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TEMPERANCE AND WHAT ONE NEEDS IN THE *CHARMIDES*

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In this article I will be reading the *Charmides* between the lines. I will show that if we ask the right questions about the dialogue, the dialogue will prove itself to be full of positive content. In the first part it will be shown that temperate behavior involves refraining from doing forceful actions which one does not *need* to perform. In the second part it will be established that one's needs are determined by the work of which one has knowledge. And in the third part we will see what *temperance*, the thing that produces temperate behavior, consists in.

I will not deal with the other great theme of the *Charmides*, the knowledge of knowledge and of the lack of knowledge.[1] But I will show how the gap between the themes of temperance and knowledge of knowledge can be bridged, for determining whether one knows how to deal with the things involved in that particular action.

1. *Refraining from forceful actions which one does not need to perform*

The dialogue begins with an example of temperance. At the beginning of the dialogue Socrates has just returned from a battle. Each of those present has his question to ask Socrates about the battle (153c8-d1). When he has finished with their questions, Socrates has a question of his own to ask about how things are going at home. What is on his mind? What does Socrates care about? He is interested in philosophy and

[1] I deal with this in "Knowledge of Knowledge and of the Lack of Knowledge in the *Charmides*," *International Studies in Philosophy* **21** (1989), 49–61, where I argue that it is the knowledge of how to conduct elenchi.

in youth (153d2-4). He is told that the most beautiful youth is Charmides. Socrates finds Charmides' beauty astounding, and everyone else seems to be in love with Charmides (154c2-5). They are so taken with Charmides' beauty that they cannot look away. The exception is Socrates: "Even when I came to observe the boys I noticed that none of them...had eyes for anything else" (154c6-8). Socrates is the one person who is able to attend to something besides Charmides—he is looking at the other people present. Clearly Plato is purposely differentiating Socrates' attitude from that of the others.

Even though these others are transfixed by the beauty of Charmides' face, there is something so sublime, according to Chaerophon, that it would make them forget about it: the beauty of his naked form (154d4-5). But, again, Socrates is concerned with something other than what everybody else is concerned with. He agrees that Charmides would be unbeatable, *if* he also has a well-developed soul (154d6-e1). It would be this consideration which keeps Socrates from falling in love with Charmides; the outward form suggests something about the inner nature, but is the inner nature really that good? This does not mean that Socrates is indifferent to Charmides. As we have seen, Socrates cares for youths; what he wants to do is to strip Charmides' *soul*, and then view it.. He speaks in the imperative: Charmides is to come (ἐλθέτω) to them (155b7). But things change for Socrates, when he happens to get a glimpse of what is inside Charmides' himation; he catches fire and is no longer in himself (155d3-4). Nonetheless Socrates manages with toil (μόγις) to control himself, when he is required to answer Charmides' question. Thus the dialogue begins with an example of Socrates exercising self-control (or temperance—σωφροσύνη). Plato, no doubt, had a reason for beginning the dialogue which attempts to define 'temperance' with an example of temperance, and it will, in fact, be of use to us as we analyze the definitions.

Charmides exemplifies something as well, for, when Socrates asks him what temperance is, he blushes with shame (αἰσχυντηλόν) and gives a false reason for not answering (158c5-d1). Such concern for the opinions of others (which is entailed in blushing) will eventually be nominated as a definition of 'temperance' and be rejected.

Charmides' first definition of temperance is a traditional one:[2] temperance means doing everything orderly and gently (ἡσυχῇ) (159b2-3). The example of Socrates' temperance, which we just considered, certainly involved acting in an *orderly* way. Charmides had asked Socrates a question and he managed with toil to respond in a fitting, appropriate way. Socrates' behavior is in contrast to that of the other's present; each pushes and shoves the other so much, in an effort to get Charmides to sit next to him, that there is no longer room for the ones on the ends of the bench to sit down—one of them even gets pushed off the bench. They exemplify disorderly, ungentle behavior.

There are two strange things about Socrates' response to Charmides' definition: the form and the content. The content is strange in that Socrates mistakenly takes ἡσυχῇ (stilly, quietly, softly, gently) to be equivalent to βραδέως (slowly), which it is not. The form is strange in that, instead of showing that it is sometimes not admirable (καλόν) to act in accordance with Charmides' definition (thus providing a counter example to that definition, for temperance is always καλόν—159d11), he merely shows that acting in the opposite way is *more* admirable.[3]

But the lack of proper content is not fatal to Socrates' objection, for, even though 'quickly' is not the opposite of 'gently', in the course of the discussion, Socrates works his way around to a true opposite of (ἡσυχῇ): at 159e9-10 he gets Charmides to agree that it is more admirable to teach σφοδρά (violently, vehemently), to be reminded σφοδρά, and to remember σφοδρά. Vehement, violent behavior is clearly the opposite of soft, gentle behavior. Thus, even though Socrates' objection to Charmides' definition is nonsense, it might still be the case that Plato is subtly using that objection to make legitimate criticisms.

