Plato on the Good: Hippias Minor and Hippias Major

John supervised my MA thesis on *Hippias Major*, and under his sceptical scrutiny my analysis ended up with the dogmatic conclusion that the dialogue is a self-standing philosophical drama,[1] dramatizing the Good and the Beautiful/Fine, the relationship between them, and the ethical ramifications of that relationship. A few loose ends have remained, such as the relationship of this dialogue to *Hippias Minor*. It therefore seemed appropriate to present for this Festschrift, some thirty years later, an outline of my previously unpublished analysis of *Hippias Minor*, also a self-standing philosophical drama, to which I add a brief comparison of Plato's treatment of the Good in the two dialogues.

Hippias Minor is a short Platonic dialogue[2] arousing academic interest chiefly because of the two apparent paradoxes found there, namely: that the liar and the truthful are the same person (369b3-7); and that if there were anyone who, by intentionally erring, did disgraceful and unjust things, this would be none other than the good man (376b4-6). What Plato intended by these paradoxes has been a matter of speculation, made more speculative, I would argue, by assuming both that there are indeed paradoxes in this dialogue, and that the dramatic aspect of the dialogue may be set aside without serious consequences.[3]

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1. Submitted in 1986 to Tel Aviv University, slightly modified and published in book form as Ludlam (1991).
2. 363a-376c, less than fourteen Stephanus pages. The dialogue is grudgingly accepted as authentic because of Aristotle's reference to it at *M* 1025a.
3. The dramatic aspect is occasionally acknowledged: e.g., Weiss (1981) admirably stresses the importance of the dramatic and literary aspects of the dialogue at a time when few did, but because she is responding to earlier attempts to sort out the paradoxes, proposes that "there is something to be gained from concentrating on the arguments themselves" (287); Balaban (2009) explicitly identifies Socrates with Plato (1, n.1), and equally explicitly removes the dramatic aspect altogether: "Once the argument is distilled from its context of plastic and literary images, it becomes clear that Plato is trying to demonstrate two theses" (2); other scholars tend to be less explicit in their dismissal of the dramatic aspect. The notable exception to those treating the drama as dispensable is Blondell (2002) who devotes an entire chapter to a detailed analysis of this dialogue (113-164); her design, however, is to demonstrate a previously constructed elenctic Socrates at work, with all the baggage that that entails.

Many accounts of the dialogue pare back the dramatic aspect to such an extent that Socrates and Hippias appear to be the only characters in the dialogue. A holistic analysis, however, must take into account not only Socrates and Hippias, but also various other characters referred to during the discussion between them, including the silent audience, and Homer and his characters. Furthermore, there is actually another *active* participant rarely referred to in the secondary literature. This is Eudicus, who appears at certain key moments in the dialogue, and his influence extends far beyond his spoken words. The interplay between all these characters at the beginning of the dialogue affects our understanding of the dialogue as a whole, and it is worth looking at these preliminaries in some detail. The rest of the dialogue will be less quoted in the interests of saving space.

Eudicus begins the dialogue with the following address to Socrates (363a1-5):

> But you, Socrates, why are you silent after Hippias has exhibited so many things, and you neither co-praise anything of the things said nor even cross-examine/ refute[4] if anything seems to you to have been said not finely, especially since we have been left who would most contend that we have a claim to passing time in philosophy?

Already at the beginning of the dialogue we learn that Hippias has just given an exhibition; he is portrayed emphatically as a sophist, although he is never referred to explicitly as a sophist. His being a sophist is dramatized throughout the dialogue. While Hippias is well known as a sophist from other sources, his being dramatized as a sophist here means that it matters to this particular philosophical drama that Hippias is a sophist. He and his interlocutors behave and talk as they do in large part because Hippias is a sophist.

Eudicus notes that Socrates has been silent, but he would like Socrates to break his silence, now that the only people left are those with a claim to passing time in philosophy. These are not the three active participants, Hippias, Socrates, and Eudicus; but Eudicus and those others who were praising Hippias before Eudicus turned to Socrates at the beginning of the dialogue. These other people are present for the whole conversation, as a remark made by Hippias half-way through the

4. The verb ἐλέγχω may have either meaning. It is not entirely clear whether Eudicus is portrayed as intending one of the meanings, or as failing to distinguish between the two. Whatever the case may be, Socrates both cross-examines and refutes in the following conversation.

dialogue makes clear (369c7). Socrates, near the beginning of the dialogue, provides us with additional information, revealing that the exhibition was "inside" (364b7). The scattered clues allow us to begin to build a picture of what supposedly happened before the dialogue began: Hippias gave an exhibition "inside", and then left the building, accompanied by Socrates and those few "with a claim to passing time in philosophy".[5]

Sophists gave exhibitions in order to attract new students,[6] and it may be understood that the present audience surrounding Hippias, with the exception of Socrates, comprises potential students. Potential students should ideally examine the suitability of the sophist to be their teacher, but interestingly these men have done nothing so far but praise Hippias, and with the exception of Eudicus, they will say nothing throughout the dialogue. It seems from their behaviour in the dialogue that they will not criticize Hippias in their own right but are very willing to hear someone else cross-examine him: it is a (dramatic) fact that they do not do anything to stop Socrates conversing with Hippias, and they remain to hear the conversation. Eudicus, like the leader of a chorus, would appear to be the spokesman for the whole group of potential students. The opening lines of the dialogue, therefore, present Eudicus as he is prompting Socrates to cross-examine/refute the sophist should he deem anything in the exhibition not to have been finely said; he is attempting to manipulate Socrates into being a critic of Hippias for the benefit of those who see themselves as having most claim on passing their time in philosophy.

The peculiar behaviour of Socrates himself becomes explicable in this light. He attended Hippias' exhibition, but was silent throughout. He attached himself to the potential students after the exhibition, but continued to hold his peace. The invitation to criticize Hippias seems to have been predictable, and worth waiting for. What Socrates achieves by waiting until prompted by Eudicus is the permission of the group to cross-examine Hippias. Since Socrates does not immediately cross-examine Hippias, we may understand that permission is only one of the elements Socrates requires (363a6-c3):

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5. There are three appearances of the expression "spending time in philosophy" in Plato's dialogues: see Ludlam (2014) 92-93. For the rich Athenian, spending time in philosophy is a status symbol of the leisured class. Socrates and Hippias exemplify in their different ways provisioners of the philosophy in which some of the leisured class choose to spend their time.

6. At 364d4 Hippias refers to himself earning money for teaching.

> Indeed, Eudicus, there are things I would gladly ask of Hippias concerning what he was saying about Homer. For I used to hear your father Apemantus [say] that the *Iliad* was made by Homer a finer poem than the *Odyssey* to the extent that Achilles was better than Odysseus. For he said that that one of the poems had been made with regard to Odysseus, and the other with regard to Achilles. About that, then, I would like to ask Hippias, if he is willing, how it seems to him about these two men, which he claims to be better, since many and various things have been exhibited to us, both about the other poets and about Homer.

