ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ IN LACHES

DAVID WOLFSDORF

I. SOCRATES’ "WHAT-IS-F?” QUESTION

Prior to 1973, Socrates’ “What-is-F?” question (hereafter WF question) was widely interpreted as a request for the meaning of “F.” In that year, Penner argued, against the meaning-interpretation, for a causal-interpretation of the WF question. According to Penner, when Socrates asks what F is, he is seeking an account of what causes people to behave in an F-like manner. For example, in the case of courage in Laches, Socrates is seeking what causes people to act courageously. Penner argues that F is a psychological power or motive-state. Therefore, the thesis of the unity of the putative components of excellence that Socrates arguably endorses in dialogues such as Laches and Protagoras is not to be interpreted as claiming that “courage,” “sound-mindedness,” “justice,” and so on mean the same thing, but that these words all refer to the same psychological state.

Penner claims that Forms (εἶδος), universals, and essences (οὐσία) have the same identity-conditions as meanings. He also recognizes that in Meno and Euthyphro Socrates characterizes F as a Form. Thus, he is compelled to argue for

1The symbol F is conventionally used for the domain of entities whose identity Socrates investigates in the early definitional dialogues. These include sound-mindedness (σωφροσύνη), courage (ἀμορφία), justice or justness (δικαιοσύνη), beauty or the beautiful (τὸ καλὸν), and human excellence as a whole (ἀρετή). How widely is difficult to judge—there seems to be some discrepancy between American and British scholars. For instance, in 1964 Kerferd writes (in defense of the contents of a paper of his of 1947): “But it cannot be too frequently repeated that when Plato asks questions in the form ‘What is it’ he is not asking questions about the meaning of a word or about linguistic usage—he is asking questions about something which he regarded as a thing” (13).


3[the ‘What is X?’ question]... is not a request for the meaning of a word or a request for an essence or universal... but rather a request for a psychological account (explanation) of what it is in men’s psyches that makes them brave. For the ‘What is X?’ question is often put as ‘What is the single thing by virtue of which (with or by which) the many F things are F?’; and I will be arguing that too is a causal or explanatory question rather than an epistemological or semantical one” (Penner 1973: 56-57). Cf. also Penner’s statement (1973: 30-40): “When Socrates asked ‘What is bravery?’ and so forth, he did not want to know what the meaning of the word ‘bravery’ was, nor what the essence of bravery was, nor what the universal bravery was. His question was not (what has become) the philosopher’s question... it was not a request for a conceptual analysis.... His question was rather the general’s question, ‘What is bravery?’—that is, ‘What is it that makes brave men brave?’ The general asks this question not out of interest in mapping our concepts, but out of a desire to learn something substantial about the human psyche. He wants to know what psychological state it is, the imparting of which to his men will make them brave.”

4Penner does not discuss Hippias Major, in which F is also characterized as a Form. Presumably, this is because in 1973 the authenticity of Hippias Major was more controversial than it has subsequently become.

a division of the early definitional dialogues into two sets. Prior early definitional dialogues include *Laches* and *Charmides* as well as *Protagoras*, which, strictly, is not a definitional dialogue but which is, to a significant extent, concerned with the identity of excellence and the relation of its putative components. Posterior early definitional dialogues include *Euthyphro* and *Meno*. In these later texts, Penner argues, Socrates is not concerned with true, but with “demonic” excellence, that is, with excellence as conventionally conceived. Therefore, in these later dialogues, Socrates does investigate the meaning of “F”—and thus his characterization of F as a Form and an essence.

Penner’s argument, or at least core elements of it, has been influential. Today, the meaning-interpretation of Socrates’ WF question is rarely endorsed. But Penner’s argument is also faulty in several respects. I have discussed these defects recently,\(^5\) and I will merely note them here. First, for various reasons, the distinction of prior and posterior early definitional dialogues is untenable. Second, the view that in *Euthyphro* and *Meno* (and Penner might now have to include *Hippias Major*) Socrates seeks components of excellence conventionally conceived is also untenable. Third, in advocating his causal-interpretation of the WF question, Penner conflates semantic and pragmatic aspects of the WF question. The WF question seeks the identity of F; in other words, the WF question seeks a real definition. The reason Socrates pursues the WF question, interpreted as such, may be that he wants to know what makes people behave virtuously or excellently and that he wants to encourage them to behave so. But such an interest in pursuing the WF question is distinguishable from what Socrates means when he asks what F is.\(^6\)

Socrates’ WF question seeks a real definition, that is, the identity of F.\(^7\) I have argued that Socrates pursues answers to the WF question, that is, satisfactory definitions of F, by evaluating proposals (made by his interlocutor or himself) according to whether those proposals satisfy conditions for the identity of F that Socrates himself introduces and to which he is committed.\(^8\) For example, in *Charmides*, Charmides suggests that sound-mindedness is quietness. Socrates then rejects this definition on the grounds that sound-mindedness is necessarily fine, whereas quietness is not. Such conditions for the identity of F are called “F-conditions.” Thus, in the case of *Charmides*, necessarily being fine is an F-condition that the *definens* must satisfy.

\(^5\)Wolfsdorf 2005.

\(^6\)‘The distinction between the semantics and pragmatics of Socrates’ WF question was first discussed by Santas (1979), i.e., after the publication of Penner’s paper. I have recently developed this topic with minor criticism in Santas in Wolfsdorf 2005.

\(^7\)The question will, accordingly, arise: How is Socrates’ pursuit of F *qua* Form to be reconciled with the view that the WF question is not a pursuit of the meaning of “F,” if Forms and meanings have the same identity conditions? This question is addressed below in section v.

\(^8\)Wolfsdorf 2003.
In my study of Socrates’ pursuit of definitions, I clarify all the F-conditions that Socrates employs in the so-called early definitional dialogues—Charmides, Laches, Lysis, Euthyphro, Hippias Major, Meno—as well as in Republic 1. The clarification of F-conditions and the correlative proposed definitions of F among these definitional dialogues facilitates more general comparative analysis of their investigations of F. This paper argues for a division of these definitional dialogues into two sets similar to Penner’s prior and posterior dialogues—however, the division is made on fundamentally different grounds from Penner’s. Much of the discussion focuses on one F-condition, being a δύναμις, that Socrates introduces early in the investigation in Laches. As will become clear in the course of the discussion, the examination of this single F-condition is crucial for understanding the relation between the investigations in all the definitional dialogues.

I should also emphasize that whether the definitional dialogues under examination were in fact early compositions in Plato’s literary career and whether Republic 1 was originally composed independently of Republic 2–10 is irrelevant to this study. The thematic and structural unities of the texts justify their comparative analysis. I will hereafter refer to them simply as “the definitional dialogues.”

II. MISUNDERSTANDING THE “WHAT-IS-F?” QUESTION IN LACHES

In Laches, Laches first responds to Socrates’ question “What is courage?” as follows (190e4–6):

Οὐ μᾶ τὸν Δία ... οὗ χαλέπων εἰπεῖν· εἰ γὰρ τις ἐθέλει ἐν τῇ τάξει μένων ἀμύνεσθαι τοὺς πολεμίους καὶ μὴ φεύγων, εἶ δὴ ὅτι ἀνδρείαν ἄν εἴη.

“By Zeus ... it is not difficult to say. If someone should be willing to remain in rank, defend against the enemy, and not flee, rest assured, he would be courageous.”

Socrates believes that this response does not answer the question he asked.9 He believes that Laches has confused courage (ἀνδρεία) with a species of courage,10 for Socrates presumes that Laches regards those who perform various other act-types as courageous.11 Socrates suggests that all courageous men commonly possess the same thing, courage, and it is the identity of this that his WF question seeks.12 Laches’ initial confusion resembles Euthyphro’s, Hippias’, and

9 Lach. 190e7–9: Ἐδ ... λέγεται. ὁ Δίας ἀνδρείας ἀλλ’ ἴσως ἐγὼ αἴτιος, οὐ σαφῶς εἰπὼν, τὸ σέ ἀποκρίνεσθαι μὴ τοῦτο διανοούμενος ἱδώμην, ἀλλ’ ἐτέρων (“You speak well, Laches. But perhaps I am at fault in that I did not speak clearly; for you have not answered the question as I intended it, but otherwise”).

10 More precisely, Socrates believes that Laches has confused what Socrates expects Laches would agree courage is with a species of courage.

11 In his response (Lach. 191a8–e11, 192b5–8), Socrates enumerates a number of other ways in which people may demonstrate their courage.