We might find the examples of teaching violently, being reminded violently, and remembering violently more problematic than Charmides does (for example, Socrates teaches Meno's slave in a gentle way), but Plato's hidden objection is still strong, for we only need one counter example of good, violent behavior to defeat Charmides' definition. And, in fact, some of Socrates' examples of activities which require quickness

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[2] See W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 164-165.

[3] Gerasimos Santas points this out in "Socrates at Work on Virtue and Knowledge in Plato's *Charmides*" in *Exegesis and Argument*, eds. E.N. Lee, A.P.E. Mourelatos, R.M. Rorty (New York: Humanities Press, 1973), 115.

also require violence—namely wrestling, boxing, and the pancratium (159c8-11). Gentle, soft wrestling is clearly not admirable. Wrestling requires an assertive, passionate attitude—an attitude like that of someone who teaches, reminds, or remembers violently.

Not only does Plato provide us with the proper content for an objection to Charmides' definition, he also provides the proper form, for even though Socrates merely says that quick wrestling is *more* admirable than slow wrestling, it is clear that soft, gentle wrestling is not at all admirable.[4] The problem with the form of Socrates' argument is simply that he understates his case, making his premise weaker than he can make it (showing that the bad form of wrestling is merely less admirable, when he could have shown that it is not at all admirable). Thus hidden within Socrates' very strange argument is an argument which is sound: acting ἡσυχῇ is sometimes not admirable (for example, in wrestling); temperate actions are always admirable; therefore temperance is not the same as acting ἡσυχῇ.

Even though it is true that some forceful, ungentle actions can be good, it is still true that Charmides' definition was in accord with the example of Socrates' temperate behavior—Socrates' temperance *did* involve acting in an orderly, unforceful way. If Charmides wished to be true to his initial insight, he would modify his original definition by specifying what types of forceful actions are intemperate. It might well be the case that he has found the proper genus for a genus-species definition, and merely has a need to further specify.

But, in response to Socrates' request to look within himself and say what temperance appears to be (160d5-e1) Charmides starts on a new tack. He feels that temperance makes a man αἰσχυντηλός (ashamed, bashful), and that temperance is αἰδώς (modesty, shame) (160e3-5). Charmides has done a good job of looking within himself, for, as Thomas Schmid and Seth Bernadete have pointed out, this definition fits

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[4] Santas claims: "Socrates has not produced a single case of quietness of behavior which...is either not praiseworthy or disgraceful" (Santas, note 3 above, p. 115). But we see here that Socrates *has* done so; it is just that he has not presented it as such.

Drew A. Hyland claims that it is not obvious that quietness (ἡσυχία) is a defect in such activities as playing the lyre, wrestling , boxing, etc., much less that it is shameful (αἰσχρόν) (*The Virtue of Philosophy: an Interpretation of Plato's Charmides* [Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981], 59). It seems clear that he is relying too heavily upon one particular translation of ἡσυχία, for, while quiet boxing is not obviously defective, *gentle* boxing is; gentle boxing would be considered unmanly—disgraceful.

the explanation of his earlier refusal to say whether or not he has temperance: he was blushing with *modesty* (αἰσχυντηλός) at the time (158c5-d1).[5] He was modestly concerned with what the other people who were present thought of him.

But what Charmides has described cannot be temperance, for, while it is true that such shame does involve self-restraint, it is possible to be intemperately swayed by shame. Plato provides us an example of this at 169c6-d1, where Critias' concern for what other people think of him prevents him from admitting that he cannot answer Socrates' questions and causes him to humbug them with meaningless talk: "since he usually contrived to distinguish himself, *he was too ashamed* to bring himself to admit to me before the company that he was unable to determine the questions with which I challenged him, but made a very indistinct reply in order to conceal his difficulty" (my emphasis). Just as Charmides' concern for what others think of him (evidenced by the fact that he was blushing) makes him answer Socrates dishonestly (158c5-d1), so too Critias' concern for what others think of him prevents him from honestly contributing to Socrates' search for truth. Clearly it is not a good thing for Critias to be swayed by shame in this way, and, as we have seen, temperance must always be good.