Socrates does not cross-examine Hippias but replies to Eudicus. He engages the interest and family honour of Eudicus[7] by mentioning an opinion held by his father, Apemantus. Interestingly, the literary point concerning the relative merits of the two Homeric poems is dropped from his question very quickly, leaving the apparently more trivial and all too obvious claim that Homer made Achilles better than Odysseus: this claim is obvious since Achilles in the *Iliad* is explicitly and emphatically the best of the Greek heroes at Troy. Socrates makes it clear to Eudicus that he will ask Hippias if Hippias is willing. Eudicus, whose urging of Socrates to join the conversation has already revealed his tendency to act as the master of ceremonies, reacts as expected by politely obliging Hippias to answer (c4-6):

> It is clear that Hippias will not begrudge answering if you ask him something. Isn't that right, Hippias? If Socrates asks you something, you will answer? Or how will you act?

It may be worth noting that Eudicus sets up the debate between Socrates and Hippias without telling them to do anything. He actually offers a choice each time, but it is clear what he expects. By appearing to acquiesce to the wishes of Eudicus, Socrates has been granted support and encouragement to debate with Hippias. Now we shall see that Hippias, too, manipulates the would-be manipulator (c7-d4):

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7. Eudicus, son of Apemantus, is mentioned by Hippias at *HMaj* 286b7, as having requested the sophist to give his speech about Nestor and Neoptolemus, which Hippias says he will give in the school of Phidostratus. This is not to be confused with the exhibition immediately preceding *HMin.* Eudicus as an admiring and demanding audience may have been a convenient dramatic means for the author of *HMaj* to reveal a link with *HMin*, but it is no more than a literary conceit.

> [Of course I shall answer], for I would act strangely, Eudicus, if I always go up to Olympia to the assembly of the Greeks whenever there are the Olympics, from home, from Elis, to the temple, and I present myself both speaking whatever anyone wishes of the things prepared by me for exhibition and answering whatever anyone wishes to ask, but now I would flee the questioning of Socrates.

This is the first time Hippias has spoken in this dialogue, and it is a very impressive entry. We learn that he gives exhibitions of his rhetorical prowess at the magnificent Temple of Zeus in Olympia during the most significant of the Greek games, held near his home city of Elis. He is versatile, having prepared speeches suitable for the occasion, while also being willing and able to answer any question thrown at him. It would be strange indeed were he to flee the questioning of Socrates, given that he does not flee any questioning in his exhibitions in Olympia. Hippias is making a parallel out of the questioning in his exhibitions in Olympia and the questioning of Socrates here in Athens. He is treating Socrates' questioning as an opportunity for another exhibition. The exhibition of his many talents "indoors" will now be supplemented outside by an exhibition of his ability to answer any question asked of him, and Socrates will be the designated questioner.

The tendency of Hippias to promote himself at every opportunity is manifest from the very first sentence he speaks. The trait is so strong that Hippias may be understood to be as predictable as Eudicus is for Socrates to manipulate. Socrates' overtly innocent hope that Hippias will be willing to answer his question guarantees both that Eudicus will ensure that Hippias answers, and that Hippias himself will present the answering of questions as a skill of which he is the master. Thus Socrates now has the permission of the audience to criticize Hippias, and he is accepted by Hippias as the designated questioner, but this is evidently still insufficient for Socrates' purposes as he does not yet ask Hippias his question about the two Homeric heroes (364a1-6):

> A blessed thing has happened to you, Hippias, if you arrive at the temple every Olympiad with such good expectation about the soul with regard to wisdom; I would wonder if any one of the athletes pertaining to the body are so fearless and confident in the body when he goes to [Olympia] to compete just as you claim [to be confident] in [your] intelligence (*dianoia*).

Hippias had of course referred indirectly to competition by alluding to the Olympic Games, but now Socrates makes the subject of competition a little more explicit: the athletes go to Olympia to compete

and they rely on their body; Hippias goes to the temple and he relies on his intelligence. Socrates does not make it clear from his parallel whether he regards Hippias as competing in Olympia. We might imagine from what Socrates says that Hippias relies on his intelligence to make a good impression in his exhibitions. Hippias himself, however, is emphatic about competing (a7-9):

> This [blessed thing] has happened to me appropriately. For ever since I have been competing in the Olympics I never yet encountered anyone superior to me at anything.

Since Hippias has already made it clear that his discussion with Socrates will be part of his exhibition, and since it seems that he competes in his exhibitions, we may conclude that he will treat the discussion with Socrates as a competition. This is in fact the case, as Hippias later reveals when he complains that Socrates competes incorrectly, seizing on small details most disadvantageous to the argument rather than competing by means of the argument as a whole (369c1-2).[8] Thus Socrates now has the permission of the audience to criticize Hippias, he is accepted by Hippias as the designated questioner, and Hippias and the audience will regard the conversation as a competition. Why Socrates does all this will be considered later, but he finally appears to be satisfied that all is ready, since he now returns to his original question (364b1-c2):

> You are saying, Hippias, that your reputation for wisdom is a fine ornament both to the city of the Eleans and to your parents. But what then do you say to us about Achilles and Odysseus? Which do you claim to be better and according to what? For when we were many inside and you were doing your exhibition I didn't keep up with the things being said by you, for I hesitated to ask questions because there was a great crowd inside, fearing that by asking I should be a hindrance to your exhibition; but now both since we are fewer and since this here Eudicus orders me to ask - speak, and teach us clearly! What were you saying about these two men? How did you distinguish them?

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8. *LSJ s.v.* ἀγωνίζομαι provide relatively many examples of the verb in the sense of "contend", whether for a prize or for victory; our passage is adduced as the sole example of the verb in the sense of "argue" (immediately followed by "argue sophistically" in Plato's *Theaetetus* 167e. *LSJ* misconstrue our passage (ὅλῳ ἀγωνίζῃ τῷ πράγματι) as "[you do not] argue about the question as a whole" rather than "[you do not] compete *by means of* the matter as a whole"; "about" would have required περί τινος, as noted elsewhere in the same entry.

Hippias is reminded that he must answer to the satisfaction of Eudicus. Socrates himself is purportedly only asking because he has been ordered by Eudicus. As for the question itself, Socrates does not to return to the original comparison by Apemantus between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* but concentrates only on the relative merits of Achilles and Odysseus. Socrates at the outset adds to his question a request for the criterion by which Hippias finds one of the characters better than the other. After his specious explanation for his silence until now, however, he concludes with an entirely different question. He asks Hippias not how he ranks the two heroes and by what criterion, but how he had distinguished the two heroes in his earlier exhibition. Hippias chooses to answer this last question (364c3-7):

> Well, Socrates, I wish to detail to you even more clearly than then what I say both about these and others. For I claim that Homer has made of those who reached Troy: the best man, Achilles; the wisest, Nestor; the most multifaceted, Odysseus.