12 Lach. 191e6: τὴν ἀνδρείαν κέκτηται (“They have come to possess courage”); Lach. 192b5–8: Περί ὅτι καὶ σὺ, ὁ Δίας, τὴν ἀνδρείαν οὕτως εἰπεῖν, τις οὗσα δύναμις ἢ αὐτῆ ἢ ἴδου ἢ καὶ ἐν λύπῃ καὶ ἐν ἀπαισιν οἷς νῦν δὴ ἐλέγομεν αὐτὴν εἴναι, ἐπείτη ἀνδρεία κέκτηται (“They now to
Meno's initial confusions of Socrates' WF question. All of these interlocutors initially respond with descriptions of types of F rather than F itself.\textsuperscript{13} Socrates attempts to resolve their confusion, as he does with Laches, and immediately or eventually Euthyphro, Meno, and Laches answer the question as Socrates originally intended that it be answered.\textsuperscript{14} Granted, Socrates thinks that none of their answers is correct; still, he accepts them as correct sorts of answers to the WF question.\textsuperscript{15}

On the other hand, Socrates' response to Laches' first response to the WF question differs from Socrates' responses to Euthyphro's, Hippias', and Meno's first responses. In clarifying the distinction between F and kinds of F in \textit{Laches}, Socrates draws an analogy between courage and quickness.\textsuperscript{16} Subsequently, Socrates characterizes quickness as a δύναμις. He then asks Laches what δύναμις courage is. In other words, Socrates suggests that being a δύναμις is an F-condition that the definiens must satisfy. In contrast, in \textit{Euthyphro}, \textit{Meno}, and \textit{Hippias Major} Socrates never characterizes F as a δύναμις.\textsuperscript{17} Moreover, in \textit{Meno} Socrates clarifies the distinction between F and kinds of F also by using an analogy, in this case between excellence and bees. Socrates speaks of that by which all bees are identical \textit{qua} bees and that by which all kinds of excellence are identical \textit{qua} kinds of excellence. Subsequently, he employs analogies with health, size, and strength for the same purpose; and he describes health and strength, common to all healthy and strong individuals, as Forms.\textsuperscript{18} In response say what courage is, it being the same δύναμις in pleasure and pain and in all the situations we just described, which is singled out by the name 'courage').

\textsuperscript{13}I have discussed this topic in Wolfsdorf 2004. Compare also Theaetetus' response in the eponymous dialogue (146c).

\textsuperscript{14}After Hippias' three failed attempts, Socrates subsequently offers more satisfactory definitions himself.

\textsuperscript{15}Benson (1990) distinguishes the two kinds of failed responses to Socrates' WF question as "materially" and "formally" incorrect. I have accepted and developed this distinction with criticisms of Benson in Wolfsdorf 2004.

\textsuperscript{16}192a1–10: ὅσπερ ἂν εἶ τάχος ἡρωτῶν τί ποτ' ἔστιν, δὲ καὶ ἐν τῷ τρέχειν τυγχάνει δὲ ἡμῖν καὶ ἐν τῷ κιθαρίζειν καὶ ἐν τῷ λέγειν καὶ ἐν τῷ μανθάνειν καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις πολλοῖς, καὶ σχεδὸν τι αὐτὸ κεκτήμεθα, οὗ καὶ πάρι ἔξων λέγειν, ἢ ἐν ταῖς τῶν χειρῶν πράξεσιν ἢ σκέλον ἢ στόματος τε καὶ φονῆς ἢ διανοίας; ("Suppose, for instance, I were asking you what quickness is, as we find it in running and playing the cithara, in speaking and learning, and in many other activities, and as possessed by us practically in any action worth mentioning, whether of arms or legs, or mouth or voice or mind . . .")

\textsuperscript{17}In \textit{Hippias Major} the sixth definition of the beautiful or beauty is δύναμις (295e9–10). But this is an identity claim. In \textit{Meno} Meno's second definition suggests that excellence (ἀρετή) is the ability to rule people (ἀρχεῖν ὦν t' εἶναι τῶν ἀνθρώπων, 73c9). Meno's third definition suggests that excellence is the ability to procure goods (δύναμις τοῦ πορίσεσθαι τάγαθα, 78b9–c1). But, notably, in his elaborate account of the kind of entity he is seeking, in response to Meno's first and second responses to his WF question, Socrates does not suggest that the definiendum is a δύναμις.

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Meno} 72d4–73c4. Socrates describes health as a Form at \textit{Meno} 72d8 and strength as a Form at \textit{Meno} 72e5.
to Euthyphro’s and Hippias’ first definitions, Socrates also characterizes \( F \) as a Form. In *Laches*, however, Socrates never characterizes courage as a Form.\(^{19}\)

It is a question, then, why in *Laches* Socrates suggests that the answer to his WF question must satisfy the condition that \( F \) be a δύναμις and, in contrast, why in *Euthyphro, Hippias Major*, and *Meno* Socrates never employs this \( F \)-condition, as well as why in the latter three dialogues, but not in *Laches*, Socrates characterizes \( F \) as a Form. In an attempt to answer these questions, section iii examines Socrates’ use and conception of δύναμις in *Charmides* and *Republic* 1 particularly in relation to a passage in *Republic* 5. Section iv then applies these results to the analysis of Socrates’ use and conception of δύναμις in *Laches*. Finally, section v applies the results of both preceding sections to explain why being a δύναμις, but not being a Form, occurs as an \( F \)-condition in *Laches*, whereas being a Form, but not being a δύναμις, occurs as an \( F \)-condition in *Euthyphro, Hippias Major*, and *Meno*.

### III. ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ

In *Charmides*, Critias suggests that sound-mindedness is a kind of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη). Socrates tries to identify the kind by comparing it with other kinds of knowledge. He first suggests that certain kinds of knowledge produce works (ἐργα), and he questions what kind of work sound-mindedness produces (165c10–d6):

> Εἰ τοίνυν με, ἐφην, ἔροι τούτοις, ιατρικὴ ὑγιεινοῦ ἐπιστήμη οὖσα τί ἦμιν χρησίμη ἐστί καὶ τί ἀπεργάζεται, ἐποιοῦ ἂν ὃτι ὧν συμμέτρει ὑφελιαν· τὴν γὰρ ὑγείαν καλὸν ἦμιν ἔργον ἀπεργάζεται ... Καὶ εἰ τοίνυν με ἔροι τήν οἰκοδομικήν, ἐπιστήμην οὖσαν τοῦ οἰκοδομείν, τί ἦμι ἔργον ἀπεργάζεσθαι, ἐποιοῦ ἂν ὃτι οἰκήσεις·

“If, then, you should ask me,” I said, “wherein medicine, being the knowledge of health, is useful and what it produces, I would say that it is a great benefit. For it produces health, a fine work for us .... And if you should ask me with respect to architecture, it being the knowledge of building, what work it produces, I would say houses.”

Here Socrates understands a work (ἐργον) to be a physical object or condition that results from activity for which the knowledge is responsible. However,

\(^{19}\)Two referees expressed the concern that in *Euthyphro* in particular Socrates is not using “ἐἴδος” in a technical sense. I do not claim that the conception of Form developed in *Euthyphro*, *Meno*, and *Hippias Major* is identical to that in, say, *Phaedo* or *Parmenides*. However, I do believe that in these three definitional dialogues, Plato is introducing ἐἴδος as a metaphysical concept and drawing an ontological distinction between ἐἴδη and their participants. Specifically, an ἐἴδος (in these texts) satisfies three conditions that its participants do not. The presence of the property \( F \) in all eponymous participants is explained by the ἐἴδος, \( F \) (universality condition). An ἐἴδος \( F \) itself has the property \( F \) purely, whereas participants may also have the polar opposite property not-\( F \) (purity condition). An ἐἴδος is responsible for its participants having the property \( F \) (aetiological condition). I have discussed these conditions and the general topic in greater depth in Wolfsdorf 2003 and Wolfsdorf 2005.
Critias criticizes Socrates for assuming that sound-mindedness can be analogized with types of knowledge that produce such works. He claims that not all types of knowledge have *such* a work (τοιούτον ἑργον), and he cites geometry and calculation as examples that do not. Socrates agrees, but the expression "τοιούτον ἑργον" permits him, despite his agreement, to believe that geometry and calculation have other kinds of works.

This hypothesis is strengthened by Socrates' definition of work in *Republic* 1 (352e2–9):

ΣΩ. Ἀρ' οὖν τούτο ἄν θείης καὶ ἵππου καὶ ἄλλου ὅτου οὖν ἑργον, δὲ ἄν ἢ μόνῳ ἐκείνῳ ποιήσῃ τις ἢ ἄριστα:

ΘΡ. Οὐ μανθάνω, ἔφη.

