then, this etymology derives its justification from a purported reality that the namegiver called the human body *σῶμα* because the soul uses it to sign. Hence, the body is the instrument by which the soul signs. The thought of the body as being some sort of container that houses the soul continues here in Socrates' second etymological option. The nuance has changed. Instead of the body enclosing the soul as a tomb, we know that the body is alive because the soul is present; the soul allows the body to exhibit animation. Otherwise, the σῶμα is nothing more than a corpse. Socrates immediately traces out a reason for this association: those who name the body σῶμα did so because they thought to sign by means of the human body. The soul *uses* the body—presumably, with different parts, for example, tongue and hands—to sign. Thus, "the body is a sign of the soul's presence." In

[93] CGL, 2021: 2:1263, s.v. "σημαίνω"; Cunliffe, 1924: 360, s.v. "σημαίνω"; Groves, 1836: 514, s.v. "σημαίνω"; LSJ, 1996: 1952, s.v. "σημαίνω"; Montanari, 2015: 1906, s.v. "σημαίνω."

other words, when the soul indwells inside the σῶμα, the body testifies to its existence.

Unfortunately, we do not have an exact parallel passage to consult within the Platonic corpus, where the body is called the sign of the soul because the soul uses it to communicate to aid us in how we should understand this σῶμα etymology. Another passage does exist in which Plato teases out potential ramifications for this etymology. While not an exact parallel to our text, we may be able to adduce other complementary remarks for additional exegetical insight from it beyond the immediate context of *Cratylus* 400b11-c10.

That passage comes from *Theaetetus* 185b7-d3.[94] In the larger context of 184b-187a, Socrates and Theaetetus come to an agreement that knowledge as perception must be finally rejected because to have true knowledge of something involves something beyond mere perception. People must reason about their perceptual experiences since perception alone can be deceived (187b-210d). Thus, knowledge is not mere perception; knowledge is proper judgment with an account of the Λόγος.

For my intended purposes, I want to jump into the conservation between Socrates and Theaetetus at 184d7 so that we grasp the broader context of the focal excerpt of 185b7-d3.

> Socrates: Well now, here's why I'm subjecting you to such strictness about it: I want to know if there's something in us with which we get at not only white and black things, by means of the eyes, but also other things, by means of the other sense organs—doing it with the same thing in each case. If the question is put to you, will you be able to refer everything of that sort to the body? But perhaps it would be better that you should state the point by answering questions, rather than that I should interfere on your behalf. Tell me this. Take the things by means of which you perceive things which are hot, hard, light, and sweet. You classify each of them as belonging to the body, don't you? Or do you think they belong to something else?
>
> Theaetetus: No, they belong to the body.
>
> Socrates: And will you also be willing to agree that if you perceive something by means of one power, it's impossible to perceive that same thing by means of another? For instance, you can't perceive by means of sight what you perceive by means of hearing or perceive by means of hearing what you perceive by means of sight.

[94] I am indebted to Dylan Futter for reminding me of this passage for comparison.

Theaetetus: Of course.

Socrates: So, if there's something which you think about both of them, it can't be something which you're perceiving about both, either by means of one of the two instruments or by means of the other.

Theaetetus: No.

Socrates: Now take a sound and a colour. First of all, you think just this about them: that they both are?

Theaetetus: Yes.

Socrates: And that each is different from the other and the same as itself?

Theaetetus: Of course.

Socrates: And that both together are two and each is one?

Theaetetus: Yes, that too.

Socrates: And you're able to raise the question whether they're like or unlike each other?

Theaetetus: I suppose so.

Socrates: Well now, by means of what do you think all those things about them? Because it's impossible to get hold of what they have in common either by means of hearing or by means of sight. Besides, here's another proof of the point we're talking about. If it were possible to raise the question whether both are salty or not, of course you'll be able to say what you'd investigate it with: it would clearly be neither sight nor hearing but something else.

Theaetetus: Yes, of course: the power that's exercised by means of the tongue.

Socrates: Good. But what about the power which makes clear to you that which is common to everything, including these things: that to which you apply the words 'is', 'is not', and the others we used in our questions about them just now? What is that power exercised by means of? What sort of instruments are you going to assign to all those things, by means of which the perceiving element in us perceives each of them?

Theaetetus: You mean being and not being, likeness and unlikeness, the same and different, and also one and any other number applied to them. And it's clear that your question is also about odd and even and everything else that goes with those. What you're asking is by means of what part of the body [through what bodily instruments] we perceive them with our minds [the soul].[95]

What can we determine about the body functioning as an instrument for the intellective

[95] The translation is McDowell's (2014: 67-9). Cf. Benardete, 1984: I.52-4; Cornford, 1935: 103-4; Dyde, 1899: 136-7; Fowler, 1921: 158-63; Jowett, 1949: 50-2; Kennedy, 1894: 176-8; Levett, 1990: 315-6; Paley, 1875: 84-5; Rowe, 2015: 59-60; Waterfield, 1987: 87-8.

soul? What is the ontological status of the body? What can we say concerning this intellective soul? What is the ontological status of the soul? We can presume that the soul gives the human body the ability to perceive through its senses based on other dialogues.[96] It, therefore, seems reasonable to conclude that the soul uses the bodily instruments to sign what it desires here, as Socrates declares in the *Cratylus* excerpt concerning the σῶμα etymologies.

I wish to return to my exegetical analysis of Socrates' second σῶμα etymology. Several conclusions, however, should be reasonably clear from the excerpt's grammatical structure. Bernabé draws attention to this reality.[97] Although Socrates says that the authors of this etymological explanation insist that it is accurate (καὶ ταύτῃ "σῆμα" ὀρθῶς καλεῖσθαι), it may not be inconsistent with Socrates' first σῶμα etymology, which gave a different application for the ambiguous term σῆμα. Bernabé's argument is as follows:

> P^1: The infinitive καλεῖσθαι appears to be still dependent on the expression τινές φασιν.
>
> P^2: The first conjunction καὶ connects the infinitives εἶναι and καλεῖσθαι where the latter has an adverbial value of "also or too."
>
> ∴: Socrates' second interpretation of σῆμα may not be mutually exclusive from his first σῆμα treatment.

In other words, there is a distinct possibility, according to Bernabé, that we should read the two etymological explanations as complementing each other instead of them as two distinctly separate ones.

I want to make several observations before examining Bernabé's argument in-depth. First, Bernabé wants us to believe that nothing within the 400b11-c10 excerpt, grammatically

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[96] The dialogue of the *Theaetetus* does not answer these questions—as far as I can tell. So, we are obliged to speculate. Such speculation should not be idle or unwarranted since testimony appears elsewhere in the Platonic corpus. The soul is an essence distinct from the σῶμα, for the corpus never describes it as a feature of the human body. In contrast, the human body is some type of container that encloses the soul. There is a sense in which the soul appears to have the power to vivify—to vitalize the human body by Plato's definition. However, the *Theaetetus* dialogue concerns itself with the human soul as *qua* rational (Robinson, 2020: 149-58).

[97] Bernabé, 1995: 209.

speaking, prevents us from reading or grasping Socrates' treatment of the term σῆμα as having two potential meanings as separate etymologies.[98] Secondly, Bernabé wants us to believe that nothing within the text under investigation here, grammatically speaking,[99] prevents us from reading or grasping Socrates' second etymological explanations as a continuation or complementary to his first treatment in which he uses the word σῆμα, meaning tomb.[100]

That said, the most natural way to read the text is to see them as two distinct etymological explanations because of the presence of the semicolon directly before 400c2[b]-c4[a] with the addition of the contrasting language immediately following it, particularly the presence of αὖ toward the beginning of Socrates' second explanation, in my opinion. The Greek language permits the text to be read as a continuation of thought, not as Bernabé argues here. The connection back to τινές φασιν has to do with the grammatical punctuation and syntax. Socrates' first etymological explanation for the term σῶμα ends with a semicolon instead of a period, which makes the connection.[101] Thus, I do not see the 400b11-c10 excerpt declaring here that some say X (Socrates' first etymology), whereas others say Y (Socrates' second etymology).

Strangely, Bernabé's rendering of the *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 excerpt contradicts his argument. He understands the passage to read as:

> Indeed, some affirm that it [the body] is the grave of the soul, as if it were buried in its current situation and, on the other hand, that, ***as the soul manifests what it manifests***

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[98] Such a reading is how Reeve's understands the Greek text in question. Socrates attributes his first etymology to "some people." In his second etymology, Socrates advocates that "others say." See Reeve, 1998: 30. However, I am not convinced that Reeve's rendering of the phrase καὶ διότι αὖ is accurate. More on this momentarily in the next footnote.

[99] Except for the phrase καὶ διότι αὖ may grammatically refute Bernabé's stance here. I do not believe it does. While the phrase can be translated a several different ways, the most literal rendering of it is: "and because of this reason." If we take the phrase to be read naturally as such, Bernabé's argument holds on this premise. Thus, we should see Reeve's rendering of the phrase "while others" as a mistranslation.

[100] See page 42 n92.

[101] The presence of punctuation within Greek text was initially absent in manuscripts during antiquity. It was later added by copyists for clarification purposes. Because of this practice, it is possible that the copyists got it wrong from how the original author intended the text to be read.

> through it, it is also[102] in this sense—correctly called a "sign." However, it seems to me that Orpheus and his people gave it this name above all because the soul, which pays the penalty for what it must pay, has it as an enclosure, like a prison, where it can see itself safe and sound; that, consequently, it is "salvage" (σῶμα) of the soul, as its name indicates, until it expiates what it owes, and that it does not have to change a letter (emphasis added in my English translation of Bernabé's Spanish version of the passage).[103]

He associates infinitive καλεῖσθαι with σῆμα: "se la llama corrrectamente "signo." After all, the Spanish equivalent of καλεῖσθαι is "se la llama," and σῆμα is equivalent to the Spanish's "signo" in the above passage.

Consider one potential caveat of Socrates' usage here of the σῆμα meaning sign. Plato's Socrates calls the σῶμα a "sign" of the soul, meaning that it is how the soul "indicates" (σημαίνει) whatever it signifies. Hence, the human body could be understood as the instrument of how the soul reveals its form and purpose;[104] it is more than that, as I argue below. The implication here is Socrates' usage of ***sign*** might denote its eidetic paradigm for accomplishing its chief task. Thus far, we do not know what the soul's achieved goal is from the *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 excerpt. The broader context in which our text concludes may reveal something beneficial. I shall address that momentarily, but I must make a few more remarks first.

What if the soul's purpose is revealed through the actions of the body that the soul itself causes? I cannot but wonder if Socrates' usage of the term ***sign*** in his second etymological explanation has a double meaning in Plato's *Cratylus*. That has to do with something he says later in the dialogue.

> καὶ τἆλλα οὕτω φαίνεται προσβιβάζειν καὶ κατὰ γράμματα καὶ κατὰ συλλαβὰς ἑκάστῳ τῶν ὄντων σημεῖόν τε καὶ ὄνομα ποιῶν ὁ νομοθέτης, ἐκ δὲ τούτων τὰ λοιπὰ ἤδη αὐτοῖς τούτοις συντιθέναι ἀπομιμούμενος (*Crat*. 427c6-d1).

By σημεῖόν τε καὶ ὄνομα, Plato seems to mean ***a name*** in the broadest sense because the name

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[102] Much hinges on this reading of the καὶ.

[103] Bernabé, 1995: 206.

[104] Uždavinys, 2011: 94.

points directly to things, their properties, and their ways of acting and being acted upon. The sign, on the other hand, refers to the actual written marks or utter sounds. If this interpretation is valid, the sign would associate itself with "two other kinds of entities: (1) its sense or meaning, and (2) all things to which it applies. The sense of a sign is expressible as a description."[105]

Additionally, such an interpretation aligns jointly with what Plato says concerning the function of language elsewhere in the dialogue. People communicate and instruct by employing words (388b; 435a). Thus, Socrates similarly uses the verb σημαίνω (to indicate) in connection with other terms (393d; 394c; 436e-437a). The point that Socrates seeks to make in these passages is that regardless of what an object is named, that name should communicate something about its essence.[106]

The Neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus supports such a reading of Plato on this point, as found throughout four of the nine Tractates of the Fourth Ennead.

> If it [the soul] had the nature of the body it would consist of isolated members each unaware of the conditions of every other; there would be a particular soul—say a soul of a finger—answering as a distinct and independent entity to every local experience;[107]
>
> All existence has this tendency to bring other things to likeness; but the Soul has the distinction of possessing at once an action of conscious attention within itself, and an action towards the outer. It has thus the function of giving life to all that does not live by prior right, and the life it gives is commensurate with its own; that is to say, living in reason, it communicates reason to the body—an image of the reason within itself, just as the life given to the body is an image of Real-Being—and it bestows, also, upon the material the appropriate shapes of which it contains the Reason-Forms.[108]
>
> How comes it then that everyone speaks of soul as being in body?
>
> Because the Soul is not seen and the body is: we perceive the body, and by its movement and sensation we understand that it is ensouled, and we say that it possesses a soul; to speak of residence is a natural sequence. If the Soul were visible, an object of the senses, radiating throughout the entire life, if it were manifest in full force to the

[105] Palmer, 1989: 157. Cf. Kahn, 1972: 568.

[106] Consult Chapter 3 for a more in-depth discussion on this topic.

[107] Plotinus, *Enn*. 4.2.2.

[108] Plotinus, *Enn*. 4.3.10.

> very outermost surface, we would no longer speak of soul as in body; we would say the minor was within the major, the contained within the container, the fleeting within the perdurable.[109]
>
> Soul, whenever and wherever it chooses to operate, does in much that way move the body.[110]
>
> I explain: a living body is illuminated by soul: each organ and member participates in soul after some manner peculiar to itself; the organ is adapted to a certain function, and this fitness is the vehicle of the soul-faculty under which the function is performed; thus the seeing faculty acts through the eyes, the hearing faculty through the ears, the tasting faculty through the tongue, the faculty of smelling through the nostrils, and the faculty of sentient touch is present throughout, since in this particular form of perception the entire body is an instrument in the Soul's service.[111]
>
> ...the body to the tool employed: the body is passive and menial; the Soul is active, reading such impressions as are made upon the body or discerned by means of the body perhaps entertaining only a judgement formed as the result of the bodily experiences.[112]
>
> ...body alone, a lifeless thing...[113]
>
> ...soul to have perception does not require body; body, on the contrary, requires soul to maintain its being and its efficiency...[114]
>
> In fact, body itself could not exist in any form if soul-power did not: body passes; dissolution is in its very nature; all would disappear in a twinkling if all were body.[115]

The essential ethos of Plotinus' claims is that because people can perceive the σῶμα and its movements, people can say it possesses a soul. In other words, the human body is the sign of the soul's presence: "The soul indicates by its body whatever the soul indicates; it is also for that reason adequately called sign" (400c2[b]-c4[a]).

What exactly does Plato mean by this interpretation? Can the physical human body be seen as a sign or proof of the soul's embodiment? If this reading were correct, the body would give the soul a ***scarlet letter*** of some kind. Therefore, it would have a function to serve on

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[109] Plotinus, *Enn*. 4.3.20.

[110] Plotinus, *Enn*. 4.3.21.

[111] Plotinus, *Enn*. 4.3.23. Cf. *Theat*. 185b7-d3.

[112] Plotinus, *Enn*. 4.3.26.

[113] Plotinus, *Enn*. 4.4.18.

[114] Plotinus, *Enn*. 4.4.22.

[115] Plotinus, *Enn*. 4.7.3.

the soul's behalf. Socrates' second σῶμα etymology fails to suggest what that might be, unlike his first treatment—where the body as the soul's tomb might be serving as the soul's attendant. The dialogue of the *Cratylus* does not definitively tells us the meaning of Socrates' second σῶμα etymology—as far as I can tell. So, we are obliged to speculate; such speculation should not be idle or unwarranted.

Nevertheless, I am still a bit stuck on the point that the soul uses the human body ***to sign whatever it signs***. This declaration of Socrates seems to imply a plurality of different ***signings***. Some of these may refer to the usage of language, others not. In any case, the point seems to me to be more about the body as a ***whole*** than about the individual, different parts and how the soul uses the σῶμα. These might well be analogous to what Plotinus talks about above. It does seem safe to say that the soul uses the tongue and voice to ***make words***. Regardless, an element remains where the human body appears to be the soul's tool.

I wish to suggest an alternative thought about grasping Socrates' second etymology, which Plotinus alludes to in the above quotations. Could the σῆμα meaning a sign of the soul here intentionally refer to Socrates' etymological treatment of ψυχή in that the soul ***drives*** the actions of the human-animal's body while it is embodied? After all, it is the ψυχή that sustains the human body (399d9-400b3). If the soul supports and sustains the σῶμα, the ψυχή would function as the body's life-force. If this interpretation is valid, it would be reasonable to conclude that the soul drives the body's actions and that the σῶμα illustrates those in a visible manner for the immaterial soul. However, we cannot rule out the possibility of the body influencing the soul to a lesser degree. That issue largely depends on whether the σῶμα has a nature of its own or if it relies solely on the nature of the soul.

A third possible facet exists for σῆμα as meaning "sign" that we need to consider. Does the soul use the human body as an apparatus to communicate? Admittedly, this specific inquiry pushes the boundaries of Socrates' second etymological explanation of the σῶμα deriving from the term σῆμα somewhat—at least, in terms of what initially comes to mind when

thinking of the etymology. I would argue that someone could justifiably raise such a question on two grounds. First, it logically follows from what has been previously stated above regarding the meaning of σῆμα as sign. The notion is within the scope of Socrates' usage of the verb σημαίνει in his second explanation to Hermogenes. Remember that part of the verb's range of meanings includes the following options: "indicate by language; to explain or communicate; to declare, announce, reveal, or signify."[116] Also, recall what Socrates says, "Additionally, on the other hand, the soul indicates by its body whatever the soul indicates; it is also for that reason adequately called sign (σῆμα)" (400c2[b]-c4[a]). Thus, we may rightfully conclude that "the body is the sign of the soul." What is it that the σῆμα wants to communicate? Here is where the second ground for raising the opening question enters the equation. Second, and perhaps more substantially, an epistemological distinction underscores the question. At a minimum, there is a differentiation between different cognitive capacities, a distinction between reason and various sensations. The soul communicates reason to the body so that it can distinguish what is reality from the shadows of allusion. Regardless, it seems quite plausible that the point is—at a minimum—this: the soul uses the human body to speak and to show.

Someone does not merely create a mental construct when providing a connotative definition. Instead, that individual associates concepts by which to apprehend the essences of those things. While the concepts exist within a person's mind, their essences or natures exist independently elsewhere. Thus, we can make a further epistemological distinction between knowledge and belief. Knowledge is cognition that is ***always*** true. If so, knowledge would never be mistaken. Belief, on the other hand, is cognition that can be ***either*** true ***or*** false. In other words, knowledge of reality through sense perception is not entirely reliable. Why? The human senses can be mistaken, and they can be deceived. If the ψυχή is in communion with the human body in the present life, knowledge is possible ***if and only if*** the soul can exist without the σῶμα, which it does after the body's death. Since the ψυχή exists outside

[116] CGL, 2021: 2:1263, s.v. "σημαίνω"; Cunliffe, 1924: 360, s.v. "σημαίνω"; Groves, 1836: 514, s.v. "σημαίνω"; LSJ, 1996: 1952, s.v. "σημαίνω"; Montanari, 2015: 1906, s.v. "σημαίνω."

of time and space in the realm of the Forms in its natural state, it can access universal truths and, in some manner, uses the σῶμα to communicate them. Note that the σῶμα is empty on its own account in that it cannot access the Forms; instead, the σῶμα only experiences the shadows of the Forms. Therefore, the σῶμα appears to be ultimately *accidental* to who the human-animal is based upon this interpretation of Socrates' second usage of the term σῆμα in the σῶμα-σῆμα wordplay.

If this notion were Plato's intention, it would align with the body's overtone being the soul's instrument. Furthermore, we should perhaps understand the σῆμα in Socrates' second account of the σῶμα as a *signifier* of the soul. We know something is entombed in the natural body because it exhibits evidence of the soul's presence; the body is the sign of the soul. Either way, the σῶμα may have a functional purpose as the soul's sign as well as a paradoxical one.

When considering each of these caveats of Socrates' second etymology collectively, one last issue concerning the unique dynamic between the body and the soul comes to mind that requires some reflection. I have debated whether to exclude mentioning this matter and realized it needs addressing, even if I only do so ever so briefly, the more I reflect on this etymology. However, I am still somewhat reluctant to do so as it stretches the bounds of what Socrates provides in his second etymological explanation and heavily draws upon an Aristotelian notion rather than a Platonic one, despite the reality that a handful of passages in Plato's corpus could arguably allude to the position or even, perhaps, deduce such that Aristotle emphatically declares outright.[117] ***Someone could ask whether the soul functions as the human body's Form***. To my knowledge, no Platonic scholar has posed this notion formally with the *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 excerpt in mind or any other passage in the Platonic corpus.[118] At the same time, a handful of scholars have raised a similar question when dealing

[117] Aristotle, *De an*. II.1.412a1-413a10. Cf. Aristotle, *De an*. I.4.408b1-19; II.4.415b8-28.

[118] I am explicitly thinking of such passages riddled throughout *Alcibiades 1*, Books 1, 4, 9, and 10 of the *Republic*, and *Timaeus*. Such is not to ignore the immediate context and its preceding one from the *Cratylus*

with Plato's final argument for the soul's immortality at 102a-107b in the *Phaedo* or when providing a synopsis of Plato's theory of the ψυχή: Is the soul a Form? While this question has a slightly different nuance, the grounds for which they propose the idea are not too different from that put forth in Socrates' second σῶμα etymology, and that has to do with the ultimate teleological function(s) of the soul itself.

The crux concerns whether the soul is a Form, particular, or something else. If the soul is a Form, another question would require addressing. That issue is contemplated further by trying to distinguish whether the soul as a Form is transcendent or immanent. On the contrary, the question of whether the soul is the Form of the σῶμα is pointless if the soul were deemed to be a particular since the human body is a particular. If the soul is something else, such as an intermediate state or status between a Form and a particular, the question of transcendence and immanence may be of even greater significance.

Usually, scholars argue that the ψυχή is either a Form or a particular.[119] Both positions lead to problems ultimately in Plato's Final Argument for Immortality in the *Phaedo*. For the proof to be valid, the soul must shift from a Form to a particular substance, as positing the soul as a Form renders the argument invalid.[120] To take the Affinity Argument seriously requires the soul to be immortal, which cannot be the case if the soul is particular. On the other hand, suggesting the soul is a form makes it difficult to understand Socrates' rationale for arguing for a Form's immortality in the first place. Consider what Bostock says,

> But a more crucial point is that this whole section is working up to the final step, by which we recognize that the soul is itself one of the 'more subtle' causes. This simply cannot mean that the *form* of the soul is a 'more subtle' cause, for if it did then what

dialogue, where Socrates addresses the etymologies of the soul and body. Someone could also consider specific passages from the *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*.

[119] For a scholar who argues the soul functions as a Form, consult Vlastos, 1969: 291-325. Both Archer-Hind (1894: 115-6) and Schiller (1967: 53) advocate that the soul should be understood as a particular. R. Hackforth claims that the soul functions as a Form up until 105e10, at which time its status shifts to that of "the soul as possessor of Form" (1955: 165). Naturally, there are other scholars who are non-committal about the soul's metaphysical status: Bluck, 1956; Frede, 1978: 27-41; Sedley, 1998b: 115-20; Silverman, 2002: 50-9.

[120] Prince, 2011: 23. Cf. Hackforth, 1955: 156-62; Keyt, 1963: 167-72; Stone, 2014: 111.

> Plato would be labouring to prove would be that the *form* of soul is immortal. That is obviously absurd. All forms are automatically immortal, and it is clearly no comfort to me, when faced with death, to be told to cheer up because the *form* of soul will not perish. What is of concern to me is my individual soul, and that must be what the argument is meant to be about.[121]

We cannot suggest that the Forms are unimportant for proving the soul's immortality (100b5-9). Distinguishing between souls in a more general sense and that of a particular, individual soul is vital in this passage. Furthermore, we need to consider the implications of what Lee put forward: that some concepts might be metaphysically neutral entities that should not be seen as transcendent Forms.[122]

A problem persists. While these considerations prompt and motivate additional questions, nowhere does the silent philosopher posit a soul Form for the soul. The views of these scholars presuppose that there is a Form of soul, a presupposition that completely lacks textual evidence in the corpus. That said, it seems plausible to argue for the soul to be something of an intermediate state or status since, in some ways, it acts like a Form and, in other ways, it behaves as a particular. According to Socrates' etymology of the soul, its essential Form is life, which is why we can say that when the soul is in a body, it makes that body alive. Hence, a body that is alive possesses a soul entombed inside.[123]

In this sense, the soul functions as a sign of evidence or proof of its existence within the σῶμα. This understanding is within the range of possible usages of the term σῆμα.[124] The implication suggests that the *sign* is a seal placed upon the human body, at least while the body is alive and before the soul departs from its encasement.

Plato's concept of the human body is one area of study that is too often ignored and neglected in favor of the more interesting theme of the ψυχή. Yet, Plato's exact definition and ontology

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[121] Bostock, 2002: 187.

[122] Lee, 2013: 4-7.

[123] For more on this third metaphysical category, see Stone, 2014: 114-37.

[124] See page 42 n92.

of the σῶμα remains elusive, as does the precise meaning of the σῶμα-σῆμα wordplay. Once we grasp what the human body is for Plato, ***then and only then*** can we determine the proper relationship of the soul to the body and understand its fluidity. There is still the question of Socrates' third etymological explanation for σῶμα to consider.

§2.4 Socrates' Third Σῶμα Etymology

Plato's Socrates offers Hermogenes a third alternative concerning the etymological origins of the term σῶμα for him to contemplate, one with which his interlocutor would likely be very familiar from hearing tales passed down through the oral traditions of yesteryear.[125] With this option, the philosopher provides a more descriptive explanation, giving some significant details. Socrates goes on to say,

> But to me, most certainly, those affiliated with Orpheus seem to sign this name (σῶμα) in that they suppose as if the soul is undergoing punishment for something, and they think that the soul has this [the body] as its enclosure—an image of a prison—in order that it may be secure (σῴζηται); so this is, as its name implies, "the safe" (σῶμα) of the soul until the penalty [debt] is paid (400c7[b]-c9[a]).

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[125] To the ancient Greeks, myth is part of their cultural heritage that recounts events during its inaccessible yesteryear (Fowler, 2017: 17; Graf, 1993: 121-41). Massive cultural implications result from this reality. The public performance of music and dance as recitation of mythical poetry is one example of such a notion. However, there may not be consistency among the poets in retelling the story. Fowler notes that each poet stresses aspects of the myth differently based on the individual's position of which elements were more significant. These details play on the poet's understanding of the religious and cultural influence in the various Greek cities in which the poet recounts the tale. Each time the poet is in a different polis, the retelling may have a distinct flair added that was previously absent (Fowler, 2017: 18; Cf. Kirk, 1978: 38). Part of the reason for the poet's editing lies in the built-in triad of μῦθος—the narrator, mythos, and audience. The narrator naturally wants to embellish aspects of the story for entertainment purposes. By implication, what the ***truth*** is might be invented rather than discovered as caveats of the initial version become blurred.