Although Hippias' second sentence begins with "For", the subsequent explanation does not detail the distinction between Achilles and Odysseus, but rather adds Nestor the most wise. It is therefore the word "others" that Hippias explains. The detail he promises is not yet forthcoming, so we have here the basic claim purportedly made in the previous exhibition. Hippias uses the present when talking about his claim ("what I say"): it is not a one-time claim occurring only in his exhibition "inside", but a prepared claim among the many prepared things that Hippias can use in any exhibition. It is the sort of claim that is so trite that any typical audience familiar with Homer would accept it without question. In the first example of a Homeric hero, Achilles is portrayed by Homer explicitly as *aristos* of the Argives by the ships (*Il.* 16.271);[9] what is meant by *aristos* is another matter, of course. The poet probably intended to mean that Achilles was "most manly". Hippias and his audience might be aware of this, but by their time the word means more generally "best";[10] in any case, when it comes to Achilles, they would have no need to distinguish between "best" and "most manly". As for the second hero, the adjective *sophos* "expert"/ "wise" does not appear in the Homeric poems; Nestor is described by Homer as a clear speaker, and his speech in the first book of the *Iliad* is prefaced by the

9. Also, Ajax is twice referred to as *aristos* of the Danaeans in appearance and body, after noble Achilles (*Od.* 11.469; 24.17).

10. Cf. *arsên* "male", *aretê* "manliness", "virtue", later "excellence" of any kind.

remark that he spoke "thinking well" (*eu phroneôn Il.* 1.253). This, however, would not suffice to make him the most *sophos*, but Nestor is also portrayed as having lived for three generations of men. Age is commonly associated with experience, and this would make Nestor the most experienced of men. Hence Nestor could easily be portrayed as the wisest of the Greeks at Troy.[11] As for the third hero, Odysseus is twice referred to as *polytropos*, most famously in the first line of the *Odyssey* (also *Od.* 10.330). He is either "much turned", being tossed about by many events and travelling in different directions, or "much turning", being versatile and cunning. Hippias' claim that Homer portrays him as most *polytropos* is therefore reasonable, since most of the *Odyssey* is devoted to his eventful travels and his versatility.

The clarification Hippias makes, then, is that he was talking about three heroes, and not just two. Why does Hippias have a prepared comment about these three Homeric heroes in particular? Interestingly, Socrates later reveals that Hippias himself is most *sophos* and therefore *aristos*, and hints very heavily that Hippias is also the most *polytropos*, although he does not say so explicitly. All this occurs in the context of the first two movements of the argument leading to what is usually considered the first paradox. During the first movement of this first argument, Socrates asks whether Hippias is experienced at arithmetic. Hippias confirms that he is, and that he is the most experienced of all (366c5-7). Socrates infers that Hippias is therefore most able (*dunatôtatos*) and wisest or most expert (*sophôtatos*) at arithmetic, and Hippias agrees (d2-3). When pressed, Hippias confirms that he is also the best (*aristos*) at arithmetic, since he is most able and most expert (d3-6). The point is thus made that Hippias regards the most able as the most expert and therefore the best at any given *technê* (art or craft), in this case, arithmetic, and it is here that we see most clearly the apparent similarity between Hippias and two of the Homeric heroes he referred to in his previous exhibition, namely Achilles and Nestor. Socrates, in the second movement of the first argument, asks whether Hippias is experienced at geometry and Hippias confirms that he is (367d6). Socrates then states that Hippias is even more knowledgeable about the *technê* of astronomy than about the previous *technai*, adding the question "Are you not?" Thus prompted, Hippias agrees to this as well (367e8-368a1). Socrates then states outright that Hippias is entirely the wisest or most expert (*sophôtatos*) of all men at most

11. Hippias in *HMaj* 286a8 has a speech in which Nestor conveys words of wisdom to Neoptolemus: the former is very old, and the latter is very young at the time of the Trojan War.

technai, as he has once heard Hippias himself proclaiming in the agora (368b2-5). On that occasion, Hippias had claimed that he had gone to the Olympic Games equipped entirely with items he had made himself, including all of his articles of clothing and other accoutrements (his Persian-style belt is singled out as the most astounding evidence of his great wisdom or expertise), and that he took with him many and various of his own literary compositions, including epic poetry, tragedies, dithyrambs and prose works, and furthermore had excelled all others in his knowledge of the correctness of rhythms, harmonies, and letters (b5-d5). Socrates slyly concludes the list of Hippias' skills with a reference to his mnemonic technique (d6-7). The hint is obvious, that Hippias is most *polytropos,* the quality of the third Homeric hero, Odysseus.

We should now consider the following: Hippias easily agrees to all of Socrates' observations including the connection between being most wise and being the best; during his exhibition "inside" and on previous occasions, Hippias has emphasized his extreme versatility; thus Hippias consciously presents himself as the most versatile, the most wise, and the best; one of his prepared display speeches includes three Homeric heroes who between them embody the three superlative traits Hippias embodies in himself. This all seems to suggest that we are to understand that Plato's Hippias usually continues the argument regarding the three Homeric heroes by declaring, for example, that progress since Homeric times has been such that any one sophist is better than these three Homeric heroes, but that Hippias is the best of all sophists and embodies all three superlative traits in himself.[12] It should be noted that the similarity between Hippias and the three Homeric heroes is only apparent - the Homeric terms *aristos* and *polytropos* do not have their Homeric connotations when applied to Hippias, and *sophos* is applied anachronistically back onto Nestor - but it is rhetorically persuasive and impressive. It is the sort of argument that could scarcely be omitted from the sophist's exhibitions once he had it in his arsenal.[13]

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12. A similar flattering comparison based on progress occurs in *HMaj*, where Hippias accepts Socrates' assessment that contemporary sophists are uniformly superior to the craftsmen of old, even the most legendary; this despite Hippias' avowed habit of praising the ancients (281c-282a). Whether these progress-arguments reflect claims made by the historic Hippias is a matter for speculation and in any case is of little bearing on a dramatic analysis of a Platonic dialogue.

13. I am considering the dramatic reality of the dialogue, not what historically was the case.

We may now appreciate that Socrates has been aware of this argument all through the preliminaries, and has taken steps to neutralize Nestor and his *sophia.*[14] The appeal to Apemantus' comparison between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* at the very beginning has laid the groundwork for comparing only between Achilles and Odysseus. Socrates easily removes Nestor now by asserting that he understands what Hippias meant about Achilles and Nestor (364d7-e1). He ensures that the comparison will be between Achilles and Odysseus alone by taking the epithet attributed to Odysseus and applying it to Achilles: he asks whether Homer did not make Achilles *polytropos* (e1-6).