ΣΩ. Ἀλλ' ἓδε: ἔσθ' ὅτι ἄν ἄλλῳ ἵππῳ ἢ ὄφθαλμῳ... ἀκούσαις ἄλλῳ ἢ ὀσίν:... οὐκοῦν δικαίως ἄν ταύτα τούτοιν φαίμεν ἑργά εἶναι:

"Would you be willing to establish that the work of a horse or anything else is that which one can do only with it or best with it?" "I do not understand," he said. "Consider this. Do you see by anything else than the eyes?... Do you hear by anything else than the ears?... Would we not justly say that these are the works of these entities?"22

Socrates here defines a work as a type of action or operation rather than the product or result of such an action or operation. Accordingly, for convenience, when necessary, I will distinguish works that are physical products or conditions that δυνάμεις produce from actions or operations that δυνάμεις produce by referring to the former as "worksP" and the latter as "worksA." Thus, arithmetical or geometrical thought, that is, mental activity, might be conceived as the worksA of calculation and geometry. This possibility is not entertained in *Charmides.* But I suggest that this is because Socrates intends to introduce another means by which kinds of knowledge (and δυνάμεις in general) can be distinguished. Specifically, Socrates grants that although certain types of knowledge, for example, geometry and calculation, do not produce such works, namely worksP, these types of knowledge are of entities that are distinct from themselves. That is to say,

21 *Chrm.* 165c3–166a8.
22 Socrates continues (*Rep.* 1.353a1–7): μαχαίρα ἢ ἄμπελον κλίμα ἀποτέμους καὶ σμίλη καὶ ἄλλοις πολλοῖς... Ἀλλ' οὔδενι γ' ἄν οὕμαι οὕτω καλῶς ὡς δρεπάνῳ τῷ ἐπὶ τούτῳ ἐγγαριθέντι... Ἀρ' οὖν οὐ τούτῳ τούτου ἑργον ἔχων; ("You could cut vine branches with a dagger or carving-knife or many other things?... But, I think, with nothing so well as a pruning-knife, one made for this [task].... Must we not establish that this is the work [ὁ ἑργον] of the pruning-knife?). In short, the word ἑργον is as ambiguous as the word "work" is. Elsewhere in the discussion Socrates says that it is the work (ὁ ἑργον) of heat to make things hot, and the work (ὁ ἑργον) of dryness to make things dry (335d3–6). He also says it is the work (ὁ ἑργον) of goodness (τὸ ἄγαθόν) to benefit (335d7–8).
they have distinct objects and thus can be distinguished according to these objects (166a3–b3):


“But I can point out that of which each of these types of knowledge is, which is different from the knowledge itself. For instance, calculation is of the odd and the even, their magnitudes with respect to themselves and one another . . . . And you grant that the odd and even are different from calculation itself . . . . Moreover, weighing is of the lighter and the heavier weight. But the heavy and the light are different from weighing itself.”

For convenience, I will refer to these objects of knowledge as “relata,” that is, related objects.

Critias claims that sound-mindedness, as a kind of knowledge, is unlike geometry, calculation, or weighing, in that its relatum is knowledge itself. That is to say, sound-mindedness is the knowledge of knowledge itself. Socrates is dubious that this can be the correct definition of sound-mindedness because he assumes that sound-mindedness exists and because he doubts that such a thing as the knowledge of knowledge could exist. In view of the following principle, he argues that the knowledge of knowledge does not exist (168d1–3): ὅτι περὶ δὲν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ δύναμιν πρὸς ἑαυτὸ ἔχη, οὐ καὶ ἐκεῖνην ἔχει τὴν ὀδηγίαν, πρὸς ἣν ἡ δύναμις ἑαυτοῦ ἦν (“Whatever has its own δύναμις related to itself will not have the being to which its own δύναμις is related”).

Socrates explains this principle by a variety of examples. The first kind includes the senses,23 specifically sight and hearing.24 Socrates says that hearing is of sound (ϕωνή); therefore, for a hearing of hearing to exist, hearing itself would have to have sound of its own (ϕωνῆ τῇ ἑχούσῃ ἑαυτῆς). Similarly, sight is of color (χρωμά); therefore, for a sight of sight to exist, sight itself would have to have color (χρῶμα τι ἑαυτὴν ἀνάγκη ἔχειν). These examples and a number of others conform to the principle; and so, on the strength of the analogy, Socrates suggests that it is unlikely that the knowledge of knowledge exists.

This section of Charmides indicates that Socrates regards types of knowledge, as well as a broad range of other kinds of entities, as δύναμεις. He does not explicitly claim that all δύναμεις can be distinguished and identified by their works or relata, but the discussion suggests that he may assume this. This hypothesis gains support from a passage in Republic 5, in which Socrates is distinguishing two psychological states, knowledge and opinion, and in which Socrates presents a

23Chrm. 167d7–9.
24Sight at Chrm. 167c8–d2 and 168d9–e1; hearing at 167d4–5 and 168d3–7.
definition of δύναμις. Note that this is the only passage in the corpus where δύναμις is explicitly defined. Socrates regards both knowledge and opinion as δυνάμεις, and he begins his explanation of their distinction with the following general characterization of δύναμις (477c1–d5):

ΣΩ. Φήσομεν δύναμεις εἶναι γένος τι τῶν ὄντων, αἷς δὴ καὶ ἑμεῖς δυνάμεθα δυνάμεις καὶ ἀλλὰ πάντα δὲν ὑπάρχουσα, οἷον λέγω δώρην καὶ ἀκόην τῶν δυνάμεων εἶναι, εἰ ἢ ἄρα μανθάνεις δ' ὕπολομαι λέγειν τὸ εἴδος...

ΣΩ. "Ἀκούον δὴ, δ' μοι φαίνεται περὶ αὐτῶν· δυνάμεως γὰρ ἐγὼ οὕτε τινὰ χρόνων ὁδὸν οὕτε σχῆμα οὕτε τι τῶν τουοῦτων, οἷον καὶ ἄλλων πολλῶν, πρὸς δ' ἀποβλέπων ἔνια διορίζομαι παρ' ἐμαυτῷ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα εἶναι, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα· δυνάμεως δ' εἰς ἐκείνο μονὸν βλέπω, ἐφ' ὃ τε ἦστι καὶ ὑπεργαζόμενον, καὶ ταῦτα ἐκάστην αὐτῶν δύναμιν ἐκάλεσα, καὶ τὴν μὲν ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτῷ τεταγμένην καὶ τὸ αὗτο ὑπεργαζομένην τὴν αὐτὴν καλῶ, τὴν δὲ ἐπὶ ἐτέρῳ καὶ ἕτερον ὑπεργαζομένην ἄλλην.

"Shall we agree that δύναμις are a type of thing by which we, as well as everything else, are capable of whatever we are capable of and whatever anything else is capable of? For example, sight and hearing are δυνάμεις—if you understand the type of thing I want to describe . . . Listen, then, to what I think of them. I do not see the color of a δύναμις, nor its shape, nor any such thing, as I do in the case of many other things I look at to define. But in the case of a δύναμις I look only at that to which it is related and at what it produces. In this way I come to call each of them a δύναμις. And that which is connected to the same thing and produces the same thing I call the same δύναμις; and that which is connected to a different thing and produces a different thing I call a different δύναμις."25

In this passage Socrates suggests that in attempting to distinguish and define a δύναμις he considers what it produces and that to which it is related or connected.26 What a δύναμις produces (ἄπεργαζομένον) is of course its workp or workA. That to which it is related or connected (ἕφ' ὃ ἔστιν οτε τεταγμένην) is not given a name, nor is there an obviously appropriate nominal expression in Greek for such a thing. Following the verbal construction, we might call it "the thing to which [the δύναμις] is related" (τὸ ἐφ' ὃ ἔστιν). However, in view of our

25 A referee expressed the following concern about this passage: as translated, Socrates employs a series of conjunctions (καί) that imply that all δύναμεις produce worksp and workA and have relata. The referee suggests translating some instances of "καί" disjunctively. I have retained my translations of "καί" as "and." But while I do believe that Socrates (or Plato) conceives of all δύναμεις as having relata and also worksA, I am also committed to the view that Socrates (or Plato) does not believe that all δύναμεις produce works p. Consider a sentence such as the following: "When I manage situations A, B, and C, I consider factors D, E, and F." This does not imply that in managing each situation, I consider each factor; in managing a given situation, I may consider some subset of factors. Cf. also Hintikka's discussion (1974: 5–13) of this passage, and note, further, that Socrates uses the same verb (ἀπεργάζομαι) here as in the Charmides passages cited above.

26 On the use of the verb "connect," consider the language of yoking in the citation from Republic 6 discussed below, 332.
discussion of Charmides, it seems clear that this is just what we have been calling the “relatum,” and so I will hereafter assume that τὸ ἐφʼ ὃ ἔστιν of a δύναμις is identical to the relatum of a δύναμις.

