

## PRODICUS ON THE CORRECTNESS OF NAMES: THE CASE OF ΤΕΡΨΙΣ, ΧΑΡΑ AND ΕΥΦΡΟΣΥΝΗ

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**Abstract:** In this paper I advance an interpretation of Prodicus' conception of the correctness of names or terms. I advance this interpretation through examining a distinction between pleasures and pleasure terms that several ancient authors, most importantly the fifth-century Neoplatonist Hermias, attribute to Prodicus. Since Hermias lived many centuries after Prodicus, it is questionable whether Hermias' testimony is accurate. Consequently, I first present evidence to support the view that Hermias' testimony is accurate. Subsequently, I examine the grounds and context of Prodicus' distinction. I reject the view that Prodicus was interested in drawing distinctions between near synonyms according to standard usage. Instead, I argue that Prodicus' linguistic distinctions follow substantive distinctions between natural kinds.

Various fifth-century intellectuals took an interest in the correctness of names.<sup>1</sup> Precisely what meaning or meanings the phrase ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων itself had for them is debatable. On one view, certain names somehow naturally and thus correctly correlate with their referents, whereas others are associated merely by convention. Plato's *Cratylus* is the *locus classicus* for this idea and its treatment. The dialogue opens with Socrates claiming that 'Hermogenes' is not the true name for this character since he is no son of Hermes.<sup>2</sup>

While *Cratylus* is a fourth-century work, it engages with and alludes to semantic concerns of earlier generations. Compare an exchange between Socrates and Strepsiades in Aristophanes' *Clouds*. Socrates informs Strepsiades that the term ἀλεκτρούων, commonly used gender-neutrally to refer to fowl, should only be used to refer to males, whereas the term ἀλεκτρούαινα, which Socrates here coins, should be used to refer to females.<sup>3</sup> This parodic distinction between the grammatical gender of words and the natural gender of their referents in turn reflects distinctions made by Protagoras. Aristotle reports that 'Protagoras used to say that wrath (μῆνις) and helmet (πήληξ) are masculine' by nature, although the words are grammatically feminine. Moreover, 'he who calls μῆνις a destructress (οὐλομένην) commits a solecism, though he who calls it a destructor (οὐλόμενον) appears to commit a solecism, but does not'.<sup>4</sup>

Discussions of natural and conventional appellations were not confined to sophists – assuming that the word 'sophist' itself is properly applied to Protagoras. For example, in a passage of the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease*, the author discusses which organ of the body is responsible for cognition, and he criticizes those who identify the diaphragm: 'The diaphragm (φρένες) has come to have its name by chance and convention, not according to reality and nature'; for, as the author explains, he 'does not know what power the diaphragm has for thought (φρονέειν) and cognition'.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Strictly speaking, the word 'name' has a narrower extension than that of ὄνομα, which includes common as well as proper nouns. But for convenience I ignore this distinction.

<sup>2</sup> *Cra.* 384a3–6.

<sup>3</sup> *Nub.* 658–66.

<sup>4</sup> *SE* 173b17–25. The second point indicates that Protagoras' semantic interests were at least partly exercised on canonical poetic works such as the *Iliad*. Indeed, at *Poetics* 1456b8–18, Aristotle reports that Protagoras criticized Homer for beginning the epic with an imperative, rather than an optative.

<sup>5</sup> *De morb. sacr.* 17.2–4 Littré.

Another such medical or Presocratic example of what may be called ‘natural semantics’ derives from Diogenes of Apollonia. Diogenes is reported to have explained the word for sexual activity, ἀφροδίσια, as a compound of ἀφρός and δόσις, that is, as ‘rendering of foam’.<sup>6</sup> The conception of semen as foam owes itself to a physiological explanation of ejaculation, which can be found in the Hippocratic treatise *On Generation*. Intercourse causes the agitation of seminal fluid within the genital organs and ejaculate is the resulting foam.<sup>7</sup> This also serves to explain why, although seminal fluid derives from blood, ejaculate is white.

This brief sample indicates that interest in correctness of names was widespread in the fifth century. But above all, it is associated with the figure of Prodicus. As Socrates says to Hermogenes at the beginning of *Cratylus*:

Hermogenes, son of Hipponicus, there is an ancient proverb that ‘fine things are very difficult’ to know about. And it certainly isn’t easy to get to know about names. To be sure, if I’d attended Prodicus’ 50-drachma lecture course, which he himself advertises as an exhaustive treatment of the topic, there’d be nothing to prevent you from learning the precise truth about the correctness of names.<sup>8</sup>

In this paper I want to advance an interpretation of Prodicus’ conception of the correctness of names that relates to the distinction between natural and conventional appellations sketched above. I advance this interpretation through examining a distinction between pleasures and pleasure terms that several ancient authors, most importantly the fifth-century Neoplatonist Hermias, attribute to Prodicus. Since Hermias lived many centuries after Prodicus, one must question whether his testimony is accurate. Consequently, I first present evidence to support the view that Hermias’ attribution is accurate. Subsequently, I examine the grounds and context of Prodicus’ distinction. I specifically reject the view that Prodicus was interested in drawing distinctions between near synonyms according to standard usage. Instead, I argue that Prodicus’ linguistic distinctions follow substantive distinctions between natural kinds.

### I. Testimonies about Prodicus’ hedonic distinctions

In *Topics*, in the context of criticizing an interlocutor who mistakenly treats co-referring expressions as though one could be predicated of the other, Aristotle writes:

In addition, look and see if he has stated a thing to be an accident of itself, taking it to be different because it has a different name, as Prodicus used to divide pleasures into χαρά, τέρψις and εὐφροσύνη; for all these are names for the same thing, pleasure (ἡδονή). And if anyone says that being joyful (τὸ χαίρειν) is an accident of being cheerful (τὸ εὐφραίνεσθαι), he would be declaring it to be an accident of itself.<sup>9</sup>

For Aristotle, no substantive distinctions are to be drawn between χαρά, τέρψις and εὐφροσύνη. Prodicus evidently thought otherwise. Unfortunately, Aristotle does not clarify how Prodicus understood the distinctions between these pleasures.

In his *Commentary on Aristotle’s Topics* Alexander remarks on Aristotle’s comments on Prodicus:

For ἡδονή and χαρά and εὐφροσύνη and τέρψις are the same thing with respect to their underlying nature and significance. But Prodicus tried to distinguish particular significances for each of these words, just as the Stoics did; for they say (λέγοντες) that χαρά is rational elation, whereas ἡδονή is irrational elation, and that τέρψις is ἡδονή through the ears, while εὐφροσύνη is ἡδονή through speech.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> DK 64 A24, B6.

<sup>7</sup> *De gen.* 1.2 Lonie.

<sup>8</sup> *Cra.* 384a8–c1.

<sup>9</sup> *Top.* 112b21–26.

<sup>10</sup> *Comm. in Aristot. Top.* 2.96.

Unfortunately, Alexander's remarks provide no further clarification of Prodicus' distinctions. The participle λέγοντες refers only to the Stoics; the distinctions that Alexander proceeds to clarify are Stoic, or rather quasi-Stoic.<sup>11</sup>

In his chapter on Prodicus in *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Diels includes Aristotle's and Alexander's testimonies; however, he does not include the following testimony from Hermias' *Commentary on Plato's Phaedrus*:

...Prodicus invented discrimination between words; for example, with regard to the difference between τέρψις, χαρά and εὐφροσύνη, <he said that> τέρψις is pleasure (ἡδονή) of fine things (καλῶν) through the ears, χαρά is pleasure of the soul and εὐφροσύνη is pleasure through the eyes.<sup>12</sup>

Hermias' testimony is consistent with Aristotle's in claiming that Prodicus distinguished τέρψις, χαρά and εὐφροσύνη; but Hermias provides further clarification of how Prodicus understood these distinctions. Since Hermias was active in the fifth century AD and thus about 1,000 years after Prodicus, we must wonder whether his testimony is accurate.

