THE RELATIONSHIP OF VIRTUE TO HAPPINESS
IN SOCRATES' MORAL THEORY

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory. The focus of my enquiry is a debate between Gregory Vlastos and Terence Irwin in which Vlastos claims that Socrates holds a component view of the relationship of virtue to happiness, and Irwin claims that Socrates holds an instrumentalist view.

I begin the thesis with an enquiry into what counts as Socrates' moral theory. I conclude that, in spite of the seemingly negative function of the elenctic method, Socrates has a positive moral theory which can be found in the early Platonic dialogues.

I then present Socrates' major theses. With respect to happiness, Socrates is a eudaemonist — that is, he holds that happiness is the ultimate end of all rational acts. With respect to virtue, Socrates holds the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue — that is, when considering two alternate courses of action, one virtuous and the other either vicious or less virtuous, it is considerations of virtue and nothing else that should decide one's actions. With respect to the relationship of virtue to happiness, Socrates holds the Sufficiency Thesis — that is, virtue is both necessary and sufficient for happiness.

The remainder of the thesis examines and critiques three divergent interpretations of the Sufficiency Thesis. First, Socrates could hold that virtue is necessary and sufficient for virtue because virtue is instrumental toward happiness. This is Irwin's position. Second, Socrates could hold that virtue is necessary and sufficient for happiness because
virtue is the major component of happiness, and any other components of happiness are components of happiness only if they occur in conjunction with virtue. This is Vlastos' position. Third, Socrates could hold that virtue is necessary and sufficient for happiness because virtue and happiness are one and the same form of living described from the vantage points of different criteria. This is my position.

I close the thesis with an evaluation of the Socratic relationship of virtue to happiness from a modern perspective. Although there are some differences between contemporary conceptions of the relationship of virtue to happiness and that of Socrates, the third interpretation of the Socrates' Sufficiency thesis (outlined in the preceding paragraph) is consistent with modern thought.
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Dedication

To

Bessie Beulah Harland

and

Esther Pickering Harland
1. Introduction

In this thesis I examine the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory. The thesis centres primarily on a debate between Gregory Vlastos and Terence Irwin in which Vlastos claims that Socrates held a component view of the relationship of virtue to happiness, and Irwin claims that Socrates held an instrumentalist view. In this opening chapter I outline, chapter by chapter, the main points of the thesis.

I begin, in Chapter 2, by considering what counts as Socrates' moral theory. This question has two parts. First, I deal with the problems of dating the Platonic dialogues in order to distinguish Plato's philosophy from that of the historic Socrates. Second, I deal with Socrates' use of the elenctic method, particularly with respect to questions concerning whether Socrates had a positive moral theory.

The remainder of the chapter examines the major passages and themes in the Socratic dialogues that are central to the Vlastos/Irwin debate. I then outline the component and instrumentalist conceptions of the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory by briefly tracing the history and content of the debate between Vlastos and Irwin.

Chapter 3 examines the instrumental conception of virtue as presented in Terence Irwin's book, *Plato's Moral Theory: The Early and*
Middle Dialogues.\textsuperscript{1} Irwin suggests that Socrates held that virtue is not desirable for its own sake, but rather that it is instrumental toward happiness. After presenting Irwin's arguments, I raise some problems with instrumentalism, many of which are suggested by his debate with Gregory Vlastos in the Times Literary Supplement.\textsuperscript{2} In particular, it is difficult to reconcile the instrumental conception of virtue with Socrates' conviction that virtue is the sovereign good, and that considerations of virtue and nothing else should decide one's course of action.

Chapter 4 presents the main argument of Irwin's 1980 paper, "Socrates the Epicurean."\textsuperscript{3} In this paper Irwin suggests that Socrates held an "adaptive strategy" with respect to happiness — a strategy that requires one to restrict one's desires to those that it is possible to fulfill, and so to guarantee desire fulfillment and happiness. The idea that Socrates held the adaptive strategy is attractive because it is consistent with his thesis that virtue is sufficient for happiness. While Irwin's paper does not commit Irwin to holding that Socrates was an instrumentalist with respect to virtue, it is consistent with this position. I close this chapter with an exposition of the problems involved in ascribing the adaptive account to Socrates. In particular, it is implausible that Socrates held the adaptive account because it does not give a satisfactory defense of virtue, and because it clearly conflicts with what we

\textsuperscript{1} Irwin [1977].
\textsuperscript{2} Irwin [1978], and Vlastos [1978a], [1978b].
\textsuperscript{3} Irwin [1980].
know of Socrates' own positive convictions as presented in the *Crito* and the *Apology*.

Chapter 5 deals with Vlastos' book, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher*. In this book Vlastos presents a component account of the relation of virtue to happiness. He holds that, for Socrates, virtue is the sovereign good, both necessary and sufficient for happiness, but that happiness may consist of lesser constituents in addition to virtue. I close the chapter with a critique of this account. In its place I suggest a Modified Identity Thesis. On this account virtue is still necessary and sufficient for happiness, since the virtuous life is the same as the happy life—

that is to say, that the form of life we call "happiness" when viewing it under desirability criteria (as the most deeply and durably satisfying kind of life) is the same form of life we call "virtue" when viewing it as meeting moral criteria (as the just, brave, temperate, pious, wise way to live).

However, the Modified Identity Thesis adds that a minimum level of the non-moral goods, health and wealth, are necessary prerequisites for virtue and happiness. That Socrates was concerned with these non-moral goods is evident; that he overlooked their role in happiness is implausible.

In Chapter 6 I present my account of the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory. First I explore the possibility that

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4 Vlastos [1991].

5 Vlastos [1991], p.214.
Plato's Socrates did not hold a stable position with respect to virtue and happiness across the early dialogues. It is possible, and plausible, given the many seemingly contradictory passages, that the passages do contradict one another, and that Socrates' moral theory was undergoing development by Plato in a way that Socrates himself would approve of, given his dedication to the learning process embodied in the elenctic method. Even though Plato's Socrates may have had more than one account of the relationship of virtue to happiness, in the second part of this chapter I present my view of the most plausible and consistent position attributable to the historical Socrates. I hold that Socrates was neither an instrumentalist nor an Epicurean. Rather, he held the Modified Identity Thesis. Vlastos' component account is motivated by an attempt to understand the role of non-moral goods such as health and wealth in Socrates' moral theory. The Modified Identity Thesis accounts for the non-moral goods and avoids problems inherent in the component account.

Chapter 7 evaluates Socrates' moral theory from a modern perspective. I begin with an examination of definitions of virtue and happiness in common usage today. I point out that equivocations between objective and subjective happiness, and between virtue as a process and virtue as an end, lead to confusions about the relationship of virtue to happiness. When the equivocations are removed, a relationship between objective happiness and virtue as a process/end can be found. This relationship is consistent with the Modified Identity Thesis outlined in Chapter 6.
I close, in Chapter 8, with a review of the main arguments and conclusions of the thesis.
2. Background and Overview

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter I present the background necessary for considering the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory. I begin by examining two questions concerning Socrates' moral theory: how does one distinguish Plato's thought from Socrates', and what role does the elenchos play in the presentation of Socrates' moral theory? This is followed by a discussion of Socrates' commitment to eudaemonism and the thesis of the Sufficiency of Virtue (the Sufficiency Thesis). I close the chapter with a brief outline of the history and content of the debate between Vlastos and Irwin on the interpretation of these same Socratic doctrines.

2.2. Background: Socrates' Moral Theory

What counts as Socrates' moral theory? In order to answer this question we need to consider two separate problems. First, Socrates' moral theory was reported in the Platonic dialogues. Consequently, we need to distinguish Plato's thought from Socrates'. Second, prima facie, Socrates' elenctic method of inquiry is a method of questioning and checking an interlocutor's beliefs for consistency. In the process of using the elenctic method, it appears that Socrates rarely arrives at an answer with which he is happy, or states positive convictions. This raises the question of whether Socrates had a positive moral theory. I will deal with each of these two problems in turn.
In this thesis I am primarily concerned with the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory. However, whenever one wants to write about Socratic anything, one must answer the question: "Who are you talking about — Socrates or a 'Socrates' in Plato?" It is generally believed that Plato wrote dialogues with a character named "Socrates" who was inspired by an historical Socrates. This belief has spawned two extreme positions concerning Plato's "Socrates". The first is that the Socrates of the Platonic dialogues is an accurate portrayal of the historical Socrates; the other is that our reports of Socrates are literary myths of questionable historical validity. Vlastos holds that early dialogues report Socrates' own thinking more than that of Plato, while the later dialogues trace the development of Plato's thought from the starting point that Socrates supplied. This moderate position is supported by most scholars, since, although Plato revered both Socrates the man and Socrates' philosophy, it is implausible that a man of Plato's abilities could postpone his own philosophical progression. ... it is impossible to believe that the development of "Socrates" doctrine in the course of the dialogues, which were written after his death, can be other than Plato's; Aristotle was right to make his distinction.

6 Vlastos [1991], p.45.
7 Kidd [1967], p.481.
8 Taylor [1932], p.29.
9 Kidd [1967], p.480.
10 Vlastos [1991], pp.46ff.
11 Kidd [1967], p.481.
The idea of a distinction between early and later dialogues yields the further question: where does one draw a line between the two Socrates, the early Socrates and the later Socrates? In answer to this question, scholars have arranged the dialogues into early, middle and late groups. Since I am concerned with the historical Socrates' moral theory, I will restrict my discussion of the dialogues to those of the early group. Vlastos divides the early dialogues into two groups, the Elenctic dialogues and the Transitional dialogues. The Transitional dialogues are written before the Middle dialogues but differ from the Elenctic dialogues in that, in the Transitional dialogues, Socrates' method of philosophical investigation ceases to be elenctic. Here is Vlastos' Group 1:

Group 1. The Dialogues of Plato's earlier period:


(b) Transitional Dialogues (written after all the Elenctic Dialogues and before all of the dialogues in Group II), listed in alphabetical order: Euthydemus, Hippias Major, Lysis, Menexenus, Meno, (abbreviating: Eud., HMaj., Ly., Mx., M.).

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12 I will not participate in the debate about dating the dialogues here, since it is beyond the scope of this thesis and since there is general agreement on the groupings. Any disagreement about particular dialogues that would affect this thesis will be noted and discussed. For a general discussion of the grouping of the dialogues see Ryle [1967], pp.319-20.

13 Vlastos [1991], p.46, n.3.

Irwin's grouping is similar to Vlastos' except that he feels that the *Gorgias*, though not a middle dialogue, needs to be considered apart from the earlier dialogues.\textsuperscript{15} Vlastos writes that he lists the dialogues in each group in alphabetical order because there is controversy about the chronological order within the groups. Nevertheless, he notes that most present-day scholars hold that the *Gorgias* is the last dialogue in the Elenctic group.\textsuperscript{16} This is consistent with Irwin's wish to consider the *Gorgias* separately. The chronological placement of the *Gorgias* is important to this thesis, since Vlastos writes that

\begin{quote}
the moral theory I shall be exploring ... is precisely the one Socrates holds in the *Gorgias* (consistently with what he says in every Socratic dialogue) ... .\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

Since Irwin (and Gosling and Taylor\textsuperscript{18}) hold that the moral theory expressed in the *Gorgias* is not consistent with earlier dialogues, and Vlastos holds that it is, Vlastos' arguments using the *Gorgias* will have to be carefully considered throughout the thesis. However, Vlastos' component thesis is not only drawn from the *Gorgias*, but also from the earlier dialogues, and so the controversy over the *Gorgias* may not affect it.

In the penultimate chapter of this thesis I suggest that even within the early dialogues, Plato's portrayal of Socrates' moral theory

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{15} Irwin [1977], p.113.
\textsuperscript{16} Vlastos [1991], p.46, n.4.
\textsuperscript{17} Vlastos [1991], p.205.
\textsuperscript{18} Gosling and Taylor [1982], p.69.
\end{footnotes}
may not be consistent. It is possible that Socrates' moral theory was undergoing development by Plato across the early dialogues. If this is the case then in order to understand the moral theory of Socrates, we need, even in the early dialogues, to trace the development of Plato's thought.

The second question that we need to explore in order to understand what counts as Socrates' moral theory is this: Does Socrates have a positive moral theory? Socrates is portrayed in the dialogues as one who disclaims knowledge, searches for knowledge, and questions others for knowledge which he finds they do not have. Nevertheless, through an examination of Socrates' use of the elenctic method, we can see that Socrates did have a positive moral theory.

Socrates' elenctic method is a process of questioning an interlocutor's beliefs to check for consistency. Prima facie, it seems that the elenctic method, in isolation, is not capable of producing a positive thesis. Both Irwin and Vlastos hold that Socrates had a positive moral theory, but they connect it with the elenchos in different ways.

Irwin maintains that, in spite of Socrates' numerous disclaimers of knowledge, Socrates held positive convictions about virtue.19 Socrates recommends that people take virtue seriously (Ap. 30a7-b3)20 and argue about it daily (Ap. 38a1-5)21; he claims to accept the strongest

19 Irwin [1977], p.40.
20 Irwin [1977], p.38.
21 Irwin [1977], p.38.
argument found by examination (Cr. 46b3-c1); and he values the elenchos for its role in removing false pretensions to knowledge (Ap. 21c3-e2, 29e3-30a2). Socrates' convictions about virtue do not necessarily count as a positive moral theory unless we see how these convictions are supported by argument. Irwin maintains that Socrates allows himself and his interlocutors true beliefs without knowledge as long as they are proven consistent by the elenctic method.

Vlastos, by contrast with Irwin, maintains that Socrates' aim was to discover knowledge and not merely true belief. Vlastos holds that Socrates' disavowal of knowledge is a complex irony. The irony is apparent when we observe that at times Socrates does claim knowledge for himself, but that this knowledge is human knowledge as opposed to the knowledge of the gods, which Socrates feels is a wisdom above man's reach. Furthermore, this human knowledge is justified true belief as opposed to certain knowledge. With respect to human knowledge, Vlastos claims that Socrates allowed those true beliefs that passed the consistency test of the elenchos to function as premisses and conclusions in his enquiries. Vlastos holds that Socrates' conviction that moral truth can be reached by elenctic arguments is consistent with the reasonable assumption that the

22 Irwin [1977], p.38.
23 Irwin [1977], p.41.
25 Vlastos [1991], p.239.
27 Vlastos [1991], p.15.
moral truth for which he was searching was already in each of his interlocutors in the form of true beliefs, accessible to him in his elenctic encounters with them, and that he could always count on the presence of these beliefs in their mind and could use them as the premises from which the negation of their false thesis could be derived.\textsuperscript{28}

Although one cannot assert that Socrates, ahead of his time, held a Davidsonian theory of knowledge, the assumption that true beliefs within us can be tested for consistency and, if they pass, be legitimately used to seek knowledge is not unreasonable. Moreover, Davidson supports this understanding of the elenchos in the following passage:

As Vlastos explains, the elenchos would make for truth simply by ensuring coherence in a set of beliefs if one could assume that in each of us there are always true beliefs inconsistent with the false ... I think there is good reason to believe the assumption is true — true enough, anyway, to ensure that when our beliefs are consistent they will in most large matters be true.\textsuperscript{29}

In this section I have highlighted two points about Socrates' moral theory:

(1) The evidence for the best reconstruction of the historical Socrates' moral theory must be gleaned from the group of dialogues that Plato scholars agree are the early dialogues.