We have seen in Charmides that not all δύναμεις produce works. But I suggest that those δύναμεις that have a relatum relate or connect to that entity by their characteristic action or operation, that is, by their work. For instance, the relatum of the δύναμις of sight is a concrete macroscopic object and specifically its aspects of color and shape. The δύναμις of sight relates to visible objects through the action of seeing.

Socrates never attempts a general characterization of the nature of the relation or connection between a δύναμις and its relatum. But it is clear that whatever this relation-type might be, it covers a wide variety of kinds whose distinction, of course, depends upon the kind of δύναμις and relatum in question. For instance, the senses perceive their relata, whereas types of knowledge intellect their relata. Consider, for instance, that in Republic 6, Socrates suggests that the δύναμεις of sight and hearing differ in the way that they relate to their relata. Hearing occurs through a simple relation of the δύναμις of hearing and its relatum sound; but, for its operation, sight requires, in addition to a visible object, the presence of light (507c10–508a2):

ΣΩ. ἔστιν διʼ ἃ προσδεί ἄκοι καὶ φωνὴ γένους ἄλλου εἰς τὸ τὴν μὲν ἀκούσαι, τὴν δὲ ἀκούσθαι, δέ ἐὰν μὴ παραγένηται τρίτων, ἢ μὲν οὐκ ἀκούσθαι, ἢ δὲ οὐκ ἀκούσθησαι:

ΓΛ. Οὐδενός, ἔφη.

ΣΩ. Ὅμως δὲ γε, ἢν δ‟ ἐγώ, οὐδὲ ἄλλας πολλαίς ἰνα ὑπό ἐμπὶ ὅτι συνεφοί, τοιοῦτοι προσδεί οὐδενός ... ἐνούσης πού ἐν δημίουν δέως καὶ ἐπιχειρούντος τοῦ ἐξοντος χρήσθαι αὐτῇ, παρουσίας δὲ χρώσες ἐν αὐτοῖς, ἐὰν μὴ παραγένηται γένος τρίτων ἑκάτοι ἐπ‟ αὐτῷ τούτῳ πεφυκός, οὔσα ὅτι ἢ τε ὅψις οὐδὲν Ὑστερότα τὰ τε χρώματα ἔσται ἀόρατα ... ὅσι συμφορά ἄρα ἱδέα ἢ τῶν ὀράν αἰσθήσεως καὶ ἢ τοῦ ὀράσθαι δύναμις τῶν ἄλλων συνεφοί τιμιωτέρῳ ἴχυρῷ ἑξάγησαν, ἐπερ μὴ ἀτμόν τὸ φῶς.

“Do hearing and sound need some other kind of thing for the one to hear and the other to be heard; or if some third entity is not present, does the one not hear and is the other not heard?” “There is need of nothing else,” he said. “I think so too,” I said, “and this is the case with many other [δύναμεις]—although not with all of them. . . . Although sight is

27The decision to focus on either the works (ἐργα) or relata (τὰ ἐφʼ ὃ ἔστιν) of the δύναμεις in the process of defining them seems simply to be a practical consideration. The work (ἐργαν) or relatum (τὸ ὃ ἐφʼ ἔστιν) of a δύναμις may be the more salient of the two. Thus, attention to the one rather than the other may be most convenient in the process of definition. For example, in Republic 5 Socrates distinguishes the δύναμις of knowledge from that of opinion, in that knowledge is related (ἐπὶ) to being (τὸ ὄντι), whereas opinion is not related to being (Rep. 478a6). The mental activity that knowledge produces is presumably different from that which opinion produces as well. But it is analytically more convenient to distinguish the two powers with respect to their relata rather than the character of their activities.
present in the eyes and its possessor tries to use it and color is present, without the presence of a third thing specifically and naturally for this, sight will not see and colors will remain invisible . . . The sense of seeing and the δύναμις of being seen are yoked together by a not trivial kind of thing, but by a yoke more honorable than that by which other entities are yoked—if light is not a dishonorable kind of thing."

The passage provides evidence of Socrates' belief that multiple elements may be necessary for the operation of a subset of δύναμεις. It also provides evidence of his belief that relata themselves are conceived as having particular δύναμεις such that they can relate or connect to the δύναμεις of which they are the relata. For instance, the relata of sight have δύναμεις such that they can be seen. This distinction between the two types of δύναμις may conveniently be described as active versus passive.28

In conventional Greek discourse, δύναμις is principally used to mean power to act and thus to describe what we are calling active δύναμεις.29 It is used in this way in several of the definitional dialogues as well. For instance, as we saw, during Socrates and Critias' discussion of the existence of the knowledge of knowledge, Socrates suggests that an entity with a given δύναμις would not have the being (ούσια) to which its own δύναμις is related. He does not say that it would not have the (active) δύναμις to which its own (passive) δύναμις is related. Presumably, this is to avoid confusion in an already complicated discussion. But whereas in Charmides Socrates does not describe sight and hearing as lacking the δύναμεις to be seen or to be heard, he uses precisely this language in Republic 6 (507c6-8):

ἐννενόηκας τὸν τῶν αἰσθήσεων δημιουργὸν δοσφ πολυτελεστᾶτην τὴν τοῦ όραν τε καὶ ὀράσθαι δύναμιν ἐδημιουργησεν:

Have you considered how exquisitely the creator has created the δύναμις of seeing and being seen?

In sum, the evidence from Charmides and Republic 1 is consistent with Socrates' characterization of δύναμις in Republic 5, with the qualification that in the definitional dialogues Socrates' use of δύναμις is limited to active δύναμεις. Δύναμεις are powers that enable their possessors to act or operate in a particular way. Furthermore, Socrates is no behaviorist. He does not take talk of δύναμεις to be a convenient way of characterizing the world and making predictions, while remaining ontologically neutral. He believes δύναμεις are—in a sense that I grant is difficult to clarify—real. For instance, as I will argue in the following section,

28 On the meaning of δύναμις at Sophist 247e, Cornford (1935: 234) writes: "'Dynamis' is the substantive answering to the common verb 'to be able' (δύνασθαι), and it covers the ability to be acted upon as well as the ability to act on something else, whereas most of the corresponding English words—power, force, potency, etc.—suggest active, as opposed to passive, ability. Dynamis includes passive capacity, receptivity, susceptibility, as well."

Socrates believes that the δύναμις courage is a state of the soul, and he regards the soul as a substantial entity. It is unclear, however, how Socrates understands the relation of the being (οὐσία) of an entity to its δύναμις, that is, in modern terms, how he understands the relation of the categorical properties of an entity to its dispositional properties.30

Furthermore, Socrates speaks of the characteristic action or operation of a δύναμις as an ἔργαν. This I refer to as “workA.” Additionally, certain δυνάμεις produce objects or physical conditions, and Socrates also speaks of such products as ἔργα. For clarity’s sake, I refer to them as “worksP.” Furthermore, it should be noted that there is some ambiguity in the way Socrates speaks of the relation between a δύναμις and its ἔργον (workA or workP). In Republic 1, Socrates speaks of the δύναμις appropriate for an entity to perform its (the entity’s, not the δύναμις’s) characteristic workA. For example, the presence in the eye of the δύναμις of sight enables the eye to see. However, sometimes Socrates speaks of the δύναμις’s workA or workP. I regard this ambiguity as innocuous and explicable. As others who have examined Plato’s conception of causation or rather aetiology have noted, Plato tends to have his characters speak of αἰτία not in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, but in terms of saliency. For example, the αἰτία or cause of something tends to be conceived as a salient object or property.31 Accordingly, Socrates may speak of the entity or, more precisely, its δύναμις as responsible for a workA or workP.

In Republic 5, Socrates says that, in defining δυνάμεις, he turns his attention to their works (ἔργα) as well as to their relata (τὰ ἐφ’ οἷς ἔστιν) rather than to the δυνάμεις themselves because δυνάμεις differ from most things whose identities one may grasp just by looking at them. Δυνάμεις do not have color (χρόνος) or shape (σχῆμα) or any such thing (τι τῶν τοιούτων), that is, any perceptible properties. I take it that this is Socrates’ way of characterizing the metaphysical peculiarities of δυνάμεις and the attendant epistemological difficulty of knowing them. A δύναμις is not perceptible in the way that a concrete macroscopic object is. Rather, as we might put it, one comes to understand what will result from the presence of a certain entity in certain conditions through induction based on past observation of that entity or others of its kind under conditions of that kind. Furthermore, on the basis of such observation one infers that the entity possesses a δύναμις that enables such-and-such to occur under such-and-such conditions.32

Socrates, of course, is not conducting experiments in empirical psychology. But,

30 On this distinction, see Armstrong 1996: 4–7.
31 For example, Sedley 1998 and Wolfsdorf 2005.
32 In cases where the δυνάμεις do not have worksP, such as knowledge or sight, and where the worksA are not perceptible as, for instance, bodily action is, inference will of course be more complex, though not fundamentally different. This may be why Socrates assumes that it is a condition of definitional knowledge of F that one be able to give an account of what F is; that is, verbal accounts are perceptible. Benson (2000: 114) calls this the verbalization requirement.
I take it, his analysis of δύναμις in Republic 5 reflects commonsensical, non-technical processes by which people make inferences about the existence and properties of δύναμις. In the following section, I apply these general results concerning δύναμις to the interpretation of Socrates' insistence in Laches that courage is a δύναμις.

