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Ethical pharmaceuticals? a deeper look at the ethics in pharmaceutical public relations

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ETHICAL PHARMACEUTICALS?

A DEEPER LOOK AT THE ETHICS IN PHARMACEUTICAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

by
William M. Walsh

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

William M. Walsh
Ethical Pharmaceuticals?
A Deeper Look at the Ethics in Pharmaceutical Public Relations
2006
Advisor: Joseph Basso, J.D., Ph.D., APR
Public Relations Graduate Program

This study takes a deeper look inside the ethics of pharmaceutical Public Relations within marketing campaigns. More specifically, the researcher performed case studies on the ethically questionable marketing campaigns of Fen-phen and Vioxx and compared that data with data collected from focus groups composed of Rowan University graduate Public Relations Alumni.

The case studies were performed through primary and secondary research of the campaigns conducted for Fen-phen and Vioxx. The data was then used to reconstruct the two campaigns. The focus group data was collected from three focus groups, each with four members, and all data was tabulated and then compared with the data of the case studies.

Findings indicate that Public Relations professionals hold to a number of unethical practices and that other Public Relations professionals do not share in the large majority of those practices.

MINI-ABSTRACT

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Chapter I

Introduction

Trust and dependability hold great importance in consumers' eyes. In an age of third party endorsement and watchdog groups, people want honest, up-front messages with little to no falsehood (Burton 1).

Ironically, one of the more booming and crucial businesses has a horrible track record of keeping the public's trust. The pharmaceutical industry, provider of medication and drugs, toes the line of new frontiers every day. With new streams of experimental products, it is logically expected that risks exist when a drug is first released. In the light of this uncertainty, consumers expect an honest and ethically-responsible relationship.

Over the last fifty years, the pharmaceutical industry has become one of the most often criticized businesses for unethical behavior. Everything ranging from mishandled product failure to shady promotion raises a great deal of concern. Hundreds of thousands of people depend on pharmaceutical products for all kinds of treatment at sometime. With pharmaceuticals having a huge part in the health of Americans, ethical issues seem to hold priority (Egan 1).

Yet, the opposite still seems to ring true; pharmaceutical companies continue to earn the reputation among consumers for having unhealthy priorities. Such issues as the withholding of crucial product information and poorly handled product blunders beg the question of whether pharmaceuticals care more for their pensions than they do for their fellow citizens (Leisinger 579).

Another issue that raises suspicion of pharmaceuticals lies in the FDA approval process. Quite often, a pharmaceutical company will concoct a product that treats an untreated or ineffectively treated ailment. When this happens, the product can enter the FDA fast track, a program used to accelerate the approval process (FDA Fast Track). But do fast tracked medications receive the rigorous testing that non-fast track medications do? Many people would say the process favors getting the product to market in order to increase profits more than it does getting product to help ailing patients.

Customers care little for the fact that pharmaceutical companies make a lot of money, but they care more for the fact that greed seems to precede companies' ethics. Ethics are defined as "the rules or standards governing the conduct of a person or the members of a profession" (American Heritage College Dictionary). According to Leisinger, it is fair to say that companies should hold the public's welfare and health above business profits and development (579).

Problem Statement

Ethical responsibility cuts across all departments within the pharmaceutical industry. But most consumers will point a staunch finger at Public Relations practitioners who carry great weight and influence due to their role in communicating with publics. Formally defined, Public Relations explains an individual or organization's activities to key publics to gain a favorable opinion from those publics (Fulginiti and Bagin 1). The Public Relations Society of America states its body of professionals should seek to "build and maintain the framework for public dialogue that deserves the public's trust and support" (PRSA Code of Ethics Message).

Many would agree that pharmaceutical Public Relations seems to march to the beat of a different drummer. According to Carl Elliot of the Hastings Center Report, various medical and scholarly organizations, such as the Mayo Clinic, accuse pharmaceutical Public Relations of disseminating false information, deceiving the public, and crookedly funding academia in order to gain credible support. As a result, the general public greets most messages from pharmaceutical companies with great skepticism and distrust (20).

Purpose of Study

This study will attempt to answer the question of whether pharmaceutical public relations professionals act (or attempt to act) ethically, ranging from everyday matters to crisis situations. With ethics becoming more and more a personal matter of subjectivity in the world of postmodern thought, this study aims to gauge how the professional standards of ethics continue to hold up amidst an ethically declining culture.

This study will use both quantitative and qualitative data in order to answer the following questions:

1. Despite the hype, do pharmaceutical Public Relations professionals have unethical practices?
2. Do pharmaceutical Public Relations professionals seem to hold to different ethics than other Public Relations professionals?

This study will not focus on the pharmaceutical public relations industry as a whole (census study) nor will it study everything about the specific cases. The researcher will not seek blame or accuse any specific parties or people. This study concerns itself

with the Public Relations tactics chosen, not so much the source of said tactics (it would be difficult to determine from where and from whom each tactic came from).

Procedure/Strategy

The researcher collected information from case studies of two pharmaceutical Public Relations campaigns (Fen-phen and Vioxx) to determine whether the companies acted ethically. The research consisted of a content analysis and case study approach. For primary research, the researcher studied the initial promotions, third party endorsements, and news releases of the initial campaigns as well as media during the product releases and the periods of crisis. For secondary research, the researcher studied academic and media sources on the situations and read through the literature of communication and Public Relations ethics. Most of the secondary research was used to analyze and formulate the primary research.

After completing the case studies, the researcher organized and conducted focus groups consisting of Rowan graduate Public Relations alumni. In these focus groups, the researcher put the participants in the role of a Public Relations professional in each company and presented them with objective cases of each situation in order to gauge their plans of action.

After all the data had been compiled, the researcher compared the tactics from the three case studies with the recommended tactics from the Rowan alumni. The researcher then measured all of this information against the PRSA's code of ethics to determine if any unethical situations were present.

Definition of Terms

Asymmetrical Communication: Seeks the public's feedback so to better reach them; the classic persuasion model

Consequentialism: a normative ethics theory that holds that the consequences not the actions, are the ethical concern.

Deontology: a normative ethical theory that holds that decisions should be made solely or primarily by considering one's duties and the rights of others.

Ethics: the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group. In this research, it will refer to standards in the PRSA's code of ethics.

Fiduciary: To be completely loyal to the party represented.

Ghostwriting: The act of attaching a credible name to a prewritten document in order to gain favor with one's public (such as attaching a well-known doctors name to a paper written by a pharmaceutical company in order to win the public's trust).

Normative Ethics: The field of ethics most concerned with determining right and wrong.

Pharmaceutical: A company that performs research, development, and sales of medications to a large consumer base.

Potter Box: A tool developed by Ralph Potter to better navigate an ethical dilemma through the evaluation of the definition/facts, values, principles, and loyalties.

Public Relations Professional: refers to a person who works within the PR department of a pharmaceutical company or of an outsourced PR firm.

Social Conscience: An organizational quality that causes individuals to respond with the best solution for their organization and their public, even though it's impossible to always come out with a win-win decision

Strategy: A long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal

Symmetrical Communication: Seeks the best course of action for both parties involved.

Tactic: An immediate action, with the resources needed at hand, to achieve a particular goal

Virtue Ethics: The normative ethics theory that is concerned with the ethics of a people's virtues instead of their actions.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

Given the breadth and immensity of material on ethics and its application to communication, the literature studied ranged greatly. Explicitly, the literature perused encompassed:

- Campbell Library Electronic Databases including Academic Search Premier, ERIC, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, CINAHL, Communication and Mass Media Complete, pre-CINAHL, Biomedical Reference Collection: Comprehensive, Business Resource Premier, Regional Business News, MEDLINE, Nursing and Allied Health Collection: Comprehensive, EJS-E-journals, Science Direct (Elsevier),
- Communication and Public Relations Textbooks
- Google
- Campbell Library Periodicals

Key words used included “Vioxx,” “Fen-phen,” “ethics,” “public relations,” “pharmaceutical,” “communication,” “third party endorsement,” and “marketing”. No articles were found that examined the complete Public Relations strategies of the Vioxx or Phen-Fen campaigns nor were there any studies that compared the ethics of pharmaceutical Public Relations practitioners with that of other Public Relations practitioners.

History of Ethics

Regarding the importance of ethics within an organization, Pratt et al. states, “Ethics is not only crucial to producing change and to attaining bottom-line goals; it is both a leitmotif of and a cornerstone for effective, overall operations” (243). But people cannot look deep into the questions of communication ethics if they do not understand the ethical basics or its history.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, ethics is defined as, “the rules or standards governing the conduct of a person or the members of a profession.” The concept of ethics traces back to man’s beginnings, yet ethics has always varied amongst different cultures and philosophies; some ethical codes changing substantially over the centuries. Today, the study of ethics breaks down into numerous categories, many of them not needed to effectively discuss business ethics. To further explore the pertinent aspects of different ethical theory, the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, and Isocrates will create a sufficient introduction.

Plato

One of the earlier and most well-known contributors to the concept of ethics was Plato. A student of Socrates, Plato was born in 427 B.C. into an upper class family in Athens, Greece. Having the luxury of a good education and avid opportunity, he became enamored with the philosophies of Socrates, a unique man who would substantially shape Plato and his writings in coming years. After Socrates death in 387, Plato established the Academy to raise-up potential statesmen who would bring solidity and vision to the

ancient world. Though Plato died in 347, his Academy continued on for nine hundred more years to train and shape the minds of tomorrow (Leslie 25-26).

Plato's view on ethics is "conceived rather broadly as knowledge of human good and how it is to be achieved" and is traditionally compared to more religious morality (Duerlinger 312). But beyond a basic overview of Plato's ethics, the details grow complicated in that his concept of "human good" varied from current views and he seemed to change his ethical outlook frequently during his life. As a result, there's little that can be done with Plato's ethics in regards to current applications (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-ethics/>).

But in regards to the art of rhetoric, Plato believed that communication should only convey that which holds to ultimate truth; that those aware of that which is right need to tell those unaware of it. Plato believed rhetoric outside of the knowledge of absolute truth unacceptable (Marsh 6). To simplify Plato (an unfair task given the depth and diversity of his teaching), he saw communication as an honest means of informing the ignorant for the sake of the greatest good. Therefore, Plato's communication ethics were always based on an objective, rigid standard of absolute truth, with little room for dissent.

Aristotle

Aristotle was born in Stagira in Northern Greece in 384 B.C. We know little of his early life except that his father was a respected physician in the court of the King of Macedonia, and that both his father and mother died when he was young. At 18, Aristotle enrolled in Plato's Academy and earned a reputation as an upstart who openly disagreed

with Plato regularly. He stayed at the Academy until Plato's death in 347 and then went on to tutor Alexander the Great from 342 to 335, after he returned to Athens to open his own school, the Lyceum (Leslie 30).

Although Aristotle studied under Plato, Aristotle's ethics were more subjective than Plato's. According to Wikipedia, Aristotle viewed ethics in what today is termed as value ethics, which moves far from the concept of a universal, hard-fixed moral code (or deontology) into a system that bases ethics on each person's specific circumstances. Virtue ethics focuses not on what forms a good action but on what makes a good person (Virtue Ethics 3)

Aristotle also viewed communication in a very different fashion. As he simply put it, "Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (1355b). Aristotle recognized rhetoric as a means of persuasion but not necessarily for the relaying of higher truths or even for the benefit of others. He set standards that changed depending on what the speaker wished to achieve (Marsh 7).

Wardy labeled Aristotle's view of rhetoric as "a rampant instance of Plato's worst nightmare (79)." Plato championed rhetoric to always deliver absolute truth, never the possibility of falsehood. According to Plato, taking rhetoric and using it to achieve selfish goals would be considered immoral (Marsh 7). Aristotle obviously did not support immorality, but he appeared more concerned with rhetorical effectiveness than moral justification (Hunt 39-41).

Isocrates

Isocrates was born in 436 B.C. to a wealthy flute production family. He received the finest education possible and is often said to have studied with Socrates. His family lost its fortune during the Peloponnesian War and Isocrates faced the problem of finding a profession. He became a lawyer and a speech writer for the courts, with some of the speeches he wrote still intact today (Willis).

Isocrates also varied from Plato and Aristotle in his view of ethics, though a little harder to categorize. Isocrates did not hold to Aristotle's the-end-justifies-the-means ethics and it's hard to say if he shared in Plato's religious thinking, but what is known is that Isocrates recognized that moral actions build repute and then credibility (Marsh 8-9).

Isocrates best emulates his ethics in his view of rhetoric. He viewed communication as a tool for persuasion but never solely for selfish gain. His stance models a more selfless ideology where all involved benefit, what is today known as symmetrical, two-way communication. According to Bagin and Fulginiti, symmetrical, two-way communication seeks the best course of action to satisfy both parties involved (3). Isocrates held that credibility comes from character traits that seek the best outcome for all. He best sums his view in his Antidosis:

The man who wishes to persuade people will not be negligent as to the matter of character; no, on the contrary, he will apply himself above all to establish a most honorable name amongst his fellow citizens; for who does not know that words carry far greater conviction when spoken by men of good repute than when spoken by men who live under a cloud, and that the argument which is made by a man's life is of more weight than that which is furnished by words? Therefore, the stronger a man's desire to persuade his hearers, the more zealously he will strive to be honorable and to have the esteem of his fellow citizens (278).

Isocrates held to the necessity of walking the walk, that people with proven character and repute will always have more success in their delivery. A trusted reputation comes at great cost and once spent is hard to win back. A solid reputation keeps society stable (Bagin and Fulginiti 5). Though Aristotle supported the emphasis of virtue more than rules, he does agree that good character comes out of habit and that one only becomes virtuous by employing such virtue over a lifetime (Book II, Section 1, pp 28-29; Section 4, pp 34-35).

Current Views of Ethics

Given the basic ethical philosophies of the three men, we see that not all of their concepts are best-suited for the business world. Despite the complexities of Plato's thoughts on ethics, one can deduce that they seem to fit into a more religious mold than secular one (Duerlinger 313). Aristotle's virtue ethics have some popularity today in the 21st century, but most proponents of the theory regard virtue ethics as a poor standard for the marketplace (Virtue Ethics 2). Of the three, Isocrates' view of ethics seems to best fit today's business world, though his work never truly deals with ethical theory. Along with his view of leading a life of character, much acclaim comes from his action-centered, Golden Rule of "Do not do to others that which angers you when they do it to you" (Gouldner 114).

According to Wikipedia, the ethics of determining right and wrong are condensed into normative ethics, a field which has taken the thoughts of the many philosophers through the ages and has broken the great diversity of their thinking into three categories: consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics (Normative Ethics 1).

Consequentialism “argues that the morality of an action is contingent on the actions outcome or result,” basically that the end justifies the means. Deontology focuses more on the ethics of the action and not as much about the outcome. Both consequentialism and deontology propose moral codes and rules to live by (Ethics 2, Normative Ethics 1).

Virtue ethics focuses more on individual character, specifically what qualities make up a good person instead of what makes a good action. The ultimate goal of virtue ethics is eudaimonia (roughly means “success”) or to lead a happy and fulfilling life (Virtue Ethics).

While all three theories have their supporters, they each have their critics. Consequentialism basically gives free reign to a person’s choice of actions as long as the desired goal is accomplished. This abdicates all kinds of actions that most people would find unethical at best and heinous at worst (Mothersill 925). Although some people’s practices seem to fit into a consequentialist mindset, few champion it (Ryan 622).

Virtue ethics has the issue that there is little formal guidance within the theory. While consequentialism and deontology offer rules and guidelines, virtue ethics only offers the advice to do what is virtuous in the situation. While virtue is important, it does little to settle conflict, especially when the discrepancy is in the area of virtuous actions (Boatright 355).

Deontology, while providing a clear framework of what’s good and what’s bad, is often accused of being far too impersonal and removed from the individual. Deontology does not account for personal development more that people follow and obey on the

surface. Deontology takes into account much of the action and little of the person (Whetstone 103-104).

Looking over the shortcomings of the three theories, many people have realized that while each theory seems to work well on its own, in reality they cannot. As a result of this apparent inefficiency, numerous people have reasoned that a combination of the theories works best. Robert Louden remarks that:

The theoretician's quest for conceptual economy and elegance has been won at too great a price, for the resulting reductionist definitions of the moral concepts are not true to the facts or moral experience. It is important now to see the ethics of virtue and the ethics of rules as adding up, rather than as canceling each other out (191).

Regarding the three theories and combinations therefore derived, many champion an action-based theory like deontology coupled with the virtue-oriented, personal development theory of virtue ethics. This gives a clearer set of guidelines for professionals to follow as well as the moral background to make it individually relevant (Whetstone 102).

The Ethical Business Dilemma

Renowned as the father of free market capitalism, Adam Smith stated that business deals largely with the pursuit of self-interest. He states that if all people would work with their self-interest in mind, the world would be better off. But he emphasized that this pursuit be constrained by the laws of justice and within the constraints of virtue (2).

But as Ronald Duska notes, the laws of justice and virtues have changed with the development of capitalism. It seems that the main problem in business is that self-interest has become the sole goal of business and that the goods produced and services rendered have all fallen subject to greed. Duska comments that the opposite should be true, that “profit is like the engine that makes the train go, but it is not the destination” (24).

Many others agree with Duska, that self-interest has monopolized the business mindset. People are out to get ahead, to make the biggest salary, and to get promoted. As Adam Smith stated, self-interest is good, but it can’t be one’s main focus.

This problem of primary self-interest encompasses many problems that are seen in the workplace today. Most unethical actions and vices such as hypocrisy, favoritism, and financial dishonesty all have roots within selfish motivation (Harman 91).

Another problem area lies in the tremendous decline in personal responsibility in society. In the business world, especially in large bureaucratic organizations, one person usually only contributes to a project. The responsibility for failure or mistakes then shifts to the team and so the burden of ownership often falls to someone else or to no one at all (Skinner et al 15). People have learned the rewards of avoiding personal responsibility and blaming the government, corporations, or someone else. Spill some hot coffee on one’s lap and sue for millions has become the corporate way of life (Leslie 10).

