In this paper, I examine broad features of Hegel’s interpretation of Plato in his Lectures on the History of Philosophy, noting how these features resonate with current views of Platonic philosophy.1 Hegel formed his interpretation of Plato under very different circumstances than those of today. Serious study of the Hellenic dialogue had come to the forefront in German Idealist philosophy. As Rieger Ritter notes, "It was this tradition of thought that discovered, in an original way of its own, the standard Plato to place of the various mediate substitutes of before, and indeed saw him as a thinker who was to provide continuing inspiration to the needs of post-Kantian philosophy."2 We find Hegel holds Plato is high esteem, most famously in a "teacher of the human race" alongside Socrates. His Plato is one who is fundamentally significant in the development of philosophy, raising it to the status of science, although not in a fully systematic manner. At the same time, Hegel distinguishes his Plato from the images of his contemporaries, Tannager’s ecstatic Plato and Schleiermacher’s aesthetic Plato. Hegel also formulates his view of Plato at a time just prior to the development of philosophical studies of these dialogues, begun in its modern form by K. J. Hintzen (1839) and furthered forward by Lewis Campbell and Friedrich Biihler in the later half of the 19th century. (This is not to claim that questions regarding the ordering of the dialogues did not arise earlier than 1879, but that they became scientific and existing in Platonic interpretation with Heine’s.) The presence Hegel negotiate in his interpretation to quite distinct, especially in this last respect, yet not altogether alike. There are, I think, interesting reasons for this. (One might think the great Hegel’s strong opposition to Schleiermacher—saw Hegel’s disposition towards development, he might have been inclined towards a developmental reading of Plato. One also might think that given his opposition to Tannager’s ecstaticism, he might have had most doubts about discovering a system within Plato’s confrontral dialogue, but one would be wrong on both counts.)

We confront the question of which Plato we are confronting with Hegel’s when assessing his work. The Plato we conceive is under construction. This is both the case historically, and deep divides exist in contemporary interpretation, especially with respect to hypotheses concerning the chronology of the dialogues, the date for determining
Socratic philosophy forms the Platonic corpus, and the literary character of Plato's dialogues. It was suggested in the past that the "erroneous" of Hegel's thought is of no importance — even if this Plato is wholly imaginary, it would be among the foundational stones of Hegelian thought. This manner of thinking about the "correctness" or "incorrectness" of Plato misses an interesting and crucial problem, one Hegel recognizes very clearly. Plato's dialogues represent a problem of interpretation. While Hegel expresses great confidence in his interpretation, he recognizes and responds to interpretive concerns: 1) the relationship between Socratic and Platonic thought; 2) the dialogue form; 3) Platonism, Anaxagoras and 4) Platonic myth. All of these issues remain with us today. Hegel describes Plato's philosophy as a "text" in which previous one-sided philosophies are united in a concrete form (Vol. 2, 13). This is quite an appropriate metaphor for approaching Plato's dialogues in general. In order to clarify the heart of Platonic philosophy, Hegel must also unravel and, at times, cut through what he perceives as misapprehensions of this not-yet-systematic philosophy potentially in need of deciphering. His decisions are informative for us, and demonstrate an awareness of the difficulties involved in interpreting Plato.

Section 1: The Lay of the Land
As around the same time as Catherine Zuckert's work on "Post-Modern Plato" was published, the Anglo-American scene was marked by John Cooper's 1997 "reading" of brewing disputes with respect to the chronology of Plato's dialogues in his introduction in the Complete Works of Plato. In his introduction to what has become a relatively standard anthology of Plato's dialogues translated into English, Cooper describes the lack of scholarly consensus as to the "weighting of chronology" of the dialogues (as Guild, Fine put it). Deon Naidoo published work examining in detail the issue of consensus among Plato scholars and interpreters in 1995. She demonstrates that consensus is neither broad nor deep, and that with the exception of a large group, with some qualifications, very little consensus exists. Appealing to Jacques Derrida for support in using the labels 'early' or 'middle' and never for 'transitional', she contends, will no longer suffice to support philosophical interpretations of Plato's dialogues. Alternative chronologies, challenging traditional arrangements of Plato's dialogues, had been put forth earlier by Helene Thelen (1982) and Charles Kahn (1981), but Kahn's publication of Plato and the Socratic Dialogue in 1996, a full length work on his view of the literary form and philosophical significance of the Platonic Dialogues, coincides with Cooper's general announcement about the state of scholarship on the matter. The lack of consensus regarding the chronology of Plato's works primarily concerns the dialogues considered early, middle and transitional (between early and middle and middle and late). It may appear as though the chronological dating and grouping of the dialogues is a small argument among scholars; however, in its context this argument is far-reaching. The impetus regarding the chronology of the "early" and "middle" works has inspired a renewed appeal of a "Unitary" view of the dialogues. This approach to Plato dates back to Schleiermacher,
and (roughly) holds that the dialogues are unified in terms of their philosophical content. Plato wrote all his dialogues with his core Platonic philosophy or philosophical commitments in place, according to this approach. The diversity of viewpoints and treatises on topics throughout the corpus is only an apparent diversity.

Uncertainty about the chronology of the "early", "middle", and "late" dialogues challenges the developmental view of Plato—the view that located and gradual transitions in Plato's thinking over the course of his career through the Platonic Corpus. This developmental view (also known as the "generic approach") began with Hegel's death, with the differentiation of distinct stages in Plato's thought (Kurt Frieden and Hermann 1839), became popularized with the work of W. K. C. Guthrie (1924), and culminated in scholarship that aims to discern Sophistic thought in the Platonic dialogues. Plato, Socrates, and Diogenes Laertius were, for example, depicted as peripatetic views of Socratic views and/or Sophistic thought as found in the early Platonic dialogues. The ways to determine Plato's development is challenged, the premise, if dialogues differ in some ways, as Kahn proposes, and we need to read at least some dialogues prophetically as he suggests (looking forward to doctrines from the middle dialogues, especially the Republic, not backwards to Socratic ideas). The Philosopher's chronology has more textual features, grouping together in no particular order most dialogues that might be considered early (Lysis, Charmides) with those considered middle (Phaedo, Symposium), and holding that the late dialogues were not written exclusively by Plato at all.