IV. COURAGE AS A ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ OF THE ΨΥΧΗ IN LACHES

Elsewhere I have defended the following point. Of the five entities that Socrates and Protagoras distinguish in Protagoras as putative parts of human excellence, it is commonly overlooked that, at least in conventional discourse, justice (δικαιοσύνη) and holiness (σοφία) differ from sound-mindedness, courage, and knowledge (σοφία) in the following respect. The last three are necessarily psychological properties, whereas the first two are not. For instance, an act may be holy (δικαιον) or just (δικαιον) regardless of the psychological state of the agent. In contrast, an act's being sound-minded (σοφρον), courageous (ἀνδρεῖον), or wise or intelligent (σοφόν) depends on the psychological state of the agent. In fact, entities may be holy or just quite independently of human interests. For instance, a place may be holy simply because it is reserved for a certain kind of activity; and a social condition may be just, regardless of whether it results from the interests of any particular agents. Accordingly, we may speak of sound-mindedness, courage, and knowledge, as opposed to justice and holiness, as personal human excellences.

Before he poses the WF question in Laches, Socrates explicitly indicates that ἀνδρεία is the sort of entity found in the soul (ψυχή; 185e1–2): ὁ οὐκοῦν νῦν φαμέν περὶ μαθήματος σκοπεῖν τῆς ψυχῆς ἑνέκα τῆς τῶν νεανίσκον: ("We now say, then, that we are considering this subject [namely, fighting-in-arms] for the sake of the soul of the young men?).

In fact, Laches' response also contains a suggestion that courage is a psychological entity. Recall that Laches uses the verb "be willing" (ἐθέλοι) in his response: "If someone should be willing to remain in rank ...." This suggests that one who is courageous and remains in rank, defends against the enemy, and does not flee has a certain psychological state. Specifically, given the character of the act-type and the resistance to flight, the courageous man must feel fear, but have the strength to resist it.

33Wolfsdorf 2002.
34See also Lach. 190b3–5: Οὐκοῦν, ὁ Λάχης, καὶ νῦν ἡμᾶς τώδε παρακάλειτον εἰς συμβουλὴν, τίν' ἂν τρόπον τοῖς ὑπόν αὐτῶν ὁρεῖ παραγενομένη ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἀμέσως κοινήσειν; ("And you know, Laches, at this moment our two friends are inviting us to a consultation regarding the way in which excellence may be made present to the souls of their sons so as to improve them"). In the context of this passage, where excellence is characterized as the thing that when made present to the soul improves its condition, Socrates also uses the analogy of the eyes and ears and sight and hearing (see Lach. 190a1–b5).
On the other hand, the focus of Laches’ definition is on the character of the act-type, rather than the psychological state of the agent. Consider Socrates’ initial response to Laches (191a1–3): ΣΩ. ἄνδρεῖός που οὕτως, δν καὶ σὺ λέγεις, δς ἄν εν τῇ τάξει μένων μάχηται τοῖς πολεμίοις. ΛΑ. "Εγὼ γούν φήμι ("That man who, as you say, remains in rank and fights against the enemy is courageous."

“I at least assert it"). As his response continues, however, Socrates does not elicit Laches’ assent to the claim that many other act-types are courageous. He elicits Laches’ assent to the claim that people who perform other act-types are courageous. The distinction is important, for although what Socrates is seeking is perhaps identifiable with what we call a “universal,” I suggest that he would not be content with a response that described a very general type of action, for instance, resisting danger—even though this very general act-type would cover the broad range of act-types he describes in his response. Those who claim that Laches’ first response is not broad enough are misguided in this respect. Courage simply is not an act-type.

Support for my proposal comes from Charmides. As I have suggested, sound-mindedness, like courage, is, at least in conventional discourse, a personal excellence. In Charmides, as in Laches, and only in these two early definitional dialogues, immediately before he poses his WF question, Socrates suggests that F—in the case of Charmides, sound-mindedness—is a psychological entity. He describes his alleged Thracian charm with these words (157a3–b1):

θεραπεύεσθαι δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν ἔφη, ὅ μακάριε, ἐποδαίς τισιν· τὰς δ’ ἐποδὰς ταύτας τοὺς λόγους εἶναι τοὺς καλούς· ἕκ δὲ τῶν τιούτων λόγων ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς σοφοσύνην ἐγγίγνεσθαι, ἢς ἐγγενομένης καὶ παρούσης ῥάδιον ἥθη εἶναι τὴν ὑγίειαν καὶ τῇ κε-φαλῇ καὶ τῷ ἄλλῳ σώματι πορίζειν.

"He said, my friend, that the soul is treated by means of certain charms and that these charms are fine words. From such words, sound-mindedness is engendered in souls; and when sound-mindedness is engendered and present, then health comes more easily both to the head and to the rest of the body."

35 Nehamas (1975: 295) writes: “His definition is, of course, not general enough.” See also Fine 1993: 47: “Sometimes an answer is rejected because it is too narrow. For example, courage cannot be defined as ‘standing firm in battle,’ since courage can be displayed in other sorts of behavior (La. 191ce).”

36 Rather, courageous action is the work of courage (or of the courageous soul).

37 See also Chrm. 158e7–159a3: δὴν λογὸν γὰρ ὅτι ἐς σοι πάρεστι σοφοσύνη, ἐξεις τι περί αὐτῆς δοξάζειν. ἀνάγκη γὰρ που ἔνοικαν αὐτὴν, εἰπὲ ἐνεστίν, αἰσθανόν τινα παρέχειν, ἐς ἣς δόξα ἄν τίς σοι περί αὐτῆς ἔθη, ὅτι ἐκι καὶ οποῖον τῇ σοφοσύνῃ. "Ira toinon toposasomene ete sοι enestiv ete mi, ete... ti phs eivane soforosyunh kata tivn sthn doxe ("Now it is clear that if sound-mindedness is present in you, you are able to form some opinion about it. For it is necessary, I suppose, that if it is in you, it provides a sense of its presence, from which you would form an opinion both of what it is and of what sort of thing sound-mindedness is... So, then, in order to guess whether or not it is in you... tell me what in your opinion sound-mindedness is").
After Socrates rejects Charmides’ first definition, he encourages Charmides to reconsider what sound-mindedness is. He does this in such a way as to suggest, as he had done before he posed the WF question, that sound-mindedness is a psychological entity (160d5–8):

Πάλιν τοίνυν ... δι' Χαρμίδη, μᾶλλον προσέχων τὸν νοῦν καὶ εἰς σκεύος ἐμβλέψας, ἐννοήσας ὅποιόν τινὰ σε ποιεῖ ή σωφροσύνη παροῦσα καὶ ποίᾳ τις οὕσα τοιοῦτον ἄπεργαζοιτο ἄν.

"Once again now ... Charmides, concentrate hard and look inside yourself. Consider what sort of person sound-mindedness makes you, if it is present, and what sort of thing it would have to be in order to affect you in that way."

Charmides’ first definition is of an act-type, quietness. By this Charmides means behaving quietly.38 His second definition is modesty. Here it is unclear whether Charmides means a mode of behavior or a psychological state responsible for that mode of behavior. Socrates rejects both definitions on the grounds that sound-mindedness necessarily is fine (καλόν) and good (ἀγαθόν) and because the definitions do not satisfy these conditions. The third definition is doing one’s own thing (τὸ τὰ ἐαυτοῦ πράττειν), which is interpreted to mean doing good things (τὸ τὰ γαθά πράττειν). This definition clearly cannot be refuted by the claim that it is not necessarily fine or good. At this point, Socrates questions whether a doctor who healed a patient, that is, performed some good act, but did so by accident, would be sound-minded. Critias denies that he would and insists that sound-mindedness must be a kind of epistemic condition.39 I suggest that Socrates introduces the example of the felicitous doctor precisely to draw out the psychological aspect of sound-mindedness.