The Ethical Solution

The emphasis of self has largely contaminated ethics within the business world. Ideally, the best solution would logically be a healthy dose of the antithesis of self-interest: humility. Though many people think of humility negatively, as the practice of

self-neglect and abject poverty, humility is simply the virtue of not thinking of one's self at all but on the welfare and benefit of others (Humility). Humble people are often cited as the best leaders, the best to work with, and quite often the more successful in industry (Lencioni).

But many believe that humility is but one facet of the greater virtue of integrity. Integrity often defined as what someone does when no one else is around is often cited throughout the business world as a key virtue to ethical business practice. A person of integrity is quite the opposite of a dishonest, unscrupulous, or simply unethical person (Audi & Murphy).

Yet the encouragement or enforcement of integrity is not the answer to the issue of business ethics. As stated earlier with virtue ethics, holding people to the achievement of a virtue is not only subjective but tremendously difficult (Virtue Ethics). Since most people are hardly considered full of integrity, there needs to be a more plain and measurable solution to help professionals work ethically.

Ethical Codes

Instead of simply holding people to their integrity, a combination of virtue ethics and deontology would best serve the problem of unethical business behavior. As earlier endorsed by Robert Louden, a deontology that requires character and virtue development will best serve everyone, from the broad view of the organization down to the individual employee.

Yet one challenge of establishing an ethical code is the question of what ethics to include. Ever since the 1960s, rapid social changes in the culture have diminished the

universality of right and wrong, and a variety of inconsistent ideas on ethics have settled in. Two problems arise from this: the task of establishing a majority-accepted professional ethical code and accommodating the growing number of dissenting personal ethical codes (Andersen 13-14).

Not only do various numbers of personal ethical codes exist, but given the globalization of business in the 21st century, the accommodation of different cultural ethical codes also presents a dilemma. In some cultures, women still have no place in negotiations and payoffs are considered ethical. It's the duty of each side to better understand the other party's ethics and work within the guidelines (Hodgson).

The ever-daunting task of creating a relevant and effective ethical code becomes more formidable by the day. Some professionals believe in a less strict code that basically offers only rough guidelines, appealing more to a virtue ethics mindset. Yet other professionals and organizations feel that the ethical codes needs to be more clear-cut. Such organizations like PRSA have endeavored to create a more relevant deontology in order to better guide professionals in their work (Pratt et al 247).

Potter Box

Along with ethical codes, there's another method that has integrated value ethics and deontology into ethical decisions. The Potter Box, developed by Ralph Potter of the Harvard Divinity School, is a tool used to address any ethical dilemma by inputting certain data that is key to the situation. The key data falls under "definition/facts" (objective and unbiased truth(s) of the situation), "values" (specific concerns or virtues within the situation), "principles" (philosophies or reasoning applicable to the situation),

and “loyalties” (where does allegiance lie first, secondly, etc.). There are different ways to work the Potter Box, but the previous steps are the most important steps needed in order to use it correctly, though more steps may better help solve the situation (Potter Box).

Though a useful tool, the Potter Box is also a highly subjective tool. An individual applying the method to the same situation may arrive at two different answers if using the tool at different times. The Potter Box only claims to provide help in dissecting an ethical situation to find the best course of action. The tool is largely effective in situations of moral ambiguity but probably unnecessary for simple ethical judgment calls (Guth & Marsh 176-179).

Public Relations Ethics

All of the complexities regarding business ethics trickle down to the field of Public Relations. The great difference is that Public Relations deals largely with the element of communication. Looking back on Isocrates’ view of ethics and how it best fits the business world, it is clear that his view of rhetoric also best fits the field of Public Relations. In comparison, Plato’s noble view of rhetoric as the vehicle of ultimate truth better suits philosophy than it does the multifaceted environment of Public Relations. And Aristotle’s asymmetric rhetoric functions well for the individual but not for the other party. Some Public Relation practitioners esteem the Aristotelian view of rhetoric, that persuasion and advocacy lay at the heart of Public Relations (Kruckberg and Starck 4). But many contend that a reputable profession would never allow the public’s welfare to

fall second to a company's. Of the three, most professionals agree that Isocrates' symmetrical, two-way communication best emulates today's ethical mindset.

Social Conscience

As one moves beneath the surface of symmetrical, two-way communication, the finer details grow a little less distinct. One area of great attention is the issue of social conscience. According to Grunig and Grunig, the PR social conscience responds with the best solution for its organization and its public, even though it's impossible to always come out with a decision that is of equal benefit to both parties (Grunig and Grunig 308).

Often confused with the media, Public Relations can never practice with an objective social conscience. Many people make that misjudgment due to a stemmed and supposedly evolved relationship with journalism. Yet Journalism occupies a third party position of finding and producing accurate, unbiased information; a position that public relations could never take. Public Relations can never share in that objectivity. Public Relations should relay accurate and truthful information (i.e. practice with a strong social conscience), but it will unavoidably contain the bias of advocacy for its client (Fitzpatrick 2).

Moving past the basics of the definition, the concept of social conscience begins to grow a little murky. Since the concept of "the best solution" swims in ambiguity and subjectivity, many tend to see social conscience differently.

The main variance results from the question of where first loyalty should lie. Some see Public Relations as fiduciary, that professionals best serve the public through best serving their clients. The social conscience here is that the public benefits when the

client receives priority treatment. This role best resembles that of a lawyer; professionals owe their loyalty first to the client then to the public (Fitzpatrick 7).

Others hold social conscience to have more duty to the general public; Public Relations professionals can only best serve the public by considering it above their organization or client. This puts the profession in a community, service-centered light and while this appeases the public, it greatly detracts from an organization's advocacy (Leeper 168).

Along with social conscience lie issues of sustaining a professional character. Symmetry between personal and professional ethics usually holds one of the greater obstacles to trusted character (Grunig and White 39). Many professionals claim to hold to ethics that are required at work but that they would not normally uphold in their personal lives. Since most companies work under some sort of a deontology (rule system) in order to consistently and effectively function, the question then becomes whether the disagreement breaks their integrity (Pratt et al 244). Others comment that professionals cannot exemplify consistent character if their ethics change when they enter and leave the office; ethical standards cannot be hung on the coatrack at the end of the day (Grunig and White).

Pharmaceutical Public Relations

All of the aforementioned views tie aptly into the problems in which pharmaceutical Public Relations face. But pharmaceutical companies also face the unique challenge of developing and producing drugs that keep the world healthy; a business of great pressure and substantial risks. Slight variations in chemical formulas can make the

difference between a harmful and a beneficial drug, such as with cocaine ($C_{17}H_{21}NO_4$) and Novocain ($C_{13}H_{20}N_2O_2 \cdot HCl$). Of course pharmaceutical companies factor this into the price of products (hence the high price tag) but it doesn't negate the dangers of selling new drugs (Egan 1).

Numerous pharmaceutical catastrophes have made the public aware of this danger. Such drugs as Vioxx and Phen-Fen have made headlines with the negative, sometimes fatal, side effects they have caused. Yet the drug blunders weren't the greatest concern of the public; the focus fell more on the possibility that the pharmaceutical companies supposedly withheld information, acting in the interest of greed instead of the public (Simons 1).

Third Party Technique

Like any industry, pharmaceuticals need third party sources to recommend and endorse new pharmaceutical products and industry actions. Unfortunately, even this tactic has become unethical. An all-too-common method of garnering public support is the "third party technique," a strategy that involves discretely paying for seemingly objective endorsements from medical and academic professionals (Burton). This strategy can be seen mainly in two tactics: undisclosed endorsement and ghostwriting.

Since pharmaceuticals are largely a source of medical funding, undisclosed endorsement can be a common pitfall. There is little problem when medical and academic professionals reveal their ties of bias, since open endorsement is part of business. It only becomes unethical when perceived objective professionals are actually secretly funded to promote a biased perspective. This practice best identifies with medical and academic

professionals writing biased copies, promoting or defending a company's product, or even helping a pharmaceutical weather a crisis (Burton).

Ghostwriting takes third party endorsement one step further into deception. A ghostwritten article is copy written by one person, often a freelance or professional writer, and then signed off as the work of another, usually an academic or medical professional. Once again, open disclosure makes this a perfectly ethical action. But ghostwriting for pharmaceuticals almost always masquerades as normal scholarly articles. In fact, the ghostwriting business is so big that some firms exist solely to focus on this practice (Beebe).

The third party technique, though common, is viewed as an unethical burden to the medical field. Even professionals often can't tell who to trust as objective and who's been paid off. To emphasize again, the problem isn't the paid endorsement, the problem is the lack of disclosure.

Summary

Ethics were never a simple problem for the business world to face. Different ethical theories further compounded by discrepancy of virtues and of deontologies have made the task of creating ethical business guidelines a constant and formidable task. But since the need persists, there will always be the constant evaluation of local and worldwide business ethics.

Along with the headaches of business ethics, Public Relations and the pharmaceutical field offer their own ethical complications. Both have unique issues to conquer. Whether Public Relations professionals view their allegiance first to their

employer or the public, whether they hold individual responsibility for company actions, etc. are questions that will be considered in the study to follow. Throughout the entire literature review, no studies or research were found that encompassed the following study.

Chapter III

Research Design

The overall design of this study is to decide Public Relation's ethical role in pharmaceutical marketing through the comparison of the results of two case studies (each one looks at an ethically-questionable pharmaceutical Public Relations situation) with the results of three focus groups (each records the recommendations of recent Rowan Public Relations graduate students to similar situations as the case studies). The two case studies were researched primarily through secondary research. Each focus group consisted of four recently-graduated Public Relations graduate students from Rowan University, totaling 12 Public Relations professionals. Rowan Public Relations graduate alumni were chosen because of their extensive training and backgrounds in Public Relations as well as in their knowledge of Public Relations ethics.

Case Studies

Research in the social science arena holds a great deal of complexity due to the fickle and complicated nature of human behavior. Wikipedia defines a case study as:

A particular method of qualitative research. Rather than using large samples and following a rigid protocol to examine a limited number of variables, case study methods involve an in-depth, longitudinal examination of a single instance or event: a case. They provide a systematic way of looking at events, collecting data, analyzing information, and reporting the results (Case Study).

According to Robert K Yin, case studies work best to answer "why" and "how." Among research instruments, case studies create or reconstruct scenarios to answer

questions that a survey or poll could not (19). Yin gives the following example to illustrate how the manner of the questions affects the choice of survey instrument:

If you were studying “who” participated in riots and “how much” damage had been done, you might survey residents, examine business records (an archival analysis), or conduct a “windshield survey” of the riot area. In contrast, if you wanted to know “why” riots occurred, you would have to draw upon a wider array of documentary information, in addition to conducting interviews (18).

Yin also gives an example of where “how” and “why” questions do not necessarily warrant a case study, but that the researcher also needs to look for the best and most efficient method for obtaining the information:

Some “how” and “why” questions are ambivalent and need clarification. “How” and “why” Ronald Reagan got elected in 1980 can be studied by either a survey or a case study. The survey might examine voting patterns, showing that southerners and blue-collar workers turned heavily in Reagan’s favor, and this could satisfactorily address the how and why questions. In contrast, the case study might examine how Reagan conducted his campaign to achieve the necessary nomination and to manipulate public opinion in his favor. The study would cover his debates with President Carter and whether information from a Carter briefing book slipped into his hands. This approach also would be an acceptable way of addressing the “how” and “why” questions but would be different from the survey study (18-19).

To best summarize the role of a case study, especially in this research, it is an instrument that attempts to “illuminate a decision or a set of decisions; why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result” (Schramm).

Regarding the research presented in this paper, the overall question of the research is “What is Public Relations’ ethical role in pharmaceutical marketing?” If this

question were simply just a study to examine the present ethical role of Public Relations, the research would boil down to studying past tactics amidst other data. But given the broadness of the question and the present negative perception of pharmaceuticals, this research also embarks to ask the following questions:

- What *should* Public Relations' ethical role be in pharmaceutical marketing?
- How do other Public Relations professionals react to and work with the same situations pharmaceutical PR professionals work with?

Given the nature of this research, case studies were determined the best method to fully investigate the problem of Public Relations ethics in pharmaceutical marketing.

Two case studies of two ethically-questionable pharmaceutical Public Relations situations were constructed, based on the past two Public Relations debacles of Vioxx and Phen-Fen. To best comprehend and understand the Public Relations tactics of each campaign, most research was performed in print media. Specifically:

- news releases
- opinions/editorials and other material produced directly from the pharmaceutical company
- trade and scholarly journal articles
- third-party endorsements
- blogs

After the tactics were sufficiently compiled came the task of attempting to recreate the campaigns. This was accomplished using articles, news releases, and other information to best piece together the campaign itself.

Once the campaigns and the tactics were realistically created, the tactics were listed along with any outside relevant information. Each tactic and respective information was measured against the PRSA's code of ethics.

Focus Groups

According to Anthony Fulginiti and Donald Bagin, focus groups are “controlled discussions with six to eight carefully selected target audience participants to discover attitudes and opinions” (67). Focus groups exist as an effective means of qualitative research to truly gauge what people think and feel in a comfortable environment that encourages self-disclosure. A focus group doesn't really seek for direct answers, but it asks open-ended questions that allow the subject sufficient time to comment, share or explain experiences or knowledge relevant to the topic at hand (Krueger and Casey 6-7).

For the task of determining the thoughts and opinions of Public Relations professionals, focus groups best fit the task. Conducting isolated interviews with the participants would yield their opinions, but not necessarily the ones they would put forward around colleagues. Focus groups function well in that they provide the right environment for friendly discourse, even if disagreements occur. No final agreement or consensus really needs to be reached, just everyone's opinions need to be recorded (Krueger and Casey 10-11).

The main purpose of using focus groups was to measure the reactions of highly-trained Public Relations professionals against already formulated scenarios that resemble the case studies. Each focus group was compiled of four individuals each. In January, invitations were sent out to 68 recent Rowan Public Relations Masters graduates, chosen

for their extensive training and background in Public Relations as well as in their knowledge of Public Relations ethics. Each individual received an extensive email invitation (each invitation gave the choice of one of three sessions to attend) and a mandatory R.S.V.P. Of the 68 invited, 12 responded, filling up the three sessions equally with four in each. Each respondent was contacted and verified to the time and date of the focus groups.

Each focus group was created similarly. Each had three different ethically-questionable pharmaceutical Public Relations scenarios, one having strong similarity to the real situation but without any information that could bias a focus group member (name of organization, product, etc.).

The focus groups all took the scenarios one-by-one, starting with basic information and using the focus group members to guide the campaign. There were ethical snags throughout the study; some obvious and others very blurry. The overall tactics and the ethical decisions recommended by the focus group members were recorded.

Comparison

After all the focus groups were completed, the data from the case studies and the focus groups were compiled into comparable tables and charts. For each actual past Public Relations case there was a similar scenario presented in each focus groups (so there were three scenarios per case study).

The tactics of the real Public Relations cases and each one's three corresponding case studies were measured against the PRSA's code of ethics in order to determine

which situation held the highest ethical actions and which seemed to hold the lowest. This analysis was completed by evaluating the tactic in the light of the background and circumstances of each case study (i.e. a positive news release for a recent wonder-drug stands in unethical light if the company fails to mention that the drug may have fatal side effects). Each tactic was measured on a Likard scale with 3 being “unethical,” 2 “gray,” and 1 “ethical.”

The results were then tabulated within each scenario cluster (scenario clusters consist of the actual case and three case studies) and examined to tell whether the PR professionals of the actual case or the PR professionals of the focus groups chose the more ethical tactics.

Chapter IV

Results

Case Study Results

Fen-phen and Vioxx were the two pharmaceutical campaigns chosen to study through primary and secondary research. Of the media chosen in which to research, only press articles, scholarly research, and company literature were the only ones used. Blogs yielded no credible information.

Below are both case studies with cited literature:

Fen-phen

Fen-phen refers to the use in combination of fenfluramine and phentermine. Fenfluramine (fen) and phentermine (phen) are prescription medications that have been approved by the FDA for many years as appetite suppressants for the short-term (a few weeks) management of obesity. Another variation of fenfluramine is dexfenfluramine (Redux), which was recently approved by the FDA in 1996 for use as an appetite suppressant (FDA Fact Sheet). The FDA never approved combine use of both fenfluramine/dexfenfluramine and phentermine though each one had prior approval for medical treatment (Pitts et al).

In September of 1997, both Fen-phen and Dexfen-phen were pulled off the market by the FDA for association with cardiovascular and lung malfunctions. Major uproar ensued. But the outrage was not so much because the Fen-phen caused such

horrible problems, but because Wyeth had acted irresponsibly by researching the benefits and not the risks.

Before releasing the drug, Wyeth knew that Fen-phen was not extremely effective in aiding weight loss and that it had numerous side effects that would make the cost of taking Fen-phen outweigh the benefits. So in order to justify the sale of the drug, Wyeth embarked on a huge medical education campaign to heavily emphasize the dangers of obesity (Mundy 41).

Wyeth largely funded many nonprofit groups, gaining an obviously biased favor. “Of 54 million set aside by Wyeth to launch the drug included grants to the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Diabetes Association, the North American Society for the Study of Obesity, and the American Society of Bariatric Physicians. Wyeth budgeted \$700,000 for C. Everett Koop’s advocacy group, Shape Up America, \$275,000 for a “State of Weight” teleseminar, \$179,000 for “Dear Doctor” letters, and \$50,000 for a Women’s Health Seminar” (Mundy 79-80).

Wyeth also had unethical financial ties with a great deal of academic and medical Key Opinion Leaders, including the funding of many ghostwritten articles. A couple examples would be JoAnn Manson of Harvard and Gerald Faich of U Penn (both wrote Fen-Phen a complimentary editorial in the NE Journal of Medicine without revealing their ties to Wyeth) and George Blackburn, the chair of the Committee on Nutrition for the Massachusetts Med Society, who turned out to be key in lifting the Massachusetts Fen-Phen ban (Manson and Faich 1996 on Elliot 20). Louis Lasagna of Tufts University was even funded to testify on the behalf of Redux (Dexfen-phen) to help the FDA approval go smoothly (Elliot 20).