(2) Socrates can be said to hold a positive moral theory since his and others' moral beliefs are verified through the consistency

\textsuperscript{28} Vlastos [1991], p.15.

\textsuperscript{29} Quoted in Vlastos [1991], p.15, n.62.
check of the elenchos. For Irwin, Socrates' positive moral theory consists of Socrates' positive convictions tested by the elenchos. For Vlastos, Socrates' positive moral theory consists of justified true beliefs that Socrates accepts as knowledge, given their successful passing of the test of coherence given by the elenchos.

2.3. Overview: The Debate over Socratic Virtue and Happiness

The debate between Irwin and Vlastos regarding the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory begins with agreement on two major Socratic theses — eudaemonism and the thesis of the Sufficiency of Virtue. The disagreement arises with respect to the various interpretations and implications of these theses. In this section I will outline the two Socratic theses and the theories that Irwin and Vlastos construct from them.

Socrates was a eudaemonist\(^{30}\) in that he held that everyone desires to be happy, or to do well:

Do we all wish to do well in the world? Or perhaps this is one of the questions which I feared you might laugh at, for it is foolish, no doubt even to ask such things. Who in the world does not wish to do well?\(^{31}\) (Eud. 278e4-7)

In this passage "to do well" can be read as "to be happy" since

\(^{30}\) Some scholars claim that "well-being" would be a better translation than "happiness" for "eudaimonia". Since both Vlastos and Irwin translate "eudaimonia" as "happiness", I will use this traditional translation here. For more on this subject see Vlastos [1991], p.201.

\(^{31}\) Hamilton and Cairns [1961], p.392.
"well" is the adverbial form of "good" and since for Socrates, as for all Greek moralists, the good for man is happiness ... . 32

In the following passage from the Symposium we see that not only does everyone wish to do well, but also that happiness or doing well is the ultimate end towards which every action is directed. For a eudaemonist, one can ask why a person does a particular thing, but once a person answers "because it will make me happy" the questioning must stop, there is no further reason. 33

Of one who wants to be happy there is no longer any point in asking, "For what reason does he want to be happy?" This answer is already final. 34 (Smp. 205a2-3)

From these passages one can see that for Socrates the good for man is equated with "eudaimonia", which is translated as well-being or happiness. Moreover, it is the pursuit of this good that guides one's actions.

Greek moralists held that one should be virtuous because virtuous conduct offers one the best prospects for happiness. 35 However, the relationship of virtue to happiness — the reason virtuous conduct offers the best prospects for happiness — was understood differently by different moralists. Socrates' view of this relationship must be recon-

32 Vlastos [1991], p.214.
33 Vlastos [1991], p.203.
34 Vlastos [1991], p.203.
structured from other views he espoused, particularly from the thesis of the Sufficiency of Virtue.

The thesis of the Sufficiency of Virtue is the thesis that virtue is necessary and sufficient for happiness. This view is suggested in the *Apology* where Socrates asserts that "nothing can harm a good man either in life or after death ...:"\(^{36}\) (Ap. 41d) Socrates states this view more explicitly in the *Gorgias*:

So there is every necessity Callicles, that the temperate man, who, as we have seen, will be just and brave and pious, will be a perfectly good man, and the good man will act well and nobly in whatever he does, and he who acts well will be blessed and happy; and that he who is wicked and acts badly will be miserable ... \(^{37}\) (G. 507b8-c7)

We have seen that Socrates was a eudaemonist, and that he held the thesis of the Sufficiency of Virtue. While Vlastos and Irwin agree on these two points, their interpretations of them differ widely. The debate centres around two divergent interpretations of the Sufficiency Thesis. For Irwin, virtue is sufficient for happiness in that it is instrumental in bringing about happiness. He holds that for Socrates, happiness is the final good and virtue is only a means to that good. For Vlastos, even though happiness is the good we pursue as an end to all our actions, virtue is the supreme good, valued for its own sake. He claims that Socrates holds the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue, that is, that

\(^{36}\) Hamilton and Cairns [1961], p.25.

\(^{37}\) Vlastos [1991], p.222.
considerations of virtue and nothing else should guide one's actions. This principle is expressed in the following passage from the *Crito*:

> But for us, since the argument thus compels us the only thing we should consider is ... whether we would be acting justly ... or, in truth, unjustly ... And if it should become evident that this action is unjust, then the fact that by staying here I would die or suffer anything else whatever should be given no countervailing weight when the alternative is to act unjustly.38 (Cr. 48c6-d5)

So, for Socrates virtue is sovereign in the domain of value and no consideration other than whether an action is just or unjust should decide one's choice of action. Vlastos argues that since Socrates holds the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue, he cannot also hold that virtue is instrumental toward happiness. This is because, according to the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue, virtue is valued for its own sake, rather than being merely instrumental. An instrumentalist might claim that the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue is not inconsistent with the fact that virtue is instrumental toward happiness. However, in the case — suggested by the *Crito* passage — where one chooses death in order to uphold the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue, virtue is chosen for something other than its instrumentality toward happiness. For Vlastos, since virtue is not instrumental toward happiness, the Sufficiency thesis must be interpreted to mean that virtue is a component — the major component — of happiness.

Irwin's instrumentalist position is presented in his 1977 book *Plato's Moral Theory: The Early and Middle Dialogues*. Vlastos' difficulty with reconciling instrumentalism with the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue is expressed in his 1978 review of Irwin's book in the *Times Literary Supplement*. A six month debate between Vlastos and Irwin in the *Times Literary Supplement* followed Vlastos' review. Irwin's 1980 paper, "Socrates the Epicurean?", suggested that Socrates held an adaptive view of happiness, a view that would explain how the Sufficiency Thesis holds without necessarily committing Irwin to holding that Socrates was an instrumentalist. The adaptive account of happiness states that one ought to adapt one's desires to coincide with those that are feasible and then, on the definition of happiness as desire fulfillment, one would be happy. Since virtuous choices of action are in our power and thus are possible to fulfill, if one only desires virtue one will be happy. In his 1991 book *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, Vlastos dismisses the adaptive view of happiness with the comment that

This [the adaptive account] looks like making sour grapes a highest-level principle of moral choice. Nothing remotely like this is ever said or implied in our Socratic texts.\(^{39}\)

Vlastos' book is the final piece of work in the debate I am considering. In this book Vlastos presents his interpretation of the Sufficiency Thesis — the interpretation that virtue, instead of being instrumental toward happiness, is the major component of happiness.

\(^{39}\) Vlastos [1991], p.10, n.39.
2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the overview and background for examining the relationship between virtue and happiness in Socrates' moral theory. First, I examined what counts as Socrates' moral theory and the role of the elenchos in that theory. I hold that Socrates' moral theory is the theory that can be reconstructed from the early dialogues, and that the elenchos does admit a positive moral theory to emerge. Second, I examined the Socratic commitment to eudaemonism and the thesis of the Sufficiency of Virtue, and briefly outlined the history and content of the debate between Vlastos and Irwin on the interpretation of these Socratic doctrines.
3. Irwin's Instrumentalism

3.1. Introduction

In *Plato's Moral Theory* Irwin argues that, for Socrates, virtue is instrumental toward happiness. Irwin's account is based on his thesis that Socrates thinks of virtue as a craft. First I outline Irwin's account. Then I present difficulties with ascribing the craft analogy to virtue and with using the craft analogy as evidence that Socrates held an instrumentalist view of the relationship of virtue to happiness.40

3.2. Irwin's Defense of Instrumentalism

Irwin distinguishes an instrumental relationship from a component relationship in the following way:

1. If x is an instrumental means to y, then (a) x causally contributes to the achievement of y; (b) if z would causally contribute to y more efficiently than x would, then, to that extent, we should have reason to choose z; (c) x is not identical with y, and need be no part of y.
2. If x is a constituent of y, then (a) x is identical with y, or a part of y; (b) if z causally contributes to other ends more efficiently that x would contribute, it does not follow that we have reason to choose z rather than x; (c) if w is a component of y preferable to x, it does not follow that we have no reason to choose x.

The point of this distinction is that an instrumental means depends on its causal properties for its value, and the

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40 The difficulties with the craft analogy and the instrumentalist view of virtue have been intensely argued by Irwin and Vlastos in a seven month debate in the *Times Literary Supplement*. See Irwin [1978] and Vlastos [1978a] and [1978b]. The final part of this chapter builds on this material.
end it contributes to is entirely distinct from it; neither of these conditions holds for a component.\textsuperscript{41}

It is important to stress that on Irwin's understanding of the instrumental relationship, the end and the means are distinct from one another. Furthermore, the value of the means is in its causal properties, not in itself. Now I will turn to an examination of Irwin's thesis that the craft analogy supports the instrumental interpretation of the Socratic relationship of virtue to happiness.

Irwin's evidence that Socrates held the craft analogy has two parts. First, Irwin gives textual evidence for the craft analogy. Second, Irwin argues that the craft analogy gives a more consistent and clear view of the Socratic conception of the relationship of virtue to happiness than other accounts. The textual evidence for the craft analogy will be given in the discussion of the second point. To examine this point I will consider the following two items:

(i) Socrates compares features of crafts to those of virtue. Irwin uses these comparisons to support his instrumental understanding of the Socratic relationship of virtue to happiness.

(ii) Irwin uses the features of virtue that are not features of crafts to support his thesis that Socrates held an instrumental conception of virtue.

\textsuperscript{41} Irwin [1977], pp.300-1, n.53.
(i) To understand how the craft analogy applies to virtue it is necessary to examine the features of crafts which Irwin claims Socrates wishes to ascribe to virtue. These features are as follows:

1. A craft has a final and determinate end.
2. A craft has a recognized procedure for reaching the determinate end.
3. The product of a craft can be judged objectively and the procedure altered to produce a better product.
4. An expert craftsman can give an account of his craft.
5. A craft can be taught.

I will examine each feature with respect to virtue in turn.

1. A craft has a final and determinate end. The final end or good that virtue leads to is happiness. We have seen in Chapter 2 that Socrates is a eudaemonist — he holds that everyone desires happiness as the ultimate end of all rational acts. Irwin argues that the end is both final and determinate, since Socrates can only defend his claim that knowledge is sufficient for virtue if

the virtuous and the non-virtuous man agree on the components of the final good, and the non-virtuous man is persuaded that the virtuous man's craft uses more efficient means to achieve this determinate end. But if the end is indeterminate, and virtue prescribes both instrumental means and components, Socrates has not shown how the non-virtuous man will be persuaded that these are the right components, or that his persuasion will result from knowledge, without a change of view on the ultimate end.\(^{42}\)

\(^{42}\) Irwin [1977], p.84.
(2) A craft has a recognized procedure for reaching the final and determinate end. Evidence for the position that Socrates holds that virtue leads to happiness can be found in the *Meno*, where Socrates states:

> In short, everything that the human spirit undertakes or suffers will lead to happiness when it is guided by wisdom, but to the opposite when guided by folly.⁴³

Irwin writes that

> The rationality of a craft, then, depends on a definite subject matter and product which can be achieved by some regular and clearly explicable process.⁴⁴

The quotation from the *Meno* states merely that the action guided by wisdom or virtue leads to happiness, but not that there is a clearly explicable process by which it does so. Irwin supports the idea of an explicable process by appealing to the fact that Socrates attacks pseudo-crafts such as poetry because they must rely on the poet's inspiration (*Ion*. 533c9-535d5; *G*. 462b5-c7)⁴⁵ while, in contrast, he believes that crafts can be taught.⁴⁶ That which can be taught has a definite explicable process. Furthermore, the elenchos is valued by Socrates as a procedure by which to gain virtue.⁴⁷ The elenchos, then, is for Socrates, one

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⁴³ Hamilton and Cairns [1961], p.373.
⁴⁴ Irwin [1977], p.74.
⁴⁵ Irwin [1977], p.74
⁴⁶ For more detail on this point see (5) below.
⁴⁷ Irwin [1977], p.74. This point is explored in more detail in §3.3.
example of a recognized procedure for achieving virtue and so for reaching the final and determinate end of happiness.

(3) The product of a craft can be judged objectively and the procedure altered to produce a better product. Irwin's argument for this point is that Socrates asserts that a craftsman can give an account of an objective procedure for the craft. He does not refer to any passage in which Socrates makes a direct reference to this quality either of both virtue and crafts, or of virtue alone. However, from (1) and (2) above this point follows: if the practice of virtue is a recognized procedure which has a final and determinate end, then the process and product can be judged and evaluated objectively. If the end were not determinate, there could be no objective way to judge the best way to obtain it, since there would be a different process leading to each different end.

(4) An expert craftsman can give an account of his craft. As one would seek an expert in a craft, Socrates seeks an expert in morals. In the *Crito* he asks,

Ought we to be guided and intimidated by the opinion of the many or by that of the one — assuming that there is someone with expert knowledge? Is it true that we ought to respect and fear this person more than all the rest put together, and that if we do not follow his guidance we shall spoil and mutilate that part of us which, as we used to say, is improved by right conduct and destroyed by wrong? Or is this all nonsense?\(^{48}\) (*Cr.* 47c13-d6)

\(^{48}\) Hamilton and Cairns [1961], p.32.
Furthermore, although not always stated explicitly, the search for the account of virtue is the motivation of the Socratic dialogues. Socrates does not think that he is an expert in the craft of virtue, yet he seeks someone who knows, or seeks to find out himself about virtue. This search is described by Socrates in the following well-known passage from the *Apology*:

Well, I gave a thorough examination to this person ... and in conversation with him I formed the impression that although in many people's opinion, and especially in his own, he appeared to be wise, in fact he was not. Then when I began to try to show him that he only thought he was wise and was really not so, my efforts were resented both by him and by many of the other people present. However, I reflected as I walked away, Well, I am certainly wiser than this man. It is only too likely that neither of us has any knowledge to boast of, but he thinks that he knows something which he does not know, whereas I am quite conscious of my own ignorance. At any rate it seems that I am wiser than he is to this small extent, that I do not think that I know what I do not know.49 (Ap. 21c4-d8)

(5) A craft can be taught. The question of the *Protagoras* is whether virtue can be taught. We have seen that Socrates claims that one should be able to give a rational account of virtue, for this is what he seeks in the elenchos. Furthermore, he holds that one should seek experts in the field of virtue, much as one does in the other crafts. Thus Socrates argues that virtue can be taught, for when the expert is found, a rational account can be given which can be passed on to others. In the *Protagoras* Socrates imagines an observer summing up the dialogue as follows:

49 Hamilton and Cairns [1961], pp.7-8
If virtue were something other than knowledge, as Protagoras tried to prove, obviously it could not be taught. But if it turns out to be, as a single whole, knowledge — which is what you are urging, Socrates — then it will be most surprising if it cannot be taught.\(^{50}\) (Pr. 361a4-c2)

The following passage from the *Laches* supports the claim that Socrates held that virtue, like a craft, can be taught. In this passage Socrates states that if you know what something is, you can say what it is, and so pass this knowledge on to others. This point is illustrated by analogy, not to a craft, but to the science of medicine.