The lack of certainty about the composition dates and groupings of the dialogues results in an appeal to "hermeneutic unity" with which the dialogues can be grouped, as Cooper proposes. A thematic grouping which designates the "ethical" (Group I), "cosmological" (Group II), and "latter dialogues" (Group III) has been meaningfully taken up. This thematic assessment of the Platonic corpus leads to groupings roughly similar to the traditional "early", "middle", and "late" categorizations, which stem essentially on the surface, yea is nowhere near the clarity that, for example, Terry Pinker argues for with respect to the Socratic nature of the early dialogues. This thematic grouping of the dialogues, despite resembling traditional groupings, allows for a greater degree of flexibility in determining relationships between dialogues. This flexibility may be seen as either an interpretive virtue or an interpretive vice, depending on the Plato one is attempting to construct—how unified the dialogues are. We have on our hands a diptych that, on the one hand, advises caution, advising that the dialogues themselves provide poor evidence for certainty about their composition, and, on the other, argues for the certainty using the content of the dialogues as evidence.

The Unitarian view has a great appeal for scholars interested in the literary aspects of the Platonic dialogues, but attention to the literary features of the dialogues is important in Socrates and the contemporary Ptolemaic school work on Plato. As Mary Cummings sees, poetic development does not lead to literary development as well. As the broadest level, a certain "spirit of Schleiermacher" (not the latter) permeates a great deal of contemporary work on Plato, wherever the particular interpretive positions. G. R. Fein, an advocate of the
highly literary "non-dogmatic and Non-doctrinal" view of Plato, cited Schrammacher as an historical originator of the literary approach to the dialogues as well as the \textit{elenchus} mentioned before, the two often going hand-in-hand. The general prior to text elucidates about the state of the literature in the 1970's is that the literary aspects of the dialogues have become a "live debate". Even if one does not accept an "anti-doctrinal" position such as Pense's, assessing the philosophical significance of the literary features of Plato's dialogues becomes a problem. Pense states, "the question ... is no longer whether literary and dramatic matter are important for understanding the dialogues, but how". Plato's dialogues are increasingly perceived as philosophical-literary works, although the meaning of this hyperbola of philosophy and art is extremely difficult to adjudicate.

As we examine Hegel's attempt to discern a not-yet-systematic but identifiable Platonist philosophy, I shall employ a certain amount of the technical vocabulary currently in use to distinguish different approaches to Plato (Developmentalist versus Unitarian) being the most crucial, as well as the accepted terminology for such problems as "the Dialogue Form" and "Platonic Anachronism". While this involves some reconfiguration of current viewpoints onto Hegel, I want to make clear that Hegel develops his view with much of this vocabulary at hand, and although not defining himself as "unitarian" (as opposed to Developmentalist) he nevertheless has a genuine sense of his interpretive options. The "problem of interpretation" in which he works is quite clear to him. Hegel's philosophical works during a period of revived interest in Plato (particularly in response to Kant's critical philosophy) come on the scene on the very cusp of modern Platonism scholarship. In my conclusion, I shall return to the issue I raise here with respect to evaluating and classifying Hegel's work on Plato, and I shall show the significance it has for us.

Section II: Xenophon versus Plato: An Initial Knox

Hegel's expositions of Socrates and Plato in his \textit{History of Philosophy} novel is very distinctive choice of source materials, particularly with respect to Xenophon. Sources did not write, and in order to correct the deficiencies in his philosophy we are forced to rely on secondary accounts of his views from the ancient authors of Greek Discourses (including Xenophon and Plato), comments from Aristotle, and those from later antiquity by Diogenes Laertius. How these sources are employed, and how their reliability is understood is by no means constant. Hegel cites Xenophon as the main source from which he gains Socratic thought. This choice might seem to today as strange choice, especially for anyone who has come to accept the Developmentalist approach to Plato and holds that we have to correct the early dialogues concerning and reproduce the views of Socrates. Our present day Xenophon is not Hegel's Xenophon's reliability as a source has been challenged; however, Hegel's use of this source material is not merely the pre-wiring of a classical source. These philosophical reasons for his focus on Xenophon to reconstruct Socrates' views.
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Hegel addresses the distinction between Plato and Xenophon's accounts in the second part of his exposition of the Socratic Principle (subjectivity's consciousness of itself as the source of truth).

If we consider the negative stoic in his wisdom as a positive and a negative side, which we find both united in Xenophon's 'Meinmalerei', a work which aims at justifying Socrates And if we inquire whether he or Plato depicts Socrates as we meet him in his philosophy and doctrine then in question that is to regard to the personality and moral of the essence of his teaching, we may certainly receive from Plato a satisfactory explanation and perhaps a more complete representation of what Socrates was, but in regard to the context of his teaching and the point reached by him in the development of thought, we have in no man to look to Xenophon. (Vol. 1, 414)

While appreciating the artistic power of Plato's depictions of Socrates as representation, Hegel sees these representations as external (presenting) Plato better represents Socrates' personality, psychology, and mode of communication, yet Xenophon provides the body of his philosophical views. Hegel also finds that Xenophon is not the very finest philosophical source. In Hegel's later discussion of the Socratic Philosophy he notes that some followers of Socrates professed Socratic discourse (Sophistic Logic), but went no further, pursuing only the one-sided (subjective) understanding of Socratic culture, which produced varied schools given the indifference and abstention of his principles (Vol. 1, 490). The Socratic authors included Xenophon, Anaxarchus, Aristocles, and Plato. As a faithful Socratean, he explains, they showed from outside, and by directing their attention to what was practical, wished firmly and indubitably to the fulfillment of duties of their positive and cumulative (Vol. 1, 400). The solitary Xenophon's depiction of Socrates from the practical effects of engaging in conversation (dialogue) with Socrates — self-mastery (education) and temperance (spiritual). Xenophon's appeal to Hegel seems to lie in his lost art and philosophical sophistication, in the fact that he appears always to exposition Socrates' ideas without these features.

For Hegel, Xenophon's accounts, with occasional refinements from Plato's Apology, demonstrate and provide the source for explicating Socrates' principles, the subjective direction of the individual as a source of his to has ideal. Socrates is very much like a 'little Luther' in respect to this principle. He explains how this subjective principle set Socrates at odds with the Spheno of Athenian culture (its ceremony, court ritual), and, moreover, how Socrates' talk and education were revolutionized by his philosophical mission. This exposition may seem to us to be a remarkable fact, considering that Hegel does not engage in excessive interpretation of Plato's Apology and 'early dialogues'. He uses the Apology as confirm Xenophon's account, and makes only a brief reference to Plato's Protagoras with respect to Socrates' idea of courage. (Vol. 1, 410).