Fen-phen was a raging success with many thousands of people consuming the drug to shed unwanted pounds. But eventually devastating evidence of severe heart and lung risks was sent to the FDA via the Mayo Clinic along with other non-Wyeth research. When the Mayo Clinic initially told Wyeth about the problems, its safety officer shredded it (Mundy 181-182). After waiting several more months and having no choice but to recall all Fen-phen, Wyeth finally pulled Fen-phen from the shelves (Elliot 20).

But even after Wyeth pulled Fen-phen, the company still continued to conduct unethical practices. Wyeth spent over \$100 million to counter negative publicity, including funding an “expert panel” of cardiologists and paying Arthur Weymen of Harvard \$500 a day to chair it, and even funded a Very Important Visiting Professor program and made sure the honorees were at medical programs at exotic resorts. Wyeth also funded biased studies to discover evidence that would shrink safety concerns and publicized favorable studies heavily (Elliot 20).

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Vioxx

Vioxx (Rofecoxib) belongs to the group of NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) known as COX-2 selective inhibitors. COX-2 selective drugs act specifically on one form of the cyclooxygenase (COX) enzyme, namely the COX-2, whereas previous NSAIDs inhibited both COX-1 and COX-2. This specificity allows COX-2 inhibitors to reduce inflammation and pain while minimizing undesired gastrointestinal adverse effects - peptic ulcers - that are common with the nonselective NSAIDs such as aspirin, naproxen, and ibuprofen (Vioxx).

Vioxx was the tail end of a large Merck production of blockbuster drugs, with Vioxx anticipated to be the largest. There was tremendous energy in Merck over this drug, ranging from the executives to the scientists (Simons 5).

But Vioxx had some possible negative side effects. U Penn published a study in 1998 stating that Vioxx and other COX-2 inhibitors could interfere with enzymes that would ward off cardiovascular disease. Merck denied that those results were conclusive (Simons 5).

Merck conducted several studies on Vioxx's safety, one considered of great importance was the VIGOR study conducted in 2000. But oddly, instead of conducting this study with a control, it compared Vioxx patients with naproxen patients, justifying that the option of using a placebo pill was impossible since osteoarthritis is too painful not to medicate. The results of the study showed the Vioxx patients had significantly more heart events than naproxen patients, which Merck researchers wrongly interpreted as naproxen having heart problem prevention capabilities (Smith).

There are several flaws with that conclusion. Firstly, naproxen was never shown

before to have similar qualities (USA Today). And according to Dr. Gregory D. Curfman and Dr. Jeffrey M. Drazen of the New England Journal of Medicine, Merck knowingly deleted Vioxx study results about three heart attacks among study participants before submitting the study to the Journal for publication (Black).

Merck's publicity practices were also questionable. It paid for numerous ghost articles and it funded a good deal of medical research. Avoiding the medical community, Merck also spent over \$100 million in direct-to-consumer advertising to best sell Vioxx (Adams).

Meanwhile, Vioxx was beginning to receive heat from scrutinizing researchers. Vioxx opponents reported that Merck was applying severe pressure and threatening persuasion against any anti-Vioxx research. Company officials were even given a Merck training manual used to help officials form a pro-Vioxx mindset in doctors without really addressing the issues (Verschoor).

Then in September 2004, nearly 4.5 years after releasing the drug, Merck released data that stated Vioxx did substantially increase heart attacks after about 18 months of use. These results came from running a true controlled drug trial of Vioxx. Critics such as Eric Tropol, chairman of cardiology at the Cleveland Clinic, states that Merck could have initiated a quicker, more effective study had they not been more concerned with sales (Rubin).

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Focus Group Results

Of the 68 recent Rowan Public Relations graduate students asked to participate in the three focus groups, a total of 12 participated, four in each group. Each focus group session consisted of three scenarios, each with follow-up questions, with focus group one and two guided by a moderator (a fellow graduate student completely objective to the research) and focus group three guided solely by the researcher, due to last minute circumstances preventing the moderator from attending.

Scenario one deals with the Fen-phen campaign before the dangers were known. Scenario two identifies with Fen-phen after the dangers were known. Scenario three represents Vioxx. Each scenario and respective questions are listed on the following pages.

Possible error or inconsistency could arise from the following factors:

- The moderator missed the third focus group and so the researcher had to conduct the focus groups alone.

- Each group had one outspoken individual who seemed to largely influence the answers of the other three.
- The four members of focus group three seemed as if they were in a rush.

Scenario 1

You work for the pharmaceutical company Wallaconcord. As the PR director, it is your job to create a Public Relations campaign to reach the medical community and the general public.

The drug you are currently working with is a weight loss pill called Trosap. It was developed to help accelerate the process of shedding unwanted pounds in overweight individuals. Clinical trials reveal that it only helps the average person lose about 5% of total body fat; not a great result considering the hefty price tag. Given this figure, you conclude that only people who are overly obese would buy this drug. But the bigwigs of Wallaconcord want you to target anyone looking to lose weight because there is little profit to be gained from only marketing only to overly obese people.

In order to establish credibility for the drug, you need the medical community to accept the drug. In the past, pharmaceutical companies have been known to author scholarly articles for their products and pay big names in the medical field or academia to sign their names to it. This practice is illegal but the ghostwritten articles are often hard to track and prove, so many companies still do it.

Facilitator's questions (also on powerpoint as they're asked)

1. How do you respond to the Wallaconcord executive demand to market Trosap to the general dieting population? Why?
2. Would you respond differently if they upgraded the executive demand to the ultimatum of "market it to all overweight people or find another job"?
3. What strategies would you use to gain credibility with the medical community and academia? Take 10 minutes to brainstorm together to come up with five tactics (which could include ghostwriting articles) and explain why you picked them.

(Follow-up questions to 3)

- Why did/didn't you include the ghostwriting?
- (if responded with NO ghostwriting) Would your answer change if once again it became a choice between the tactic and your job?

Scenario 2

This is virtually identical to Scenario 1, but soon after the drug is released, trusted national research clinics mail you results saying that Trosap causes pulmonary valve failure (lung problems) in a large majority of patients.

Your Research and Development department shows concern about this but it does not see this as a huge deal. Wallaconcord Research and Development says to wait it out. The research clinics on the other hand show great distress about these findings and want you to recall the product immediately. Recalling the product may tarnish the credibility of the drug and cause the company to lose a great deal of money. But if the research clinics are right and you leave it on the market, many people may develop serious lung conditions, which will also hurt your reputation, not to mention the people. Plus, the injured will definitely try to prosecute your company.

1. Do you advise your company to wait it out or to recall the drug? Why?
2. If the Research and Development Department offered to do a series of rigorous tests on Trosap over the course of two weeks to ultimately conclude its safety, do you wait two weeks to recall or do you do it immediately?
3. (If they opt to wait it out) Do you think the longer you wait will reflect poorly on your concern for your customers?

Scenario 3

You work as the PR director for a different pharmaceutical company called Fohg. This company has an amazing track record of developing some of the greatest and most effective drugs in the market. Many of these drugs are soon due to lose their patent and so will cause the company to lose a lot of profits if new drugs are not released in their place.

Your company has a new drug, DR34 that treats arthritis and associated pain with amazing results. The company is very excited that this drug will bring in even more profits than past drugs. Your bosses want to get this drug to market as soon as possible.

But while planning your PR campaign, information from the Research and Development Department tells you that the drug “may” cause heart dysfunction in some patients. Though this is not absolute, it is documented and could hold weight. The company dismisses this as “not compelling enough evidence” and that “all drugs seem to have glitches at first.” They also counter with other clinical data to show that the negative results are probably an anomaly.

The company plans to run this product through the FDA fast track program, an accelerated FDA program designed to review new drugs and biologics that could treat serious conditions and address unmet medical needs. This accelerated process also accommodates the desire to beat the competing product from its rival company, Fizing. Delay would surely mean a significant reduction in sales.

In the meantime, the company wants you to plan a campaign for DR34, specifically targeting the medical community.

1. As a Public Relations counselor, what do you recommend to the executives regarding releasing DR34 as planned above?
2. Would your recommendation change in an ultimatum situation?
3. If the decision is to officially release DR34 as planned above, do you have any other suggestions on how to best release the drug?
4. What strategies would you use to gain credibility with the medical community and academia? Take 10 minutes to brainstorm together to come up with five tactics (which could include ghostwriting articles) and explain why you picked them.

(Follow-up questions to 4)

- Why did/didn't you include the ghostwriting?
- (if responded with NO ghostwriting) Would your answer change if once again it became a choice between the tactic and your job?

Scenario 1 Results (*note that “FG” stands for Focus Group)

1. How do you respond to the Wallaconcord executive demand to market Trosap to the general dieting population? Why?

FG1:

- All four members remarked that they would market it to everyone, but they would be sure to give data regarding who it will effect

FG2:

- All four members agreed that this demand was based on greed and not in pleasing the customer.
- Two members advised not to market it to the general public
- One member advised to market it to the actual five percent of the public that would benefit from it (i.e. a more open means of marketing)

FG3:

- One member felt that marketing to the general public was acceptable as long as there was full disclosure. Any deceptive tactics would be unacceptable.
- The other three members thought it dishonest to publicly market a drug that was largely ineffective to most people.

2. Would you respond differently if they upgraded the executive demand to the ultimatum of “market it to all overweight people or find another job”?

FG1: N/A

FG2: All four members said they would not let it get to that point and that they would do their best to persuade the executives to market Trosap honestly. They did not say specifically whether they would leave if they had to market the drug to the general public.

FG3: One member does not apply. Of the other three members, one remarked that she would do her best to convince the executives otherwise, but if she had to she would leave. The other two members said they would leave if given an ultimatum.

3. What strategies would you use to gain credibility with the medical community and academia? Take 10 minutes to brainstorm together to come up with five tactics (which could include ghostwriting articles) and explain why you picked them.

FG1: Some recommendations to gain credibility were:

- Join with another organization (profit or nonprofit) that is marketing to overweight people
- Use a comparison of similar drugs, emphasizing the benefits of Trosap
- Testimonials and endorsements

- Solicit or seek out a medical figure to write (but only under ethical guidelines)
- TV appearance by a credible medical professional to endorse Trosap
- Use old test results for a campaign
- NO ghostwriting

FG2: Some recommendations to gain credibility were:

- Seek out objective medical experts to assess Trosap and publish their findings
- Commission/fund an independent study
- Conduct a series of lectures or seminars to the medical community
- Pitch articles to trade journals

FG3: All four members felt it unethical to get the medical community behind this drug in any way.

(Follow-up questions to 3)

- **Why did/didn't you include the ghostwriting?**
- **(if responded with NO ghostwriting) Would your answer change if once again it became a choice between the tactic and your job?**

FG1: Did not include ghostwriting because:

- The members did not wish to risk their credibility
- Felt that physicians would be on the watch because of past events and would not go for it
- Reasoned that legal counsel would completely disagree with the tactic
- Saw the tactic as too risky, especially with recent debacles

Their answer would not change if their job was on the line.

FG2: Did not include ghostwriting because the members felt ghostwriting unethical. They would do substantial research to persuade the executives that ghostwriting is detrimental.

Their answer would not change if their job was on the line, though they conceded that in a real-life scenario the decision might be different.

FG3: N/A

Scenario 2

1. Do you advise your company to wait it out or to recall the drug? Why?

FG1:

- All four members advised to recall it, advising to issue a statement immediately regarding the recall of Trosap.
- All four members agreed that the FDA will find out sooner or later and that keeping a potentially dangerous drug on the market was too dangerous.

FG2:

- All four members advised to recall it immediately, stating that trust is crucial and human life is too valuable to risk. They also felt it would be too hard to win back public opinion.

FG3:

- One member felt the decision reflected more on finances; which option would cost more?
- One member stated that the drug needed to be pulled right away to save credibility.
- Two members stated that the drug should be pulled but primarily for the well-being of the patients and secondly to create a proactive image.

2. If the Research and Development Department offered to do a series of rigorous tests on Trosap over the course of two weeks to ultimately conclude its safety, do you wait two weeks to recall or do you do it immediately?

FG1:

- One member remarked that the FDA will force the recall (if possible).
- The other three members thought it wise to do the test and keep the drug on the market as long as the public and media knew that tests were being performed to ensure drug safety. A proactive yet realistic decision will possibly salvage image.

FG2: All four members still felt that it was crucial to recall it immediately.

FG3:

- Three members advised to recall the drug immediately and introduce it later if need be
- One member advised to wait the two weeks since it had already passed initial FDA testing and that two weeks was hardly preposterous.

3. (If they opt to wait it out) Do you think the longer you wait will reflect poorly on your concern for your customers?

FG1:

- All members agreed that as long as patients are notified that the drug is undergoing quality tests, it's OK to keep Trosap on the market. It may hurt the image but recovery is very possible.
- All members also wanted to ensure that problems were not because of patient medical history.
- One member felt that doctors wouldn't prescribe such a drug because of liability.
 - Two members felt that a waiver would resolve the problem
 - The other two members felt that a waiver would not resolve the problem.

FG2:

- All four members felt that the longer a company waited to recall a potentially dangerous product, the poorer the reflection of company care for the public.

FG3:

- All four members felt that the longer the wait the poorer the reflection.

Scenario 3

1. As a Public Relations counselor, what do you recommend to the executives regarding releasing DR34 as planned above?

FG1:

- All members recommended full revelation of the data instead of hiding or masking anything that would be potentially harmful to the general public.
- All members agreed to publish all findings in scholarly articles and the general media
- One member recommended that the company author a scholarly article.
- All members recommended that DR34 not be fast tracked because the safety of the public comes first.

FG2: All members

- Stated that the medical community needed to be informed of the possible problems by publishing the results
- Recommended that warnings are added to DR34 packaging
- Stated that they would only encourage fast-tracking DR34 if all data was presented.

FG3:

- Emphasizing that every drug has defects and the FDA employs many checks and balances, all members felt that DR34 should continue on the FDA fast track program as long as there is full disclosure of data.
- All members felt that any substantial drug defects will be identified by the FDA

2. Would your recommendation change in an ultimatum situation?

FG1:

- All members agreed that they would quit if they were forced to hide data
- If forced to fast track, all four members agreed that all information must be given to FDA

FG2:

- If forced to act unethically, all members agreed they would walk to avoid soiling their careers and reputations

FG3:

- If forced to act unethically, all members agreed they would quit.

3. If the decision is to officially release DR34 as planned above, do you have any other suggestions on how to best release the drug?

FG1: All members agreed that all information must be presented

FG2: All members:

- Would inform professionals of any possible side effects and they would be very transparent with all data, even at the cost of profits. They thought it better to work for the greater good.
- Emphasized scrupulous tactics and practices

FG3:

- One member recommends that risks should be assessed to see if they endanger certain people
- One member recommends that all people prescribed DR34 should have monitored for possible side effects and problems

4. What strategies would you use to gain credibility with the medical community and academia? Take 10 minutes to brainstorm together to come up with five tactics (which could include ghostwriting articles) and explain why you picked them.

FG1: All members agreed:

- That another study of the drug was necessary; one conducted by a third-party research company. All members agreed that if Fohg funded the study, the funding needed to not bias the study.
- To conduct a medical conference or presentation
- To gain the approval of an arthritis organization
- To sponsor a university/medical program or event
- NO ghostwriting

FG2:

- All members did not list any specific strategies or tactics in order to reach the medical community, except to be completely transparent and open with the data.
- NO ghostwriting

FG3:

- Three members recommend inviting independent researchers to test DR34
- One member encourages contacting past researchers and patients/test subjects to gain an objective perspective
- One member emphasized operating with full disclosure
- All members agreed that government-funded research would help remove bias
- NO ghostwriting

(Follow-up question to 4)

- **Why did/didn't you include the ghostwriting?**
- **(if responded with NO ghostwriting) Would your answer change if once again it became a choice between the tactic and your job?**

FG1: Did not include ghostwriting because:

- They did not wish to risk their credibility
- Felt that physicians would be on the watch because of past events and would not go for it
- Reasoned that legal counsel would completely disagree with the tactic
- Saw the tactic as too risky, especially with recent debacles

Their answer would not change if their job was on the line.

FG2: Did not include ghostwriting because they felt it unethical. They would do substantial research to persuade the executives that ghostwriting is detrimental.

Their answer would not change if their job was on the line, though they conceded that in a real-life scenario the decision might be different.

FG3: All members felt ghostwriting to be unethical and would leave if forced to do so.

Measurement of Ethics

After collecting the data from the focus groups, the researcher then broke down the case studies into concise strategies and tactics. Using only strategies and tactics that presented an ethical ambiguity, the researcher then measured each strategy and tactic against Code Provisions from PRSA's Code of Ethics (the full Code of Ethics including the Code Provisions can be viewed in the appendix). The researcher then compared each tactic to the correlating recommendations of the focus groups in the corresponding scenarios.

Each strategy and tactic is measured on a three standard scale of "ethical," "gray," and "unethical." The standards of "ethical" and "unethical" represent clear-cut

designations; there is no ambiguity to the ethics. The “gray” standard represents a strategy or tactic that does not have a clear designation and will be explained as to why.

Fen-phen

Strategy 1: Market it to all people trying to lose weight, regardless of the small rate of effectiveness and the potential dangers.

Ethical Standard: Unethical

Related PRSA Code Provision(s): *Disclosure of Information*

This strategy is what gave Fen-phen such a huge potential to be a blockbuster. If it was marketed with the 5% rate of effectiveness and the fact that once use was discontinued the weight came back, Fen-phen would have made very little in sales. Then add on the fact that the drug had numerous harmful side effects (the deadly ones not being revealed/confirmed until later), Fen-phen would have flopped.

The Code Provision Disclosure of Information says to “avoid deceptive practices” and to “investigate the truthfulness and accuracy of information released.” Wyeth marketed Fen-phen as wonder drug that will fight the war against obesity. But the company never included that the drug sheds few pounds and that the weight would come back if the drug was discontinued, never mind the harmful side effects. These practices were clearly deceptive and inaccurate to the facts, and hence unethical.

Focus Group Comparison: The focus groups were asked simply if they would market an ineffective drug (with no harmful side effects) to the general population. Some said they felt it was unethical or uncomfortable to market a largely ineffective drug. Those

that said they would market the drug stated that they would give full disclosure of the drug's effectiveness. No one suggested full marketing while hiding any data, which is what Wyeth did with Fen-phen.