Socrates can predict how Hippias will react to this question, since Hippias and the audience believe that they are engaged in a competition, an eristic debate.[15] Hippias will not merely deny that Achilles is *polytropos,* but will claim that he is the complete opposite of Odysseus who is the most *polytropos;* and since Achilles is the best, Hippias will have to accept when pressed that Odysseus is the worst precisely because he is most *polytropos.* Thus the term will acquire a negative connotation for the duration of this argument.[16] This is indeed what happens, as we shall soon see. We may recall that Hippias usually presents himself as most *polytropos,* but in the sense of "most versatile", being the most expert at most *technai*. In an eristic debate where connotations are deliberately obscured in the interests of winning, Hippias might be thought to be playing a dangerous game. He is surely at risk of being considered by the audience to be the most false. We shall, however, see that he is a masterful eristician, despite being apparently outmanoeuvred here by Socrates.

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14. As we shall soon see, *sophia* (the quality attributed to Nestor) is reintroduced once Hippias has reinterpreted *polytropos* negatively.

15. For a good introduction to eristics, see Plato's *Euthydemus.* Eristics also features heavily in *HMaj*, where, however, Hippias believes he is helping Socrates against an obnoxious interlocutor, actually made up by Socrates.

16. Hippias already has in mind the negative connotation of *polytropos* when he concentrates on the positive qualities of Achilles in his reply, who he claims is truthful and far from being *polytropos,* but it is Socrates who makes the negative connotation explicit. The negative connotation seems to be an innovation for the purposes of this argument. In the Homeric hymn to Hermes (possibly seventh century BCE), the child Hermes is described as *polytropos* (*In Mercurium* 13), followed by epithets including "pirate/robber" and "ox driver", that might suggest that *polytropos* already has a negative sense there. On balance, however, the many epithets are positive (indeed, Thucydides 1.5.1 notes that piracy was once not considered negatively), and it seems to me that *polytropos* has in the Homeric hymn the sense of versatility in which Hippias usually uses it.

After Socrates asks whether Homer did not make Achilles *polytropos*, Hippias cleverly quotes from the ninth book of the *Iliad* to show that Homer actually portrays Achilles as the most simple and truthful. The passage is Achilles' speech to Odysseus in which Achilles expresses his loathing for those who think one thing but say another. Socrates concludes that Hippias interprets *polytropos* as *pseudês*, which I shall translate as "false" or "lying" in all senses of "not telling the truth", whether intentionally, or mistakenly. Hippias confirms that this is his interpretation of *polytropos* (364e6-365c1). The conclusion should be explained. Hippias denies that Achilles is *polytropos* on the grounds that he is, to the contrary, simple; so far, he would seem to be interpreting *polytropos* in the usual sense of "multi-turning". In order to make Achilles appear better than Odysseus, however, Hippias links "simple" with "truthful", implying that "multi-turning" is to be understood as "lying". We may note that Hippias also gives the impression that Homer portrays Odysseus as false simply by his being the recipient of Achilles' outburst against the person who dissembles.

Socrates now asks Hippias whether he, Hippias, is of Homer's opinion, and Hippias claims that it would be terrible were he not (c6-7). Of course, Hippias does not usually consider the term *polytropos* in a negative light, but he must appear to agree with his interpretation of Homer given that this is part of his explanation for Achilles being better than Odysseus, and he must appear to be in agreement with Apemantus. At this point Socrates suggests leaving Homer out of the discussion since Hippias can speak for himself and for Homer. Thus Hippias becomes the centre of attention for the first two movements of the argument leading to what is usually considered to be the first paradox, but Homer is reintroduced for the final movement.

In the first movement (365d6-367d7), Socrates introduces the crucial and underlying notion of ability.[17] Through a string of questions, he has Hippias agree with him that the false are able, prudent, understanding, and expert (*dunatoi, phronimoi, epistêmones, sophoi* respectively) regarding the things about which they are false (366a2-4). After some more questions, Socrates concludes that the able (*dunatos*) is someone who does what he wishes whenever he wishes (b7-c1). To be clear, this does not mean that the able is someone who can do whatever he wishes, like a god, but only someone who does what he does intentionally. It is here that Socrates exploits Hippias' being most able at

17. A point well emphasized by Weiss (1981) in the title of her article.

arithmetic. Hippias is in a difficult position since self-promotion obliges him to agree with everything he is expected to be able to do, if he is to retain the title of most able. Ability is important for him, since his being most able and most expert means he is also the best - in this case, at arithmetic (d2-6). Of course, able and good are not the same thing. Ability is a means to good or to bad, and should not automatically be considered good in itself.[18] It is precisely this false identification between able and good that Socrates plays upon for the rest of the dialogue. Significantly, he does not point out the false identification; he does not, for example, attack Hippias *ad hominem* as the man most able to do bad things and therefore the most harmful person in the world (a perfectly respectable conclusion to an eristic debate). Instead, he raises examples of the bad things that able people, especially Hippias the most able, can do; and obliges Hippias, who wishes to preserve his aura of all-encompassing ability, to agree with him.

That versatility and lying are connected and necessarily bad is something Hippias has established temporarily for the purposes of the present debate. According to his argument, it is because Achilles the simple tells the truth and expresses his hatred of liars to Odysseus the versatile that Homer clearly made Achilles better than Odysseus. It is for this reason that Hippias should feel some discomfort in acknowledging that if anyone in mathematics were to lie intentionally and successfully on many occasions without slipping up and accidentally giving a correct answer, it would be Hippias. Since Socrates is emphasizing Hippias' ability and not saying that Hippias is a lying *polytropos*, Hippias is able to go along with the argument. It seems to me that he would have balked only in two cases: if his ability were questioned; or if his multifacetedness were linked with lying. Socrates does neither, but rather plays up Hippias' superlative ability and astonishing versatility, as if to Hippias' advantage. Socrates, however, does eventually prepare for a suitably eristic refutation, observing that in arithmetic the true and false are one and the same man (he does not say explicitly that this is Hippias); the eristic refutation comes next when he adds that they are not extreme opposites "as you thought just now" (367d1). Hippias, clearly an accomplished eristician, trivializes the refutation by saying "Here it doesn't seem so" (d2), as if arithmetic is beside the point.