## II. The accuracy of Hermias' testimony

Hermias' Prodician testimony occurs among a set of comments on *Phaedrus* 266e–67d. In the *Phaedrus* passage Socrates enumerates various contributions to the field of rhetoric. For example, Socrates attributes the rhetorical forms of confirmation and supplementary confirmation to Theodorus of Byzantium and he attributes covert implication and indirect praise to Evenus of Paros. Among the contributors Socrates lists are most of the so-called sophists who figure prominently in other Platonic dialogues: Gorgias, Polus, Hippias, Protagoras and Thrasymachus, as well as Prodicus. Hermias makes brief, but amplifying, remarks about most of these individuals, as he does in the Prodician testimony. The entire passage from Hermias' *Commentary* runs as follows:<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The Stoics drew generic distinctions between ἡδονή and χαρά as irrational and rational elation respectively; however, they did not distinguish τέρψις and εὐφροσύνη as Alexander claims. Ps.-Andronicus (*de pass.* 6) informs us that the Stoics distinguish τέρψις and εὐφροσύνη among the species of χαρά. Τέρψις is defined as χαρά appropriate to one's benefits (πρέπουσα ταῖς περὶ αὐτὸν ὠφελείαις), that is, appreciation correctly measured according to benefits one gains. Εὐφροσύνη is defined as χαρά at the deeds of a sound-minded person (ἐπὶ τοῖς τοῦ σώφρονος ἔργοις). This disparity alone does not confirm that Alexander's testimony, as opposed to ps.-Andronicus', is inaccurate. But there is good reason to believe that Alexander is the one who is mistaken. First, the Stoic taxonomy of ἡδονή and χαρά is considerably more complex than the one Alexander gives. It is not exhausted by the four pleasure terms in his comments. Second, both ps.-Andronicus and Diogenes Laertius report that the Stoics use the word κήλησις, rather than τέρψις, to refer to ἡδονή through hearing ([Andron.] *de pass.* 5; DL 7.114). Observe that both use the participle κατακηλοῦσα. Note also that Ps.-Andronicus adds to the Stoic definition of κήλησις as pleasure through the ears: 'the pleasant enchantment occurs either through speech and music (ἐκ λόγου τε καὶ μουσικῆς)', that is, poetry, 'or through deception'. Furthermore, Stobaeus states that the Stoics use the word γοητεία to refer to

ἡδονή through the eyes. More precisely, ἡδονή δι' ὄψεως κατὰ ἀπάτην. (Cf. [Andron.] *de pass.* 5: γοητεία δὲ ἡδονή κατ' ἀπάτην ἢ διὰ μαγείας.) The accuracy of Stobaeus' report is corroborated by the idea that the Stoics selected γοητεία to serve as this technical term in view of Plato's account in *Republic* 9 of illusory pleasure as γοητεία, itself explicitly informed by the painting technique called 'shadow-painting' (σκιαγραφία). Shadow-painting involves the juxtaposition of darker and lighter shades on a two-dimensional surface to create the illusion of depth. Analogously, in *Republic* 9, Socrates claims that the juxtaposition of an antecedent experience of pain and a subsequent experience of relief from pain, the neutral condition, engenders the misperception of pleasure. Socrates calls this untrue pleasure an illusion (φάντασμα) and the production of such illusions witchcraft (γοητεία). (*R.* 584a10; cf. also the reference to σκιαγραφία itself as γοητεία at 602d2.) Thus, the Stoics had technical terms for auditory and visual ἡδονή respectively.

<sup>12</sup> *Comm. in Pl. Phdr.* 238.22–239.2. This testimony is included in M. Untersteiner, *I Sophisti* (Florence 1949) 2.173–74, §a19. It is also included in L. Radermacher, *Artium scriptores* (Vienna 1951) 68, §9.

<sup>13</sup> As far as I know, this is the first time the passage has been translated into English.

(1) Tisias: In association with this man [Tisias] and his student, the proverb is transmitted: from a bad crow comes a bad egg. For this man [Tisias], being a sophist, claimed he could teach his student to win his first case if, as he said, ‘you give me so many drachmas as a fee’. The student agreed. He then prosecuted his first case in order not to render the fees, making <Tisias’s> proposition the subject of judgment, his intention being to pay nothing whether he won or lost. And the proverb has been applied to this. (2) Concerning Gorgias, it is said that this man used to call on anyone who wished to ask him whatever he wished. Once, when no one asked him anything, he picked up a leaf and spoke about the leaf, then about Athena and he drew out a lengthy speech. (3) Prodicus laughed: since Prodicus invented discrimination among words, for example the difference between *τέρψις*, *χαρά* and *εὐφροσύνη*, saying that *τέρψις* is pleasure of fine things through the ears, *χαρά* is pleasure of the soul and *εὐφροσύνη* is pleasure through the eyes. Prodicus also said that it is necessary to ornament (*καταποικίλλειν*) one’s speech with such words. He also said that one should not repeat the same things in a long speech, but use proportion. (4) Gallery of words: for they say that man [Polus] invented balanced clauses. And <Socrates> has used the phrase ‘gallery of words’ because Polus thought one should thoroughly adorn one’s speech with eloquent language. Diplasiology is saying the same thing twice, for example ‘alas alas’. Gnomology, as Demosthenes has also said, ‘He <who furnishes the means> by which I might be captured is my enemy’<sup>14</sup> and elsewhere ‘Poverty is indeed horrible’ and similar things. Iconology is presenting what is said by means of an image and example. (5) Of Licymnius’ words: Licymnius taught Polus certain distinctions among words, for example literal uses, compound words, cognates, epithets and many other things relevant to good diction. A certain right diction (*ὀρθόπεια*): this is literal speech. (6) Protagoras used literal meanings (*κυριολεξία*) and not figurative language and epithets in his speech. (7) Evoking sympathy: the Chalcedonian is Thrasymachus; he taught that one ought to evoke sympathy in the judge by appealing to pity, old age, penury, crying children and such things. <Socrates> has spoken of him as mighty in reference to the power of his speech, since, for instance, he wrote in his speech that the gods do not observe human affairs. For they have not seen the greatest of human goods, justice; for we see men neglecting justice <and the gods do not punish them>.<sup>15</sup>

In short, Hermias comments on Tisias, Gorgias, Prodicus, Polus, Licymnius, Protagoras and Thrasymachus in that order.

One possible means of assessing the accuracy of Hermias’ Prodician testimony is to consider the source or sources of these remarks. Hermias’ *Commentary on Phaedrus* is based on Syrianus’ lectures on Plato’s dialogue. Indeed, Hermias’ *Commentary* may be a transcription of Syrianus’ lectures. John Dillon and Tania Gergel characterize Syrianus as ‘an authority on the history and theory of rhetoric’.<sup>16</sup> Among Syrianus’ extant works are commentaries on Hermogenes of Tarsus’ rhetorical treatises *On Types of Style* and *On Issues*.<sup>17</sup> This prompts the question whether Syrianus derived the rhetorical-historical material in Hermias’ *Commentary* from Hermogenes’ *On Types of Style* or *On Issues*. But the comments in Hermias’ *Commentary* are unparalleled in either of Hermogenes’ treatises. They are also unparalleled in the other works that constitute the Hermogenic corpus.<sup>18</sup>

Hermias’ comments are also unparalleled in Syrianus’ works. In light of this, Syrianus probably derived the rhetorical-historical material either from a different intermediary rhetorical source than Hermogenes or from Syrianus’ own research on the primary texts, perhaps specifically for his lectures on Plato’s *Phaedrus*, or, finally, from a combination of the two.

<sup>14</sup> Dem. *Phil.* 3.17.10. The Demosthenes quotation is also cited in Dion. Hal. *De comp. verb.* 9.7, 9.9; and [Hermogenes] *De invent.* 4.3.18, 4.3.55, but for other purposes.

<sup>15</sup> *Comm. in Plt. Phdr.* 238.13–39.24. I have added Arabic numerals to make conspicuous the structure of the comments.