Tactic 1: Large medical education campaign emphasizing the dangers of obesity in order to justify the need for fen-phen (Mundy).

Ethical Standard: Gray

Related PRSA Code Provision(s): *Disclosure of Information*

This tactic falls under “gray” due to the complexity of the tactic. Medical education regarding obesity is not wrong, but using it as a tool to emphasize the need for an ineffective, potentially dangerous, weight-loss drug could be considered misleading or deceptive.

The PRSA Code Provision for *Disclosure of Information* states that the intent of the Public Relations professional is “to build trust with the public by revealing all information needed for responsible decision making.” The issue isn’t so much the misrepresentation of the situation (i.e. Fen-phen is the only hope of losing dangerous weight), but more the exaggeration of the Fen-phen benefits and the miniaturization of the negatives in comparison to the dangers of obesity.

Focus Group Comparison: Instead of asking each focus group whether they would do a similar tactic, the researcher took a step back and asked how they would gain credibility for the diet drug in the medical community. While FG3 felt it unethical to get the medical community behind a diet drug with such low effectiveness, FG1 and FG2 both recommended educational campaigns (though not in that exact wording).

FG1 recommended that Wallaconcord ethically seek out medical endorsement and testimonials as well as to compare the effectiveness of Trosap to other diet medications. While these recommendations are not on identical lines as creating a strong awareness campaign on obesity, they do compare.

FG2 recommended having objective medical experts evaluate Trosap, funding an independent study, as well as conducting a series of lectures and seminars geared to the medical community. The recommendations, while also not identical, closely resemble the tactic of education on obesity.

The one thing not measured by the focus groups was whether or not they would have blown the problem of obesity out of proportion as Wyeth apparently did.

Tactic 2: Large grants to nonprofit and medical organizations at the release of Fen-phen (Mundy)

Ethical Standard: Gray

Related PRSA Code Provision(s): *Disclosure of Information, Free Flow of Information*

The Code Provision of *Disclosure of Information* states that “a member shall reveal the sponsors for causes and interests represented” with the intention of keeping vested interests and possible biases out in the open.

In this case, it appears Wyeth was open about its heavy funding to different medical and obesity-focused organizations. But under the Code Provision of *Free Flow of Information*, there is a guideline which states that “a member shall preserve the free flow of unprejudiced information when giving or receiving gifts by ensuring that gifts are nominal, legal, and infrequent.” While this guideline seems to handle situations closer to person-to-person gifts, the guideline can definitely apply to funding with a vested

interest. The ethical dilemma in this case stems from the fact that medical and other trusted third-party endorsements were prejudiced towards Fen-phen because of the hefty funding received from Wyeth. In retrospect, a product with such dangerous side effects might have been more objectively assessed had vital funding not been provided by the very people trying to miniaturize the dangers.

Focus Group Comparison: This tactic was also asked indirectly with the question of how each group would gain credibility with the medical community. Only FG3 did not recommend funding any medical or nonprofit groups related to the drug. FG1 suggested partnering with a medical or nonprofit group and FG2 recommended commissioning an independent study (i.e. funding an organization to do research on the drug).

Tactic 3: Funding academics and medical professionals to write favorable articles or to speak favorably of the drug (Manson and Faich; Mundy)

Ethical Standard: Unethical

Related PRSA Code Provision(s): *Free Flow of Information, Disclosure of Information*

The Code Provision of *Free Flow of Information* which states that “a member shall preserve the free flow of unprejudiced information when giving or receiving gifts by ensuring that gifts are nominal, legal, and infrequent.” In this case, specific trusted individuals were paid to prejudicially endorse a product, many of them having never directly worked with the drug. On top of that, each individual did not openly reveal the ties each had with Wyeth, which breaks the guideline in The Code Provision of

Disclosure of Information which states that “a member shall reveal the sponsors for causes and interests represented.”

Focus Group Comparison: Not including FG3 (do not recommend marketing the drug at all), both FG1 and FG2 agreed that they would seek out third-party expert endorsement, yet only FG1 stated they would pay for it. FG2 remarked they would seek out objective professionals to assess the drug and publish the findings.

Tactic 4: Wyeth paid for ghostwritten articles (Kaufman and Julien)

Ethical Standard: Unethical

Related PRSA Code Provision(s): *Free Flow of Information, Disclosure of Information*

The Code Provision of *Free Flow of Information* which states that “a member shall be honest and accurate in all communications,” “preserve the free flow of unprejudiced information when giving or receiving gifts by ensuring that gifts are nominal, legal, and infrequent,” and last but not least “preserve the integrity of the process of communication.” In the case of ghostwriting, there is little to no dispute as to the ethics of this tactic. When academic or accredited names are signed to documents which are not their own, especially in the instance where the documents are biased propaganda, there is little wiggle room for ethical legitimacy.

Focus Group Comparison: All three focus groups felt ghostwriting is unethical.

Tactic 5: Wyeth waited several months to recall Fen-phen after public research found it was harmful (Elliot)

Ethical Standard: Unethical

Related PRSA Code Provision(s): *Free Flow of Information, Conflicts of Interest*

The Code Provision of *Free Flow of Information* which states that “a member shall be honest and accurate in all communications.” The Code Provision of *Conflicts of Interest* states that a member’s intent is “to build trust with the public by avoiding or ending situations that put one’s personal or professional interests in conflict with society’s interests.” Though Wyeth contended that these side effects were inconclusive, the company did not act on the public’s behalf, but instead stalled in order to make sure the allegations were indeed serious. Had Wyeth acted quickly and removed the drugs when the dangers were first made known by the Mayo Clinic, many lives would have been saved.

Focus Group Comparison: In the focus groups, members were asked whether they would allow the drug to stay on the market for two weeks while tests that would absolutely prove the drug’s safety were being performed (perfect world scenario). FG1 had one member who felt that the FDA wouldn’t even allow keeping the drugs out for one week while the other three members opted to keep it on the market as long as there was full disclosure as to what was going on behind the scenes. All of FG2 felt it crucial to recall immediately. Of FG3, three members felt it necessary to recall while one member felt it OK to keep the drug on the market as long as it was only two weeks.

Even in a two week test period where results on the drug would be conclusive, two-thirds of the members felt it crucial to recall it immediately. The one-third who opted

to keep it out felt it necessary to fully disclose to the public what was going on. Wyeth waited months and released not one word to the public.

Vioxx

Tactic 1: Merck largely ignored a 1998 U Penn study that showed that cox-2 inhibitors may promote cardiovascular disease (Simons)

Ethical Standard: Gray

Related PRSA Code Provision(s): *Disclosure of Information*

The Code Provision of *Disclosure of Information* says that professionals need to “investigate the truthfulness and accuracy of information released on behalf of those represented” as well as to “avoid deceptive practices.” The ethical grayness comes from what appears to have happened versus what actually did.

The study focused on the broad category of COX-2 inhibitors which also encompasses such medication as Celebrex and Bextra. Though the study focused on all the drugs, Merck ideally should have taken into account such dangers when doing their own tests. Merck replies that the data from the initial tests contradicts the U Penn study and only years later, after an 18 month study did the dangers become “confirmed.” Whether Merck is being honest about ambiguity of Vioxx’s safety is a point of contention.

Focus Group Comparison: In the focus groups, members were asked whether they would downplay possible negative side effects in the release of the drug. All three focus groups recommended a full release of data. FG1 and FG2 encouraged the company to publish all information, both negative and positive, in a company-authored article to

medical and academic professionals. FG1 recommended that the drug not be placed in the FDA fast-track so as to more closely review the side effects. FG2 and FG3 recommended that the drug be fast-tracked only if all data were given to the FDA to review objectively. FG3 had full confidence the FDA would point out any problems quickly.

Tactic 2: Conducted a knowingly blind VIGOR study which pitted Vioxx against naproxen instead of a control. As a result, conclusions were wrong and Vioxx passed FDA regulations despite inconclusive safety (Black)

Ethical Standard: Gray

Related PRSA Code Provision(s): *Free Flow of Information*

Merck in this case admits to the blunder. As an arthritis medication, doing comparative studies with Vioxx and a placebo weren't a popular option since osteoarthritis is so painful to have people only take a sugar pill to treat it. So to do the study, Merck compared Vioxx to naproxen, another NSAID that treats arthritis. Oddly, the test showed that Vioxx people had significantly more cardiovascular events than naproxen. But looking blindly and optimistically, the tests were interpreted that naproxen had positive effects on the cardiovascular system, not that Vioxx had negative effects.

It wasn't until years later when a controlled study was done on Alzheimer patients that Vioxx was found to have negative cardiovascular effects. The ethical issue here is not the negligence, but the action(s) taken to rectify it. The Code Provision of *Disclosure of Information* states that a member should "act promptly to correct erroneous communications for which the member is responsible." Merck claimed they did their best to verify the Vioxx/naproxen study. But on the other hand, Merck supposedly deleted three heart attack victims from within the study before submitting to publication. Many

researchers also claim that Merck acted slowly and poorly in further verifying Vioxx's safety. Proven negligence will determine the ethics.

Focus Group Comparison: The members of the focus groups weren't specifically asked whether they would conduct this study or trust it if they had no medical background but they were asked whether they would disclose all information. All three focus groups highly emphasized transparency with possible negative side effects.

Tactic 3: Paid for ghostwritten articles and funded medical research (Adams)

Ethical Standard: Unethical

Related PRSA Code Provision(s): *Free Flow of Information, Disclosure of Information*

The Code Provision of *Free Flow of Information* which states that "a member shall be honest and accurate in all communications," "preserve the free flow of unprejudiced information when giving or receiving gifts by ensuring that gifts are nominal, legal, and infrequent," and last but not least "preserve the integrity of the process of communication." In the case of ghostwriting, there is little to no dispute to the ethics of this tactic. When academic or accredited names are signed to documents which are not their own, especially in the instance where the documents are biased propaganda, there is little wiggle room for ethical legitimacy.

Focus Group Comparison: All three focus groups felt ghostwriting unethical.

Tactic 4: Merck employees were taught how to avoid the Vioxx problems when under question (Adams and Verschoor)

Ethical Standard: Unethical

Related PRSA Code Provision(s): *Free Flow of Information, Disclosure of Information*

The Code Provision of *Free Flow of Information* which states that a member shall “be honest and accurate in all communications,” and they should “preserve the integrity of the process of communication.” The Code Provision of *Disclosure of Information* states a member should “avoid deceptive practices.” Though spinning the truth is historically considered a Public Relations practice, it is indeed unethical and objectionable.

Focus Group Comparison: All three focus groups highly emphasized transparency with all data. No group even remotely encouraged spinning the data in the company’s interest.

Tactic 5: Merck put severe pressure on Vioxx critics to keep them quiet (Adams)

Ethical Standard: Unethical

Related PRSA Code Provision(s): *Competition*

The Code Provision of *Competition* states that all members should “promote respect and fair competition among Public Relations professionals.” While critics needn’t be Public Relations professionals, the concept of bullying people to not release or verbalize criticism is not only illegal, but also unethical.

Focus Group Comparison: Though this issue was not directly addressed, one can deduce that based on other data from the three focus groups, something as outright as putting pressure on critics in the company’s interest would not be considered an option.

Chapter V

Hypotheses

H1. Despite the hype, do pharmaceutical Public Relations professionals have unethical practices?

To determine support for this hypothesis, the researcher largely depended on the data collected from the case studies. Extensive research into the history of the Fen-phen and Vioxx situations provided numerous strategies and tactics that constructed the case studies. Each ethically questionable strategy and tactic was then compared with the Code Provisions from PRSA's Code of Ethics.

Based on the ethics of the strategies and tactics measured, it's apparent to see that Pharmaceutical Public Relations has unethical practices. Of the one strategy and five tactics measured in Fen-phen, the strategy and three of the tactics were found unethical and the other two tactics were found ethically gray. Of the five tactics measured in Vioxx, three were found unethical and two were found ethically gray.

H2. Do pharmaceutical Public Relations professionals seem to hold to different ethics than other Public Relations professionals?

To determine support for this hypothesis, the researcher studied the comparison of the focus group data to the case study data. The following tables best illustrate the comparison of ethics between the two:

Fen Phen Strategies and Tactics

Figure 1: Fen Phen Case Study and Focus Group Comparison

S = strategy T = tactic	Ethical	Gray	Unethical
Case Study		T1, T2	S1, T3, T4, T5
Focus Groups	S1, T3*, T4, T5	T1, T2	T3**

* only FG2 and FG3

** only FG1

Of the strategy and tactics recommended by the focus groups, only two were ethically gray (the same two found in the case studies) and only one tactic recommended by FG1 was unethical. With the ethically gray tactics cancelled out, it seems that Public Relations professionals not in the pharmaceutical industry hold to more ethical tactics than those behind Fen-phen's Public Relations.

Vioxx Strategies and Tactics

Figure 2: Vioxx Case Study and Focus Group Comparison

S = strategy T = tactic	Ethical	Gray	Unethical
Case Study		T1, T2	T3, T4, T5
Focus Groups	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5		

Of the tactics recommended by the focus groups, all five were considered ethical. Moreover, this comparison shows that the chasm has widened between Public Relations

professionals not in the pharmaceutical industry and those behind Vioxx's Public Relations.

How Do They Measure Up?

Looking back at the issue of social conscience (responding with the best solution for the organization and the public), it seems that the Public Relations professionals of Fen-phen and Vioxx were more concerned with the solution for the organization and less concerned about the public. Even if the professionals were completely fiduciary and held to a less strict ethical code than that of PRSA, still many of the actions taken by the people behind Fen-phen or Vioxx would fall under unethical behavior.

The professionals behind the Fen-phen and Vioxx campaigns also heavily favored the deceptive third party technique. Both Merck and Wyeth funded professionals to speak on their drug's behalf, to endorse the drug and company in scholarly copy, and to sign their seemingly-objective names to professionally ghostwritten articles.

Overall, the campaigns of Fen-phen and Vioxx were littered with unethical decisions and tactics. Especially in comparison to the recommendations of non-pharmaceutical Public Relations professionals, the Public Relations professionals behind Fen-phen and Vioxx seem to be in need of an ethical reform.

Pitfalls of the Study

Though a successful study, the research did have a few shortcomings. In investigating Fen-phen and Vioxx strategies and tactics, it was quite difficult coming up with a comprehensive campaign for the case studies. Most information came from secondary sources, with very little coming from primary research. Also with the Fen-

phen campaign happening several years ago, there was much more literature on its Public Relations campaign than there was for Vioxx.

Regarding the focus groups, there were also a few pitfalls. Ideally, there should have been a total of six people per group instead of four in order to add more dialogue. Also, the questions following each scenario could have been further developed and streamlined. The moderator of the focus groups (who as noted before, did not make it to FG 3) should have done more research on the two cases in order to better facilitate the discussion.

What This Study Does and Does Not Contribute

This research took the long-standing convictions of the public and of professionals alike, and it brought them a step further to legitimize the concern that in comparison to other Public Relations professionals, pharmaceutical Public Relations has fallen far from ethical practice. While this study did not encompass all pharmaceutical companies and their Public Relations practices, it took two companies who were caught outright in seemingly unethical practice and confirmed the lack of ethics through measurement against PRSA's Code of Ethics as well as compared to Public Relations professionals.

This study did not attempt to make claims about all pharmaceutical Public Relations. Though many of the same unethical strategies and tactics explored in Merck and Wyeth happen amongst other companies, this study did not conclude that the same practices exist in all other pharmaceutical companies.

This study does not explore Merck or Wyeth before or after their respective campaigns. All data collected reflects the time period of Fen-phen and Vioxx.

Future Applications

This study could be continued by measuring the strategies and tactics of other pharmaceutical campaigns to this study or to another panel of Public Relations professionals. This research could also be used in further studies of Public Relations ethics, especially in regards to pharmaceutical applications. Further research could be conducted on the comparisons to pharmaceutical marketing or other aspects of drug campaigns. A comparison to pharmaceutical Public Relations or another specific field of Public Relations could also be conducted.

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Appendices

Appendix A: PRSA Code of Ethics

Preamble

Public Relations Society of America Member Code of Ethics 2000

- Professional Values
- Principles of Conduct
- Commitment and Compliance

This Code applies to PRSA members. The Code is designed to be a useful guide for PRSA members as they carry out their ethical responsibilities. This document is designed to anticipate and accommodate, by precedent, ethical challenges that may arise. The scenarios outlined in the Code provision are actual examples of misconduct. More will be added as experience with the Code occurs.

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is committed to ethical practices. The level of public trust PRSA members seek, as we serve the public good, means we have taken on a special obligation to operate ethically.

The value of member reputation depends upon the ethical conduct of everyone affiliated with the Public Relations Society of America. Each of us sets an example for each other - as well as other professionals - by our pursuit of excellence with powerful standards of performance, professionalism, and ethical conduct.

Emphasis on enforcement of the Code has been eliminated. But, the PRSA Board of Directors retains the right to bar from membership or expel from the Society any individual who has been or is sanctioned by a government agency or convicted in a court of law of an action that is in violation of this Code.

Ethical practice is the most important obligation of a PRSA member. We view the Member Code of Ethics as a model for other professions, organizations, and professionals.

PRSA Member Statement of Professional Values

This statement presents the core values of PRSA members and, more broadly, of the public relations profession. These values provide the foundation for the Member Code of Ethics and set the industry standard for the professional practice of public relations. These values are the fundamental beliefs that guide our behaviors and decision-making process. We believe our professional values are vital to the integrity of the profession as a whole.

ADVOCACY

We serve the public interest by acting as responsible advocates for those we represent. We provide a voice in the marketplace of ideas, facts, and viewpoints to aid informed public debate.

HONESTY

We adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth in advancing the interests of those we represent and in communicating with the public.

EXPERTISE

We acquire and responsibly use specialized knowledge and experience. We advance the profession through continued professional development, research, and education. We build mutual understanding, credibility, and relationships among a wide array of institutions and audiences.

INDEPENDENCE

We provide objective counsel to those we represent. We are accountable for our actions.

LOYALTY

We are faithful to those we represent, while honoring our obligation to serve the public interest.

FAIRNESS

We deal fairly with clients, employers, competitors, peers, vendors, the media, and the general public. We respect all opinions and support the right of free expression.

