

# Socrates, Seated Socrates

*First Philosophy and Sophistic*



# The Second *Aporia*

- ✦ Should the science that studies substance also study the principles of demonstration? (*Met.* 996a26-997a14).
- ✦ Three worries:
  - ✦ If the axioms are studied by several sciences at once, then what is common to them? (Why, e.g., is the PNC in geometry the same as the PNC in physics? Or is it?)
  - ✦ But if they are studied by one science, then which one? And how could one be privileged over all others?
  - ✦ In any event, how can these axioms be proven, given that they show up in various genera?



# Short Answer

- ✿ *Met.* Γ iii: Yes, one science studies the principles of being and the axioms.
- ✿ That science is first philosophy.



# Fuller Answer

- ✿ “We must state whether it belongs to one or to different sciences to inquire into the truths which are in mathematics called axioms, and into substance. [20] Evidently the inquiry into these also belongs to one science, and that the science of the philosopher; for these truths hold good for everything that is, and not for some special genus apart from others.”
- ✿ “Therefore since these truths clearly hold good for all things *qua* being (for this is what is common to them), he who studies being *qua* being will inquire into them too.—And for this reason no one who is conducting a special inquiry tries to say [30] anything about their truth or falsehood—neither the geometer nor the arithmetician. Some natural philosophers indeed have done so, and their procedure was intelligible enough; for they thought that they alone were inquiring about the whole of nature and of being. But since there is one kind of thinker who is above even the natural philosopher (for nature is only one particular genus of being), the discussion of these truths also will belong to him whose inquiry is universal and deals with primary substance.”



# Privilege

- ✿ But if they are studied by one science, then how could one be privileged over all others?
- ✿ By studying all beings, simply in so far as they are beings and in no other way.
- ✿ This seems to mean: it studies beings bereft of a filter.
- ✿ A salient possibility: studying being *qua* being means (*inter alia*) studying an arbitrary being, and wondering what must be true of it, just as a being and in no other way.



# The 11<sup>th</sup> *Aporia*: the Hardest of All

- ✦ Further, one must consider the question that is the hardest question of all, and the one which introduces the greatest perplexity (*aporia*): are one and being the substances of beings, just as the Pythagoreans and Plato said, and not properties of other things? Or is this not so, since their substratum is something else? (Just as Empedocles says it is love, another says it is fire, and another air, and another water.)



# Glossed

- ✿ Are unity and being substances?
- ✿ Or are unity and being rather attributes of other things?
- ✿ Might unity and being rather be a substratum? Or might the substratum be something else, like love, or fire, or water, or air?



# Three Passes at a Response

- ✿ *Met. Γ 5*: Socrates and seated-Socrates
- ✿ *Met. Z 16 1040b16-24*: these are not substances but attributes of substances
- ✿ *Met. M 8 1083a20-1085a2*: neither unity nor number exist separately.



# First Answer: An Odd-sounding Question

- ✿ ‘If not the philosopher, who will ask whether Socrates and Socrates seated are one and the same?’ (*Met.* 1004b1-3).



# An Answer, of Sorts I

- ✿ It falls to the philosopher to be able to investigate all things. For if this does not fall to the philosopher, then who will inquire into whether Socrates and Socrates seated are the same things, or whether one thing has one contrary, or what contrariety is or how many meanings it has. And similarly with all other such questions.
- ✿ Since, then, these sorts of properties belong *per se* to unity *qua* unity and to being *qua* being—not to things *qua* numbers or lines or fire—it is clear that it falls to this science to investigate both what these things are [viz. unity and being] as well as what coincides with them.
- ✿ And those who study these matters at present go awry not by pursuing philosophical questions, but by failing to understand anything about substance, which is prior to other things. For number *qua* number has peculiar attributes (for instance, oddness and evenness, commensurability and equality, being more or less), and these belong to numbers either *per se* or in virtue of their relations to one another. Similarly, there are peculiar attributes of what is solid, whether in motion or not in motion, and whether having weight or being weightless. So too certain properties are peculiar to being *qua* being, and it falls to the philosopher to investigate the truth about these matters.



# An Answer, of Sorts II

- ✿ An indication that this is so: dialecticians and sophists assume the same guise as the philosopher, for sophistry has the semblance of philosophy, and dialecticians do engage in dialectic about all things.
- ✿ Now, being is common to all things, and it is clear that they practise dialectic about all things precisely because of its being proper for philosophy to do so. For sophistic and dialectic focus on the same genus of things as philosophy, but philosophy differs from dialectic in the kind of power it has and from sophistic in its choice of life. Dialectic merely probes in areas where philosophy is knowledgeable, while sophistic gives off the appearance of being knowledgeable without in fact being so (*Met.* 1004a34-b26).



# The Problem about Seated-Socrates

- ✦ A principle of unity: when  $x$  and  $y$  completely overlap, then  $x = y$ .
- ✦ So, e.g., if the Commander in Chief of the US military and the president of the US completely overlap, then the CiC = the President.
- ✦ If the ES and the MS completely overlap, then  $ES = MS$ .