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Hegel’s account of Socrates incorporates a resistance to the aesthetic features of the Platonic dialogues. He separates Socrates from Plato and for the most part treats the Platonic dialogues as Plato’s works expressing Plato’s views. On the one hand, Hegel agrees that there is such a thing as Socratic thought, and does not deny a strong relationship between Socrates and Plato.

On the other hand, Hegel does not seek out the main content of Socratic thought in Plato’s dialogues. Hegel is charmed by Plato’s representation of Socrates, though not seduced by it in the end. His position on Socrates reflects something like a Unitarian viewpoint with respect to Plato; yet it is based upon the overall position he maintains with respect to philosophers and the history of philosophy in general. In his discussion of the ‘transcendence’ of Plato’s dialogue he states: Philosophy is essentially one and the same, every succeeding philosophy will and must make up into his own, all the philosophies that went before, and what falls specially to him is their further development’ (Vol. 2, 13). Plato’s thought represents a knot (as mentioned earlier) — a concrete moment in the history of philosophy — and that he sees Plato’s dialogues holistically. But Hegel’s ‘satisfaction’ here is quite distinctive. There is an overarching unity in all philosophy — its progress towards the absolute, yet this unity does not end itself as a balking of philosophy. A philosopher stands as he is or her own time, reflecting thought’s reflection upon itself within the limitations of a given historical
content. Hegel perceives each individual philosopher as self-contained within this program. The history of philosophy consists, as he states, in 'epochalization of opinions'. Each individual philosopher furthers the development of the concept (determinate idea) towards the one (absolute) idea:

Matter — which as developed has form — becomes once more material for a new form. Mind again takes as its object and applies its intensity to the notion, in which going within itself, it has comprehended itself, which is in form and being, and which has just been separated from it. The application of thought to this, resolves it with the form and determination of thought. This action thus further hovers the previously formed, gives a additional determinations, makes it more determinate in itself, further developed and more profound. (Vic, 1,27)

Hegel's choice of Xenophobes as a seemingly neutral representation of Socrates makes sense in light of the development of the history of philosophy. In contrast, contemporary developments regard Plato's early dialogues as representing Socrates' thought. The arguments for this view are indeed, as to break, into the dialogues themselves, chronologically establishing the order of Plato's dialogues and the evolution of the positions Socrates holds in the early dialogues as opposed to those held by Plato in the middle and late dialogues. This move is the strongest one available to us yet, as described earlier, by no means secure. University like Kuhn argue that not only is there an alternative chronological arrangement such that all the major dialogues from which we might discern Socratic thought in fact look forward to the Republic, there are additional reasons to doubt both Xenophobes and Areopagite as reliable sources for constructing Socratic thought. If Kuhn is correct, Hegel's use of Xenophobes as a source of the concept of Socratic thought amounts to using Plato misappropriately. Xenophobes, he attempts to show, depends on the Platonist dialogues as a source. It may be that Socrates' view has never been as difficult to construct as it is today, as the reliability of all of our sources is increasingly debated. Hegel's confidence in the relationship between Socrates and Plato, that there is a relationship, persists amid, Socrates' presence throughout the Platonic corpus except for the lost early refusals, and the shifting functions of Socrates, especially in the late dialogues, must indicate something as well. Cashing out these meanings depends on a thorough account or theory of the dialogues themselves.

Section III: The Unity of the Platonic Corpus
Among our contemporary interpretive knots is the question as to how unified Plato's dialogues are. Developmentalist and current Unicist views diverge. I have already noted that Hegel's approach can be considered Unicist, as is initially evident in his treatment of Socratic thought. The two philosophers stand related, yet discrete. As such, Plato's dialogues stand alone as the source from which we can grasp Plato's thought, and
Hegel begins his discussion of Plato, he recognizes the difficulties the dialogues represent for an investigator. For neither the single fact that the dialogues are "dialectic," a term which does not mean "philosophy," nor their systematic nature and historical development has been subjected to a study of readings, which have exaggerated their form over their content or been crudely diagnostic.

We have to speak in the first place, of the direct mode in which Plato's philosophy has come down to us; it is to be found in those writings we possess, independent they are none of the later gospels which have been preserved from the time that are named. His philosophy is not, however, merely speaking preserved there in systematic form, and we construct it from such existing facts is difficult, not so much from anything in itself, as because this philosophy has been differently understood in different periods of time; and more than all, because it has been much more handled in modern times by those who have other ends into it. This systematic form, however, is the essential element and most significant element in Plato's philosophy; that which we retain from our study to philosophy at all, but only to the mode of presentation, in this, however, it is only governance of Philosophy that makes it difficult to grasp the philosophy of Plato. The form and content of these works are alike of interest and importance. In studying them we must nevertheless make sure, if what Philosophy we mean to seek and may find within them, and we are not aware, what Plato's view was not to give, (Vol. 2, 7).

In the passage above, Hegel outlines the misguided interpretations to the lack of understanding of Spirit, which, if understood (as he does), makes understanding Plato's works easier. Hegel is also highly aware of historical content, as he notes that we cannot expect to find what is not Plato's to provide, and when's later try to explain the difference of opinion in the dialogue: The Philosophic nature of Plato, like the general culture of his time, was not yet ripe for truly scientific work; the idea was still too fresh and new; it was in its infancy then it amounted to a systematic form of representation (Vol. 2, 17). The dialogue, in historically found, must be appreciated just as they are, thus both the form and content of Plato's works are of interest and importance. We shall see how difficult it is to maintain this claim as Hegel presents the particular involved in the literary form and content, thus the content of the dialogues balancing form and content, or appreciating the dialogues for both their form and content in their own way, the issue being to reduce the philosophical content to literature. For Hegel, this change took the form of Romantic enthusiasm for the dialogues, and he cites Schopenhauer as an opponent.

It would be perfectly justifiable to return to Plato in order to learn more from him the idea of speculative philosophy, but it is to speak of him with
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evisceral enthusiasm, as if he represented beauty and excellence in general. Moreover it is quite superfluous for Philosophy, and this belongs to the hypostasisms of our time, to treat Plato from a literary point of view, to Schillerianer does, critically examining whether one or another of the minor dialogues is genuine or not. Regarding the more important of the dialogues, we may consider that the testimony of the ancient leaves not the slightest doubt.