Socrates has a different way of dismissing Charmides' definition. He quotes Homer: "Shame is not a good mate for a needy man (κεχρημένῳ ἀνδρί)" (161a4).[6] Thus shame cannot be temperance, because temperance must always be good. Again, the natural response to Socrates' criticism does not involve abandoning the original definition. To be true to his original insight Charmides should further *specify* under what conditions shame is temperance. The natural move to make is to specify that temperance is shame about things which one does not need. Charmides

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[5] Thomas Schmid in "Socrates Practice of Elenchus in the *Charmides*," *Ancient Philosophy* **1** (1981), 142–3, and Seth Bernadete in "On Interpreting Plato's *Charmides*," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* **11** (1986), 19. Schmid further points out that Socrates commends Charmides' definition of temperance as 'modesty' as "courageous self-inspection" (160e2-3).

Michael J. O'Brien sees the connection between Charmides' modesty and his definition in *The Socratic Paradoxes and the Greek Mind* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 126.

[6] The meaning of the quotation is that being bashful is bad for a beggar because he will be embarrassed to beg. But when it is used as a general principle it takes on a more general meaning. For example, at *Laches* 201a-b Socrates uses it to justify old people going to school.

does not make this move, nor should we, for we have seen the example of Critias' intemperate shame. But this possibility now gives us a clue as to how to further specify Charmides' *original* definition. We have seen that Charmides needed to specify which forceful actions a temperate person would abstain from. Plato has now provided us with a way of doing this: temperate behavior could involve abstaining from those forceful actions which one does not *need* to perform. For example, boxers and wrestlers *need* to perform various forceful, ungentle actions, and that fact makes these actions not intemperate.

Thus we are led to the conclusion that if one does not need to perform some action, then it would be intemperate to do it forcefully. There is a natural connection between feeling a need and being willing to use force. For example, when one tries to remember something forcefully there is a sense of needing to remember; the sense of need is the source of the passion behind the force. One feels that one *must* remember—that one has that need—just as Socrates would have felt that he *must* have Charmides, if he had been overcome by his passion. On the other hand, when we feel a desire, but decide that we are not willing to use force to attain the object of the desire, we are deciding that we do not, after all, really need that particular thing—we can do without it.

The dialogue can be seen to be concerned with this relationship between feeling a need and being willing to use force. Charmides attitude toward Socrates changes. Early in the dialogue, at 156a3-4, he laughs at the thought of *forcing* himself upon Socrates without Socrates' consent. But at the end of the dialogue Charmides declares that he needs (δεῖσθαι) Socrates' cure (176b2) and that he is prepared to use force (βιάζεσθαι) upon Socrates to obtain it. The motivation for this forceful, ungentle behavior is clearly the sense of need. The dialogue is showing us that when we feel a need we are willing to use force.

The key for temperate behavior would then be the ability to recognize when one does not need to perform some action, for the recognition that one does not need to do some action could allow one to let the action go by, unperformed. This is exemplified by the way Socrates acts when he feels erotic desire for Charmides. The very first thing that Socrates thinks about is that he is like a fawn has been seized by a lion (155d4-e2). The lion would not be the young boy; it would be the thing that is causing Socrates to feel the desire. The lion represents some foreign power which is working upon Socrates, causing him to desire the boy. It is not Socrates' needs which are the source of the desire, but

something outside him. Thus it would be this recognition that he is under a foreign influence which frees Socrates from the lion, and allows him to abstain from forcefully trying to attain Charmides.[7]

Because Socrates' temperance stems from his recognition that his desire does not come from his needs, we have further support for our position that Plato is trying to establish that intemperate behavior involves forceful action that one does not need to perform. The central concern is really whether one needs to perform an action, rather than whether the action is forceful. Only forceful actions are intemperate, but, of forceful actions, only the unneeded are intemperate.

To what extent can we attribute these conclusions to Plato? If these are his views, why did he not just say so? The answer to the latter question would seem to lie in the discussion of the limitation of the written word of *Phaedrus* 275ff. Even though the written word, unlike the spoken word, is unable to explain its meaning when questioned (*Phaedrus* 275d-e), there is still a role for a certain type of playful writing (277e, 276d), which can help those who follow in the same path. Written words are limited because they (generally) present us with only one way of approaching things, but by writing in riddles Plato offers us the chance to discover the answers in a less superficial way. Truly understanding something requires this deeper insight. As Socrates says of Meno's slave: "At present these opinions, being newly aroused, have a dreamlike quality. But if he were asked many times in many ways, you know he will have in the end as exact an understanding as anyone" (*Meno* 85c-d). My view is that Plato has purposely given us a series of riddles in the *Charmides*; that he intended for us to make the moves which we have been making. The most obvious example of such a riddle is the parallelism between *Charmides* 156a and 176b-c. Charmides initially has no conception of forcing himself upon Socrates, but when he feels a need for what Socrates possesses he is determined to force himself upon Socrates. And then this is clearly linked to the conception of need making a shameful action good (161a4). If these moves are cogent then it is fair to conclude that Plato has purposely prepared the ground for them, that they are not materialized out of thin air.