# The Sophistic Argument

- ✦ Aristotle alludes several times in his *Sophistical Refutations* and *Topics* to a fallacious argument turning on co-incidence (*Soph. El.* 5, 24 179a26-b6; cf. *Met.* 1015b17, 1017b31, 1032a8; *Top.* 103a29-35).
  1. When Socrates-seated rises, Socrates-seated goes out of existence.
  2. Socrates and Socrates-seated are one and the same.
  3. So, when Socrates rises, Socrates goes out of existence.



# Some Crossover Terms

- ✿ Let us say that something persists *iff*, somehow or other, it exists at various times; this is the neutral word.
- ✿ Something perdures *iff* it persists by having different temporal parts, or stages, at different times, though no one part of it is wholly present at more than one time; whereas it endures *iff* it persists by being wholly present at more than one time.
- ✿ Perdurance corresponds to the way a road persists through space; part of it is here and part of it is there, and no part is wholly present at two different places.
- ✿ Endurance corresponds to the way a universal, if there are such things, would be wholly present wherever and whenever it is instantiated. Endurance involves overlap: the content of two different times has the enduring thing as a common part. (Lewis, 1986, 202)



# Another of the same ilk?

## ✦ The Problem of Temporary Intrinsics

1. If some object  $o$  is  $\varphi$  at  $t_1$  and not- $\varphi$  at  $t_2$  (when  $\varphi$  is an intrinsic property of  $o$ ), then either  $o$  perdures or endures.
2. If  $o$  endures, then  $o$  is both  $\varphi$  and not- $\varphi$ .
3. LL:  $\forall x \forall y [x=y \rightarrow \forall F (Fx \rightarrow Fy)]$
4. Hence,  $o$  does not endure.
5. Hence,  $o$  perdures.



# Two Approaches

1. When Socrates-seated rises, Socrates-seated goes out of existence.
  2. Socrates and Socrates-seated are one and the same.
  3. So, when Socrates rises, Socrates goes out of existence.
- ✦ This argument may be:
    - ✦ Unsound, because (2) is false. (Matthews and Cohen)
    - ✦ Invalid, with an unsound argument trailing in its wake. (Our preference.)



## (2) is false

1. When Socrates-seated rises, Socrates-seated goes out of existence.
2. Socrates and Socrates-seated are one and the same.
3. So, when Socrates rises, Socrates goes out of existence.



# How False?

- ✦ Consider such passages as: “The man survives, but the unmusical does not survive, nor does the compound of the two, namely, the unmusical man” (*Phys.* 190a19–21)
- ✦ ‘The idea, roughly, is that for an attribute to belong accidentally to a subject is for that attribute to belong essentially to a different entity, one that coincides with, that is, is one in number with but only accidentally the same as, the subject.’—Cohen (2008, 8-9)



# Simply Invalid

1. When Socrates-seated rises, Socrates-seated goes out of existence.
2. Socrates and Socrates-seated are one and the same.
3. So, when Socrates rises, Socrates goes out of existence.



# Made Valid

1. When Socrates-seated rises, Socrates-seated goes out of existence.
2. Socrates and Socrates-seated are one and the same.
3. If Socrates and Socrates-seated are one and the same, and if Socrates-seated goes out of existence when Socrates-seated rises, then Socrates goes out of existence when Socrates-seated rises.
4. So, when Socrates rises, Socrates goes out of existence.



# Shown Unsound

1. When Socrates-seated rises, Socrates-seated goes out of existence.
2. Socrates and Socrates-seated are one and the same.
3. If Socrates and Socrates-seated are one and the same, and if Socrates-seated goes out of existence when Socrates-seated rises, then Socrates goes out of existence when Socrates-seated rises.
4. So, when Socrates rises, Socrates goes out of existence.



# Aristotle's Diagnosis

- ✦ On this approach, the loss of the property, being-seated, has no consequences regarding Socrates' continued existence.
- ✦ Thought of this way, this is the force of Aristotle's contention that sophistic arguments of this sort result from 'failing to understand anything about substance, which is prior to other things' (*Met.* 1004b8-10).
  - ✦ The sophistic argument treats Socrates and Socrates-seated as if they were entities of the same type, on an ontological par with one another.
  - ✦ According to Aristotle, speaking on behalf of first philosophy, they are not: one is a substance, and the other is not.



# A Closing Observation

- ✿ For this reason, our attitudes towards arguments of this sort inevitably draw upon various principles of unity, versions of which are surreptitiously invoked by their non-philosophical proponents.
- ✿ As represented, those proposing this argument began with an innocent-sounding principle to the effect that whenever x and y occupy the same place at the same time, then x and y are one and the same.
  - ✿ If we wish to reject this principle, or, indeed, even if we wish to embrace it in an enlightened and defensible sort of way, we will need to do something the sophists have failed to do, despite their operating within the sphere of philosophy: we will need to reflect upon the nature and sources of unity, being, and priority, and so, if Aristotle is right, upon the theory of substance and, thus, ultimately upon the theory of categories.
  - ✿ We will necessarily, in short, have to engage in the difficult matter of first philosophy.
- ✿ This is what Aristotle means in saying: “Sophistry gives off the appearance of being wisdom [sophia, i.e. first philosophy], but is not really so’ (*Soph. El.* 171b34-35; cf.. *Met.* 1004b25-26).