ARCTOS

INDEX

REMOVING THE *INSERENDA*

Harold Tarrant

Introduction

At the end of the prologue of the *Theaetetus* Euclides, who has allegedly made a record of the entire conversation and checked it with Socrates' own recollection, states as follows:

> ἵνα οὖν ἐν τῇ γραφῇ μὴ παρέχοιεν πράγματα αἱ μεταξὺ τῶν λόγων διηγήσεις περὶ αὐτοῦ τε ὁπότε λέγοι ὁ Σωκράτης, οἷον 'καὶ ἐγὼ ἔφην' ἢ 'καὶ ἐγὼ εἶπον,' ἢ αὖ περὶ τοῦ ἀποκρινομένου ὅτι 'συνέφη' ἢ 'οὐχ ὡμολόγει,' τούτων ἕνεκα ὡς αὐτὸν αὐτοῖς διαλεγόμενον ἔγραψα, ἐξελὼν τὰ τοιαῦτα. (143b7–c5)

> So in order that, in the written version, the narrative bits between the speeches should not giving bother,[1] whenever Socrates said for instance 'and as for me I said' or 'and as for me I stated', or again in the case of the respondent [when he said] that 'he assented' or 'he was not in agreement', with this in mind I wrote it with him conversing directly with them, removing that kind of thing.

This reads very much like the rejection of the narrative form of presentation as practised in various dialogues up to and including the *Republic* and the first part

---

[1] It is not specified whether it is the writer, reader, or auditors who are supposed to be bothered by this technique, though the anonymous commentator (IV 14–17; Bastianini – Sedley 1995, 270) appears to interpret it as being the auditors, and is thus able to deny that this is the real reason, seemingly preferring to attribute the remark to Plato's assessment of what Euclides would have thought appropriate.

of the *Parmenides* (to 137c4) in favour of the direct or 'dramatic' presentation of the discussion found in many dialogues, including all that are stylistically 'late' (i.e. that avoid hiatus and certain clausulae at the close of sentences). The reference to an act of 'removing' such little bits of narrative has led some, including myself, to suspect that there had been an early version of *Theaetetus* that had indeed been presented as a frame dialogue embracing a narrated conversation.[2] Indeed parallels for the introduction to the *Theaetetus*, set at a time later than the principal conversation depicted in the dialogue, are all to be found in *narrated* dialogues: a little later in *Protagoras*, *Euthydemus*, and *Republic*, and considerably later in *Parmenides Symposium*, and *Phaedo*.[3] Interestingly, *Theaetetus* is the only dialogue set after the death of Socrates of which it is possible to regard Socrates, even *in absentia*, as a kind of narrator,[4] for Euclides does everything possible to deny that he had manipulated the story that he had originally heard from Socrates himself (142d6–143a5).

The choice of inserenda

Here I wish to ask more precisely what kind of narrated conversation Plato had in mind here by examining the actual list of allegedly tedious *inserenda* that Plato's Euclides had wanted to do without, and to ask what could have led to their selection. The striking fact is that of the four formulas listed, two for introducing the lead speaker's words and two for documenting the respondent's reaction, both καὶ ἐγὼ ἔφην and οὐχ ὡμολόγει have no exact parallels in Plato. Part of the puzzle may easily be solved if one bears in mind (i) that the verb φάναι ordinarily follows the first phrase of the speech reported, and (ii) that Plato could not write an ellipse; καὶ ἐγώ ... ἔφην, roughly 'and as for me, "…", said I' with the verb saved until after the first phrase of direct speech, is found some six times, either with only that first phrase intervening, or with something else besides, as at *Protagoras* 310b4 where a participial phrase 'recognizing his

---

[2] See Thesleff 1982, 83–87, 125–127, 152–157; Tarrant 2010; Schultz 2015.

[3] No interval is specified in *Charmides*, *Lysis* or *Amatores*.

[4] For an exploration of the 'trace elements of Socrates' narrative voice in the *Theaetetus*' (108) see Schultz 2015.

voice' also precedes the first phrase.[5] It is not too charitable to assume that Plato had meant to recall precisely this usage.