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[7] Santas is right as far as he goes when he sees this as a "conflict between reason and the appetites" (Santas, note 3 above, p. 106).

2. *One's needs are determined by the work that one has knowledge of*

I shall now argue that the dialogue takes the position that those, who do the work they understand, do that work well, and therefore are happy. And then this will imply that the only things that someone really needs are those things which are required for him to do his work well.

At 171e7-172a3 we find the argument that those who do the work they understand will do their work well, and, doing well, will be happy. An objection to this argument is raised at 172e7-173a1: Socrates says that he sees nothing which shows what good effect a life, in which everyone did only that which they understood, would have upon us. His problem is not whether acting well causes happiness, but whether acting according to one's understanding causes on to act well (and, incidentally, by happy) (173d3-5). In order to see what is going on here it is helpful to note a similarity in wording between this passage at 172e7-173a1 and a passage at 160d5-8: at 160d5-8 Socrates asks Charmides to observe what quality is effected (ἀπεργάζοιτο) in him by temperance, and here at 172e7-173a1 he asks what good thing is effected (ἀπεργάζοιτο) by temperance when temperance is understood to result in a state in which people deal with only those things which they understand. When Socrates says that his problem is that he does not see what good effect temperance would have upon us, he is not saying that every action must produce a good effect upon the doer in order to be well done; he is just saying that if it is temperance then it would produce a good effect upon the temperate person. If someone could show him how acting according to understanding causes one to do well, then he would agree that temperance would have a good effect upon us—it is good to act well.

Let us consider the case of the craftsmen whom Socrates discusses at 164b8-9. When they do their work they do not necessarily know if they personally are about to derive some advantage from it or not. The reason why the craftsmen do not know whether the thing they produce will be of use to them personally would be that they do not know what will happen in the future.[8] *But* they would know what will happen in the fu-

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[8] The other possibility is that they do not know what is to their benefit. See *Laches* 195e-196a and *Gorgias* 511c-512b. This is the view of Guthrie (note 2 above, p. 160n), Tuckey (*Plato's Charmides* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951], 22), A.E. Taylor (*Plato: The Man and His Work* [New York: Dial Press, 1936], 52), Rosamond Kent Sprague (*Plato's Philosopher King* [Columbia: University of South Carolina Press,

ture in the hypothetical state depicted at 173a7-d2, a state in which even prophets do their job well and accurately predict the future. In this state the craftsmen could know all the results of their action both for their household and for the state (172d4). Now, the question is whether or not these results represent *all* the benefits they would receive from doing their work according to knowledge. If there is nothing beneficial over and above the material and social benefits of their actions, then there is no good effect which can be attributed to acting according to knowledge *per se*. Health, for example, is acknowledged to be a fine, useful effect, but it is produced in us by medicine (165c10-d2), not by temperance. Socrates is not disputing whether health is a good thing, when he says that he sees nothing which shows what good effect a life according to knowledge would have on us (172e7-173a1). His reason for saying this is that all the good effects he can envision are produced by other sciences (see 174e-175a), unless that result be acting well—and he does not see how such a life would cause us to act well (173d3-5). The only thing left over to be the result of acting according to knowledge *per se* is acting well. This *would* be a different result for it would not be the result of any particular science. One employs a particular science to produce some concrete object or state of affairs. Acting according to knowledge would have its effect as one produced that concretion.

Why should Socrates doubt that acting according to knowledge causes people to act well? All of the results to one's household and one's state are the products of the employment of bodies of knowledge (ἐπιστῆμαι); if one did not act according to knowledge (or at least true opinion), then one would have no way of arriving at such results. If one does not act according to knowledge (or true opinion), then one is just stumbling around in the dark, and stumbling around in the dark cannot be construed as doing well. The problem is that while acting according to knowledge (or true opinion) is a necessary condition for doing well, it might not be a sufficient condition. Critias, for one, is not willing to admit that acting according to *any* knowledge implies doing well; he has an aristocratic prejudice against lowly occupations like shoemaking (163b7, 173d9). As far as he is concerned all such dishonorable occupations deserve reproach (ὄνειδος). Thus, even though a shoemaker might

1976], 33), and Donald Watt (in his notes to the *Charmides* in *Early Socratic Dialogues*, ed. Trevor J. Saunders [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987], 191n.). But there is no such radical questioning going on in our dialogue, for at *Charmides* 165c10-d2 it is agreed that health is of no small benefit.