For the ancient Greeks, a myth expresses their history (Bremmer, 1990: 5-6; Freund, 1965: 25; Gernet and Boulanger, 1932; Nilsson, 1949: 38-75; Sailors, 2007: 9; Snell, 1982: 43, 63, 90-1, 97). No single Greek myth stands alone. They are all somehow interconnected, with each leading to another (Sailors, 2007: 22). Such gives rise to the thought that myth conveys a worldview for the people in which the myth originates (Austin, 1990: 23). Lauri Honko realizes this challenge: "Philosophers who have been eager to abolish myth have realized that a vacuum is immediately created if the contribution made by myth to culture is explained away" (1984: 43).

For additional insight on the impact and significance of myth in ancient Greek culture, consult Burkert, 1979; Burkert, 1981: 11-35; Caldwell, 1989; Court, 1960: 580-627; Csapo, 2005; Eliade, 1963; Frye, 1963; Hatab, 1990; Kirk, 1970; Kirk, 1984: 53-61; Malinowski, 1926; Pettazzoni, 1984: 98-109.

Unfortunately, Socrates' third etymology is vexing and may cause additional frustration in attempting to determine what the σῶμα is for Plato, the silent philosopher. While Socrates is more explanatory here than previously, his rhetoric remains ambiguous—at least for us today since he comes across as somewhat playful and speaking tongue-in-cheek. Yet—at the same time—it is alluring and remains perplexing. Socrates forces us to ask ourselves whether there is any validity in any of these three etymologies. This notion requires an account of what it means for an etymology to be correct and, thus, valid, a question I take up in Chapter 3.

On this account of the σῶμα, Socrates suggests that the Greek term σῶμα might derive from the verb root σῴζω, which means the word "body" may derive from the verb for "to secure," in the sense of a ***keeping something safe and secure*** because the soul is secure within its embodiment in the human body. A careful reading of this etymology reveals that it is the Greek term περίβολον that the verb σῴζηται describes as keeping the soul secure; hence, why I present the third etymology as the body is an enclosure in the opening pages of this chapter. Remember that I also stated that Plato's Socrates further qualifies this enclosure in two ways: (1) by declaring it is to keep the soul secure and (2) as if it were a prison or like one. Thus, we have much more to examine and consider with this etymology than the previous two. We will also have to return to some issues discussed previously in Socrates' first etymology given to his interlocutor, Hermogenes, since they reappear in his third.

Before I proceed too much further, it would be advantageous for me to examine the three fundamental terms that outline Socrates' third σῶμα etymology since they will likely prove crucial for us to properly grasp what the philosopher means by his usage of calling the body the ***enclosure of the soul, keeping it secure as a prison***. The first of the terms to examine is the adjective περίβολον, which its noun form is περίβολος. This Greek term has a variety of potential meanings depending on its surrounding context. Here are the various options: "compassing, encircling, fence, spires or coils of a serpent, of a tomb, a wrapping, enclosing

wall, a town wall, fortification, a cage, as a case or casing, wall of the heart, an area enclosed, enclosure, protection, defense, or a temple."[126] Now, let us take into account the possible renderings of the verb σῴζηται in its root form σῴζω: "to save (from death), preserve, keep, guard, watch, defend, protect, deliver, rescue, keep alive, keep in good condition."[127] The next word to review is δεσμωτήριον, the less popular noun for "prison or place of imprisonment";[128] whereas the more commonly used word φρουρά has a broader range of meanings: "a guard, watch, garrison, a fort, fortress, guard-house, prison, or dungeon."[129] This term is more controversial than δεσμωτήριον because of its scope of meanings when associated with the human body. I shall say more about this issue a bit later in this section. Implicitly, then, this etymology derives its justification from a purported similarity that obtains between the notion of the human body saving the soul as opposed to souls saving themselves. The thought that the σῶμα encapsulates the ψυχή in some fashion continues here in Socrates' third etymology. However, the nuance has changed yet again. Instead of the body enclosing the soul as a tomb or the soul allowing the body to exhibit animation because of its embodiment, the σῶμα functions as a means of protection for the soul until a particular point in time when the soul's debt is paid in full. Socrates immediately traces out a reason for this association: those who name the body σῶμα did so because they thought of it as a safe. Thus, "the body is the safe of the soul."

Based upon Socrates' third etymological account, the ethical-apocalyptic theme introduced in his first account of the σῶμα-σῆμα wordplay carries over into this concession; the wordplay, however, morphs ever so slightly to σῶμα-σῶμα, body-safe. Here, the human body takes on a new characteristic, adding a redemptive quality to it since Socrates' expanded explanation declares that the soul has a debt to pay. Hence, another question enters the

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[126] CGL, 2021: 2:1110, s.v. "περίβολος, ον"; Groves, 1836: 456, s.v. "περίβολος, ον"; LSJ, 1996: 1370, s.v. "περίβολος, ον, (περιβάλλω)"; Montanari, 2015: 1621, s.v. "περίβολος, ον, (περιβάλλω)."

[127] CGL, 2021: 2:1352, s.v. "σῴζω"; Cunliffe, 1924: 372, s.v. "σῴζω"; Groves, 1836: 550, s.v. "σῴζω"; LSJ, 1996: 1748, s.v. "σῴζω"; Montanari, 2015: 2072, s.v. "σῴζω."

[128] CGL, 2021: 1:331, s.v. "δεσμωτήριον, τό"; LSJ, 1996: 380, s.v. "δεσμωτήριον, τό"; Montanari, 2015:468, s.v. "δεσμωτήριον, τό."

[129] Beekes, 2010: 2:1592-3, s. v. "φρουρά"; CGL, 2021: 2: 1480, s. v. "φρουρά"; Groves, 1836: 594, s. v. "φρουρά"; LSJ, 1996: 1957, s. v. "φρουρά"; Montanari, 2015: 2310, s. v. "φρουρά."

ongoing discussion: Could the σῶμα be, for Plato, a means for atonement or purification process for the ψυχή? Even though such a judgment seems the direct result of a natural reading of the *Cratylus* 400c7[b]-c9[a] excerpt and a result of the insertion of Orphic doctrine into Socrates' etymological account, such an inference necessitates more to warrant a firm verdict.

Therefore, several elements within Socrates' explanation demand further assessment before drawing precise, hard conclusions.[130] It is feasible to restructure those elements ever so slightly into the premises of an argument. Each would require strict scrutiny:

> P^1: The soul is undergoing punishment for something (δίκην διδούσης).
>
> P^2: The body is the enclosure (περίβολον) of the soul.
>
> P^3: The body is to keep secure (ἵνα σῴζηται) the soul.
>
> P^4: This enclosure is an image of or like a prison (δεσμωτηρίου).
>
> ∴: The name σῶμα implies that the body is the safe of the soul until its debt is paid in full (ὀφειλόμενα).[131]

Each caveat of the third σῶμα etymology builds upon the previous. Plato fails to provide a more detailed depiction of these qualitative characteristics that establish his character Socrates' unique etymology beyond what appears in the *Cratylus* dialogue other than a few isolated, obscure statements in other dialogues. That silence could be because his immediate audience was aware of the inferences he was alluding to, unlike us—the modern-day reader—who are more than two millennia removed from the historical context. I desire to flush out Plato's character Socrates' intended meaning for his final etymological explanation of the term σῶμα given to Hermogenes. Again, the purpose is to determine whether these three etymologies unveil Plato's understanding of what the σῶμα is and its potential ontology.

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[130] I am intentionally skipping over several exegetical issues at the forefront of Socrates' third etymology for the term σῶμα because those matters deal primarily with the origin of the explanation given to Hermogenes. See page 29 n62.

[131] Even though I lay out this etymology as an argument, we must remember that Plato's Socrates presented Hermogenes an etymology, not a formal argument. I purposefully want to show the progression within Socrates' mind in developing his final etymological explanation of what the human body is.

While his initial audience would have understood the intended meaning based on their usage in the surrounding context, the modern reader may not necessarily grasp the philosophical implications and ramifications of what Plato's Socrates says. Socrates' silence is an invitation to investigate the various nuances mentioned above. Consequently, two natural questions emerge at the forefront. First, how should an individual discern what Socrates conveys by each idiosyncratic assertion? Second, how does each statement—when taken as a part of the whole etymology—intertwine to establish the awareness of the notion of σῶμα qua σῶμα?

It is crucial to remember that the human-animal comprises two distinct entities—soul and body. As a metaphysical dichotomy, each substance contributes something unique to what the human-animal is. While Plato presents multiple meanings for the term ***substance*** throughout his writings, the *Cratylus* dialogue concerns itself with only one of these: οὐσία, the essential essence or nature within things that differentiate one thing from other beings and makes them what they are. Therefore, this metaphysical dichotomy could be integral in determining the proper interpretation of the significant features that constitute Socrates' σῶμα etymology here.

According to Socrates' first declaration, the soul is undergoing punishment for something (δίκην διδούσης). A basic, unstated presupposition underlies this first premise: the ψυχή undergoes this punishment while embodied within this enclosure known as the σῶμα. We know that the soul's embodied union with the human body is unnatural based on everything Socrates has stated since his treatment of the etymology of ἄνθρωπος. We do not know, however, why the soul is being punished or for what sin(s) it must atone.

While Socrates appeals to his interlocutor's knowledge of tales from remote Greek history and Orphism, modern-day readers are left bewildered. We are over three millennia removed from the historical context to which Socrates refers. Here is where a basic knowledge of the convergence of cosmological and anthropological motifs in the Orphic tradition is vital to

grasping fully what Plato's Socrates advocates in the third σῶμα etymology.

There is a genesis with all things—a moment where it all begins. The origin of humanity is not without exception. The question is whether that *so-called* origin has any truth behind it or if it is nothing but a myth, mere speculation of the human mind. Must *myth* be conjecture? Could it be an attempt to explain or understand the truth of reality, filling in gaps of the unknown with an account of what occurred before recorded history in a form that a specific society in which it arose could grasp quickly?

Here is a hint to what we face trying to decode Socrates' final σῶμα etymology. To grasp what he says, we must investigate ancient Greek theogony—the origins and genealogies of the Greek gods. Such is the source of the genesis of the Greek anthropogeny myth.

Bréhier notes that the Orphic-Pythagorean tradition represents the soul's entrance into the sensible world as a fall.[132] This claim may illuminate why the Orphics—and perhaps the Pythagoreans—believe the soul has a debt to pay. We must discover the why hidden behind her claim to discover insight into Socrates' intended meaning for his final σῶμα etymology. The *Cratylus* testimony emphatically declares that the soul is undergoing punishment for something; the question remains as to why.

If the soul's coming into the realm of Becoming is the result of a fall, its embodiment in the human body would be reprehensible.[133] This fallen state of the soul resulted from a savage state of affairs, according to the Orphic myth.

> Zeus mated with his daughter Persephone, who bore a son, Zagreus, which is another name for Dionysus. In her jealousy, Hera then aroused the Titans to attack the child. These monstrous beings, their faces whitened with chalk, attacked the infant as he was looking in a mirror (in another version, they beguiled him with toys and cut him to pieces with knives). After the murder, the Titans devoured the dismembered corpse.

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[132] Bréhier, 1967: 55-6. According to Inge, the Orphics were the first to teach that the soul of man is fallen (1948: 1.87; 1.201). He claims, "It is in prison until the end of the cosmic year of ten thousand solar years" (1948: 1.201).

[133] Plotinus, *Enn*. 4.8.1.

> But the heart of the infant god was saved and brought to Zeus by Athena, and Dionysus was born again—swallowed by Zeus and begotten on Semele. Zeus was angry with the Titans and destroyed them with his thunder and lightning, but from the ashes humankind was born.
>
> Surely this is one of the most significant myths in terms of the religious dogma that it provides. By it human beings are endowed with a dual nature—a body gross and evil (since we are sprung from the Titans) and a soul that is pure and divine (for after all the Titans had devoured the god). Thus basic religious concepts (which lie at the root of all mystery religions) are accounted for: sin, immortality, resurrection, life after death, reward, and punishment.[134]

In this mythic account, Dionysus is spiritualized as Zagreus.

According to *Gorgias* 524e-525a, if the soul is immortal, it shall be judged—bearing the marks and scars of its actions while entombed in the body.[135] Such a notion is consistent with our *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 excerpt. However, we are not told why the soul is condemned to pay for its sin(s) beyond the fact that it must do so. If accurate in Orphic dogma, the Zagreus myth accounts for why the soul has a sin debt to pay off.[136]

The next portion of Socrates' final σῶμα etymology puts forth the human body as the enclosure of the soul to keep it secure. The assumption is that the first of Socrates' claims is

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[134] Morford, Lenardon, and Sham, 2014: 326. Cf. Alderink, 1981: 25-53; Bremmer, 2004: 35-61; Bremmer, 2008: 73-99; Dio Chrysostomus, *Orat*. XXX.550; Diodorus, V 75.4-5; Lobeck, 1829: 1.357-9; *Meno* 81b-c; Nilsson, 1935: 202; Preller, 1894: 1.706 n2. Pausanias VIII 37.5 = Kern, 1922: fr. 186. Παρὰ δὲ Ὁμήρου Ὀνομάχριτος παραλαβὼν τῶν Τιτάνων τὸ ὄνομα Διονύῳ τε σθνέθηχεν ὄργια, καὶ εἶναι τοὺς Τιτᾶνας τῳ Διονύσῳ τῶν παθημάτων ἐποίησεν αὐτοθργούς. Cf. Diodorus V 75: τούτον τὸν θεὸν γεγονέναι φασὶν ἐχ Διὸς καὶ Περσεφόνης δν Ὀρφεὺς κατὰ τὰς τελετὰς παρέδωχε διασπώμενον ὑπὸ τῶν Τιτάνων.

I must note that Edmonds III's research since 1999 has questioned the notion of original sin in Orphic thought and its connection to the Zagreus myth. For the dissenting view, consult Edmonds III, 1999: 35-73; Edmonds III, 2004; Edmonds III, 2008b. I do not wish to belabor the points of contention against the myth to Orphic dogma. Edmonds III's logic follows that of Linforth (1941), which others have successfully argued against. One point that is worth noting is that the Zagreus myth records do not appear to advocate the notion of original sin being transferred to humanity. Cf. Diodorus, IV 4.1, 4.5, 5.2, 6.1, V 75.4; Pausanias, VII 19.4, VIII 37.1, Clement, *Protr*. II.15; Nonnus, IV 268-9, V 562-3, VI 155-7, X 290-1, XXIV 43-4, XXXI 28-9, XXXVI 119-20 XXXVIII 206-7, XXXIX 70-1, XXXXIV 198-9, XXXXVIII 41-2, 962-3.

[135] Cf. *Rep*. VII 614d for a similar thought process about the body bearing scars of its crimes.

[136] While one could surmise that I am influenced by the Christian dogma of the hall of humankind here, that is not the case. Consult Alderink, 1981: 25-85. Granted, there is the idea elsewhere in the Platonic corpus that humanity's sin appears to be to live unexamined lives; for example, see *Rep*. X on the Myth of the Er and metempsychosis. However, the *Cratylus* excerpt strongly suggests that the sin stems from something else.

accurate. If so, then we must assume that his description is as well. We have no reason to doubt Plato's Socrates. Remember that he is presented as an expert philologist by the silent philosopher. Until the nineteenth century, the notion of a prison was a place of detention for an individual awaiting trial or execution—not a means of punishment.[137] On the other hand, the tomb connotes death and pollution.[138]

Could our text's *punishment* point to something of an ascetic lifestyle? If so, the punishment *per se* would not necessarily be for past sins committed by the soul. It would suggest that there is something else to which it looks for redemption or perhaps liberation. Such would further mean that the soul's stay in the human body is not wholly unpleasant. Thus, the σῶμα could be correctly called a protecting enclosure (περίβολος) of the soul.[139]

Fortunately, Plato may offer us another text that could plausibly illuminate his meaning here. We need to consider what he says in the *Timaeus*. At 73d, Plato states, "The Demiurge built the body around the soul for a shelter." Then, at 74a, we find the following claim: "For preserving (διασῴζων) the seed, the Demiurge closes it in with a ring-fence (περίβολος) of stony substance." At 81e, Plato urges that an untimely departure of the soul from its shelter is painful for the soul itself. These three passages from the *Timaeus* seem to support the notion that, in Plato's perspective, the σῶμα is meant to protect the soul rather than punish it. If such is the case, we should then understand περίβολος in the 400b11-c10 excerpt in the sense of a ***protecting structure*** with the intent to keep the soul safe. Such a view also seems consistent with the Orphic and Pythagorean creeds.

In the preceding point, we learned that περίβολος could have the meaning of a protecting structure and that it is reasonable to believe that Plato has this perspective in mind. I excluded two fundamental terms from that brief discussion: δεσμωτηρίου εἰκόνα. Does adding these

[137] Finkelberg, 2017: 100 n33.
[138] Parker, 1983: 35-48.
[139] Cf. *Theaet*. 197c; *Leg*. VI 759a.

two words topple the hypothesis that the human body is a protective structure?

We cannot deny that Plato describes the σῶμα as the prison of the soul, for the corpus testimony is too strong for a denial.[140] When the soul is in its incarnate state, it is "chained to a body" (*Phd*. 81e), "entombed as it were, in its present body" (*Crat*. 400c), "disfigured due to its association with the body (*Rep*. X 611c-e), and "encased in the body as an oyster-shell" (*Phdr*. 250c). However, there is a question about how we should understand this adage.

> As repeatedly said, the Orphic considered the body as a prison wherein the soul pays for the sin committed by the Titans, which constitutes its inherited weakness. From this prison, souls can finally escape through death, the only perfect catharsis, the unique, complete deliverance, to speak properly, can be assured only by destruction of the body. While the body exists there is a possibility that the soul may again enter its former prison. Hence the necessity, not only of death, but also of a funeral rite which involves the annihilation of the body.[141]
>
> They believed that fire had the power to blot away the sins of the soul, and especially the original Titanic sin.[142]
>
> Antiquity considered Orphism and Pythagoreanism as one and the same thing. But it is plain that the assumption of their real identity relates only to certain religious features, some rites which both of them undoubtedly had in common.... Like, Orphism, Pythagoreanism assumed the human inheritance of the Titan's sin, for which souls are obliged to atone by being kept prisoners in the body.[143]

Must it be understood in light of Orphic dogma?

It is possible to understand this *prison* similarly to Plato's usage of περίβολος. I made this point previously in this section.[144] We can grasp the imagery as a place that is guarded. Upon a closer examination of the Greek text, Socrates does not say that the soul is in the prison of the human body. It is a secret doctrine that tells us such is the case.

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[140] *Crat*. 400b11-c10; *Gorg*. 493a; *Phd*. 62b, 67d, 81e, 82e, 114c; *Rep*. VII 517b. Cf. Courcelle, 1974: 345-80.

[141] Macchioro, 1930: 118.

[142] Macchioro, 1930: 119.

[143] Macchioro, 1930: 167. Cf. Herodotus, II.81; Iambl. *VP* 151.

[144] See page 58 n126.

There is a significant question to consider concerning Plato's usage of the Orphic schema, σῶμα-σῆμα. Does Plato affirm and believe the teaching, or is he just reporting an ancient doctrine? In both the *Cratylus* and *Gorgias* accounts, Plato seems to be reporting the position more than affirming it. Plato, however, seems to affirm the doctrine in other accounts where he speaks of the teaching. If Plato is affirming the doctrine, then the statement—on the surface—would be a direct claim on what the σῶμα is or is like.

If it means that the human body is *only* accidental to human ontology, we could find several ways to disprove this notion.[145] If it means that the σῶμα is to express an essential and fundamental weakness of the soul, then Plato's etymology is of great importance since it reveals an important truth. Since the ψυχή is shackled to the σῶμα, it experiences the same sufferings that the body endures.[146] How someone feels directly affects that person's capability of clear, rational thought. For example, a person suffering from migraines may one day be incapable of critical thinking, another day do so but not well, and another time can reason quite well depending on the severity of the migraine pain. Thus, the individual's reasoning faculties are also dull as part of the natural aging process. Therefore, Plato seems justified in calling the σῶμα a prison. This concept makes me wonder if Plato has an ethical definition in mind for the σῶμα as part of the redemptive aspect.

Reale notes

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[145] Remember that Timaeus believes that individual souls exist before their embodiment (41d). So, the body is certainly accidental to the individual soul-being. Additionally, the account of the transmigration of souls in the *Phaedo* (78b-84b) passages about souls that remain lurking by graves, which cannot descend, and the notion of withdrawing from the body as a form of purification (81d) all support the fact that the σῶμα is accidental to human ontology. The question in play here is whether it is more than just accidental. The body seems as an ***essential element*** of the human-animal as well. However, this distinction may not square with Plato's ontology perfectly. There are some difficult questions here about that ***matter*** as being part of the definition of the thing. The Athenian Stranger, in the *Laws* X 896b10-c3, translates σῶμα as matter. So, should this be considered as part of its definition? Aristotle has much to say about this notion in the *Metaphysics*. We must resist the urge to transpose Aristotle back into Plato's philosophical thought.

[146] *Phd*. 64d, 65b, 66, 82c, 114e; *Rep*. X 608d-611a; *Tim*. 86b-87b. When the incarnate soul is connected with the body, it is defiled and polluted until it is ***purified*** as it separates from the human body (*Phd*. 67a-c, 80e).

> What gives meaning to this life is the eschatological destiny of the soul, that is, the other life; the here and now has a meaning only if compared to an afterlife, where the just and virtuous man is rewarded, and the unjust and wicked is punished.[147]

According to Plato, it is the soul of those who do evil that does not wish to depart from the confines of the body in the realm of Becoming, for it knows punishment awaits (*Phd*. 108a-b). Therefore, the name σῶμα implies that the body is the safe of the soul until its debt is paid in full (ὀφειλόμενα).[148]

§2.5 Establishing Socrates' Preferred Σῶμα Etymology

Now that I have completed the exegetical analysis of the *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 excerpt, it is prudent to conclude which of the three σῶμα etymologies is Socrates' preferred one. I would argue that it is the last one—σῶμα *qua* σῶμα. While there are features within the first two σῶμα etymologies that carry over into the third, it is not easy to overcome the notion that σῶμα derives from σῆμα. This etymological connection, though plausible, is not as straightforward as Socrates' last etymological explanation.

Here is the argument why Socrates' last etymology is preferred. Socrates' third σῶμα etymology is much more pregnant than his previous two treatments in that the philosopher provides more significant details about the origins of the Greek term σῶμα and directly points to the Orphics for its formulation. I shall approach it more systematically than I have done with the previous two etymologies. For this reason, I want to address a more pressing issue staring us in the face before moving forward with the examination of the various claims about the soul's relationship with the σῶμα that I mentioned above. I wish to return to the text of Socrates' third etymological explanation to Hermogenes. Again, see what Plato's character Socrates says, as the expert on etymologies,

> But to me, most certainly, those affiliated with Orpheus seem to sign this name (σῶμα) in that they suppose as if the soul is undergoing punishment for something, and they think that the soul has this [the body] as its enclosure—an image of a prison—in order

[147] Reale, 2018: 636. Cf. Bottini, 1992; Boyancé, 1963: 7-11; Bremmer, 2019: 175-95.

[148] For an overview of the religious dimension in Socrates' thought, consult Beckman, 1979; Brickhouse and Smith, 1994: 176-212; Gadamer, 1985: 53-75; McPherran, 1999.

> that it may be secure (σῴζηται); so this is, as its name implies, "the safe" (σῶμα) of the soul until the penalty [debt] is paid (400c7[b]-c9[a]).

I specifically want to focus our attention momentarily on the opening portion of what Socrates says as a means of introduction to his third etymological explanation for the term σῶμα.

Several features require addressing here. Those who are familiar with Plato's *Cratylus* will notice that I translate "δοκοῦσι μέντοι μοι μάλιστα θέσθαι οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα" differently from how most scholars read and understand the Greek text. Most scholars translate this segment of the *Cratylus* text as equivalent to something similar to how Reeve translates it: "I think it is most likely the followers of Orpheus who gave the body its name."[149] My primary concern with how the more popular translations, such as Reeve's and others, read centers around a single point of contention—how they handle the verb δοκοῦσι with the pronoun μοι in its dative form. These translators all see the verb δοκοῦσι corresponding to the dative pronoun μοι. Hence, they read as something to the effect of "I [Socrates] think that" or "It seems to me that," suggesting that Socrates introduces his own, personal opinion as in creating an entirely new etymology for his current treatment rather than recounting a known or already established etymology. This issue is a source of debate among some Platonic scholars.

That said, the *Cratylus* excerpt does acknowledge Socrates' personal opinion but not in the manner in which the traditional renderings portray it or how Bernabé believes regarding a relationship between δοκοῦσι and μοι. Here is where the second error comes into focus. The text indicates that the last σῶμα explanation is Socrates' opinion (that is, if someone wants to hold this view), but because of that, it follows after the placement of the pronoun, not before it. The appearance of the opening verb δοκοῦσι does not prove that this etymology is Socrates' opinion or of his making. Socrates recounts the etymology provided by the Orphics.

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[149] Reeve, 1998: 30. Cf. Bernabé, 1995: 206; Cornford, 1903: 436; Dalimier, 1998: 106-7; Fowler, 1926: 63; Sachs, 2011: 178. Compare these to how Jowett, 1892: 343 and Proclus, 2014: 76 render the Greek text.

A handful of scholars have drawn attention to this evidence between 1901 and 1987. For some unknown reason, these sources remain eerily silent in most of the treatments that focus on Socrates' σῶμα treatments because the researcher does not consult them. Tannery declares that "Socrates prefers to derive σῶμα from σώζεσθαι."[150] Rathmann concludes that since Socrates moves forward to reveal the relationship between σῶμα and σῴζηται in lieu of elaborating σῆμα from σηαίνεν stresses that it is Socrates' personal perspective he shares.[151] His understanding of the Orphics' doctrine surrounding the human body's nature heavily influences that perspective. Surprisingly, Boyancé realizes that the last σῶμα etymological explanation is related to the Orphics; he goes on to say that it is not until Socrates' attribution to them that the word itself is instituted.[152] Despite expressing some doubts and reservations about the ascription of the etymology, Nilsson[153] and Timpanaro Cardini[154] acknowledge the fact that it is likely Socrates who established this etymology for the term σῶμα. Then, Rehrenböck testifies that it is Socrates who expresses his personal opinion by giving the final σῶμα explanation.[155] Finally, Casadio notes, "what Plato attributes to the Orphics and the idea of atonement for sins [is] not necessarily the etymological link between sòma e sòzo."[156]

If those who advocate that Socrates is the author of this etymological perspective are correct, there could be still another clue in the grammatical syntax of the passage that could support their claim that the etymology expert himself puts forth the final etymology based on his understanding of teachings on the human body within Orphism. With the inclusion of the adverb μάλιστα ("above all; especially; most certainly; more than anything"),[157] Plato's Socrates gives the impression that he has found a *new* means to improve upon his first two

[150] Tannery, 1901: 314.
[151] Rathmann, 1933: 65.
[152] Boyancé, 1941: 160.
[153] Nilsson, 1935: 205.
[154] Timpanaro Cardini, 2010: 433.
[155] Rehrenböck, 1975: 26.
[156] Casadio, 1987: 390.
[157] Beekes, 2010: 2:895-6, s.v. "μάλα"; CGL, 2021: 2:891, s.v. "μάλα; Cunliffe, 1924: 254, s.v. "μάλα"; Groves, 1836: 376, s.v. "μάλα"; LSJ, 1996: 1076, s.v. "μάλα"; Montanari, 2015: 1274-5, s.v. "μάλα."