(Vol. 2, 10)

The alternative danger is to ignore the form of the dialogue, picking and choosing the contexts out of context. Hegel criticizes Tonniesmann for this approach (being Plato to formalism proofs of God's existence), as well as the Neo-Platonists, who he claims elevated Pythagorean myths to theorems.

Much worse, for Hegel, would be to interpret Plato's dialogues as a hodgepodge of ideas, without any commitment to any of the positions articulated (as Grotz would interpret Plato in 1875). Such a position views Plato as a philosopher of absent ancestors, the dialogues being fundamentally fragmentary. Hegel embraces the many fragmentariness of the dialogues, rejecting the view that Plato 'bravely expounded the system and doctrine of Socrates' as well as the Sophists, Pythagoreans, Heracliteans' followers and the Eleatics (Vol. 2, 12). In a rather clair manner, Hegel's characterization of Plato at times makes it clear that he sees his own history of philosophy in the dialogues. Plato is a 'little Hegel'.

Thus in Plato's Philosophy we see an attempt of philosophy enabling from earlier times obscured into a deeper principle, and therein united. It is in this way that Plato's philosophy shows itself to be a totality of ideas, and therefore, as the result, the pretensions of other are comprehended in itself. (Vol. 2, 14)

Historically, he notes, Plato's dialogues have been seen as the outward form of this internal content, fundamentally a kind of philosophical novel. The elements of his philosophical views are sublated within Plato's, but Plato's thought cannot be reduced to those particular thinkers.

Hegel's Unitarian approach to the dialogues, in contemporary terms, depends on the consistency of their philosophical constitutional aim, which he sees as having both a negative and positive character.

With Plato there can be so much of this ambiguity, and the difficulty is only one of expression. In the Dialogues of Plato his philosophy is quite clearly expressed; they are not constructed as are the conversations of some people, which consists of many monologues, in which one person expresses a certain opinion and another person differs from him, and both hold to their own way of thinking. Here, on the contrary, the divergency of opinions which come out is examined.
Hence these first two sides of the dialectic, directed as they are towards the dissolution of the particular and thus to the production of the universal, are not yet dialectic in its true form; it is a dialectic which Plato has in common with the Sophists, who understood very well how to distinguish the particular. (Vol. 2, p. 53)

Hegel finds the Sophists to be the source of this dissolution of the particular, although the Sophists did not produce the universal, just conclusion. Someone who contradicted the particular, but Hegel sees Plato’s views as generalized.

In connection with this, the second part of dialectic makes its first aim the bringing of the universal in terms to consciousness, which, as we remarked when speaking of Socrates, was the main interest of Socratic culture. From this time on, we may think of such an aim as having been discarded, and simply means that a number of Plato’s dialogues merely aim at bringing to consciousness a general consciousness.

While Socrates aimed at the individual consciousness of people in actual dialectical conversation, Plato, in a work of dialogue, brings general consciousness into view in the apoplectic dialogues. Socratic culture is disclosed in this respect, and Socrates, according to Hegel, necessarily comes into conflict with Athenian culture for influencing people in this manner.

Now because, it has been said, the new principle, by effecting an entrance into the Greek world, has come into collision with the substantial spirit and the existing sentiments of the Athenian people, a reaction had to take place, for the principle of the Greek world could not yet bear the principle of subjective reflection. The Athenian people were thus, not only justified, but also bound to react against it according to their law, for they regarded the principle as a crime. (Vol. 1, p. 444)
Plato, abandoning this kind of conflict with Athenian culture in writing his aporetic dialogues, brings Virtue, for reasons of his own, into view at a universal within philosophical discourse (not within individual persons). 11

Hegel relates Plato's negative, aporetic dialectic to the Speculative Dialectic, found in the late dialogues. The two dialectics form a whole in terms of Plato's overall philosophical method.

Now because the universal which has emerged from the confusion of the particular, i.e. the 
, beautiful and good, that which taken by itself is a species, was at first undetermined and absent, it is, in the third place, a principal part of Plato's endeavours further to determine this universal in itself. (Vol. 2, 53)

To be clear, Hegel does not find Plato engaging in speculative philosophy properly speaking — Hegel's admission for Plato is that he is the first philosopher to represent speculative dialectic: "We certainly do not find in Plato a full consciousness that this is the nature of dialectic, but we find dialectic itself present; that is, we find absolute elements that recognised in pure Notions, and the representation of the movement of these Notions" (Vol. 2, 49–50). The dialectic across the Platonic corpus, as Hegel sees it, represents something extremely close to his own continuation with Kantian critical philosophy. The aporetic dialogues, in a sense, demonstrate how the understanding can be "horrified", exposing the contradictions it arrives at, and in turn present the need for determination of a concept in Pure Reason. The "late dialogues" that represent this movement are pure reason. There is no hint in Hegel's account of the empirical 'Socratic Policy' (popularised by P. T. Geach), the argument that in the early dialogues Socrates must hold that definition is impossible, as requesting a definition presupposes the individuation of examples, but Socrates will not accept examples as definitions. As the aporetic dialogues and without scepticism, but consistently with the optimism that further work can be done in this respect, Hegel is quite close to the Socrates himself.

In contemporary "Unilaternal" terms, we might translate Hegel's view pedagogically (a notion Kahn endorses with respect to the book of the earlier, Group I dialogues). Plato's dialogues should be read looking forward to the Parmenides in respect to speculative dialectic and its method of collection (aeon) and division (dialem). This is where Plato demonstrates speculative dialectic:

The Notion of true dialectic is to show forth the necessary movement of pure Notions, without thereby resolving the into nothing for the sake, simply represented, as that they are at this movement, and the universal is just the unity of these opposite Notions. We cannot do this in Plato a full consciousness that this is the nature of dialectic, but we find dialectic itself present; that is, we find absolute existence thus recognised in pure Notions, and the representation of the movement of these Notions. (Vol. 2, 49–50)
The Parmenides demonstrates the movement of the universal in pure thought. This view is found only in the man, in Socrates' discussion of the forms (τέχνη) with Zeno, but preceding the critiques of the forms "but I would be much more impressed if someone were able to display this same difficulty, which you and Parmenides went through in the case of visible things, also similarly executed in modulative ways in the forms themselves — in things that are grasped by reasoning" (Parmenides 126b–130a). The universal is hence determined as that which resolves and has resolved the contradictions in itself, and hence it is the concrete in itself; thus this sublation of contradictions is affirmative (Vol. 2, 52). This aspect of Platonic dialectic is speculative in that it does not conclude with a negative result — instead it demonstrates the unity of opposites.