Socrates: ... Suppose we know that the addition of sight makes better the eyes which possess this gift, and also are able to impart sight to the eyes; then, clearly, we know the nature of sight, and should be able to advise how this gift of sight may be best and most easily attained. But if we knew neither what sight is, nor what hearing is, we should not be very good medical advisors about the eyes or the ears, or about the best mode of giving sight and hearing to them.

Laches: That is true, Socrates.

Socrates: And are not our two friends, Laches, at this very moment inviting us to consider in what way the gift of virtue may be imparted to their sons for the improvement of their minds?

Laches: Very true.

Socrates: Then must we not first know the nature of virtue? For how can we advise anyone about the best mode of attaining something of whose nature we are wholly ignorant?\(^{51}\) (La. 190a1-c1)

(ii) What features of virtue that are not features of crafts does Irwin use to support the view that Socrates held an instrumentalist conception

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\(^{50}\) Hamilton and Cairns [1961], p.351.

\(^{51}\) Hamilton and Cairns [1961], p.133.
of virtue? The first feature is that all virtues are reducible to the knowledge of good and evil. This doctrine Irwin calls the unity of the virtues. The second feature is that the knowledge of good and evil is sufficient for virtuous action, and so if one has knowledge of good and evil one will act in accord with it. There is no possibility of "akrasia"; rather knowledge is sufficient for correct choice. Irwin uses passages from the *Protagoras* to support both of these points. That virtue is the knowledge of good and evil and therefore that all the virtues are one and the same thing, is summed up in the concluding passage of the *Protagoras* (partially quoted above):

It seems to me that the present outcome of our talk is pointing at us, like a human adversary, the finger of accusation and scorn. If it had a voice it would say, 'What an absurd pair you are Socrates and Protagoras. One of you, having said at the beginning that virtue is not teachable, now is bent upon contradicting himself by trying to demonstrate that everything is knowledge — justice, temperance, and courage alike — which is the best way to prove that virtue is teachable. If virtue were something other than knowledge, as Protagoras tried to prove, obviously it could not be taught. But if it turns out to be, as a single whole, knowledge — which is what you are urging, Socrates — then it will be most surprising if it cannot be taught.'\(^{52}\) (*Pr.*, 361a4-c2)

That *akrasia* is impossible and therefore that knowledge is sufficient for virtuous action is also stated in the *Protagoras*. Socrates bases his argument against *akrasia* on the hedonistic premiss that we always choose the most pleasurable course of action. By substituting "good" for "pleasure" and asserting that virtue is knowledge of the measuring of

\(^{52}\) Hamilton and Cairns [1961], p.351.
good and evil, Socrates can affirm that knowledge is sufficient for virtuous action and deny *akrasia*.

To remind you of your question, it arose because we two agreed that there was nothing more powerful than knowledge, but that wherever it is found it always has the mastery over pleasure and everything else. You on the other hand, who maintain that pleasure often masters even the man who knows, asked us to say what this experience really is, if it is not being mastered by pleasure. If we had answered you straight off that it is ignorance, you would have laughed at us, but if you laugh at us now you will be laughing at yourselves as well, for you have agreed that when people make a wrong choice of pleasures and pains — that is, of good and evil — the cause of their mistake is lack of knowledge. We can go further and call it, as you have already agreed, a science of measurement, and you know yourselves that a wrong action which is done without knowledge is done in ignorance.53 *(Pr. 357c1-e2)*

To summarize, Irwin holds that Socrates has a positive account of virtue which he develops with the aid of the craft analogy. Like a craft, a virtue is an instrumental means toward a final and determinate end — happiness. A rational account of the means toward the end can be given, and thus it is possible both to have experts in virtue and to teach virtue. Furthermore, all virtues are really one and the same thing, knowledge of good and evil. This knowledge, once acquired, guarantees virtuous behaviour, since we all desire pleasure or good, and once we know what is good and what is not, we will always choose the good.

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53 Hamilton and Cairns [1961], p.348.
I have outlined Irwin's thesis regarding the role that the craft analogy plays in establishing the instrumental account of virtue. In the next section I examine some difficulties with Irwin's account.

3.3. A Critique of Irwin's Instrumentalism

That Socrates employed the craft analogy to clarify his interlocutor's thinking about virtue is easy to establish, but that the craft analogy shows conclusively that Socrates was an instrumentalist with respect to virtue is not. For although the craft analogy points toward an instrumentalist conception of virtue, there are problems, independent of the craft analogy, with ascribing instrumentalism to Socrates. In this section I explore five such problems:

A) Instrumentalism is inconsistent with the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue.

B) Irwin's instrumentalism depends on the means and the end — virtue and happiness — being distinct. Yet the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue points to a different conception of the relationship of virtue to happiness, one in which virtue is the major component of happiness.

C) When the hedonistic premiss of the *Protagoras* — that we always choose the most pleasurable action — is seen as a candidate end for the moral science that the Socrates of the *Protagoras* wants to establish, rather than as a fixed Socratic doctrine, it is no longer a strong support for the instrumentalist view of the relationship of virtue to happiness.
D) The craft analogy does not necessarily support Irwin's instrumentalist account, although it could be consistent with some modified instrumentalist views. For virtue may be like certain crafts such as music in which the means and the ends are not distinct.

E) The elenctic method, like virtue, is something that Socrates values, not only for its results, but also in and of itself. If this is so, then it is not, as Irwin holds, merely a path to giving a rational account of virtue, which is instrumental toward happiness, but rather, the elenctic method, like virtue, can be conceived of as a component of happiness.

I will now examine each of A) through E) in turn:

A) Instrumentalism is inconsistent with the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue. The inconsistency can be noted when we examine the following two possible meanings of "suffices" in the Sufficiency thesis, the thesis that virtue is both necessary and sufficient for happiness:

i) Virtue suffices for happiness as an instrumental means.
ii) Virtue suffices for happiness as a component of happiness.

In §2.3 I outlined Socrates' principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue. To review, this principle states that virtue is the supreme good and that

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54 See §2.3.
when deciding between two actions that differ with respect to virtue, considerations of virtue and nothing else should decide one's actions. The principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue is evident in Socrates' speech in the *Apology* where he states the reply he would give to a person who questions why he has followed a course of action that has put him in danger of his life:

> Man, you don't speak well, if you believe that a man worth anything at all would give countervailing weight to danger of life or death, or give consideration to anything but this when he acts: whether his action is just or unjust, the action of a good or of an evil man.\(^{56}\) (*Ap.* 28b5-9)

Here Socrates is not stating that virtue is sovereign because it is instrumental toward happiness, but rather that virtue is sovereign because, putting aside considerations of happiness or any other consequences — even the consequence of death — virtuous actions should be chosen. Even if Socrates does hold that virtue is instrumental toward happiness, he does not hold that its only value is in its instrumentality. If virtue were valued solely for its instrumental value, as it is on Irwin's account,\(^{57}\) then the choice of death would not be an option.

B) Instrumentalism depends on the means and the end — virtue and happiness — being distinct. The principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue points to a different conception of the relationship of virtue to happiness, one in which virtue is the major component of happiness. The conflict is between the view that

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\(^{56}\) Vlastos [1991], p.209.

\(^{57}\) Irwin [1977], pp.300-1, n.53. See also §3.2.
(1) virtue should be pursued "however bad the consequences" for anything distinct from virtue, and

(2) virtue should be pursued only for its consequences for happiness, which is something distinct from virtue.\(^{58}\)

We have seen that on Irwin's understanding of the instrumental relationship, the end and the means are distinct from one another. Furthermore, we have seen that on his view, the value of the means is in its causal properties, not in itself.\(^{59}\) (1) is a statement of the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue. According to (1), virtue should be pursued for its own sake rather than for its instrumentality. (2) is consistent with Irwin's views. Here virtue and happiness are distinct, and virtue is valued only for its consequences for happiness. However (2) is at odds with (1). Since Socrates clearly states that he holds (1), we must reject (2) and Irwin's instrumentalism.

Vlastos suggests that the Sufficiency thesis and the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue show that Socrates' concept of happiness is different from that of the common person. Instead of virtue being instrumental toward a distinct and determinate happiness in the way that a craft is instrumental toward its product,

... he [Socrates] has transformed the notion of happiness, has built virtue into happiness, much as Spinoza was to do when

\(^{58}\) Vlastos [1991], p.9.

\(^{59}\) Irwin [1977], pp.300-1, n.53. See also §3.2.
he declared that happiness is not a reward for virtue, but virtue itself.\textsuperscript{60}

On a view such as this virtue could still be "instrumental" toward happiness, but not in Irwin's sense, for it would be neither distinct from happiness, nor valued solely for its causal properties. Rather, the instrumentality would be a trivial consequence of the fact that virtue is a part of happiness, and so if one pursued virtue for whatever reason, happiness would also be achieved.

C) When the hedonistic premiss of the \textit{Protagoras} — that we always choose the most pleasurable action — is seen as a candidate end for the moral science that the Socrates of the \textit{Protagoras} wants to establish, rather than as a fixed Socratic doctrine, it is no longer a strong support for the instrumentalist view of the relationship of virtue to happiness.

The prima facie reading of the hedonistic premiss seems more consistent with the instrumental than the component conception of the relationship of virtue to happiness. The view of the Socrates of the \textit{Protagoras} seems to be that

\begin{quote}
pleasure is the only underivatively good thing and that 'pleasant' and 'good' are different names for one and the same characteristic.\textsuperscript{61}
\end{quote}

If pleasure is the only \textit{underivatively} good thing then the thesis in the \textit{Protagoras} must be that virtue is derivatively good. This supports the

\textsuperscript{60} Vlastos [1978b] Apr. 21, p.445.

\textsuperscript{61} Gosling and Taylor [1982], p.50.
instrumental and not the component account. For on the instrumental view, virtue is valuable for its causal properties of bringing about pleasure, while on the component view, virtue is valuable in and of itself (it is the sovereign good). In other words, the idea that virtue is only derivatively good conflicts with the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue.

Both Vlastos and Nussbaum suggest that Socrates does not necessarily hold the hedonistic premiss of the *Protagoras*. Their interpretations of the hedonistic premiss are motivated by the fact that the hedonistic premiss, and the instrumental account that it implies, contradict many of Socrates' other doctrines, such as the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue.

Vlastos suggests that in the *Protagoras* Socrates is tailoring his argument to the understanding of the common people. Since Socrates knows that everyone aims at what they think is the good and that for most people the good is simply what is pleasant, he uses this view as the basis for his argument that knowledge is sufficient for virtuous action and that *akrasia* is impossible. These conclusions may also obtain with the premiss that the good is the virtuous life, but this is a further step that Socrates does not attempt to show in the *Protagoras*. Since instrumentalism appears to be inconsistent with Socrates' other views, Vlastos suggests that the hedonistic premiss of the *Protagoras* is not Socrates' own, but rather "that of the *hoi polloi* on whom he foists it."62

62 Vlastos [1978a] Feb. 24, p.231. The only other possible interpretation is that the Socratic conception of virtue changed from dialogue to dialogue. This is
An alternate interpretation of the hedonistic premiss is suggested by Nussbaum. She claims that the goal of the *Protagoras* is to find a method of scientific measurement which will reliably guide people to choose moral behaviour consistently. The argument that unfolds and its consequences — that knowledge is sufficient for virtue and *akrasia* impossible — serve as "an advertisement, as it were, for its premises."63 Among the premisses is the hedonistic premiss. I favour this interpretation since, instead of trying to find a reason for the premiss on its own, one sees that the premiss is necessary to achieve that towards which Socrates aims, a science of practical reasoning. Furthermore, seen in this way, one can understand how the following comment, made by Socrates at the end of the *Protagoras*, makes sense.

> Now *which techne* [human art or science], and *what episteme* [knowledge], we shall inquire later. But this suffices to show that it is *episteme*.64 (*Pr.* 357b-c)

This statement lends credence to the thought that Socrates is exploring the consequences of a science based on measuring pleasure rather than committing himself to hedonism. It appears that Socrates is motivated by the idea that a science can be found that will solve moral problems rather than by the logical consequences of hedonism.65

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63 Nussbaum [1986], p.115
64 Nussbaum [1986], p.112.
65 Nussbaum ([1986], p.112) draws a parallel between the motivation behind Socrates' hedonism in the *Protagoras* and that of the nineteenth-century moral philosophers. She writes

> In both Bentham and Sidgwick, we find that distaste for the plurality and incommensurability of common-sense values gives a powerful push
One reason Socrates may have been willing to consider the science of the measuring of pleasures (goods) and pains (evils) for his moral science in the Protagoras is suggested by the component view of the Socratic relationship of virtue to happiness. On this view, though everyone seeks pleasure (happiness), when they come to understand that virtue is a component of happiness, and are equipped with virtue — the knowledge of good and evil — they will be both virtuous and happy.

In summary, the hedonistic premiss of the Protagoras is needed to affirm that knowledge is sufficient for virtuous behaviour and to deny akrasia. Although the hedonistic premiss seems to support the instrumental view of the relationship of virtue to happiness — that pleasure is the only underderivatively good thing and so virtue must be only derivatively good — it is not a challenge to the component reading if we hold that the Socrates of the Protagoras was exploring the possibility of a moral science rather than committing himself to hedonism and its consequences. We have good reason to look for an explanation that does not take the hedonistic premiss at face value, such as the one outlined above, since the hedonistic premiss conflicts with other views that Socrates espouses, such as the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue.

D) The craft analogy does not necessarily support Irwin’s instrumentalist account, although it could be consistent with some modified instrumentalist views. For virtue may be like certain crafts such as music in which the means and the ends are not distinct.

towards the selection of an end that is, admittedly, not believed to be a supreme good in the intuitive deliverances of common sense.
Socrates thought that all crafts perfect their object and, similarly, that moral knowledge leads to perfection of the soul. This perfection of the soul is what makes life worth living. Consistent with these Socratic views, the craft analogy can be read in the following non-instrumental way:

... in the case of this craft, the only one of its kind, its exercise is an end in itself; the moral perfection at which it aims is realized in the very process which creates it.

Virtue, as a craft whose exercise is an end in itself, cannot be thought of merely instrumentally. Instrumental crafts work toward ends distinct from the craft itself, other non-instrumental crafts embody the end in their process. Music is a craft in which the process also embodies the end. We do not say that the process of music is instrumental in making the end of music. Virtue could be this type of non-instrumental craft, and it seems more reasonable, given the arguments above, to ascribe this reading of the craft analogy's bearing on virtue in place of the instrumental reading. A modified type of instrumentalism in which the means and the ends are not distinct, could accommodate "crafts" such as music and virtue. However, on Irwin's instrumentalist account, the ends and the means are distinct and, furthermore, the means are valued only as a means to the end. In cases such as music and virtue, where the ends and the means are not distinct, the means are valued in that they are part of the ends. The relationship here is not one characterized by

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66 Vlastos [1978a], Feb.24, p.231.
67 Vlastos [1978a], Feb.24, p.231.
causal links as the instrumental relationship is, but rather by component parts.