σῶμα etymologies in which he said the term derives from σῆμα. The presence of the particle μέντοι seems to support such a view further, as it indicates a shift in Socrates' thought process concerning what he just finished saying about the origins of the term for the human body. This inclusion of the particle seems to imply that he is about to introduce a refutation to his former explanations, at least in the minds of some Platonic scholars.[158] Drawing such a conclusion could be inaccurate. Socrates could merely provide a contrast rather than a refutation; likewise, he could further elaborate on what he has already stated from a different perspective. Another possibility exists here. Plato's Socrates could be expressing his thoughts on which σῶμα etymology is his personal preference with the expression μέντοι μοι μάλιστα. We must, however, remember that someone can argue that these etymologies may be understood as being bifurcationary and not necessarily contradictory between them. Once again, we must not read more into the dialogue's text than is there, and we must keep the spirit of Occam's Razor in mind. Regardless, a new alternative proposal is now forthcoming for the σῶμα-σῆμα schema that alters it to σῶμα-σῶμα.

Socrates goes on to unveil the primary reason why he believes the Orphics assign (θέσθαι οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα) the human body the name σῶμα. Cornford captures this notion when he writes,

> Socrates, still under Euthyphro's inspiration, goes on to derive ἥρως from ἔρως εἴρειν ἐρωτᾶν and ἄνθρωπος from ἀναθρῶν ἃ ὄπωπεν, and finally to improve on the Orphic σῶμα σῆμα by suggesting that the body is the prison-house in which the soul σῴζεται till it shall have paid the debt of its sins.[159]

Even though the philosopher provides a series of reasons to support what he says, he is the one who appears to make the association between σῶμα and ἵνα σῴζηται—not those affiliated with Orpheus. Socrates' rationale, however, does draw on specific Orphic teachings for its acceptance and approval. In other words, he brings legitimacy to this final etymology because he links these Orphic theories together to provide Hermogenes with a new twist for an etymological treatment to justify why the Greeks associate the term σῶμα with the

[158] Dodds, 1957: 169-70 n87; Sedley, 2003c: 75.
[159] Cornford, 1903: 433.

human body.

An additional clue in the Greek text may further indicate this explanation is of Socrates' making for some Platonic scholars. That is the insertion of the particle οὖν ("certainly; in fact; so; therefore; consequently; accordingly").[160] In the excerpt, the particle functions for an inferential purpose since it denotes that what it introduces is the result of or an inference from what directly precedes it. The word presents a logical conclusion to what Socrates has been saying concerning his thoughts on the last clarification on the origins of σῶμα. Although it seems that the term σῶμα is the perfectly constructed name for the morphological perspective from the verb σῴζω, that very well may not be the case at all.

How Socrates boasts of his linguistic accuracy—καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖν παράγειν οὐδ' ἓν γράμμα[161]—suggests otherwise. It is as if he expresses his own satisfaction for having found an etymology of σῶμα that accurately encapsulates the Orphic teachings and, more importantly, does not require alternation in its spelling—unlike the alternative etymologies that stem from the term σῆμα, which force a vowel change ω by η. Thus, it is not that the etymology of σῶμα derives from σῴζω, but instead, σῶμα derives directly from σῶμα, as Socrates coins this precise etymological explanation. Saying σῶμα qua σῶμα is another way of wording this morphological perspective.

Plato could purposefully have his character Socrates transpose the authorship of the etymology to some level. This perspective is not airtight, however. The Greek text seems clear that the Orphics, not Socrates, are the ones who assign the name to the human body for specific reasons. Furthermore, reading the passage as Plato's Socrates recounts and affirms the Orphic etymology seems very natural. I want to draw attention to the phrase θέσθαι οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα again. The verb θέσθαι appears in the aorist middle infinitive tense. However,

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[160] Beekes, 2010: 2:1127, s.v. "οὖν"; CGL, 2021: 2:1038, s.v. "οὖν"; Cunliffe, 1924: 305, s.v. "οὖν"; Groves, 1836: 429, s.v. "οὖν"; LSJ, 1996: 1271, s.v. "οὖν"; Montanari, 2015: 1503-4, s.v. "οὖν."

[161] According to Rehrenböck, this phraseology is equivalent to ἂν μὲν καὶ σμικρόν τις παρακλίνῃ (*Crat*. 400b11-c1) at the beginning of Socrates' σῶμα etymologies (1975: 26).

there are some sources that advocate otherwise, saying it is an irregular liquid verb of τίθημι.[162] That said, its cognate forms appear no less than twenty times,[163] and those recur no less than forty-nine times in the *Cratylus* dialogue,[164] especially its relation with the noun for "lawgiver" or "name-maker" (νομοθέτης) assigning a particular name to a specific thing.[165] This portion of the 400b11-c10 excerpt of the *Cratylus* appears to advocate the Orphics as the origin of the name σῶμα to name the human body adequately. Suggesting that Socrates is the individual who coins the final etymology seems rather strange since the word occurs within Homer and Hesiod.[166]

Furthermore, Plato's inclusion and use of θέσθαι could be much more significant than it looks during a precursory reading of the passage, as Bernabé notes.[167] Plato could be implying one of two points here: either (1) the ancient chronologies of Orpheus are older than Homer and Hesiod, or (2) the Orphics agree with Homer's preference to use σῶμα when designating a *corpse* from that of a *living* human body.[168] Bernabé believes the latter option could be entirely plausible since the thought of a human body being a corpse would be consistent with the Orphic worldview.[169]

I mean no disrespect. I must disagree with Bernabé on this issue because I have already shown

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[162] The endings of a liquid verb do not follow the typical Greek pattern formation. See Smyth, 1920: 141, specifically §419; White, 1896: 193-6, 254, 288, specifically §788.

[163] Here are the various forms of τίθημι found within the text of the *Cratylus*—words that occur once (ἐθέμην; ἐτίθεντο; ἔθεντο; ἔθεσαν; θέμενον; θήσεσθαι; θῆται; τιθείς; τίθενται; τίεσαι; τίθεται); occur twice (θείς; τεθήναι; τὶθεμαι); occur three times (ἐτίθετο); occur four times (τιθέμενον; τιθέναι; τίθεσθαι); occur six times (ἔθετο; θέσθαι; τιθέμεως).

[164] *Crat*. 384d2; 385d9; 386b9; 389a1; 389a6; 389c8; 389d6; 389d8; 390d7; 390e4; 391b2; 393a1; 393e8; 394a9; 395d5; 397b4; 398c2; 400c5; 401a5; 402b2; 402b4; 404c3; 406b6 (twice); 406c1; 416b3; 416b4; 416c2; 417b4; 419a5; 425d8; 427a8; 431b6; 433b7; 436b6; 436b9; 436c1 (twice); 436c4; 436c8; 437c6; 438a4; 438a5 (twice); 438a8-9 (twice); 438b4; 438c4 (twice); 439c2.

[165] Interestingly, the term νομοθέτης is a compound noun from νόμος (law) plus the verb τίθημι (to give, assign). Here are a few examples where νομοθέτης is in proximity with τίθημι: *Crat*. 389a1-2; 389a5-6; 389d9; 390d5-7; 393e8; 404c2-3; 438b4-5.

[166] See page 18 n34. Cf. Boyancé, 1941: 160; Renehan, 1979: 271-3.

[167] Bernabé, 1995: 210.

[168] Ferwerda, 1985: 266-8; Ferwerda, 1986: 111-3.

[169] Bernabé, 1995: 210.

that Homer and Hesiod both use the term σῶμα to reference both dead and living human bodies.[170] While the notion of the σῶμα corresponding to a corpse may be consistent with the Orphic worldview, it seems much more likely that Orpheus and the Orphics are distant predecessors of Homer and Hesiod,[171] despite both poets not mentioning Orpheus in their literary works.

I want to turn our attention to the expression οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα. It is worthwhile devoting some time to it since influential scholars of previous generations have approached its subject matter with a lack of critical honesty. According to Guthrie, "the question of the existence of something called Orphism, and if it exists, its nature, is one of the most hotly disputed in the field of Greek religion."[172] Guthrie's assessment captures the essence of the environment that gives rise to the biases against Plato's character Socrates' ascription to the Orphics when discussing the final etymological treatment of the term σῶμα.

It is poor scholarship for someone to question whether the Orphics existed solely based on obscure references within the Platonic corpus. How Plato introduces this mysterious religious group in the *Cratylus* dialogue is essentially the same stylistic method he ploys to denote the followers of or schools of thought that originated from Protagoras[173] and Heraclitus.[174] For certain scholars of the twentieth century to question the Orphics' existence because of what is or, more importantly, what is lacking within Plato's dialogues is ludicrous. Using their logic, they must question the same to be done to other schools of philosophical thought that Plato mentions similarly—unless a particular reason exists for

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[170] See page 18 n34.

[171] The oldest uncontested reference to Orpheus is a fragment from the poet Ibycus from the sixth century BCE in which he scribes "ὀνομακλυτὸν Ὄρφην" (Edmonds, 1924: 2:90, fr. 10). While the opinion in antiquity as to when Orpheus lived is divided, most writers of the period believed that he lived in remote antiquity, several generations before Homer and Hesiod—possibly a period of multiple generations before the Trojan War, according to some accounts (Diodorus, VII.1; Freeman, 1946: 1; Freeman, 1977: 1; Mojsik, 2023: 3; Plato, *Leg*. III 677d). Proclus advocates that Homer is a direct descendant of Orpheus (*Chrestomathy I* 5.4). For a more in-depth discussion on Orpheus, see Roscher, 1884-1937: 3:1058-1207.

[172] Guthrie, 1968: 307.

[173] *Theaet*. 170c6-7: τῶν ἀμφὶ Πρωταγόραν.

[174] *Crat*. 440c2: οἱ περὶ Ἡράκλειτόν.

them to think that Plato means to problematize the issue. To my knowledge of the corpus, no such reason exists. Such a question reveals a strange inference to make, which unveils a bias in the scholars' scholarship.

From what follows in the *Cratylus* excerpt after this reference to the followers of Orpheus, Socrates introduces certain fundamental doctrines consistent with Orphism: (1) the assertion that the human body is an enclosure that encapsulates the soul, (2) the unjust soul endures punishment in its present life, (3) a debt must be paid for sins, and (4) salvation by initiation. These are the anchors by which Plato's audience learns of those affiliated with Orpheus. Because of the inclusion of these tenets within Socrates' final etymological presentation, two thoughts immediately come to the forefront. First, there is the question of whether Plato is providing an imprecise quotation out of ignorance of the exact Orphic material. Second, someone could raise whether Plato was fully aware of a body of Orphic writings or merely relying on a known tradition passed down through the generations.[175] Unfortunately, I am

[175] For more on Plato and the Orphics, consult Bernabé, 2011; Cornford, 1903: 433-45; Dyson, 1929: 19-48; Feibleman, 2013: 47-71; Guthrie, 1968: 307-32; Guthrie, 1993: 238-46; Hütwohl, 2016; Kingsley, 2009: 112-32; Uždavinys, 2011. For more on the Orpheus, the Orphics, and Orphism, consult Bernabé, 2013: 117-51; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, 2008; Böhme, 1953; Böhme, 1970; Boulanger, 1925; Boulanger, 1937; Boulanger, 1940: 69-79; Borgeaud, 1991: 51-9; Bottéro, 1991: 221-25; Bremmer, 1991: 13-30; Bremmer, 2002: 11-26; Bremmer, 2014: 55-80; Brisson, 1991: 157-209; Burkert, 1977; Burkert, 1980: 27-41; Burkert, 1982: 1-22, 183-9; Bordoy, 2013: 153-76; Calame, 1991: 227-47; Chrysanthou, 2021; Coman, 1938: 130-75; Croon, 1965: 17-34; Dinkelaar, 2020: 36-62; Doerig, 1991: 61-4; Edmonds III, 2011; Edmonds III, 2018; Eisler, 1921; Farnell, 1907-09: 3.29-213; Farnell, 1921a: 373-402; Farnell, 1921b: 82-3; Finkelberg, 1986: 321-55; Gerhard, 1861: 9-95; Gigante, 1989: 26-9; Gigante, 1990: 17-8; Graf, 1974; Graf, 1991: 87-102; Grant, 1953: 105-11; Gruppe, 1886: 1058-1207; Guthrie, 1937: 110-20; Guthrie, 1993; Harrison, 1959: 454-658; Kapsomenos, 1963: 221-3; Kapsomenos, 1964a: 3-13; Kapsomenos, 1964b: 17-25; Karamanolis, 2019: 2.1197-9; Kern, 1888; Kern, 1920; Kern, 1922; Keydell, 1942: 1321-41; Lobeck, 1829: 1.233-783; Locke, 1997: 3-29; Maas, 1895; Macchioro, 1930: 3-185; Martin, 1987: 98-102; Mead, 1965; Merkelbach, 1989: 15-6; Monnier, 1991: 65-76; Moulinier, 1955; Nilsson, 1949: 3-7, 213-23; Nock, 1940: 301-15; Paget, 1967; Parker, 1995: 483-510; Pugliese Carratelli, 2011; Reale, 2018: 5—71; Redfield, 1991: 103-17; Robertson, 2003: 218-40; Rudhardt, 1991: 263-89; Sabbatucci, 1991: 7-11; Schmidt, 1991: 31-50; Tierney, 1922a: 77-87; Tierney, 1922b: 121-7; Tortorelli Ghidini, 1991: 249-61; Tweten, 2015; Vinogradov, 1991: 77-86; Watmough, 1934; West, 1976: 221-6.

For information on the Derveni papyrus, consult Bergomi, 2014: 215-24; Bernabé, 2007: 99-133; Bernabé, 2010: 79-86; Betegh, 2001: 47-70; Betegh, 2004; Bierl, 2014: 187-210; Boyancé, 1974: 91-110; Edmonds III: 2008a: 16-39; Ferrari, 2011: 71-83; Giangrande, 1991a: 81-3; Giangrande, 1991b: 85-7; Janko, 2001: 1-32; Janko, 2002: 1-62; Janko, 2005: 37-51; Kouremenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou, 2006; Luppe, 1989: 13-4; Meißner, 2018: 51-85: Merkelbach, 1967: 77-80; Most, 1997: 117-35; Oschenschlager, 1963: 245-7; Parker, 1995: 488, 490-6; Rangos, 2007: 35-75; Rusten, 1985: 121-40; Santamaría, 2012: 55-76; Sider,

unsure if either inquiry could be known as there is insufficient textual evidence to provide a satisfactory answer. That said, it seems plausible—and even possible—that Plato relies on a known tradition for this information, knowing how the ancient Greeks passed down the works of Homer and Hesiod and the myths that shaped their culture to future generations.

§2.6 Dancing with the Devil in the Cave

A profound enigma still clouds the σῶμα etymology, even though this etymology has sparked the most interest of scholars from the etymological section within the *Cratylus* since antiquity.[176] I have no reason to distrust the claim—at least from a historical perspective when comparing it to the other etymological treatments stemming from Plato's *Cratylus*. I am not so confident, on other grounds, that scholars are as interested in the etymology today as they once were. Strangely, nearly all modern treatments of the dialogue or even dealings on the human body in Platonic or ancient Greek philosophy fail to give attention to Socrates' treatment of the σῶμα etymology. If they do reference the *Cratylus* excerpt, it is in passing without much detailed elaboration, if any at all.[177]

In the *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 excerpt, Plato's Socrates provides Hermogenes with what appears to be several possible etymologies for the term σῶμα. Yet, their definitive meaning is much more elusive, as a consensus still does not seem to exist in adequately interpreting the fundamental points within this specific text. From my perspective, there appears to be

2014: 225-53; Torjussen, 2008; Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou, 1987: 3-16. For details concerning the Olbia bone tablets, consult Addey, 2012: 115-27; Ferrari, 2016: 177-86; Graf and Johnston, 2013: 214-5; Meißner, 2018: 238-47; Merkelbach, 1977: 276; Murray, 1959: 659-73; Pleket and Stroud, 1982; Tinnefeld, 1980: 65-71; West, 1982: 17-29; Zhmud, 1992: 159-68.

[176] Bernabé, 1995: 204.

[177] This list is by no means exhaustive. Take, for example, the following sources that ignored the 400b11-c10 excerpt: Ademollo, 2011; Barney, 2001; Derbolav, 1972; Eckl, 2003; Meißner, 2019; Rijlaarsdam, 1978; Sedley, 2003c. Whereas the following sources do, at minimum, reference the text with or without any commentary: Baxter, 1992: 101-2; 141-2; Ewegen, 2014: 130; Gaiser, 1974: 54, 68, 73, 90. In the edited work entitled *ΣΩMA* by Buchheim, Meißner, and Wachsmann (2016), only a single chapter, Barbara Sattler's, references the excerpt in a footnote (p. 444), and it is not a chapter devoted exclusively to Plato's take on the human body. For an overview of the dialogue, consult Lutoslawski, 1897: 220-33; Schleiermacher, 1836: 224-46.

reason to return to this challenging passage despite it being one of the more famous etymologies of the dialogue. The text must primarily speak for itself before incorporating external sources, whether from the Platonic corpus or scholarship. A careful reading of the excerpt is essential, for reading it too hastily can lead to more confusion than already exists within the passage.

According to our text, I see Socrates acknowledging that the term σῶμα may have three potential, distinct meanings—that is, *if and only if* a person does not distort its name slightly. Distorting the given name even a little will unveil more considerations to discuss. Socrates' primary possibilities are: (1) the body is a tomb (Σ = τ); (2) the body is a sign (Σ = η); and (3) the body is an enclosure (Σ = ε).[178] Figure 1 below visually illustrates the options Socrates gives Hermogenes.

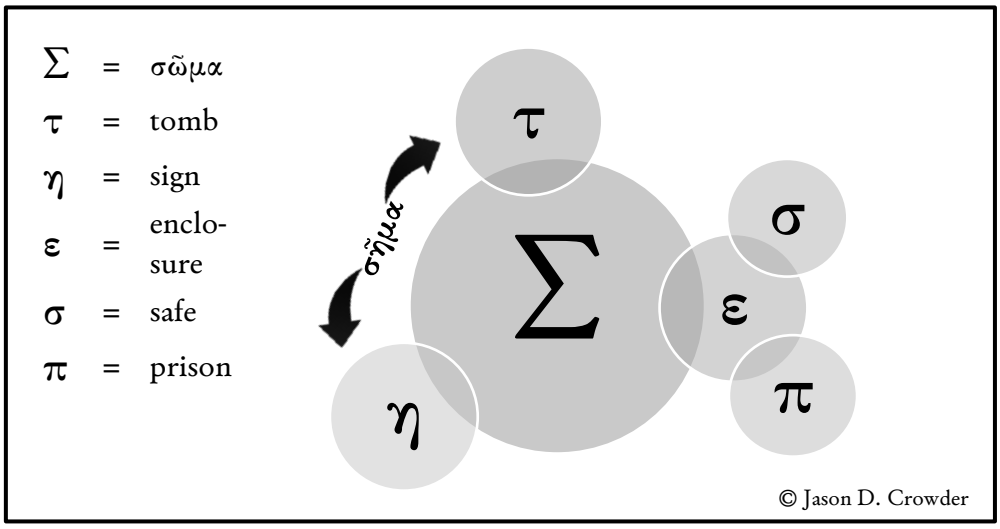


Figure 1: Radial Venn Diagram of Crat. 400b11-c10

The first two options center around the thought that the σῶμα is the σῆμα, which is an ambiguous and perplexing concept in the Greek. Socrates willfully chooses not to clarify or elaborate upon his meaning. However, he does unpack the third option, namely that the

[178] At this juncture, I purposefully refrain from going into greater detail or explanation beyond cursory remarks as this section is for introductory purposes only.

σῶμα comes from σῴζειν by introducing two other ideas into the equation, giving the impression that they are in conflict.

Socrates' third etymological explanation suggests that the body is an *enclosure* for the soul. As an enclosure, the human body is a safe (σῶμα) to keep the soul secure or to preserve the ψυχή or, alternatively, a prison from which it cannot escape. Socrates reiterates this point when noting that "not even a letter of the word needs to be altered" at the end of the passage. The implication is that the human body is "the safe of the soul" since the term σῶμα is a derivation from the verb root σῴζω. We may also see the human body enclosure as being an image of a prison. Socrates' exact purpose for using this mental picture is unclear from the immediate context. At first impression, this imagery seems to be at odds with Socrates' previous notion. Only after further exegesis can we determine whether such is the case.

These etymologies emerge elsewhere within the Platonic corpus in one way or another. What follows are a few examples from the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Timaeus*. In a conversation with Callicles in the *Gorgias*, Socrates claims that the body is a person's tomb (492e-493a) after Callicles asserts that a life without desires and ambitions is nothing more than a life of a corpse (491e-492d). Plato's *Timaeus* reveals that the human body serves as a vehicle of the soul (44e, 69c)—a type of sign. A central theme within the *Phaedo* is the soul's liberation from the body at death. Hence, a reader finds the body portrayed as a prison of the soul appears as a dominant motif (61e-62c, 78b-84b) of the dialectic dialogue. Socrates, in the *Phaedrus*, compares the σῶμα to how an oyster is imprisoned in its shell (250c). The same thematic illusion manifests in the *Timaeus*, where the human body shelters the soul (73d5-7, 73e1, 74a4-5, 81e1-5).

Socrates' expressive language is exceptionally misleading if we rush through his phrasing. We can quickly draw incorrect conclusions. Likewise, we can do the same if we take our time and make improper connections. Socrates implicitly links two or more things not genuinely associated with the human body. He establishes a series of metaphors to provoke our

imagination. I readily admit that Plato's character Socrates' usage of ***metaphors*** throughout the etymological section bewilders us as readers of the *Cratylus*. Socrates' etymologies are not ***metaphors*** but legitimate attempts to define the object in question and give its origin.

While language is a powerful tool, it can mislead, especially when describing abstract ideas or concepts since they do not have physical referents. Many of the Socratic questions attempt to discuss such things. Take, for example, the question: "What is virtue?" No physical referent for virtue exists that we can see to say that X is what virtue is. When discussing what it means to be virtuous, we rely on language abstraction. A problem abruptly emerges when attempting to talk about abstract thoughts; unfortunately, we complicate the situation further by using other abstract phrases rather than concrete language to explain what we are describing.

On the contrary, the human body has a physical referent. It is not some abstract idea or concept ***per se*** that Hermogenes asks Socrates to provide an etymology for. Socrates' response is cryptic despite his vocabulary choices being more of a concrete nature—at least for the twenty-first-century reader. His language entices more confusion than benefits since we are so removed from this time. Failing to decipher the purpose of Socrates' explicit word choices will hinder us from moving toward establishing Plato's ontology of the human body and, perhaps, his teleology of the σῶμα as well.

As I previously stated, I find the *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 excerpt unveiling Socrates making three etymological assertions regarding the term σῶμα. I differ slightly, however, from how most Platonic scholars understand what these etymologies of the σῶμα are. In the first incidence, the σῶμα is the "tomb" of the soul. The second one claims the σῶμα is the "sign"—as in a signifier—of the soul. Finally, the σῶμα is an "enclosure" of the soul. I examined each of these etymological claims separately in this section. Through this examination, I proposed that Socrates' third etymology has two ways to qualify the enclosure motif further. Exploring certain aspects alluded to concerning the theme of the separation

between the σῶμα and ψυχή within each account requires placing the excerpt in its broader, preceding context so that I can grapple with any implications that may impact the ontology of the σῶμα as established in the *Cratylus*. The passage at 403d7-404a7 may also prove insightful for my inquiry. The question is whether the exegetical analysis of the Greek text will verify my initial thoughts as accurate or if I must modify them accordingly.

Does Socrates' etymology of the σῶμα-σῆμα wordplay from the *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 contribute anything to Plato's genuine understanding and definition of the σῶμα? If so, then this etymology would reasonably seem to function as foundational for how scholars should comprehend Plato's view regarding the σῶμα, including its purpose and role. Accomplishing this task involves more than merely grasping the context around Socrates' usage of the expression. Socrates affirms, at least, the Orphic tradition as being part of the origin of the σῶμα-σῆμα dictum in his etymological explanation. Irrespective of whether Socrates' etymologies are intended seriously and whether his theory of naming is correct, he affirms or comes close to confirming the Orphic etymology in the passage. Therefore, within the parameters of the dialogue—and possibly beyond—the equation of the body with the terms "safe" and "prison" is significant and worthy of investigation. Only afterward may we begin to wonder about the metaphysical implications that might arise concerning the σῶμα etymologies or even the iconic σῶμα-σῆμα schema. The inquirer will, then, be in a position to start to see the complexities and vagueness attached to Plato's ontology of the σῶμα.

To claim to know what Plato's ontology of the human body is but to be unable to explain how the silent philosopher defines the term σῶμα in his dialogues means that an individual does not fully comprehend his philosophical anthropology. This chapter aimed to bring forward a discourse that set forth the foundation to explore the matter more in-depth than current scholarship has done. Naturally, additional questions are raised at this juncture, and many more are left unanswered than answered. That is philosophizing, after all. Inquiries do not always get resolved quickly. Some conundrums may remain obscure despite the best efforts to resolve them. Or, as Norman puts it: "True philosophy leads us away from objects

and facts into the domain of significance, and here the real problem begins."[179]

Resisting from subscribing to the σῶμα any preconceived notions is best practice. Allow the Platonic dialogues to speak for the exegetical outcomes that eventually shape the silent philosopher's ontology of the human body. Thus, the primary concern here is the *correctness* of names or words used to invoke and define what the σῶμα is. Wisdom in appropriate Socratic questioning might assist us from aimless wandering.

[179] Austin, 1990: 12.

Chapter 3
Moving Toward the Cave's Opening

§3.1 Preparing to Sneak a Peek Outside the Cave

One of my primary goals in this dissertation is to show that Socrates' etymologies of σῶμα yield insight into how Plato understands what the human body is. As I argued in the preceding chapter, the etymology of σῶμα as σῆμα—an etymological derivation—yields two accounts for consideration. One that presents the human body as a sepulcher, entombing the soul. The other account arguably is more enigmatic for the modern-day reader in that the precise illusion of its meaning and purpose is less apparent. We must remember that the term σῆμα is quite ambiguous in the archaic Greek language. Socrates claims the human body is a sign of the soul. Its precise meaning is not straightforward. Through further exegetical analysis, it seems that the soul gives animation to the σῶμα when it is embodied within the human body. In other words, the soul gives life to the σῶμα. A question remains unclear, however, with this etymological explanation: what does it imply—whether explicitly or implicitly—about the human body itself? Then, we are faced with Socrates' final etymology. Here, Plato's Socrates goes into much more detail than his previous two explanations on the σῶμα. Because of Socrates' language, it appears that his third etymological explanation for σῶμα is his preferred etymology, and I concluded that it is Socrates' preferred σῶμα etymology because the σῶμα derives from σῶμα *qua* σῶμα. This treatment also appears to incorporate a sense from his first etymological explanation but in a more nuanced manner.