Important work has been done assuming Hegel's understanding of the Parmenides and the methods demonstrated in it, whether affirming his interpretation (Gedanke), or detailing it in terms of its plausibility — whether Plato intended the method of collection and division to be identified as schematic of the Idea. The point here is simply that dialectic as it appears in both 'early' and 'late' dialogue is the feature that unifies them for Hegel, and moreover, this issue is one that any Uniteristic interpretation of Plato's dialogues would confront. Developmental approaches have the benefit of examining the Parmenides in a wholly separate case from collection and division, perhaps confronting a problem with a "transitional stage in the noetic/dialectic" discussion of rhetoric. Projects that unify the dialogues must somehow relate the aporetic dialogues of Parmenides with the method of collection and division. Hegel does so elegantly. While one could claim that Hegel is superimposing his own view of speculative dialectic upon the Platonic texts, or charitably claim that Hegel is philosophizing with Plato, it is important to remember that Hegel's attention to the Parmenides and his dialogues insinuates scholarly attention to them. He is himself aware of the significance of his contribution: "The speculative dialectic which commences with him [Plato], is thus the most interesting but also the most difficult part of his work; hence acquaintance is not usually made with it when the Platonic writings are studied" (Vol. 2, 57). Hegel places questions pertaining to the technical philosophical significance of dialectic in the late dialogues on the table.

As Hegel is able to unify the Platonic corpus with respect to Plato's method, he is also able to deduce its positive content, a 'system' he finds expressed in the Parmenides, Timaea and the Symposium, corresponding respectively to Logos, Rational Philosophy and Philosophy of Spirit (critical philosophy) (Vol. 2, 69). Other Platonic dialogues are integrated instead as they supplement this system, that is to say, proléptically. It is important to recognize that the system Hegel constructs from the non-systematic Platonic corpus should be understood as an 'immanent' construction, one that utilizes the dialogues at hand and interprets what is said in them. This approach contrasts with the early beginnings of the 'epoic' approach to Plato. Hegel cites Témenos as a source for interpreting Plato as an cosmic philosopher — the view that in writing the dialogues
Plato did so in such a way as to communicate only what he wished to those with the capacity to grasp it. Hegel dismisses this approach:

How mistaken! This would appear as if the philosopher kept possession of his thoughts in the same way as of his external goods: the philosopher Idea is, however, something utterly different, and instead of being possessed by, it possesses a man. (Vol. 2, 11)

Simply through communication on philosophical subjects, ideas are parceled and followed, according to Hegel. The philosopher, in the act of expressing himself or herself on philosophical topics, communicates a view. "They cannot keep them in their pockets!" He describes an analogy between the philosopher and the poet in communication: if one's words have any meaning at all, they must contain whatever ideas are present in them. This does not seem to be a knock-down argument against external reading of the dialogues. Typically, strong arguments either question the sources for the unwritten documents of Plato (Plato's Seventh Letter, Phaedrus, Aristotle's comments on the Lecture or Lectures on the Good), or question the ultimate purpose of the dialogues themselves — why ultimately did Plato bother to write them? It may be more hopeful to see that Hegel is committed to taking texts at face-value — much like we have seen in his treatment of Xenophon. Ultimately, all forms of philosophical, religious and artistic expression, within their context, express the progress of the idea through history towards the Absolute. Hegel cannot admit a fundamental opacity between historical subjects, their culture, and their works. Plato cannot be treated any differently. These first-order expressions can, however, be misunderstood — Hegel continues: "the communication of ideas requires a certain skill; there is always something ecstatic in this, something more than merely rational" (Vol. 2, 12). Hegel avoids Schleiermacher's hermeneutics at this point, avoiding the idea of the impossibility of achieving intersubjective understanding. It is only through an immediate impersonation of the dialogues — utilizing the dialogues as representative of Platonic thought — and decentering the presence of the Notion here, that he can avoid falling into the errors he claims his contemporaries make. This becomes a most difficult challenge when he confuses the particular literary features of the Platonic texts, which do not communicate philosophical ideas transparently.

Section IV: Literary Aspects of the Dialogues
The literary aspect of Plato's dialogues arguably represent the Gordian knot in Platonic interpretation. The dialogues are part of a literary genre that flourished after the death of Socrates. Plato's dialogues uniquely combine artistic expression and philosophy. How these elements relate, as mentioned earlier, is difficult to adjudicate. Do the literary features and devices in the dialogues somehow support the philosophical issues they concern? Do they further them and/or undermine them? These kinds of questions can be
applied within most interpretive frameworks (excluding a completely analytic approach to the argument). Indeed, an approach that takes the dialogue at face value — as 'immanent' approach) — confirms the literary features directly as part of what is represented in each dialogue. They cannot be written off, as they are part of the whole text. Given that Hegel is committed to an immanent approach, it is not surprising that he devotes much time in discussing the literary aspects of the dialogues. And given that, at the same time, he must distinguish a close Platonic philosophy, one that transparently reflects the progress of the notion, in order to avoid Schleiermacher's subjective, literary approach, it is not surprising to find that he must explain away much of the literary features of the dialogues. I suggest, however, that there is considerable tension and instability in Hegel's position, and we shall see that, at times, his assessments contain significant questions that go unanswered.

b. Dialogue Form

We find Hegel's appreciation of the dialogue form mixed explicitly, but highly qualified, and there is a tension here that needs resolution. He states: 'The beauty of this form is highly consummative; yet we must not think, as many do, that it is the most perfect form in which to present philosophy; it is peculiar to Plato, and as a work of art is is of course to be much esteemed' (Vol. 2, 16). Dialogue is not the best presentation format, for Hegel. It is the first difficulty that stands in the way of comprehension, and he later notes that it is a 'deficiency in the Mode of Representation'. None of Plato's oral dialogues remain. The dialogues we have present an obstacle to a clear view of his philosophy. Hegel is assuming that there must be a clear philosophy. This assumption is substantiated and sharpened by the Neo-Platonic and ascetic interpreters he opposes, but is also shared by most non-sceptical interpreters of the dialogue (ancient or modern). His worry seems to be falling into a sceptical view, to diluting the dialogues with art. In Hegel's separation of the dialogue form from philosophy, we may also perceive a problem in terms of his use of dialectic to unify the Platonic trinity. As noted earlier in discussing the dialogue form, Hegel sees that the conversations of the dialogues are unlike conventional conversations in that they aim towards the universal, either positively (collection and division) or negatively (bringling to light the universal as necessary). How, exactly do we clearly separate out the dialogue form (the manner of presentation) from the dialectic, since the dialectic transpires in both cases in dialogue form? Hegel does not obviously perceive this problem.