Socrates, who could have produced some rhetoric at this point to claim victory, chooses instead to pursue the logic of the argument. If Hippias admits to the true and false not being opposites in the

18. A point made explicitly in *HMaj*; see the end of this article.

case of arithmetic, it should be an easy matter to oblige him to admit that the true and false are not opposites in most *technai*. This is because the strategy that worked with arithmetic will work with any and every *technê* at which Hippias is the most able, most expert, and best. He is the most able to lie consistently in any of the *technai* where lying is possible, and cannot deny this without losing his status as the most able. It is for this reason that Socrates, in the second movement of the argument (367d6-369b7), goes through the many *technai* at which Hippias is the most expert, and which we have already had occasion to look at. Interestingly, it is only with geometry and astronomy that Socrates goes through roughly the same stages as in the argument on arithmetic; he then turns to a brief survey of all the other *technai* at which Hippias is most expert without considering his ability to lie in them. It is sufficient for the eristic argument to establish that Hippias is the most able in most *technai*, and given that he could lie most consistently in arithmetic, geometry and astronomy, it seems superficially plausible to assume that he could lie in the rest of the *technai* too, being the most able at most of them. As it is, by the time Socrates has finished effectively praising Hippias for his outstanding abilities in most *technai*, Hippias pretends to have forgotten what the argument was about (369a3-8: Socrates observes that Hippias does not need to use his mnemonics here). Socrates reminds Hippias that he, Hippias, had said that Achilles was true, Odysseus false and *polytropos*. Now the false and the true have appeared to be the same person, so that Achilles, being true, would also be false, and Odysseus, being false, would also be true, and they would not be opposites (b3-7). Once again, by drawing attention to the original position defended by Hippias, Socrates seems to have achieved an eristic refutation, but once again, he seems to be thwarted by the eristic ability of Hippias.

This eristic refutation appears to be even stronger than the previous one, given that it applies to most *technai* rather than one, and Hippias reacts appropriately by launching a personal attack on Socrates and his inability to compete properly (a point we have already noted). He attempts to sidetrack the debate entirely by suggesting an alternative form of competition, whereby he will give a speech showing how Homer made Achilles better than Odysseus and unfalse, but made Odysseus crafty and lying in many things and worse than Achilles; he suggests that Socrates give a rival speech showing that Homer made Odysseus better than Achilles. The audience will know who speaks better (b8-c8).

This marks the transition to the third movement of the first argument (369e2-372a6). Before turning to that, however, it is worth noting several points about Hippias' reaction to the refutation:

Hippias does not admit his defeat, and therefore has not been defeated; he believes he will have more success with speeches than with short questions and answers, despite his promise not to flee Socrates and his questions, but does not draw attention to his flight from Socrates' questioning; he reintroduces Homer into the argument and suggests that Socrates argue for an impossible position, that Homer made Odysseus better than Achilles ("the best of men").

Socrates forestalls Hippias' attempt to shift the competition to more favourable ground by initiating a reexamination of Homer's presentation of Achilles and Odysseus with regard to lying. In a short preamble he states how he is always eager to learn from experts such as Hippias, incidentally revealing an attitude to the discussion completely at odds with Hippias'. In terms of an eristic debate, Socrates appears as usual to be doing everything wrong, since he should be attacking, not praising, his opponent. Despite appearances, however, Socrates finally completes his refutation of the original proposition being defended by Hippias. The first and second movements of the argument had concentrated on the most able person being the one most able both to tell the truth and to lie; now, in the third movement, Socrates must demonstrate that Homer has not made Achilles better than Odysseus, either by portraying them both as equal, or more strongly, by portraying Odysseus as better than Achilles, and this despite Homer making Achilles the best of the Greeks at Troy.

Anything is possible in eristics, but Socrates actually makes a plausible case based on considering together what is said and done in the *Iliad*. Firstly, Socrates observes that Achilles is twice portrayed declaring that he will sail back home while making no preparations whatsoever for the trip (370b1-d6). He causes Hippias to react by offering the moderate compromise (still a refutation in eristic debate) that Achilles and Odysseus are equal in their lying and truth-telling (d6-e4). Hippias cannot, of course, accept this, and explains that Odysseus' lying is intentional (no example of Odysseus' lying will be given in the whole argument), but Achilles' inconsistency as observed by Socrates is unintentional since he really did intend to go home at the time he declared his intention. Socrates reacts to Hippias' defence of Achilles by observing that Hippias is thereby being deceitful and mimicking Odysseus. This is the first indication of Socrates' shift from treating Achilles and Odysseus as the same to treating Odysseus as the better in that he is the intentional liar, the one with ability. Hippias of course denies the personal charge of deceiving (371a1), but thereby leaves himself open to the charge of a lack of ability. Socrates does not take the opportunity to do so, but instead confusingly makes the opposite extreme claim that Homer made Achilles deceitful and Odysseus

simple. As evidence he cites Achilles telling Odysseus that he will sail home but later telling Ajax that he will remain in his tent; Socrates argues that Achilles is more deceitful than Odysseus because Achilles does not fear that Odysseus will discover the lie.[19] Since lying has been designated the bad characteristic in the argument, Hippias again explains (quite reasonably) that Achilles does not lie since he merely changes his mind between the two conversations, but he eristically denies Socrates' claim that Odysseus is simple by asserting the opposite, that Odysseus always plots, whether he is telling the truth or lying (d8-e3). This eristic rebuttal was predictable and explains Socrates' confusing assertion that Odysseus was simple: it is the best way to elicit from Hippias the strongest statement to the contrary. Socrates accepts the rebuttal and concludes that Odysseus must be better than Achilles, according to the earlier agreement that those lying intentionally are better than those lying unintentionally. We might have expected at this point a formal refutation, with Socrates pointing out explicitly that Hippias was mistaken at the beginning of the argument, since far from Achilles being made better than Odysseus, Homer actually made him worse, inasmuch as Achilles lacks, and Odysseus has, the ability to lie intentionally. The refutation is not forthcoming, however, because Hippias eristically slips in an objection which derails the entire argument while making himself appear in a favourable light. How would those who commit injustice intentionally be better than those who commit injustice unintentionally? As Hippias observes, even the laws are much harsher with the intentional wrongdoers than the unintentional wrongdoers. This conventional position would seem to salvage Hippias, although in fact there is no real connection between lying and committing injustice. There appears to be a connection because Hippias has made lying a bad trait in the first argument. His objection is intended to seem to be making a more general remark about wrongdoing, and hence applicable to lying as well.

Socrates has already compared Hippias with Odysseus, an indication that Plato would like us to consider Socrates and Hippias in connection with lying. This is not to say that we should use eristic argument and a concomitant abuse of literary criticism as has happened with Homer's heroes, and it would probably not be useful to compare Plato's characters with Homer's subsequently distorted heroes. Hippias merely adduced the fact that Achilles' rant against dissimulators was addressed to

19. The imputation of simplicity to Odysseus parallels Hippias' imputation of duplicity to Odysseus in the first movement, in both cases based only on what Achilles says and does.