In this chapter, I must trace a path from the content of an etymology to the being of the body to establish Plato's definition of the human body and its ontology. Proceeding from a named thing's etymology to its ontology is easier said than done. It is not a clear path from

point A (etymology) to point B (ontology). That said, there are at least three difficulties here that are worth stating upfront.

The first difficulty is simply this: what licenses an inference from etymology to ontology? In other words, how can a claim about the original meaning of a word, even if correct, be a sufficient guide to the being of something? This question is the problem of philosophical etymology.

Secondly, some scholars have argued that Socrates' etymologies are not serious either in general or in some cases. So, even if I could show that Plato's Socrates prefers a given etymology of σῶμα and I could show that etymology is, for him, a way of determining the being of the thing to which the word applies, it would not be clear that the etymology of body ought to be taken seriously.

Thirdly, there are difficulties in determining the meaning of Socrates' preferred etymology for the term σῶμα. We have already addressed this problem in the preceding chapter—what does it mean to say that the human body is the "tomb" or "safe" of the soul? The position that I take on this question is relevant to the preceding two questions of difficulty.

To address these difficult questions, I must take a stance on some rather complicated matters of interpretation concerning Plato's *Cratylus*. I am writing my dissertation purposefully in an exploratory style. It would be more accurate to say that I seek to achieve two primary tasks with this chapter. First, I seek to explain the distinction between exegetical and philosophical etymology. I must explain the objection that we will not learn about the being of the body even if we know what Socrates' preferred etymology is because, as is evident from the end of the dialogue, the namegivers might have got things wrong. All we would learn from the exegetical etymology is what their opinions were. Second, I must further explain why some scholars have thought that the etymologies are not seriously intended. Here, I must provide my response to this objection. In other words, why do I think that the

etymology (etymologies) of the σῶμα should be taken seriously, or why can we learn from them even if they should not be seen as serious? To achieve such, I begin by examining the testimony from the *Cratylus*, examining the issue of an etymology yielding a definition, and responding to two potential naysayer objections.

§3.2 What Testimony Does the *Cratylus* Provide Regarding These Matters, If Any?

A lingering question remains concerning the validity of Socrates' *tool analogy* passage (386d-390e).[180] This passage is a point of contention among Platonic scholars. Most contend that readers should not take much stock in Socrates' argument. On the other hand, others believe this passage within the *Cratylus* presents a moderate linguistic naturalism, which either stands or falls "independently of the more unpalatable etymological and mimetic theories advanced later in the dialogue."[181] If we take Socrates' claim seriously that names are tools, what holds for tools should also hold for names. Tools only successfully function if they exhibit the proper compositional, material, and structural properties required for the task they are created to complete. Hence, names should adequately describe the object for which they are named.

We must remember that Hermogenes' position is grounded in the belief that names are arbitrary. After all, he declares to Cratylus that a name is merely "a piece of voice that is

[180] I intentionally only provide a summary of Socrates' *tool analogy* in this section for the purpose of staying on task with the primary focus of the chapter. This principle appears elsewhere in the Platonic corpus—*Phdr*. 244d, *Rep*. V 454a, *Theat*. 177d-e. My approach to Socrates' *tool analogy* is heavily shaped by: Ackrill, 1994: 9-28; Anagnostopoulos, 1972: 691-736; Anagnostopoulos, 1973: 318-45; Bagwell, 2010; Barney, 1997: 143-62; Barney, 2001; Baxter, 1992; Bestor, 1980: 306-30; Brumbaugh, 1958: 502-10; Calvert, 1970: 26-47; Churchill, 1983: 92-3; Crivelli, 2011: 217-42; Crombie, 1971: 473-516; Demand, 1975: 106-9; Demos, 1939: 253-70; Demos, 1964: 595-610; Denyer, 1991: 68-82; Driscoll, 2022: 367-88; Ewegen, 2014; Fine, 1977: 289-301; Gold, 1978: 223-51; Jørgensen, 2021: 18-20; Kahn, 1996: 148-82; Keller, 2000: 284-305; Ketchum, 1979: 133-47; Kretzmann, 1971: 126-38; Levinson, 1957: 28-41; McCabe, 1994: 26-9; Nehring, 1945: 13-48; Palmer, 1984; Palmer, 1989; Partee, 1972: 113-32; Politis, 2015; Robinson, 1955: 221-36; Robinson, 1956: 324-41; Rosenmeyer, 1998: 41-60; Roth, 1969: 44-8; Schofield, 1972: 246-53; Schofield, 1982: 61-81; Sedley, 2003a: 21-32; Sedley, 2003b: 5-16; Sedley, 2006a: 214-27; Sedley, 2006b; Silverman, 1992: 25-71; Smith, 2014: 75-99; Spellman, 1993: 197-210; Stewart, 1965; Thayer, 1964: 303-18.

[181] Smith, 2014: 75.

uttered."[182] To say that names are arbitrary is problematic. It is equivalent to saying that "their intrinsic properties could have been otherwise without detriment to existing reference relations," according to Smith.[183] Hermogenes advocates a position beyond that of a name that ***could have been different***. He holds to the notion that the name ***can*** be different:

> For it seems to me that whatever name you give an object is its correct name, and if you change that name and assign another, it is no less correct than the original name, just as we change the names of our slaves (384d2-5).

The antithetical problem of Hermogenes' position is this: if names are arbitrary, some mechanism is required through which all members of a linguistic community can refer to know how to interpret the arbitrary sounds so that successful communication may occur. In the past three decades, three scholars—Ademollo,[184] Barney,[185] and Sedley[186]—have put forth convincing arguments that Hermogenes' conventionalism is a much more substantial thesis than Platonic scholarship previously thought. These three scholars argue that Hermogenes' position does not entail a general relativism. This fact is evident by the very nature of Socrates' rebuttal to Hermogenes. Instead of attempting to refute him by proving such, Socrates argues along a linguistic naturalism based upon specific objectivist premises with which he agrees.

To disabuse Hermogenes of his belief that the arbitrary nature of linguistic naturalism is ***false***, Plato's Socrates must either (a) demonstrate the falsehood of Hermogenes' belief that names are arbitrary or (b) advance an alternative linguistic naturalism that holds even if names are arbitrary. The latter option adheres to the idea that linguistic naturalism does not entail that names are non-arbitrary. Furthermore, the latter does not amount to as a ***proof***

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[182] *Crat*. 383a6-7: "τῆς αὐτῶν φωνῆς μόριον ἐπιφθεγγόμενοι." The root verb φθέγγομαι need not denote meaningful or purposeful speech in that it is comprehensible. It may simply reference a sound or a noise produced by an animal or an inanimate object (Ademollo, 2011: 25; Beekes, 2010: 2.1568-9, s.v. "φθέγγομαι"; CGL, 2021: 2.1460, s.v. "φθέγγομαι"; Cunliffe, 1924: 407, s.v. "φθέγγομαι"; LSJ, 1996: 1927, s.v. "φθέγγομαι"; Montanari, 2015: 2269-70, s.v. "φθέγγομαι").

[183] Smith, 2014: 76.

[184] Ademollo, 2011: 81.

[185] Barney, 1997: 151-2. Barney's work functions as the catalyst for the reexamination of Hermogenes' argument among other scholars. Cf. Meißner, 2023.

[186] Sedley, 2003c: 54.

of linguistic naturalism. It simply defeats Hermogenes' specific and primary objection to it. Socrates' goal is to make Hermogenes more amenable to his alternative thesis.

Socrates' alternative thesis comprises two principal parts. On the one hand, there is the ***tool analogy*** (386d-390e) itself, which is essentially a deductive argument that appeals to Plato's Forms and proceeds from rejecting Protagorean relativism.[187] On the other hand, Socrates advances the etymological-mimetic theory of naming (391b-427d). Here, the philosophical etymologist appeals to the phonetic and structural properties of various Greek names for a single purpose—to show Hermogenes that names are non-arbitrary as their internal constitutions render them ***correct names*** for each object they name.[188] Smith points out a crucial factor: "Key to this interpretation are both Socrates' introduction of Species-Forms (389b8), which finely circumscribe the features of the specific tools that instantiate them, and his careful distinction between the crafts of the expert name-maker, the νομοθέτης (or ὀνοματουργός), and the expert name-user, the dialectician."[189] Thus, I concur with Smith when she notes the following:

> The specialised ability afforded to the name-maker in looking to the Species-Form of each name and setting it in sounds and syllables is at the core of the conclusion of the tool analogy (390d7-e5), where Socrates does not claim to have shown (merely) that Hermogenes' conventionalism is wrong, but that 'Cratylus speaks the truth (ἀληθῆ λέγει) when he says that names exist by nature for things' (390d11-e1). It will be to the detriment of any interpretation, then, not to give the craft of name-making its due.[190]

Such a conclusion is consistent with the *Cratylus* testimony within the text, which contains the ***tool analogy***, and with that beyond it.

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[187] Ackrill, 1994: 9-28; Gold, 1978: 223-51; Kahn, 1973a: 152-76; Ketchum, 1979: 133-47; White, 1978: 259-74.

[188] Smith, 2014: 77.

[189] Smith, 2014: 78. Historically, little has been made of this precise distinction in Platonic scholarship by defenders of a more moderate stance on naturalism. For example, Robinson believes the namegiver is "a mythical device to make it easier to develop an abstract theory" (1969: 105). Silverman suggests that the former is "rather simply each of us in our capacity as a dialectician" (1992: 39). Keller makes no mention of the distinction between the namegiver and the dialectician (2000: 292-3). Then, Ademollo dismisses the distinction as unreal (2011: 138-44).

[190] Smith, 2014: 79.

Consider Levinson's outline that shows Plato's treatment of the nature of language in the *Cratylus*:

> 383a I. Names as ideal instruments.
>
> 383a A. Introduction: names as natural vs. names as conventional or customary.
>
> 385a B. The ideal activity of naming in accord with nature; the ideal namegiver or custom-establisher and his product, the word, as tool of discrimination and instruction; the dialectician as ideal user.
>
> 389e II. Names as imitations and manifestations of reality.
>
> 389e A. Descriptive-evaluative names: names said to have been divinely given, and mythologic names; names of cosmic entities; ethical terms.
>
> 421c B. Phonically imitative names and the system of imitative language.
>
> 427b III. Names as practical semantic tools.
>
> 427d A. False and imperfect imitative names.
>
> 433b B. Conventional names as successful in conveying meaning.
>
> 435d C. Irreducible limitations of the imitative name; necessity of validating names by independent knowledge of things.
>
> 439b D. Necessity of fixed Being: the Ideas.[191]

This outline, paired with Socrates' *tool analogy*, should emphasize several critical and crucial caveats about the art of naming and its relation to Plato's Forms.

When Socrates' *tool analogy* is taken seriously, it establishes the relationship between the Forms and the art of naming per the dialogue's testimony. Furthermore, it establishes the constraints on the art of name-making by the name-maker. The name-maker cannot do as he freely wishes and must follow the constraints. Consequently, the name-maker should point us to the Forms for any given named thing.

Platonic scholars contest nearly everything within the *Cratylus*. The position I take on many of these issues is disputable. However, that is the nature of philosophy—taking a stance and defending such regardless of whether others agree. Taking Socrates' tool analogy seriously requires us to take his etymological explanations as serious attempts at ancient etymology. I

[191] Levinson, 1957: 28.

readily admit that it is difficult to continuously take every one of Socrates' etymological explanations as being completely serious. There are occasions when what Plato's Socrates says seems to be not only comic but intentionally stated tongue-in-cheek. To argue that only some of Socrates' etymologies are to be seen as serious and others as otherwise undercuts the ability to take his *tool analogy* as a serious illustration of understanding the etymological section of the dialogue, and it also undercuts the other testimony of the *Cratylus* on how we should understand the nature of language. Here is where Sedley's differential between an etymology being exegetically correct and not necessarily philosophically correct is beneficial. After all, a correct etymology of a complex (not etymologically simple) name manifests the being of the object it names by describing it and unveiling its ontology and teleology. For such to be the case, the etymology must be both exegetically and philosophically accurate.

Because of these issues, we can move toward the question of an etymology yielding a definition, which is the next step of progression to establishing whether Socrates' σῶμα etymologies unveil Plato's understanding of what the human body is and its proper ontology. ***If and only if*** an etymology yields a definition could we move from a given definition to ontology and teleology for such. This matter brings us back full circle to the first primary aim of this chapter, the establishment of Socrates' preferred σῶμα etymological explanation. Only then can I argue why it is a sufficient guide to the being of the human body.

§3.3 What About the Question of an Etymology Yielding a Definition to Obtain a Proper Ontology?

My approach to this twist and turn may seem odd to some of you because I will approach the section backward. I shall first address the importance of having a definition and then move to whether a given etymology may yield a definition. Hopefully, it will make sense shortly as to why I do so.[192]

[192] The following references aided in the formation of the contents within §3.3: Ackrill, 1994: 9-28; Ademollo, 2011; Ademollo, 2013: 41-85; Ademollo, 2015: 33-54; Ademollo, 2018: 35-83; Ademollo, 2021: 26-47; Anagnostopoulos, 1973: 318-45; Annas, 1982: 95-114; Barney, 2001; Bénard, 1892: 97-102; Bestor, 1980: 306-30; Beversluis, 1974: 331-6; Bondeson, 1975: 29-41; Bostock, 1994: 10-27; Brown, 2014: 151-71;

Many disputes arise from unclear uses of language. Knowing how someone defines a term is crucial in any discourse for the speaker and audience. In ordinary language, particular words have an accepted definition or range of meanings that we naturally take for granted based on their immediate and surrounding context.

Why is defining specific terms so important? Definitions enable individuals to establish a common understanding of a word or subject matter when the context allows ambiguity; they enable people to be on the page when discussing or reading about something, ensuring no confusion in how a term should be understood. Suppose Hermogenes and Cratylus use a word differently than each other in a conversation; their ability to dialogue eventually will cease. The precision of communication is always the ultimate goal in that the audience, whether a reader or listener, grasps the precise understanding of the concept in mind, which the communicator expresses. Sometimes, more clarification is necessary. For this reason, the more precisely a person can communicate one's thoughts, the more probable the communicator's point of view will be understood—not necessarily accepted but understood. Nevertheless, precisely defining terms does not guarantee the resolution of all problems. Insisting every expression be defined can turn otherwise meaningful discourse into semantic quibble. Introducing a new definition may lead to other words requiring examination to ensure clarity. Before we know it, we could enter an infinite regress situation. We must know how to use them properly. This reality requires acknowledging that definitions come in various types and serve different aims—both of which can be debatable.

Brumbaugh, 1958: 502-10; Cary, 1964; Charles, 2014: 115-50; Cohen, 1971: 158-76; Crivelli, 2011: 217-42; Crombie, 1971: 473-516; Crombie, 1994: 172-207; Dancy, 2004, 23-64; Demos, 1964: 595-610; Driscoll, 2020; Fine, 1977: 289-301; Fine, 1993: 45-65; Firey, 1999: Friedländer, 1969b: 196-215; Gerson, 2004: 305-32; Gerson, 2006: 21-39; Gill, 2014: 172-99; Grinzer, 1994: 184-211; Healow, 2017; Ilievski, 2013: 7-25; Jørgensen, 2015; Jørgensen, 2019: 1-14; Judson, 2014: 31-61; Kahn, 1973a: 152-76; Karfik, 2021: 179-90; Kretzmann, 1971: 126-38; Levin, 1993; Levin, 1995: 91-115; Levin, 1997: 46-57; Levin, 2001: 42-98; Levinson, 1957: 28-41; Levinson, 1971: 259-84; Lorenz and Mittelstrass, 1967: 1-20; Luce, 1969: 222-32; McCabe, 1994: 25-52; Modrak, 2015: 16-32; Nakhnikian, 1971: 125-57; Nehring, 1945: 13-48; Nianias, 1956; Nightingale, 2003: 223-40; Palmer, 1984; Partee, 1972: 113-32; Pavani, 2021: 90-106; Politis, 2014: 62-114; Politis, 2015: 73-92; Richardson, 1976: 135-45; Robinson, 1955: 221-36; Robinson, 1969: 100-17; Robinson, 1971: 110-24; Rusmey, 1987: 385-403; Sayre, 1969: 216-38; Sedley, 1998a: 140-54; Sedley, 2003c; Sedley, 2006a: 214-27; Shorey, 1963: 259-68; Silverman, 1985; Stewart, 1965; Taylor, 1955: 75-90; Thayer, 1964: 303-18; Tinnin, 1992: 23-8; Ware, 1987: 91-114; Williams, 1982: 83-93; Wolfsdorf, 2003: 271-312.

This issue is multifaceted, like almost everything else. To grasp what constitutes a Socratic definition, we first need to have a working foundation of what a Socratic question is. It is like asking, "Which came first: the chicken or the egg?" You cannot have either without the other. Yes, it is difficult to discuss what constitutes a Socratic definition without the issue of the Socratic question as a means of introduction; doing so can cause unnecessary confusion as it will emerge in the conversation naturally.

After all, we routinely find the character Socrates asking probing questions throughout Plato's dialogues.[193] Because of this reality, they must distinguish between primary and secondary inquiry issues. Socrates regularly proposes a critical problem or query to his interlocutors, and his principal question generally takes one of two forms: "Is X Y?" or "What is X?"[194] Then, after receiving a suggested answer, Socrates proceeds to examine that point further through further questioning, which are all secondary matters. These additional questions often arise from Socrates' dissatisfaction with the responses to his principal question. However, Socrates' discontent does not necessarily stem from the reaction being outright false or inappropriate; on the contrary, the specific reply is often not what Socrates

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[193] Someone could argue that my question "What is σῶμα?" is not technically a Socratic question since Socrates' "What is X?" question primarily—if not exclusively—seeks out the discovery of abstract concepts such as virtue or justice. That individual could argue that my precise question is solely an exegetical question. Yes, it is an exegetical question. However, I argue that it is much more than that. I see it also as a true form of a Socratic question, and here is why. Though I do not always agree with Silverman, I do when he writes,

> The dialectician is the expert user of names. He judges whether the product of the name-maker is well or poorly made. His judgement is based on the questions and answers he raises, concerning the nature of the object, *x*, whose form the name-maker's product purports to embody. His [*sic*] is the familiar activity of asking a 'What is *x*?' question. The answer to this question reveals the essence of *x*, the proper form whose embodiment is in question. The linguistic answer to a 'What is *x*?' question is the linguistic definition (λόγος) which signifies the essence of *x*. The dialectician can judge the suitability of the name '*x*' because he knows this definition. When he judges the names' suitability, he determines whether there is an essence which the supposed name embodies" (1992: 38).

[194] Robinson, 1971: 110. An example of the "Is X Y?" would be "Is the soul better than the body?" Whereas the "What is X?" construction is more recognizable: "What is σῶμα?" Even though I construct my research question as an example of the formulations of the Socratic question, we cannot think of it as such, nor can I pursue it as a viable methodological option. Socratic questions are nonexistent with the *Cratylus*. I argue, therefore, that the question "What is the human body?" is an exegetical question. Due to the status of the primary question being exegetical in nature, I must establish my exegetical methodology for how to go about answering it. Textual analysis constitutes evidence *if and only if* I adequately provide convincing testimony to warrant interpreting the *Cratylus* text as I do. After all, it is the primary—if not the sole—method in which I can defend my findings to my framed question.

expected or had in mind when posing the initial question.[195]

Consequently, Socrates insists that an individual must handle the "What is X?" question before the person can consider any contingent questions regarding X. Socrates' logic is that we need a reasonably firm answer to X before finding specific explanations for other questions about X that may arise. In other words, Socrates believes that we cannot know what *sort* of thing X is until we know *what* X is.[196] Therefore, we can never say whether such is the case surrounding X until we are confident about what X is by implication.[197] All we can do is form probable opinions regarding X without being sure of such character qualities before ascertaining what X is.[198]

Socrates appears to desire more than mere implications when wanting an answer to the "What is X?" question. For example, he wants the answer to say X = AB in that every X ≠ AB, and nothing else may be AB. Thus, Socrates seeks equivalence—two statements having identical meanings. However, he does not wish for a lexical definition; Socrates seeks to know how X is understood and used by his companions in the common vulgar of their daily lives. In other words, Socrates concerns himself with wanting to grasp the nature of X itself rather than being told what X is by a description of terms. Therefore, if he gets an answer

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[195] The form "Is X Y?" might be the most precise formulation to achieving a desired answer in that the respondent knows that the asker seeks specific information that shows that either X = Y or X ≠ Y is based on whichever is true. Asking the question in the form "What is X?" could elicit ambiguous responses in that it asks one to make some valid claim concerning X. The surrounding context in which the question is framed may alleviate any potential vagueness but does not guarantee it. Nevertheless, asking the "What is X?" question allows for no preconceived restrictions in one's answer. This quality tends to prove beneficial when seeking a definition in a discourse of abstruseness or enigma. Pressing probing inquiries gets one only so far. Eventually, the conversation forces the usage of more precise terms and language. So, the "What is X?" question does have its limitations. Despite this realization, using the "What is X?" question is natural for most people. For example, "And of that which we know, I presume, we can also say what it is" (*Lach*. 190c7; cf. *Charm*. 159a).

[196] A primary example of this mindset within the Platonic corpus involves the issue of virtue. Before determining whether virtue is teachable, one must first know what virtue is (*Meno* 71, 86d-e, 100b; *Prot*. 360e). Likewise, one cannot know whether justice is a virtue without first determining what virtue is (*Rep*. I 354c). Furthermore, knowing whether something is beneficial is impossible without knowing what X is first (*Lach*. 189e-190a; cf. *Rep*. I 354c). Cf. Robinson, 1971: 112.

[197] Cf. *Euthyp*. 6e.

[198] *Theaet*. 196d-e.

such as X is A when A is not equivalent to X but is instead broader than X, Socrates dismisses or refutes the explanation by pointing out that other things besides X are A and asks the respondent to distinguish further what part of A is equivalent to X.[199]

As a result, the reader invariably presumes that Socrates' term X is univocal.[200] However, such does not exclude the term X from having multiple meanings determined by its context usage.[201] Additional presumptions must follow if this one is accurate. Second, the reader must further presume that Socrates' X contains being, essence, or substance (οὐσία)—the core nature (property or properties) that serve to identify X.[202] That said, we need to be mindful of a critical distinction: "Every statement giving X's essence serves to identify X; by not every statement serving to identify X gives its essence."[203] Third, we must likewise presuppose that Socrates holds to some sort of realism instead of nominalism, which means that he affirms a realist view regarding the ontological stature of X's core nature. Finally, we must presume that X's essence can be expounded upon based on its structure, not as being a primary element of X.[204]

Does any of this matter? The short answer is yes. However, that response will not suffice since it is too simplistic and has no defense.

Any definition could be true or false. However, a solid Socratic definition will accurately depict the core nature of whatever is being defined by the "What is X?" question. Socrates aims to determine an extension of commonplace terms by which people are familiar, a natural bridge allowing communication.[205] Thus, Socratic definitions have their place and

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[199] Robinson, 1971: 115. Cf. *Gorg*. 449 ff., 453c ff.; *Meno* 74b-c, 75b; *Prot*. 312.
[200] *Meno* 74d; *Rep*. X 596a.
[201] Nakhnikian, 1971: 125-57.
[202] *Meno* 72b; cf. *Euthyp*. 11a.
[203] Robinson, 1971: 116.
[204] Robinson, 1971: 115-24.
[205] Socrates continually emphasizes the purposes of the names—that is, definitions—throughout the *Cratylus* as a means of distinguishing between things and determining what things are similar (388a-c; 422d-e; 424a-b; 428d-e; 432e-433b; 434d-435a; 435d). A definition should stimulate mental images of that object as one hears

importance in general but also within this research endeavor, especially since at its core is a Socratic question: How does Plato understand or define the human body (σῶμα)? Such a question, however, could be reduced to its more basic form—what is σῶμα?

Protagoras declares, "Of all things the measure is Man [as in each individual], of the things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not."[206] Socrates fundamentally opposes the Sophists' notion of relativism regarding knowledge and truth—what is valid for one person may not necessarily be the case for another. Likewise, he also rejects Euthydemus' doctrine of hyper-relativism within the Sophist philosophical school of thought.[207] Instead, he believes that truth and morality are never-changing constants. Both truth and morality hold firm for all people. Because of this belief, Socrates believes objective knowledge and standards are discoverable. Such a notion means there must be correct and wrong answers to questions based on something beyond mere opinion and popular sentiment. Therefore, first and foremost, Socratic definitions are objective.

Note that the "Is X Y?" and "What is X?" presuppose a single correct answer. Consequently, Socrates does not qualify either question to seek a relative response by adding *to you* at the end of them. Instead, he asks, "Is X Y, period, full stop?" or "What is X, period, full stop?" Thus, someone arrives at an accurate definition when a series of words correctly describes X. As a consequence, the object of such a definition must be independent of what individuals think of X. If Socrates proposes the question with the *to-you-qualifier*, he would lead people into either circularity or an infinite regress with their responses for a specific definition as a series of words describing X.

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the term vocalized if it accurately encapsulates what it is. However, human language is not without its imperfections and confusion. Fear of misrepresenting a form is an ever-present possibility if one is careless; what the definition defines is the Form, that is, the name names the Form.

[206] Freeman, 1977: 125 (fr. DK 80B1). Cf. *Crat*. 386c; *Theaet*. 152a; 167c.

[207] Euthydemus believes that everything *always* has every attribute simultaneously. In other words, all things always exhibit all their properties since they exist at all times as they *might appear* for the perceiver at some point in time (*Crat*. 386d3-e3).

Secondly, Socratic definitions are fundamental to obtaining knowledge.[208] Remember that an individual can only form probable opinions regarding X without being sure of such character qualities before ascertaining what X is.[209] Likewise, one finds the same principle in Plato's *Meno* when Socrates states that one must know the answer to the more fundamental question of ***what virtue is before knowing*** whether it can be taught (71a-b). Thus, possessing the accurate response to the "What is X?" ***question*** dictates if a person has any knowledge regarding the X or if what is said is a mere personal opinion, which moves the discussion forward to the next issue to consider concerning Socratic definitions.[210]

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[208] Politis notes the following for determining "what motivates and justifies the demand for definitions" within Plato's dialogues:

> *Plato's Justification of the Demand of Definitions*
> The justification of raising a question of the form 'What is Φ?' and demanding a definition of Φ is that:
>
> *If* (1) there is a general question of the form whether or not Φ is Ψ, and (2) this question articulates an aporia (in the sense that, as it will typically have emerged from enquiry addressed to the whether-or-not question, there are what appear to one and the same person to be good reason on both sides, and the person does not at all know how to resolve this conflict of reason), and (3) this aporia is radical (in the sense that it renders questionable whether things that are generally acknowledged as examples and exemplars of things that are Φ, genuinely are such exemplars),
>
> *then* raising the question 'What is Φ?', and answering it with a general, unitary and explanatory definition, is the one and only way of answering the question whether or not Φ is Ψ and resolving the aporia that it articulates (2015: 97-8).