Interestingly, C. B. Macmillan takes up this problem with explicit reference to Hegel — not to Hegel's interpretation of Plato, but to Hegel's understanding that metaphysics tends to be taken up only dialectically. He explains:

Hegel does not deny the need for metaphysics; he does not deny that the project can be real, only dialectically, and correspondingly that the effort to see limits compels us to make increasingly comprehensive claims.
Dialectic and the search for wholeness seem closely connected for both Hegel and Plato [...]. Kant's effort to assign dialectical reason to a non-empirical stance is thus self-defeating. As is clear from Kant's own writings, reason's (Vorurteile) knowledge of the a priori conditions for the empirical (Vorurteile) cannot be obtained within those conditions. Verstehen is modeled on belief (vertrauen); but the knowledge of belief cannot be an example of it. Tzolik made effective negans itself [...]. The Hegelian point is, in my opinion, shared by Plato.

If Griswold is correct, Hegel might have had at his disposal a means to examine the dialogue form as a necessary feature of Platonic philosophy. However, I would claim that this insight could only be revealed to us retrospectively. As Griswold discovers, following this line of inquiry into the metaphilosophical function of the dialogue form yields a Plato who contends with the radical critics of philosophy without undermining his own views in doing so. This Plato, whom Griswold compares with contemporary critics of reason like Rush and Derrida, serves contemporary needs, but not those of Hegel. His aim in the History of Philosophy (in which Plato plays his part) is to reveal the wholeness of philosophy itself. This overarching whole is an answer to his critics.

Yet, despite the absence of a thorough pursuit of the significance of the dialogue form, Hegel still manages to take none of the kind of fiction it provides the reader. Plato reifies the dialogues, and their rationalism is only an appearance — they are not 'real' conversations.

The dialogue seems to be the form best adapted for representing an argument, because it sets itself before us and reduces the different stands to different persons, and thus the argument is made more universal. The dialogue has, however, this disadvantage, that it seems to be carried on arbitrarily, so that at the end the feeling always remains that the matter might have turned out differently. But in the Platonist dialogue this arbitrary element is expressed only; it has been got rid of by limiting the development to the development of the subject in hand, and by leaving very little to be said by the second speaker. (Vol. 2, 10)

And he again reinforces this observation about the craft of Platonic rationalism: "The question is so framed that a quite simple answer is alone possible, and, thanks to the artistic beauty and power of the dialogues, such an answer appears at the same time perfectly natural. (Vol. 2, 17).

In preserving the craft of the dialogues — and that, ultimately, Plato earns exceptional control over the entire presentation — such that it may appear less controlled than it actually is, Hegel is, to a certain degree justifying the 'truncated' approach that he takes to these texts. (It is tempting, even, to see this observation as a foretaste of the Strausian notion of 'logographic necessity'). Here we find Hegel struggling with the
discourse of his own approach. If very little is arbitrary in the Platonic texts, as he notices, very little can be explained away easily.

A good example of this "struggle" is Hegel's approach to the dramatic settings of the dialogues; the places, persons, characters and occasions depicted. Hegel claims that these προσωπαίαται are all "natural". At the same time, he notes that the dialogues explore culture — entering into ordinary conceptions, those earlier philosophers, beginning before us exemplifications from ordinary κόσμος, and using methods from the same (Vol. 2, 17). The dialogues are not abstruse documents, out of date from historical context. For Hegel, it seems that it is a matter of the same to which denial about culture can be pursued in deciphering Plato's philosophical intentions. Hegel's distinction of Plato's use of myth further brings to light the way in which his understanding of historical context is in tension with his aim of bringing Plato's philosophy to light.

II. Myth

Plato's myths occupy a significant portion of Hegel's lengthy introductory remarks on Platonic philosophy. Like the dialogue form, Hegel claims that Plato's myths represent a "deficiency in the concrete determination of the Idea". The use of myth in a philosophical context, he determines, expresses popular ideas, and is present in the dialogues intermingled with philosophy "in ineradicable in the beginning of science proper in its true form". He continues: "Plato's lofty mind, which had a perception or conception of Mind, penetrated through his subject with the speculative Notion, but he only began to penetrate it thus, and he did not yet embrace the whole of its reality in the Notion" (Vol. 2, 17-18). Plato's use of myth is derived from his culture and its intellectual resources. Its place in the dialogues represents Plato's own limitations. However, Hegel also expresses the idea that Plato may intentionally present myths, and the is itself a drawback to Plato's mode of philosophizing.

Sometimes, in order to give greater completeness and reality, in place of following out the Notion, more pictorial conceptions are introduced, myth, spontaneous imaginations of his own, or taken inverted from the erroneous conception, which no doubt are determined by thought, but which this has never possessed in truth, but only in such a way that the intellectual is determined by the form of ordinary conception. (Vol. 2, 18)

The divergence here between views of Platonic myth — that Plato's use of myths reflects science in its early stage and that Plato intentionally uses myth in philosophy — most likely would not have struck Hegel as a divergence in sensus. If indeed the Notion appears through human agents, Plato's intentions must only reflect the limitations of the science he expresses. For us, however, this sort of divergence regarding the status of myth makes a great difference. If we determine that Plato intentionally utilizes myth, we need to discern his status as a philosophical device. (Heideg's presentation of myth in the
However much, therefore, Plato's mythical presentation of Philosophy is praised, and however attractive it is in his Dialogues, it yet proves a source of misapprehensions and is one of those misapprehensions if Plato's myths are held to be what is most essential in his philosophy. Many propositions, it is true, are made more easily believable by being presented in mythical form; nevertheless, that is not the true way of presenting them, because the thoughts which, in order to be true, must be brought forward as such. (Vol. 5, 19-20)

And:

So alone, all that is expressed in the manner of circumscription is taken by the students in other names for philosophy. Such a representation of Plato's philosophy can be supported by Plato's own writings, but one who knows what philosophy is, cares little for such explanations, and recognizes what was Plato's true meaning. (Vol. 2, 21)

Hegel's task in interpreting Plato's myths is to separate the wheat from the chaff, finding neither too little nor too much. Ordinary conceptions must be disentangled from philosophical conceptions. Hegel is optimistic that this division can be made with clarity.