The same cure is not available for οὐχ ὡμολόγει, 'he was not in agreement'. There is nothing formulaic about this as far as one may judge. Negative responses are of course much less common in Plato than positive ones, and many negative responses occur when the protagonist actually invites a negative answer, so that the negative implies agreement rather than disagreement. The beauty of this particular formula, if it were found, would be that it always expresses disagreement just as the previous example, συνέφη, always expresses agreement. Disagreement with Socrates is mostly to be found among his tougher interlocutors, such as Critias, Thrasymachus and Protagoras. Accordingly, though the formula οὐχ ὡμολόγει does not occur, it would not have been out of place given the availability of the right context. But it is important to note that Socrates must eventually secure their agreement, however reluctant they may be, if the elenchus is not to come to a premature close.

The simple ὡμολόγει is found as a way of expressing the interlocutor's agreement in the *Amatores* (included here because of its narrative presentation in spite of doubts about its authenticity),[6] the *Protagoras*, and the *Euthydemus*. The language of agreement using the root –*homolog*– reaches levels of more than 2 per thousand words in the following dialogues:[7] *Amatores* (8.25NS), *Hipparchus* (6.18DS), *Crito* (4.85D), *Euthydemus* (3.84N), *Gorgias* (2.98D), *Protagoras* (2.88N), *Symposium* (2.28N), *Meno* (2.07D) and *Alcibiades II* (2.04DS). *Clitopho* (1.91DS), *Charmides* (1.90N) and *Theaetetus* (1.85D?) are not far be-

---

[5] Cf. *Chrm.* 153b7; more problematic is *Prt.* 311a8–b2 where other main verbs, also introduced by καὶ ἐγὼ, intervene, so I do not count this instance. From *Prt.* 310b4 and *Chrm.* 153b7 one gathers that there is a tendency to use this formula very early in a conversation, and this applies to new conversations within a dialogue too, *Eud.* 304e6 (Crito to Isocrates), *Smp.* 201e8 (Socrates to Diotima) and *Resp.* 449b8 (discussion is resumed in book V), leaving only one example from an established discussion, *Chrm.* 161b8.

[6] In a previous study of 'narrative response formulae' (Tarrant 1994) I suggested that the *Amatores* behaved more like a very early dialogue than a spurious one, and found it most similar to *Protagoras*, *Symposium*, and *Euthydemus* in matters pertaining to narratological apparatus. The order used here is the one suggested by that study, except that *Euthydemus* here appears before *Symposium*. I am not pretending to know the precise order of writing or of preparation for publication.

[7] I have included the rate per thousand words in brackets, adding the letters S for suspect, D for direct, and N for narrative.

hind. The list contains a disproportionate number of narrative dialogues (particularly if suspect and/or brief dialogues are ignored), and of the remainder not only the *Theaetetus* but also the *Gorgias* was thought by Thesleff (1982: 86–87; 2003) to have been through an earlier narrated version. If that is correct, then it seems plausible that one or the other of these could have included the expression 'He was not in agreement' where direct dialogue would offer an expression of disagreement in the present tense coming directly from the interlocutor.[8]

I present here in Table 1 the number of cases where the formulaic *inserenda* are to be found in the narrative dialogues that have come down to us in that form, giving also the positive ὡμολόγει and cases of the delayed verb in the first formula mentioned, assuming that Plato had expected readers to understand an ellipse here.

Table 1: Occurrence of the *inserenda* of 143c across the narrated dialogues

inserenda	*Amat.*	*Prt.*	*Eud.*	*Symp.*	*Chrm.*	*Phd.*	*Lys.*	*Resp.*	*Prm.*
καὶ ἐγὼ ἔφην	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
καὶ ἐγώ ... ἔφην	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	0
καὶ ἐγὼ εἶπον#	2	11*	0	1*	0	0	4	3	1
συνέφη	1	4	9	0	0	2	0	1*	0
οὐχ ὡμολόγει	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ὡμολόγει	4	7	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8	24	19	2	2	2	4	5	1

Also twice in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, once in his *Cyropaedia*.
* Signifies one case rather close.