[209] *Theaet*. 196d-e.

[210] An epistemological problem emerges regarding how one can determine whether a proposed definition is an accurate one. Plato is aware of this problem as it arises in the *Meno,* notably at 80d-e and 77b-78b. Here is where Plato's theory of Forms and doctrine of recollection interweave into the discussion. Because our senses cannot access objects of the definition, they must exist in an abstract realm since the human senses can only participate with particulars. The Forms are abstract, independent entities distinct from the particulars that exist in the realm of being, not in the realm of becoming. Cf. Alican and Thesleff, 2013: 11-47; Allen, 1960: 147-64; Allen, 1971: 319-34; Annas, 1977: 146-60; Bénard, 1892: 86-149; Bluck, 1956: 522-9; Bolton, 1975: 66-95; Cherniss, 1944: 174-478; Cherniss, 1978: 16-27; Clegg, 1973: 26-43; Copleston, 1946: 163-206; Cresswell, 1971: 91-113; Crombie, 1969: 42-56; Crombie, 1971: 247-472; Cross, 1954: 433-450; Dancy, 2006: 70-84; Devereux, 1994: 63-90; Field, 1969: 17-46; Fine, 1984: 31-87; Gill, 2006: 184-98; Grube, 1980: 1-50; Hamlyn, 1955: 289-302; Hanhijärvi, 2019; Irwin, 1999: 143-70; Jessop, 1930: 36-50; Luce, 1965: 21-36; Mason, 2010: 27-98; Matoso, 2017: 184-8; Melling, 1987: 96-113; Nakhnikian, 1994: 129-51; Nehamas, 1975: 105-17; Nehamas, 1994: 221-48; Ostenfeld, 1982; Pater, 1893: 136-57; Patterson, 1985a; Patterson, 1985b: 27-46; Pavani, 2021: 90-106; Perl, 1999: 339-62; Prior, 1985; Rist, 1975: 336-57; Ritter, 1933; Rogers, 1935: 515-33; Rogers, 1936: 61-78; Ross, 1966; Sedley, 2016: 3-22; Spellman, 1993: 197-210; Stewart, 1909; Thomas, 2014: 168-94; Vlastos, 1984: 187-96; Vlastos, 1969: 187-96; Wedberg, 1978, 28-52; White, 1994: 152-71; Williams, 1958: 499-521; Wolf II, 1996: 20-35; Zeller, 1876: 225-92.

Definitions may go wrong. When they do, it occurs because of problems with either its form or content. Issues with form arise because the provided description essentially contains an enumeration. For example, attempting to define the term ***shape*** as roundness or claiming ***color*** refers to only white or white plus a list of any number of other colors.[211] Socrates insists that mere citation of a single instance or even a list containing many instances is inadequate for a definition; an adequate description for X should point to a general formula regarding X's core nature.

On the one hand, an explanation of X may be technically accurate and still go wrong by failing to capture the correct category of instances. When such happens, there is an issue with the definition's content. Its content may either be too broad or narrow in scope. For example, defining virtue as ***the ability to rule*** is too general because it includes tyrants who rule unjustly in its description.[212]

On the other hand, saying that virtue means ***managing a home well*** is too narrow because it does not consider children as being virtuous.[213] Furthermore, a definition can be both too strict and too narrow. Virtue, as ***the ability to rule*** from Meno 73d, is a prime example of this notion. It includes tyrants while excluding children.

Obtaining a ***definiens*** for the ***definiendum*** is not always a straightforward task.[214] Likewise, demanding too much or too little precision might cause problems with a particular definition in the future. Nevertheless, a workable definition should accomplish six goals based on the exchange between Socrates and Meno.[215] First, it answers the question, "What is X?" or "What is the nature (οὐσία) of X?" Second, a definition focuses upon a familiar concept or nature. Third, it states or reveals what is in common among various things of similarity.

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[211] *Meno* 74a-76a.
[212] *Meno* 73d.
[213] *Meno* 71e.
[214] *Euthyp*. 10.
[215] *Meno* 72-76.

Fourth, such seeks to describe something utilizing its uniqueness via a definite description. Fifth, it notices the single trait that either runs through or is in common with numerous particulars. Sixth, a definition looks for that quality or aspect with the same commonality to all things that bear the same name. Finally, if these goals are met, an explanation should show X as part of a more significant set of items. Such is the case only because the description points to a common nature amongst the group and refers to that common nature.

To know whether an etymology yields a definition, I must return to an issue I mentioned previously now that the matter of definition is out of the way. The concern here is not unlike many others within the *Cratylus*; any question surrounding the term *etymology* is complex and contested. Even though Plato's character Socrates provides over a hundred etymologies and the etymological section (390e-427d) comprises a substantial portion of the overall dialogue, they are an infamous enigma and remain unclear precisely what, if anything, they contribute to the whole work.[216] Hence, a consensus has emerged among scholars that Plato presents them tongue-in-cheek since many of the etymologies are farfetched. In other words, readers of the *Cratylus* should not take them too seriously. While this consensus among scholars regarding Socrates' etymologies may be true, we should not necessarily dismiss or ignore them entirely outright without some somber and deliberate reflection first. An individual should justifiably scrutinize if there is something more to these furnished etymologies in the *Cratylus* than a playful spirit on Plato's part. The idea that these etymologies are playful might be a point about them as *etymologies* themselves and nothing more.

While there may be some truth behind the uncertainty of the purpose of the etymological section within Platonic scholarship, Grote makes a compelling argument to the contrary. He recognizes Socrates' etymological fortitude within the *Cratylus* as a logical consequence and deduction from Plato's overshadowing doctrine of Forms.[217] Grote writes,

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[216] Barney, 1998: 63; Sedley, 1998a: 140; Sedley, 2003c: 28-30; Thomas, 2007: 218.

[217] Grote, 1888: 3:289-91. Cf. *Crat*. 390d-e; *Rep*. VI 511b; VII 533a-34e.

> In my judgment, Plato did not put them [the etymologies] forward as extravagant, nor for the purpose of ridiculing anyone, but as genuine illustrations of a theory of his own respecting names. It cannot be said indeed that he advanced them as proof of his theory: for Plato seldom appeals to particulars, except when he has a theory to attack. When he has a theory to lay down, he does not generally recognise the necessity of either proving or verifying it by application to particular cases. His proof is usually deductive or derived from some more general principle asserted ***a priori***—some internal sentiment enunciated as a self-justifying maxim. Particular examples serve to illustrate what the principle is, but are not required to establish its validity. But I believe that he intended his particular etymologies as ***bona fide*** guesses, more or less probable…some certain, some doubtful, some merely novel and ingenious…[218]

Hence, the concepts inherent in a fabulous etymology might be perfectly serious and Platonic. Why ignore the possibility that an etymology could provide reliable information concerning the ontology and potentially the telos of the human body (σῶμα)? To my knowledge, no testimony from antiquity exists—starting with Plato's pupil Aristotle—suggesting that we ***should not*** take the ***Cratylus*** etymologies seriously.[219] Taking an etymology ***seriously*** does not mean that a person must accept it fully or that the etymology does not morph over time to capture better what something is. Therefore, the etymology may be an incomplete representation of all that is involved with the name. Human language does have its limitations in conveying ideas fully; thus, it may be considered flawed in this respect.

We must keep my central task for this project in the forefront of our minds. I must also occasionally remind myself of this issue since it is so easy to get distracted by everything the ***Cratylus*** involves. What does the ***Cratylus*** testimony tell us about how Plato understands or

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[218] Grote, 1888: 3:308-9.

[219] This statement neither disregards, ignores, nor neglects the tension between Plato's ***Cratylus*** and Aristotle's ***Interpretations*** concerning the philosophy of language. After all, Aristotle opens his work with remarks about language that scholars often interpret as his reaction against Plato's ***Cratylus***. Aristotle writes, "Words spoken are symbols or signs of affection or impressions of the soul; written words are the signs of words spoken. As writing, speech is not the same for all races of men. But the mental affections themselves, of which these words are primarily signs, are the same for the whole of mankind, as are also the objects of which those affections are representations or likenesses, images, copies" (***Int***. I 16a4-8). Then, Aristotle begins the second chapter by stating, "A ***name*** is a spoken sound significant by convention—without time, none of whose parts is significant in separation.... I say 'by convention' because no name is a name naturally but only when it has become a symbol" (***Int***. II 16a19-20, 27-28).

defines the human body? Still, further, does this notion reveal anything about Plato's ontology of the σῶμα? Such inquiries have two unspoken, presuppositional questions behind them. What makes an etymology proper? What makes an appropriate definition?

Two crucial concepts require further clarification as these may aid in determining whether Socrates' σῶμα etymologies within the 400b11-c10 excerpt reveal anything about Plato's ontology of the human body. Is there a connection between them? Or could one or both purposefully be misleading to confuse us even further?

Definitions serve a purpose. Definitions aid in the narrowing of the meaning of specific symbols, which likewise narrows the possible referents of a given set of symbols. However, a definition may be useless, especially when the concept is abstract and the terms used to describe it are also.

Concerning Plato's definition of the σῶμα, as evidenced by the *Cratylus* testimony, finding his precise definition is not clear cut. Because of this reality, two additional concepts may prove quite beneficial for us to contemplate—denotative versus connotative aspects of a definition. A term's denotation refers to its plain and direct meaning. Another way of thinking of this aspect is it references its explicit meaning. In terms of Plato's definition of the human body, it is rather challenging to say with certainty what his denotative definition is since he has Socrates provide three distinctly different etymologies for the term σῶμα. This aspect is the objective of the two, whereas the connotative is the subjective one. That brings us to the notion of the connotative aspect of a definition. Here, a term's connotation refers to what it implies—what nuances and shades of meaning it carries. That said, it should be obvious why the connotative is subjective and not objective. Such does not mean that it cannot aid us in determining a denotative definition for Plato's understanding of the human body. I am convinced that it is possible to determine a denotative definition of the σῶμα from Plato's Socrates' three etymological explanations given to Hermogenes in the 400b11-c10 excerpt.

Naturally, someone will likely ask, "Why do you think it is possible to determine Plato's definition of the human body from Socrates' three σῶμα etymologies?" Throughout the Platonic corpus, Plato concerns himself with one overarching theme—conveying things to others. The silent philosopher maintains that instruction is fundamental to doing philosophy because it aims at knowledge of the truth. Everything that he has his characters say and do has a purpose behind it, and he wants his readers to take part in the learning process of what is being discussed throughout his dialogues. Hence, the reason why he prefers the dialectic method of writing. Additionally, Plato believes that the philosopher should pursue truth and combat ignorance in all its forms (*Apol*. 29d). To convey a philosophical lesson or any other type of instruction, we must use the beauty of words. In doing so, it seeks to overcome any ignorance of the intended audience for those whose souls are open to receive the truth of ideas.

While I still disagree that the philosophy of language is the primary focus and purpose of the *Cratylus*, I take no issue with the notion that Plato considers language a critical area of inquiry. Plato insists that things have their own nature apart from human perception and language. After all, we must remember that Plato's character, Socrates, declares that each thing "must be supposed to have its own proper and permanent essence; such are not concerning or influenced by us according to our desires. They are independent and maintain by their own being or essence as their nature prescribes" (386d9-e4). In this vein of thought, neither our perception nor language offers us a reliable understanding of things as they indeed are. Perception mediates our ability to access them, whereas language represents what we perceive. These are, at best, secondary to the knowledge of the things themselves—the Forms.

Such a stance is not without a potential rebuttal. That rebuttal could come from the testimony of the *Cratylus* itself. Plato recognizes but acknowledges that people are born into a linguistic environment and are introduced to the language spoken by those in that community at an early age. Furthermore, the silent philosopher acknowledges that a

linguistic community cannot sustain itself unless its members agree upon common meanings for used terms. He realizes that we can learn language incorrectly, and he goes as far as to doubt that people learn language correctly. He also doubts whether these conventions about linguistic usage and meaning attend to how the world is in its true essence. Why the doubts? Because a linguistic community may agree on the usage and meaning of a given name, there is no guarantee that the name used is correct—the one corresponding to the thing it supposedly names that matches the Forms. Plato also dismisses the position that stipulates that "the individual who knows names knows also the things that are expressed by them" (435d). He further contends that those of us relying on language to learn about the nature of the world do the exact opposite of what we should. For Plato, the knowledge of things must precede the knowledge of language because it is impossible to know something (a named thing) in terms of something else (the name given) (438e). Therefore, he has Socrates say that "the knowledge of things is not to be derived from names. No, they must be studied and investigated in themselves" (439b). According to Plato's stance, only such a study promises to yield the correct name for each thing.

This discussion within the *Cratylus* about language identifies three interlinked difficulties. First, we commonly assume that there is a direct relationship between the names we use and the way things are in reality—in the realm of Being. On this issue, Plato advocates that "The agreed upon name is not necessarily the same with the thing named" (430a). The silent philosopher goes further by positing that the name is not simply an utterance entirely unrelated to the thing; instead, "the name is an imitation of the thing" (430b). Plato suggests that the original thing is primary while its imitation, the name, is secondary. He further suggests that names are like pictures, likewise imitations of what they represent. The critical difference is that the pictures appeal to the sense of sight while names appeal to the sense of hearing (430e-431a). Following the logic of the analogy, Plato defines a name as a "vocal imitation of that which the vocal imitator names or imitates" (423b). If such is the case, he reasons that some imitations are correct while others are not. Thus, the basis of assigning names cannot be completely random or arbitrary—arbitrariness exacerbates the disparity

between things and names, and such leads to the generation of unfitting names. These names do not faithfully imitate the things named. However, all this can be avoided by first studying the nature or essence of things, finding out what they are or do, and then assigning them names only afterward and accordingly. Such a discovery of what a thing is and does naturally includes the discovery of its natural name. Properly executing this investigation would not eliminate the difference between the thing and the name. The opposite would occur. We would notice the infusion of language with names that truly imitate or reflect the nature of things.

The second difficulty Plato identifies is that people generally make no distinction between fitting and unfitting names or correct and incorrect methods of speaking. For them, any name is as good as any other as long as the linguistic community they belong to agrees to use it in specific ways and assign precise meanings. Similarly, most of us believe that one way of speaking is as good as any other so long as it is acceptable and effective within a particular society of speakers. The focus of this theoretical attitude is language as it is used or can be used, not the nature of things as they are or the proper relationship between language and things. Consequently, the procedure of naming that goes with this attitude is generally chancy, producing typically defective names—erroneous ones. For the silent philosopher, how language is used and how it should be used are vastly different; a name is an instrument through which we name something (388a). Therefore, the function of a given name should be "to express the nature of the named thing" (396a). From this perspective, there are *correct* and *incorrect* means of speaking. Because actions can be done rightly or wrongly and speaking is a king of action, we should not speak as we prefer. When we speak, we should "give information to each other and distinguish things according to their nature" (388b). In other words, language should tell us what things are and how they differ.

The third difficulty Plato identifies in his discussion on the nature of language is the problem of truth and falsehood. He points out that people often use imaginary names as if they had real referents in the realm of Being or the world of Becoming. The trouble with such names,

however, is that they can lead someone to believe that something is the case when it is not (440c). Worse, people call things what they are not. To give something an unfitting name, to call it by the incorrect name, or to say what is not is to speak falsely (429d). Conversely, to give something a fitting name, to call it by the correct name, or to say what it is, is to speak truthfully. Once again, the test of truthfulness or falsehood is not based upon conventional agreement. A name can circulate within a linguistic community and still be incorrect. Instead, the test is whether a name expresses the nature of the thing it names. Accordingly, Plato has his Socrates declare: "If I can assign names...to objects, the right assignment of them we may call truth, and the wrong assignment of them falsehood" (431a-b).

Plato asks three questions considering these conversations. First, suppose convention and custom are unreliable in producing correct terms and fitting names. How can we rehabilitate language to reestablish its proper relationship to the things it names? Second, if most people cannot be trusted to make correct names, who should be the maker of such names? Third, if most people cannot discern the appropriateness or correctness of names, who is to decide this matter? In response to the first question, Plato has Socrates make the case for etymology, the study of the historical evolution of words from their earliest forms. Etymology assumes that many words are derivations of earlier, more valid words (the term *etymology* itself is derived from two Greek terms: *etymos* [true, real] and *logos* [language or word]). Going back and discovering the meaning of the earliest forms of words is important because it can reaffirm the proper connections between the given name and the thing named, word and idea, and word and action. According to Plato, these connections are forgotten over time as language changes for such reasons as euphony and convenience (414c). Eventually, however, people may come to understand the words themselves but lose sight of what they originally meant to signify. To know a word's etymology is to know more than conventional use allows; it is to know how a term came to mean what it does today.

An etymology can take us only so far. When we have discovered the earliest form of a word

and its meaning, we typically still have no account of how that earliest form came to be made. Plato introduces the onomatopoetic function of language, which underlies the process of articulation for the consideration of his readers. Specifically, he posits that letters and syllables, the elements out of which words are made, are forms of gestures performed by the vocal apparatus. At the heart of this theory is the observation that the letters and syllables humans can utter are analogous to the sounds that things make in their natural state. By combining letters and syllables, humans formulate the earliest nouns and verbs, and through combinations of these, the whole of language emerges. The fact that words change over time or that words for the same thing differ from one language to another does not negate this explanation.

On the contrary, both facts make the case for etymology even stronger. Thus, Socrates points out that "whether the syllables of the name are the same or not the same makes no difference, provided that the meaning is retained; nor does the addition or subtraction of a letter make any difference so long as the essence of the thing remains in possession of the name and appears in it" (393d). Different words can carry out the essence of the same thing and its meaning. That this is so, according to Plato, can be seen by comparing the words to drugs (394b-c).

The usefulness of etymology notwithstanding, the language of contemporary usage still needs to be corrected, and new, fitting names must be coined to replace current, unfitting ones. According to Plato, this task cannot be left to just anyone: "Not every individual knows how to give a thing a name" (388e; 390e; 391b). Even the poets and rhetoricians, the two classes usually associated with linguistic expertise and innovation, are not to be trusted here—the former invent names for imaginary things, while the latter manipulate names already in circulation. Plato would, instead, have the lawgiver charged with the task of reforming language. This reality should be so because the legislator is the one expert who, more than any other, knows the essence of things. As we have seen, the knowledge of things is the most fundamental prerequisite for creating a correct name and language. The lawgiver,

who, for Plato, virtually coincides with the philosopher, is uniquely qualified "to make and give names with a view to the ideal name"—the name, that is, that inheres in the thing named (389d).

Even after the lawgiver makes the names, the issue remains whether any given name has received the correct, suitable form. For Plato, it is not the name-maker but the user of names who must make that determination. While the lawgiver makes names, the dialectician must decide whether the lawgiver has provided the correct names. This task is so because the dialectician is the one who knows how to ask the correct questions and can answer them as well (390b-d). Two principles are operating here. First, names must be helpful. Their usefulness involves a judgment that cannot be left to the name-maker—the lawgiver. Second, the name-maker must make instruments, that is, words, according to the specifications given by the end user. Specifications cannot come from the name-maker. By employing the maker-user pair, Plato, in effect, places two safeguarding mechanisms in his scheme for language production: the user provides the proper specs, and the name-maker follows them precisely. Only when the lawgiver and dialectician work together can language become—once again—what it was meant to be all along, a means of imitating accurately the reality of the world as it truly is.

His theory of epistemology is deeply intertwined with Plato's perspective on the nature of language. Plato's theory of knowledge is a rather complex and elaborate affair.[220] According to Plato, knowledge of something is the conceptual discovery of what the thing is, not what it appears to be. To know something is to have cognitive access to its idea and truth, not its appearance. The truth of any one or all things exists independently of human beings. As such, it cannot be created or invented by us. It must be discovered. Knowledge, in other words, is neither subjective nor societal agreements and cannot be subject to changing

[220] Burnyeat, 1990: 7-31, 39-52; Cooper, 1970: 123-46; Copleston, 1946: 142-62; Cornford, 1935; Crombie, 1971: 1-152; Cross and Woozley, 1978: 70-96; Gulley, 1962; Hicken, 1957: 48-53; Moline, 1981; Moravcsik, 1978: 53-69; Moss, 2021; Reed, 1972: 65-77; Scott, 1995: 15-85; Silverman, 2014; Thornton, 1970: 581-91; Vlastos, 1985: 1-35; White, 1976; Wolfsdorf, 2011: 57-75.

circumstances, varying perspectives, particular interests, or common linguistic usage. For Plato, most people do not know the truth but possess the requisite mental equipment to acquire it. Pursuing and acquiring knowledge takes a disciplined and sustained search, employing critical discussions (dialectic) with an accomplished philosopher. The expected outcome of these discussions is that students will at least realize that their thinking is based on superficial opinions and unjustified beliefs, which they have adopted uncritically. Students will also see that their views are simplistic, partial, internally inconsistent, and often contradictory. With these realizations in place, students will begin anew the search for ideas that are complete, consistent with one another, logical, and above all, true.

For the silent philosopher, obtaining knowledge is an endless pursuit, an unattainable goal. The way to this goal is full of obstacles. One such obstacle is the appearance of things. Appearances come in three forms: empirical reality (objects), artistic representation (drawings, paintings, sculptures), and linguistic representation (words, language). While appearances are at the surface, the truth is at the core. As such, the idea of things can be said to be hidden behind the appearances. While ideas of things remain constant, their appearances change over time and across situations. The senses perceive the appearance of things, whereas the mind apprehends the truth. The senses are not exceptionally trustworthy or reliable sources of knowledge; the mind, on the other hand, is much more dependable. The mind can be trained to discover the truth of things and to detect the errors of the senses and its own.

Another obstacle to knowledge is the commonly used language in a linguistic community. I have shown above that there are correct and incorrect names and that knowing things should come before assigning them names. To know something means knowing its essence, not its common name. Conversely, knowing a thing's common name is not the same as knowing what makes it what it is. An outgrowth of his theory of language concerns the correct definition of words. Definitions, he notes, are significant because they let us know what a thing is, what it is not, and how it differs from other things. About terms on which people

typically agree, definitions are not especially necessary. Where there is confusion about the meaning of critical terms, definitions are of paramount significance. When left undefined, such terms perpetuate disagreements and interfere with the communication between the parties involved in that dialogue. Each party may be working with a different definition for a given term. To minimize or avoid unnecessary misunderstandings among people, Plato argues that we ought to define important terms and use them consistently throughout our discourses.

The best method to acquire knowledge of things and their correct linguistic definitions is through dialogue, a question-and-answer process that aims to establish the truth about a doubtful proposition or idea. By examining any and all claims critically, dialectic seeks to expose invalid methods of thinking and thus refute erroneous methods of reasoning and groundless methods of believing something. On its way to knowledge, dialectic employs two procedures: collection, or synthesis, and division, or analysis. The purpose of the first procedure is to bring a dispersed plurality into a single, unified whole to see it all together. The purpose of the second is the reverse—to divide a single form into its constituent parts to see how each part functions with every other part. Regardless of the subject under examination, dialectic helps those who engage in it to discover whether something is simple or complex. If it is simple, someone then needs to discover what it can do to other things and how, or what other things can do to it and how. If it is complex, someone must reduce it to its most basic components and treat each component as a simple object.

I wish to highlight something I will state later in this chapter.

> I wish to set aside the issue of etymologically simple names. Socrates claims that simple names can indicate "what each of the beings is like" (422d) only by imitating them.... But since I am interested in an etymologically complex name, I can sidestep this debate.

Plato's understanding of the Greek term σῶμα is etymologically complex. Because of this reality, I must reduce it to its most basic components and treat each component as a simple etymology. This task is much easier said than done. Additionally, I must determine whether the other two etymological explanations contribute anything to correctly understanding

Socrates' preferred etymology for σῶμα.

§3.4 Responding to the Naysayer's Objections

Two potential objections come to mind that I need to refute. First, someone could claim that the σῶμα etymologies are only exegetically correct. Second, someone could argue that the σῶμα etymologies are Heraclitean.

§3.4.1 Response to Objection 1

It is quite likely that someone will raise an objection to my account of Socrates' σῶμα etymologies being both exegetically and philosophically correct. The imagined objector might concede that the σῶμα could be exegetically correct. However, such a concession does not mean it is philosophically correct. After all, the Orphics who have named the σῶμα the σῶμα might have been wrong. Therefore, we cannot learn anything about the being of the human body or even what Socrates thinks it is from the three provided etymologies in the 400b11-c10 excerpt. All we get to in the end is the name-givers' beliefs.

Such a conclusion by the naysayer is not only one that readers and interpreters can have in response to the fundamental question that Hermogenes asks and also occasionally by Socrates: Τίνα ἔχει ὀρθότητα τὰ ὀνόματα; (cf. 421c5-6). This question about the correctness of names can be and often *de facto* is interpreted in three primary ways. According to Adomėnas, these positions are as follows:

> (1) to ask for the discussion of the universal conditions under which any name can be said to be correct; (2) to ask for the analysis of a concrete name—whether it is given correctly or not. Apart from these two "basic" readings, this question is also taken in a "derivative" sense—it stands for: (3) "What follows from the name's correctness? If it is correct, what content does it indicate?"[221]

We find each notion at various points throughout the dialogue. For my purposes here, I will focus on the third since it is the most problematic to my overall thesis of determining what

[221] Adomėnas, 2003: 17.

the σῶμα is for Plato.[222]

I am not convinced that such a conclusion is proper regarding every etymology within Socrates' presentation of the various etymologies. They are not necessarily equal, so drawing the same conclusion seems prejudiced. While the σῶμα etymologies are exegetically correct, I argue that they are more than that. They are also philosophically correct, as each of Socrates' σῶμα etymologies unveils something about the being of the human body. On the other hand, exegetically correct etymologies may reveal only something about the namegivers' beliefs.

Such is not the case for the σῶμα etymologies, as they are both exegetically and philosophically correct in that they point us to the Forms in the realm of Being. On what grounds can I make such a claim? Sedley informs us that words relating to *cosmological* themes (397b-410e) are judged to be correct names by Socrates. Those words that concern ethical themes (411a-421c) are misguided.[223]

§3.4.2 Response to Objection 2

I have come across another potential origin of Socrates' first σῶμα etymology, despite what the textual testimony says and does not say. Someone could raise an objection that Heraclitus is the origin of one or two of the etymologies. Then, the individual could argue that Socrates' preferred etymology is, likewise, Heraclitean. If Socrates' preferred etymology of σῶμα were Heraclitean,[224] then we would have a good reason not to take it seriously on account of Socrates' arguments in the concluding sections of the *Cratylus* dialogue.

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[222] For example, we find the first at the dialogue's opening and closing discussions (387a1-390e5, 430a8-435d1). Two unstated presuppositions are behind the second approach. First, knowledge of the object exists behind the given name. Secondly, only such knowledge allows or enables us to determine and judge whether a given object has been correctly named. We find examples of this approach at 395b-c and 396b7-c3.