<sup>16</sup> J. Dillon and T. Gergel, *The Greek Sophists* (London 2003) 215.

<sup>17</sup> Hermogenes himself (b. ca. 161) was one of the most important rhetoricians of the Roman Imperial period.

<sup>18</sup> For Hermogenes’ and ps.-Hermogenes’ works, cf. C.W. Wooten, *Hermogenes’ On Types of Style* (North Carolina 1987); M. Heath, *Hermogenes On Issues* (Oxford 1995); M. Patillon *Hermogène L’art rhétorique* (Paris 1997); G.A. Kennedy, *Invention and Method: Two Rhetorical Treatises from the Hermogenic Corpus* (Atlanta 2005).

One thing Hermias' comments immediately reveal is that Syrianus did not derive the anecdotes about Tisias and Gorgias in (1) and (2) directly from texts composed by Tisias and Gorgias.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the anecdotes indicate that at least some of Syrianus' material must derive from some intermediary source.

Generally speaking, we know that Syrianus derived some of the material for his rhetorical commentaries from the rhetorical works of the fourth-century Neoplatonists Evagoras and Aquila.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, we know very little about these rhetorical works.

A version of the anecdote about Tisias occurs in Zenobius' *Epitome of Lucillus of Tarrha's and Didymus' Collections of Proverbs*.<sup>21</sup> In Zenobius' *Epitome*, however, Tisias is the student prosecuting his teacher Corax.<sup>22</sup> Zenobius' *Epitome* was composed in the second century AD. The collection of proverbs by Didymus of Alexandria was composed in the late Republic or early Empire. About Lucillus' collection, little is known. Syrianus may have derived the anecdote in (1) from Evagoras or Aquila, who in turn derived it from Zenobius, who in turn derived it from Didymus or Lucillus. But even if we could confirm this reception history, it would not substantively inform us about the accuracy of the information in Hermias' *Commentary*.

It is perhaps noteworthy that the Tisias anecdote, where again Tisias is the student, also occurs in Sextus Empiricus' *Against the Professors* and that Sextus notes that the anecdote is common knowledge.<sup>23</sup> Given this and given that Syrianus' version garbles the anecdote by making Tisias and his student the participants, rather than Corax and his student Tisias, Syrianus may have drawn the anecdote from memory. In that case, although Syrianus must have ultimately derived the anecdote from some intermediary source, we need not think of him as working directly from an intermediary source at this point in his lectures on *Phaedrus*. The idea that Gorgias invited open questions from his audience is also familiar.<sup>24</sup> Thus, Syrianus could have derived this too from memory.

The other anecdote in Hermias' comments, the one about Gorgias' speech on the leaf and Athena, is unparalleled in any surviving Greek literature.

The precise contents of the remaining material among Hermias' comments, that is, the non-anecdotal material, is also unparalleled in any surviving Greek literature, save for the attribution to Protagoras of an interest in right diction and, as we have seen, the attribution to Prodicus of a three-fold distinction between pleasures or pleasure terms. Indeed, the terms 'diplasiology' and 'iconology' in (4) only occur in Plato's *Phaedrus* and in Hermias' commentary. This is extraordinary, and one wonders what to make of it. The possibility that the information derives from intermediary sources that have coincidentally all perished without a trace seems implausible; and that encourages the view that Syrianus derived the information from primary texts.

<sup>19</sup> However, whoever constructed such anecdotes may have derived them from the contents of Tisias' and Gorgias' writings.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. D.M. Schenkeveld, 'The philosopher Aquila', *CQ* 41 (1991) 490–95.

<sup>21</sup> §82. The same anecdote occurs in Sopater's *Commentary on Hermogenes' On Issues or Art of Rhetoric* 5.6.24–7.9.

<sup>22</sup> The sense of the proverb is enhanced in this case since 'Corax' is also the Greek word for 'crow'. Note that a similar anecdote is told about Protagoras in DL 9.55: 'When he demanded a fee from his pupil Euathlus, on the latter declaring "But I have not yet won the case!"

he said, "But if I win the case, I should get the fee because I have won it; if you get the case, I should get it because you have won it"'. Cf. Aulus Gellius *NA* 5.10.

<sup>23</sup> *Adv. math.* 2.99.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. the following passage from the preface to Philostratus: 'It was Gorgias who founded the art of extempore oratory. For when he appeared in the theatre at Athens he had the confidence to say, "Come, propose a topic". He was the first to make this bold move, indicating thereby that he knew everything and would speak on any subject whatever, trusting his powers of improvisation'. My translation is influenced by Dillon and Gergel (n.16) 46–47.

Syrianus assumed the position of scholarch of the Academy in 430/431 AD. If anyone in the fifth century AD had access to the works of the so-called sophists, an Academic scholarch would have. Indeed, I find it hard to believe that the library at the Academy, even at this late date, would not include some of the works of the so-called sophists who are central to so many of Plato's dialogues.<sup>25</sup>

Our inquiry into the pedigree of Hermias' rhetorical-historical comments can advance no further. The upshot is this. Hermias' rhetorical-historical comments derive from Syrianus. The anecdotal material must derive from some intermediary source. Zenobius' *Epitome* is one likely source. But knowledge of this does not or would not confirm the accuracy of the Prodican testimony. The non-anecdotal material does not derive from any known intermediary source. This encourages, although it by no means confirms, the view that Syrianus derived the non-anecdotal material from primary texts. Thus, consideration of the sources of Hermias' comments yields no reason to deny the accuracy of Hermias' Prodican testimony; however, it does not confirm the accuracy of Hermias' Prodican testimony either.

Another possible means of assessing the accuracy of Hermias' Prodican testimony is to consider the accuracy of the non-anecdotal material in (3)–(7). First, once again, the claim in (3) that Prodicus distinguished *τέρψις*, *χαρά* and *εὐφροσύνη* is consistent with Aristotle's claim in *Topics*.<sup>26</sup> Regarding the material in (4) and (5), we have evidence that Polus and Licymnius were associates of some kind and that both composed rhetorical works that introduced or employed ornate rhetorical figures.<sup>27</sup> Regarding the material in (6), we know that Protagoras wrote about *ὀρθοέπεια*.<sup>28</sup> It may also be noteworthy that the one substantial verbatim quotation we have from Protagoras exemplifies *κυριολεξία* to the extent that it is composed in 'fairly simple and straightforward Ionic prose'.<sup>29</sup> Regarding the material in (7), Aristotle also informs us that Thrasymachus composed a rhetorical work on pity.<sup>30</sup>

This lends support to the view that Hermias' Prodican testimony is accurate. In the absence of any counter-evidence, I suggest that we accept Hermias' testimony that Prodicus distinguished *τέρψις*, *χαρά* and *εὐφροσύνη* as fine auditory, psychic and visual pleasure respectively.

### III. The grounds of Prodicus' hedonic distinctions

The conclusion of the preceding section invites two questions. How did Prodicus understand the distinction between fine auditory, psychic and visual pleasures? And why did Prodicus associate these distinctions with the Greek words *τέρψις*, *χαρά* and *εὐφροσύνη* respectively? A relatively straightforward answer to both questions begins with the second and suggests that

<sup>25</sup> Compare the following remark from Dillon and Gergel's edition of the Greek sophists. In their chapter on Thrasymachus, they include Hermias' testimony at (7) and they suggest that Syrianus might have had access to Thrasymachus' rhetorical treatise *Methods of Arousing Pity* (Dillon and Gergel (n.16) 215). Compare also the following intriguing remark from Porphyry's *Lecture on Literature*: 'Books written by Plato's predecessors are scarce; otherwise, one might perhaps have detected more of the philosopher's <plagiarisms(?)>. In a passage that I (namely, Prosenes) came upon by chance while reading Protagoras' book *On Being* (presumably, Protagoras' *On Truth*), I find Protagoras using similar counterarguments against those who propose being as one' (apud Eusebius *PE* 10.3.25 = DK 80 B2). While this passage suggests that pre-Platonic philosophical or so-called sophistic texts were difficult to find, it simultaneously indicates the

existence in the late third century AD of another key so-called sophist's text.