When looking at these figures one has to realise that *Symposium*, *Phaedo* and *Parmenides*, because they are not narrated by Socrates himself, offer very little opportunity for the first person forms. The *Euthydemus* also offers little opportunity for them because of the limited role of Socrates within the reported con-

---

[8] While those who postulate an original narrative version of either dialogue would not normally expect them to have differed in that respect only, I cannot discover any point where this might have happened in an *Ur-Gorgias*.

versation.[9] This makes it all the more obvious that the *Republic*, where neither limiting factor applies, only contains a few of these allegedly tedious forms in spite of its considerable length, and certainly an insufficient number to entail that one becomes bored with them. It was particularly noticeable that in preference to the form καὶ ἐγὼ εἶπον the *Republic* employs the same verb parenthetically after the first phrase of speech, with or without the first–person pronoun. Table two will make this clear:

Table 2: Parenthetic uses of εἶπον etc.

inserenda	Amat.	Prt.	Eud.	Symp.	Chrm.	Phd.	Lys.	Resp.	Prm.
εἶπον ἐγώ [p]	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	9	2
εἶπον [p]	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	93	1
εἶπεν [p]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
εἰπεῖν [p]	NA	NA	NA	14	NA	NA	NA	NA	10

Curiously, though there seems to have been a marked trend towards using the first person of this verb parenthetically by the time of the *Republic* (as it has come down to us), this did not follow through to the third person for which different verbs (e.g. φάναι) were preferred. However, in the two dialogues where much of the narrative involves reported speech, the infinitive was freely used.

The *inserenda* and the date of writing

Given the marked trend away from the *inserenda* specified by Euclides it seems obvious that what one might call the default position regarding the *Theaetetus* does not sit easily with the data that have been produced here. The majority will assume, often with comparatively little reflection, that (i) the dialogue appeared in one version only and even if an alternative proem had once existed (as claimed at anon. *in Tht.* III 28–37) it was at best a discarded version of the proem only. They will also assume with Eva Sachs (1914) that (ii) the date of

---

[9] He leads the conversation only at 278e3–282d3 and 288d5–290c8, so that there is little need to vary the expressions by which first person remarks are introduced.

composition is 369 BCE or shortly after,[10] and that it follows the *Republic*.
What I should now like to argue is that, if the *Theaetetus* had been first written
soon after the completion of the *Republic* or even during its composition, then
it is likely that a different set of *inserenda* would have come to mind as the pro-
logue was written, including the parenthetic forms just discussed. Although the
inserenda differed markedly between the *Protagoras* and *Euthydemus* and the
Republic, Plato might also have found some formulae in common, such as the
parenthetic formula, ἔφην ἐγώ, which occurred regularly in almost all narrative
dialogues except those with a narrator other than Socrates.[11] Why should it be
that Plato's Euclides only mentions formulae that were already obsolete or obso-
lescent? Clearly there is an argument here for the prologue of the *Theaetetus*, or
this part of it at least,[12] having been composed at a time when Plato had recently
been using the response formulae that he now finds himself rejecting, whether
or not for the reasons given.

It will now be instructive to record in Table 3 the books of the *Republic* in
which the rare occurrences of the seemingly earlier *inserenda* occur, comparing
the distribution of ἔφην ἐγώ:

---

[10] For significantly more thoughtful treatment see Narcy 1994, 34–39 and Sedley 2004, 1 n.1; for
a much earlier date for the supposed death from battle of Theaetetus see Thesleff 1990, Nails 2002.

[11] Here are the figures, but it must be appreciated that there were very limited opportunities for this
formula in *Symposium*, *Phaedo* and *Parmenides*, so that only *Lysis* seems to have too few:

inserendum	*Amat.*	*Prt.*	*Eud.*	*Symp.*	*Chrm.*	*Phd.*	*Lys.*	*Resp.*	*Prm.*
ἔφην ἐγώ [p]	4	32	26	4	8	2	1	20	0

Note that uses for this response formula are also found in brief conversations in *Apology* (1) and
Theages (3).

[12] An alternative proem was known to the anonymous commentator on the work (III 28–37), and
began with a request of Euclides to his slave to fetch the book about Theaetetus; hence in this
version too the spotlight seems to have fallen on the book itself and presumably on the manner in
which it had been written.