[223] Sedley, 2003: 98.

[224] Irwin, 1971: 1-13. Cf. Calvert, 1970: 26-47; Crombie, 1969: 33-7; Reeve, 1998: xliv-xlvii.

Stauffer suggests that Socrates' first etymology could potentially originate from a Heraclitean origin following a brief discussion by Dodds.[225] According to Dodds, the expression "τὸ μὲν σῶμά ἐστιν ἡμῖν σῆμα" from the *Gorgias* 493a2-3 text could be a formulation of either Pythagorean or Heraclitean origin, but it cannot be that of the Orphics.[226] He appeals to Sextus for this attribution to Heraclitus:

> And Heraclitus let them live and die, and in the living, we are also in dying; when we live, our souls die and are buried in us, but when we die, souls revive and live.[227]

However, we should note that we cannot be sure how much paraphrase from Sextus reads into Heraclitus' original thought.

Dodds is not the first Platonic scholar to appeal to Heraclitus as the origin of the σῶμα-σῆμα motif. The first occurrence of advocating this idea I have found dates to 1871.[228] Whether Heraclitus' testimony of the surviving fragments supports such a claim remains. Additionally, is there any other historical evidence from antiquity that supports it?

Philo of Alexandria appears to borrow the words of Heraclitus, though not the precise words:

> That is an excellent saying of Heraclitus, who, on this point, followed Moses' teaching, "We live," he says, "their death, and are dead to their life." He means that now, when we are living, the soul is dead and has been entombed in the body as a tomb, whereas, should we die, the soul lives its own proper life immediately and is released from the body, the baneful corpse to which it was tied.[229]

At best, we can only infer here that the well-known σῶμα-σῆμα might have been said by Heraclitus based on this testimony.

Plutarch provides the closest antiquity testimony to the potentiality of Heraclitus as the

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[225] Stauffer, 2006: 105.

[226] Dodds, 1959: 300. Cf. Cumont, 1920: 230-1. However, Cumont fails to make any connection of the body as being a tomb to Heraclitus. He favors the Pythagoreans over the Orphics for the expression.

[227] Sextus Empiricus, *Pyr*. 3.230.

[228] Thompson, 1871: 96-7.

[229] Philo, *Leg*. *All*. I.XXXIII.108.

source of the σῶμα-σῆμα motif.

> For at what time is death not existent in our very selves? As Heraclitus says: "Living and dead are potentially the same thing, and so too waking and sleeping, and young and old; for the latter revert to the former, and the former in turn to the latter."[230]

The most natural reading of this citation is that life and death are part of the same continuous process of growth and decay.[231]

Let us shift to what Heraclitus himself says. I want to focus on four specific fragments for the remainder of the discussion. Collectively, we should be able to determine exclusively if the σῶμα-σῆμα motif originates in the thought of Heraclitus.

> Immortals are mortals; mortals are immortals: each lives the death of the other and dies their [respective] life.
>
> Wherefore when he [God, θεός] is there, they [souls in Hades] arise and become watchful guardians of the living and the dead.
>
> And what is in us is the same thing [sameness]—living and death, awake and sleeping, and youth and old; the latter having changed becomes the former, and the former becomes the latter.
>
> Souls process the sense of smell in Hades.[232]

Heraclitus proposes a paradox of ambiguity in fragment 62. The Greek term most interpreters translate as *immortals* means *deathless*, but the philosopher avoids referencing its parallel, birthless. Instead, he implies it. According to Robinson, fragment 63 decodes the paradoxical puzzle that Heraclitus presents here. We learn who the "deathless ones" are in question here. These individuals are the Greek heroes granted the everlasting reward of becoming "watchful guardians of the living and dead (corpses)."[233] Such a mindset is consistent with the thoughts of Homer and Hesiod.[234]

In fragment 88, we find Heraclitus speaks of *sameness*. The most natural way of grasping

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[230] Plutarch, *Cons. Apoll*. 106E. Plutarch's reference appears to quote fr. DK 22B88.

[231] *Soph*. 242e—"διαφερόμενον ἀεὶ ξυμφέρεται."

[232] Freeman, 1977: 29-31 (frs. DK 22B62, DK 22B63, DK 22B88, DK 22B98).

[233] Robinson, 2003: 124-6.

[234] Kirk, 1949: 384-93.

what he means is to think of it as referring to someone's self-identity instead of a supposed identity of any sequential and opposite characteristics it may partake. If such is the case, the sameness could be either ourselves or those attributes of ourselves. However, the former possibility is less problematic with the fewest philosophical difficulties—at least *prima facie*. The actions that follow the expression illustrate the various stages we progress through in life compared to maintaining them *in* our self-identity.[235]

This fragment seems to support the notion of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which Heraclitus may have adhered to.[236] The concluding expression "the latter having changed becomes the former, and the former becomes the latter" indicates a ***continuum of consciousness***.[237] Such illustrates the cyclical change between extremes that continue for a lifetime. That said, the older person in Incarnation 1 is young again in Incarnation 2; then, that individual is old again in that same incarnation and becomes young again during Incarnation 3, and so forth.[238] Heraclitus' fragment 88 supports the notion of the transmigration of souls. It is reasonable to think that the soul adheres to all the senses, not just the sense of smell, while in Hades. We must remember that Hades is a dark and gloomy kingdom seen by most religiously minded Greeks as the destination for the human soul after separating from the human body.[239]

As recently as 2017, another scholar advocated that the σῶμα-σῆμα has its origin in Heraclitus. Finkelberg believes that Socrates' reference to "some people" means Heraclitus, not the Pythagoreans whom many Platonic scholars advance.[240] He states, "Heraclitus believed that our soul is divine and that purification is the agent of its deliverance from earthly life and restoration to divine station."[241] He appeals to DK 22B12: "Anhalation

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[235] Robinson, 2003: 137.
[236] Freeman, 1977: 29-31 (frs. DK 22B63, DK 22B98).
[237] Kirk, 1975: 144.
[238] Robinson, 2003: 137-8.
[239] Robinson, 2003: 145-6.
[240] Finkelberg, 2017: 100 n33.
[241] Finkelberg, 2017: 126.

(*vaporization*). Those who step into the same river have different waters flowing ever upon them. (Souls also are vaporized from what is wet)."[242] However, I am not convinced that this single fragment supports Finkelberg's claim that the wordplay belongs to Heraclitus.

Thompson draws the correct conclusion based on the testimony of Heraclitus and that from antiquity: "It is not however to be supposed that Plato in the present passage [*Gorgias* 492a] refers to Heraclitus."[243] Thus, the σοφός to whom Socrates supposedly quotes likely is some Orphic or Pythagorean sage of his own day. We know that both traditions held the notion of penal incarceration of the soul in the σῶμα (*Crat*. 400b11-c10; cf. *Phd*. 62b). There is not enough evidence to suggest that the σῶμα-σῆμα originates in the thought of Heraclitus.

§3.5 Is Transitioning from Etymology to Ontology Possible?

My first question concerns transitioning from etymology to ontology. Supposing an etymology could be established, how does that given etymology unveil the being of the ***named thing***? To determine the correctness of a name, Socrates seems to say that a person must pass the notion of language altogether and stop focusing on the words themselves (385b-c).[244] The individual must grasp what lies behind those terms—the permanent, unchanging nature of the things in question as they are in and of themselves.[245] In other words, we eventually need to consider the Platonic Forms themselves. Socrates' testimony appears to establish that it is plausible that we can glean a named thing's ontology from its etymology because he goes on to examine individual etymologies for roughly a third of the dialogue after he tells us not to focus on words themselves.

To aid in establishing my case that it is possible to transition from etymology to ontology,

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[242] Freeman, 1977: 25 (fr. DK 22B12). Translation is Freeman's.

[243] Thompson, 1871: 97. Cf. Hamilton and Emyln-Jones, 2004: 145; Hussey, 1991: 517-30. The concept is also unaddressed in Nussbaum's two-part series on the soul in Heraclitus (1972a: 1-16; 1972b: 153-70), which gives further credence that Heraclitus is not the source of the σῶμα-σῆμα motif.

[244] This passage is controversial among scholars.

[245] *Crat*. 389a5; 389a7-8; 389b3; 389b8-c1; 389b10; 389c4; 390a7.

I first appeal to another dialogue from the corpus to illustrate that it is not only plausible but also possible to do so. I assume that this example is controversial within Platonic scholarship. That said, I will not belabor the point in significant detail. Instead, I will take Sedley as an expert on the topic and will only reference other works in the footnotes for further discussion. I will then appeal to distinguishing between an exegetically correct versus a philosophically correct etymology afterward. It is reasonable for an etymology to be exegetically correct while it fails to be philosophically accurate. To be philosophically correct, the etymology should depict reality accurately. If both points are valid, there would be no question that such a task is illegitimate.

§3.5.1 The *Philebus*, as a Case Study

Such a notion is not entirely foreign to Plato's corpus. One of Plato's late dialogues may assist in supporting my argument. Sedley draws attention to this fact when discussing Plato as an etymologist.[246] He highlights explicitly three examples from Plato's *Philebus* to establish his case (17a8-b9; 17c11-e6; 18b6-d2) from the more significant portion of the text where the silent philosopher presents the issue of ***the problem of the One and Many*** (14b-20a). Notably, this portion of the *Philebus* is not too far removed from the dialogue's presentation of the fourfold ontological division of beings (23b-27c).

Socrates opens by telling Protarchus that what they have is "a gift given to humanity from the gods that were tossed down from the heavens from some divine origin through the agency of a Prometheus along with gleaming fire."[247] What is this divine gift from Plato's Prometheus? The gift in which the agency of Prometheus bestowed to humanity is ***number***. Socrates explains that there is a single genus from which to start a scientific investigation and how the genesis point opens to an infinite range of individual members. More importantly, a wise investigator will not move too quickly from the ***one to the many*** without considering

[246] Sedley, 2003c: 25-8. Cf. Crivelli, 2019: 34-54; Davidson, 2013: 111-9; Hackforth, 1945: 24-31; Gosling, 1975: 153-81.
[247] *Phil*. 16c5-8.

the whole first. However, this individual will be concerned with systematizing the various intervening possibilities. Protarchus thinks he grasps what Socrates is saying, but to be sure, he asks for further clarification. Socrates proceeds to give Protarchus three illustrations for further explanation—each involving the classification of sounds.[248]

Socrates' first illustration fails to provide much insight into how we can transition from etymology to ontology when isolated from the second and third. However, it functions as the foundation for the other two. Socrates begins his triad by invoking the notion of literacy and spoken language, evidenced by the letters of the alphabet learned as a child. While sound exits the mouth of everyone, it is one and infinite in number. Only the grammarian comprehends the knowledge of the number and the nature of those sounds (17a8-b9).

Socrates' second illustration appeals to the professional musician (17c11-e6). He says that Protarchus would be an expert once he learns the various intervals and combinations of the high and low pitches of sound. Sedley notes that there is a "flood of arithmetical wordplays towards the end of this passage" and that these wordplays establish "the place of etymology in this linguistic barrage."[249] At 17d5-6, Socrates states that these sounds "are measured by means of numbers and should be referenced as rhythms and measures." Sedley insists that "measured by means of numbers" is etymologically connected to the technical language of "rhythms and measures," which the Promethean ancestor chose to describe dancing. According to Socrates' own words, the intention is not to draw attention to the numerical regularities of dance steps but to recognize the role of ***number*** in their classification. Hence, at 17d6-e3, Socrates continues to note that the ancients are conveying to us by such language to think systematically concerning every one-and-many relationship that we investigate. Once we see the role that etymology has in the passage, we do not see the innocuous wordplays merely as wordplays. We should see them as being further etymologies: "...our inherited vocabulary of intellectual evaluation of people, it turns out, is shot through with

[248] ***Phil***. 16c5-17a7.
[249] Sedley, 2003c: 26.

recognition of the link between understanding and number."[250]

Socrates returns to discussing the alphabet in his third illustration (18b-d). Though sounds we hear are infinite, only three elements constitute the basic structure of the many combinations possible within the spoken language—vowels, consonants, and mutes. Theuth[251] assigns each sound and combination thereof a precise letter and considers each individual letter as one and any group or combination thereof as one; thus, he makes all potential possibilities of the sounds as one, calling the expertise to be over them grammar. Sedley admits that the etymological derivation is less evident in this illustration than in the former. He suggests that such is the case because Socrates, like the ancestors, expects us to do the work of derivation instead of having it handed to us.[252] Sedley states,

> It seems, indeed, obvious enough that our forebear's choice of the word ***stoicheion*** [στοιχεῖον] was based on a (perfectly correct) derivation from ***stoichos*** [στοιχος], a 'rank', so that letters of the alphabet are, etymologically speaking, 'rankings'—yet another recognition that systematic enumeration under headings is the essence of scientific understanding. Finally, the word ***grammatikē***, 'grammar' or 'literacy', is said to embody our ancient benefactor's recognition that, despite their segregation into ranks, letters could be understood only jointly, as a unity (the notion of unity being heavily emphasized by repetition). I suppose that ***grammatikē*** [γραμματικὴν] is being derived, not merely from ***gramma*** [γράμμα] ('letter'), but also from yet another mathematical term, ***grammē*** [γραμμή], a line: all those separate rankings ***stoicheia***, must in the last analysis be joined up into a single line if they are to be understood, and that task falls to the science, ***grammatikē***, as such.[253]

Here is the crux and conclusion of Sedley's argument: "Socrates is conveying to us that the vocabulary which we have inherited from our forebears can be expected to embody important scientific insights, having in fact been devised by them precisely in order to encode and thus transmit those insights."[254]

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[250] Sedley, 2003c: 26.

[251] Theuth is the Egyptian deity of the patron of science and letters, who was the reputed inventor of hieroglyphs (Werner, 2012: 181-235).

[252] Sedley, 2003c: 27.

[253] Sedley, 2003c: 27. Cf. Burkert, 1959: 167-97.

[254] Sedley, 2003c: 28.

Because of the breath that Plato's Socrates goes belaboring various etymological explanations to Hermogenes, it seems evident that Socrates intentionally wants to convey to us that our usage of language should embody insights into the things they describe. It is merely a matter of decoding the code of the words to discover their intended meaning. In other words, ***it is more than plausible to transition from a named thing's etymology to its ontology; it is possible to do so***. It would be pointless for Socrates to go to such lengths during the etymological section if they had no significant purpose.

I want to return to Plato's attitude toward etymology within the *Cratylus* dialogue. Such a reading is fundamental to correctly understanding Plato's dialogue and a historically sound one concerning its philosophical nature and content.[255] It seems unnatural and ludicrous for someone to insist that the long series of etymologies that occupy a central portion of the *Cratylus* should not be taken as serious attempts at an etymological system. What would Plato's point be for doing so? Doing such would only cause mass confusion. The contrary seems more reasonable. In other words, the silent philosopher would likely share "the presupposition endemic to his culture that languages were consciously devised by early members of the human race, who can be assumed to have constructed each word as a brief description of its nominatum."[256] We have the same presupposition today with those who create new words.

Consequently, etymologies are, in reality, encoded descriptions for the words they refer to, and there is no reason for us not to attempt to decode them to discover the namegiver's

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[255] Ademollo, 2009: 15-73; Barney, 1996; Barney, 1998: 63-98; Barney, 2001; Dalimier, 1998; Findlay, 1974: 213-9; Gaiser, 1974; Grinster, 1994: 76-107; Grote, 1888: 3.285-333; Montrasio, 1998: 227-59; Reeve, 1998: xxx-xxxiii; Sedley, 1998a: 140-54; Sedley, 2003c: 28-30; Wohlfahrt, 1990: 5-35. To be clear, some readers of Barney could justifiably argue that she does not take Socrates' etymologies as seriously as others in the sampling of scholars who do. However, she denies that they should be understood as parodic. Even Boyancé (1941) argues effectively that the etymological section of the *Cratylus* cannot be entirely ironical, but oddly, he proceeds to attribute Euthyphro with them instead of the dialogue's author. Not all scholars agree with this position, however. For the opposing viewpoint, see Arieti, 1991; Baxter, 1992; Brock, 1990: 39-49; Ewegen, 2014; Gonzalez, 1998: 62-93; Nightingale, 2003: 223-40; Sallis, 1996: 232-62; Trivigno, 2012: 35-75.

[256] Sedley, 2003c: 28.

beliefs regarding the terms. We cannot assume that each etymological explanation is entirely accurate since any of the namegiver's beliefs could be false. Therefore, we cannot guarantee that a given etymology will always lead us to philosophical truths.

With these notions in mind, a few caveats must be clarified further. To make a start here, I wish to set aside the issue of etymologically simple names. Socrates claims that simple names can indicate "what each of the beings is like" (422d) only by imitating them. His account has generated much discussion historically among Platonic scholars.[257] Since I am interested in an etymologically complex name, I can sidestep this debate.

§3.5.2 Exegetical *Versus* Philosophical Correctness

Another point to consider is Sedley's distinction between exegetical and philosophical correctness.[258] For an etymology to be ***exegetically*** correct, it must accurately depict the namegiver's beliefs about a name. An etymology must accurately depict the world's reality to be ***philosophically*** correct.[259] His difference between the correctness of an etymology is insightful. However, it is not wholly free from all difficulties in precisely how we should understand Plato's etymological section in the *Cratylus*.

Recall that I proposed that the Cratylus reads as a philosophical conundrum, engaging the reader to contemplate the trifold relationship between specific caveats: (1) ὀνόματα (names), (2) the οὐσία (essence) in which the name captures, and (3) Platonic philosophy in its most

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[257] Ademollo, 2009: 15-73; Ademollo, 2011; Anagnostopoulos, 1973: 318-45; Barney, 2001; Benfey, 1866: 189-330; Bestor, 1980: 306-30; Fine, 1977: 289-301; Gold, 1978: 223-51; Grote, 1888: 285-333; Guzzo, 1956: 609-66; Heitsch, 1984; Kahn, 1973a: 152-76; Ketchum, 1979: 133-47; Kretzmann, 1971: 126-38; Lanzalaco, 1955: 205-48; Meißner, 2022; Palmer, 1989; Rehn, 1982; Robinson, 1956: 324-41; Schofield, 1982: 61-81; Sedley, 2003c; Trivigno, 2012: 35-75; Weingartner, 1970: 5-25.

[258] Sedley, 1998a: 140-1; Sedley, 2003c: 28-30; 41.

[259] Barney presents an alternative explanation of an etymology's correctness. She declares,

> As practiced by Socrates in the *Cratylus*, etymology involves a claim about the underlying semantic content of the name, what it really means or indicates. This content is taken to have been put there by the ancient namegivers: giving an etymology is thus a matter of unwrapping or decoding a name to find the message the namegivers have placed inside. Further, Socrates offers this decoding as a *justification*: ***a name is correct by virtue of having content true of or appropriate to its object*** (1998: 63-4, emphasis added).

basic expression—inquiring about the eternal truths for oneself. From this perspective, I affirm that readers should consider the dialogue's central theme regarding the issue of what constitutes the correctness or incorrectness of names. Hermogenes is quite bewildered by Socrates' claim that names can be false (383a-385e). That said, the natural question is: what does it mean for a name to be correct?

From reading the dialogue, an individual may get the impression that the term ὀνόματα reflects the namegiver's interpretation of reality instead of mirroring reality because the process of name-making involves a dialectician to check the namegiver's work (390b1-390d7). Such an interpretation would be inaccurate. The namegiver is the individual who knows, sees, and recognizes the nature of objects. Thus, the act of name-making involves wisdom. The individual who is not wise and unable to see the essence of objects is incapable of assigning a genuine name. The namegiver is the one who assigns things their names, which divides the world inevitably. More importantly, the silent philosopher addresses language's relation to reality and truth within the Cratylus. Plato's Socrates declares that "a name is an instrument of instruction and discrimination in reality" (388b13).

This proclamation is just one in a series of similar claims that weave throughout the dialogue. Sedley claims that an etymology may be exegetically correct but not necessarily philosophically accurate. In other words, an etymology is exegetically correct insofar as it accurately captures the namegiver's beliefs about a name; thus, such etymologies allow people to learn about names. On the contrary, an etymology is philosophically correct only if it accurately depicts the world's reality. Such would be a sufficient condition for a philosophically correct etymology. Hence, if etymologies were philosophically correct, they would enable individuals to learn about the actual things named.[260]

On the view that I want to focus on in this chapter, a correct etymology generates an accurate description of the being of the named thing. For an etymology to be correct, it must be

[260] Bagwell, 2010: 3.

exegetically and philosophically accurate to unveil the named thing's ontology. Being only exegetically correct establishes only the namegiver's beliefs for the given thing. It does not convey or depict the world's reality concerning it, as it is not philosophically correct. I would argue that Socrates' preferred etymology of the σῶμα must be both exegetically and philosophically correct.

Such an argument, as Bagwell notes, "fits nicely with Socrates' attack on the view that learning about names is the best way to learn about nature (435d ff.). Nevertheless, it is unclear how the claim that the examination is 'exegetically' correct fits with the overall argument of the dialogue."[261] After all, Sedley fails to establish how his ***exegetically*** correct examination of names fits the whole dialogue on the grounds of the *Cratylus*. Instead, he seeks to prove his argument by examining Socrates' critique of names within other Platonic dialogues.[262] Nonetheless, what Sedley advocates for concerning its application to other dialogues can be referenced in the same manner regarding Plato's *Cratylus* because he does not appear to see Plato's treatment of etymologies as being distinctly different from dialogue to dialogue. Sedley's argument that names are not ***philosophically*** accurate appears that it may hold truer for proper names rather than common ones.[263] Plato explicitly makes this point for specific names with the *Cratylus* (411b-c).

For example, Hermogenes' name stems from Hermes, the herald of the gods and the protector of human heralds, travelers, thieves, orators, and commerce. This reality may be why Hermogenes disowns his name in 408b. Consider two more examples using my given name and surname. My given name is Jason, which means healer. I am not in a profession related to the medical field or any aspect that involves healing. Take my surname, Crowder. It is an occupational name that describes a musician. Likewise, I do not play a musical instrument and am not in a related profession. While these three examples are exegetically

[261] Bagwell, 2010: 4.

[262] Sedley, 2003c: 25-51; Bagwell, 2010: 4.

[263] While I distinguish between proper and common names, Plato does not. He distinguishes between primary and secondary names. I will say more about this shortly.

correct, someone cannot say that any of them are philosophically accurate. They all fall short of that threshold.

On the contrary, common names seem to portray better what the thing named actually is. Plato's Socrates suggests that names are imitations of what they name in *Cratylus* (390e, 414a-b, 423a, 423c, 423e, 426d-e).[264] If such is accurate, an etymology of a common or primary name will provide a good indication of that named thing's being.[265] Consider, for example, the name *cat*. Regardless of the language in which the name appears for *cat*, it conveys or possesses the same basic imagery and overall characteristics. That said, some of a specific cat's attributes, such as its fur coloring, may differ from another cat's. The essence that makes a cat a cat is the same between two cats or any other cat. The same applies to horses, dogs, and many other terms. Thus, Barney concludes that Socrates exhibits in each etymology how its name reveals the nature of those things.[266] Likewise, Smith is accurate with her assessment that if scholars take Socrates' claim seriously that names are tools, then "tools in general can only function successfully if they exhibit the relevant structural, compositional and (to some extent) material properties. Since Socrates claims that names are a class of tools and not merely like tools in some respects, as many have supposed, then what holds for tools in general must also hold for names."[267]

§3.6 Are Plato's Etymologies Serious Attempts?

I want to reemphasize something that I previously mentioned in §3.1. Within this chapter,

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[264] For more on imitation (μίμησις), consult Barney, 1992: 283-313; Chen, 1982: 86-101; Driscoll, 2018: 113-25; McKeon, 1936: 1-35; Sedley, 2003c: 41-50, 147-51.

[265] Someone could argue that Socrates himself argues against this stance within the *Cratylus* dialogue. Take, for example, the etymologies of ἀρετή (415a1-415e2) and φρόνησίς (411a1-b1). I would argue that these two words and the others intertwined in this portion of the *Cratylus* fall into a separate category of names since these terms are appealed to in other dialogues in an attempt to answer the Socratic "What is X?" question. As such, these terms are abstract concepts that I would argue do not have a direct parallel set in the Forms as they are not concrete things but are in flux by characteristic.

[266] Barney, 2001: 71. Joseph, however, views this differently. He understands the analysis as complicating the tension between the nature and convention relationship to the extent that it renders it impossible to judge how either influences the correctness of names (2000: 85).

[267] Smith, 2014: 75.

I aim to establish how we can transition from the content of an etymology to the being of the body to establish Plato's definition of the human body and its ontology. Proceeding from a named thing's etymology to its ontology is easier said than done. There is no clear path from point A (etymology) to point B (ontology). That said, there are at least three difficulties here that are worth stating upfront. The first difficulty is simply this: what licenses an inference from etymology to ontology?

§3.6.1 Plato's Socrates and the Etymologies of the *Cratylus*

Socrates goes to great lengths to present many of the etymologies in an extravagant, humorous tone. More than half of Socrates' discussion in the *Cratylus* dialogue is laboring to the proposing etymological analyses of more than a hundred Greek terms, which can be divided into eight broad groupings. He begins with the names of rational beings or the hierarchy of living beings—gods, daimons, heroes, and humans (3994e-399b). Next, he explores the names of the fundamental constituents of rational beings (399d-400c11). Socrates proceeds by examining the names of individual personal gods (400d-408e), followed by the names of the cosmological gods (408e-410e). He continues by discussing the names of intellectual virtues (411a-413e), which leads him to address the names of moral, epistemic, and prudential values and disvalues (414b-420d). After this, he moves to the issue of the finest and most significant names (421a-c).[268] Socrates concludes by addressing primary names (421c-427e).[269]

Plato's Socrates spends the first four-fifths of the dialogue discussing with Hermogenes the various issues with his position (383a-433b). On the other hand, the last fifth of the dialogue focuses on Socrates' response to Cratylus' take on the issue (433b-440e), where Socrates

[268] Someone could reasonably group the etymological section differently: Homeric names (390e-397b), cosmology (397b-410e), and knowledge, value, and truth (411a-421c). The cosmological grouping is named such based upon the text at 397b8-9—τὰ ἀεὶ ὄντα καὶ πεφυκότα. For a further breakdown of the etymologies within each grouping, see Sedley, 1998a: 149.

[269] This last subdivision is debatable as to whether it belongs in the etymological section. Sedley thinks it does (1998: xxviii), whereas Ademollo does not (2011: 257-316).

refutes naturalism and defends conventionalism.[270] It is within the first four-fifths of the dialogue that the etymological section appears (394e-421c). The length of this section of the dialogue is slightly over fifty percent of the entire drama. By contrast, the discussion of Hermogenes' conventionalism (384c-386e) and Cratylus' naturalism being rebutted (433b-4440e) is much shorter, being only two-fifths of the length of the discourse at best.