act according to knowledge, he would not be acting well according to Critias. We might disagree with him about shoemaking, but the general point would hold if there is even one profession which is dishonorable. Critias mentions prostitution in this regard at 163b7-8.[9]

Critias goes on to claim that the things of which he approves are the things which are nobly and usefully made, and he describes all other things as being harmful (163c3-6). Clearly this is not a tenable position. As Drew A. Hyland observes: "does not the acceptance of the criterion of usefulness raise to the level of virtue those very makings which Critias, in his aristocratic taste for nobility and beauty, finds repulsive?"[10] The aristocrat cannot conceive of shoemaking as a honorable thing, but if Socrates chose to ask him about it, he clearly could not maintain that shoemaking is not useful. Shoes are useful, for most people need shoes (*Republic* 369d), at least in rough winter (the exceptions are Socrates [*Symposium* 220a-b] and Aristodemus [*Symposium* 173b]).

Even though Critias' criterion of usefulness does not hold for occupations which are merely non-aristocratic, it would seem to apply to occupations which are absolutely dishonorable. That is, if an occupation really were absolutely dishonorable, then it would seem to be the case that it would produce nothing useful. If one wanted to argue that prostitution is honorable, then the natural way to proceed is to show what benefits it produces. Thus honorable bodies of knowledge would be knowledge of useful things.

At 173e6-174c8 Critias has other ideas about what it is that causes us to act well. What causes us to act well is not simply acting according to knowledge, but acting according to knowledge about *certain* things (173e7-10). Knowledge about what things? Knowledge about health more than knowledge about numbers, and knowledge about good and evil more than any other type of knowledge (174b7-10). It is clear from the earlier discussion that Critias is thinking of those bodies of knowledge which are acceptable to an aristocrat—bodies of knowledge like *medicine*. Acting according to knowledge would cause one to act well only if the occupation in question were honorable for an aristocrat. But Socrates pressed him to name just one thing, so he needed a generic ex-

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[9] Note the parallel with the refutation of Charmides' first definition of temperance. In both cases Plato presents the needed counter example amongst examples which do not pertain. Thus the interpretations of the two passages tend to support each other.

[10] Hyland, note 4 above, p. 85

pression to cover all the honorable bodies of knowledge: knowledge of good. His earlier position had been that noble occupations produce good things and dishonorable occupations do not (163b8-c4), so he now nominates the knowledge of good and evil, the body of knowledge that produces good things, as the knowledge which causes us to act well when we act according to it. But this is the name of a body of knowledge, not of a group of bodies of knowledge; Critias has failed to find an expression for all the honorable bodies of knowledge.

This failure seems largely due to Socrates' leading questions, which only recognize two possibilities: "Which of the bodies of knowledge is it that makes him happy? Or does he owe it to all of them alike?" (174a10-11). Socrates does not mention the possibility that some, but not all, of the bodies of knowledge might make the person in question happy.

Naming the knowledge of good and evil as the body of knowledge which causes us to act well changes things immediately. Shoemaking is now on a par with medicine; neither activity can be well and usefully done if the knowledge of good is lacking (174c9-d1). One can now fail to do well while acting according to the knowledge of medicine.

Because each body of knowledge must have a distinct subject matter (171a5-6)[11], and because the knowledge of good would be the body of knowledge that produces good things, no other knowledge would produce good things as such. There is an implicit understanding that the good (ἀγαθός) is the useful (ὠφέλιμος) (174c9-d1), and this then leads to the further conclusion that no other body of knowledge can produce useful things as such (175a3-4).

Critias' position has grown more complicated. The knowledge of good is seen as having two different types of result. Critias nominated it as the knowledge which causes us to act well, but, as the knowledge of the good, it will also be the knowledge which allows us to produce good, useful things. The dialogue contradicts the notion that only this knowledge produces good things, when it has Critias and Socrates agree that health is an honorable, useful thing (165c10-d2).[12] It is, of course,

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[11] Cf. *Ion* 537c-d.

[12] J. Stenzel (*Studien zur Entwicklung der Platonischen Dialektik von Sokrates zu Aristoteles* [Darmstadt: Wissenshaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961], 11) Chung-Hwan Chen ("On Plato's *Charmides* 165c4-175d5," *Apeiron* **12** [1978], 20), Guthrie (note 2 above, p. 173), Norman Gulley (*The Philosophy of Socrates* [London: MacMillan, 1968], 84), and Tuckey (note 8 above, p. 25) all feel that the point at issue is insight into the ends toward which the various bodies of knowledge are used as means. But this goes beyond

the knowledge of medicine which produces this good thing (165c10-d2), not some knowledge of good.