Table 3: Distribution of *inserenda* in books of *Republic*

inserenda	Resp. 1	Resp. 2	Resp. 3–5	Resp. 6–7	Resp. 8–9	Resp. 10	Total
καὶ ἐγώ … ἔφην	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
καὶ ἐγὼ εἶπον	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
συνέφη	1*	0	0	0	0	0	1*
ἔφην ἐγώ	2	0	9	4	4	1	20

Those familiar with the six-book *Republic* about which there has been recent discussion will want to know also that all book 5 references are from the earliest part that was included in book 3 of the six-book edition.[13] That might well mean that all the *obsolescent* forms came from the earliest parts of the work, and indeed that they were themselves *obsolete* by the time that Plato was writing books 6 and 7.

Let us suppose then that the final version of the *Theaetetus* did belong to the period after the *Republic*, and that the *Republic* can have done nothing to determine the examples of *inserenda* that Plato chose. What could have done so? Why does he have these particular trappings of the narrative dialogues in mind? The obvious answer would be that these forms were of precisely the type that an earlier version of the *Theaetetus* had employed, and that these phrases had indeed been removed in the process of rewriting. If this is correct, then it would show not only that the hypothetical early version had existed, but also which of the narrative dialogues it had some affinity with. The *Protagoras* had employed καὶ ἐγώ … ἔφην, καὶ ἐγὼ εἶπον, συνέφη and ὡμολόγει. There is no reason to suppose that it could not have used also οὐχ ὡμολόγει should the occasion have arisen. The *Theaetetus* resembles the *Protagoras* not only in making a great deal of use of Protagoras of Abdera, albeit indirectly rather than as an interlocutor, but also in making considerable use of vocabulary from the root *–homolog–* in the very part of the work that undertakes the refutation of Protagoras. The refu-

---

[13] See Tarrant 2012; the Antiatticista cites 5.460d3 as book 3 of his edition, but 5.462b8 as book 4; it is suggested that Gellius' talk of the first two books of the *politeia* to be published at *NA* 14.3.3 makes reasonably sense on the assumption that we are talking of the first two books of the description of the state in its *six book* version, i.e. from the middle of our book 2 to the middle of our book 5 (ibid. 72–73). Gellius believes that Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* was written in response to just this, and that Plato in turn added a further two books.

tation begins after the theory that knowledge is sensation has been adequately canvassed at 161a. Before Protagoras' name was introduced at 152a there had been only three cases of this vocabulary including 143c. From 152a to 161a there had been six cases. In the refutation of Protagoras, which lasts from 161b to 179b, excluding the digression from 172b–177c, there are twenty-two cases in only 13 Stephanus pages, as opposed to that same number in the whole of the rest of the work, a further 56 Stephanus pages. Table 4 presents this material in tabulated form:

Table 4: Distribution of –omolog– vocabulary in sections of *Theaetetus*

Section	Description	*homolog*– words	St. pages	No. per 'page'
142a–143c	Proem	1	1.4	0.71
143d–151d	Introductory discussion	2	8.2	0.24
151e–161a	Theaetetus' theory	6	10.4	0.58
161b–72a, 177d–9b	Protagoras refuted	22	12.8	1.72
172b–177c	Ethical digression	0	5.4	0
179c–186e	Sensation refuted	2	7.6	0.26
187a–201c	True & false opinion	8	14.6	0.55
201d–210d	True opinion + logos	4	9.2	0.43

While the figures show clearly that this vocabulary of assent is concentrated in the refutation of Protagoras, they fail to show why. Protagoras is absent, and it is extremely important that Socrates is fair to him by procuring assent on his behalf at every stage. Though reluctant, Theodorus eventually has to take up the cause and become the primary interlocutor from 169c until such time as both Protagoras and Heraclitus are beaten. Essentially he has to assent and to dissent on Protagoras' behalf. When an intellectual is forced to disagree with something that Socrates has said, the disagreement is generally either quite complex or accompanied by a strong reaction that signifies his personal involvement with the issues.[14] Or it may be rather that he is forced somehow to agree, but with