In order to gather Plato's philosophy from his dialogues, what we have to do is to distinguish what belongs to ordinary conception — especially where Plato has recourse to myths for the presentation of a philosophic idea — from the philosophic idea itself; only then do we know what belongs only to the ordinary conception, as such, does not belong to thought, is not the essential. But if we do not recognize what is the Necessity, or what is speculative, there is necessarily the danger of these myths leading us to draw quite a host of mistaken and erroneous from the dialogues, and to give them one as Plato's philosophic
propositions, while they are really nothing of the kind, but belonging entirely to the
matter of premonition. (Vol. 2, 15)'

In his discussion of Recollection, we shall see that this procedure has interesting results.
The theme is presented to the mind as having a causal source — ancient primers and
provinces — yet we shall find that Hegel denies a literal interpretation of this myth. He
argues, instead, against the view that Plato holds a 'doctrine of recollection'. Recollection,
in this mythical form mostly offhanded to be an empirical doctrine at first;

With Plato, however, as we cannot deny, the word recollection has certainly the
first empirical sense. This comes from the fact that Plato proposes the true
recollection as consciousness itself is the content of knowledge, partly in the
form of popular ideas and in the form of myths. (Vol. 2, 34)

Plato's account of how we come to learn, moreover, although presented as mythical, is of
a piece with Platonist logical. The myth represents the ideal's challenge to an
empirical view of the acquisition of knowledge. For learning according to the immediate
ordinary conception of it, expresses the taking up of what is foreign into thinking
recollections, a mechanical mode of union and the filling of an empty space with things
that are foreign and indifferent to the space itself (Vol. 2, 33). Hegel notes that the
German term Entdeckung (meaning oneself inward, going inward) would be more
appropriate for expressing the idea of recollection (Spleit is his word for knowledge),
and that Plato's terminology has given rise to common views (structure), he notes have
arisen upon determining its source in Egyptian doctrine, and interpreted it as a certain
conception (Vol. 2, 36). Yet, the notion of recollection should not be taken as Plato's
literal view:

but when Plato speaks of knowledge as of a 'recollection', he knew all the true
that this is only putting the matter in similar and analogous, he did not ask, as
the theologian would generally do, whether the soul had existed before its birth, and
if so, in what particular place. It cannot be said of Plato that he had any such
belief, and he never spoke of the matter in the sense that the theologians did.
(Vol. 2, 40-41)

There is something quite interesting in Hegel's treatment of recollection. If we take the
view literally, we come up with the 'theological' kind of question; I don't think. This
is to say that a finely clever undergraduate, upon hearing the 'doctrine' taking it literally
and being beholden to a commonplace, empirical view of the acquisition of knowledge,
will inevitably ask where the 'original forms' came from. It is beyond the scope of this
paper to further debate the merits of Hegel's interpretation of recollection. I mean to
indicate instead that when Hegel engages in an interpretation of myth separating the

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philosophical when from the chaff of the ordinary conversation, he does so judiciously, adding into consideration how a myth like collective it was entirely in step with the ordinary conception. Hegel does not eliminate Platonism, but must invent it with philosophical significance. This procedure presupposes a clear view of Platic philosophy to reconstruct the myth is apparent, yet any Immense and Unseen view would need to proceed in just this manner.

c. Platonic Anonymity

Plato’s anonymity is an issue in interpreting the dialogues that has come to symbolise their elusive nature. Technically speaking, there is no “Plato” says... ‘There are dialogues in which different speakers, primarily but not only Socrates, are depicted expressing their thoughts. Plato is all of the speakers, and none of them, since he himself is only depicted as a speaker. It is presently rare for commentators on the dialogues to include mention of this issue, and as it ran in other issues such as the dialogue form, Platonism Anonymity lends itself readily to fundamental questions about the function of the dialogues — why Plato wrote them, and how views of writing expressed in the dialogues (and several Later) may relate. Hegel is analysing on this point, a case made for dissimilating Platonism anonymity as a process-processes and external consideration’ (he perhaps, implicit-replies to Schleiermacher) (Vol 2, 12), but within a few pages relating Platonism Anonymity to other literary genres in ancient Greece in which authors made themselves absent — the poetry of Homer and the Iliad of Thucydides.

Be never allowing himself to appear in person, but proving his thoughts shown in the mask of others, any semblance of preaching or of teaching is avoided by Plato, and the manner appears just as little as he does in the Iliad of Homer. Xenophon sometimes brings himself forward, sometimes he entirely loses sight of the aim he had in view, of teaching by when he tells them of the life of Socrates and his method of instruction. With Plato, it is the contrary, all is quite objective and plastic and he employs great art in removing himself. (Vol 2, 15)

I suggest that we might find this ‘attracting’ because it is so clear that Hegel possesses more than enough knowledge of the classics to admire Plato historically as a writer — to make the literary features of the dialogues to other genres. As it stands, Hegel notes that through anonymity Plato avoids preaching and dogmatically. He does not explain why Plato would prefer to avoid doing this, or why there might be a relationship between Plato’s use of anonymity and her of Homer and Thucydides. Assessment of Plato’s views on writing and rhetoric is not necessarily absent throughout Hegel’s study (noticeable, because this seems a crucial feature in explaining the dialogues for us at the present time). The Iliad, it seems to me, is too due to a lack of attention to the dialogues, but can be attributed (unsurprisingly) to Hegel’s prioritizing of dialectic. The principle
through which he unifies the dialogues is at once his own principle and organizes his observations — casting them short even when they indicate alternative interpretative possibilities. I do not intend here to charge Hegel crudely with being a victim of his own paradigm, especially since his 'inmanent' approach threads its way through a very narrow space between Romanticism and historicism. It is much more interesting to observe how much his approach yields, given its constraints.