The false dichotomy at 174a10-11 (which one of the bodies of knowledge is it, or is it all of them alike?) points to the solution that Plato has in mind for what allows us to act well. Even though Critias is wrong in thinking that shoemaking is dishonorable, there might be some occupations which deserve reproach—perhaps prostitution or sophistry. It does indeed seem wrong to say that anything which is dishonorable could be well done. So it is not right to say simply that acting according to knowledge causes one to act well; some types of knowledge might not. But this does not mean that only *one* body of knowledge causes us to act well. Any *honorable* body of knowledge will do (or, perhaps, any honorable body of true opinion); bodies of knowledge which produce honorable, *useful* things (163c3-6), things like health or shoes.

Thus Socrates might well be correct in saying that acting according to knowledge does not in itself constitute doing well. But it seems fair to say that if we qualify this formulation and say that acting according to knowledge about honorable things constitutes doing well, then we have captured what Plato is getting at. The knowledge of medicine allows a doctor to produce health; a doctor performs well if he acts according to knowledge (or, perhaps, true opinion). A prostitute acts well only if, in addition to acting according to knowledge, she accomplishes something useful.

Thus the dialogue seems to take the position that those who do useful work according to knowledge (and do not do any other work) act well. This establishes the first part of the argument of 171e7-172a2 that those who do the work they understand will do their work well, and, doing well, will be happy. It remains to establish that doing well implies happiness. T.G. Tuckey sees this move as sophistical, playing upon an ambiguity of εὖ πράττειν, two of whose meanings are 'to act well' and 'to fare well'. He claims that while there is a traditional identification of

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anything that is said in the text, and there are no grounds for doubting Socrates' and Critias' agreement that health is useful (ὠφελίμος and χρησίμος) and noble (καλός) (165c10-d2).

Paul Friedländer claims that the knowledge of good "is concerned with the question whether what is done in the particular sciences is good and useful" (*Platon* II [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1957], 69). But the text says that this body of knowledge would be involved in the production of good things (174c9-d1), not in any subsequent evaluation.

happiness with εὖ πράττειν in the sense of *faring* well, the argument only establishes that someone who acts with understanding will *act* well. He claims that the gap between these two senses of εὖ πράττειν is unbridgeable, because, while "it may be that any action well executed does bring a feeling of satisfaction to the doer," such a feeling could hardly be happiness.[13] But is it really so clear that doing one's work well will not make one happy? We shall argue that it does make one happy by appealing to the *Lysis*.

At *Lysis* 210b5-6 Socrates says that if someone with a property right to something gives that thing to someone else who really understands it, the person with understanding owns the thing. The reason he owns it is said to be because he derives delight (ὄνασθαι) from it. ὄνασθαι is usually translated here as 'derives advantage', but that translation can be seen to be incompatible with the text. Lysis's father gives control of his horses to a hired servant, someone who knows about horses (*Lysis* 208a5-6). Any advantage that the servant derives from the horses goes to Lysis's father; the reason that the servant must be given wages (208a7-b1) is that the advantage which he derives is not his own. Clearly the servant cannot be said to own the horses because of the advantage which he derives from them, when that advantage is not his own. But ὄνασθαι can also mean 'derives delight'. Can we say that the servant owns the horses because of the delight he derives from them? Ownership that is due to deriving delight would not be ownership in a legal sense. It is clearly such extra-legal ownership that Socrates is referring to, for the argument, which culminates in the assertion that things belong to the person who understands them, tells us that a person who does not understand his horses (or whatever) will entrust them to the person who does understand them. Even a very unsophisticated person can see the problem that no one will entrust a knowledgeable person with their horses if they think that person will cheat them out of their property. While the reader is carrying this fact in one hand and turning pages with the other, Plato has Socrates say that the property in question will not belong to its legal owner. The only way to make sense of this is to see a new sense of ownership being introduced—this would be ownership in an extra-legal sense, ownership in the sense that is caused by 'deriving delight'. For example, the hired servant, who derives delight from horses in a way which their ignorant legal owner cannot, can be thought of as having the

[13] Tuckey, note 8 above, pp. 71–75.

horses belong to him in a way that they do not belong to their legal owner. The person who really owns something is the person who has the delight of really interacting with it. This delight should not be dismissed as a mere "feeling of satisfaction", for surely someone who experiences such delight would be *happy* as he went about his work. (The "feeling of satisfaction" that Tuckey has in mind would seem to be experienced only after one has completed a task. Plato has in mind something that is experienced *as* one interacts with that which one understands).