As examples of a humorous tone, we think of his second etymology for ἥρως (hero) at 398d5-e5, where heroes are akin to orators and skilled questioners. Granted, orators and skilled questioners are not people who come to mind as individuals who are heroes. Most of us would immediately think of first responders or those who serve in the military protecting their homeland. Socrates is not your ordinary person, is he? For the philosopher, it seems reasonable to see orators and skilled questioners as heroes—individuals we should look up to or be inspired to be like.

We may also think of the language within his etymology of ἄνθρωπος contains a self-ironical expression—κομψῶς (clever) followed by σοφώτερος τοῦ δέοντος (wiser than I should) at 399a1-5. In a serious or tense discourse, even today, we often defuse it by introducing humor into the discussion for the sole person to lighten the mood. It is plausible that Socrates is poking fun at himself for that very purpose here in this example.

In addition, Socrates makes apparently ironical sounding remarks about etymologies themselves. For example, someone may appeal to 392e1-3 where he says: "Well, do you think it is an awe-inspiring thing to know that the name of that river is more correctly called 'Xanthos' instead of 'Skamandros'?" From our point of view, this does not seem too inspiring at all. Aside from the question of what it could mean for a river to be correctly called by one name rather than another, does it genuinely matter if we call the Thames the Thames or the Pequot? I take issue with such an appeal to this example beyond the previous point on two grounds. First, this example appears outside of the official etymological section

[270] Denyer, 1991: 68.

of the dialogue as it proceeds. Second, Socrates reports an example from Homer's *Iliad*,[271] not an etymology he presents as his own. Someone could justifiably argue that the humor rests here in Homer, not Socrates.[272]

Here is another example of an ironical-sounding remark about the etymologizing at 396d2-8:

> Hermogenes: Indeed, Socrates, you seem to me to be practically like a prophet who has suddenly been inspired to deliver oracles.
>
> Socrates: Yes, Hermogenes, and I mostly blame it on Euthyphro, the one from the Prospaltian district. It is coming upon me because I was with him this morning and listened to his lengthy discussion. He must have been inspired because it looks as though he has not only filled my ears with his supernatural wisdom but has also taken possession of my soul.

Again, this example is not farfetched. Do others not influence us and our actions? Granted, we are not likely to speak divine prophecy, but others definitely impact what we may say or think.

However, the humorous tone of some of the etymologies may not be the biggest challenge to overcome with them. Ademollo declares,

> Many of the etymologies which Socrates is going to set forth cannot be meant to express the ***essence*** of the name's referent in any reasonable sense; in particular, many names will turn out to encapsulate descriptions which are not ***uniquely*** true of their referents. This could give rise to an argument in favour of convention: if a name '*N*' encapsulates a description true of both *X* and of *Y*, and yet names *X* but not *Y*, this can only be in virtue of convention. Thus it seems that a thoroughgoing naturalist should really hold that names express some peculiar feature of their referents, if not their essence. But Socrates will not make use of any such argument; and the generic meaning of the term οὐσία here seems to be confirmed by the paraphrase Socrates will adopt at 422d, according to which the correctness of names consists in 'indicating ***what*** each of the beings is ***like***' (δηλοῦν οἷον ἕκαστόν ἐστι τῶν ὄντων). Only at 401cd, and then at 423ce, will the term's meaning be restricted to something like 'essence' or at least 'essential property'; and indeed, the 'ideal' names which Socrates goes on to

[271] Homer, *Il*. 20.74, 21.342-80.

[272] Ademollo makes two observations as to why Socrates appeals to Homer here that are worth noting. Foremost, the Homeric exegetes were interested in problem-solving. Secondly, it fits with the contemporary exegetical practice of Socrates' era; there was an idea that Homer's lines contained elements of knowledge that could point to the correctness of names (2011: 150-1).

> envisage at 424b-425a will presumably be made in such a way as to imitate the essence of their referents.[273]

For these reasons and others, it is not easy to read the etymological section without thinking there is more to the etymologies than it appears.

The question of what such is and the intended purpose of the etymologies have been the subject of much inconclusive speculation.[274] Platonic scholars and commentators have differing perspectives concerning the significance of the etymologies and their status and provenance.[275] Such an attitude leads to many probing questions of inquiry. How should we understand the etymologies? Are they—or are they meant to be—plausible, accept, serious etymologies? Are they Plato's own invention? Is Plato borrowing them from somewhere else? Since many have a humorous overture to them, should we grasp them as parodies for comic relief? As Barney correctly notes:

> Interpretation has tended to suffer from a lack of clarity regarding the relation of these questions; and failure to accept that the *Cratylus*' etymologies are not etymologies in the modern manner has led to much irrelevant controversy. Worse, the tendency has been to collapse all these questions into one and ask whether the etymologies are *Scherz oder Ernst* [Joke or Serious]—whether Plato is expounding dogma or enjoying a (fairly private) joke.[276]

This so-called collapsed question demands and warrants our attention since scholarship tends to focus primarily on it over the other questions, especially since nothing within Plato should be seen just as a joke.

§3.6.2 Reading the Etymologies and the *Cratylus* Dialogue

The question of the seriousness of the etymologies is closely connected to the question of

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[273] Ademollo, 2011: 167.

[274] For a synopsis of the debate, see Gaiser, 1974: 45-9. For a basic overview of the etymologies of the *Cratylus*, consult Ademollo, 2011: 181-256; Baxter, 1992: 86-106; Steiner, 1916: 109-32.

[275] Barney, 2001: 47.

[276] Barney, 2001: 47. Cf. Gaiser, 1974: 45. For a similar mindset as Gaiser, see Gosling, 1973: 206: "The function of the central passage [the etymological section] would seem to be partly to rest the mind, partly to bring home the implausibility of a thesis which, if described but undeveloped, might seem to have some attraction." On the contrary, Sedley argues that if the etymologies were meant to be a joke, it failed (2003c: 39-41).

how we should read the dialogue as a whole. In some readings, as we shall see, Socrates is perfectly serious in defending a version of naturalism about correct naming, and the etymologies seem intended to support such a point of view. The opposite seems to be the case in other readings.

At 391a, Hermogenes says to Socrates: "I think you would be more likely to persuade me if you were to show me just what you claim this natural correctness of names is." Socrates eventually introduces the example of the name Astyanax (392b). So, it seems to be an example of a name that expresses natural correctness. The example details are as follows: Here is where Socrates attempts to answer Hermogenes' question regarding what Homer has to say concerning names (391d2-3). The dialogue at 392b9-393b4 reads as:

> Socrates: Which name do you imagine Homer thought was more correct for the boy, Astyanax or Scamandrius?
>
> Hermogenes: I cannot say.
>
> Socrates: Look at it this way: suppose someone were to ask you whether the wise or the unwise assign things more correct names.
>
> Hermogenes: That is obviously the wise, I should say.
>
> Socrates: And which class of people in general do you think are wiser in the city, the women or men?
>
> Hermogenes: The men.
>
> Socrates: Now you know that Homer tells us that Hector's son is called Astyanax by the men of Troy? Is it not evident then that the women called him Scamandrius since the men called him Astyanax?
>
> Hermogenes: That appears to be the case.[277]
>
> Socrates: Did Homer not regard the Trojan men as wiser than their women?
>
> Hermogenes: I suppose so.
>
> Socrates: Therefore, he thought 'Astyanax' better suited the boy than 'Scamandirus'?
>
> Hermogenes: So, it appears.
>
> Socrates: Then, we should consider the reason why. Does he not himself indicate the reason to us in the most beautiful fashion? He says, "He alone defended their city and

[277] Socrates either forgets or ignores *Il*. 6.402-3 where Homer states that Hector gave the baby the name Scamandrius, while everyone else called him Astyanax out of honor and respect. So, Hermogenes' response may have a bit of caution behind it.

> long walls."[278] So, for that reason, it seems only fitting to call the protector's son Astyanax (Lord of the city), which, as Homer says, his father defended.
>
> Hermogenes: That seems the right thing to do to me.
>
> Socrates: But why? I do not understand it myself, Hermogenes. Do you?
>
> Hermogenes: No, by Zeus, I do not.
>
> Socrates: Well, my good fellow, did not Homer also give Hector his name?
>
> Hermogenes: So, what if he did?
>
> Socrates: Well, to me, the two names seem more or less the same since both appear to be Greek. After all, ***anax*** (lord) and ***hektôr*** (possessor) signify pretty much the same thing; both are kingly names. Indeed, a man possesses that of which he is lord since it is clear that he rules, owns, and has it. Or perhaps you think I am talking nonsense, and I am ignorantly assuming that I have found a clue to Homer's opinion about the correctness of names.

It is plausible that Socrates purposefully misquoted Homer. Textual evidence from Plato's Socrates in the *Cratylus* supports such a notion. More importantly, this evidence explains Socrates' playful behavior throughout the rest of the discourse in the dialogue.

Socrates reveals to us how we should respond to him.[279] He warns those who are listening to be on their guard. Plato's Socrates remarkably says to Hermogenes, "Watch out that I do not lead you astray" (φύλαττε γάρ με μή πῃ παρακρούσωμαί σε, 393c8-9). He tells his interlocutors that he may trick them. Such a warning stands for us, too, as readers of the *Cratylus*.

He goes even further by unveiling just how these tricks may come about. Socrates articulates,

> Regardless of whether the exact meaning is expressed in one set of syllables or another, it does not make a difference. And if a letter is added or subtracted, that does not matter either, so long as the being or essence of the named thing remains steady in such a way that is evident in its name (393d1-5).

Socrates provides us with further clues on how much leeway this simple rule gives him. He

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[278] Hector is the person being referenced here. Cf. Homer, *Il*. 22.507.

[279] I am indebted to Tanner (2022) for pointing these elements out so clearly. I am embarrassed to say that after reading the *Cratylus* countless times over a three-year period I completely missed these insights from Socrates.

can easily bend the rule to his advantage to deceive us—"And yet, if we are permitted to add or subtract whatever we wish to names, it will be far too easy to fit any name to any thing" (414d8-9).

Tanner emphasizes that

> Throughout his etymologizing, Socrates remarks about his capability in doing so. These remarks usually undermine his and his audience's confidence in his etymologizing. From the start, Socrates sets his own bar low, saying, "My dear Hermogenes, I don't have a position on [the correctness of names]. You have forgotten what I told you a while ago, namely that I didn't know about names but that I would investigate them with you" (391a). When Hermogenes agreeably offers, "That seems right to me," Socrates responds with, "It does? You understand it, Hermogenes? For I don't understand it yet myself." To this, Hermogenes responds by acknowledging his own ignorance: "Then *I* certainly don't" (392e). It becomes difficult to trust Socrates's etymologies when he so clearly distrusts them himself.[280]

While it becomes difficult to trust Socrates, that does not mean we should not do so. The silent author wants his audience to work through the conundrum of the etymologies with Socrates. We should not expect someone else to spoon-feed us everything. We must be able to think for ourselves.

Before proceeding further, I must discuss how scholars interpret the *Cratylus* dialogue. Meißner notes, "But there seems to be one question that must play a role in any attempt to arrive at an overall interpretation of this dialogue: Which view of the correctness of names does the *Cratylus* support?"[281] Given the significance of this question, it is not only reasonable to provide an overview of the various positions taken by scholars, but it is necessary to do so. Most Platonic scholars fall into three groupings, depending on their reading of the dialogue, according to Meißner.[282] In the following four paragraphs, I paraphrase Meißner's presentation of those positions.

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[280] Tanner, 2022.

[281] Meißner, 2023.

[282] Meißner, 2023.

Some scholars believe the etymologies of the *Cratylus* should be read as comical relief or parodies because the *Cratylus* ultimately supports Hermogenes' conventionalism. They advocate readers of the dialogue must disapprove of Socrates' rebuttal of conventionalism and the naturalist theory he advances at 390e-427d. From Socrates' criticism of the naturalist theory at 430a-435b, readers should infer that his interlocutor, Hermogenes, was correct in denying the natural correctness of names the entire time.[283]

On the other hand, others draw a different conclusion based on arguments at 430a-435b. These scholars see that conventionalism may ensure that *some names* achieve a minimal correctness threshold. Nevertheless, a specific condition must be met: the extent to which names are correct depends mainly on how well they describe their respective referents. Therefore, at 390e-427d, Socrates presents an argument for a limited role of conventionalism in favor of the naturalist theory of the correctness of names.[284]

Still, other scholars affirm that there should be a sharp distinction between claims that there is a natural correctness of names and that correct names must describe their referents. They, therefore, argue that Plato's *Cratylus* supports the first claim for support for the natural correctness of names. They see the dialogue undermining the second claim that correct names must imitate their referents.[285]

These are not the only three positions of interpreting 390e-427d. For example, Baxter and Keller advocate that Plato's primary goal is to debunk the notion that etymological analyses

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[283] Ademollo, 2009: 15-73; Ademollo, 2011; Arieti, 1991; Bestor, 1980: 306-30; Brock, 1990: 39-49; Gonzalez, 1998: 62-93; Guzzo, 1956: 609-66; Lanza Lao, 1955: 205-48; Nightingale, 2003: 223-40; Rehn, 1982; Robinson, 1956: 324-41; Sallis, 1996: 232-62; Schofield, 1982: 61-81.

[284] Anagnostopoulos, 1973: 318-45; Barney, 2001; Benfy, 1866: 189-330; Brumbaugh, 1958: 502-10; Findlay, 2014: 215-7; Fine, 1977: 289-301; Grote, 1888: 3.285-333; Palmer, 1989; Sedley, 1998: 140-54; Sedley, 2003c; Sedley, 2006a: 214-27; Trivigno, 2012: 35-75; Weingartner. 1970. Ewegen argues that we should read the *Cratylus* as a comedy but acknowledges the seriousness of the etymologies (2014).

[285] Gold, 1978: 223-51; Heitsch, 1984; Kahn, 1973a: 152-76; Ketchum, 1979: 133-47; Kretzmann, 1971: 126-38; Meißner, 2022; White, 1976: 139.

could lead to philosophical knowledge.[286] Gaiser puts forth another alternative reading in which he advocates that Plato wants to make an ontological point regarding flux and stability.[287] However, it does not seem natural to argue that Plato's primary point in the etymological section is an ontological one to establish the importance of flux and stability.

The next question I want to take up is to consider how we should interpret the etymologies on each of the above styles of reading. As I noted already, for the interpreter who claims that Socrates defends the etymologies, we must read them as serious attempts at an etymology. The interpreter cannot allow any humorous tone to distract, but the person must attempt to figure out why Socrates uses it. Rist notes that "...the etymologies carry on to their inexorable conclusion: that each name discussed 'shows' (δηλοῦν, 422d) what kind of thing its nominatum is. Each name, whether new or old, is a vocal imitation of a thing (423b), or rather of the essential nature of a thing (423e)."[288] He continues by saying, "Indeed despite the obvious parody and irony in many of the etymologies, it is hard to believe that Plato would have gone to such lengths if the notion that names might imitate their nominations is quite impossible. Plato's goal, of course, is not yet clear, but that need not surprise us."[289]

On the other hand, those who think Socrates is defending conventionalism must argue that the etymologies are either parodies or comic relief for the most part. Some exceptions exist where Socrates avoids expressing a humorous tone to a specific etymology. Then and only then may these individuals see the etymology as somewhat profound. Rist declares in response, "In brief, names are philosophically useful only in the sense that the man who knows 'things' can use the names to expound what he knows to other people. Names are for exposition, not for investigative enquiry. Thus, incidentally Plato does know the difference between reference and description in the *Cratylus*."[290]

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[286] Baxter, 1992; Keller, 2000: 284-305.
[287] Gaiser, 1974.
[288] Rist, 1984: 209.
[289] Rist, 1984: 209.
[290] Rist, 1984: 212. *Pace* Robinson, 1956: 337.

Similarly, others may see some of the etymologies as legitimate, but most are fictitious. They acknowledge there could be an element of naturalism within the etymologies. They favor conventionalism, hence, so only some etymologies are legitimate. It is as if there is a tautology happening here. For example, Soltes notes,

> The principle behind Plato's etymological process is one of development, moving ideally from a φύσει relationship between ***nominatum*** and ὄνομα (based on a φύσει relationship between phonemes and their 'meanings' in other words—at the same time that Plato recognizes the unreliability of such an ideal in reality) to universally accepted 'proper' (νόμῳ) terminology. That this involves a tautology will once more be apparent, rendering the opposition of φύσει to νόμῳ manifestly absurd (of which absurdity, I contend, Plato is aware).[291]
>
> And since ὀνόματα cannot be exact imitations/reflections of their ***nominate***, the entire enterprise as it had been initiated by Hermogenes and Cratylus is necessarily undercut: to study ὀνόματα themselves instead of ***nominate*** themselves, is analogous to mistakenly focusing on a table or an instance of justice in lieu of making Justice or Tableness—their Forms—objects of the search of knowledge.[292]

So, while Platonic scholars differ substantially on how we should interpret the etymological section of the *Cratylus*, I believe there is only one natural way of reading and understanding that portion of the dialogue. We must acknowledge Socrates' usage of humor and realize that he may be intentionally trying to deceive us. After all, he warned us to be alert before he began the etymological section that he would purposefully try to trick us (393c8-9). However, we should not allow such humor to distract us from what Socrates says regarding any given etymology. Yes, we can laugh with Socrates and his interlocutors. We must press forward to find the truth the philosopher wants us to discover.

Suppose we are to accept Hermogenes' view of conventionalism. Why would Plato have his character Socrates go to such lengths to elaborate countless etymologies to forsake his refutation against conventionalism at the end? Such behavior does not seem logical. After all, Socrates begins by refuting Hermogenes' conventionalism in support of naturalism. Likewise, it seems unnatural to conclude that there should be a stark contrast between the

[291] Soltes, 2007: 142.
[292] Soltes, 2007: 145.

claims of the natural correctness of names and that correct names must describe or imitate their referents. Such a position seems to devalue Socrates' argument that the etymologies are to point us to the Forms (389b3, 389d4-6).[293]

Therefore, the most natural method of reading and understanding the 430a-435b is that we should see that conventionalism ensures some names at least meet a certain minimal standard of correctness. We must also acknowledge that names are correct depending on how accurately they describe or imitate their respective referents, the Forms. Consequently, we need to take the etymologies of the *Cratylus* as serious ancient etymologies.

Plato devotes more than half of Socrates' discussion in the *Cratylus* dialogue to laboring to the proposing etymological analyses of more than a hundred Greek terms, beginning with the Atreidae genealogy from Orestes to Uranus (394e-396c). As a result, Hermogenes and Cratylus believe Socrates is an authority, having the credentials of a first-rate philologist, even though he declares that knowledge gained through an etymological name is essentially trivial (421c-442c, 436a-e).

We should see Plato's Socrates in the same manner. But doing so is not without its challenges and difficulties, as we will soon see.

This dialogue of the Platonic corpus focuses on humanity's experience and its dependence upon language as an underlying axiom regarding its condition. Socrates' conclusion that etymologies are irrelevant (421c-442c) might be a moot point as there could be some truth behind a word's etymological meaning.[294] In other words, the inherent ideas encompassed within any given philological definition may accurately represent that thing under consideration. If such is the case, an individual should not be so quick to dismiss an etymological explanation as utterly insignificant. Remember that Socrates says those who

[293] More on this point will be toward the end of this section.

[294] It seems to me that he definitely thinks this with regard to the etymologies of the σῶμα.

first introduced the terms to society *might be wrong*. He does not say *definitively* that those individuals are misguided or have erroneous teachings regarding reality. However, Socrates allows varying degrees of the correctness of names (cf. 392a-d).

Of course, there is a further problem. By the end of the etymological section of the dialogue, Socrates seems to suggest that at least a good many etymologies lead to Heraclitean doctrines (for example, 439b10-c4).[295] Yet, since the dialogue finishes with arguments against these, it would seem to follow that at least a subset of these etymologies end with false beliefs—the doctrine of flux, and so on. So, this is not only a claim about possible errors of the namegivers but an actual error.

To respond to this objection, I wonder if we must assume that there is an actual error on Socrates' part or even on the part of the namegivers. It seems reasonable that Socrates knows what he is doing as a philosopher and a philologist. Once again, it seems likely that Socrates has set another trap for us to work through with the tricks at hand that he warned us about just before the etymological section (393c8-9). Why must the namegivers or even Socrates be the ones in error? Could we not have erred in missing their intended point about reality? Finding fault in others before seeing it in ourselves is much too easy.

While I put forth these questions about us being the individuals who may have erred, there is another plausible and more acceptable explanation to ponder here. Recall what I said earlier about the difference between an etymology being exegetically correct versus philosophically correct. Here is an excellent example of where this distinction seems vital. Those etymologies with a Heraclitean overture seem to be only exegetically correct; they fail to meet the threshold of being philosophically correct.[296] Therefore, the namegivers' belief is false in the sense that such etymologies are not exegetically *and* philosophically

[295] Ademollo notes that we cannot easily explain away this passage as either ironical or unserious (2011: 238-9). Thus, we have what "constitutes as first-hand evidence," according to Ademollo, of Plato endorsing many of the etymologies his Socrates presents (2011: 239).
[296] Sedley, 2003: 159-60.

correct.[297] Soltes states, "Plato seeks a true account of ***anything*** under investigation. And it is important to seek the truth-value of words so that they may be put to use in assessing the truth-value of λόγοι offered in teaching, dialectic and philosophical discussion."[298]

Another way of thinking about this distinction is as follows.

Exegetically Correct Name: N is a correct name of X $=_{df}$ N is a name of X.

Philosophically Correct Name: *N* is the correct name of X $=_{df}$ *N* is the name of X.

In both cases, specific caveats are held. A correct name for any given named thing is a name that successfully performs the function of being a name relative to that named thing. In other words, it is not some ***unique*** name for that given named thing. Such a concept entails two logical consequences. First, no degrees of correctness exist in names, as no truth-value is assignable to a name ***per se***—unlike statements.[299] Hence, one name cannot be more correct than another. Second, there cannot be such a thing as an incorrect name of something. Such a notion is self-contradictory. If N is a name of X, N is a correct name of X. Thus, it follows that if N is not a correct name of X, then N is not a name of X. Therefore, we can conclude that an incorrect name of X is not a name of X at all.[300] The same basic logic applies to the second equation for philosophically correct names. Furthermore, this perspective of correctness holds with Socrates' advancements at 432c-433b, as he makes a stark distinction within a set of correct names.[301]

Like nearly everything else in philosophical discourse, much more emerges from the depths

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[297] Socrates' σῶμα etymologies in the 400b11-c10 excerpt are not Heraclitean in their nature. Also, remember that toward the end of Excurses 2, I showed that Heraclitus is not the origin of the σῶμα-σῆμα motif. Thus, these etymologies are both exegetically and philosophically correct.

[298] Soltes, 2007: 258. I am sympathetic to Soltes' remark here, but I do not fully agree with him. Names do not have a truth-value. See the following paragraph.

[299] Robinson, 1955: 335. Cf. Ademollo, 2011: 3. To claim that ***names have a truth-value*** is fallacious. They do not, and they cannot possess such. The same is true regarding definitions. Saying that names or definitions do causes someone to err by committing a fallacy of division. Readers of the *Cratylus* discover that Socrates makes the converse mistake of composition later in the dialogue (431b).

[300] Ademollo, 2011: 3, 326-332; Barney, 2001: 177-9; Denyer, 1991: 68-82.

[301] Sedley disagrees on this point, as he sees the text at 392b9-393b4 advocating degrees in correctness in names. See Sedley, 2003: 78-80.

of the abyss the further someone investigates. I need to address an additional challenge when dealing with the *Cratylus* dialogue before I can attempt to tackle the crux of the chapter since it directly and indirectly impacts various aspects of what I will argue. This controversy centers around the problematic etymological section (397a-421e).[302] Here, the primary issue deals with the intent and purpose of Socrates' etymologies and how readers and interpreters should interpret them.

Controversy and skepticism plague the aim of Socrates' etymologies within the *Cratylus*.[303] One account considers the various etymologies legitimate philological accounts. On the other hand, others see Socrates' treatments as parodies for comic relief.[304]

I firmly believe that a middle-ground position, of course, is possible. Naturally, the question emerges as to what the middle ground consists of. I suggest we take all etymologies within the etymological section as serious treatments of ancient etymologies.[305] Yes, that includes those that read more comical or as parodies. If we consider them unseriousness, how could they be compatible with truth? We cannot see them as conveying truth. Consider what Soltes asks, "But can there be Truth-pursuing discourse, ἔλεγχος, dialogue—if, simply put, the necessary elements of that enterprise, ὀνόματα, are not true?"[306] Even though we take all the etymologies seriously, we can still acknowledge the comical and parodical nature of

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[302] A second controversial issue of the *Cratylus* interweaves with this matter of dispute—the status of the imitation theory of letters (421c-427d). The imitation theory also appears within the *Republic,* where its presentation in Book X appears self-contradictory—at minimum inconsistent—with the discussion of *mimesis* that occurred in Book III. Cf. Belfiore, 1984: 121-46. The crux complication of these two controversies stems from the reality that Socrates appears double-tongued near the end of the *Cratylus*. Trivigno captures the conflict well when he pens, "After spending nearly the entire dialogue defending etymology and the imitation theory, he spends the rest of the dialogue refuting its claims and attacking the natural names thesis (427e-442c)" (2012: 35). This controversy further highlights the question of the legitimacy of the etymological section since Socrates seems to refute everything that he just argued for.

[303] Deihl, 2012: 86.

[304] See pages 126-7 nn281-4.

[305] Barney, 1998: 63-98; Pfeiffer, 1968; Sedley, 1998a: 140-54; Sluiter, 2015: 896-922; Thomas, 2007: 218-26; Trivigno, 2012: 35-75; Tsitsibakou-Vasalos, 1997-98: 117-32; van den Berg, 2019-20: 227-47; Verlinsky, 2003: 56-77.

[306] Soltes, 2007: 15. Another way of looking at this is "if ἔτυμος is 'true,' then 'etymology' is the study of truth—or rather, it is the λόγος about truth" (Soltes, 2007: 109).

those that read in such a manner. After all, the problem, for the philosopher and astute reader, is to grapple with the issue of how we can effectively pursue ***truth*** when specific names appear to bear no intrinsic truth-relationship to the expressed entities.[307]

The first step in considering objections to an individual's position is understanding the objections. So, I must begin by taking up the question of what it means to say that etymologies are not serious, and then, I need to explain why scholars have thought this to be the case. By doing such, I will be in a better position to answer it.

Palmer makes a crucial observation:

> Plato is a sophisticated author and the altogether plausible insight that much of what goes on in the dialogue, especially the etymological derivations, is developed in a satirical vein does not warrant the conclusion that the *Cratylus* is generally devoid of serious purpose. (After all, what makes satire a particularly effective genre is precisely the way in which an author incorporates an element of truth in the caricatures employed to attack both foolish and substantive views or actions of an opponent.) And it certainly does not warrant the wider conclusion of those who say that Plato took no discernible stand on the issues which he raises in the dialogue.[308]

Even if all the etymologies are ***satirical***, we can, nevertheless, learn about the named thing's being by considering them.