Odysseus as evidence that Homer portrayed Odysseus as a liar; Socrates at least compared the words of Achilles with his actions, albeit in a contentious manner. At any rate, we should not simply take sentences out of context as indicating that one or other character is a liar, but should compare what Socrates and Hippias say and do throughout the dialogue in order to find some consistency in their motivation. Hippias the sophist seems to be telling the truth when he boasts of his ability in many *technai*. He is able in many *technai* since he wishes to appear good to the Many. He is, however, capable of lying (in the broad sense) in eristics, at the very least. His motive for doing so is clearly to show his superior ability in this field as well, again in order to appear good. Socrates, on the other hand, seems to lie most of the time, and he begins even before the eristic debate. He lies during his manipulation of his interlocutors (e.g., the reason for his silence; his admiration for Hippias; even the Apemantus story, unless we are to imagine that the father of Eudicus used to harp on the superiority of the *Iliad* over the *Odyssey* inasmuch as Achilles was better than Odysseus); he must, of course, lie in the eristic debate because it is an eristic debate, but it is clear from his failure to produce simple eristic arguments that he is not eristically motivated. One important point Socrates hints at with numerous examples in the second argument, which we are about to look at, is that ability is neutral, and that the end is what matters. Hippias wishes to appear good to the Many; they assume that ability *per se* is good, and so Hippias plays up his ability in almost every field. Socrates has no qualms about appearing bad to the Many. Since lying, being a neutral ability, may be used for a good end, we may already speculate that Socrates somehow wishes to be good, not appear good, through lying (not expressing his true opinions). More on this later.

Hippias intended his objection to conclude the conversation, but for us it marks only the end of the first argument. There is a short interval before the second argument, required to make it clear that Hippias had indeed withdrawn from the conversation. Socrates eventually appeals to Eudicus, and Eudicus reminds Hippias of his promise not to flee the questioning of Socrates. He actually commands Hippias to continue, and Hippias relents. The eristician defends himself by launching another personal attack on Socrates, whom he accuses of creating mischief intentionally; this would seem intended to explain his present behaviour: he is not so much running away from Socrates' questioning as saving everyone from the wrongdoing of Socrates' questioning. This would no doubt go down well with his audience.

The second argument dwells upon Hippias' apparent generalization of the previous discussion. What was actually only a debating device to escape the refutation of the first argument is taken by Socrates to be the position Hippias is to defend, that the willing wrongdoer is worse than the unwilling wrongdoer.[20] This position is, in the context of this dialogue, logically untenable from the outset, since Hippias has already agreed in the first argument that the able and therefore willing agent is better than the unable and therefore unwilling agent. All Socrates needs to do to refute the new position is to point out that the willing wrongdoer is better than the unwilling wrongdoer, inasmuch as the able is better than the unable, as Hippias had agreed earlier.

Since the identified position pertains to the willingness (ability) or unwillingness (inability) to do bad, the second argument comprises a string of eristic two-option questions in the format: "Which is better: something bad willingly or unwillingly". In nearly every case, Hippias chooses the option in which the bad occurs through willingness. To take the first example in the second argument, although it is established that the good runner is the one with the ability to run and that in running it is good to win, when faced with the question which of two options is better, a runner who loses willingly, i.e., through ability, or a runner who loses unwillingly, i.e., through inability, Hippias chooses the former. Hippias and the audience he wishes to impress regard ability itself as a good, for which reason the ability to do bad is considered better than the inability to do bad. It would seem from the inordinate number of examples Socrates asks about, and the formulation of his questions, that he is not so much interested in refuting Hippias as in getting him or his audience to think dialectically. Here is an example (374c5-d1):

> Soc: Would you accept having good things or bad?
>
> Hipp: Good things.
>
> Soc: *Therefore* would you accept having lame feet willingly or unwillingly?
>
> Hipp: Willingly.

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20. Socrates sets the tone for the second argument immediately when he defends himself against the charge of mischief-making (373b6-9). He points out that according to Hippias' previous argument, any mischief he is causing is completely unintentional, because were it intentional he would be an expert. Alluding to Hippias' appeal to the laws as evidence for the relative seriousness of intentional wrongdoing because unintentional wrongdoers receive lighter punishments, Socrates begs forgiveness. Socrates turns his apparent lack of expertise to advantage.

Having expressed his preference for good over bad, it does not follow for Hippias to choose either ability or inability to achieve the bad. Hippias may feel constrained by the eristic questioning to choose one of the two options provided, but Socrates' "therefore" is out of place and clearly intended to make Hippias consider the logic of the argument. And another example (375a7-b2):

> Soc: Well then. Is it better to have the soul of an archer which willingly or unwillingly misses the mark?
>
> Hipp: Willingly.
>
> Soc: Therefore this [soul] is better at archery?
>
> Hipp: Yes.

Technically, Hippias is correct, because the soul that willingly misses the mark is the expert at archery, able to miss the mark at will. However, again, missing the mark is a bad thing. This line of questioning about souls soon leads to an absurd example which does not seem to bother Hippias in the slightest (375c3-6):

> Soc: Indeed, we would accept having souls of slaves willingly rather than unwillingly erring and mischief-making, since they are better at these things.
>
> Hipp: Yes.

Socrates is describing the impertitent, wilful, slave, whom no right-thinking master would prefer. Given that Hippas is prepared to accept absurdities in order to preserve his consistent stand on ability being better than inability, the instances where he breaks with form are instructive (375c6-d6):

> Soc: Well then. Would we not wish to have our own soul as good as possible?
>
> Hipp: Yes.
>
> Soc: *Therefore,* will it (i.e., the soul) be better if it willingly or unwillingly makes mischief and errs?
>
> Hipp: It would be terrible, Socrates, if those committing injustice willingly will be better than those [committing injustice] unwillingly.
>
> Soc: They actually appear [to be] from what has been said.
>
> Hipp: It doesn't seem so to me.

The soul, of course, is not as good as possible if it is doing bad things, and Socrates' "therefore" is as jarring as in the example we saw at 374c5-d1. Although he preferred ability (willingness) then, in this case, Hippias does not opt for the soul which errs willingly since he sees that this is close to a

refutation of the position he is supposed to be defending. Indeed, in his strong objection, he formulates the sentence more closely to that position by referring to the committing of injustice. He has no logical objection, however, and relies just as much as he did originally on the mere assertion of a conventional truism. Socrates correctly points out that the logic of the argument would suggest that those committing injustice willingly are better than those committing injustice unwillingly, but again Hippias arbitrarily overrides this, probably with the approval of the audience, since what he says is a conventional truism. Something similar occurs at the very end of the argument (376b2-7):

> Soc: So it is [a characteristic or function] of the good man to commit injustice willingly, of the bad man [to commit injustice] unwillingly, if indeed the good man has a good soul.
>
> Hipp: Indeed he has.
>
> Soc: So the one who willingly errs and does base and unjust things, Hippias, if someone is this, would be none other than the good man.[21]
>
> Hipp: I have no way I'll agree with you, Socrates, about these. [= I am unable to agree with you on this point]

First Socrates says that committing injustice willingly is a characteristic of the good man, and then he inverts the sentiment, saying that the one who commits injustice willingly, if there is such a person, would be none other than the good man. The second follows logically from the first: both sentences envisage the willing committer of injustice being necessarily the expert at justice, but both also allow for the possibility that a good man would in fact choose not to commit injustice: (1) the good, not the bad, man has the ability to commit injustice (it is of the good, not the bad, man), but he may not choose to commit injustice; (2) conversely, the one able to commit injustice must be the good man, but since the good man may not choose to commit injustice, the one who commits injustice with ability may not exist. Despite these two claims being essentially the same, Hippias allows the first sentence to pass, but balks at the second sentence. Both sentences are one step away from a refutation of Hippias' designated position, but Hippias heads off the first opportunity for a refutation by agreeing only with the last part of the first sentence, that the good man does indeed have a good soul, while in the second sentence there is no irrelevant part to agree with.