Irwin argues that Socrates holds that virtues are not tendencies but rather states. Virtue is not a set of actions to do, but rather a state of knowledge of good and evil. The idea that virtue is a state does not necessarily support the instrumentalist reading. Virtue could be a state which promotes happiness or, equally plausibly, it could be a state which is identical to, or perhaps a major component of, the state of happiness.

In summary, virtue may be like crafts, such as music, in which the means and the ends are not distinct. On this reading, the craft analogy does not support Irwin's instrumentalist account, although it could be consistent with some modified instrumentalist view. Furthermore, the Socratic conception of virtue as a state can be read as supporting both the instrumentalist and component accounts of the relationship of virtue to happiness.

E) The elenctic method, like virtue, is something that Socrates values, not only for its results, but also in and of itself. If this is so, then the elenctic method is not, as Irwin holds, merely a path to giving a rational account of virtue, which is instrumental toward happiness, but rather, the elenctic method, like virtue, can be conceived of as a component of happiness. In the following passage Irwin argues that if virtue is a craft then we don't need the elenchos:

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68 Irwin [1977], p.45.
By identifying the craft and the product, the elenchos promises its own obsolescence.69

This statement is inconsistent with the many Socratic texts in which the value of the elenchos is extolled. Passages supporting the thesis that Socrates highly values the elenchos are cited by Irwin in the following quotation. This quotation shows how well Irwin understands the importance of the elenchos for Socrates and so contradicts his statement that through identifying the craft and its product the "elenchos promises its own obsolescence."

Socrates values the negative, therapeutic function of the elenchos (Tht. 151c5; Sph. 230d6-e3) when it removes false pretensions to knowledge (Ap. 21c3-e2, 29e3-30a2; Ch. 166c7-d2) and exposes the interlocutor's ignorance (La. 199e13-200a8; Eu. 15d4-e2). But this therapy should precede positive progress towards the truth (Ch. 166d2-6; Sph. 230c3-d4), which is Socrates' goal (Ch. 165b5-9). When he advises people to take virtue seriously (Ap. 30a7-b3; Cr. 53c6-8), and argue about it daily (Ap. 38c1-5), he promises not only that his methods will expose any lingering confusions, and produce a healthy moral scepticism in place of thoughtless dogma, but also that they will improve moral convictions. The negative procedure of the elenchos does not refute this claim.70

It is apparent that Socrates values the process of learning that the elenchos embodies. Irwin's view that the elenchos is only a tool towards discovering that virtue is the best means to happiness is anathema to the Socratic commitment to the process of learning which the elenchos embodies.

69 Irwin [1977], p.110.

70 Irwin [1977], p.38.
Perhaps an "elenchos analogy" would be more apt in relation to virtue than the craft analogy. While the craft analogy may seem to encourage an instrumental view of virtue, the elenctic analogy encourages a component view. On this view, just as the practice of the elenchos is also the experience of learning and understanding, so the practice of virtue is also the experience of happiness. Socrates does not ever consider abandoning the elenctic process, as Irwin suggests he might, since for Socrates, although the process is valued as a means to an end, it is also valued for its own sake.

Irwin writes that the elenchos appeals to three different kinds of shared beliefs:

a) rules and definitions,
b) beliefs about examples, and
c) theoretical connections.71

Socrates and his interlocutors disagree about a). Socrates uses b) and c) against a), and then c) against b).72 On this account the craft analogy is on shaky ground yet again. For the craft analogy is the way that Socrates approaches b), people's beliefs about examples. But these beliefs about the examples are challenged by theoretical connections c). So, Socrates uses crafts as a common ground upon which to begin discussion that will lead to a) and c). He uses crafts but does not hold the craft up as an example of the way virtue should be theoretically

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71 Irwin [1977], p.76.
72 Irwin [1977], p.67.
defined. Socrates' quarry is virtue, and the craft analogy is a tool of the elenchos. On this analysis, the role of the elenchos is not restricted to showing that virtue is instrumental toward happiness. Rather the elenchos, a learning process, is key to the gaining of knowledge or virtue. Virtue is a non-final end in that one can always learn more and gain more knowledge. The elenchos is the process of learning, virtue is knowledge, and virtuous behaviour is the result of having that knowledge.

3.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined Irwin's instrumental thesis regarding the relationship of virtue to happiness. Irwin's evidence for the instrumental thesis relies heavily on his interpretation of the craft analogy, which we have seen does not necessarily show that Socrates was an instrumentalist with respect to virtue. In fact, the early dialogues give evidence that Socrates felt that considerations of virtue and nothing else, even the possibility of death, should decide our actions.

In the process of critiquing Irwin's instrumentalist view of the Socratic relationship of virtue to happiness, I suggested a component view. On the component view, the process of being virtuous is also the experience of happiness. In this sense, an analogy comparing virtue with the elenctic method, which is both a means and an end, gives a more consistent view of Socratic virtue and happiness.
4. Irwin's Adaptive Account

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter I examine Irwin's adaptive account of happiness and its relationship to the Sufficiency Thesis. After outlining Irwin's position, I offer three critiques of it. First, I explore Irwin's own admission that the adaptive account does not give a satisfactory defense of virtue. Second, I show that the adaptive account does not accord with the Socratic conceptions of virtue and happiness. Finally, I show that the adaptive account cannot be attributed to Socrates, since he clearly did not desire external goods\(^{73}\) for their own sakes.

4.2. Irwin's Account

In "Socrates the Epicurean"\(^{74}\) T.H. Irwin examines the relation of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory as distinct from that in the moral theory of Plato. He claims that Socrates holds the Sufficiency Thesis — that virtue by itself does secure happiness — while Plato holds the Comparative Thesis — that "justice by itself makes the just person happier than the unjust."\(^{75}\) Plato's Comparative Thesis allows for the possibility that there are some components of happiness that are not

\(^{73}\) I will use "external goods" to refer to those "goods" that are independent of virtue. It is important to keep in mind that Socrates may not feel that these are goods at all.

\(^{74}\) Irwin [1980], pp.85-112.

\(^{75}\) Irwin [1980], p.85.
secured by justice. In this case, it is possible that although the just man may be happier than the unjust, neither is happy.\textsuperscript{76} By contrast, on Socrates' Sufficiency Thesis justice by itself is necessary and sufficient for happiness and so the just man is necessarily happy.

In order to examine the Socratic relation of virtue to happiness, Irwin discusses Socrates' conceptions of happiness and virtue. With respect to happiness, Irwin observes that Socrates suggests candidates for happiness rather than giving a formal analysis of happiness.\textsuperscript{77} Aristotle, by contrast, gives the following three stage analysis of happiness:

1. Formal criteria for the highest good — completeness and self-sufficiency. (1097b20-21)
2. A conception of happiness meeting these criteria — activity of the soul according to virtue in a complete life. (1098a16-18)
3. A candidate for the happy life — the life according to the specific actions and states of character described in the Eth. Nic.\textsuperscript{78}

From this analysis we can understand happiness in three stages. The Greek moralists held that the good for man is happiness,\textsuperscript{79} and for Aristotle this good is characterized by completeness and self-sufficiency. The second stage is describing a general state of a person out of which happiness, or completeness and self-sufficiency, will obtain. The

\textsuperscript{76} Irwin [1980], p.85.
\textsuperscript{77} Irwin [1980], p.89.
\textsuperscript{78} Irwin [1980], p.89. The numbers in brackets refer to the \textit{Nichomachean Ethics}.
\textsuperscript{79} Vlastos [1991], p.214.
third stage is a description of specific actions and states of character that will lead to (2) and (1). Irwin uses the Aristotelian analysis of happiness to elucidate his understanding of the Socratic relation of virtue to happiness.

With respect to virtue, Irwin's discussion of the Socratic conception is brief. He writes that Socrates identifies virtue with wisdom and takes virtue to be sufficient for happiness — wisdom (virtue) is the only good and makes a person happy.80

Having briefly examined happiness and virtue, Irwin presents the following account of how Socrates argues that virtue is sufficient for happiness.

(1) Happiness is what we all want.

(2) We obtain happiness by gaining goods.

(3) Wisdom is the only good and therefore is necessary and sufficient for happiness.81

Irwin argues that Socrates must show that his candidate for happiness, wisdom (virtue), achieves the Aristotelian criteria of self-sufficiency and security, or he "violates an apparently reasonable formal criterion for happiness."82

80 Irwin [1980], p.92.
81 Irwin [1980], pp.90-1.
82 Irwin [1980], p.91.
That Socrates held that happiness is what we all want, and that we achieve happiness by gaining goods is apparent in the following passage from the *Euthydemus*:

Do we all wish to do well in the world? Or perhaps this is one of the questions which I feared you might laugh at, for it is foolish, no doubt, even to ask such things. Who in the world does not wish to do well?

Not a single one, said Clinias.

Very well, said I. Next then, since we all wish to do well, how could we do well? If we had plenty of good things, eh? Perhaps that is a sillier question than the other. For it is clear, I suppose that that is true?

He agreed.83 *(Eud. 278e3-279a4)*

To argue that wisdom is the only good and therefore is necessary and sufficient for happiness, Socrates needs to show that there is no part of happiness that is not secured by virtue, and that the goods such as health and wealth that are independent of virtue are not elements of happiness at all.

Briefly, Socrates rejects external goods in the *Euthydemus* by arguing as follows:

(1) ... good fortune is not an element of happiness that is independent of wisdom, because wisdom by itself secures all the good fortune that is needed. (279C9-280A8)

(2) ... none of the external goods is a good at all, because it is their right use that secures happiness and only wisdom ensures their right use.84 (280B1-281E5)

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83 Hamilton and Cairns [1961], p.392.

84 Irwin [1980], p.92.
How does Socrates justify these claims? According to Aristotle's formal criteria of completeness and self-sufficiency for happiness (and from the common view of happiness), it appears we need external goods. Irwin gets around this problem by suggesting that Socrates held an adaptive strategy with respect to happiness. The adaptive strategy is to desire only those things that it is feasible to achieve. If one desires only wisdom, and not external goods (unless they are achievable, and one uses wisdom to decide this), then wisdom (virtue) would be sufficient for happiness. Irwin writes:

A virtuous person can certainly suffer the loss of external goods; such losses require him to change his desires; but they do not threaten his happiness, since he adapts his desires to fit the circumstances.85

The adaptive account has interesting implications for understanding the Socratic relation of virtue to happiness. If Socrates is an adaptive strategist with respect to happiness, and holds that virtue is sufficient for happiness, then it is not necessary to think that he attributes some intrinsic value to it; rather the virtuous state of being, which involves the adaptive strategy could be instrumental toward happiness. However, Irwin claims that the adaptive account is also consistent with either an identity or a component conception of virtue. On these readings, virtue

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85 Irwin [1980], p.105.
might be identical to happiness, [Identity conception] or a part of happiness whose presence is causally sufficient for the presence of other parts. [Component conception]\(^{86}\)

On the adaptive account the external goods could be either instrumental goods, or not goods at all, depending on the feasibility of the desire for them. If the desire for an external good can be filled, that external good is instrumental toward happiness, whereas if the desire cannot be filled, the external good is not a good and has no effect on happiness.\(^{87}\)

The adaptive account may be consistent with a component or an identity account of virtue but it does not require it. In the next section I will show that the adaptive account does not give a satisfactory defense of virtue, and so, if it supports any conception of the relationship of virtue to happiness, it supports a conception that does not attribute any intrinsic value to virtue. In this sense, the adaptive account implies an instrumental view of virtue.

Irwin's account of the Socratic relation of virtue to happiness can be summarized as follows:

(1) Happiness is all we want.

(2) The formal criterion is that happiness leads to the complete and self sufficient life. Happiness is the complete fulfillment of desire.

\(^{86}\) Irwin [1980], p.105.

\(^{87}\) Irwin [1980], p.107.
(3) The adaptive strategy is a method for fulfilling our desire which results in the external goods being unnecessary for our happiness.

(4) Wisdom is both necessary and sufficient for happiness. It is key to happiness since it involves the wisdom to adopt and to pursue the adaptive strategy.

4.3. Problems with Irwin’s Adaptive Account

In the last section I outlined Irwin’s adaptive account of happiness. In this section I point out the following three problems with it:

(1) The adaptive account does not capture Socrates’ meaning since it does not give him a satisfactory defense of virtue.

(2) The adaptive account is inconsistent with the Socratic conceptions of virtue and happiness.

(3) The adaptive account is foreign to Socrates’ scheme of values. Socrates only desires the good and is not concerned with external goods. It is hard to imagine Socrates spending much time formulating desires about external goods and checking to see if the desires are feasible and modulating them if they are not. Socrates’ conception of happiness is not concerned with his desire to satisfy feasible preferences with respect to external goods, but rather with whether he fulfills his desire to live up to his standards of justice.

I will examine each of these three difficulties in turn.
(1) The first problem is suggested by Irwin's comment that the adaptive account of virtue does not give Socrates a satisfactory defense of virtue. This is true because the adaptive account does not tell us how to choose between two equally feasible, but not equally virtuous, sets of desires. If each set of desires is feasible, then on the adaptive account one can choose either set, and fulfilling each set, regardless of its virtue, will yield happiness. So although Socrates can argue that virtue is sufficient for happiness and vice unnecessary, being virtuous is only one of many possible results of the adaptive strategy. In other words, the adaptive account does not show virtue to be necessary for happiness.

(2) The adaptive account cannot be Socrates', since it is inconsistent with the Socratic conceptions of virtue and happiness. Irwin uses Aristotle's three stage criteria for happiness because he claims that Socrates does not give a clear account of his conception of happiness. However, it is not clear why, if Socrates does not give a clear account of happiness, we should rely on Aristotle's. It seems more reasonable to try to reconstruct Socrates' view of happiness from his "less-than-clear" account. Using this strategy, it appears that we do know at least two things about Socrates' views on happiness. First, we know that he is a eudaemonist, that is, he holds that happiness is the final good toward which all our actions are directed. Second, we know that Socrates' view of happiness has a strong objective component. This is so since

89 Irwin [1980], p.89.
90 See Chapter 2.
objective happiness is more stressed in the Greek "eudaimonia" than in the English "happiness". Moreover, Socrates' objective view of happiness is apparent in the Gorgias where he states:

Yes, in my opinion, Polus, for the man and woman who are noble and good I call happy, but the evil and base I call wretched. (G. 470e9-11)

Irwin's adaptive account is consistent with the eudaemonist axiom and its loading on the subjective element of happiness, but not with the objective element of happiness. In the Protagoras Socrates equates good with pleasure, and evil with pain. Socrates felt that one would only be happy if one's desires for the good, based on knowledge, are actually satisfied. Since, for Socrates, the evil person's desires are not good, fulfilling them will not produce happiness. The evil person is actually ignorant, lacking the wisdom to know good and evil and obtain objective happiness. Thus in the Protagoras Socrates states:

Then if the pleasant is the good, no-one who either knows or believes that there is another possible course of action, better than the one he is following will ever continue on his present course when he might choose the better. To 'act beneath yourself' is the result of pure ignorance; to 'be your own master' is wisdom. (Pr. 358b8-c3)

According to this passage, once one is convinced that something one desires is not good, one will no longer desire it. The implication of

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91 Vlastos [1991], p.203.
this is that what makes something desirable is not its feasibility but rather its goodness.