PRSA Code Provisions

FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION

Core Principle

Protecting and advancing the free flow of accurate and truthful information is essential to serving the public interest and contributing to informed decision making in a democratic society.

Intent

- To maintain the integrity of relationships with the media, government officials, and the public.
- To aid informed decision-making.

Guidelines

A member shall:

- Preserve the integrity of the process of communication.
- Be honest and accurate in all communications.
- Act promptly to correct erroneous communications for which the practitioner is responsible.
- Preserve the free flow of unprejudiced information when giving or receiving gifts by ensuring that gifts are nominal, legal, and infrequent.

Examples of Improper Conduct Under this Provision:

- A member representing a ski manufacturer gives a pair of expensive racing skis to a sports magazine columnist, to influence the columnist to write favorable articles about the product.
- A member entertains a government official beyond legal limits and/or in violation of government reporting requirements.

COMPETITION

Core Principle

Promoting healthy and fair competition among professionals preserves an ethical climate while fostering a robust business environment.

Intent

- To promote respect and fair competition among public relations professionals.
- To serve the public interest by providing the widest choice of practitioner options.

Guidelines

A member shall:

- Follow ethical hiring practices designed to respect free and open competition without deliberately undermining a competitor.
- Preserve intellectual property rights in the marketplace.

Examples of Improper Conduct Under This Provision:

- A member employed by a "client organization" shares helpful information with a counseling firm that is competing with others for the organization's business.
- A member spreads malicious and unfounded rumors about a competitor in order to alienate the competitor's clients and employees in a ploy to recruit people and business.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

Core Principle

Open communication fosters informed decision making in a democratic society.

Intent

- To build trust with the public by revealing all information needed for responsible decision making.

Guidelines

A member shall:

- Be honest and accurate in all communications.
- Act promptly to correct erroneous communications for which the member is responsible.
- Investigate the truthfulness and accuracy of information released on behalf of those represented.
- Reveal the sponsors for causes and interests represented.
- Disclose financial interest (such as stock ownership) in a client's organization.
- Avoid deceptive practices.

Examples of Improper Conduct Under this Provision:

- Front groups: A member implements "grass roots" campaigns or letter-writing campaigns to legislators on behalf of undisclosed interest groups.
- Lying by omission: A practitioner for a corporation knowingly fails to release financial information, giving a misleading impression of the corporation's performance.

- A member discovers inaccurate information disseminated via a Web site or media kit and does not correct the information.
- A member deceives the public by employing people to pose as volunteers to speak at public hearings and participate in "grass roots" campaigns.

SAFEGUARDING CONFIDENCES

Core Principle

Client trust requires appropriate protection of confidential and private information.

Intent

- To protect the privacy rights of clients, organizations, and individuals by safeguarding confidential information.

Guidelines

A member shall:

- Safeguard the confidences and privacy rights of present, former, and prospective clients and employees.
- Protect privileged, confidential, or insider information gained from a client or organization.
- Immediately advise an appropriate authority if a member discovers that confidential information is being divulged by an employee of a client company or organization.

Examples of Improper Conduct Under This Provision:

- A member changes jobs, takes confidential information, and uses that information in the new position to the detriment of the former employer.
- A member intentionally leaks proprietary information to the detriment of some other party.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Core Principle

Avoiding real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest builds the trust of clients, employers, and the publics.

Intent

- To earn trust and mutual respect with clients or employers.
- To build trust with the public by avoiding or ending situations that put one's personal or professional interests in conflict with society's interests.

Guidelines

A member shall:

- Act in the best interests of the client or employer, even subordinating the member's personal interests.
- Avoid actions and circumstances that may appear to compromise good business judgment or create a conflict between personal and professional interests.
- Disclose promptly any existing or potential conflict of interest to affected clients or organizations.
- Encourage clients and customers to determine if a conflict exists after notifying all affected parties.

Examples of Improper Conduct Under This Provision

- The member fails to disclose that he or she has a strong financial interest in a client's chief competitor.
- The member represents a "competitor company" or a "conflicting interest" without informing a prospective client.

ENHANCING THE PROFESSION

Core Principle

Public relations professionals work constantly to strengthen the public's trust in the profession.

Intent

- To build respect and credibility with the public for the profession of public relations.
- To improve, adapt and expand professional practices.

Guidelines A member shall:

- Acknowledge that there is an obligation to protect and enhance the profession.
- Keep informed and educated about practices in the profession to ensure ethical conduct.

- Actively pursue personal professional development.
- Decline representation of clients or organizations that urge or require actions contrary to this Code.
- Accurately define what public relations activities can accomplish.
- Counsel subordinates in proper ethical decision making.
- Require that subordinates adhere to the ethical requirements of the Code.
- Report ethical violations, whether committed by PRSA members or not, to the appropriate authority.

Examples of Improper Conduct Under This Provision:

- A PRSA member declares publicly that a product the client sells is safe, without disclosing evidence to the contrary.
- A member initially assigns some questionable client work to a non-member practitioner to avoid the ethical obligation of PRSA membership.

PRSA Member Code of Ethics Pledge

I pledge:

To conduct myself professionally, with truth, accuracy, fairness, and responsibility to the public; To improve my individual competence and advance the knowledge and proficiency of the profession through continuing research and education; And to adhere to the articles of the Member Code of Ethics 2000 for the practice of public relations as adopted by the governing Assembly of the Public Relations Society of America.

I understand and accept that there is a consequence for misconduct, up to and including membership revocation.

And, I understand that those who have been or are sanctioned by a government agency or convicted in a court of law of an action that is in violation of this Code may be barred from membership or expelled from the Society.

Signature

Date

Appendix B:

FDA Questions and Answers about Withdrawal of Fenfluramine (Pondimin) and Dexfenfluramine (Redux)

1. What is "fen-phen"?

Fen-phen refers to the use in combination of fenfluramine and phentermine. Phentermine has also been used in combination with dexfenfluramine ("dexfen-phen"). Fenfluramine ("fen") and phentermine ("phen") are prescription medications that have been approved by the FDA for many years as appetite suppressants for the short-term (a few weeks) management of obesity. Phentermine was approved in 1959 and fenfluramine in 1973. Dexfenfluramine (Redux) was approved in 1996 for use as an appetite suppressant in the management of obesity. Recently, some physicians have prescribed fenfluramine or dexfenfluramine in combination with phentermine, often for extended periods of time, for use in weight loss programs. Use of drugs in ways other than described in the FDA-approved label is called "off-label use." In the case of fen-phen and dexfen-phen, no studies were presented to the FDA to demonstrate either the effectiveness or safety of the drugs taken in combination.

2. What is the difference between fenfluramine and dexfenfluramine?

Fenfluramine (Pondimin) contains dexfenfluramine and levofenfluramine. Levofenfluramine may have some activities not directly related to appetite suppression. Dexfenfluramine (Redux) contains only dexfenfluramine.

3. What is the new evidence that prompted withdrawal of fenfluramine and dexfenfluramine?

On July 8, 1997, the Mayo Clinic reported 24 patients developed heart valve disease after taking fen-phen. In five patients who underwent valve replacement surgery, the diseased valves were found to have distinctive features similar to those seen in carcinoid syndrome. The cluster of unusual cases of valve disease in fen-phen users suggested that there might be an association between fen-phen use and valve disease.

On July 8, FDA issued a Public Health Advisory that described the Mayo findings. The Mayo findings were reported in the August 28 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, along with an FDA letter to the editor describing additional cases. FDA has received over 100 reports (including the original 24 Mayo cases) of heart valve disease associated mainly with fen-phen. There were also reports of cases of heart valve disease in patients taking only fenfluramine or dexfenfluramine. No cases meeting FDA's definition of a case were reported in patients taking phentermine alone.

Within the past several weeks, additional information received by the FDA has raised more concern. Most of the cases previously brought to the FDA's attention were in patients who had symptoms of heart disease. Recently, FDA has received reports from five physicians who had performed heart studies (echocardiograms) on patients who had received fen-phen or dexfen-phen and did not have symptoms of heart disease. Of 291 asymptomatic patients screened, about 30 percent had abnormal valve findings, primarily aortic regurgitation. Based on these data, the manufacturers have agreed to withdraw the products from the market and FDA has recommended that patients stop taking the drugs.

4. Why isn't phentermine being withdrawn from the market?

At the present time, no cases of heart valve disease meeting FDA's case definition have been reported with phentermine alone. Analysis of the data points to an association of heart valve disease with fenfluramine and dexfenfluramine.

5. Why wasn't this problem discovered earlier?

The type of valve disease that FDA believes may be associated with fenfluramine and dexfenfluramine is an extremely unusual type of drug reaction. Because valve disease is not usually associated with drug use, it is not normally screened for in human clinical testing of drugs. Since valvular heart disease is not screened for in clinical trials, it would usually not be detected unless patients developed symptoms. No cases were detected in 500 patients followed for one year in a clinical trial of dexfenfluramine. Furthermore, asymptomatic heart valve disease (heart valve disease without symptoms) would not likely be detected in patients taking the drugs as part of a weight loss program. The number of patients who have been reported to have symptoms of heart valve disease associated with recent exposure to the drugs has been very small, compared to the number of recent prescriptions, although there may be a delay in the development of symptoms. And even in symptomatic patients, the link between the symptoms and drug use may not be obvious because such a reaction is not common. These factors may explain why this problem was not discovered earlier.

During the last few years, there has been a marked increase in amount and duration of use of fenfluramine, as it became widely prescribed as part of the fen-phen regimen..

In 1992, articles were published about study results suggesting that the combined use of phentermine and fenfluramine would result in significant weight loss when used over an extended period of time. The results of these studies were not reviewed by FDA, and the conclusion about long-term use of the combination of drugs has not received FDA approval. The increased magnitude and duration of use probably led to an increase in the number of cases of symptomatic heart valve disease, which may have contributed to the recent recognition of this association.

With respect to dexfenfluramine (Redux), which was approved on April 29, 1996, the labeling states that safety has not been shown for longer than one year of use. This reflects the length of the study upon which dexfenfluramine was approved. It was a one-

year European study of 1,000 subjects, half of whom were treated with dexfenfluramine. The study population was 80 percent women with an average age of 41. Heart disease was not noted in the study. A follow-up study directed toward uncovering heart disease after termination of the study was not performed because there was no reason to believe at that time that the heart was affected. In addition, dexfenfluramine had been marketed in Europe for over a decade without detection of an association between dexfenfluramine and heart valve problems. FDA is currently trying to obtain such follow-up.

6. What is valvular heart disease?

The heart contains four major valves that regulate the flow of blood through the heart and to the lungs and general circulation. Disease may cause excessive tightness (stenosis) or leakiness (regurgitation) of the valves. In the case of valve disease associated with fenfluramine and dexfenfluramine, leakiness is the problem. Valvular damage may ultimately produce severe heart and/or lung disease.

7. What is the relationship of fenfluramine and dexfenfluramine to heart disease?

Patients who have taken those drugs may have changes in their heart valves that cause leakiness and backflow of blood. If this is severe, the heart has to work harder. This may cause problems in heart function. However, the full medical implications of this relationship, especially in the asymptomatic patients, is not fully understood.

8. What are the signs and symptoms of valvular heart disease?

The patient may have no symptoms. The physician may hear a new heart murmur (abnormal sound as the blood flows over a valve), or the changes may be detected with a painless, non-invasive special heart test called an echocardiogram. An echocardiogram is usually performed by a cardiologist. If the disease is severe, the patient may experience such symptoms as shortness of breath, excessive tiredness, chest pain, fainting, and swelling of the legs (edema).

9. Is the valve disease reversible?

It is not known at this time. One report has been submitted to FDA in which the valve disease appeared to improve. However, we encourage those people who have taken fenfluramine or dexfenfluramine to contact their physician and discuss the appropriate follow-up, even after stopping their medicine. The full medical implications of these findings are not known at this time, especially as they relate to the asymptomatic valvular changes. The FDA and other government agencies, the manufacturers, and medical researchers will aggressively follow this concern and keep patients and health care providers informed of what is learned about the natural history of the valvular disease caused by these medications.

10. How is valvular disease treated?

It depends on the degree of damage. Medications may help the heart function. If the damage is severe, the valves may have to be replaced surgically.

11. Should I stop taking fen-phen, fenfluramine or dexfenfluramine right now?

Yes, this is the FDA's recommendation. Although we believe these drugs can be stopped at once for most persons, you should consult your physician about whether he/she advises you to taper the dosage over, for example, a 1 to 2 week period. The manufacturers of these drugs are withdrawing fenfluramine and dexfenfluramine from the marketplace, effective September 15, as the concerns about the effects of these drugs on heart valves continue to grow. The drugs will no longer be available in pharmacies. Though the potential long-term medical implications are not known at this time as there are still a number of unanswered questions, the FDA and the manufacturers believe it is in the best interest of the patients that they stop taking these medications. Please be aware that at present this recommendation does not apply to phentermine taken alone.

12. Should I get an echocardiogram if I've been taking fenfluramine or dexfenfluramine?

You should consult your physician about having an echocardiogram. Your physician's recommendation will depend upon your symptoms, if any, his or her examination of you and your history of exposure to these drugs.

13. Does "herbal fen-phen" have the same problem?

Herbal fen-phen is a product that does not contain fenfluramine, dexfenfluramine, or phentermine. Products called "herbal fen-phen" often contain a combination of ephedra (an ephedrine containing herb) and caffeine, but may also contain other herbal ingredients. FDA has not reviewed these herbal products for safety or efficacy. Ephedrine is pharmacologically different from fenfluramine and dexfenfluramine.

14. Can selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) antidepressants such as Prozac, Zoloft, Luvox and Paxil be substituted for fenfluramine in the phen/fen combination?

FDA has not reviewed the safety or efficacy of such combinations and has not approved their use. These drugs are active in serotonin metabolism but have somewhat different activity than fenfluramine and dexfenfluramine. No currently available weight-loss drugs have been studied adequately in combinations to permit a recommendation by FDA for combined use.

15. I have heard the FDA recently denied a citizen petition that sought to suspend the approval of Redux (dexfenfluramine). Why did the FDA deny that request?

The citizen petition did not contain any additional medical information that was not already known. The FDA had taken appropriate actions based on the knowledge at that

time. Since that time, more information has been obtained that raised enough additional concerns to warrant withdrawal of Redux from the market.

16. Is this just a disease of women?

Though the majority of cases of which FDA is aware are women, there is no reason at present to believe that men are not also at risk. Most of the use of these products is in women, so what we have seen to date could be only a reflection of the usage patterns of the products. FDA advises that both male and female patients consult their health care professionals.

Appendix C:

Fast Track, Priority Review and Accelerated Approval

Fast Track refers to a process for interacting with FDA during drug development. Priority Review applies to the time frame the FDA targets for reviewing a completed application. Accelerated Approval (Subpart H) applies to the design and content of the studies used to support a marketing claim.

Fast Track is a formal mechanism to interact with the FDA using approaches that are available to all applicants for marketing claims. The Fast Track mechanism is described in the Food and Drug Administration Modernization Act of 1997 (FDAMA). The benefits of Fast Track include scheduled meetings to seek FDA input into development plans, the option of submitting a New Drug Application in sections rather than all components simultaneously, and the option of requesting evaluation of studies using surrogate endpoints (see Accelerated Approval below). The Fast Track designation is intended for the combination of a product and a claim that addresses an unmet medical need, but is independent of Priority Review and Accelerated Approval. An applicant may use any or all of the components of Fast Track without the formal designation. Fast Track designation does not necessarily lead to a Priority Review or Accelerated Approval. An FDA Guidance on Fast Track Designation provides more detail with a citation of the relevant portion of the statute as an Appendix.

Priority Review is a designation for an application after it has been submitted to the FDA for review for approval of a marketing claim. Under the Food and Drug Administration Modernization Act (FDAMA), reviews for New Drug Applications are designated as either Standard or Priority. A Standard designation sets the target date for completing all aspects of a review and the FDA taking an action on the application (approve or not approve) at 10 months after the date it was filed. A Priority designation sets the target date for the FDA action at 6 months. A Priority designation is intended for those products that address unmet medical needs. Internal FDA procedures for the designation and responsibilities for a Priority Review are detailed in the Manual of Policies and Procedures. Applications that were designated as Priority in the Division of Oncology Drug Products are listed at the website:

<http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/onctools/Accel.cfm#FastTrack>

Appendix D: Wayne Willis page

<http://people.morehead-st.edu/fs/w.willis/isocrates.html>

ISOCRATES (436 - 338 B.C.)

He was slightly older than Plato and lived and wrote in the same cultural situation: Peloponnesian War, demise of Golden Age, etc.

He was born into the wealthy family of a flute manufacturer and was given the best education available. He studied with a variety of sophists, as well as with Socrates.

His family lost its money in the war, and Isocrates was faced with the dilemma of earning a living. He became a lawyer, a speech writer for the courts, for about ten years. We still have some of the speeches he wrote, although he denies that he ever did this.

He wanted to be an orator, but he lacked the strong voice and stage presence (he had stage fright) to do this, so instead he became a teacher of rhetoric. He was very successful at this and became both rich and famous at it. He attracted students from all over the Greek speaking world, many of whom went on to important leaders of their day.

Isocrates died at the age of 98. According to tradition he committed suicide by starving himself to death upon hearing of Philip's conquest at the Battle of Charonea. This seems unlikely, since he encouraged Philip to do this.

Isocrates' Philosophy

He thought the tedious, abstract arguments of Plato about metaphysics, epistemology, axiology and human nature were so much jibberish. He was a practical, down-to-earth man who wanted to solve immediate problems.

Reality is immediate human experience: "What you see is what you get."
Metaphysical speculation is a waste of time and energy.

Knowledge is tentative. We can't know anything for sure. What we can have is good opinions. A good opinion is one that helps explain life in a way that helps me get along in the world. Correspondence to ultimate reality is not important.

Values are relative. Isocrates agrees with Plato in promoting traditional Greek values, but he does it for different reasons. Isocrates believes those values are useful, but not necessarily the true values.

Plato wanted to develop in the people a passion for those values because they are real and eternal and never changing. Therefore, they could give a unity of purpose

and meaning to Athenian life - a reason for living and participating. (Truth, justice and the American way!)