Likewise, Plato is also a complex philosopher. To propose a hypothesis, any hypothesis, that Socrates' etymologies have little importance to the whole of this dialogue or Plato's philosophy seems counterproductive. After all, would Plato write a dialogue in which he did not have a specific intention for its content? By raising this question, I do not wish to imply or suggest that Plato has some underlying basic systematic philosophical system throughout his corpus. Instead, I wonder if he may have an essential task in mind driving the focus for each specific dialogue—an intellectual task to capture his readers' minds so that they contemplate the matters raised by his characters and come to their own conclusions as

[307] Soltes, 2007: 15-6.

[308] Palmer, 1989: 4.

readers.

Consequently, the overshadowing controversy of the *Cratylus* might not be as problematic as it appears within Platonic scholarship. Such an assertion does not imply that no challenges or difficulties exist related to the issue. Goldschmidt pleads:

> Pourvu seulement qu'on veuille laisser de côté cette inévitable pseudo-question de savoir si Platon est 'sérieux' ou non,—question qui n'a encore aidé à l'intelligence d'aucun dialogue mais qui, en revanche, a puissamment contribué à obscurcir les véritables problèmes.[309]

Note that Goldschmidt sees the etymological section's seriousness as a pseudo-question that obscures the fundamental problems of the dialogue.[310]

The questions that I raised toward the opening of this section are just some of the challenges modern readers face while reading Plato's dialogue. Additionally, why did Plato write them? Why did the silent philosopher think it necessary to preserve over a hundred etymologies? Furthermore, the etymological section has been a sticking point for scholars who have attempted to write a commentary on the *Cratylus* dialogue.[311] According to Baxter, "The result has been a turning away from the etymologies in favour of studying the opening and closing parts of the dialogue, where one seems to be on more familiar ground and one can argue about what theory of language Plato held and similar questions more congenial to modern readers."[312]

§3.6.3 Reading *Cratylus* Etymologies as Ancient Etymologies

The text of the *Cratylus* dialogue is substantially preoccupied with the etymologies of an array of Greek words that either the protagonists or Socrates suggest for analysis. Its focus on the etymologies is why countless scholars write the entire dialogue as less than serious. After all, many of the etymologies have a "folk-etymological nature," which appears quite

[309] Goldschmidt, 1940: 145.
[310] For an overview of the general problems of the *Cratylus*, see Berger, 1970-71: 213-33.
[311] de Vries, 1955: 290 n1.
[312] Baxter, 1992: 86.

distinct from the "serious brilliance" that Plato's Socrates displays elsewhere in the corpus.[313] Two other questions of inquiry emerge from this issue. On the one hand, we must realize Socrates' etymologies within Plato's *Cratylus* resemble ancient etymological practices. We cannot insist that Socrates' etymological treatments ***must fit*** into the mode of the modern discipline. While those who prefer the comical or parodical reading and understanding of the etymologies of *Cratylus* do not come out directly making this charge, it appears to be an underlying presupposition of their argument—nonetheless. It is as if they are saying, "Because many of Socrates' etymologies read as humorous, they cannot and do not fit the mode of authentic etymologies. Therefore, we cannot take them seriously or consider them as serious attempts of an etymology. Thus, they are not acceptable etymologies."

Barney states that

> This is obviously not etymology in the modern sense, which offers non-evaluative, largely evolutionary accounts of the origins of words. Ancient etymology, for which the *Cratylus* was a classic and central text, was a quite different practice—or rather a loose family of practices, with a wide range of purposes and standards. As practiced by Socrates in the *Cratylus*, an etymology evidently amounts to a proof of the correctness of a name; but it is more mysterious than it might appear just how this proof is supposed to proceed—especially as Socrates' procedures are often rushed or allusive, and vary considerably from one case to the next. Roughly and in general, a name is explained or analyzed by Socrates in terms of (at least one) etymologizing term or phrase; this phrase is presented as a ***phonetic explanation*** of the name; and it is shown that the meaning of that explanation—what I will call the ***deep content*** of the name etymologized—is true of the nature of the referent of the name.[314]

She goes on to elaborate further on the phrase "of the nature of the referent" by stating that "because truth-of simpliciter is probably not sufficient for correctness: Socrates' etymologies typically disclose not just any true description of the referent, but one which brings out some

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[313] Soltes, 2007: 81. Cf. Méridier 1931: 20 for discussion on the list of etymologies from the *Cratylus* that meet modern etymological standards.

[314] Barney, 2001: 46-7. Cf. Barney, 1996: 76-8. Valente notes, "It can be said with confidence that the etymologies discussed by Socrates have continued to circulate for centuries independently of the dialogue itself and even outside the Platonic tradition" (2019: 79). Cf. Bernecker, 1994: 1543-56; Herbermann, 1981: 22-48; Herbermann, 1991: 353-76; Sluiter, 2015: 896-922. Riley states, "The *Cratylus* as a whole follows the design of a ***reductio*** proof: enunciation, construction, demonstration, and recapitulation" (2005: 16).

central aspect of its 'nature.'"[315]

While Barney makes a worthwhile point, her usage of *proof* seems too strong. Etymologies are not philosophical arguments, despite how much she or I would like them to be. Granted, it would make things much more simplistic in my argumentation if such were the case, but that is not the situation. Consequently, etymologies cannot *intrinsically* prove a name's correctness—at least by itself. We can use them to support our arguments in establishing philosophical proof for a claim, however.

Plato's *Cratylus* is the first known work whose central discussion focuses on the systematic use of etymology. That is to say, there is a systematic characteristic within the etymological section that follows the chief developments of Greek thought up to Plato—mythology, cosmology and physics, ethics, psychology, and language, including matters of logic and ontology.[316] In other words, Socrates' survey of the etymologies provides us with a systematic overview of matters of philosophical interest to the early Greeks.[317] Unlike the modern-day discipline of etymology, the practice of ancient etymology is much more restrictive in its scope, which Plato's character Socrates admits in *Cratylus* 410a and 421d. This prohibitive nature reflects "the unavailability of ample comparative material."[318] Furthermore, a common practice of ancient etymologizing is to attach *myth* to etymologies.[319]

Scholars have considered the *Cratylus* to be the standard text for etymology since antiquity.

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[315] Barney, 2001: 47. Based on this discussion and the following discourse, Barney advocates that all etymologies should be taken seriously as etymological explanations (2001: 66-70, 78-106). Furthermore, this line of thought agrees with Grote (1888: 3.302-21). Cf. Sedley, 198: 140-54. We should also take into account Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Comp*. XVI.5-7: "τὰ κράτιστα δ' ὡς πρώτῳ τὸν ὑπὲρ ἐτυμολογίας εἰσαγαγόντι λόγον, Πλάτωνι τῷ Σωκρατικῷ, πολλαχῇ μὲν καὶ ἄλλῃ μάλιστα δ' ἐν τῷ Κρατύλῳ." However, Heath offers an opposing position against Grote's perspective (1888: 192-218).

[316] Ademollo, 2011: 189; Baxter, 1992: 91-3; Sedley, 2003: 156-7.

[317] Sedley, 1998a: 150.

[318] Tsitsibakou-Vasalos, 1997-98: 117.

[319] Tsitsibakou-Vasalos, 1997-98: 117. Tying the etymologies to myth may explain why Socrates elaborates on the names of the Greek gods in the etymological section of the *Cratylus*. Cf. Bénard, 1892: 82-3.

From its writing until the nineteenth century, Maltby acknowledges that scholars did not significantly advance etymological techniques during this era.[320] Perhaps much of the frustration for present-day readers of the *Cratylus* is that the etymologies do not follow established rules or are grounded in a firm theoretical basis.[321]

One further aspect concerning ancient etymologizing is noteworthy.[322] It is not uncommon to see the appearance of a synonym in a given etymology. So, a question arises as to what the role of synonyms in ancient etymologizing might be. Ideally, the synonym functions as an etymological sign that clarifies obscurities to an etymology.[323] Some etymologies may have multiple synonyms, which may serve grammatically as metaphors. Such a practice often causes further puzzlement rather than clarity. On other occasions, a synonym may be absent.

On the other hand, what constitutes the proper approach to reaching a correct name? This concern becomes increasingly substantial if Plato believes that for a name to be accurate, its descriptive content must be a true exemplar to which the name refers.[324] This issue returns to the initial debate that causes Hermogenes and Cratylus to invite Socrates to join their conversation in the first place.

One thing seems abundantly clear, though. Strauss notes, "The assumption that the Platonic dialogues do not convey a teaching is absurd."[325] Precisely what that contribution or teaching is, however, may not be as evident in one dialogue as in another. For example, Thomas sees the *Cratylus* and the *Theaetetus* forming a critical unit that critiques "Heracliteanism,

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[320] Maltby, 1993: 257-75. For more on etymological practices in antiquity, consult Adomėnas, 2003: 8-20; Amsler, 1989; Cairns, 1996: 24-59; Harris and Taylor, 1997: 1-18; Law, 2003: 17-23; Louden, 1995: 27-46; Matthews, 2014: 1-133; O'Hara, 1996; Peraki-Kyriakidou, 2002: 478-93; Taylor, 1987; Tsitsibakou-Vasalos, 1997-98: 117-32.

[321] Pfeiffer, 1968: 234-51. Cf. Peraki-Kyriakidou, 2002: 478.

[322] While I have witnessed this aspect while reading Aristotle, Homer, and Plato, I have never seen anyone articulate this perspective until reading Peraki-Kyriakidou's article (2002: 478-93, especially 482-9).

[323] In ancient etymology, synonyms seek to achieve the same objective as actual etymologies (Lausberg, 1998: 481, specifically §1095).

[324] Palmer, 1989: 18.

[325] Strauss, 1978: 51.

sophistic relativism, and poetic pretensions to linguistic expertise and far-reaching wisdom."[326] Understanding these two dialogues in such a manner establishes a framework in which Plato could construct his doctrine of the Forms as non-relativistic. On this type of account, the Forms are ***stable beings***, grounded to reality in the realm of being and knowable through sensible objects in the realm of becoming. Thus, the dialectician aspires to divulge such truths.[327] Therefore, we should take the etymological portion of Plato's *Cratylus* as being a serious attempt at etymological explanations.

§3.6.4 The Question of What the Term *Etymology* Means and Its Intended Purpose for the Silent Philosopher, Plato

For the silent philosopher, Plato, the contents within a given etymology should convey something about the truth of reality regarding the named thing's being or essence. As such, we should see or understand etymologies as whimsical accounts of what they describe in the *Cratylus*. The focus should be on the relationship between Socrates' etymologies and Plato's doctrine of the Forms (389b3, 389d4-6). This treatment seems to agree with how Plato treats etymologies elsewhere in the corpse. Remarking on the *Sophist*, Cornford declares, "Plato's definition of 'word' thus covers two senses. (1) A common name ***signifies*** or '***means***' a 'nature' which is a Form, as well as '***standing for***' or ***indicating*** existing things. (2) A proper name ***stands for*** or ***indicates*** an existing thing only. With his usual disregard for precision, Plato uses all the common words for 'signify', 'mean', 'indicate', indiscriminately."[328]

According to the *Cratylus* text at 438d7-8, correct names exhibit the ***truth of the things that are*** insofar as those names are in the likeness of the things that are—the things in which they name. Hestir puts it this way: "True names are like ***the truth*** insofar as they are a likeness of truth. One might say that true names are ***true to*** what they are about because they accurately express those things. So, on the Cratylean account, for a name to be ***true of*** something is for

[326] Thomas, 2007: 225.
[327] Thomas, 2007: 225. Cf. Hoenig, 2019: 557-65; Verlinsky, 2003: 56-75.
[328] Cornford, 1935: 307.

it to be *true to* its referent."[329]

We cannot neglect what Socrates says at 438e8-9: "Something different, something other and different in kind from them, would not also signify something other and different than them [the things that are]." There seems to be a fundamental principle behind this odd claim for Plato. If some named thing *like* φ is different from the named thing ψ, then φ could and would not signify ψ but something else *φ*. If φ truly signifies ψ—that is, genuinely signifies ψ and does not merely act like φ—then φ is *like* ψ. Therefore, names are ***not correct names*** in any sense of not being *like* their objects, which are not actually names at all (cf. 438c6, 438d4-5). Plato's Socrates declares that if a named thing's name is different from rather than like what it names, we should conclude that the given name is incapable of signifying that object being referenced. For names to be correct and capable of signifying, they must be *like* their objects. Consequently, correct names point us to the reality of the Forms.

§3.7 Inching Closer to the Cave's Opening

I would argue that Plato's Forms serve as objects of linguistic meaning and reference to properly communicate about the realm of existence in which we live.[330] Unfortunately, ancient Greek philosophers are infamous for their peculiar view that reality is entirely different from what we perceive it to be or think it is. Such makes the notion of language somehow deceptive and sometimes even elusive.

According to Heraclitus, "Nature likes to hide."[331] We could infer from him that even our ability to speak about reality can be a state of contradictory affairs. That said, renouncing the existence of a physical realm never occurred to him.

Does "nature like to hide"? Granted, it is quite visible to us. Could nature be hidden because

[329] Hestir, 2016: 40.
[330] Clegg, 1973: 26-43; Graeser, 1975: 218-34; Graeser, 1977: 359-88; Hintikka, 1973: 1-30.
[331] Freeman, 1977: 33 (fr. DK 22B123).

an ordinary individual assumes it is by attaching "a name to a thing that he somehow exercises a conceptual grasp on the respective object"?[332] Such a notion seems foreign to Heraclitus, though. It is doubtful that ordinary individuals know names, in general, are only incomplete symbols. They only depict what must be considered as aspects, attributes, or features of the object to which it refers. In other words, names are mere abbreviations, depicting just a single mode of the named object's presentation.

Here is why the Platonic Forms represent objects of linguistic meaning and reference. It seems that no particular φ-thing equals what φ-ness purports to be. Such is the rationale for why Plato's Socrates is never satisfied with the enumeration of examples of answers to his "What is X?" question throughout the dialogues. Socrates desires to know why any given response can be an illegitimate example in the first place. Therefore, to know what someone means when talking about some *x* being φ, that individual must first know what it means to be φ. That is to say, the individual must know that Plato holds the very entity properly called φ-ness.

Thus, the Forms should be considered normative meanings, having considered them as some denoted intentions. The silent philosopher was not, however, prepared to consider ***meanings*** in terms of referring to ordinary linguistic usage, which appears obvious. His theory of Forms did not intend to provide for what may be called a model of ***ontological predication***, where ***x*** is φ, ***if and only if*** some homonymous form φ-ness exists, and ***x*** is one of its participants.

The primary intent behind Plato's theory is to provide a condition in which the possibility of significant discourse, in general, could occur. We should note what Plato suggests in the *Parmenides*:

> "To the contrary," said Parmenides, "if anyone who has his mind fixed on all these objections and others alike denies the existence of ideas of things and does not assume an idea under which each specific thing is classified, that person will be quite at a loss,

[332] Graeser, 1977: 365-6.

> [135c] since he denies that the idea of each thing is always the same, and in this way, he will utterly destroy the power of carrying on discourse. You seem to be aware of such" (*Parm*. 135b5-c3).

By implication, Plato suggests people fail to recognize their ignorance of support for the Forms when arguing against them. They are forced to commit themselves to the position that the Forms do exist. After all, it is precisely the Forms' existence that language and thought depend, according to Plato's thought. Things are not always straightforward, though. Plato believes that things that belong to the realm of Becoming do not fully answer the mode of presentation conveyed by the language that names those ideas.

Commentators of Plato have said that Plato's world of sensory experiences was cognitively unreliable and deceptive because phenomenal things do not fully account for the mode of presentation conveyed by the expressions or language used to refer to things. Naturally, much more could be said regarding such a notion. Instead of needlessly highlighting the various issues involved, I want to focus on one further point of clarity on the conundrum.

The silent philosopher believes spatio-temporal objects could have multiple names and partake in a plurality of forms. Such accounts for why some specific feature of the participant may be present.[333] However, such a notion of participation implies the concept of substantial being was foreign to Plato—at least concerning the phenomenal things consisting of the content of the realm of Becoming. There were no such things as Aristotle's notion of ***substance*** for Plato. With the usage of ordinary language, we cannot refer to the sensible properties of a named thing without first introducing a word or phrase that appears to stand for the thing itself instead of anything else that may be said about it.[334] Thus, on the issue of the metaphysical distinction between substance and attribute, Plato is silent. Such does not prevent us from investigating Socrates' σῶμα etymologies of the *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 excerpt in an attempt to determine what the human body is for Plato and its ontology. We must be careful with how we go about our inquiry, not to transpose an unnatural reading into Plato's

[333] Vlastos, 1969: 291-325; Burge, 1971: 1-13; Stough, 1976: 1-30.
[334] Ayer, 1952: 56-7; Kahn, 1966: 245-65; Kahn, 1973b.

thought.

Chapter 4
Peeking Outside the Cave

§4.1 Etymologies Are Not Philosophical Metaphors

Pinker brazenly claims, "TO THINK IS TO GRASP A METAPHOR."[335] What an odd statement to make. But is it? While his proclamation may initially surprise us, that is not his intent. He desires to illustrate the intimate connection between language and how we comprehend knowledge.

Pinker's assessment is not novel. For at least the past half-century, there has been a renewed interest in the notion of *metaphor* in philosophical discourse. The basic premise is that philosophy would not exist without using metaphors since metaphors are the building blocks upon which intellectual concepts are built.[336] Because of this mindset, many scholars have argued through the years that the etymological section of the *Cratylus* should be regarded as philosophical metaphors rather than actual etymologies.

Etymologies are etymologies. Despite what scholars may say, they are not philosophical metaphors. Despite what some scholars may think, we have no reason to doubt the seriousness of Socrates' etymologies in the *Cratylus*, as I argued in Chapter 3.

§4.2 Recapturing How We Got Here

By now, it should be evident that my primary concern in my dissertation centered around a single issue of interest: what does the *Cratylus* 400b11-c10 testimony reveal about Plato's

[335] Pinker, 2007: 238, capitalization is original.

[336] Boys-Stones, 2003; Donnellan, 1966: 281-304; Donoghue, 2014; Glucksberg, 2008: 67-83; Johnson, 1981: 3-47; Johnson, 1995: 157-62; Johnson, 2008: 39-52; Martinich, 1984: 35-56; Pepper, 1982: 197-205.

ontological views concerning the human body? I wanted to see if Socrates' σῶμα etymologies unveiled anything that we can use to determine Plato's definition of what the human body is and its ontology.

In the second chapter, I addressed the question: what is Socrates' preferred etymology of the σῶμα in the *Cratylus*? I scrutinized the devil in the details within the 400b11-c10 excerpt. In other words, I completed an exegetical analysis of Socrates' three σῶμα etymologies themselves. I also addressed two additional etymologies that Socrates mentions in the broader context of the passage of my primary interest, along with numerous peripheral issues that arose that required attention, as they could have aided in my investigation to determine the philosophical significance of the etymologies.

We must remember that we cannot divorce Socrates' discussion of the human body from the overshadowing philosophical discord of the *Cratylus* itself—the nature of names or words and their connection to absolutes and reality. Likewise, we must acknowledge the question of whether Plato's philosophical predecessors influenced what he has Socrates' character put forth in the σῶμα etymologies at 400b11-c10 excerpt since Socrates appears to weave elements of the Orphic and Pythagorean traditions into his vernacular definitions of what the human body is. Some aspects of those traditions do not originate within themselves; they adopt them from mythical tales, which the ancient Greeks deem part of their history.

In the third chapter, I fixated on the second fundamental component involved in my primary research interest: what makes this etymology a sufficient guide to the being of the σῶμα? Answering this question required dealing with others, such as whether an etymology yields a definition. After all, the namegiver makes words suitable for things, so the given name should be seen as an instrument for communicating about things and representing their Forms. If only the issue were that straightforward. I had to deal with the difficulty of transitioning from a so-called etymological definition of a named thing to that named thing's ontology. If the etymology is correct, it should reveal something about the named thing's

ontology. Here is where Plato's theory of Forms entered the equation.

§4.3 Conclusions

Socrates' σῶμα etymologies are not straightforward semantic connections but rather heavily influenced by a philosophical-religious perspective.[337] In the first etymology, Socrates describes the body as a tomb, derived from the word σῆμα. The second etymology, also from the Greek word σῆμα, presents it as a sign. In both cases, Socrates attributes his words to an unnamed sage.[338] Socrates' third etymology is more elaborate, directly linking the word to the followers of Orpheus and their belief in the body's role in protecting the soul.

Because Socrates' language introduces his final σῶμα etymology, we are inclined to believe that this etymology is his preferred etymology. Furthermore, based on the discussion from Chapter 3, we are also inclined to grasp it as a sufficient guide to the being of the σῶμα. Such does not imply or suggest that we should ignore what the philosopher has to say concerning the σῶμα in his first two etymologies.

To decode this motif, we must ask the correct series of questions. Why does Socrates call the σῶμα a tomb? Why does he then call the σῶμα a sign? Why does the philosopher proceed to call the σῶμα an enclosure that is like a prison but keeps the soul safe until its penalty is paid? Finally, we must ask one last question. What is Socrates' ultimate purpose in saying what he does about the σῶμα that unveils what it is for Plato and its ontology?

Except for the last one, I addressed these questions during my exegetical analysis of the σῶμα etymologies in Chapter 2. Socrates' first etymology states that the body is the tomb of the soul. In his second, he declares that the body is the sign of the soul. Then, he calls the body the enclosure of the soul, which is like a prison to keep the soul secure. Each etymology has two common denominators. First, the ψυχή is in the σῶμα when it is in the realm of

[337] Soltes, 2007: 98; Cf. page 29 n62.
[338] See page 29 n62.

Becoming, per Plato's account in the 400b11-c10 excerpt. Second, an implication of Socrates' etymology of the ψυχή is that the soul rules over the human body (399d ff.). Both claims are an unstated presumption of each of the etymologies. As such, we must note that each etymology, as does the common denominators, seems relatively intelligible and that the statements are *prima facie* unproblematic at a precursory glance.

I want to focus primarily on the last question now. Again, that question is: What is Socrates' ultimate purpose in saying what he does about the σῶμα that unveils what it is for Plato and its ontology? We must ask ourselves the following questions. Why does Socrates depict the σῶμα as a tomb, sign, and enclosure? What is he trying to convey to us with such imagery?

While Plato's character Socrates' three σῶμα etymologies appear intelligible and *prima facie* unproblematic upon closer examination, that does not appear to be the case. Too many problems arise when grasping what the silent philosopher exactly means. Admittedly, doing such is intellectually challenging if we only consider it at the surface level. However, we must go beyond the *prima facie* to determine Plato's ontology of the σῶμα.

On one level, it appears somewhat safe to say that in each of Socrates' explanations regarding the σῶμα, the human body functions as an *instrument* for the soul based upon the exegetical analysis. It is unclear as to precisely how we should understand this unique relationship based on the σῶμα etymologies alone. Socrates' etymologies of the σῶμα seem to be consistent with what Plato expresses in *Alcibiades 1* 124b-d: "The human body is only a tool that the soul uses."

On another level, the σῶμα appears to function as the *attendant* of the soul. According to Lodge, the expression "τὸ μὲν σῶμά ἐστι σῆμα" from the *Gorgias* 493a is connected to both the Orphics and Pythagoreans who advocated "the body is the custodian of the soul." He goes to note that Plato combines the σῶμα with σῆμα in the same manner in the *Cratylus*

400b11-c10 excerpt.[339] Thus, the σῶμα functions as the ***attendant*** of the soul in the dialogue under investigation per Lodge's account. However, I have yet to find supporting evidence in either the Orphics or Pythagoreans to have the saying "the body is the custodian of the soul." The question becomes whether there is lexical evidence to support such a claim. Unfortunately, I have found none beyond the means of an implication of Socrates' explanation of the ψυχή.[340]

Let us suppose that Lodge is correct in his claim that the Orphic-Pythagorean traditions did have the notion of the human body functioning as the custodian of the soul. What precisely does this expression mean? The σῶμα is a vessel for the soul. An attendant is someone who guards, protects, or maintains. Such a notion, however, seems to contradict what was stated previously in §1.2.2.2 about how the soul rules over the human body.

But does Lodge's notion contradict the soul ruling over the human body? I would say that it does not necessarily. An ***attendant*** or ***custodian,*** to a degree, is a servant. However, there is nothing within the actual σῶμα etymologies to suggest such. Considering the etymology that precedes them, we can find support for the claim. After all, the soul rules over the body. This claim has an unstated implication to it—the body is a ***slave*** to the soul. Another way of grasping Lodge's notion is to see the ***attendant*** or ***custodian*** as another way of phrasing the thought that the human body is an instrument of the soul.

Both of these accounts must take into consideration Socrates' etymology of ψυχή that he gave immediately preceding his three σῶμα etymologies. Per Socrates' description, we must recall that the soul gives life and animation to the human body. Consult §1.2.2.2. Consequently, the σῶμα needs caring for.[341] The σῶμα must obey the orders that the soul gives.[342] Since the ψυχή is the source of life and animation, the human body merely receives

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[339] Lodge, 1891: 167.
[340] See page 42 n92.
[341] *Gorg*. 465d ff.; *Leg*. 896e ff.; *Phdr*. 246a.
[342] *Crat*. 400c2[b]-c4[a]; *Phd*. 80; *Rep*. 353d.

and transmits motion.[343]

That said, I am not sure I have figured out precisely how we are to understand the ontology of the σῶμα yet, where I am completely satisfied. It seems that Socrates' σῶμα etymologies are not entirely clear as to how we are to understand them and where we can draw definitive conclusions as to an ontology of the human body based on the testimony of the 400b11-c10 excerpt alone. In other words, there does not seem to be a precise way to determine the expressions' meaning, at least in a sufficient manner without conjuncture. Therefore, Socrates' σῶμα etymologies appear to be, in fact, unintelligible and problematic.

To complicate matters further, the verb *to be* in Socrates' etymologies appears as it should be understood as unequivocal. If we are not careful, we can easily commit the informal logical fallacy of equivocation with his etymologies otherwise.

> If A is B, and B is C, then C must be A.
>
> Salads are healthy, and a taco salad is a salad. Therefore, a taco salad is healthy. If you were to ask my wife, Rebekah (a registered dietitian), she would inform you that a taco salad is one of the unhealthiest things one can eat in terms of a salad.

A tomb is not necessarily a body, just like a sign or prison, which is not necessarily a body. More specifically, neither is a human body. The same can be said for saying "a tomb is an instrument" and so forth.

Therefore, only after a fuller examination of the Platonic corpus might we determine Plato's ontology of the human body. The silent philosopher's corpus should provide ample testimony for further investigation. Initial philosophical investigations do not always go as we think they will.

§4.4 Moving Forward

While the *Cratylus* testimony unveils itself as functioning as the soul's attendant, the question

[343] *Crat*. 399d ff.; *Leg*. 894e ff.; *Phdr*. 245c ff.

remains whether the rest of the Platonic corpse agrees. The primary dialogues requiring further investigation are *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Republic*, and *Timaeus*. The *Republic* may be the most challenging because of its sheer length. However, I do not believe it to be the most crucial dialogue for examination. I firmly believe that the *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Timaeus* would provide more than ample material to determine if the findings here are held elsewhere.

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