Thus we are able to make sense of a move which the *Charmides* takes to be unproblematic—the move from doing one's work well to being happy. Together with our previous result, that the dialogue seems to hold that those who do the (useful) work they understand act well, this yields the argument of *Charmides* 171e7-172a3, that those who do something (useful) according to knowledge are happy. If one is happy, then one must not be in want of anything one needs (if one can be happy without something, then it is fair to say that one did not really need it). Thus one's needs are defined by what one knows—provided that the knowledge is of something useful. Each individual would need to perform the actions of his particular body of knowledge (and he would need various other things, such as food, which would allow him to function in that way). See *Republic* 421b3-c6.

We can now see the significance of Charmides' last definition: doing one's own business (161b6). Charmides and Socrates are not able to make sense of this definition, but we can see that, because the temperate individual does what he knows, he can be said to do his own business.[14]

3. *What Produces Temperate Behavior*

Finally we need to make the move which Socrates urges Charmides to make at 160d6-8: "reflect upon the quality that is given you by the presence of temperance, and what quality it must have to work this effect upon you." We have seen that temperate behavior involves refraining from forcefully desiring that which one does not need (and also that one's needs are determined by one's work); now we should consider

[14] There is a sense in which minding one's own business is akin to modesty. Thus we can understand how temperance can be mistaken for modesty or shame. Except in matters which involve his needs, a temperate person behaves in the same way as someone who is too modest to assert himself.

more carefully what it is which can cause this effect upon us. That is, we must consider what quality temperance must have in order to enable us to refrain from desiring those things which we do not need.

We can learn quite a bit from the example of Charmides' not intemperate willingness to use force in order to learn from Socrates at the end of the dialogue. At 176d1-3 Socrates says that once you set about doing anything with force nobody can prevent (ἐναντιοῦσθαι) you. (ἐναντιοῦσθαι should be understood as 'prevent' rather than 'withstand'. Obviously force can be withstood by superior force, but no one can *prevent* someone bent upon using force from doing so). The opposition which Socrates would attempt if Charmides were not bent upon using force would take the form of submitting his ἀνάκρισις. ἀνάκρισις is a legal term referring to a preliminary examination of the parties involved in a lawsuit. There is no point in such a Socratic examination here, for Critias and Charmides have already resolved upon (βεβουλεύμεθα) what to do. In particular, the fact that Critias, Charmides' guardian, commands Charmides is decisive (176c8-9). Why does Plato accentuate Critias' authority? Why the whole heavy-footed exchange? Just look at it:

CHARMIDES: Depend upon me to follow and not desert him. It would be terrible if I did not do as you, my guardian, command.

CRITIAS: Well now, I command you.

CHARMIDES: Then I will do as you command and begin this very day.

SOCRATES: Now, what are you two deliberating (βουλεύεσθον) about?

CHARMIDES: Nothing; we have already resolved (βεβουλεύμεθα) upon what to do.

SOCRATES: So you will use force, before even allowing me to submit my (ἀνάκρισιν)?

CHARMIDES: I will force you, since he gives me the command. Therefore you had better deliberate (βουλεύου) about what you are going to do.

SOCRATES: There is no room for deliberation (βουλή). When you are determined to do something and to use force, no man will be able to prevent you.

CHARMIDES: Then do not prevent me.

SOCRATES: I will not prevent you, then.

It *has* to mean something. The key would seem to be the repeated use of the words with the same root. Charmides and Critias have *resolved* (βεβουλεύμεθα) what to do, so they no longer *deliberate* (βουλεύεσθον).

Similarly there is no point in Socrates *deliberating* with himself, because if he decides to say "no", he will still not be able to prevent Charmides' force. In both cases there is no *need* to deliberate.

But why does Plato accentuate Critias' authority?[15] Because Critias' role was decisive in ending his deliberation with Charmides, it should correspond to that which makes the ultimate decision in Socrates' internal deliberation about whether he should try to prevent Charmides from using force, that which commits Socrates to a particular course of action.

Note the nature of that about which Critias and Charmides deliberate: after Charmides declares his need for Socrates' cure, Critias asks him whether he will follow Socrates through thick and thin (176b6-8). That is, he asks Charmides to compare his feelings for this thing he thinks he needs with his feelings about other possible experiences; is this something he really needs, or can he envision circumstances in which he would be willing to give it up? Satisfied of Charmides' feeling that he really needs Socrates' charm, Critias decides that Charmides should go for it.

Once an individual's deliberation results in such a resolution, the individual is committed, and there is no longer any point in considering further. This is represented by the fact that there is no opportunity for Socrates to present his (ἀνάκρισις).