Isocrates realized that his relativistic value system did not have the psychological force to draw people together into the common bond of unity and fraternity that would stabilize society. Therefore, he promoted a political ideal which he thought could unify: panhellenism. How could this political ideal be achieved? Only through education. Isocrates, like many modern thinkers, tends to view education as the savior of the world.

Human nature is distinctive because of man's ability to communicate, to speak. It appears as though Isocrates may see this as a quantitative, rather than qualitative difference.

What does this imply for the aims of education?

1. Education should teach people to speak. Speech distinguishes us from animals. Speech was the key to political power. (utility) Speech integrates many aspects of human ability. (thought, speech, action) Isocrates believed that education should not just teach us to think or just teach us to fight. It should make us well-rounded citizens.
2. Education should help us survive and succeed in society.
3. Education should prepare the elite to lead society. Isocrates' school tended to be aristocratic. Only the rich could afford it, and he had very selective admissions. Isocrates was biased against democracy, although he didn't like to admit it.
4. Education should promote a political ideal, panhellenism.

Return to Web Page for [EDEL 680: History and Philosophy of Education](#)

Return to Web Page for [Wayne Willis](#)

Appendix E:

Merck caught in scandal to bury Vioxx heart attack risks, intimidate scientists and keep pushing dangerous drugs; Vioxx lawsuits now forming



Posted Saturday, November 06, 2004 by [Mike Adams](#) ([Ask Adams to help your organization.](#))

[Print this article](#) [Permalink: http://www.NewsTarget.com/002155.html](#)

Key concepts: **Merck, the FDA and dangerous drugs.**

The truth has finally come out about Vioxx: insider emails published by the Wall Street Journal reveal that Merck, the maker of Vioxx, was fully aware of the health risks of its COX-2 inhibitor anti-inflammatory drug as early as March, 2000. As is apparent from the published emails, there was a concerted effort to bury the negative evidence and even **distort the drug trials** by excluding heart patients from the Vioxx studies so that, *"...the rate of cardiovascular problems for Vioxx patients would not be evident."*

This has all been revealed now, thanks to the publication of Merck's own insider emails. One email, authored by Edward Scolnick, chief of research for Merck, says that cardiovascular risks, *"...are clearly there."* Additional emails contribute to the evidence that points to a fairly straightforward case of consumer deception.

Statements from several of these emails were recently published in a scathing article at the Wall Street Journal, which wrote, *"Merck's first worry, in the mid-to-late 1990s, was that its drug would show greater heart risk than cheaper painkillers that were harsh on the stomach but were believed to reduce the risk of heart attacks. Several company officials discussed in e-mails how to design a study that would minimize the unflattering comparison, even while admitting to themselves that it would be difficult to conceal."*

Even the medical journals are astonished at Merck's behavior. Dr. Richard Horton, editor of The Lancet (one of the most respected journals in the world), says, *"the licensing of Vioxx and its continued use in the face of unambiguous evidence of harm have been public health catastrophes. This controversy will not end with the drug's withdrawal. Merck's likely litigation bill is put at between \$10bn and \$15bn. The company has seen its revenues and its capitalization slashed. It has been financially disabled and its reputation lies in ruins. It is not at all clear that Merck will survive this growing scandal."*

Merck threatens scientists to suppress anti-Vioxx information

Merck has even been caught red-handed trying to suppress negative information about its drugs. Gurkirpal Singh, a Stanford University researcher, was threatened by the company and told he would "flame out" (meaning his career would be ended) unless he stopped giving "anti-Merck" lectures. This has now been revealed in a letter of complaint written to Merck by

Dr. James Fries, a Stanford University Medical School professor, who went on to say, as reported in the Wall Street Journal, "There is a line that you can't go across. ... It had gone over that line."

And it wasn't just Stanford University, either: chief researchers at several top medical schools were being threatened by Merck. Dr. James Fries called it, "a consistent pattern of intimidation of investigators by Merck."

Merck's Chief Executive Raymond Gilmartin, in response, says it the firm has "a deep and abiding commitment to the highest ethical standards in all our dealings with physicians and other healthcare providers." Sure it does. And Vioxx is good for you, too.

As if all this wasn't enough, a Merck training manual was developed and distributed to help company officials fend off criticisms about Vioxx and instill pro-Vioxx propaganda in the minds of doctors. The document listed questions about the safety of Vioxx and said in capital letters, "DODGE!" Internally, it was even called the "Dodge Ball Vioxx" document. The primary purpose of the document was to convince doctors to keep prescribing Vioxx, even while evidence of the drug's dangers mounted.

Classic Big Pharma behavior

What does all this add up to? It's Big Pharma as usual, folks: distorted clinical studies, lying to consumers, threatening critics, burying negative evidence and all the while heavily promoting the drug to physicians and consumers. This is exactly what I've been talking about all along. These companies are knowingly harming patients just so they can keep selling dangerous drugs to a population that's generally too uninformed to know any better. And most conventional physicians just kept on prescribing the drug, oblivious to the true causes of disease or health.

Given all the damning evidence about Vioxx and its handling by Merck, does the company apologize and try to make amends? Of course not. Merck said in a recent news release that it "*acted responsibly and appropriately as it developed and marketed Vioxx.*"

See, it's not just that these pharmaceutical companies act with reckless endangerment to the public, it's also the stunning fact that they don't see anything wrong with it. They will develop a dangerous drug, distort the clinical trials, lean on the FDA for approval, threaten scientists who speak out against the drug, and finally when the body bags start mounting, they'll claim they are innocent and have been acting ethically and honestly all along.

Dangerous drugs still generate profits

Yet the pattern of exploiting the public for profit is quite clear. An email authored by Dr. Scolnick, Merck's research chief, during the development of Vioxx reveals that even though the drug was known to be dangerous, it was bound to be a great seller just like the company's other drugs which, he admitted, are also dangerous: "*We have a great drug and like angioedema with vasotec and seizures with primaxin and myopathy with mevacor there is always a hazard. The class will do well and so will we.*"

By saying, "The class will do well and so will we," he clearly means that despite the health hazards of the drugs, they're going to sell well anyway, and everyone who owns stock at Merck (or who works at Merck) is going to financial benefit from that.

Even prestigious medical journals (which are funded primarily by drug advertising money, by the way), joined in pumping up the credibility of Vioxx. In November, 2000, the New England Journal of Medicine published an article written by academics who were literally **paid by Merck**. This article heralded the "benefits" of Vioxx in reducing stomach problems and -- get this -- reducing heart attack rates. The article, of course, left out all the negative information about Vioxx, including what was obvious even in 2000: that Vioxx increased the risk of heart attacks, strokes and blood clots, even in healthy people.

The FDA: asleep at the wheel

For its part, the FDA does nothing to protect consumers. As always, the agency ignored the dangers of prescription drugs and, for many years, continued to allow Merck to keep pushing this dangerous drug right up to the day the evidence was undeniable and the drug was finally pulled. The behavior of the FDA was so irresponsible (if not downright criminal) that it earned itself scathing criticism from The Lancet, where Dr. Horton explained, "This discovery points to astonishing failures in Merck's internal systems of post-marketing surveillance, as well as to **lethal weaknesses** in the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's regulatory oversight." (Emphasis added.) This phrase, "lethal weaknesses," has never before been used to describe the FDA... at least not by anybody in the medical industry. It means, simply stated, that the FDA's mistakes are killing people.

In effect, the FDA acted as a Big Pharma propaganda machine, catering to the interests of drug companies at every turn. In 2001, when the FDA became increasingly aware of the dangers of the drug, it went to Merck and asked the company to include prominent new warnings on the drug label. Merck balked and complained that the FDA should, instead, highlight the drug's positive gastrointestinal features. Instead of demanding the inclusion of the warning label (like a fully empowered regulatory body might do), the FDA caved in and actually **reached a compromise** with Merck that resulted in a new label **promoting the claim that Vioxx would caused fewer stomach upsets!** Below that claim, in small print, it mentioned that the drug would also cause more heart attacks and strokes.

Meanwhile, people were dying. How many people were harmed or killed in those four years during which Merck and the FDA hid the truth about Vioxx? And how many other drugs are just as dangerous and yet heavily promoted? According to the American Medical Association, prescription drugs kill -- yes, kill -- 100,000 Americans each year. Another document, Death by Medicine authored in part by Dr. Gary Null, shows as many as 750,000 people being killed each year by medications and surgical procedures combined. Clearly, these deaths dwarf the fatalities caused by terrorists, wars, and all national crime statistics combined.

Drug companies far more dangerous than terrorists

It leads to a startling, but true, conclusion: **drug companies are killing far more**

Americans than all terrorists, murderers and criminals combined, and yet the deaths are allowed to go on thanks to a Bush Administration that's closely allied with Big Pharma and a Food and Drug Administration that might as well be called the "Drug Promotion Agency."

"the FDA continues to see the pharmaceutical industry as its customer -- a vital source of funding for its activities -- and not as a sector of society in need of strong regulation." - Dr. Richard Horton, editor, The Lancet

Outraged

I'm outraged by this. I'm outraged by the pain, suffering and fatalities that are caused every day by prescription drugs. I'm outraged by the behavior of the FDA and its campaign to discredit herbs and vitamins while ignoring far more dangerous prescription drugs. I'm outraged by the drug company executives who earn millions of dollars each year peddling dangerous drugs to elderly people who have to choose between food and medicine because they can't afford the sky-high prices of prescription drugs. I'm outraged by the FDA's efforts to monopolize the U.S. drug market, ban drug imports from Canada, and force senior citizens to pay ridiculous prices for deadly drugs. And I'm outraged by a national media that's so tied to drug company advertising revenues that we'll probably never be able to repeal direct-to-consumer advertising (which is partly responsible for this Vioxx mess).

It's time for serious action. It's time to go after these criminal pharmaceutical executives and charge them with the crimes they have committed against humanity. It's time to hit these companies where it hurts: right in the pocketbook. It's time to put Merck and its competition out of business for good... and thereby save the lives of untold Americans who can be spared the harm caused by prescription drugs.

And here's how I'm going to help make that happen:

For the first time ever, I am publicly supporting legal action against a pharmaceutical company. Today, I am announcing that I will assist individuals who were harmed by Vioxx in filing lawsuits against Merck for the damage caused by their products. I'll do this by getting you in touch with capable legal teams who are involved in ongoing legal action against the pharmaceutical giant. So if you've taken Vioxx and want to join what could become a multi-billion-dollar settlement against Merck, contact us at **feedback48@newstarget.com** and include your name and address. We'll forward your information to a legal team who will take it from there. (We're doing this at no charge, and without any financial compensation of any kind.

Or, you can search on Google or some other search engine and find a legal team yourself. Whatever you do, don't sit back. This is not just about getting a financial reward for yourself, this is about **bankrupting an evil empire** that is knowingly damaging the health of millions of people in order to make a buck. And these "smoking gun" emails are probably just the tip of the iceberg. Who knows how many more evils are taking place behind closed doors at Merck and other companies, where the business philosophy seems to be, "profits at all costs!" Ethics be damned. These companies are going to sell you drugs that may, indeed, kill you. And they're going to keep raising the prices each year, too, so you have to pay more even while you continue to be harmed. It is unethical, unjust, and unacceptable.

It's time to stand up and take action. If you've been harmed by Vioxx, I urge you to demand justice and join the legal action against Merck. Let's put this company out of business for good and send a message to Big Pharma that they can no longer exploit Americans' health for their own corporate greed.

Steal this article

What else can you do to help defeat Merck? **Steal this article.** Post it on your website, email it to your friends, print it out and hand it to your coworkers. Tell people what you know about Merck, Vioxx and the FDA, and encourage people to join the lawsuit effort against this pharmaceutical giant. Here's the URL to give people who want to read this article:
<http://www.newstarget.com/002155.html>

Let's make this the mostly costly lawsuit in the history of medicine. Let's bankrupt Merck and thereby protect Americans from the company's future drugs, which will no doubt have even more dangerous side effects. It's time to put this evil empire out of business for the good of all mankind.

The natural Vioxx alternative: astaxanthin

One more thing: for those of you who took Vioxx and are now looking for a natural replacement for it, I have the answer for you. It's a nutritional supplement called "astaxanthin," and it's an all-natural antioxidant that works wonders for eliminating joint pain, especially pain associated with osteoarthritis and even rheumatoid arthritis. I'm putting together a special report on this product in the near future where I'll reveal the astounding properties of this nutritional supplement. It's something I'm using myself now, and it has increased my joint flexibility and **all but eliminated muscle soreness after my demanding gymnastics workouts**. It's also fantastic for athletic performance, both in terms of strength and endurance.

Where can you get astaxanthin? There are only two sources, and I've interviewed them both. In fact, I negotiated discounts with them on behalf of NewsTarget readers, so if you use the discount codes provided on the [Astaxanthin Sources page \(click here\)](#), you'll save a bundle on these supplements. (And, no, I don't earn a dime from these supplements. You know my policy: no financial involvement with products I recommend. That's quite a contrast from drug companies who will apparently sell you anything as long as they're making money.)

<http://www.newstarget.com/002155.html>

Appendix F:

New England Journal of Medicine accuses Merck of deleting important Vioxx information from study



Posted Wednesday, February 15, 2006 by Alexis Black

As if things weren't bad enough for pharmaceutical giant Merck and Co., the picture just got a little grimmer. Already facing tremendous heat and a long line of lawsuits over Vioxx -- its arthritis medication that was pulled off the market in September 2004 after it was determined to increase heart attack and stroke risk -- the editors of a prominent medical journal are now accusing Merck of withholding crucial study data that showed the drug's heart risk.

Dr. Gregory D. Curfman, executive editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine* and editor-in-chief, Dr. Jeffrey M. Drazen, write in their "Expression of Concern" editorial in the Dec. 29 issue of the *Journal* that a Merck editor knowingly deleted Vioxx study results about three heart attacks among study participants before submitting the study to the *Journal* for publication.

"We have very solid evidence that important data on cardiac events was deleted or withheld, which rendered the study of suboptimal quality," Curfman told *HealthDay*.

According to Curfman, the three deleted heart attacks occurred in people who were otherwise at low risk for heart problems, which would ultimately discredit the study's primary conclusion that Vioxx only increases heart attack risk in those already at high risk.

Ironically, Merck has frequently cited the study, called VIGOR (Vioxx Gastrointestinal Research) in defense of Vioxx. Therefore, if the results of this Merck-funded study were indeed falsified, it could leave the drug company virtually defenseless.

The VIGOR study was originally published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* in November 2000 before the deception was discovered, according to the *Journal's* editors.

Although the editors first became aware of the missing data in 2001, they did not suspect any wrongdoing at the time.

"Until the end of November 2005, we believed these were late events that were not known to the authors in time to be included in the article published in the *Journal* on Nov. 23, 2000," they write in "Expression of Concern".

The editors say they did not learn until after Vioxx was pulled off the market that study authors had apparently deleted heart attack data from the study prior to sending it to the journal. The discovery was apparently made when the *Journal's* editors uncovered an electronic version of the study that contained data that was missing from the paper version submitted to them.

The accusations against Merck came at a particularly significant time, as deliberations in the first federal trial against Merck over Vioxx got underway in Houston. Of course, Merck disputes the *Journal's* claims, arguing that the heart attacks omitted from the study results occurred after the prescribed analysis cutoff date.

A statement from Merck, quoted in *Forbes Magazine*, reads in part, "Nevertheless, the additional events were disclosed to the FDA's Advisory Committee in February 2001 and included in numerous press releases subsequently issued by Merck. We also note that these additional events did not materially change any of the conclusions in the article."

However, *The New England Journal of Medicine* isn't buying it. After all, the heart attacks that happened to be omitted occurred in patients at *low* risk for heart problems, while the study concluded Vioxx only posed potential dangers to people who already had *high* risk for heart trouble.

The accusations levied here loom large for Merck, as it is highly unusual for a high-profile medical journal to accuse a company of withholding information about a potentially fatal risk. *The New England Journal of Medicine* has asked Merck to submit a written correction to the *Journal*, but, whether they comply or not, it is impossible to correct the damage that may have been done to patients who suffered fatal heart attacks after taking Vioxx.

<http://www.newstarget.com/017875.html>

Appendix G:

Plato's Ethics: An Overview

Like all ancient philosophers Plato maintains a virtue-based eudaemonistic ethics. That is to say, human well-being (*eudaimonia*) is the highest aim of moral thought and conduct; the virtues (*aretê*=‘excellence’) are the requisite skills and character-traits. If Plato's support for an ethics of happiness seems somewhat subdued that is due to several reasons. First of all, his conception of happiness differs in significant ways from ordinary views. He therefore devotes more time to undermining the traditional understanding of the good life than to describing his own conception. Second, Plato regards happiness as a state of perfection that is hard to comprehend because it is based on metaphysical presuppositions that seem both hazy and out of the realm of ordinary understanding. Hence there is not — as there is in Aristotle — much talk about happiness as a self-sufficient state of the active individual; the emphasis is, rather, on problems and difficulties that need to be solved. Third, Plato's moral ideals appear both austere and self-abnegating: the soul is to remain aloof from the pleasures of the body; communal life demands the subordination of individual wishes and aims. The difficulties of assessing Plato's ethical thought are compounded by the fact that it was subject to various modifications during his long life. In Plato's early works, the so-called Socratic dialogues, there are no indications that the search for virtue and the human good goes beyond the human realm. This changes with the growing interest in an all-encompassing metaphysical grounding of human knowledge in Plato's middle dialogues that leads to the recognition of the ‘Forms’ — the true nature of all things, culminating in the Form of the Good as the transcendent principle of all goodness. Moral values must be based on an appropriate political order that can be maintained only by leaders with a rigorous scientific training. Though the theory of the Forms is not confined to human values but embraces the nature of all there is, Plato at this point seems to presuppose no more than an analogy between human affairs and cosmic harmony. The late dialogues, by contrast, display a growing tendency to see a unity between the microcosm of human life and the order of the entire universe. Such holistic tendencies would seem to put the attainment of the requisite knowledge beyond human boundaries. Though Plato's late works do not display any readiness to lower the standards for knowledge as such, in his discussion of cosmic order he leaves room for conjecture and speculation, a fact that is reflected in a more pragmatic treatment of ethical standards and political institutions.