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21. This is considered to be "the second paradox".

The dialogue ends with a few disarming remarks by Socrates on matters of dialectic disguised as an expression of his mystification: just as Hippias cannot agree with the conclusion, neither can Socrates, although it appears necessary according to the present *logos*; Socrates cannot keep to one position but wanders from one to the other, which is unsurprising if even Hippias and the other experts do the same; it is terrible (Socrates uses one of Hippias' favourite words) that Socrates' and others' wandering will not stop even when they go to the experts. It is almost as if Socrates were unaware that the conversation has been formally, if not exactly, an eristic debate. It is one of the features of eristic debate that nothing is what it appears to be, and is ever-changing. Logical consistency is not at issue.

The dialogue, then, is not a philosophical conversation. Formally, it is a quasi-eristic debate. Hippias and the audience expect it to be eristic, and this is exploited by Socrates for his own dialectic ends. Some of the non-eristic features are: Socrates' tendency to praise rather than attack Hippias; his failure to make a laughingstock of Hippias; and his obsession with *logos* (although he does not always follow it). Hippias expertly trivializes or evades refutations and may appear to the audience to have won the debate. The first argument does not lead to the paradox that the liar and the truth-teller are the same person; instead it leads to Socrates' unacceptable conclusion that Homer made Odysseus better than Achilles on the grounds that, while both heroes both lie and tell the truth, Odysseus always does so intentionally. Hippias must deny this conclusion because it contradicts his original position in defence of Apemantus, even though the conclusion rests on Hippias' own underlying belief that ability *per se* is good. Hippias avoids the imminent formal eristic refutation by appealing to the conventionally acceptable position that committing injustice unwillingly, even in the eyes of the law, is better than committing injustice willingly. He makes injustice appear to be the general of which lying is a particular. This is possible only because Hippias had introduced lying as a negative trait, to explain the negative interpretation put upon *polytropos* in the first argument.

The second argument is therefore not actually an expansion of the first, but is of a different order. The first argument, on lying, is about a means, for good or bad. The second argument is on ends.

Socrates turns Hippias' eristic ploy into the position Hippias must defend in the second argument: committing injustice unwillingly is better than committing injustice willingly. The so-

called paradox at the end of the dialogue is merely a simple contradiction of this position.[22] It is not the formal refutation, since this is not forthcoming. Hippias once again heads off the formal refutation by simply not accepting the stage before it, the contradiction. Once again the contradiction has been achieved thanks to Hippias' underlying belief that ability *per se* is good. The expert in justice is necessarily able to commit both justice and injustice whenever he likes because he is able to do so, while the non-expert, according to the sophistic reasoning in the discussion on arithmetic in the first argument, is unable to commit either justice or injustice whenever he likes because he may make a mistake and do the opposite. To commit injustice willingly means, in this argument, to perform injustice without the chance of mistakenly performing justice. Furthermore, according to the same perverse logic of the first section of the first argument, we may infer that the common criminal with no notion of justice would not commit injustice willingly simply because there is the outside chance that he might mistakenly commit an act of justice.

If the dialogue is a tissue of sophistic wordplay and equivocation, how can it be of any philosophical worth? No wonder attention has centred on the two apparent paradoxes, since paradoxes provide philosophical mileage. In fact, it is only once the conversation is recognized as in great part eristic that the search for the consistent *logos* of the dialogue can begin. The consistent *logos* is to be found in the dramatic reality of the dialogue; not in what is said *per se*, but in the actual state of affairs, including the speakers and the audience. The speakers and their audience are consistent as models representing philosophically interesting positions (which is not to say that they are all philosophers).[23] Although the parallel with Homer and his heroes might beckon, we would do well not

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22. It should by now be clear that it is not Socrates' own position. As Weiss (2015) 222 well puts it in her review of a recent translation/interpretation of *HMin:* "Fletcher further commits the error that many interpreters of the dialogue do: he thinks Socrates regards intentional wrongdoing as a good thing and a better thing than unintentional, and that he approves of and admires abusing one's skill so long as the abuse is intentional. It is critical to see, however, that Socrates unequivocally regards all the bad things—running slowly, seeing dimly, limping, singing off-key—as bad; *they* do not become better when one does them intentionally." One might think that the translation Weiss reviews is itself an attempt to exemplify intentional wrongdoing: Weiss (2015) 223 observes, "In the introductory note to her translation, Sarah Ruden inauspiciously admits she is not 'a fan of Plato' but 'quite the opposite.' Might the translation reflect her lack of sympathy and regard for the work's author?"

23. On characters in Platonic dialogues as *paradeigmata,* minimalist concrete representations of aspects of concepts,

to ask whether Plato made Socrates better than Hippias or the like; the parallel with Homer and his heroes is designed to show us how not to analyse characters.

Hippias, as has already been established, is presented in his capacity as a sophist. Underlying this is his motivation for being a sophist. As we have seen, he and his audience believe that ability *per se* is good, and he does all in his power to appear good to his audience. For this reason, he not only claims to be, but actually is, most able at most *technai.* He successfully appears able to all those who assume that ability *per se* is good, and he consequently appears expert/wise and good.

Eudicus and the chorus of potential students of whom Eudicus is spokesman are *dunatoi* in another way; they are politically able. They believe themselves to be good simply by virtue of their apparent persuasive ability, again, with no thought to the end of that ability. Eudicus uses his power, so he believes, to arrange the discussion between Socrates and Hippias, and to keep it going when it is in danger of breaking down. The eristic debate is apparently considered by him and the rest of the audience to be an example of philosophy, and they are prepared to spend time in it. Their participation is entirely passive, since they lack the debating ability of Hippias.