Presuming that Socrates' deliberation would similarly be about what his needs are, presents us with a picture of someone who does not blindly follow his first immediate inclination for something, someone who first deliberates about whether he really needs this thing or not. This would be what temperance consists in. Temperate behavior involves refraining from desiring what one does not need. Temperance is the thing that produces such behavior. Refusing to be determined by one's immediate inclination and first determining whether one really needs that particular object of desire would, indeed, tend to result in refraining from desiring what one does not need.

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[15] All Tuckey can make of Charmides' promise to obey Critias (176b9-c2) is that it "displays Charmides' possession of conventional σωφροσύνη [temperance]...even if to us it may seem rather priggishly self-righteous" (Tuckey, note 8 above, p. 90).

Helen North thinks that Charmides is here demonstrating "his possession of σωφροσύνη in a limited by genuine sense—that of αἰδώς [modesty]" (*Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966], 158). But Charmides would be obeying Critias' *to force himself* upon Socrates—it is no longer a question of modesty.

The dialogue indicates another way in which one can exercise temperance. Socrates did not make any such move of deliberation when he was tempted by Charmides' beauty.[16] Socrates *immediately* recognized that it was not his own need which made him desire Charmides:

> I caught fire, and could possess myself no longer; and I thought none was so wise in love matters as Cydias, who in speaking of a beautiful boy advises someone to "beware of becoming as a fawn opposite (κατέναντα) a lion and being seized as his portion of flesh," for it seemed to me that I had been seized by such a creature.
>
> (155d4-e2)

These are the reflections of someone who is concerned with his own inner being, there are not the observations of a man on fire. A man on fire is thinking of attaining his object of desire. Moreover, Socrates is thinking that *he* is not the source of these desires; his habit of introspection enables him to disassociate himself from this alien desire, and recognize that it does not come from his own needs. Thus there is more than one thing which can produce temperate behavior. In addition to making the move of deliberating whether or not one needs and object of desire, a habit of introspection can prevent one from following through on an unnecessary desire.

As we have seen, one's needs correspond to what one knows. Thus the deliberation about whether one needs something or not will revolve around whether one knows what one is doing. The dialogue indicate two ways in which one can determine that one knows about something. The first way is exemplified by Socrates' relationship to Charmides early in the dialogue (155c ff.). When Charmides sits next to Socrates, Socrates loses his initial audacious belief (θρασύτης) that he will have a very easy time talking with him. Socrates is no longer sure *that he knows* how to deal with Charmides. When he had that audacious belief, he actively sought interaction with Charmides, for at 155b7 he told Critias that Charmides was to come (ἐλθέτω—third person imperative) to them. When Socrates loses his audacious belief he does not actively seek interaction with Charmides; he merely responds to Charmides' questions. What eventually allows him to regain his confidence is Charmides' ap-

[16] North claims that Socrates' ἔρως (love) is directed at the intellect of Charmides rather than his physical beauty (North, note 13 above, p. 154). But it was what Socrates saw inside Charmides' cloak that set him on fire (155d3-4).

proval of what he has been saying (156d1). The interaction with that which he understands confirms his prior belief that he does, in fact, understand. The renewal of this belief is not the result of a deliberation, but of the interaction. Hence one way which the dialogue indicates that we can determine that we understand something is through interacting with that thing.

The other way of determining that one understands something does involve deliberation. This is the way of employing that body of knowledge whose subject is bodies of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη ἐπιστήμης). This body of knowledge allows one to determine what one knows and what one does not know (167a5-7).[17]

In conclusion we can see that temperance, the thing that produces temperate behavior, is not necessarily one simple thing, but that it can involve a combination of certain types of behavior. Temperate behavior, i.e., abstaining from forcefully desiring what one does not need, can come either from a habit of introspection through which one recognizes that one's motive does not come from one's real needs, or it can come about as a result of deliberating whether one really needs the object of desire in question. This deliberation involves considering whether one knows what one is doing, and this, in turn, can be decided either through successful interaction or through deliberation employing the body of knowledge whose subject is bodies of knowledge. All this, in an effort to refrain from forcefully desiring what one does not need, constitutes temperance.

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[17] See note 1 above.

Kenneth Seeskin sees the description of this knowledge at 167a1-5 as "an obvious reference to Socrates... Indeed, the passage repeats, almost verbatim, Socrates' description of himself at *Apology* 21d" (*Dialogue and Discovery: A Study in Socratic Method* [Albany: SUNY Press, 1987], 86). But there is an important distinction between the two passages. In the *Apology* Socrates qualifies as the wisest because he knows that he does not have knowledge of human and political virtue (20b). He is concerned there with his knowledge of his lack of this *specific* knowledge—he is not concerned with the *general* body of knowledge which deals with knowledge and the lack of knowledge.