Whereas in conventional Greek discourse ἀνδρεία is used to designate the psychological state that enables one to overcome the impulse to flee from fearful states of affairs, σωφροσύνη is used to designate the psychological state that enables one to resist the impulse to indulge in pleasures. Both states depend on the cognizance of the fearfulness or desirability of the pertinent external state of affairs respectively. Accordingly, if a soldier is engaged in a drill in which he must crawl across a stretch of earth while machine-gun fire passes just above his head and he falsely believes that the gunners are using blanks, then his willingness to perform the exercise does not as such involve courage. Similarly, a man who turns down a delicious meal because he falsely believes that it is poisoned does not as

38 This is clear from the formulation of Charmides’ first definition (159b): σωφροσύνη εἶναι τὸ κοσμίος πάντα πράττειν καὶ ἱστεί, ἐν τῇ ταῖς οὖσίς βαδίζειν καὶ διαλέγειν, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα ὀφειλεῖς ποιεῖν. καὶ μοι δοκεῖ, ἐκι, συλλήβδην ἱστικτής τις εἶναι δ ἔρωτάς (... sound-mindedness is doing everything in an orderly and quiet manner, walking in the streets, talking, and everything else of that kind. ‘In a word,’ he said, ‘I think the thing about which you ask may be called ‘quietness’”).

39 Chrm. 164a1–d4.
such demonstrate sound-mindedness. The extent to which these psychological states are in fact identifiable with epistemic states is, of course, debatable. But that courage and sound-mindedness, like knowledge or wisdom (σοφία), are some kind of psychological state is clear.

Let us now turn to the work of courage. As I noted at the end of section III, there is some ambiguity in this very formulation. We might, more appropriately, inquire after the work of the soul that possesses courage. The obvious candidate is courageous corporeal action; that is to say, the psychological state of courage enables a person to act courageously. However, Socrates himself never explicitly describes things as such. We have seen that in *Republic* 1, Socrates defines the work of an entity as that which can only or best be done with it. Toward the end of that text, he claims that the soul has a work or number of works: to care for, calculate, and govern.

At least the second of these is a mental activity. So, it is plausible that the work of courage or rather the courageous soul may be or at least may include a mental activity. Moreover, in the same passage in *Republic* 1, Socrates defines the excellence (ἀρετή) of the soul as justice (δικαιοσύνη), where by excellence he understands the condition that makes an entity fit for its work. Also, by this point in the text he has suggested that justice is knowledge (σοφία). And since there is ample evidence in *Laches* and elsewhere that Socrates regards human excellence and so courage as knowledge of some kind, he may very well regard the work of courage or the courageous soul as including mental activity and perhaps precisely as caring for, calculating, and governing. I believe that this is the view of the work of human excellence or of the soul in a condition of human excellence that Plato intended to advance as a compelling alternative to pre-analytic, conventional views. I will call it the “Socratic conception.” Moreover, courageous, as well as sound-minded, just, and holy corporeal activities fall within the scope of caring for and governing, but they do not exhaust the work of human excellence.

On the other hand, the Socratic conception of human excellence and especially of courage as a kind of knowledge is not conventional. I suggest that in their pre-analytic grasp of the concepts, Socrates’ interlocutors would regard the work of courage, holiness, justice, and sound-mindedness, where these are understood as psychological states, as correspondingly virtuous or excellent corporeal action. This hypothesis is supported by a range of evidence.

Most of Socrates’ interlocutors’ initial responses to the WF question describe act-types. Charmides defines sound-mindedness as quiet behavior; Critias as

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40 In contrast—as we have seen (above, 334)—the common translation of δεσιων as "pious" is misguided because "piety" is a personal excellence-term. On the other hand, "holy" is not.


43 Rep. 1.350c4–5 and 351a3–4. I assume that Socrates and Plato understand the words ἐπιστῆμη and σοφία as equivalents.
doing good things. Laches defines courage as paradigmatic hoplite conduct. Cephalus defines justice as truth-telling and returning borrowed items; Polemarchus as rendering each his due. Euthyphro defines holiness as what he is doing, prosecuting one who commits sacrilege, regardless of his relation to the offender. Meno defines excellence, for a man, as managing political affairs and, for a woman, as managing household affairs.44

In Republic 1, Socrates asks Thrasymachus whether one city will have the δύναμις to enslave another if it lacks justice.45 Socrates suggests that a city whose citizens lack justice will be incapable of organizing a successful military campaign. This is because the work of injustice is to breed hatred among the citizens of the enslaving city.46 Socrates then speaks of injustice as having a δύναμις and suggests that if injustice is present among at least some members of a group it will disable the group from cooperatively carrying out its enterprises (351e6–352a3):

'Εὰν δὲ δῆ... ἐν ἐνὶ ἐγγένηται ἁδικία, μῶν μὴ ἀπολεῖ τὴν αὐτῆς δύναμιν, ἢ οὐδὲν ἔττουν ἔξει; Μηδὲν ἄὰτον ἐχέω, ἔψε. Ὁδόκουν τοιαύτα τινα φαίνεται ἔχουσα τὴν δύναμιν, οἶον. ὃ ἂν ἐγγένηται, ἐπὶ πόλει τινι ἐπὶ γένει ἐπὶ στρατισθένθω ἐπὶ ἄλλῳ ὁμοίῳ, πρῶτον μὲν ἄδυναν αὐτὸ ποιεῖν πράττειν μεθ᾽ αὐτοῦ διὰ τὸ στασιάζειν καὶ διαφρέσθαι, ἐτι δ’ ἐχθρὸν εἴναι ἐαυτῷ...; [If, in the case of two people,] injustice is present in one, will it lose its δύναμις or retain it? “Let it have it just the same,” he said. “Then is it not apparent that it has a certain kind of δύναμις such that wherever it is present, be it in a city, family, army camp, or anywhere else, it first makes the thing incapable of acting within itself on account of faction and division, and then it renders the thing an enemy to itself...?”

In Protagoras, it is Protagoras who, during his account of the origin of society, first introduces the word δύναμις.48 There δυνάμεις are treated as entities Zeus charges Prometheus and Epimetheus to distribute to animals. Among the entities said to be δυνάμεις are strength49 and quickness (τάχος),50 as well as

44 For references, see the table below, 340–342.
45 Rep. 1.351b1–9. It clearly cannot be assumed that the work of justice is understood as enslaving another city, for it has been denied that the work of justice can be to harm others. It seems more accurate to say that the work of justice is to act cooperatively.
47 In different texts Socrates occasionally describes the same entities as having δυνάμεις and as being δυνάμεις. For instance, in Laches he says that courage is a δύναμις, and in Protagoras he says that courage has a δύναμις (330a4–b3). This is not to be confused with the fact that some entities that have δυνάμεις, for example, the eye and ear, are not identical to their δυνάμεις, sight and hearing. Rather, I take it that when Socrates says that an entity that otherwise there is reason to believe he regards as a δύναμις has a δύναμις, this is simply a manner of speaking and that the predicate “has a δύναμις” is to be interpreted as equivalent to “is a δύναμις.”
48 P. 320d5.
49 P. 320d8.
50 P. 320e1.
other means of self-preservation. Presumably, Protagoras intends to convey that Epimetheus distributed the δύναμις of strength to certain animals to enable them to fight well and that he distributed the δύναμις of quickness to other “weaker” (ἀσθενεστέρους) animals to enable them to flee.

It is necessary, then, to distinguish the proper Socratic view of the work of human excellence or of the soul in the state of excellence from the conventional view to which Socrates’ interlocutors may be committed—assuming they recognize that the putative components of excellence are psychological states. In their case, the work of courage or the courageous soul is courageous corporeal action. Again, in Socrates’ case, it is mental as well as corporeal activity.

In sum, Socrates believes that courage is a δύναμις of the soul, that is, a psychological state or, more literally, power. Thus, Laches’ first response to Socrates’ WF question is unsatisfactory because Laches confuses a type of work with the δύναμις responsible for that work. In response, Socrates tries to impress upon Laches that there are numerous other types of courageous behavior; in other words, there are numerous other works for which courage is responsible. But Socrates does not do this in an effort to persuade Laches to identify courage with a sufficiently general act-type; rather, he does so in order to draw Laches’ attention to the common psychological δύναμις that all such agents share.

V. ETHICAL VERSUS METAPHYSICAL DEFINITIONAL DIALOGUES

Having clarified why, in response to Laches’ first definition, Socrates insists that courage is a δύναμις, I turn now to the question of why in Laches Socrates does not introduce the condition that F is a Form and why in Euthyphro, Hippias Major, and Meno, he introduces the latter F-condition, but not the former. I will begin with a list of all the definitions in the definitional dialogues and the correlative F-conditions that they fail to satisfy.