Section V: Constructing Plato
At the conclusion of his Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Hegel bids farewell to Plato:

The latter philosophy contains a doctrine (that which went before; it embodies in itself all the differences among them; it is the product and result of those that preceded it. We can now, for example, be Platonists no longer. (Vol. 3, RLP)

Not only can we no longer be Platonists, we can no longer be the past interpreters of Plato. There is presently a scholarship of Platonic scholarship, a charting of the changes on the interpretative methods used to understand Plato's dialogues throughout history.64 Hegelian influence on interpreters have been noted in this branch of scholarship,65 yet assessments of Hegel's interpretation of Plato have been left to the philosophers and scholars working on Hegel and the history of German Idealism, on the high assessment remains embedded within particular works on Plato. I suspect that the scholarship of Platonic scholarship has neglected Hegel on the grounds that his interpretation is so strongly philosophical that it doesn't count as Platonic scholarship. However true that may be, something seems amiss with it. The history of Neo-Platonic interpretation of Plato, for example, is well-documented, and is itself a philosophically motivated interpretation. Platonic interpretations are occasionally revealed as reflecting the influence of widely accepted philosophy of their time, reflecting 'Kantian', 'Positivist' or 'Marxist' influence. Hegel is neglected in the scholarship of Platonic scholarship, it seems, for being his own name of influence. It turns out that the study of the history of interpretations of Plato demonstrates that every interpretation reflects philosophical motivations, direct or indirect. What I have done here is to suggest that Hegel's interpretation of Plato can be examined productively, and situated within a scholarship of the interpretation of Plato. Hegel situates himself within the context of the Platonic scholarship of his day, and addresses this scholarship in light of his own views. The scholarship of Platonic scholarship is an endeavour to make sense of the historically bound nature of this field of inquiry — interpreting Plato — and to bring forth a self-consciousness to our constructions of Plato. Reflection on the history of interpreting Plato is a vital part of new Platonic scholarship. Hegel's Plato has a place in this reflective history.

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Notes

1 All citations of Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy in the body of the paper are from Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy in Three Volumes, trans. B. B. Rascher and P. H. Dietz (Iowa City: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), from the 1940 translation (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.). This paper is written with gratitude to Frank M. Rist and Gerald Press, my earliest teachers of Hegel and Plato.


7 S. N. Toulmin assess the historical progression of Platonism interpretation in his work, Interpreting Plato (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). This is a critical review of the systematic deconstruction of the dialogues (p. 19).

8 Schlesinger notes is involved in generating the Vaticans view by making contemporary scholars although this is not challenged by S. N. Toulmin, who sees the Neo-Platonism (glossary of interpretations of Plato based on the same tradition as Plato's work. For E. N. Kramer, "Deity and the Plato's Interpretation of Plato's Commentaries on the Platonic Text," in Plato, ed. H. Holm (1976), 138. Another approach to Plato has been derived throughout the twentieth century by two Amos, Randall, Sterling, Jorgensen, Friedlander and H. Knew of the Tillingham School.

9 Gregory Vlastos, "Interpretation and Moral Philosophy" (London: Curzon University Press, 1990), pp. 45-86. Vlastos presents his "first theme" for the view of the historical Socrates found in Plato's dialogues — as distinct from Plato's views. "Russell House, University of Oxford, London (London: Routledge and Kegan-Paul, 1977), presents a Platonic Socrates Pheidias and Socrates, following Vlastos, further defined the distinguishing of the historical Socrates views in Plato's works, especially the Apology, which they argue is the most accurate record of the events of Socrates' trial.


12 See Baldwin, The Interpretation of Plato, pp. 43-84 for a brief but intriguing discussion exploring contemporaneous Tillingham Platonism's interpretation (somewhat scattered) in light of Schlesinger's interpretation of Plato.

13 Michael Frank, for example, maintains a developed framework for interpreting Plato's dialogues, yet addresses the question of Plato's true of the dialogue form and in relation to argument: "The key line of his paper reads, "Theo's dialogue is written as an", Plato's Argumentation and Dialogue Forms" in Methods of Interpreting Plato and His Dialogues, ed. P. J. Sigley and N. Smith, Oxford Essays in Ancient Philosophy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 201-219.


15 Schlesier used to hold that the Apology is not a purely philosophical document, but also a historical document. Charles Rohat even shares this view point, although he opposes the
It remains an open question for me at this point as to why Hegel, who is familiar with Fichte's Seventh Letter, and De Maistre's 'causal reading of the Phædrus' (Vol. 2, 36-84), intends that on Plato's view of writing his discourse to 'comemoria' would, on the one hand, be weakened by acknowledging the problem of writing raised in these texts. On the other hand, Hegel uses 
letter as a biographical review (Vol. 2, 124-8) and is perhaps unwilling to claim that a new philosophical text expresses philosophical ideas. This may be quite a charitable reading, especially since Hegel is also aware of the Phædrus post-political discussion, of rhetoric as well as his method of collection and division. My suspicion is that Hegel found himself between a rock and a hard place on this count, so interpreting the Phædrus as supporting the symposium on speculative dialectics would open the door to more about Platonic text theory, we argue a much stronger account of any Phenomenic text should be read instead. This, in turn, would bring him too close to Schleiermacher for comfort.

Hegel does, however, determine that there is a feature of the conversations, Urbandity, which affects our responses to conversations. 'Urbandity is true courtesy, and forms of real being, but Urbandity makes a point of granting complete liberty to all whom we converse, as regards both the character and the matter of their opinions, and thus the right of giving them the use' (Vol. 2, 13). The characteristic 'gives each graduable to Plato's Dialogue', he says.


Robertson: 'As far as the search for the true Plato is concerned, this means we must rely on the distinction between interpretation and historical fact. The historical Plato is also the Plato that is most intelligible, with regard to further efforts of interpretation. Interpretation and historical research are not alternatives. At most, we are merely a question of differently structured and plausible approaches that differ more or less consistently in relation to the same essential as a whole. There is no unanswerable or unanswerable reality in itself, either in the interpretation, or beyond our interpretation. And if there were such reality in itself beyond all interpretation, we should still have to describe it as an incoherently intelligible, and thus a falling potentially within the framework of what limits we can interpret.' (Richard Robin, The Interpretation of Dialogue, p. 49). While on the whole agreeing with Robertson, view on interpreting Plato — that there is no 'true Plato' standing above and beyond our interpretation, I am uncertain that the fragmentary nature of material on Plato can be considered 'the Platonic.' Competing interpretively, so it seems, the historical facts are very different. Interpretation, based on different readings of historical facts may become necessary, so on the model of competing theories is the sciences. Any 'reductionism', instead, to philosophical interests, which can become more effective, especially in view of the present social conclusion of methodology. Yet if our question is such that there is no one over-arching philosophy, there still will be interpreting Plato.