The idea of objective happiness brings us to a need to look into Socratic virtue in more detail. We have seen that Socrates felt that the satisfaction of desires guided by wisdom is the true good, and yields objective happiness, while the satisfaction of those guided by ignorance is not good, and does not yield happiness. So happiness does not simply come from fulfilling desires, and wisdom is not simply the wisdom to use the adaptive strategy — it is the knowledge of good and evil.

Irwin has de-emphasized Socrates' conception of virtue as the knowledge of good and evil, and put in its place a virtue which simply consists of the wisdom to use the adaptive strategy. Irwin writes:

An adaptive account of happiness explains the sufficiency thesis. In Socrates' view, a virtuous person has seen that his happiness requires him to have flexible or feasible desires; he therefore cultivates these desires and eliminates others, and so ensures the satisfaction of his desires.94

This claim is a direct contrast to Socrates' view of wisdom, in which virtuous actions are not the result of the modification of desire, but rather of the knowledge of good and evil.

In summary, although Irwin states that Socrates claims that "wisdom is the only good, ... necessary and sufficient for happiness,"95 he also argues that the adaptive account of happiness does not require that

94 Irwin [1980], p.110.
95 Irwin [1980], p.91.
virtue be necessary for happiness. It therefore seems unlikely that Socrates held the adaptive account. The adaptive account does not give a satisfactory defense of Socratic virtue because it is not based on the accounts of virtue and happiness that Socrates held. Socrates held that what is desirable is the good, not the feasible. It is the fulfilling of these desires for the good that bring happiness. Furthermore, happiness, for Socrates, has a strong objective component with the result that non-virtuous actions (those that are not based on knowledge) do not produce happiness. Moreover, wisdom (virtue) is the knowledge of good and evil, and not simply the wisdom to adopt the adaptive account of happiness.

(3) The third problem with the adaptive account is simply that it is clear that Socrates does not hold it. It is interesting that Irwin quotes a passage from Hume's Treatise which supports the adaptive strategy rather than a passage from the early Dialogues.\textsuperscript{96} Socrates does not hold the adaptive strategy because he only values the good and gives no countervailing weight to any other factors. This is evident in the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue. Socrates consistently states that

\begin{quote}
He has only one thing to consider in performing any action — that is, whether he is acting rightly or wrongly, like a good man or a bad one.\textsuperscript{97} (Ap. 28b7-9)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{96} Irwin [1980], p.96

\textsuperscript{97} Hamilton and Cairns [1961], p.14.
Socrates only wishes for the knowledge of good and evil which, in turn, determines virtuous action. Feasible desires and an adaptive account did not occur to him.

One could argue that Socrates does not only wish for virtue on the strength of his comment in the *Gorgias* that he would not wish to suffer injustice:

Polus: "Then you would wish rather to suffer than to do wrong?" Socrates: "I would not wish either, but if I had either to do or to suffer wrong, I would choose rather to suffer than to do it."98 (*G*. 469b12-C2)

However Socrates could wish this in an instrumental sense. Suffering injustice would make him less able to be virtuous. If not suffering is an instrumental good and the only good Socrates wishes for is virtue, then the adaptive account is unnecessary. For Socrates, the adaptive account is immaterial with respect to external goods and not applicable to virtue itself.

In the *Gorgias* Socrates argues:

For it is not worth while in my opinion for a man to live with a diseased body; in that case he must live a diseased [unhappy] life. Is it not so?99 (*G*. 505a2-4)

This claim would not make sense if the adaptive strategy held, for on this strategy, one could adapt to bad health and live happily. If, on the other hand, health is necessary for virtue, then although one might


99 Hamilton and Cairns [1961], p.287.
be able to adapt to not having it, one would not be happy since virtue is necessary for happiness.

4.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined Irwin's adaptive account of happiness and its relationship to the Socratic Sufficiency Thesis. I have shown that the adaptive account does not give a satisfactory defense of virtue. Furthermore, the adaptive account is not consistent with Socrates' conceptions of virtue and happiness. Finally, the adaptive account cannot be attributed to Socrates, since he clearly did not desire external goods for their own sakes.

The relation of the external goods to happiness in Socratic moral theory can be puzzling. I suggest that Socrates holds that a minimum level of health and wealth are necessary prerequisites for virtue, and that virtue is both necessary and sufficient for happiness. This two-step model accounts for the fact that Socrates sometimes refers to health and wealth as goods, and says he would not wish to suffer or be unhealthy, and yet also holds that virtue is both necessary and sufficient for happiness.
5. Vlastos' Component Account

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter I examine Gregory Vlastos' conception of the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory. I begin with an outline of Vlastos' defense of his component interpretation of the Sufficiency Thesis over the more generally supported Identity Thesis. In the remainder of the chapter I offer a critique of Vlastos' account and provide an alternate conception of the relation of virtue to happiness which accounts for "non-moral" goods (such as health and wealth) that are so central to Vlastos' argument.

5.2. Vlastos' Account

Vlastos begins his account with an examination of the Socratic use of the words "eudaimonia" and "arete" and their English translations.

"Arete" is the Greek word for virtue, whose parts are courage, moderation, justice, piety, wisdom. We have seen that Socrates held that these parts of virtue are all reducible to knowledge.\footnote{Irwin calls this the thesis of the unity of the virtues. For a more detailed discussion of this topic see §3.2.} A consequence of this is that "if one has any of them one will necessarily have all of them" (Pr. 369e4).\footnote{Vlastos [1991], p.210, n.46.} A further consequence of all the virtues being one
thing — the knowledge of good and evil — is that "whatever stake any of them has in a given choice, each of the other four has the same."\textsuperscript{102}

The word "eudaimonia" translates into our notions of both objective and subjective happiness. Objective happiness can be thought of as attainment of good or well-being, whereas subjective happiness can be thought of as an experience of pleasurable contentment or satisfaction.\textsuperscript{103} We have seen that objective happiness is more stressed in the Greek usage than in the English,\textsuperscript{104} a point that will become important in our discussion later in this chapter.

Having looked at the words "eudaimonia" and "arete", Vlastos next examines what Socrates has to say about happiness and virtue in terms of their relationship to human action. With respect to happiness Socrates holds the Eudaemonist Axiom, and with respect to virtue, he holds the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue.\textsuperscript{105}

The Eudaemonist Axiom can be stated as follows:

happiness is desired by all human beings as the ultimate end (telos) of all their rational acts.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{104} Vlastos [1991], p.203.
\textsuperscript{105} Since these two theses have been shown to be supported by Socratic texts in previous chapters I will simply state them here.
\textsuperscript{106} Vlastos [1991], p.203. In essence the Eudaemonist Axiom is the hedonistic premiss of the Protagoras discussed in Chapter 3. In the Protagoras Socrates uses the hedonistic premiss that we all seek pleasure to show both that knowledge is sufficient for virtue since akrasia is impossible. Here I state the premiss as an axiom because this discussion is not related to the argument of the Protagoras.
Vlastos states Socrates' principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue as follows:

Whenever we must choose between exclusive and exhaustive alternatives which we have come to perceive as, respectively, just and unjust or, more generally, as virtuous and vicious, this very perception of them should decide our choice.107

Socrates and the other Greek moralists, being eudaemonists, sought to connect virtue to happiness. If such a connection could be found, then the motivation toward happiness would result in virtuous behaviour. Vlastos lists three ways that the Greek moralists see the relation of virtue to happiness:

(1) For some the relation is purely instrumental: they hold that virtue is desirable only as an instrumental means to happiness, not at all for its own sake.
(2) For others the relation is constitutive, but only partly so: they hold that virtue is a principle, but not the only, thing desirable for its own sake.
(3) For still others, who go further in the same direction, the relation is constitutive in toto: for them virtue is happiness — the only thing that makes life good and satisfying.108

The goal of Vlastos' inquiry is to decide which account best satisfies Socrates' view of the relation of virtue to happiness. In other words, Vlastos' account must connect the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue

Furthermore, it is appropriate to use Vlastos' terminology when examining his account.

108 Vlastos [1991], p.204.
with the Eudaemonist Axiom. There are two theses that will accomplish this, the Identity Thesis and the Sufficiency Thesis:

(1) According to the Identity Thesis, the happy and the virtuous modes of living are identical. To live happily, is the same as to live virtuously under a different description; one is a description of the desirability of a particular way of living, the other, a description of the morality.\textsuperscript{109}

(2) According to the Sufficiency Thesis, virtue is the sovereign good and is both necessary and sufficient for happiness. On Vlastos' component interpretation of this thesis happiness has a multitude of lesser constituents in addition to virtue (e.g., non-moral goods such as health and wealth). In disjunction from virtue each of the lesser constituents would be worthless, but when conjoined with virtue each would enhance happiness to some small extent.\textsuperscript{110}

Either the Identity Thesis or the Component Sufficiency Thesis, together with the Eudaemonist Axiom, give us a rationale for the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue as follows:

(1) Eudaemonist Axiom: Happiness is desired by all human beings as the ultimate end of all their rational acts.

\textsuperscript{109} Vlastos [1991], p.214.
\textsuperscript{110} Vlastos [1991], p.216.
(2) The Identity Thesis: The happy and the virtuous modes of living are identical.

*or*

The Component Sufficiency Thesis: Virtue is the sovereign good, both necessary and sufficient for happiness, since virtue is the major component of happiness.

(3) Principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue: Virtue is the sovereign good in our domain of value, its claim upon our choice of action is always final.

Vlastos thinks that Socrates holds the Component Sufficiency and not the Identity Thesis. He argues for the Component Sufficiency Thesis in two ways: first, because its implications makes more sense than those of the Identity Thesis, and second, because it is supported by textual evidence.

In Vlastos' view, the Component Sufficiency Thesis makes more sense than the Identity Thesis, since the Identity Thesis does not support eudaemonism as a theory of rational choice.

If happiness were identical with virtue our final reason for choosing anything at all would have to be only concern for our virtue; so the multitude of choices that have nothing to do with that concern would be left unexplained.\(^\text{111}\)

For example, Vlastos writes that, if the Identity Thesis holds,

\(^{111}\) Vlastos [1991], p.225.
Vlastos' Component Account

an inmate of Gulag should be as happy as an equally virtuous inmate of a Cambridge college.\textsuperscript{112}

Although life in the Gulag is not a choice, the point Vlastos is making here is that if happiness were identical to virtue, then there would be no reason to prefer one over the other. The fact that people, given the choice, would uniformly choose a virtuous life in a Cambridge college over an equally virtuous life in the Gulag, suggests that happiness is not identical to virtue.

Vlastos presents two sets of textual evidence to support the Component Sufficiency Thesis. The first set shows that the texts can be read to support either the Identity or the Component Sufficiency Thesis. The second set gives positive evidence in support of the Component Sufficiency Thesis.

In the following passage from the \textit{Crito} Socrates states that happiness and virtue are "\textit{tauton}" or the same.

"Do we still hold, or do we not, that we should attach highest value not to living, but to living well?" — "We do" — "And that to live well [happily] is the same [\textit{tauton}] as to live honorably and justly [virtuously]: do we hold that too, or not?" — "We do."\textsuperscript{113} (\textit{Cr.} 48b4-10)

Vlastos argues that this text can be read as supporting both the Identity Thesis and the Component Sufficiency Thesis. His argument is based on an Aristotelian analysis of possible meanings of saying that A

\textsuperscript{112} Vlastos [1991], p.216.

\textsuperscript{113} Vlastos [1991], p.214.
and B are *tauton*. Using Aristotle's interpretation, the possible meanings of *tauton* in the *Crito* passage are

(1) that A and B are synonyms or that they "are the same in definition";
(2) that B is, in technical Aristotelian terminology, a "proprium" of A, i.e. that while B is not the "essence" of A, the two are nonetheless necessarily interentailing.\(^\text{114}\)

Vlastos claims that it is clear that the meaning of *tauton* in the passage from the *Crito* is not expressed in the first of Aristotle's interpretations, since Socrates does not mean that "happiness" and "virtue" are synonyms, or that they have the same definition. Yet Socrates could mean that "happiness" and "virtue" are synonyms in that they are different descriptions of the same mode of life. Vlastos himself suggests this interpretation when he writes that

the form of life we call "happiness" when viewing it under the desirability criteria (as the most deeply and durably satisfying kind of life) is the same form of life we call "virtue" when viewing it as meeting moral criteria (as the just, brave, temperate, pious, wise way to live).\(^\text{115}\)

Vlastos claims that Aristotle's second interpretation of *tauton* fits both the Component Sufficiency Thesis and the Identity Thesis.\(^\text{116}\) However, the second definition cannot fit the Identity Thesis since it states that "B is not the 'essence' of A." This statement cannot be true of any identity relation. However, Aristotle's second definition of *tauton* is consistent
with both the passage from the *Crito* and the Component Sufficiency Thesis. This interpretation can be expressed as follows:

... when A and B are necessarily interentailing, then, necessarily x has attribute A if, and only if, x has attribute B, and then x may (but need not) have certain additional attributes, say, C, and D, necessarily interentailing with attributes E and F, respectively. On the Sufficiency Thesis A would stand for virtue, B for happiness which is found necessarily and exclusively in virtue, C and D might stand for, say, virtuous health and virtuous wealth, and E and F for the increments of happiness associated with health and wealth, respectively, when these are virtuously used.\(^{117}\)

Although I disagree on two counts with Vlastos' analysis of *tauton* with respect to Aristotle's definition, Vlastos and I reach the same conclusion: the *Crito* passage is consistent with both the Identity and the Component Sufficiency Thesis. Having established this, Vlastos continues with evidence that Socrates must have held the Component Sufficiency and not the Identity Thesis.

The main argument that Vlastos gives for reading Socrates as a Component Sufficiency theorist relates to the way that Socrates categorizes goods. The text Vlastos uses to support this point is from the *Gorgias*:

Now is there anything in existence that isn't either good or bad or intermediate between the two: neither good nor bad? ... And you call 'goods' wisdom and health and wealth and other things of that sort? ... and by 'neither good nor evil' don't you mean things of this sort: which partake now of the one now of the other and at times of neither — for example,
sitting and walking and running and sailing; and again stones and sticks and other things of that sort? ... And when people do those intermediate actions, do they do them for the sake of the good things, or the good things for the sake of the intermediates? ... So it is in pursuit of the good that we walk when we walk, thinking this would be better, and when, on the contrary, we stand, this too we do for the sake of the good? Is it not so?118 (G. 467e1-468B4)

In this quotation Socrates trichotomizes all things and actions into those which are

a) good — goods that have intrinsic value, even non-moral ones (e.g., health and wealth);

b) evil;

c) neither — having instrumental value only (e.g., sticks and stones, walking and running).119

If Socrates had held the Identity Thesis he would not have put non-moral goods in group a) because he would not have seen them as components of the good. On the Identity Thesis, non-moral goods such as health and wealth would be given an instrumental status and be classified in group c), whereas on the Component Sufficiency account, non-moral goods such as health and wealth can have value as mini-goods120 that add to happiness as long as virtue is also present.