51 The line is: “while for those with an unarmed constitution (ἀσθενλοι φύσιν) he devised some other δύναμις for survival” (Prt. 320e1–3).
52 Prt. 320d8–e1. The text does not explicitly say that Epimetheus distributed these δύναμις to the animals for the purposes I have suggested. But this assumption seems beyond doubt.
53 I note that I have not here discussed the relatum of courage (or human excellence). Insofar as Socrates or Plato conceives of human excellence as the knowledge of goodness, the relatum of the δύναμις is goodness. Whether Socrates or Plato conceives of the putative components of excellence as identical is, of course, controversial, and I must here sidestep the debate.
54 It should be noted here that, in defense of the meaning-interpretation of the WF question, Vlastos (1981: 410–417) presents an idiosyncratic argument against the view that δύναμις in Laches means “power.” For a criticism of Vlastos’s argument, see Wolfsdorf 2005.
55 Note that I have excluded consideration of Lysis on the grounds that because of the significant ontological difference of friendship (φιλία) from all the other definienda, the structure of the investigation in this text is anomalous.
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<td>Lach.</td>
<td>(1) Paradigmatic hoplite conduct</td>
<td>A power</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Toughness of the soul</td>
<td>Fine (192d7–8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Knowledge of what is to be feared and dared62</td>
<td>A part of excellence (199e3–7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euth.</td>
<td>(1) Prosecuting sacrilege regardless of personal relation</td>
<td>Not a type of holiness (6d9–11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) That which is loved by some gods</td>
<td>Purely holy (8a10–12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) That which is loved by all the gods</td>
<td>An essence (11a6–b9: οὐσία)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4) Attention to the gods63</td>
<td>An essence64</td>
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</table>

56 Socrates’ response to this definition is complex. It begins with the reinterpretation of the definition itself as aiding friends and harming enemies (Rep. 1.331e5–332d9). He then asks how the just man is able to aid friends and harm enemies. In other words, an attempt is made more precisely to determine the just man’s particular expertise. It appears that the just man is rather useless since he is only good for guarding items when they are not in use (Rep. 1.332d10–333e5). Subsequently, Socrates suggests that the ability to guard also implies possession of the polar opposite skill, namely the ability to steal. Accordingly, the just man appears to be a thief (Rep. 1.3336–334b6). At this point, Polemarchus concedes perplexity, yet reaffirms that justice is aiding friends and harming enemies (Rep. 1.334b7–9).

57 Given the possibility of misjudging people, one might harm a good person, mistaking him for an enemy, and benefit a bad person, mistaking him for a friend. In response to this, it is granted that it is just to harm the unjust and benefit the just (Rep. 1.334d9–11).

58 In the first movement of Socrates’ response to this definition, it is clarified that the genuine ruler does not pursue policies that are harmful to himself, mistakenly believing them to be beneficial to himself (Rep. 1.338d7–341a4).

59 Reinterpreted as doing what is good.

60 Reinterpreted as knowledge of knowledge (and of lack of knowledge and of all other knowledges).

61 Insofar as Socrates believes himself incompetent to determine whether knowledge of knowledge exists, he concedes that even if it did exist, it would not be beneficial (Cbrm. 171d1–2; see also 172c–d).

62 Reinterpreted as knowledge of good and bad.

63 Reinterpreted as service to the gods.

64 On the assumption that holiness is service to the gods, Socrates questions what benefit it provides. Euthyphro’s response (15b10–c2) implies that holiness is pleasing to the gods, and as such this definition falters on the same grounds as the preceding definition.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>$F$-Condition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hip. Maj.</td>
<td>(1) A fine woman</td>
<td>Purely fine (287c3–5: τὸ καλόν)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(2) Gold</td>
<td>Purely fine (291c6–8)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) To be rich, healthy, honored, live to old age, etc.</td>
<td>Purely fine (293c2–5)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(4) Propriety</td>
<td>Makes things fine (294d9–e3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(5) Utility$^{66}$</td>
<td>Not harmful (296c6–d1)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>(6) Benefit</td>
<td>Not a type of goodness$^{67}$</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>(7) Aesthetic pleasure$^{68}$</td>
<td>Not a type of goodness$^{69}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meno</td>
<td>(1) Managing political affairs, managing domestic affairs, etc.</td>
<td>Not a type of excellence (72c6–d1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Ability to govern people</td>
<td>Not a type of excellence (74a7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Desiring what is fine and being able to procure it$^{70}$</td>
<td>Not a type of excellence$^{71}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With a few exceptions, all the $F$-conditions fall into two categories: ethical and metaphysical. In most cases, it is clear from the list which $F$-condition falls into which category. However, there are several misleading or ambiguous cases. Being purely holy, being purely fine, and making things fine are introduced to advance metaphysical rather than ethical ideas. Precisely, the Form $F$, unlike its participants, is purely holy or fine; moreover, the Form $F$, unlike its participants, is responsible for its participants having their correlative properties. Accordingly, I categorize these $F$-conditions as metaphysical. In sum, the ethical $F$-conditions include being just, useful, not harmful, altruistic, fine, good, and beneficial; the metaphysical $F$-conditions include existing, not being a type of holiness, being purely holy, being an essence, being purely fine, making things fine, not being a type of goodness, and not being a type of excellence.

$^{65}$See also Hipp. Maj. 290d.

$^{66}$Reinterpreted as power.

$^{67}$No single line encapsulates the $F$-condition upon which the refutation of the definition depends.

$^{68}$Reinterpreted as beneficial pleasure.

$^{69}$The refutation of this definition depends upon the same complex point as that in involved in the refutation of the previous definition. But consider Socrates’ statement (Hipp. Maj. 303e11–13): “Well, then,” he will say, ‘benefit is that which creates the good, but that which creates and that which is created were just now seen to be different; and our argument has come round to the earlier argument, has it not?”

$^{70}$Reinterpreted as desire for what is good and ability to procure it. But see following note.

$^{71}$Socrates argues that all people desire the good (Meno 77b6–78b8). Accordingly, this aspect of the definition is dropped and Socrates concentrates on the ability to attain the good. As in the second definition, Socrates suggests that such procurement should entail the exercise of specific excellences such as justice, whereupon the same problem arises (Meno 79a3–5).

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The exceptional cases include implying self-knowledge, being a power, and being a part of excellence. Implying self-knowledge is obviously an epistemic or cognitive psychological condition and ostensibly not an ethical one. Being a power appears to be a metaphysical property. However, as we have seen, in the context in which it is used Socrates intends to convey the more specific idea that \(F\) is a psychological power. Therefore, being a power is more accurately categorized as psychological, although not ethical. Being a part of excellence is a meta-ethical condition. Beyond the apparent dissimilarities of these \(F\)-conditions, their functions within the contexts of the investigations pertain to the Socratic-Platonic consideration of the unity of excellence, the identification of excellence with knowledge of a kind, and the conception of knowledge as a psychological power. Accordingly, this miscellaneous set of three \(F\)-conditions may conveniently be subsumed under the rubric “intellectualist.”

The basic division of \(F\)-conditions into ethical and metaphysical categories corresponds almost precisely with the division of two sets of dialogues. The investigations in Republic 1, Charmides, and Laches are almost wholly concerned with ethical and more broadly psychological and intellectualist aspects of \(F\). (This is also true of the discussion of the relation and identity of the putative components of excellence in Protagoras.) The investigations in Euthyphro, Meno, and Hippias Major are also almost wholly concerned with metaphysical aspects of \(F\). Specifically, only in Euthyphro, Meno, and Hippias Major are the concept of Form, including the suggestion that \(F\) is a Form, and the distinction between the Form \(F\) and its participants introduced and developed.

It is also noteworthy that while existing—introduced as an \(F\)-condition in examining the knowledge of knowledge in Charmides—is obviously an ontological topic, the function of this \(F\)-condition differs from all the other metaphysical \(F\)-conditions introduced in Euthyphro, Hippias Major, and Meno. All of the latter are employed to convey the idea that \(F\) is a Form and so distinct from its participants. As we have seen, in Charmides Socrates’ principal objective in examining whether the knowledge of knowledge exists is not to develop a metaphysical idea, but to determine whether, on the assumption that sound-mindedness exists, knowledge of knowledge does.