<sup>26</sup> There is no other mention of Prodicus' views about ornamenting speech, not repeating words and using proportion in surviving Greek literature.

<sup>27</sup> Regarding Licymnius, cf. Aristot. *Rhet.* 1405b6, 1414b17; Anon. in Aristot. *Rhet.* p.227, 34 Rabe. These passages are collected with commentary in Radermacher (n.12) 117–19; my point regarding Polus derives to a large extent from Plato's treatment of him in *Gorgias*. But see the passages collected in Radermacher (n.12) 112–14, especially §9 (= Philostr. *Vit. Soph.* 497, p.210, 22K).

<sup>28</sup> Aristot. *Rhet.* 1407b6–9; *SE* 173b17–25; *Poet.* 1456b8–18. Cf. also Themistius 289d2.

<sup>29</sup> I am here quoting from Dillon and Gergel (n.16) 8–9, who are referring to [Plut.] *Consol. Apoll.* 118e–f.

<sup>30</sup> *Rhet.* 1404a14.

Prodicus' distinctions simply follow common Greek usage. That is, in Classical Greek, *τέρψις* means 'fine auditory pleasure', *χαρά* means 'psychic pleasure' and *εὐφροσύνη* means 'visual pleasure'.<sup>31</sup> What Prodicus did was to observe and report this fact.

This conception conforms to a familiar view. It is often thought that Prodicus' linguistic interests lay in the distinction of near synonyms. Thus, Hermann Diels distinguishes a set of Prodician testimonies under the rubric 'Synonymik';<sup>32</sup> and Hermann Mayer entitled his study *Prodikos von Keos und die Anfänge der Synonymik bei den Griechen*.<sup>33</sup> Plato's treatment of Prodicus is undoubtedly responsible for this impression of Prodicus' linguistic practices.<sup>34</sup> For example, in *Protagoras*, Plato dramatizes in a parodic manner Prodicus' practice of making linguistic distinctions. At this point in the dialogue Prodicus is giving a speech to encourage Socrates and Protagoras to press on with their examination of the partition of excellence:

...those who attend a discussion are, for both speakers, a joint (*κοινούς*), but not equal (*ἴσους*) audience – it's not the same thing. For one must listen to both jointly, yet not give equal credit to each of them, but more to the wiser and less to the less intelligent. Now I myself, Protagoras and Socrates, think that you should agree to debate (*ἀμφισβητεῖν*) with each other about your arguments, but not to wrangle (*ἐρίζειν*) – for friends debate with friends, indeed through good will, whereas it's those who disagree with and are hostile to each other who wrangle. And it's in this way that we might have the finest meeting, as you the speakers would gain a good reputation (*εὐδοκιμοῖτε*) among us as listeners, yet you would not be praised (*ἐπαινοῖσθε*); for gaining a good reputation occurs without deception in the souls of those who listen, but being praised often comes in the words of those who lie, contrary to their true opinion...<sup>35</sup>

To be sure, one of Prodicus' central interests was the correctness (*ὀρθότης*) and division (*διαίρεσις*) of words.<sup>36</sup> But the grounds of Prodicus' linguistic distinctions are open to question. While Platonic passages such as this one from *Protagoras* might suggest that Prodicus had a keen ear for subtle distinctions in common usage, in the case of the pleasure terms under consideration, there is no reason to think that Prodicus' distinctions of *τέρψις* and *εὐφροσύνη* in particular were based on common usage.

*Χαρά* is the only one of the three pleasure terms for which an argument from common usage might be reasonably advanced. In the fifth century, *χαρά* was often used to refer to mental pleasures. As such, 'joy' is often a good translation of *χαρά*.<sup>37</sup> But the cases of *τέρψις* and *εὐφροσύνη* do not conform to this explanation. *Τέρψις* is used to refer to any sort of pleasure; for example pleasure in eating with friends,<sup>38</sup> general enjoyment in life,<sup>39</sup> celebration,<sup>40</sup> sexual pleasure<sup>41</sup> and, like *χαρά*, psychic or cognitive or mental pleasure.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, the noun *τέρψις* is not specifically associated with auditory pleasure. Note that this is true for the Archaic period as well as the fifth century. For example, in the Homeric hymns to Apollo and Pan, as in Homer's *Iliad* book 20 and *Odyssey* book 16, the verb *τέρπεσθαι* is used for pleasure upon seeing

<sup>31</sup> Or at least Prodicus would think that these words were commonly used with these meanings.

<sup>32</sup> DK 84 A13–20.

<sup>33</sup> (Paderborn 1913).

<sup>34</sup> *Cra.* 384b; *Men.* 75e; *Euthd.* 277e–78a; *Chrm.* 163a–b; *La.* 197b.

<sup>35</sup> *Prt.* 337a2–b7; cf. *Prt.* 340a.

<sup>36</sup> At *Plt.* *Men.* 75e3 the word *διαφέροίτο* is used. *Euthd.* 277e4 has the phrase *ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης*. *Prt.* 340b1 has the word *διαίρεις*; *Prt.* 358a6–7 has the phrase *τὴν διαίρεσιν τῶν ὀνομάτων*; and at *Chrm.* 163d4 Socrates speaks of Prodicus *περὶ ὀνομάτων διαίρουστος*. Likewise, Aristotle says that Prodicus *διηρεῖτο* pleasures (*Top.* 112b22). Marcellinus speaks of Prodicus' *τὴν ἐπὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν ἀκριβολογίαν*

(*V. Thuc.* 36).

<sup>37</sup> It may be noted that *χαρά* is not exclusively used in this way. For example, *χαρά* is once used in Aeschylus to refer to the pleasure of hearing Orpheus' voice (*Ag.* 1630) and it is once used in Euripides to refer to the pleasure of hearing hymns to Apollo (*Alc.* 578). Still, such instances need not undermine the view that *χαρά* is generally used to refer to some sort of psychic or cognitive pleasure.

<sup>38</sup> *Pind. P.* 9.19.

<sup>39</sup> *Pind. fr.* 126.1; *Thuc.* 2.38.1.3; Eurip. *Alc.* 347.

<sup>40</sup> *Pind. N.* 8.43; *Soph. Ajax* 1201; Eurip. *Med.* 202.

<sup>41</sup> *Aesch. Pers.* 544; *A.* 611.

<sup>42</sup> *Soph. OT* 1477; *OC* 1122; *Trach.* 291; Eurip. *Her.* 663, 939; *Hel.* 626.

things.<sup>43</sup> Elsewhere, for instance in Archilochus and Theognis,<sup>44</sup> the noun and verb are used to refer to pleasure generally, with no specific sensory modality intended.

Εὐφροσύνη in fact has a distinct meaning, but that meaning is not ‘visual pleasure’. Εὐφροσύνη is almost always associated with celebrations and festive activities, saliently including eating, drinking and listening to poetry.<sup>45</sup> As such, ‘merriment’ or ‘good-cheer’ is often an appropriate translation. Again, this point holds for the Archaic as well as the Classical period. For example, in the Homeric hymn to Hermes, Hermes gifts Apollo with a lyre and says: ‘From now on bring <the lyre> proudly to the rich feast, the lovely dance and glorious revel, a delight (εὐφροσύνην) by night and day’.<sup>46</sup> In this and most of the other cases,<sup>47</sup> εὐφροσύνη is not associated with any particular sensory modality.<sup>48</sup>

In short, there is no reason to think that Prodicus chose εὐφροσύνη because it was commonly used to refer to visual pleasure, and there is no reason to think that Prodicus chose τέρψις because it was commonly used to refer to auditory or fine auditory pleasure. What sense, then, can we make of Prodicus’ reference to auditory and visual pleasures as τέρψις and εὐφροσύνη respectively? And if τέρψις and εὐφροσύνη do not commonly mean ‘(fine) auditory pleasure’ and ‘visual pleasure’, what reason do we have for thinking that Prodicus distinguished χαρά as referring to psychic pleasure on the grounds of common usage?