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1. Preliminaries

If ethics is the most accessible branch of philosophy, it is so because many of its presuppositions seem to be truisms. To name just a few: All human actions serve some end or purpose. Whether these purposes are judged right or wrong depends on their overall aim. At least for secularists, the attainment of these overall aims constitutes the quality of life. What we regard as a life worth living depends on the notion we have of our own nature and of the conditions of its fulfillment. This in turn is determined, at least in part, by the society we live in, its values and standards. Personal ends and purposes in each case depend not only on reason, but also on the individual agents' dispositions, the likes and dislikes, that make up their character. In addition, these ends are influenced by external factors such as health, wealth, social standing, and even good looks or sheer luck.

Self-evident as these truisms may appear, most of the time we are aware of them only implicitly. Human beings grow into a form of life with certain standards and values; they are not objects of reflection and choice. It is only in times of crisis that a society's traditions are challenged by a Socrates, who sees the need to disturb his compatriots' complacency. The historical Socrates was, of course, not the first to question the Greek way of life. Certain Presocratic philosophers such as Heraclitus or Xenophanes had been critics of their time — and the sophists had drawn attention to the fact that, contrary to the naïve view, it is custom and convention rather than nature that set the standards for what is deemed right or wrong, good or bad in a society. If other thinkers had preceded Socrates with moral and social criticism, he was certainly the first to challenge his fellows on an individual basis with his maxim that 'the unexamined life is not worth living' (*Ap.* 38a). Whatever position one may take in the controversy whether there is anything truly 'Socratic' in Plato's early dialogues, it seems beyond doubt that his cross-examinations (*elenchos*) not only questioned the supreme values in human life, but also challenged the customary notion of 'virtue' — the social 'skills', attitudes, or character-traits that were all too often geared towards their possessors' success, to the detriment of their neighbors' or the community's well-being. Socrates made it his mission to instigate a re-valuation of those values — and it seems to have cost him his life.

The Socratic legacy prompted Plato to engage in a thorough examination of the nature of knowledge and reality, an examination that gradually took him far beyond the scope of the historical Socrates' discussions. Nevertheless, Plato continued to present his investigations as dialogues between Socrates and some partner or partners and preserved

this form even in those of his late works where Socrates is replaced by a stand-in and the didactic nature of his presentations is hard to reconcile with the pretense of dialogue. The literary form makes the interpretation of Plato's ethics difficult because the informal discussions combine questions of ethical, political, social or psychological importance with metaphysical, methodological and epistemological considerations. There are, as a result, no central texts on his ethical doctrine and the information collected from different dialogues may not always fit together well. Since Plato never speaks in his own name, it is difficult to assess the extent to which he agrees with his figures' pronouncements, including Socrates'. That a certain problem or its solution is not mentioned in a dialogue does not mean that Plato was unaware of it. This makes it hard to be certain about the question: "What did Plato see and when did he first see it?" What adds to this difficulty is the fact that we lack information about the order in which Plato wrote his works. It stands to reason, however, that he started with the short dialogues that question the traditional virtues — courage, justice, moderation, wisdom, or piety. It also stands to reason that Plato gradually widened the scope of his investigations by reflecting not only on social and political conditions of morality, but also on the logical, epistemological, and metaphysical presuppositions of a successful moral theory. These theoretical reflections often take on a life of their own. Several of Plato's later works are concerned with ethical problems only marginally or not at all. The *Parmenides*, the *Theaetetus*, and the *Sophist* deal primarily or exclusively with epistemological and metaphysical problems of a quite general nature. Nevertheless, as the *Philebus*, the *Politicus*, the *Timaeus*, and the *Laws* show, Plato never lost interest in the conditions of the good human life. This article will elucidate the most important stages in the progress of Plato's thought.

2. The early dialogues: Examining life

2.1 The quest for definitions

When confronted with Plato's early dialogues and their investigation of the different kinds of virtues, we may well ask ourselves why he focused on these virtues almost exclusively. The answer seems to lie in the peculiar style of Socratic discussions. First, they always address particular persons. Second, they ask for definitions and their presuppositions (cf. Xenophon *Memorabilia* I, 10; 16). Both features have important consequences. (1) The personal character of the discussion explains that the focus is on a particular virtue or virtues rather than on the general foundations and principles of ethical thought that would be the natural starting point in a systematic investigation. Socrates' partners either possess — or pretend to possess — certain socially valued skills and attitudes. Thus in the *Euthyphro* Socrates discusses piety with an 'expert' in religious affairs. In the *Laches* he discusses courage with two renowned generals of the Peloponnesian war, Laches and Nicias. In the *Charmides* Socrates addresses the nature of moderation with young Charmides, an alleged paragon of modesty, and — somewhat ironically — with his guardian, the later tyrant Critias. The *Greater Hippias* raises the question of the nature of the beautiful with a producer of 'beautiful things', the sophist and polymath Hippias. The *Protagoras* focuses on the question of the unity of virtue with the most famous teacher of 'civic virtues' among the sophists. The *Gorgias* discusses the nature of rhetoric and its relation to virtue with the most prominent teacher of rhetoric

among the sophists. In the *Meno* the question how virtue is acquired is raised by an ambitious seeker of power, wealth, and fame. All of Socrates' interlocutors are at first quite confident about their own competence in discussion. Nor is such confidence unreasonable. If virtue is a kind of 'skill' or attitude that enjoys general recognition, its possessor should be able to give an account of his excellence. That such 'knowledge' is often at best implicit comes to light only gradually — and often much to the victims' chagrin and anger when they are confronted with their own inability to explain the nature of their cherished expertise. This accounts at least for part of the widespread enmity against Socrates. (2) Though there were no acknowledged formal standards for definitions in Socrates' time, his investigations contributed significantly to the establishment of such standards by exposing the flaws in his partners' abortive attempts to justify their convictions. These flaws vary greatly in kind and gravity: Enumerations of examples are not sufficient to capture the nature of the thing in question. Definitions that merely replace a given concept with a synonym are open to the same attack as the term itself. Definitions may be hopelessly vague or miss the mark entirely; they may be too wide and include unwanted characteristics or subsets; they may be too narrow and exclude essential factors. Moreover, definitions may be incomplete because the subject in question does not constitute a unitary phenomenon. If generally accepted 'social excellences' are not simple conditions, they may be subject to conflicting convictions. Examples of all these flaws are exposed in Plato's early dialogues with more or less diagnostic clarity about the exact nature of the respective deficiencies.

Given that the focus in the early dialogues is almost entirely on the exposition of inconsistencies, one cannot help wondering whether Plato himself knew the *answers* to his queries, had some card up his sleeve that he chose not to play for the time being. This would presuppose that he had not only a clear notion of the nature of the different virtues, but also a positive conception of the good life as such. Since Plato was neither a moral nihilist nor a sceptic, he cannot have regarded moral perplexity (*aporia*) as the ultimate end, nor continued mutual examination, *more Socratico*, as a way of life for everyone. Perplexity, as the *Meno* states, is just a wholesome intermediary stage on the way to knowledge (*Me.* 84a-b). But if Plato assumed that those convictions that survive Socratic questioning will coalesce into an account of the good life, then he keeps this expectation to himself. Nor would such optimism seem warranted given Socrates' disavowal of knowledge and his disdain for the values of the *hoi polloi*. There is no guarantee that only false convictions are discarded and true ones retained in a Socratic investigation. Quite the contrary, promising suggestions are as mercilessly discarded as their less promising brethren. Perhaps Plato counted on his readers' intelligence to straighten out what is skewed in Socratic refutations, to detect unfair moves, to supplement what is missing. It is in fact often quite easy to make out fallacies and to correct them; but such corrections must remain incomplete without sufficient information about Plato's conception of the good life and its moral presuppositions. It is therefore a matter of conjecture whether Plato himself held such a view while he composed one aporetic dialogue after the other. He may have either regarded his investigations as experimental stages or seen each dialogue as a piece of a mosaic that he hoped to complete eventually.

If there is a lesson to be drawn from the many failed accounts of the virtues by different partners, it is that definitions of particular virtues in isolation, summed up in one sentence, will not do. The evidence that Plato wanted his readers to draw this very conclusion from early on is somewhat contradictory, however. On the one hand Plato famously pleads for the unity of the virtues in the *Protagoras* and seems intent to reduce them all to knowledge. Scholars are therefore wont to speak of the ‘intellectualistic’ character of the so-called ‘Socratic ethics’ because it leaves no room for other motivational forces such as emotions or desires. Socrates’ proof in the *Protagoras* that reason cannot be overcome by the passions has — from Aristotle on — been treated as a denial of *akrasia*, of the phenomenon that was later dubbed ‘weakness of the will’. This intellectualizing tendency does not tell us, however, what kind of master-science would fulfill all requirements and what its content should be. What is more, the emphasis on knowledge does not rule out an awareness on Plato’s part of the importance of other factors, even in his early dialogues. Though he often compares the virtues with technical skills, such as those of a doctor or pilot, he may have realized that virtues also involve emotional attitudes, desires and preferences, but seen no clear way to coordinate the rational and the affective components that are connected with the virtues. The discussion of courage in the *Laches*, for instance, struggles with two different conditions. In his attempt to define courage as steadfastness in battle, Laches, one of the two generals and ‘experts’ on courage, is faced with the dilemma that steadfastness renders a satisfactory definition of courage neither in combination with knowledge nor without it (*La.* 192a-194c). His comrade Nicias, on the other hand, fails when he tries to identify courage with a certain type of knowledge (197e-200a). The investigation of moderation in the *Charmides*, likewise, points up that there are two disparate elements commonly associated with that virtue, namely a certain calmness of mind on the one hand (*Chrm.* 158e-160d) and self-knowledge on the other (166e-175a). It is clear that a complex account would be needed to combine these disparate factors. For moral skills not only presuppose sufficient ‘operative’ rationality but also the requisite attitude towards the desirable ends to be attained and the appropriate means to be employed. Such an insight is displayed in Socrates’ long and passionate argument in the *Gorgias* against Polus and Callicles that the just life is better than the unjust life for the soul of its possessor, an argument that he fortifies with a mythical depiction of the soul’s reward and punishment after death (523a-527e). But the nature of justice and the proper care for one’s soul is thereby illuminated only indirectly. For the most part, the arguments rely on the incompatibility of his adversaries’ selfish aims with their better social insights. Plato may or may not yet have envisaged the kind of solution to that problem he is going to present in the *Republic*: there he establishes a hierarchy among the virtues with wisdom, the only intellectual virtue, as their basis. Courage, moderation, as well as justice, presuppose a certain steadfastness of convictions and a harmony among the disparate parts of the soul, but their goodness depends entirely on the intellectual part of the soul, just as the virtue of the citizens in his state depends on the wisdom of the philosopher kings (*R.* 428a-444e). Thus Plato confines the dispositional or ‘demotic’ virtues to second rank (500d; 522a-b).

There are at least some indications that Plato already saw the need for a holistic conception of the good life at the time when he composed his ‘Socratic’ dialogues. At the

end of the *Laches* he lets Nicias founder with his attempt to define courage as the 'knowledge of what is to be feared and what should inspire confidence'. He is forced to admit that such knowledge presupposes the knowledge of good and bad *tout court* (*La.* 199c-e). In a different but related way Socrates alludes to a comprehensive knowledge at the end of the *Charmides* in his final refutation of Critias' definition of moderation as 'knowledge of knowledge' by urging that this type of knowledge is insufficient for the happy life without the knowledge of good and bad (*Chrm.* 174b-e). But pointing out what is wrong and missing in particular arguments is a far cry from an explanation of what is good and bad in human life. The fact that Plato insists on the shortcomings of a purely 'technical' conception of virtue suggests that he was at least facing up to these problems. The discussion of the 'unity of the virtues' in the *Protagoras* — regardless of the perhaps intentionally unsatisfactory structure of his proofs — confirms that Plato realized that a critique of the inconsistencies implied in the conventional values must be insufficient to justify such a unitary point of view. But the evidence of a definitive conception of the good life remains at most indirect at this early stage.

2.2 Definition and recollection

Reflection on what is implied in the quest for definitions confirms that Plato cannot have been blind to the sterility of a purely negative way of argument, or if he was blind at first, his blindness cannot have lasted long. For the quest for definitions has important consequences. First and foremost, definitions presuppose that there is a definable object; that is to say, that it must have a stable nature. Nothing can be defined whose nature changes all the time. In addition, the object in question must be a unitary phenomenon, even if its unity may be complex. If definitions are to be used as a basis, one needs to embrace some kind of essentialism. This presupposition is indeed made explicit in the *Euthyphro*, where Plato employs for the first time the terminology that will be characteristic of his full-fledged theory of the Forms. In response to Euthyphro's enumeration of various examples of pious behavior, Socrates demands an account of *the one* feature (*Euthyphr.* 5d: *idea*; 6d: *eidōs*; 6e: *paradeigma*) that is common to all cases of what is holy or pious. In spite of this pregnant terminology, few scholars nowadays hold that the *Euthyphro* already presupposes transcendent Forms in a realm of their own — models that are incompletely copied by their imitations in material conditions. The terms *eidōs* and *idea* preserved their original meaning of 'look' or 'shape' into the classical age. But they were also often used in ordinary prose in the more abstract sense of 'form', 'sort', or 'kind'. No more than this abstract sense seems to be presupposed in the *Euthyphro*. There is, at any rate, no mention here of any separation of a sensible and an intelligible realm, let alone of an existence of 'the holy itself', as an entity existing in splendid isolation from all cases of holiness.

The passage in the *Euthyphro* makes intelligible, however, why Plato felt encouraged to develop such a view in the dialogues that no longer confine themselves to the 'negative way' of questioning the foundations of other people's convictions. The requisite unity and invariance of entities like 'the holy', 'the beautiful', 'the just' or 'the equal', necessarily prompts reflections on their ontological status and on the appropriate means of access to them. Given that they are the objects of definition and the paradigms of their ordinary

representatives, there is every reason not only to treat them as real, but also to assign them a state of higher perfection. And once this step has been taken, it is only natural to make certain epistemological adjustments. Access to paradigmatic entities is not to be expected through ordinary experience, but presupposes some special kind of intellectual insight. It seems, then, that Plato was predestined to follow the path that let him adopt a metaphysics and epistemology of transcendent Forms once he had accepted invariant and unitary objects of thought as the subject of definitions. The alternative of treating the objects of definitions as mere constructs of the mind that more or less fit the manifold of everyday-experience clearly was not to Plato's taste. It would have meant the renunciation of the claim to unassailable knowledge and truth in favor of conjecture and, *horribile dictu*, human convention. The very fact that mathematics was already an established science with rigorous standards and unitary and invariant objects must have greatly enhanced Plato's confidence in applying the same standards to moral philosophy. It led him to search for models of morality beyond the limits of everyday experience. This, in turn, explains the development of his theory of recollection and the postulate of transcendent immaterial objects as the basis of reality and thought, that he presents in the *Meno* and the *Phaedo*.

We do not know when, precisely, Plato adopted this mode of thought, but it stands to reason that contact with the Pythagorean school on his first voyage to Southern Italy and Sicily around 390 BC played a major role in this development. Mathematics as a model-science has several advantages: it deals with unchangeable entities that are set down in definitions. It also shows that the essence of these entities cannot properly be comprehended in isolation but only in a network of interconnections that have to be worked out at the same time as each particular entity is defined. To understand what it is to be a triangle, it is necessary — *inter alia* — to understand the nature of points, lines, planes and their interrelations. That Plato was aware of this fact is indicated already by the somewhat prophetic statement in his introduction of the theory of recollection in the *Meno*, 81d: “As the whole of nature is akin, and the soul has learned everything, nothing prevents a man, after recalling one thing only — a process men call learning — discovering everything else for himself, if he is brave and does not tire of the search, for searching and learning, are, as a whole, recollection (*anamnesis*).” The somewhat mystifying claim of an ‘overall kinship’ is then illuminated in the famous ‘mathematical experiment’ (*Me.* 82b-85c). The slave finally manages — with some pushing and pulling by Socrates and some drawings in the sand — to double the area of a given square. In the course of this interrogation, the disciple gradually discovers the relations between the respective squares and triangles. That Plato takes this to be a crucial feature of knowledge is confirmed later by the distinction between knowledge and true opinion (97b-98b). As Socrates explains, true opinions are unreliable — they are like the statues of Daedalus that easily run away as long as they are not tied down. The requisite ‘tying down’ happens, 98a: “by giving an account of the reason why. And that, Meno my friend, is recollection, as we previously agreed. After they are tied down, in the first place, they become knowledge, and then they remain in place.” This explanation indicates that according to Plato knowledge does not consist in a mental ‘gazing’ at isolated models, but rather in uncovering the invariant relations that constitute the objects in question.

The complexity underlying Plato's theory of the Forms at this stage is easily overlooked because the first application of that theory in the *Phaedo* suggests that recollection is no more than the grasping of concepts such as 'exact equality in size' prompted by the perception of more or less equal seeming sticks and stones (74a-e). Not only that, the same is suggested by the list that first introduces the Forms, 65d-e: "Do we say that there is such a thing as the Just itself or not? And the Beautiful, and the Good? [...] I am speaking of all things such as Tallness, Health, Strength, and in a word, the reality of all other things, that which each of them essentially is." Such an appeal to recollection leaves a lot to be desired. How is one to be sure that one's intuitive grasp of these natures is correct? That 'recollection' of isolated ideal objects is not the whole story emerges later in the *Phaedo* when Socrates presents a 'simple minded hypothesis' of the Forms as a way to avoid his difficulties with the causes of generation and destruction (*Phd.* 99d-100e). The hypothesis he starts out with seems simpleminded, indeed, because it consists of no more than the assumption that everything is what it is by participating in the corresponding Form. But it soon turns out that more is at stake than such naïveté (101d-102a). First, the hypothesis of the respective Form is to be tested by looking at the compatibility of its consequences; second, the hypothesis itself is to be secured by higher hypotheses until some satisfactory starting-point is attained. Unfortunately Socrates gives neither an explanation of the kinds of consequences he has in mind, nor of the kind of 'satisfactory highest principle', but confines himself to the demand for orderly procedure. The subsequent distinctions he introduces in preparation of the last proof of the immortality of the soul seem, however, to provide some information about the consequences and hypotheses in question (103d-107b). He first introduces the distinction between essential and non-essential attributes. This distinction is then applied to the soul: since it always causes life in whatever it occupies, it must have life as its essential property, which it cannot lose; hence the soul is incompatible with death and must therefore be immortal. The viability of this argument, stripped here to its bare bones, need not engage us. The procedure shows, at any rate, why Plato resorts to relations between Forms here. The essential tie between soul and life is clearly not open to sense-perception; instead, it takes a good deal of reflection of the mind by itself on what it means to be and to have a soul. To admirers of a two-world metaphysics in Plato it may come as a disappointment that recollection should consist of no more than the uncovering of such relationships. But this agrees well with the fact that with the exception of such concepts of perfection as 'the Good' and 'the Beautiful', all of Plato's examples in the *Phaedo* are quite pedestrian. Not only does he confine himself to concepts like 'tallness', 'health', 'strength' and 'the equal as such', he treats the fact that knowledge of their nature cannot be derived from sense-perception alone as sufficient evidence for the existence of such Forms, as the case of equal looking sticks and stones supposedly shows.