Socrates is the least obviously able of the whole group. He is not a powerful member of the *polis*, nor is he a famous and successful sophist like Hippias. He clearly has no interest in appearing good, and takes every opportunity to appear to praise Hippias and do the bidding of Eudicus. Through his questioning, it becomes clear that he does not regard ability *per se* as good; in the second argument, the numerous eristic questions requiring a choice between two bad ends would make this obvious to anyone not thinking eristically. Socrates is necessarily not the most able at most *technai*, since this is an essential characteristic of Hippias. Indeed, he would appear to be the least able at eristics, apparently failing as he does at all the crucial moments. There is, however, one *technê* at which he is most able but which Hippias and the audience probably do not even know exists. Socrates is the expert at dialectic, the art of dialogue. We have seen how Socrates expertly set up the conversation he has had with Hippias: it appears to be an eristic debate in order to engage Hippias; at the same time, Socrates has engaged the audience who wish to see Hippias tested; it is Eudicus who ensures that Hippias continues the discussion even after he had decided to end it after the first argument. Such sure-footed manipulation is extremely rare in real-life dialecticians, but in the

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see Ludlam (2014) esp. 233-234.

dramatic reality of the dialogue, Socrates is the ultimate dialectician, just as Hippias is the ultimate Jack-of-all-trades, and the audience are ultimate people of political power who at most enjoy listening to verbal gymnastics which they consider to be philosophy, and may hope at a later date to learn from Hippias more tricks of persuasion in the form of rhetoric.

I have suggested that Hippias and the audience are satisfied with their ability, which they consider *per se* to be good. Socrates differs from them in that his ability is necessarily used for the good. Socrates already has a few things clear in his own mind, including the fact that ability is a means and not a good *per se*. Dialectic is the means by which confusions are removed and concepts are clarified, especially in oneself, by comparing and contrasting, questioning and answering. Dwelling on the problem of means and ends inevitably leads the dialectician to consider the concepts of good and bad. When it comes to benefitting others, a dialectician can do no better than attempt to make his interlocutors think dialectically too, not actually provide them with answers. This dialogue demonstrates some of the ways in which a dialectician may attempt to achieve that aim. A clear example is Socrates' insistent questioning in the second argument on whether willingness or unwillingness is preferable in attaining a bad end; his attempt to draw Hippias' attention away from the means and towards the end fails because Hippias is as much an extreme model as he is, and is fixated on appearing good through ability *per se*. Another example: Socrates at one point notes that Hippias sees no reason to use his mnemonic device during the conversation, but Socrates will remind him of what Hippias had said earlier (369a7-8). And again: at the end of the dialogue, Socrates admits that he would not normally agree with his final conclusion, but it follows from the argument. As we have seen, Hippias has no trouble rejecting a conclusion even though it has followed from the argument so far; he uses his eristic ability to apparently good effect.

Hippias Minor is intimately connected with *Hippias Major* which was clearly written later as an expansion. Comparisons between the two dialogues have usually been conducted over matters of style in an attempt to establish the authenticity or inauthenticity of *Hippias Major*. My comparison is based on the conclusions to my dramatic analyses of both these dialogues conducted independently.[24]

Both dialogues dramatize real and apparent good; both feature Hippias as the apparently beneficial but actually harmful, and Socrates as the actually beneficial but apparently harmful; the

24. For my analysis of *HMaj* see Ludlam (1991).

able as apparently good is the main explanation for the phenomenon in the former dialogue, but is only part of the explanation in the latter. Many unexplained points or loose ends in the former are dramatized in the latter. For example, it is not clear in *Hippias Minor* whether Socrates wishes to benefit Hippias, his audience, or both; in *Hippias Major*, Socrates clearly wishes to benefit Hippias, since they are alone. Similarly, Hippias wishes to appear good to his audience, but it is not clear in the earlier dialogue whether his audience includes Socrates along with the potential students; Socrates is his sole audience in the later dialogue.

Hippias Major adds much to the conceptual framework regarding the good and apparent good as dramatized in the dialogue. Firstly, the definitions of the good and the beautiful/fine (=apparent good) are accurately dramatized but necessarily perversely discussed in the conversation between a Hippias who is concerned only with fitting himself to his audience's concept of good, and a Socrates who will attempt by any means to shock his interlocutor into thinking dialectically. The definitions are not explicitly stated in the dialogue, but may be pieced together through the dramatic and dialectic clues scattered throughout the dialogue: the good is the fitting, and the beautiful/fine is the apparently fitting. Humans are not directly acquainted with fittingness. Fittingness is necessarily always apparent. Material fittingness may be sensed. Pragmatic fittingness may be intelligized. The wise will not confuse the two. Hence Socrates may appreciate that Hippias is fittingly clothed (visually fine) and speaks fittingly (audially fine), but there is no Hippian pragmatic fittingness to be intelligized: Hippias is harmful. The Many (a character spoken about in the dialogue) would assume that Hippias is beneficial, precisely because their senses tell them that he is fitting. They confuse sensed fittingness with intelligized fittingness, since they lack the dialectic ability to make the distinction.

Hippias Minor, as we have seen, also dramatizes the confusion between real and apparent good. The Many are impressed with ability and expertise, and immediately assume that the able expert is also good, but they do not examine this assumption by checking the ability with its end. Hippias plays on this assumption and concentrates on being the most able and most expert at most *technai*, thereby appearing to the Many to be the best. *Hippias Major* takes this a step further. The fitting is always fitting to something: pragmatically, an object or an activity is fitting to an end; materially, parts are fitting to a whole, and the whole is fitting to its concept (to take an example from the dialogue, a woman is fitting to the concept of a female humanoid). The able is considered in *Hippias Major* and both participants stay true to form from the earlier dialogue: Socrates offers

dynamis (ability) as a possible candidate for the fine/beautiful, and its opposite *adynamia* as the base/ugly, and is enthusiastically endorsed by Hippias (*HMaj*. 295e9-10). Socrates, however, then points out that the useful and able for bad is not fine, and we know that this would lead to the rejection of the able *per se* (296d2-3). Hippias, however, is intent on saving the able, so he counters by concentrating on the useful for good things. Socrates runs with the suggestion, and, by incorporating the good end into the ability, converts the candidate for the fine/beautiful into the beneficial (e5-6), which itself is rejected as a candidate shortly afterwards (297d3-9).

It is my contention that a comparison of the results of dramatic analyses of individual dialogues will greatly contribute towards an understanding not only of Plato's thought at the time of writing a dialogue, but on the development of his thought over time. The argument for development would be difficult to make if the order of the dialogues could not be established, but I hope to have shown at least in the case of the *Hippiai* that the development is obvious, and that there was a good reason for the development. Plato did not stop with *Hippias Major*, but continued to apply his dialectic thought to those topics of the greatest import to humanity, including dialectic itself.[25]

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25. See Ludlam (2014) 267-8 for a brief comparison of the results of my dramatic analyses of *HMaj* and *Politeia* (the *Republic*).

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