Beyond Plato’s parodic passages and other sparse and scattered references to Prodicus’ interest in linguistic distinctions, we have only one direct attestation of Prodicus’ activity of deploying linguistic distinctions that also provides some explanation for the distinctions. Galen reports that Prodicus composed a treatise *On Human Nature*,<sup>49</sup> and he informs us of one linguistic distinction that figured in this work:

Prodicus said... that phlegm is that part of the humors that has been subject to heat and, as it were, overcooked. He came to this view by deriving the word ‘phlegm’ (φλέγμα) from the verb ‘to have been burned’ (πεφλέχθαι), since he tends to use words in special senses, although he keeps the same meaning for the thing itself as do other people... On the other hand, what everyone else calls ‘phlegm’, that is to say, the white variety, he calls ‘mucus’ (βλέννα); for, being a cold and damp humor, it is found in greatest quantity in the aged and in those who have caught cold from any cause whatever. And no one in his sense would call this anything but cold and damp.<sup>50</sup>

In Hippocratic medicine, phlegm was generally regarded as a cold and moist humor – no doubt at least in part from the prevalence of colds and runny noses in winter.<sup>51</sup> For instance, in *On the Sacred Disease* phlegm is said to chill the brain, while bile heats it.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, the word φλέγμα, which is clearly related to the verb φλέγειν (to burn), suggests inflammation and heating. Accordingly, Prodicus distinguishes two species of phlegm, accommodating the tradition by identifying the cold and moist variety as βλέννα.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *Il.* 20.23; *Od.* 16.26; *h. Aphr.* 153; *h. Pan.* 45. Note that, relatively speaking, these are not simply visual pleasures, since considerable cognition is associated with the contexts in which the delight at seeing occurs.

<sup>44</sup> *Archil.* 13.2, 168.4, S478a.133; *Thgn.* 787, 921.

<sup>45</sup> *Pind. P.* 4.129, 11.45; *N.* 4.1; *Aesch. Pr.* V. 538; *Eurip. Ba.* 377; *Hel.* 1470; *Bacchyl. E.* 10.53, 11.12; *Panyassis fr.* 12.19.

<sup>46</sup> *h. Merc.* 4.480–82, see also 4.449.

<sup>47</sup> *Cf.* also *Hom. Od.* 9.6; *Xenoph.* 1.3; *Sol.* 4.10; *Eurip. Ba.* 377.

<sup>48</sup> *Hom. Od.* 6.156 and *h. Merc.* 449 are exceptions; the context of the former case is visual, the latter auditory.

<sup>49</sup> *Nat. fac.* 2.9; *cf. Elem.* 1.9.

<sup>50</sup> *Nat. fac.* 2.9.

<sup>51</sup> For example, *Aer.* 10.6, 48.21; and *cf. Nat. hom.* 7: ‘Phlegm increases in a man in winter, for phlegm, being the coldest constituent of the body, is closest akin to winter... It is in winter that the sputum and nasal discharge of men is fullest of phlegm...’.

<sup>52</sup> *Morb. Sac.* 15. I owe this and the preceding references to I.M. Lonie, *The Hippocratic Treatises ‘On Generation’ ‘On the Nature of the Child’ ‘Diseases IV’, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Quellenkunde der Alten Medizin, Abt. 2, Bd. 7* (Berlin 1981) 277.

<sup>53</sup> *Cf. Philol.* A27: ‘Philolaus says that phlegm gets its name from φλέγειν. In this way, also things that are inflamed are inflamed by taking part in phlegm’. *Cf. Democr.* DK 68 A159; also *Plt. Ti.* 83d–e.



Prodicus' distinction between φλέγμα and βλέννα suggests two important points. First, the distinction is a substantive one in human physiology; it is not primarily or simply a distinction based on common usage of the words φλέγμα and βλέννα. Accordingly, we need not and perhaps should not assume that Prodicus' distinctions between τέρψις and εὐφροσύνη were based on common usage. Rather, Prodicus may have had independent reasons for distinguishing kinds of pleasure and then ascribing terms such as τέρψις and εὐφροσύνη to them. Second, etymology informs Prodicus' ascription of the term φλέγμα to one kind of phlegm; however, Prodicus' ascription of βλέννα to the other kind of phlegm is not, so far as I can tell, etymologically based. Accordingly, we need not and perhaps should not assume that Prodicus' attributions of terms to substantive distinctions were based on a uniform set of etymological or other linguistic principles.

In the case of τέρψις and εὐφροσύνη, I can see no way of engineering creative, let alone historical, etymologies that would explain these words as referring to auditory and visual pleasures – even under the influence of the liberal linguistic transformations we find, for instance, in Plato's *Cratylus*. For example, in this dialogue Socrates offers the following etymology of εὐφροσύνη: 'Εὐφροσύνη needs no explanation, for it is clear to everyone that since it is conveyance (φέρεσθαι) of the soul in concord with the world, its name derives from εὐφεροσύνη (well conveying)'.<sup>54</sup>

Assuming that Prodicus' choices of τέρψις and εὐφροσύνη are not based on etymological grounds, other linguistic or historical considerations may be responsible for his application of them. In considering τέρψις, note that both Euterpe and Terpsichore are Muses. Euterpe was associated with lyric poetry; Terpsichore was associated with dance and dramatic choruses. For instance, in Hesiod's *Theogony* the pleasure of song (τέρψις ἀοιδῆς) is related to the Muses in general.<sup>55</sup> In his second Isthmian ode, Pindar speaks of Terpsichore as honey-voiced (μελιφθόγγου).<sup>56</sup> Terpsichore was also identified as the mother of the Sirens. In *Odyssey* 12, it is said that Odysseus will enjoy (τερψάμενος) their honey-sweet voices.<sup>57</sup> Prodicus might have been influenced by such considerations when he associated τέρψις with fine auditory pleasure.

A similar reason may explain Prodicus' association of εὐφροσύνη. Euphrosyne was also a divinity, one of the three Charites or Graces. The following passage from Hesiod's *Theogony*, which appears to have been especially influential in antiquity, is the earliest surviving expression of this idea: 'Eurynome, the daughter of Ocean, beautiful in form, bore <Zeus> three fair-cheeked Graces, Aglaia, Euphrosyne and lovely Thaleia'.<sup>58</sup> The Graces were commonly identified with physical beauty. For instance, in *Odyssey* 8 they are characterized as attendants of Aphrodite, bathing and adorning the goddess.<sup>59</sup> In the *Catalogue of Women*, Hesiod speaks of one 'who has the beauty of the Graces'.<sup>60</sup> Diodorus Siculus – of course writing much later than Prodicus, nonetheless – well encapsulates the common idea: 'to the Graces <Zeus> allotted visual adornment (τὴν τῆς ὄψεως κόσμησιν) and the beautification of each part of the body for the purpose of making it better and more soothing to those who behold it (τοῖς θεωροῦσι)'.<sup>61</sup> Accordingly, such considerations might have informed Prodicus' association of εὐφροσύνη with visual pleasure.

In sum, Prodicus' grounds for associating the words τέρψις, εὐφροσύνη and χαρά with auditory, visual and psychic pleasures may not be based on a uniform set of linguistic or semantic principles. The association of χαρά with psychic pleasure may be based on common usage. But the association of τέρψις and εὐφροσύνη with auditory and visual pleasures must have a different explanation. In these cases, particular literary and mythological associations of these words might be responsible for the use Prodicus makes of them.

<sup>54</sup> *Cra.* 419d4–9.

<sup>55</sup> *Thgn.* 917; cf. *Hes. Sc.* 273.

<sup>56</sup> *I.* 2.7.

<sup>57</sup> *Od.* 12.188. Note that Euterpe is mentioned at *Hes. Thgn.* 77, but not in anything else which existed in the fifth century for Prodicus to read, as far as we can

judge from what survives.

<sup>58</sup> *Thgn.* 907–09.