In short, the investigations in Republic 1, Charmides, and Laches are distinct from those in Euthyphro, Hippias Major, and Meno in that the latter set involve the identification of \(F\) as a Form, whereas the former do not. The significance of this point may be underscored by comparing aspects of the investigations in a few dialogues. Consider the first definition in Republic 1, truth-telling and returning borrowed items; as a definition of justice, this could be criticized as being too narrow. Instead, Socrates criticizes the definition on ethical grounds. Charmides’ first two definitions of sound-mindedness, quietness and modesty, arguably also could be criticized as inadequately general. But Socrates criticizes them on ethical grounds. In contrast, Euthyphro’s and Meno’s first definitions
could be criticized on ethical grounds, but Socrates criticizes them on metaphysical grounds. This is, perhaps, especially noteworthy in the case of Euthyphro, for at no point in the investigation does Socrates criticize a proposed definition on ethical grounds. Yet, as the discussion in Protagoras makes clear, holiness, like courage, sound-mindedness, and justice, was conventionally recognized as a principal constituent of excellence.73 In short, Plato was not logically compelled to have Socrates criticize these particular definitions exclusively on either ethical or metaphysical grounds; rather, Plato chose to compose the investigations in certain definitional dialogues and not others to introduce the metaphysics of Forms.

This division of definitional dialogues into two sets largely corresponds to Penner's division of prior and posterior early definitional dialogues. I myself make no claims about their relative dates of composition. Furthermore, since Penner's claim that in Euthyphro and Meno (and, we must now add, Hippias Major) Socrates pursues demotic, not true excellence is untenable, the grounds for the division must be explained otherwise. One of the fundamental problems with Penner's argument is that in, rightly, criticizing the meaning-interpretation of the WF question in Laches and Charmides (as well, we should add, as Protagoras and Republic 1) and claiming, more controversially, that Forms, universals, and meanings have the same identity conditions, Penner is compelled to admit the meaning-interpretation of the WF question in those dialogues where Socrates characterizes F as a Form. Yet, even if Forms have the same identity conditions as meanings, Socrates himself need not have conceived of his WF question in Euthyphro, Meno, and Hippias Major as a request for the meaning of "F." Rather, as in Laches, Charmides, and Republic 1, Socrates could have—and surely did—conceive of his WF question as a request for the identity of the referent of "F." The difference between the sets of dialogues, of course, is that in the one set Socrates conceives of the referent specifically as a psychological δύναμις, whereas in the other set he conceives of the referent specifically as a Form. Note, however, that Socrates need not have conceived of being a psychological δύναμις as inconsistent with being a Form. Indeed, it may be argued that the two are not inconsistent. Surely, there are Forms of psychological kinds. And surely Socrates holds both that human excellence (ἀρετή) is a Form and that human excellence as a whole is knowledge of a kind, which is a non-demotic conception of human excellence as a whole.

73 In Meno, the investigation does lead toward consideration of at least the broader psychological aspects of excellence. Moreover, it is perhaps entirely reasonable that ethical aspects of excellence are not considered, at least insofar as the goodness and fineness of excellence would have been considered obvious (indeed, as we might say, analytic). It is noteworthy in this regard that the one proposition that Socrates offers later in the investigation as stable and secure is that excellence is good.
Why, then, did Plato compose the investigations in one set of early definitional dialogues to focus on the ethical and more broadly psychological aspects of $F$ and another to focus on the metaphysical aspects of $F$, specifically the conception of $F$ as a Form? The answer, I suggest, is for pedagogical reasons. The ethical and more broadly psychological aspects of human excellence that Plato intended to clarify and advance are complex and controversial. Likewise, the metaphysical conception of $F$ qua Form is complex and was novel and momentous. Consequently, for the sake of pedagogical efficacy, Plato, to a large extent, segregates these aspects of $F$ among the two sets of dialogues.

In closing, I would like to air one further consideration relating to the distinction of the two sets of definitional dialogues that also pertains to Penner’s causal-interpretation of the WF question. As explained in section 1, Penner’s causal-interpretation conflates semantic and pragmatic aspects of the WF question. We should distinguish these aspects. On the one hand, the WF question seeks the identity of $F$. On the other, Socrates may pursue the WF question because he wants to know how to make people act virtuously or excellently and so because he wants to know what is responsible for such behavior. Given the evidence, in particular from Charmides, Laches, Republic 1, and Protagoras, that Socrates conceives of human excellence as a power whose work$_A$ is virtuous or excellent corporeal and mental action, I want to question more closely whether Socrates (or rather Plato) conceives of the relation between the psychological δύναμις and the ἔγγον as causal. I do not intend to resolve this question here, but I do want to propose two reasons that should make us reluctant to embrace a positive answer to it.

Vlastos, for one, has claimed that for Socrates the only motive-force responsible for action is desire for the good. On this view, human excellence qua knowledge directs this motive-force. Accordingly, either the claim that human excellence produces works$_A$ must be interpreted as describing a causal relation in what Wakefield has call “a relaxed sense”; or Socrates has two conceptions of the psychology of action that are inconsistent between definitional dialogues such as Laches and Charmides, on the one hand, and, say, Gorgias, on the other. Alternatively, granting Wakefield’s point, Socrates expresses different views about

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74Vlastos 1981: 428; see also Wakefield 1991: 53–54 and n. 10. It may also be noted that in Laches, Charmides, Republic 1, Euthyphro, and Hippias Major, Socrates does not discuss the relation of desire and the definiendum. In Lysis he claims that desire (ἐπιθυμία) is the aitia of friendship (φιλία) (220e6–221c5) and in Meno he discusses the view that all people desire the good and the relation of this notion to the definition of excellence (Meno 77e–78c).

75Cf. Wakefield’s (1991: 54, n. 10) remark: “Vlastos uses ‘motive’ in a legitimate but restricted sense; if, as is common, the term is applied more broadly to the reasons (in Davidson’s sense) that cause someone’s actions, then motives includes beliefs as well as desires. Thus Vlastos’ opponents are entirely consistent—although perhaps not optimally clear—in agreeing with the ‘knowledge’ analysis of virtue despite their ‘motive-force’ talk.”

the psychology of virtuous or excellent action in different texts just because Plato focuses on different aspects of the psychology of action in different texts. Elaborating on this alternative—which strikes me as the more plausible of the two—in certain definitional dialogues Plato has Socrates focus on the responsibility of human excellence in the psychology of virtuous or excellent action, and in, say, Gorgias, he has Socrates focus on the responsibility of desire in the psychology of action.

A deeper reason for questioning whether Socrates or Plato conceived of the relation between human excellence qua psychological δύναμις and excellent action as causal relates to the problem of Plato's conception of causation. For several decades now, particularly in the wake of Vlastos's "Reasons and Causes in the Phaedo,"77 it has been debated whether Plato anticipated Aristotle in distinguishing different kinds of aetiological accounts, specifically whether Plato distinguished causal and logical relations. Elsewhere I argue that neither in Phaedo nor in the rest of the corpus did Plato clearly distinguish these relation-types.78 Rather, Socrates or the principal interlocutor of the dialogue refers to both kinds as aetiological—notably, sometimes conflating the two. Consequently, since logical relations are not identical to causal relations, we cannot, without anachronism, claim that, for Socrates or Plato, human excellence qua psychological δύναμις causes virtuous or excellent action. Instead, we are compelled to accept the more vague claim that, for Socrates or Plato, human excellence(s) qua psychological dynam(e)is is the αἴτιον (or αἴτιοι) of virtuous or excellent action.

This might seem like a pedantic point. But consider the special poignancy it assumes when we consider passages such as the following one from Charmides, which we have already discussed in section III. Recall that in examining the knowledge of knowledge as a definition of sound-mindedness, Socrates introduces the following principle (Chrm. 168d1-3): "Whatever has its own δύναμις related to itself will not have the being to which its own δύναμις is related." Socrates uses the examples of sight of sight and hearing of hearing to clarify this principle. Among other examples Socrates uses are, for lack of a better phrase, quantitative relational conditions: the double, more, heavier, and older. For example, Socrates argues that the double of itself could not exist, for then the same entity would be both double and half of itself. These examples are extremely puzzling. As Benson writes:

a Socratic dunamis is typically associated with particular types of activities. (I say "typically" because it is unclear what activities are associated with the dunameis of the greater, the double, the heavier, the lighter, the older, and the younger in Charmides [168b-d]) . . . . A thing that possesses a dunamis does various things."79

77 Vlastos 1969.
78 Wolfdorf 2005.
79 Benson 1997: 80–81 and n. 5. The sentence in parentheses is from n. 5. Other commentators—Schmidt (1998), Hyland (1981), and van der Ben (1985)—do not offer any explanation.
A problematic passage such as this—and there are others in the corpus\textsuperscript{80}—encourages us to be cautious in interpreting Socrates’ or Plato’s concept of δόνωμις as causal.

Department of Philosophy
Temple University
748 Anderson Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19122
U.S.A.
dwolfsdo@temple.edu

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\textsuperscript{80}These are discussed in Wolfsdorf 2005.