120 Vlastos uses the term "mini-goods" to refer to non-moral goods that can add to happiness, in addition to, but not apart from, virtue. I will use the term in the same way.
A further passage that Vlastos uses to support the Component Sufficiency Thesis appears in the *Gorgias* (*G*. 469b12-c2) where Socrates claims that he would not wish to suffer injustice. If suffering injustice would not impair his virtue, then on the Identity Thesis Socrates has no reason not to desire it. By contrast, if Socrates held the Component Sufficiency Thesis, it would make good sense that he would not want to suffer injustice.

Vlastos closes his account with the following summary of Socrates' scheme of value:

(1) The final unconditional good is happiness. It is the only good we "pursue" or desire only for its own sake and thus the "end" of all our actions ... .
(2) The supreme non-final unconditional good, both necessary and sufficient for our happiness, hence the sovereign constituent of our good is virtue. ... The achievement of this good should be the aim by which all of our actions are guided, for regardless of what other goods we may gain or forfeit if we achieve this constituent of the good we shall possess the final good, we shall be happy.
(3) The subordinate, non-final and conditional goods: health, wealth, etc. The difference to our happiness these can make is minuscule. But goods they are; we shall be happier with them than without them, but only if we use them aright, for they are not 'good just by themselves': if separated from wisdom they will go sour on us and we shall be worse off with them than we would have been without them.
(4) The 'intermediates' which are reckoned 'neither good nor evil' because they are not constituents of the good: their value is purely instrumental; they are never desired for their own sake, but only for the sake of goods.\(^\text{121}\)

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Vlastos concludes that although, prima facie, it appears that Socrates holds the Identity Thesis with respect to the relation of virtue to happiness, upon further examination it is apparent that the texts are also consistent with the Component Sufficiency Thesis and, furthermore, the Component Sufficiency Thesis gives Socrates a "foundation for what we know he wants to maintain at all costs — the Sovereignty of Virtue — without obliterating the eudaemonic value of everything else in his world."122

5.3. A Critique of Vlastos' Account

We have seen that Vlastos holds that Socrates' characterization of the relation of virtue to happiness is explained best by the Component Sufficiency Thesis. The main point for the Component Sufficiency Thesis is that it makes more sense of the position that mini-goods such as health and wealth hold in relation to virtue and happiness. Furthermore, Vlastos has shown the texts to be consistent with the Component Sufficiency Thesis. In this section I examine whether a Modified Identity Thesis is an alternate possibility for the relationship of virtue to happiness, and their relation to the "goods" Vlastos refers to as mini-goods. (For examples of mini-goods I will use health and wealth.) In the course of this examination I critique Vlastos' account.

Before examining the Modified Identity Thesis I would like to consider a more general question. How does Socrates avoid the subjective claim that one could be happy with only health and wealth? Why is

virtue necessary for happiness at all? As long as we remember that the Greek idea of happiness has a stronger loading on the objective component than the subjective component, the answer is clear. Although those with health and wealth may feel subjectively happy, Socrates can hold that they are not really objectively happy unless they are also virtuous.

On the Identity Thesis the virtuous form of life and the happy form of life are identical, just described from different vantage points. On its own, this thesis does not account for mini-goods such as health and wealth. In order to account for them, I propose that Socrates held that a minimum level of health and wealth are necessary in order to be virtuous. I will call this the Modified Identity Thesis. On this reading, health and wealth are instrumental goods which are prerequisites to virtue. In a footnote, Vlastos credits Socrates with acknowledging that minimal health and wealth are necessary for virtue, but Vlastos does not include this idea, or its implications in his account.123 Nevertheless, Vlastos' account, modified to include the minimum level of health and wealth necessary for virtue, could still hold (unless we find other reasons to reject it), if we add the idea that health and wealth up to a certain minimal level are necessary for virtue, and over that minimal level become mini-goods, or components of happiness.

Vlastos argues that while many texts are consistent with both the Identity and the Component Sufficiency Theses (for example, the Crito passage cited in §5.2), other texts support the Component Sufficiency Thesis solely. I will now examine the set of texts Vlastos uses to support

123 Vlastos [1991], p.218, n.69.
the Component Sufficiency Thesis to see whether they are consistent with the Modified Identity Thesis. Note that Vlastos' motivation for suggesting the Component Sufficiency Thesis has been taken care of in the Modified Identity Thesis, since it plausibly accounts for the mini-goods, health and wealth.

The first text Vlastos examines is the one from the *Gorgias* in which Socrates divides all things into those that are good, evil, and neither good nor evil. Vlastos argues that since health and wealth are classified with wisdom, health and wealth must be goods that are intrinsically valuable, or desirable for their own sake. Vlastos comments that the *Gorgias* passage assigns intrinsic value to non-moral goods [health and wealth], accepting them as components of the good, without thereby elevating them to preference-parity with the moral goods ... This is inconsistent with Vlastos' component account where he states that health and wealth are valuable only in conjunction with virtue. How could health and wealth be both intrinsically valuable, and only valuable in conjunction with virtue? The Modified Identity Thesis avoids this inconsistency. Health and wealth are necessary for virtue, but one could (and does) desire health and wealth for their own sakes; they are the goods that are necessary before virtue is possible, but one does not have to go on and be virtuous after obtaining them.

125 Vlastos [1991], p.226.
The next two texts that Vlastos addresses can be considered together. They are:

Polus: "Would you then wish to suffer injustice rather than do it?" Socrates: "For my part I would wish neither. But if I were forced to choose between suffering injustice and doing it, I would choose to suffer it."\(^{126}\) (G. 469b12-c2)

Some pleasures are good and some bad. Is it not so? ... And the good ones are the beneficial, the bad ones the harmful? ... Now is this what you mean: of the bodily pleasures — of eating and drinking, for instance — are not the good ones those that produce bodily health or strength or some other bodily excellence, the bad ones those which do the opposite? ... Then pleasant actions, as well as (all) others, should be done for the sake of the good, not the good for the sake of pleasure?\(^ {127}\) (G. 499c6-500a3)

In the first text, Socrates says he would not wish to suffer injustice. On the Modified Identity Thesis this makes perfect sense. If health is a necessary condition for virtue, and virtue is the supreme good, it is easy to see why Socrates would not wish to suffer injustice. There is another passage that deals with suffering injustice in which Socrates states "in every unjust act the agent does more harm to himself than to his victim."\(^ {128}\) In this passage, Socrates does not say that he would not wish to suffer injustice, but rather implies that he would rather suffer injustice than compromise his virtue. This is consistent with the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue. It is also consistent with both Vlastos' Component account and the Modified Identity Thesis. If virtue is the

\(^{126}\) Vlastos [1991], p.227.

\(^{127}\) Vlastos [1991], p.227.

\(^{128}\) Vlastos [1978b], July 14, p.798.
same form of life as happiness, described differently, then the agent will be harmed because he will have forfeited virtue, and thus happiness in the process of committing the unjust act. On Vlastos' Component account, this passage also makes sense in that the agent's virtue, the major component of happiness, is compromised.

The second text also supports the Modified Identity Thesis. In comparing those pleasures that are conducive to health and those that are not, Socrates states that the pleasure that is conducive to health is better. As Vlastos points out, both pleasures must be acceptably moral, for if they were not, by the Principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue, there would be no discussion as to which pleasure to choose.\textsuperscript{129} The reason that not only moral criteria are considered here is that, on the Modified Identity thesis, health is a prerequisite for virtue. So good pleasures are those that produce health. Once minimal health is procured, the supreme good — virtue — can be pursued. Again, it is important to note that on this view health is not simply instrumental toward virtue, it is a good in its own right, necessary for virtue.

The last text that Vlastos considers is from the \textit{Euthydemus}:

(i) In sum, I said, it would appear Cleinias, that in the case of all those things which we first said were good, our view is that it is not their nature to be good just by themselves. But this is the truth of the matter, it seems: if ignorance controls them they are greater evils than their contraries to the extent of their great power to serve their evil leader; while if they are controlled by sound judgement and wisdom they are greater goods, though both are worthless just by them-

\textsuperscript{129} Vlastos [1991], p.227, n.90.
selves. (ii) What follows from what has been said? Is it anything but this: that none of these other things is either good or evil (just by itself), while there are two things of which one — wisdom— is good (just by itself), the other — ignorance — is evil (just by itself)?130 (Eud. 281d2-e1)

This text is consistent with the Modified Identity Thesis. Health and wealth are goods, but can also be used for good or for evil. This is reflected in part (i) of the quotation where Socrates says that they are "greater goods" or "greater evils" depending on whether virtue or evil controls them. Part (ii) of the text can be understood as referring to the fact that health and wealth are also instrumental as prerequisites for virtue. A minimum level of health and wealth is necessary, but once past this point they are neither good nor evil just by themselves; if one uses them for good, one goes on to be virtuous, if one uses them for evil, one does not.

5.4. Conclusion

Where does this leave us? I have restricted my enquiry to the texts that Vlastos uses to support his component account of the Sufficiency Thesis. We have seen that the Modified Identity Thesis, with its prerequisite of minimal health and wealth for virtue, is consistent with these texts also. Furthermore, we have seen that the Modified Identity Thesis avoids the contradictory claim that health and wealth are both intrinsically good and also good only in conjunction with virtue.

130 Vlastos [1991], p.228.
I will close with a summary of the two schemes of value that have been examined as candidates for understanding the relationship of virtue to happiness and the other "non-moral" goods, health and wealth.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vlastos' Component Reading</th>
<th>The Identity Interpretation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The final unconditional good is happiness.</td>
<td>1. A final unconditional good is happiness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The supreme, non-final unconditional good, both necessary and sufficient for happiness, is virtue.</td>
<td>2. The supreme, non-final unconditional good, both necessary and sufficient for happiness is virtue. But, virtue is not possible without a minimum level of health and wealth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The subordinate, non-final, conditional goods are health, wealth, etc. They are mini-goods which, in conjunction with virtue, yield more happiness.</td>
<td>3. Health, wealth, etc., are subordinate, non-final goods. Since they are necessary pre-requisites for virtue, they are also instrumental toward virtue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The &quot;intermediates&quot; are neither good nor evil, they are instrumental.</td>
<td>4. The &quot;intermediates&quot; are neither good nor evil. These are the instrumental goods that are not necessary pre-requisites for virtue.</td>
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6. The Developmental View of Socrates' Moral Theory

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter I present my account of the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory. First, I explore the possibility that Plato's Socrates did not hold a stable position with respect to virtue and happiness across the early dialogues. Second, I present my view of the most plausible and consistent position attributable to the historical Socrates, assuming that Plato was, even in the early dialogues, developing Socrates' thought.

6.2. Plato's Development of Socrates' Moral Theory in the Early Dialogues

It is possible, and plausible, given the many seemingly contradictory passages in the early dialogues, that these passages are evidence of Plato's reconstruction of Socrates' moral theory, which was undergoing development in a way that Socrates himself would find acceptable, given his dedication to the learning process embodied in the elenctic method. Although grouping the dialogues with respect to time is useful for understanding the development of Plato's thought, it is important to see the dialogues as a continuum. I hold that Plato was constantly developing Socrates' thought; in the early dialogues he was concerned with developing the theoretical background for what he knew of Socrates' philosophy and moral convictions, and in the later dialogues he
was interested in developing his own theories. Support for this position comes from four sources:

(1) Socrates' positive convictions as stated in the *Apology* and the *Crito*.

(2) The apparent contradictions in Socrates' moral theory that lead to controversies such as the one between Vlastos and Irwin.

(3) The controversy over the grouping of the *Gorgias*.

(4) Socrates' and Plato's dedication to the elenchos.

I will examine each of these points in turn.

It is generally agreed that Plato's earliest dialogues were the *Apology* and the *Crito*. Vlastos writes of the *Apology* that it is

the most explicitly personal, least theory-laden account of Socrates' conception of the good life. Any construction of Socratic theory which does not do justice to this primary base would be suspect.\(^{131}\)

Edith Hamilton writes of the *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo* that

only in them is Socrates himself the subject. In the others, although almost always the main speaker, he rarely speaks for himself. Indeed, in two of the three latest dialogues he is only a listener, and in the last he does not even appear. But in these first three he talks at length about his life and his beliefs.\(^{132}\)

\(^{131}\) Vlastos [1991], p.209, n.40.

\(^{132}\) Hamilton and Cairns [1961], p.3.
Irwin writes that

Not all the dialogues are elenctic. The *Apology* and the *Crito* present Socrates' own moral convictions.133

These comments all support the idea that the early dialogues express the historical Socrates' moral convictions. Vlastos' observation that any reconstruction of Socrates' moral theory must do justice to Socrates' conception of the good life, seems right in that it is highly likely that this was Plato's goal. Plato's dialogues can be seen as an attempt to provide the theory for Socrates' convictions as expressed in the *Apology* and the *Crito*.

For the most part, it is in the process of examining the elenctic dialogues written after the *Apology* and the *Crito* that controversy arises. Irwin focuses on the *Protagoras* for his instrumental conception of virtue, while Vlastos focuses on the *Gorgias*. We have seen that Irwin, and Gosling and Taylor, think that the *Gorgias* represents a stage in Plato's thinking different from that expressed in the previous dialogues. On Vlastos' account, the *Gorgias* is the last of the elenctic dialogues. On both conceptions, evidence from the *Gorgias* should be interpreted differently from that of the *Protagoras* and that of the *Apology* and the *Crito*. When we see the early dialogues as a developing moral theory, rather than a fixed one, it is less difficult to reconcile two interpretations of Socrates' moral theory as widely divergent as that of Vlastos and Irwin, particularly when we understand that they are based

133 Irwin [1977], p.38.
respectively on the *Protagoras*, an early dialogue, and the *Gorgias*, a late early dialogue or a transitional dialogue to the middle period.

Socrates' positive convictions in the *Apology* and the *Crito* can be roughly divided into two groups: those dealing with his convictions about the good life — his moral convictions; and those dealing with his convictions about the best process for examining moral truth — his methodological convictions. It is the latter convictions that support the idea of the changing nature of Plato's reconstruction of Socrates' moral theory across the early dialogues. For it is evident that not only Socrates, but also Plato, held that the elenctic method was the superior method to ferret out knowledge, otherwise there is no reason that Plato would so extensively use the method, and write about its virtues, even throughout the later dialogues. The later dialogues do not use the elenctic method exclusively, as the earlier ones do, but the methods of inquiry in the later dialogues spring from, and are closely related to, the elenctic method. For example, in the *Theaetetus*, Plato has Socrates conclude with an exposition of the merits of his role in bringing forth knowledge through his methods of enquiry.