<sup>59</sup> *Od.* 8.362.

<sup>60</sup> *Fr.* 92; cf. *frr.* 14, 68 and *Thgn.* 907.

<sup>61</sup> 5.72.3; cf. *Pind. O.* 14.1–2; *P* 2.2.

#### IV. The non-semantic grounds of Prodicus' hedonic distinctions

The preceding conclusion suggests that Prodicus' distinction between auditory, visual and psychic pleasures cannot ultimately be explained on semantic grounds. In that case, we must seek non-semantic reasons for Prodicus' hedonic distinctions. In considering this problem, ironically, some light may be gleaned from linguistic usage.

τέρψις, χαρά and εὐφροσύνη are not the only pleasure terms in the Classical Greek vocabulary. Accordingly, Prodicus' threefold distinction between pleasure terms should not be thought of as an exhaustive distinction of pleasure terms. That said, the absence of one term in particular from Prodicus' set is remarkable. In surviving fifth-century Greek literature, ἡδονή is by far the most common pleasure term. It occurs 213 times. In contrast, τέρψις occurs 42 times; χαρά occurs 28 times; and εὐφροσύνη occurs 15 times.<sup>62</sup> Thus, although Prodicus' distinction of pleasure terms is not exhaustive, it is remarkable that ἡδονή in particular is absent from his set.

The absence of ἡδονή from Prodicus' set may also be remarkable in view of the way Prodicus distinguishes pleasures. Notably absent from Prodicus' distinctions are what late fifth- and early fourth-century thinkers conceive of as vulgar or base pleasures. In particular, these are pleasures associated with eating, drinking and sex, less commonly with sleep and warmth. For example, in one of his ethical fragments, Democritus refers to these as 'pleasures of the belly' (γαστρὸς τὰς ἡδονάς): 'Those who take their pleasures from their belly, exceeding what is appropriate in food, drink or sex, to all of them their pleasures are meagre and brief, lasting just so long as they are eating and drinking, and their pains are many'.<sup>63</sup>

Xenophon and Plato refer to them as pleasures of the body. For example, in *Memorabilia* Xenophon reports that Socrates kept control over 'the pleasures of his body' (τῶν διὰ τοῦ σώματος ἡδονῶν);<sup>64</sup> and in *Republic* book 1 Cephalus says: 'as the pleasures of the body (αἱ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα ἡδοναὶ) wither, my desire for conversation and its pleasures grows'.<sup>65</sup> In fact, in the passage of Plato's *Protagoras* partially cited above, where the character Prodicus encourages Socrates and Protagoras to resume their suspended discussion, Prodicus also draws a distinction between ἡδονή and εὐφροσύνη:

...we in the audience would be wholly delighted (εὐφραίνεσθαι), not pleased (ἡδοίμεσθα), for being delighted (εὐφραίνεσθαι) is a condition of learning something and partaking of understanding (φρονήσεως) with the intellect (διανοίαι) itself, whereas being pleased (ἡδεσθαι) is a condition of one eating something or experiencing some other pleasure (ἡδὺ) with the body (σώματι) itself.<sup>66</sup>

Since I, following Hermias, maintain that the historical Prodicus did not identify εὐφροσύνη with psychic pleasure, we can see that in *Protagoras* Plato does not faithfully follow the historical Prodicus. Rather, Plato alludes to Prodicus' distinctions between pleasures and pleasure terms and, in view of the body-soul dichotomy, deploys his own distinctions for the purpose of parody.

<sup>62</sup> This result is based on a TLG search of the noun in all its cases and genders among authors located solely in the fifth century. I say 'solely' to distinguish this set of authors from those such as, for example, Plato, whose lives extend well into the fourth century.

<sup>63</sup> DK 68 B235.

<sup>64</sup> *Mem.* 15.6.3.

<sup>65</sup> *Plt. R.* 1.328d2–3; cf. *R.* 580e: 'Hence we call it the appetitive part because of the intensity of its appetites for food, drink, sex and all the things associated with them, but we also call it the money-loving part because such appetites are most easily satisfied by means of money'.

<sup>66</sup> *Prt.* 337c1–4. Prodicus' statement also suggests an explanation for his use of εὐφροσύνη to distinguish

mental pleasure. The use of the word φρόνησις suggests that the basis for Prodicus' distinction is etymological. The word εὐφροσύνη only occurs in two other passages in the Platonic corpus. We saw one other occurrence above, the ludicrous etymology in *Cratylus*. The other occurrence is in *Timaeus* where Timaeus discusses the experience of harmonious and inharmonious sounds: '...so they produce a single experience, a mixture of high and low. Hence the pleasure (ἡδονήν) they bring to the ignorant (ἄφροσι) and the delight (εὐφροσύνην) they provide – by their expression of divine harmony in mortal movement – to those of understanding (ἐμφροσι)' (*Ti.* 80b4–8). Here again, the use of εὐφροσύνη, in contrast to ἡδονή, is related to the word φρόνησις.

In light of this, however, we can at least affirm that Prodicus' distinction of fine auditory, visual and psychic pleasures excludes a large class or classes of pleasure. The absence of such vulgar or base pleasures from Prodicus' set of pleasures and the absence of ἡδονή from Prodicus' set of pleasure terms is striking. But perhaps the absences are also revealing. Some distinctions among pleasures in other Platonic dialogues help to see how.

In another early dialogue, Plato seems to adhere more closely to Prodicus' own hedonic distinctions. In *Hippias Major* the penultimate definition of the fine (τὸ καλόν) is pleasure through sight and hearing.<sup>67</sup> Socrates describes such pleasures as follows: '...everything decorative, paintings and sculptures, these all delight us when we see them – if they're fine (καλά). And fine sounds and music and speeches and story-telling have the same effect'.<sup>68</sup> Socrates subsequently contrasts visual and auditory pleasures with at least one other species of pleasure. He asks: 'Should we say, Hippias, that fine practices and customs are fine because they are pleasing through sight and hearing, or do they have some other form?'<sup>69</sup> The question is not directly answered. Hippias attempts to dodge the question: 'Perhaps we can avoid these things'.<sup>70</sup> And Socrates himself subsequently does: 'Perhaps fine customs and practices will not appear to lie outside of perception through sight and hearing. But let us focus on the claim that that which is pleasing through these senses [sight and hearing] is fine, and let's ignore the topic of customs'.<sup>71</sup>

The exchange indicates that it is questionable how pleasures relating to practices and customs should be conceived. Considering the identification of knowledge with virtue in the early dialogues and the parodic distinction of intellectual from somatic pleasures in *Protagoras*, my supposition is that Plato may think of pleasures through fine customs and practices as psychic, but that he does not wish to broach the subject here or to explain the distinction between visual and auditory pleasures, on the one hand, and psychic pleasures, on the other. In this case, then, a distinct species of pleasure may be implicit.

Another species of pleasure is, however, more clearly distinguished. This species includes pleasures of 'food, drink, sex and all such things', and Socrates characterizes these pleasures as experienced 'through other forms of perception' (κατὰ τὰς ἄλλας αἰσθήσεις).<sup>72</sup> Here Plato clearly has in mind what Xenophon and he elsewhere refer to as 'somatic pleasures' and what Democritus has in mind when he refers to 'pleasures of the belly'. In *Hippias Major*, Socrates additionally characterizes these pleasures as base, in other words, as not καλαί.<sup>73</sup>

Among the base pleasures described in *Hippias Major*, Socrates includes smells: '<we would be laughable> if we called a pleasant smell not pleasant but fine (καλόν)'.<sup>74</sup> The inclusion of olfactory pleasure within the genus of – let us hereafter call it – base pleasure is noteworthy because later in his career Plato came to think that olfactory pleasures should in fact be distinguished from base pleasures. Specifically, in *Republic* 9, where pleasures are conceived as natural replenishments, pure pleasures are distinguished from impure pleasures, the latter being mixed with pain. More precisely, mixed or impure pleasures are those that follow painfully felt depletions such as eating when one is hungry and drinking when one is thirsty. On the replenishment model, olfactory pleasures are also understood to be replenishments of some sort of nasal depletion. Yet unlike other bodily pleasures, nasal depletion is not felt as a pain.<sup>75</sup> Thus, olfactory pleasures are distinguished as a relatively pure kind of pleasure.<sup>76</sup>

The same point is made in *Timaeus* and once again in *Philebus*.<sup>77</sup> In *Philebus* in particular Socrates' διαίρεσις of pleasure concludes with three species of true, that is, pure and unmixed

<sup>67</sup> *Hp. Ma.* 297e–303e.