---

[14] Examples involving Thrasymachus can be found at *Resp.* 337a3, d5, 338d2, c6, d2, 342d3, 343a1–8, e5; examples involving Protagoras are found at *Prt.* 331b8–c3, 331e6–332a1, 351c7–d7,

the utmost difficulty and reservation, such as is nicely described at *Republic* 350c12–d3.[15] An expression such as οὐχ ὡμολόγει is a colourless way of recording dissent; it says nothing about the reasons, emotional or intellectual, for which assent is withheld, and give no sense of the intellectual battle that is being fought. But, when Theodorus agrees to give answers on Protagoras' behalf, assent and dissent can be offered dispassionately, for it is not his theory or his reputation that are at stake. He does not often disagree with Socrates here, but does fall short of agreeing at 171c8–9. At that point a narrative version might have run something like: 'He did not assent; but rather he said that they were pursuing his friend too hard.' The following two answers are, at Socrates' invitation (171d3–7), given by Theodorus from his own perspective, not from that of Protagoras.

Hence I can offer this one location only where the phrase οὐχ ὡμολόγει would have been in place in a narrative version of the *Theaetetus*, and it is no accident that it occurs at a point where agreement had been of vital importance to the argument itself. In fact the terminology of agreement discussed above had been here at its peak, occurring ten times between 169d and 171d, so such an expression would have had added meaning in this context. However, the important thing is not that a context is found for the elusive οὐχ ὡμολόγει, but that if, as seems reasonable, Plato was writing his final version of the *Theaetetus* when the *Republic* was complete, or partially so but sketched out in full, which is as much as Thesleff allows (1982: 186), then it was certainly not the *Republic* that inspired the list of *inserenda* at 143c, but narrative practices that were much more akin to those of the *Protagoras*. Precisely why it had been seemingly earlier dialogues that inspired this list should remain open to further debate. Here I merely suggest that each of the four *inserenda* cited might conceivably have been employed in an earlier narrative version of the *Theaetetus* itself.

University of Newcastle Australia

359e1–3, 360d6, e3–5.

[15] Cf. *Prt.* 333b3–4, 334e2–4, 360d3–4.

References:

G. Bastianini – D. N. Sedley (eds.) 1995. [edition of the anonymous *In Theaetetum* in] *Corpus dei papiri filosofici greci e latini* 3, *Commentari*, Firenze, 227–562.

D. Nails 2002. *The People of Plato, a Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics*, Indianapolis.

M. Narcy (trans.) 1994. *Platon:* Théétète*: Traduction et presentation par Michel Narcy*, Paris.

E. Sachs 1914. *De Theaeteto Atheniensi mathematico*, Diss. Berlin.

A.-M. Schultz 2015. "Listening to Socrates in the *Theaetetus*: Recovering a Lost Narrator", in D. Nails and H. Tarrant (eds.), *Second Sailing: Alternative Perspectives on Plato* (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 132), Helsinki, 107–124.

D. Sedley 2004. *The Midwife of Platonism*, *Text and Subtext in Plato's* Theaetetus, Oxford.

H. Tarrant 1994. "Chronology and Narrative Apparatus in Plato's Dialogues", *Electronic Antiquity* 1.8, reprinted in H. Tarrant, *From the Old Academy to Later Neo-Platonism*, Aldershot, 2011.

H. Tarrant 2010. "The *Theaetetus* as a Narrative Dialogue", *Australian Society for Classical Studies Proceedings* 31: 1–17.

H. Tarrant 2012. "The Origins and Shape of Plato's Six-Book Republic", *Antichthon* 46: 52–78.

H. Thesleff 1982. *Studies in Platonic Chronology*, *Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum*, Helsinki. Reprinted in Thesleff 2009, 143–382.

H. Thesleff 1990. "Theaitetos and Theodoros", *Arctos* 24: 147–159. Reprinted in Thesleff 2009, 509–518.

H. Thesleff 2003. "A Symptomatic Text Corruption: Plato, *Gorgias* 448a5", *Arctos* 37: 251–7. Reprinted in Thesleff 2009, 551–6.

H. Thesleff 2009. *Platonic Patterns*: *A Collection of Studies by Holger Thesleff*, Las Vegas.