And so, Theaetetus, if ever in the future you should attempt to conceive or should succeed in conceiving other theories, they will be better ones as the result of this enquiry. And if you remain barren, your companions will find you gentler and less tiresome; you will be modest and not think you know what you don't know. This is all my art can achieve — nothing more. I do not know any of the things that other men know — the great and inspired men of today and yesterday.\(^{134}\) (*Th.* 210b11-c7)

\(^{134}\) Burnyeat [1990], pp.350-1.
In this passage Socrates states that he does not know any of the things that other men know. Although the *Theaetetus* cannot be held up as an example of a dialogue that consists solely of the elenctic method as it appears in the early dialogues,\(^{135}\) the elenctic method is still clearly present here. The disavowal of knowledge seen in this passage is the cornerstone for the elenchos. From the starting point of admitting ignorance, through the elenchos, mere beliefs are put to the test and knowledge is gained.

In this section I have outlined my thesis that the early dialogues represent Plato's development of Socrates' moral theory from the positive convictions he states in the *Apology* and the *Crito*. Seeing them in this way is consistent with the methodological convictions of the Socrates of the *Apology* and the *Crito*. This view is also consistent with the fact that Plato thought highly of the elenctic method since he used it exclusively at first, and the later dialogues show its influence. In the next section I examine the controversy between Vlastos and Irwin in this light.

6.3. Vlastos and Irwin — Two Parts of a Reconstruction?

The developmental theory in the previous section leaves room for the hypothesis that both Vlastos and Irwin have fixed their accounts on different stages of Plato's theoretical reconstruction of Socrates' moral

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\(^{135}\) The *Theaetetus* is thought by Vlastos ([1991], p.47) to be a middle period dialogue. Ryle ([1967], p.320) classifies the *Theaetetus* as a late dialogue. However, there is general agreement that it is later than both the *Republic* and the *Phaedo*. 
theory. However, as Vlastos notes, any reconstruction of Socratic moral theory must remain true to the convictions of Socrates as presented in the *Apology* and the *Crito*. Vlastos' component theory fulfills this condition while Irwin's instrumentalist and adaptive accounts do not.

We have seen that Irwin's instrumentalist account of virtue is at odds with the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue which is stated clearly by Socrates in both the *Apology* and the *Crito*. If this were not so, we could perhaps hold, as Irwin does, that the Socrates of the *Protagoras* was a hedonist who had an instrumental conception of virtue. But, since the convictions of the Socrates of the *Apology* and the *Crito* are not consistent with this view, it seems more likely that the Socrates in the *Protagoras* was exploring the hedonistic premiss as a candidate end for a moral science rather than committing himself to hedonism. The only other possible view is that as early as the *Protagoras*, Plato was concerned, not with reconstructing a moral theory consistent with the historical Socrates, but rather with developing his own thought. This view does not seem likely given the narrow focus of the early dialogues on the moral conception of the good life and on the elenctic method inspired by the historical Socrates.

What of Irwin's adaptive account of happiness? Upon examination, it is evident that this account is also at odds with Socrates' positive convictions. To begin, it is at odds with the principle of the Sovereignty

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137 See §5.2.
of Virtue. If one based all one's actions on considerations of justice there would be no need to adapt one's desires to those that are feasible. One could hold the adaptive account and also adhere to the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue, but the adaptive account is not necessary for Socrates' views.

The second difficulty with the adaptive account is that it is based on a conception of happiness as the satisfaction of feasible desires. From the Apology and the Crito we see that Socrates is not concerned with whether desires are feasible, but rather with whether they are just. On the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue, those desires that are not just, however feasible, cease to be desires.\textsuperscript{138} Socrates sees happiness in terms of fulfilling good or just desires, not in terms of fulfilling feasible ones.

Finally, the adaptive account does not give a satisfactory account of virtue. Why be virtuous if other courses of action will fulfill desires? I conclude that the adaptive account is so unlike the Socrates of the Apology and the Crito, who is concerned only for virtue and unaffected by the thought of death and imprisonment, that it is an implausible account to attribute to him.

The final account to consider is Vlastos' component account of virtue. This account is consistent with Socrates' positive convictions as stated in the Apology and the Crito. Remembering that Socrates was a eudaemonist who held the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue, we

\textsuperscript{138} This is also stated in the Protagoras, see my discussion §4.3
considered whether his belief that virtue suffices for happiness meant that

i) virtue and happiness are characteristics of the same form of life, differently described (The Identity Thesis);

or

ii) virtue is both necessary and sufficient for happiness and no other goods or states of affairs can affect our happiness. It is the only component of happiness (The Sufficiency Thesis);

or

iii) virtue is necessary and sufficient for happiness but other "mini-goods", in addition to virtue, can add to our happiness. Virtue is the major component of happiness (The Component Sufficiency Thesis).

In Chapter 5 I examined and critiqued the Component Sufficiency Thesis in detail. I concluded that a two-step account is needed to understand the relation of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory. The first step consists of procuring the necessary goods needed in order to be virtuous — minimal health and minimal wealth. The second step is the identity account as described in i) above. That Vlastos agrees with the first step of this account is evident, for he writes:

If health fell below a certain minimal level, x's mental processes would fail — he or she would be incapacitated for the exercise of knowledge and therewith for that of virtue, since Socrates holds that virtue "is" knowledge. (We may surmise that some such sub-minimal physical state is what Socrates
has in view at *Cr. 47D-E* and *G. 512A*: a body so ravaged by disease that life is no longer preferable to death.) *Mutatis mutandis* the same would be true of "wealth," i.e. of the means of subsistence.\(^{139}\)

The Modified Identity Thesis does not contradict any of Socrates' convictions in the *Apology* and the *Crito* and can be consistently read throughout the elenctic dialogues. It therefore seems most plausible to conclude that the theory Plato was reconstructing from Socrates' convictions is most accurately expressed by this account.

6.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued, along with Vlastos, that the convictions of the Socrates of the *Apology* and the *Crito* must not be contradicted in any account of Socrates' moral theory. Furthermore, these convictions ought to be given greater weight than positions stated in subsequent dialogues since it is probable that Plato's reconstruction of Socrates' moral theory developed across the early dialogues, and any unclarity or lack of consistency may be Plato's and not Socrates'. Nevertheless, when examining the accounts of Vlastos and Irwin, it is only Vlastos' account that is consistent with the convictions of the Socrates of the *Apology* and the *Crito*. That evidence for Vlastos' account is also to be found across all the elenctic dialogues makes it a strong contender for the most accurate portrayal of the position of the historical Socrates. However, Vlastos' account does not take into account the minimal health and wealth needed for virtue, so I have suggested that a two step

\(^{139}\) Vlastos [1991], p.218, n.69.
account, as outlined in Chapter 5, best represents Socrates' position. The first step of this account requires minimal health and wealth as pre-requisites to virtue. The second step states that virtue is both necessary and sufficient for happiness, since virtue and happiness are the same form of life, differently described.
7. Modern Thoughts on the Relationship of Virtue to Happiness

7.1. Introduction

In previous chapters I argued that a Modified Identity Thesis is the best interpretation of the Socratic Sufficiency Thesis. In this chapter I examine whether this view of the relationship of virtue to happiness is acceptable to the modern reader.

7.2. A Modern Account

Equivocations between "virtue" and "virtuous action" and between "objective happiness" and "subjective happiness" make the relationship of virtue to happiness unclear. I begin this enquiry with a look at how we conceive of virtue and happiness today, with an aim to resolve the equivocations. From this point we may be able to see if there is, in fact, a relationship between them, and whether this relationship is consistent with the relationship that Socrates espoused.

Happiness, as we have seen in Chapter 5, can be thought of both objectively and subjectively. These two views of happiness are reflected in our common understanding of happiness. Subjective happiness is conceived of as a feeling of pleasure or contentment. Objective happiness is conceived of as a state of well-being. It seems strange, from the subjective view-point, that one could say to another something like, "you are perfectly happy, but don't know it." On the other hand, from a more objective point of view, it seems less odd to say to someone, "you
may think that you are happy, but you are not." In the first case, our intuitions tell us that happiness has a subjective element and one cannot feel unhappy and yet be happy. In the second case, our intuitions tell us that happiness has an objective element: one can feel that one is happy and yet be deluded. The two intuitions can be accommodated if we postulate that happiness must have both a subjective and an objective element. The subjective element is easy to define: if one feels pleasurable satisfaction or contentment, one can be said to be happy. The objective element is less easy to define. We have the idea of well-being, but how does one measure that?140

The best way to measure well-being would be to examine how it's produced. Well-being is generally thought to be produced by need-fulfillment. If we could objectively measure need-fulfillment, we could begin to measure objective happiness. An example of one such measurement is based upon Maslow's hierarchy of needs.141 In 1943 Maslow postulated that there are five basic levels of human needs, and that needs of the lower levels must be at least partially satisfied before a person can work toward satisfying higher needs. The five levels are listed as

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140 I am not assuming that it is necessary to be able to measure something in order for it to be objective. There may be many objective things we cannot measure. However, if we can measure well-being, and if well-being is equated with objective happiness, then we have a basis for showing that there is objective happiness.

141 The explanation of Maslow's hierarchy is summarized from Maslow [1943], pp.370-96.
(1) biological or physiological needs,

(2) safety needs,

(3) belongingness and love needs,

(4) esteem needs,

and

(5) self-actualization needs.

Happiness, then, could be defined as the subjective feeling of pleasurable satisfaction, coupled with fulfillment of the more basic needs in the hierarchy. More objective happiness would result the higher up the hierarchy one travels. Needs do not have to be narrowly defined, since it is plausible that they would vary depending upon individual, social, and cultural differences. The Maslow hierarchy is an example of a general objective scale for measuring well-being or objective happiness.142

There are some clear advantages to requiring both objective and subjective elements to happiness. Here I list five:

(1) This view fits with our intuitions about feeling happy and yet not really being happy, as described above.

142 The Maslow scale is given as an example of a way to measure objective well-being. Better scales may exist or may be developed. Criticisms of Maslow's scale need not be seen as criticisms of the view that objective happiness can be measured according to some scale that categorizes needs.
(2) This view answers the reductionist who asks why happiness cannot be defined simply as a subjective brain state in which certain chemicals in the brain produce the feeling of pleasurable satisfaction which we have called the subjective element of happiness. The answer is that the chemical story is consistent with the objective view of happiness also. The production of chemicals in the brain that produce happiness must be started by some objective process, whether it be meeting a basic need for food, meeting a higher level need such as that of self-actualization, or ingesting anti-depressant medication.

(3) A view of happiness that is both objective and subjective supports the idea that happiness is not simply a subjective state, but also partly the quality of the relationship between persons and their environment. The subjective view is end-oriented, it is a state of feeling content or satisfied. The objective view, on the other hand, can be seen as implying an interactive process. Maslow's hierarchy of needs nicely captures this idea, since it shows a progression of need satisfaction with the highest need — self-actualization — a non-determinate end.

(4) The idea that happiness is both subjective and objective suggests support for Mill's argument that happiness can be measured both qualitatively and quantitatively. Thus Mill writes in a well-known passage that

> It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different opinion, it is
because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.\textsuperscript{143}

The subjective feeling of satisfaction can be measured quantitatively, as is evident when one says, "I feel very happy" as opposed to "I am fairly happy". In the Mill passage, the pig and the fool only know subjective pleasure. By contrast, the state of well-being produced by filling needs can be thought of qualitatively — the higher the level of need that is filled, the higher quality of objective happiness produced. Mill's "other party" knows this objective element of happiness.

(5) The view of happiness as both objective and subjective helps explain the "Paradox of Hedonism". This paradox observes that the more one seeks happiness, the less possible it is to attain. Happiness is best achieved as a by-product of an unrelated activity.\textsuperscript{144} This paradox is resolved by the view of happiness as both a feeling of satisfaction and a state resulting from satisfying certain objective needs. The state of subjective happiness, impossible to reach by aiming for it, is reached by pursuing objective happiness, the state measured by need-fulfillment.

Virtue, for the Greeks, was defined in terms of human excellence.\textsuperscript{145} The five cardinal virtues — courage, piety, temperance, wisdom and justice — were seen as marks of human excellence. As we have seen, Socrates agreed that these five qualities are virtues, and also went a step further to say that these virtues are all one and the same thing,
knowledge of good and evil. That Socrates felt that virtue is human excellence is apparent in the following passage from the Republic Book I. Here Socrates argues, in a conversation with Thrasymachus, that the virtue of a thing is its excellence, in that it is found in its fulfilling its function well.

Take note now. Could the eyes possibly fulfill their function well if they lacked their own proper excellence and had in its stead the defect? How could they? he said. For I presume you meant blindness instead of vision. Whatever, said I. For I have not yet come to that question, but am only asking whether whatever operates will not do its own work well by its own virtue and badly by its own defect.  

The argument continues with Socrates naming justice as the virtue or excellence of the soul.

And do we not also say that there is an excellence or virtue of the soul? We do. Will the soul ever accomplish its own work well if deprived of its own virtue, or is this impossible? It is impossible. Of necessity, then, a bad soul will govern and manage things badly while the good soul will in all these things do well. Of necessity. And did we not agree that the excellence or virtue of soul is justice and its defect injustice? Yes, we did.  

146 Hamilton and Cairns [1961], p.604.

147 Hamilton and Cairns [1961], p.604.
These passages indicate that Socrates held that virtue is found in something that fulfills its function excellently. On this view, human virtue is human excellence.

On the modern view, the Socratic idea of virtue as a kind of human excellence is still in usage. In the process of examining virtue as a kind of excellence, the equivocation between virtue and virtuous action will become apparent.

Virtue can be thought of in two ways. Virtue can be a way of acting that is end-oriented. The agent in this case generally wishes to do virtuous deeds. Virtue can also be thought of as a process. For example, it is not foreign to our understanding of virtue to assert that someone has chosen a virtuous mode of living. So with respect to virtue, we can have both tokens of virtuous actions and the type of the virtuous life.

The conception of virtue as a characteristic of a mode of living that embodies a process, and as a characteristic of a particular action — as both a means and an end — raises questions about where the process is leading, or at what end the means is aiming. The definition of virtue as moral excellence supplies a possible answer. The idea of virtue as encompassing both the pursuit of excellence and moral excellence itself, lends itself to the idea of the process being the end, since moral excellence can be thought of as implying an ideal by which to guide one's actions, rather than a final achievable end.

The concept of a "performative" helps to clarify our idea of virtue. A performative is a kind of act in which the process of doing the act is also the end of the act. An example of a performative is promising.
saying, "I promise to pay you five dollars", I am both promising and reporting a promise at the same time. Music is also a performative. The process of practicing music also produces the result of music. In a similar fashion, virtue is a practice in which both the process and the end are virtue.

The idea of virtue as a process and an end — a mode of living — and the idea of happiness as both a subjective feeling of satisfaction, and a result of filling certain objectively defined needs, are both in accord with present day intuitions. The equivocation between objective and subjective happiness is due to a lack of clarification between the objective and the subjective stance. The equivocation between virtue as a process and virtue as an end occurs due to a lack of understanding of virtue's performative nature. As a performative, virtue's process and the end are the same action, so there is nothing to equivocate between. Virtuous ends are either part of the process of being virtuous or not; if they are not, then the motivation for the so-called virtuous action cannot be a virtuous one, and the action is misidentified. So whenever we identify a virtuous end, we are either also talking about a virtuous process, or we are mistaken.