<sup>68</sup> *Hp. Ma.* 298a1–5.

<sup>69</sup> *Hp. Ma.* 298b2–4.

<sup>70</sup> *Hp. Ma.* 298b5.

<sup>71</sup> *Hp. Ma.* 298d1–5.

<sup>72</sup> *Hp. Ma.* 298d8–e2.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. *Hp. Ma.* 299a–b.

<sup>74</sup> *Hp. Ma.* 299a2–3.

<sup>75</sup> In *Timaeus* this is explained on the ground that nasal depletion is particularly gradual and subtle.

<sup>76</sup> *R.* 584b–c.

<sup>77</sup> *Ti.* 65a–b; *Phlb.* 51e.

pleasure. Hierarchically ordered, the lowest species is olfactory pleasure; visual and auditory pleasure is ranked second; and intellectual pleasure is the highest species.<sup>78</sup>

I suspect that Plato's distinction of visual and auditory pleasures from other perceptual pleasures in *Hippias Major*, and specifically his distinction of the former as καλαί and the latter as αἰσχροί, conforms to Prodicus' hedonic distinctions, as does Plato's implicit, but unresolved species of psychic pleasure. In short, Prodicus and then Plato appear to conceptualize pleasures in terms of a psychological hierarchy, with certain perceptual faculties situated low on the hierarchy, other perceptual faculties situated higher and the psyche itself located at the peak. This way of conceptualizing pleasures can also be seen in Aristotle and the Peripatetic school. For example, in *Eudemian Ethics* Aristotle distinguishes the pleasures of touch and taste as the lowest forms: 'Temperance and profligacy have to do with those two senses whose objects are alone felt by and give pleasure and pain to brutes as well; and these are the pleasures of taste and touch, the brutes seeming insensible to the pleasures of practically all the other senses alike...'.<sup>79</sup>

Consider also the following passage from the Peripatetic *Problems*. Note in particular here the situation of olfactory pleasures between the lower perceptual pleasures of touch and taste and the higher perceptual pleasures of sight and hearing:

Why are men called incontinent if they indulge to excess in the pleasures connected with touch and taste? ... Being shared by the animals, then, they are held in least honour and so are regarded as the only pleasures deserving of reproach, or at any rate more so than any others. So we blame a man who is a slave to them and call him incontinent and intemperate because he is a slave to the worst pleasures. Now the senses being five in number, the other animals find pleasure only in the two already mentioned; in the others they find no pleasure, or, if they do, it is only incidentally. For the lion rejoices when he sees or scents his prey because he is going to enjoy it; and when he has satisfied his hunger, such things do not please him, just as the smell of dried fish gives us no pleasure when we have eaten our fill of it, though, when we wanted to partake of it, it was pleasant.<sup>80</sup>

In sum, these passages distinguish lower or base and higher or fine pleasures. Lower or base pleasures are associated with particular perceptual faculties, above all touch and taste, and are viewed as common to all animals. In contrast, higher or fine pleasures are associated with virtue and wisdom as well as with sight and hearing, and especially in this case with visible and audible objects that belong to higher culture. Recall Socrates' enumeration in *Hippias Major*: 'everything decorative, paintings and sculptures, these all delight us when we see them – if they're fine. And fine sounds and music and speeches and story-telling have the same effect'. In light of this, it is also noteworthy that Hermias does not merely claim that Prodicus identified τέρψις with auditory pleasure, but with fine (καλόν) auditory pleasure. I assume that although εὐφροσύνη is not explicitly characterized as *fine* visual pleasure, this was Prodicus' understanding as well.<sup>81</sup>

Consequently, I will refer to the set of pleasures that Prodicus distinguished as 'refined pleasures'. My proposal, then, is that Prodicus' distinction among pleasures was specifically among refined pleasures. Moreover, Prodicus associated these refined pleasures with τέρψις, εὐφροσύνη and χαρά because, relative to ἡδονή in particular, these are refined pleasure terms. Indeed, after Hermias reports that Prodicus distinguished τέρψις, χαρά and εὐφροσύνη, he continues: 'Prodicus also said that it is necessary to ornament (καταποικίλλειν) one's speech with such words'. Prodicus' distinction of and among refined pleasures is consistent with Hermias' comment insofar as Prodicus' agenda in drawing and deploying linguistic distinctions is itself a form of intellectual cultivation and linguistic refinement.

<sup>78</sup> *Phlb.* 51d–52a.

<sup>79</sup> *EE* 1230b36–31a12.

<sup>80</sup> *Probl.* 949b37–50a17; cf. 949b13–19.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Protagoras' rejection of Socrates' initial

suggestion in *Protagoras* that all pleasures are good: '(So:) So, then, to live pleasantly is good, and unpleasantly, bad? (Pr:) Yes, so long as he lived having taken pleasure in fine (καλά) things' (*Prt.* 351b7–c2).

**V. Prodicus' hedonic distinctions and *The Choice of Heracles***

Our evidence regarding Prodicus' corpus is meagre. The one work about which we have most information is *The Choice of Heracles*. In this ἐπίδειξις, Prodicus represented Heracles as a young man at a crossroads, having to choose between two courses of life. Two anthropomorphic female figures, Virtue and Vice, attempt to persuade the hero to follow their paths. Vice offers a life of ignoble and easy pleasures. Virtue offers a life of happiness governed by moderation, hard work, piety and civic virtue, all of which offer pleasures of their own. Prodicus' composition of *The Choice of Heracles* would thus appear to have been the occasion that motivated him to draw and deploy distinctions between base and refined pleasures and associated pleasure terms.

Our most detailed source of information about Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles* is Xenophon's rendition of the work in *Memorabilia*.<sup>82</sup> Xenophon portrays Socrates as relating the content of Prodicus' work to Aristippus of Cyrene in an effort to reform the latter's anti-civic, somatic pleasure-seeking. David Sansone has recently argued that Xenophon records Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles* verbatim.<sup>83</sup> More recently, Vivienne Gray has, in my view, rightly rejected Sansone's argument.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, Xenophon makes Socrates conclude his rendition by saying: 'This is roughly how Prodicus describes the education of Heracles by Virtue, except that he actually dressed up the sentiments in language still more splendid than I have now used'.<sup>85</sup>

Xenophon's rendition contains all of the pleasure terms Prodicus distinguished, but Xenophon does not deploy them as Hermias says Prodicus did. For example, Vice uses the verb τέρπεσθαι, cognate with τέρψις, to characterize pleasure taken in sights and sounds;<sup>86</sup> and she uses the verb εὐφραίνεσθαι, cognate with εὐφροσύνη, to characterize the enjoyment of sexual pleasures.<sup>87</sup> Virtue uses the verb χαίρειν, cognate with χαρά, to refer to pleasures the virtuous young will experience when they hear the praises of their elders.<sup>88</sup> It is unclear whether these are construed as auditory pleasures or rather as mental ones – a point to which I will return shortly. In any case, Xenophon's use of the pleasure terms either wholly or at least largely supports Gray's conclusion that Xenophon renders Prodicus' work loosely.

As just suggested, it is difficult to determine what pleasures Vice and Virtue refer to. Vice appears to refer to auditory and visual pleasures when she says: '<If you follow my path, Heracles,> you will always be considering... what you will enjoy seeing or hearing (τί ἰδῶν ἢ τί ἀκούσας τερφθείης)'.<sup>89</sup> But it is noteworthy that the objects and contents of the pleasures are not here indicated. Consider Virtue's ostensible reference to auditory and visual pleasures: 'Praise, the most pleasant of all things to hear, is unheard, and unseen is the most pleasant of all sights, for you have not witnessed noble deeds of your own'.<sup>90</sup> Once again, the language suggests auditory and visual pleasure. However, one could construe rejoicing in praise and the sight of one's own noble deed as psychic, rather than auditory and visual, pleasures. The difficulty is that we do not know how Prodicus understood the distinction between auditory, visual and psychic pleasures. Similarly, Virtue appears to refer to pleasures of the soul when she says that old men 'will recollect their past deeds with pleasure'.<sup>91</sup> At least later philosophers, for example Plato and Epicureans, refer to memorial pleasures and conceive these as being of the soul. But visual and auditory perception are arguably 'of the soul' in some sense as well. The distinction between visual and auditory pleasures, on the one hand, and pleasures of the soul, on the other, therefore, depends upon some substantive psychological views. In this case, we have evidence from

<sup>82</sup> *Mem.* 2.1.23–34.

<sup>83</sup> 'Heracles at the Y', *JHS* 124 (2004) 125–42.

<sup>84</sup> 'The linguistic philosophies of Prodicus in Xenophon's *Choice of Heracles*?' *CQ* 56 (2006) 426–35.

<sup>85</sup> *Mem.* 2.1.34.

<sup>86</sup> *Mem.* 2.1.24.

<sup>87</sup> *Mem.* 2.1.24.

<sup>88</sup> *Mem.* 2.1.33.

<sup>89</sup> *Mem.* 2.1.24.

<sup>90</sup> *Mem.* 2.1.31.

<sup>91</sup> *Mem.* 2.1.33.

Platonic and Epicurean works.<sup>92</sup> But in the case of Prodicus, we are at a loss. My inclination is to think that Prodicus distinguished between visual, auditory and psychic pleasures on the basis of whether the object immediately causing the pleasure was visual (for example, a sculpture), auditory (for example, an ode) or psychic (for example, a memory). More precisely, I am inclined to think that Prodicus distinguished pleasures according to the faculty that apprehends the object that gives the pleasure. This at least seems to conform to the treatment in *Hippias Major* and it may also explain why in this Platonic dialogue there is some hesitation over the classification of pleasures through customs and laws.<sup>93</sup>

## VI. Conclusion

Hermias' remarks in the *Commentary on Plato's Phaedrus* suggest that Prodicus' interest in distinguishing pleasure terms and, more generally, in the correctness of words figured within a programme of rhetorical pedagogy. Accordingly, Dionysius of Halicarnassus reports that Isocrates was a student of Prodicus, Gorgias and Tisias;<sup>94</sup> Aulus Gellius mentions that Euripides was a student of the 'rhetor' Prodicus;<sup>95</sup> and in his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle refers to Prodicus as having said that 'when your audience <at the cheap lecture> starts to snooze, <you should> throw in something from <your more costly> lecture'.<sup>96</sup> Indeed, for Prodicus, as for many fifth-century intellectuals, teaching public speaking was a means of making a living and often a particularly lucrative enterprise.

On the other hand, the earliest mention of Prodicus, in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, speaks of him among the μετεωροσοφισταί, that is, among those concerned with cosmological matters.<sup>97</sup> In this case, Aristophanes is most likely referring to Prodicus' euhemerist theory of religion. This suggestion is at least corroborated by the chorus in Aristophanes' *Birds*, who mention Prodicus in the context of criticizing those who reject traditional theology.<sup>98</sup> Consistent with Aristophanes' conception, a scholiast on the *Birds* passages argues that Callimachus was wrong to classify Prodicus among rhetoricians, 'for he is also a philosopher'.<sup>99</sup>

I take this divide in ancient perceptions of Prodicus to reflect the complexity of Prodicus' interests as well as the particular orientations and partial concerns of his successors. In fact *Suda* – of all sources – comes closest to the truth in stating that Prodicus was both 'a natural

<sup>92</sup> By the late fourth and third centuries, the Cyrenaics were also alive to related psychological distinctions. Cf. the following doctrines attributed to them: 'Not all psychological pleasures and pains depend upon somatic pleasures and pains. For example, there is joy (χαράν) in the impersonal prosperity of our country just as in our own prosperity' (Diogenes Laertius 2.89). 'And yet [contrary to Epicurus] they do not admit that <pleasure> is derived from the memory or the expectation of good. For they assert that the movement affecting the mind is exhausted in the course of time' (2.89). 'Pleasures are not derived from bare sight or hearing alone. At least, we listen with pleasure to imitation of mourning, while we listen with pain to those who are truly mourning' (2.90).

<sup>93</sup> One final problem deserves notice here. An ignoble or unrefined person might enjoy seeing a buffoon, hearing doggerel or remembering some perverse act. How is this to be explained? Let me emphasize that these considerations problematize the hedonic distinctions in *Hippias Major* as well as in Prodicus. Evidently, some Greeks thought that certain psychological faculties were more valuable than others, and this view encouraged the distinction and hierar-

chization of corresponding pleasures. Why they thought this about the psychological faculties is a question I must leave for another occasion. The basic answer, however, would seem to be that some psychological faculties are more potent than others with respect to the acquisition of knowledge, ἀρετή or εὐδαιμονία. But the problem is that those higher faculties would then also be capable of enjoying the contrary base objects; and thus they would be particularly potent with respect to depravity. Both Plato, in later dialogues, and Aristotle respond to this problem by referring to the dysfunction of the faculties. There is no evidence that Prodicus responded to the problem; however, the fact that Vice promises pleasures of sight and hearing encourages the view that he should have considered it.

<sup>94</sup> *Isoc.* 1.

<sup>95</sup> *NA* 15.20.4; see also *Plt. Phdr.* 267b.

<sup>96</sup> *Rhet.* 1415b12. Socrates informs us in *Cratylus* that Prodicus had both a one-drachma and a 50-drachma lecture on language (*Cra.* 384b).

<sup>97</sup> *Nub.* 360; cf. *Av.* 692.

<sup>98</sup> *Av.* 692.

<sup>99</sup> Σ ad Ar. *Av.* 692.

philosopher and a sophist'.<sup>100</sup> Consonant with this more complex view of Prodicus, in the course of examining his distinctions between pleasures and pleasure terms, I have encouraged replacing Plato's caricature of a man quibbling over near synonyms with the view of a thinker whose linguistic interests fall within a different and broader intellectual sphere.<sup>101</sup> As I have argued, Prodicus' distinctions between kinds of pleasure are not due to distinctions that he recognized between the established meanings of pleasure terms. Rather, Prodicus' distinctions between pleasures are independently motivated, and Prodicus subsequently ascribed distinct pleasure terms to the pleasures he distinguished. For Prodicus ontology does not recapitulate philology; rather, philology attempts to recapture the nature of things. As the few citations at the beginning of the paper indicate, this natural semantics is consistent with the views of various fifth-century thinkers. It is also essentially the way the fanciful Heraclitean etymologizing proceeds in Plato's *Cratylus*: etymologies are supplied to conform to an ontology of flux. As such, ὀρθοέπεια or ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης endeavours to rectify or refine common usage in order to make language conform to the world. Socrates no doubt saw his pursuit of definitions in the same vein. As such, Prodicus' linguistic interests may be seen as belonging to what he, like his contemporaries, simply understood as a part of the study of nature.

<sup>100</sup> DK 84 A1.

<sup>101</sup> At several points in the paper, I have referred to Plato's *Protagoras*. This dialogue is especially responsible for the caricature of Prodicus. But the more substantive view of Prodicus' linguistic activity that I hope has emerged from this discussion in turn casts light back onto Plato's composition of *Protagoras*. In

particular, it casts light on Socrates' question regarding the relation between the various virtue-terms. Specifically, Plato may hold that the common use of the various virtue-terms to refer to various things reflects a corruption in language that obscures the fact that the so-called virtues are actually one thing.