We are now in a position to ask whether there is a connection between any of the conceptions of happiness and virtue discussed — subjective happiness, objective happiness, virtue as a process and virtue as an end. I propose that a connection can be found between virtue as a process/end and objective happiness. Before I present this connection I will eliminate the possibility of connection between subjective happiness and virtue. Virtue, as a process/end, cannot produce frustration of
desire or satisfaction of desire, unless one's desire is only to be virtuous. Subjective happiness is based on what one desires, and so if one desires virtue and is virtuous, one will be happy, but if one desires vice, virtue is neither necessary nor sufficient for subjective happiness. The necessary and sufficient connection between virtue as a process/end and happiness, then, must only be found between objective happiness and virtue.

The idea that objective happiness is the result of fulfilling needs which can be arranged in a hierarchy is in accord with the idea of human excellence, if we hold that the higher up the hierarchy one travels, the more excellence one achieves. A hierarchy of some sort is necessary in order to rank needs according to their qualities of producing, not only happiness, but also human excellence.\textsuperscript{148} We have seen that for the Greeks virtue was defined in terms of human excellence embodied by the five cardinal virtues. Since virtue today is commonly thought of as moral excellence, there appears to be a connection between virtue and objective happiness. Excellence can be seen as fulfilling the needs that result in the state of well-being we are calling objective happiness. Objective happiness is conceived of as a matter of degree, and the mode of life that is virtuous and aims at human excellence is the same mode of life that moves up the hierarchy of human needs.

\textsuperscript{148} The idea of a hierarchy of needs does not imply that all lower level needs must be filled before one can fill higher needs. It is plausible that after a certain number of lower level needs are fulfilled, it would be possible to sacrifice lower needs for higher ones. The important point about the idea of a hierarchy is that it ranks needs, with the result that higher level needs yield both more happiness and more human excellence or virtue.
How does this view fit with Socrates' view? This view is consistent with Socrates' Sufficiency Thesis in that both objective and subjective happiness are the consequence of a virtuous mode of living. One can have subjective happiness without virtue, but objective happiness is a result of obtaining human excellence which is gained in the process of virtuous living. When objective happiness is present, since the desire is in accord with the process, subjective happiness is also present.

This view is also consistent with the Modified Identity Thesis. The first step of the Modified Identity Thesis specifies the minimum levels of health and wealth necessary for virtue and happiness. These needs are accounted for in the first two levels of Maslow's hierarchy which allow for biological or physiological needs and safety needs. The second step — that virtue and happiness are the same form of life differently described — is accounted for in the last three levels of needs. On this account the working to fill these needs is defined as the pursuit of excellence or virtue, and through the progressive meeting of these needs objective happiness increases.

There are three objections to my account that need to be considered.

(1) Although Socrates held that virtue is human excellence, he also held that all virtues reduce to the knowledge of good and evil. Moreover, in order to support his idea that virtue is the knowledge of good and evil Socrates held that akrasia is impossible. These ideas are not acceptable to the modern reader.
On the Modified Identity Thesis one could hold that the filling of higher level needs requires knowledge, and that once this knowledge is acquired one can not help but act on it, since the benefits of such action would be readily apparent. This is a similar strategy to the one Socrates used to show that *akrasia* is impossible; however it is difficult for the modern reader to accept. There are many reasons why knowledge alone is insufficient for making the best choice, moral or otherwise. For example, consider the Socratic example of the apparently simple matter of choosing the greatest pleasure. In this case perfect ability to know and weigh pleasure and pain does not always result in the right choice. One may have habits or addictions that lead one always to choose the overall less pleasurable action. There are many occasions when one may have the knowledge of weighing pleasures and pains and yet not act on it, since there are many non-rational motivations that guide one's actions. In these cases one may give greater weight to present pleasure than is reasonable and pay a great price in future pleasure. Since the modern reader is aware that *akrasia* is possible, I suggest that the Socratic idea that virtue is knowledge is not acceptable today. However, the Socratic idea of virtue as moral excellence is still held today. It is this view that forms the link with objective happiness in the account given above.

(2) It may seem here as if I am equivocating between human excellence and moral excellence. This account does not say why human excellence could not be defined in terms of vice rather than virtue. Although objective happiness may be obtained by achieving human excellence, it does not follow that it is obtained by achieving moral excellence.
In order to answer this objection, a connection between human excellence and moral excellence needs to be drawn. The objection is suggested by my use of the example of Maslow's hierarchy which is concerned with human, rather than moral, excellence. Another hierarchy could be constructed that involves moral excellence. However, there is no reason we should accept either hierarchy unless we examine both questions of value, and questions concerning the problem of connecting "ought" and "is." Since an in-depth examination of these problems is outside the scope of this thesis, the problem will have to be addressed here by appealing to our contemporary understanding of human and moral excellence. Commonly, human excellence and moral excellence are thought to go together. We do not generally ascribe human excellence to one who has mastered vice. Using this understanding, we can see that the connection between the common understanding of virtue (a characteristic of pursuing and obtaining moral excellence) and that of objective happiness (a characteristic of fulfilling needs that result in fulfilling human potential or human excellence) is captured by the Modified Identity Thesis.

(3) The account is consistent with an instrumentalist view of virtue. On this view, one could pursue excellence only because it is the best way to produce both objective and subjective happiness, without valuing it for its own sake.

While this is true, the person who does not value virtue would probably not value objective happiness either since both objective happiness and virtue are the process of working toward human excellence. When subjective happiness is the only aim, vice may be a more
efficient means. This is so since vice is generally directed toward immediate satisfaction of desire, and the feeling of the satisfaction of desire is the same as subjective happiness. On this count, it is implausible that those who pursue excellence and gain objective happiness would not value virtue for its own sake.

7.3. Conclusion

In this chapter I outlined a contemporary account of the relation of virtue to happiness that is in accord with the Modified Identity Thesis interpretation of the Socratic thesis of the Sufficiency of Virtue. On this view, virtue is both the process toward human excellence and the end of human excellence. The feeling of subjective happiness and the state of objective happiness result from this process. In part, it is the equivocation between objective and subjective happiness that leads to confusion about the relation of happiness to virtue, and produces puzzles such as the "paradox of happiness."
8. Conclusion

In this closing chapter I briefly review the main arguments and conclusions of the thesis. In order to examine the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory I examined the following five points:

(1) The content of Socrates' moral theory.

(2) Socrates' major theses.

(3) Irwin's and Vlastos' interpretations of the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory, and problems with these interpretations.

(4) My own interpretation of the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory.

(5) An evaluation of Socrates' moral theory from a modern perspective.

I will briefly summarize the results of my examination of these points.

(1) Socrates' moral theory: Socrates did not record his own philosophy, and so his moral theory must be reconstructed from secondary sources. The most significant of these sources is the Platonic dia-
However, the Socrates of Plato’s dialogues holds so many conflicting points of view that it would be impossible to think that all of Plato’s Socrates are true to the historical Socrates. Nevertheless, it is possible to see a progression in the philosophy of Plato’s Socrates from the early through the late dialogues. We have seen that Plato scholars feel that Socrates’ moral theory is expressed in the early dialogues, while in the later dialogues Socrates is used as a mouthpiece for Plato’s philosophy.

The question of what counts as Socrates’ moral theory is not solved when we decide that his moral theory can be found in the early dialogues. For we need to ask the further question: "Did Socrates have a positive moral theory?" The early dialogues are known as the elenctic dialogues because they are dominated by the elenctic method, a method known for exposing inconsistencies and fallacies of reasoning without necessarily arriving at knowledge. Upon examination we found that the elenctic method can be said to yield a positive moral theory if we allow that Socrates held the assumption that true beliefs, tested for consistency by the elenctic method, comprise knowledge.

Socrates’ moral theory, then, can be found in the early group of dialogues and is expressed and developed through the elenctic method.

\[149\] Other sources are found in the writings of Xenophon and Aristotle, and also in the play *The Clouds* by Aristophanes. See Vlastos [1991], "The Evidence of Aristotle and Xenophon," pp.81-106, and Kidd [1967], pp.480-81.
(2) Socrates' major theses: The following five theses must be considered when we examine the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory.

(i) Socrates was a eudaemonist: that is, he held that the desire for happiness is the final end of all human activity.

(ii) Socrates held the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue: that is, he held that no considerations other than those concerning virtue ought to guide human action.

(iii) Socrates held the thesis of the Sufficiency of Virtue: that is, he held that if one is virtuous one will be happy: virtue is necessary and sufficient for happiness.

(iv) Socrates held the thesis of the unity of the virtues: that is, he held that all virtues are reducible to the knowledge of good and evil.

(v) Socrates held that *akrasia* is impossible: that is, he held that it is impossible to act without virtue once one has knowledge of good and evil.

The various ways of linking these five theses give the various accounts of the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory. In this thesis I have concentrated on the accounts that Vlastos and Irwin construct from these theses.

(3) The accounts of Irwin and Vlastos: The debate about the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory centres on the
thesis of the Sufficiency of Virtue. Vlastos holds that Socrates meant by the Sufficiency Thesis that virtue is the major component of happiness. However, even though virtue is both necessary and sufficient for happiness, other goods, such as health and wealth, can also add to happiness. Irwin holds that Socrates meant by the Sufficiency thesis that virtue is instrumental toward happiness. Virtue is necessary and sufficient for happiness because virtuous actions yield happiness.

I raised two problems with Vlastos' account. First, Vlastos' view that mini-goods are intrinsically good, and also good only if found in conjunction with virtue, is contradictory. Second, on the strength of the texts that Vlastos uses to support his component account, a two-step Modified Identity account can be constructed that is consistent with the reasonable assumption that a minimal level of the mini-goods health and wealth must be present before virtue is possible.

The main difficulty with the instrumental account is that it is at odds with Socrates' principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue. On the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue, virtue is valued for its own sake and not for its instrumentality. Second, virtue cannot be instrumental to happiness unless virtue and happiness are distinct. However, for Socrates, it seems more plausible that virtue is either a component of happiness, or it is a characteristic of a life that is identical to the happy life.

In a later article, Irwin suggests that the Sufficiency thesis can be understood if we attribute an adaptive account of happiness to Socrates. On this view, happiness is seen as desire fulfillment, and the recom-
mended route to happiness is one in which one restricts one's desire to those that are feasible to obtain, or to those states of affairs that have occurred. Irwin suggests that if Socrates held the adaptive account of happiness, virtue would be sufficient for happiness.

The adaptive account is flawed because it fails to give a satisfactory defense of virtue. If one has to choose between two equally feasible sets of desires, one set virtuous and the other not, the adaptive account gives no reason to choose the virtuous set. This consequence of the adaptive account is inconsistent with the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue. Furthermore, the adaptive account is at odds with what we know of Socrates' values. For Socrates, feasible desires are not important; virtuous desires are what matter.

(4) My account of the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory: My first tack, in the exploration of the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory, was to see if there is any reason to think that Plato's Socrates may have held inconsistent ideas about this relationship across the early dialogues. My motivation for this line of thought was two-fold.

i) The many divergent views of Socrates' moral theory seem to be generated for the most part, not by alternate interpretations of the same text, but rather by interpretations of different texts. For example, much of the instrumental interpretation of Irwin is based on the Protagoras, while the component theory of Vlastos is based mainly on the Gorgias. Furthermore, some commentators agree that the Gorgias ought to be treated separately, as a transitional dialogue between the
early and middle dialogues, while some treat it as the last of the earlier
dialogues. In this thesis, I suggested that Socrates' moral theory was
undergoing development by Plato, even within the early dialogues, and
that this development accounts both for some of the difficulties in
finding a fixed theory about the relationship of virtue to happiness, and
for the fact that the last of the elenctic dialogues, the *Gorgias*, is seen as
divergent from the others.

ii) My second motivation for exploring the developmental view of
the early dialogues comes from both Socrates' and Plato's high regard
for the elenctic method. Consistent with the ideal of the elenctic method
— moving closer to knowledge by exploring ideas and exposing inconsis-
tencies — the early dialogues, as a set, can be seen as a moral theory
undergoing development. Even though Plato's motivation for the early
dialogues was no doubt to explore Socrates' moral theory, it seems
likely that in the process of writing the dialogues, the elenctic method
did its work on Plato, and he honed his exposition based on the previous
work.

My second tack, in the exploration of the relationship of virtue to
happiness in Socrates' moral theory, was to examine the theories of
Vlastos and Irwin in light of the fact that most Plato scholars feel that
the *Apology* and the *Crito*, the most personal and least argumentative of
the dialogues, express the positive convictions of Socrates. I agree with
Vlastos that any account of Socrates' moral theory must be consistent
with these convictions.
The theories of Irwin were found to contradict Socrates' convictions in the
Apology and the Crito, especially Socrates' strict adherence to the principle of the Sovereignty of Virtue. Vlastos' component account, by contrast, was seen to be consistent with the convictions of the Socrates of the Apology and the Crito.

If we accept the developmental account of Socrates' moral theory, then it is likely that other possible accounts of the relationship between Socrates' moral theory could be found that are consistent with Socrates' positive convictions as expressed in the Apology and the Crito, and yet differ from the account that Vlastos gives. Although Vlastos' account deals with the major components of Socrates' thought in a convincing and comprehensive way, it does not take into consideration the minimal level of health and wealth necessary in order to choose virtuous actions. I suggest that a Modified Identity account is a good explication of the relationship of virtue to happiness in Socrates' moral theory. The Modified Identity account is a two-step account. Step one is the requirement of the minimal health and wealth necessary for virtue, and step two is a form of the Identity Thesis which can be stated as follows: the virtuous life and the happy life are the same form of living, differently described.

(5) An evaluation of Socrates' moral theory from a modern perspective: Using definitions of virtue and happiness acceptable to the modern reader, and clearing away equivocations on both happiness and virtue, a relationship can be found between objective happiness and virtue that is consistent with the Modified Identity Thesis. However, the modern reader is not able to accept the Socratic claim that akrasia is impossible
and thus that virtue reduces to knowledge. While knowledge may be necessary for virtue, it is not sufficient. Thus the Modified Identity Thesis suggested by the Socratic texts is acceptable to the modern reader only if the Socratic definition of virtue as moral excellence, rather than as knowledge, is used.

The question "why be virtuous?" motivated Greek philosophers to search for the relationship of virtue to happiness. The question is one that is still considered important today. Socrates' search for knowledge applicable to practical moral living can be seen as a search for an answer to this question. Since there is general agreement that the desire for happiness motivates human action, many philosophers have tried to link the happy life with the virtuous life. In this thesis I have explored the relationship of happiness to virtue in the Socratic dialogues. In order to clarify this relationship, I examined the Socratic conceptions of happiness and virtue and the Socratic thesis that knowledge is both necessary and sufficient for virtue. Upon consideration of various interpretations of the relationship of virtue to happiness in the Socratic dialogues, specifically those of Vlastos and Irwin, I concluded that the Modified Identity Thesis best expresses the Socratic relationship of virtue to happiness. We have seen that this is a two-step account. The first step accounts for the minimal level of health and wealth necessary for virtue, and the second states that virtue and happiness are characteristics of the same form of life, described according to different criteria.
Bibliography