Plato does not in the *Phaedo* employ his newly established metaphysical entities to work out a definitive conception of human nature and the appropriate way of life. Rather he confines himself to warnings against the contamination of the soul by the senses and their pleasures and against corruption by worldly values, quite generally. He gives no advice concerning human conduct beyond the recommendation of a general abstemiousness from worldly temptations. This seems a rather austere picture of human life, and an egocentric one, to boot, for nothing is said about relations between human beings.

Socrates treats as sufficient the warning that everyone should take care of his soul as best he can. It is unclear whether this negative attitude is the sign of a particularly pessimistic period in Plato's life or whether it merely reflects the circumstances of the discussion, Socrates' impending death. As long as this negative attitude towards the physical side of human nature prevails no interest is to be expected in nature as a whole — let alone in the principles of the cosmic order. But it is not only Platonic asceticism that stands in the way of such a wider perspective. Socrates himself seems to have been quite adverse to the study of nature. Not only does Plato make him admit his inability to understand the causes of natural processes in the *Phaedo* (96a-99e). In his *Apology* he lets him deny energetically any concern with natural philosophy. The accusations that depict Socrates as “a student of all things in the sky and below the earth” are quite false (18c); he has never conversed on such issues at all; the attribution to him of Anaxagorean tenets such as that the sun is stone and the moon earth is a sign of his accusers' recklessness (26d-e). And in a dialogue as late as the *Phaedrus*, Socrates famously explains his preference for the city and his avoidance of nature (230d): “landscapes and trees have nothing to teach me — only the people in the city can do that.” That Plato is not here distorting the facts is confirmed by the testimony of Xenophon, who is equally emphatic about Socrates' repudiation of the study of heavenly phenomena and his concentration on human affairs (*Memorabilia* I 1.15-16). If Plato later takes a much more positive attitude towards nature in general, this is a considerable change of focus. In the *Phaedo* he quite deliberately confines his account of the nature of heaven and earth to the myth (108d-114c). As he states in conclusion, this mythical depiction is not to be taken literally but as an encouragement to heed its moral message and to take care of one's soul (114d-e). This is as constructive as Plato gets in his earlier discussion of the principles of ethics.

3. The middle period: Justice and other virtues

3.1 The needy nature of human beings

If Plato went through a period of open-ended experimentation, this stage was definitely over when he wrote the *Republic*, the central work of his middle years. That there is a major change of mind is indicated already by the dialogue's dramatic means. The aporetic controversy about justice in the first book is set off quite clearly against the cooperative discussion that is to follow in the remaining nine books. Like the *Gorgias*, the first book of the *Republic* presents three partners who defend, with increasing tension, their notion of justice against Socrates' *elenchos*. Of these disputes especially the altercation with the sophist Thrasymachus has received a lot of attention, because he defends the provocative thesis that justice is the right of the stronger and that conventional justice is at best high-minded foolishness. The arguments employed by Socrates at the various turns of the discussion will not be presented here. Though they reduce Thrasymachus to angry silence they are not above criticism. Even Socrates himself expresses dissatisfaction with the result of this discussion, *R.* 354c: “As far as I am concerned, the result is that I know nothing, for when I don't know what justice is, I'll hardly know whether it is a kind of virtue or not, or whether a person who has it is happy or unhappy.” For once, the confession of *aporia* is not the end of the discussion. Two members of the audience, Plato's brothers Glaucon and Adeimantus, challenge Socrates: Thrasymachus has

defended his case badly. If Socrates wants to convince his audience, he must do better than that. Not only do they demand a positive account of what justice is and does to the soul of its possessor, Glaucon also makes clear that he expects a systematic investigation by distinguishing three types of goods (357b). There is (a) the kind of good that is welcome for its own sake, regardless of any consequences; such are joy and the harmless pleasures. There is (b) the kind of good that is desired for its own sake and also for the sake of its consequences; such are sight, knowledge, or health. There is (c) the kind of good that is not chosen for its own sake but only on account of its consequences, such as physical training, or the acquisition of wealth. Since they agree that (b) is the most valuable kind, Socrates is to prove that justice belongs to that class of goods.

The change of character in the ensuing discussion is remarkable. Not only are the two brothers not subjected to an *elenchos*, they get ample time to elaborate on their objections (357a-367e). Though they are not themselves convinced that injustice is a better good than justice, they argue that in the present state of society injustice pays — with the gods as well as with men — as long as the semblance of respectability is preserved. To prove this claim the brothers assume the role of devil's advocate by unfolding a scathing picture of their society's attitude towards justice. As the story of the Ring of Gyges and its gift of invisibility proves, everyone who does not have a god-like character will eventually succumb to its temptations (359c-360d). Instead of the wolf, as in Thrasymachus' account, it is the fox who is the paragon of injustice. He will succeed at every level because he knows how to play the power-game with cunning. The just man, by contrast, pays no heed to semblance and therefore suffers a Christ-like fate, because he does not comply with the demands of favoritism and blandishment (361e). Even the gods, so the poets allegedly confirm, are on the side of the successful scoundrel since they can be propitiated by honors and sacrifices. Given this state of affairs, the brothers regard a logic-chopping argument that justice is better than injustice as quite insufficient (367b-e: *logô*). Instead, Socrates is to tell them what effect each of them have on the soul of their possessors. Plato clearly regards refutation as insufficient to make true converts; whether he ever had such confidence in the power of refutation must remain a moot point. The *Republic* shows, at any rate, that he saw that the time had come for a positive account of morality and the good life. If *elenchos* is used in Plato's later dialogues it is never used in the knock-down fashion of the early dialogues.

Socrates complies with the brothers' request. Ignoring his own disclaimer of knowledge from the end of book I, he now readily engages in a long drawn-out investigation on justice and injustice. A brief sketch of its main points must suffice here, to make intelligible Plato's definition of justice and the other kinds of virtue. Instead of setting out with a definition of justice, Socrates asserts the need to study its nature in a 'larger text', the state, rather than in the smaller and harder to decipher soul. A study of how a city comes to be will supposedly reveal how justice and injustice arise in it (369a). The justification of the assumed isomorphism between the state and the soul is postponed till book IV, after the establishment of a three-class society. This procedure has received much comment and criticism in the secondary literature, but its justification will not here be subject to any closer scrutiny. Instead, it is necessary to take a closer look at the principle of mutual economic *need* that Socrates introduces as the principle on which

communities are based in 369b: “A city comes to be because none of us is self-sufficient (*autarkês*), but we all need many things. [...] And because people need many things, and because one person calls on a second out of one need and on a third out of a different need (*chreia*), many people gather in a single place to live together as partners and helpers.” The need in question is, at least at this point, purely economic. The minimal city is based on the need for food, clothing, shelter, and the corresponding tools. Need also dictates the adoption of the principle of the ‘division of functions’ — as one should call it, rather than ‘division of labor’ in the modern sense. This principle determines not only the structure of the minimal self-subsistent state of farmers and other workers, but also the separation of three classes in the ‘inflated state’. A more luxurious city needs protection by a professional army as well as the leadership of a class of philosopher-kings and -queens. Beyond the claim that the division of functions is much more economical, Plato gives no justification for this fateful decision that determines the social order in the state as well as the nature of the virtues. Human beings are not born alike, but with different talents that predestine them for different tasks in a well-ordered state. This leads to Plato's rule: ‘one person — one work’ (R. 370a-c; 423d).

Plato's ethics in the *Republic* is thus not based on high-minded moral principles with a transcendent *summum bonum*, but on down-to-earth considerations of efficiency. This is an important fact to keep in mind in an evaluation of his ethical system. Since the division of functions surreptitiously paves the way for the definition of justice as ‘doing your own thing’ in book IV (432d-433b), it is necessary to review, at least briefly, the kind of social order Plato has in mind and the means by which it is to be attained. For this explains not only the establishment of a three-class society and the corresponding parts of the soul, it also explains Plato's theory of education, and its metaphysical presuppositions. That economic needs are the basis of the political structure does, of course, not mean that they are the only human needs Plato recognizes. It indicates, however, that the emphasis here is on the unity and self-sufficiency of a well-structured city, not on the well-being of the individual (423c-e; 425c). This focus should be kept in mind in the assessment of the ‘totalitarianism’ and rigorous cultural conservatism of Plato's political philosophy.

Socrates' minimal city is designed to satisfy no more than the basic economical needs. If he calls it a ‘healthy city’ that is because it is a self-contained community without riches that attract outside covetousness or with demands that make foreign conquests necessary. When his partners protest against the citizens' primitive lifestyle because it resembles a ‘city of pigs’ he readily agrees (372e-373a). To supply cultural refinement, the city has to grow in size and wealth and thus conflicts with neighbors become inevitable. In accordance with the principle of division of functions, a professionally trained army is necessary. It is this very feature that leads to the discussion of education, because the preservation of internal peace and external security presuppose the combination of two different character-traits among the ‘guardians’, namely friendliness towards their fellow-citizens and fierceness towards the enemy (‘the philosophical watchdogs’, 375d-376c). This starts a long discussion of the appropriate education that combines the right kind of ‘muses’ (poetry, music, and other fine arts) with the right amount of physical exercise to procure the right temperament and attitude in the soldiers (376d-403d). The muses come in for protracted criticism, both in content and form. All stories that undermine respect

towards the gods are to be banned, along with tales that instill the fear of death in the guardians. Imitation of bad persons is forbidden, as are impersonations of different characters quite generally. Analogous injunctions apply, *mutandis mutatis*, to the modes and rhythms in music and to painting. Physical exercise must fit the harmonious soul and therefore must not exceed what is healthy and necessary (403e-412b). Since the educational scheme is geared to secure a harmonious and yet spirited class of soldiers, Plato bans from the city most of the cultural achievements that were the Greeks' pride and joy. There must be nothing to disturb the citizens' willingness to fulfill their tasks. In order to secure such an education, Socrates introduces a third class, the class of the rulers of the city (412b-417b). They are to be selected through tests of character from the soldiers — most of all because they must be unshakable in their conviction that their own well-being is intimately tied to that of the city. To secure this attitude, they must lead a communal life, without private homes, families, or property. His partner's objection, that the leaders are thereby deprived of all happiness is not accepted by Socrates: first, their concern is not the happiness of one particular group, but that of the city as a whole. Second, the rulers will have their own type of happiness, which differs significantly from that of ordinary people. As will emerge later in books VI and VII, the rulers will be recompensed by the rewards of higher learning.

3.2 Virtues of state and soul

The division of functions that leads to the separation of three classes is reflected in the search for justice that concludes the discussion of the social order (427d-434c). This order explains the peculiar character of Socrates' further procedure. He presents, without comment, the catalogue of what in later tradition have been dubbed as 'the four cardinal Platonic virtues' — wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice. Piety, as the text indicates, is no longer to be considered as an autonomous human virtue, but religious practices should be left to tradition and the oracle of Apollo at Delphi (427b-c). Socrates then suggests that justice can be discovered by a method of 'elimination': If there are four virtues in the city, then justice must be left over after the other three have been identified (427e). He neither proves that there are exactly four virtues in a state nor that they are items that can be lifted up, singly, for inspection, like eggs in a basket. Instead, he simply presents his catalogue of virtues and determines the role they play in the maintenance of the social order. First comes wisdom (*sophia*), the only purely intellectual virtue and the exclusive possession of the rulers (428b-429a). Little more is said about it at this point, except that it is 'good council' (*euboulia*) in decisions about the internal and external affairs of the city. Second is courage (*andreia*), the soldiers' defining excellence (429a-430c). Socrates has some trouble explaining its nature, since it is a mixture of conviction (*doxa*) and steadfastness of character (*sôtêria*); he compares this disposition with colorfast wool: through thick and thin the guardians must be dyed-in-the-wool adherents to the laws' decrees about what is to be feared. Third comes moderation (*sôphrosunê*) (430d-432a). Again it is not an intellectual excellence, but rather a kind of combination of belief with a certain orderly disposition. It is a conviction shared by the three classes about who should rule (*doxa*, 431e), but this belief is based on a state of 'order' (*kosmos*), 'consonance' (*sumphônia*), a 'harmony' (*harmonia*) that results in the mastery of certain kinds of pleasures and desires so that the better part is in control of the lower part. It is

clear from its description as ‘self-mastery’ (*egkrateia*) that this virtue fits the individual soul better than an entire city (430e-431b), as witnessed by the fact that the function of self-control in the individual soul is used in order to explain its role in the city. Moderation is supposedly not the specialty of any one class of the state, but a unanimity shared by all three (432a). The third class, then, has no specific virtue of its own. That moderation is a virtue common to all three classes makes it hard to pinpoint its difference from justice, the excellence that is left over and that is also shared by all (432d-434c). Socrates claims to realize only now that justice is neither more nor less than the principle they have employed all along in the foundation of their state, namely that everyone is to “do their own thing and not meddle with that of another” (433a). In comparison with moderation’s function as “consonance about who should rule and be ruled”, justice as “doing your own thing” may signify a more active state of mind with a wider extension since its task is also to see to it that “no citizen should have what belongs to another or be deprived of what is his own” (433e). But since the dispositions of justice and moderation are not specified any further, there seems to be only a fine line between the functions of justice and moderation in the city. That there are four virtues rather than three, seems to be due to the fact that this catalogue of four was a fixture in tradition. Indeed, as will be emerge in connection with the virtues in the individual soul, the distinction between justice and moderation is far less problematic when applied to the individual, because in the individual soul internal self-control and external self-restraint are clearly different attitudes.

The promise to establish the isomorphic structure of city and soul (= the larger and the smaller text) has not been forgotten. After the definition and the assignment of the four virtues to the parts of the city Socrates turns to the investigation of the virtues in the soul. In order to do so, he first has to establish that there are three parts in the soul, just as there are three classes in the city. The lengthy argument for the tri-partition of the soul into a rational (*logistikon*), a spirited (*thumoeides*), and an appetitive (*épithumêtikon*) part (434d-441c), can here be neither reproduced nor subjected to a critical evaluation. That Plato lets Socrates express reservations concerning the fittingness of his own procedure (435c-d), despite his unusually circumspect way of justifying his division of the soul’s faculties, indicates that he regards it as an important innovation. No mention of separate parts of the soul is to be found in any of his earlier dialogues; irrational desires are attributed there to the influence of the body. In the *Republic*, by contrast, the soul itself becomes the source of the appetites and desires. Socrates has little trouble in establishing the difference between a rational and an appetitive part, because the opposition between the decrees of reason and the various kinds of unreasonable desires is familiar to everyone (438d-439e). That there must be a third, a ‘spirited’ or courageous part (*thumoeides*), separate from reason and desire, is more difficult to show. The phenomenon of moral indignation is finally used as evidence for a psychic force that is neither reducible to reason, nor to one of the appetites. Instead, it is an ally of reason in a well-ordered soul, a force opposed to unruly appetites (439e-441c). Thus Socrates takes it as established that there are three parts in the soul that correspond to the classes in the city — the rational part to the wisdom of the rulers, the spirited part to the courage of the soldiers, the appetitive part to the rest of the population whose main motivation is material gain.

The division of the soul leads to the final evaluation of justice and injustice: In the city there is justice if the members of the three classes mind their own business; in the individual soul justice likewise consists in each part fulfilling its own function. This presupposes that the two upper parts have obtained the right kind of training and education in order to control the appetitive part (441d-442a). The three other virtues are then assigned to the respective parts of the soul. Courage is the excellence of the spirited part, wisdom belongs to the rational part, and moderation is the consent of all three about who should rule and who should obey. Justice turns out to be the overall unifying quality of the soul (443c-e). The just person does not only refrain from meddling with what is not his externally, but also internally harmonizes the three parts of the soul. While justice is order and harmony, injustice is its opposite: it is a rebellion of one part of the city or soul against the others and an inappropriate rule of the inferior parts. Justice and injustice in the soul are, then, like health and illness in the body. This comparison suffices to bring the investigation to its desired result. If justice is health and harmony of the soul, then injustice must be its disease and disorder. Hence it is clear that justice is a good state of the soul that makes its possessor happy and injustice its opposite. As little as anyone in his right mind would prefer to live with a ruined body, so no-one would prefer to live with a diseased soul. In principle the discussion of justice has reached its promised goal already at the end of book IV. Socrates has met the challenge of Glaucon and Adeimantus to show that justice is a good for the soul of its possessor, in and by itself, and preferable to injustice.

That the discussion does not end here but occupies six more books is due, most of all, to several loose ends that need to be tied up. Apart from the fact that reason and order are to reign supreme, little has been said about the citizens' way of life. This gap will be filled, at least in part, by the description of the communal life without private property and family in book V. More importantly, nothing has been said about the rulers of the city and their particular kind of knowledge. This is a crucial point because, as their definitions show, the quality of the three 'inferior' virtues is contingent on the rulers' wisdom. Socrates addresses this problem with the provocative thesis (473c-d): "Until philosophers rule as kings or those who are now called kings and leading men genuinely and adequately philosophize, [...] cities will have no rest from evils, nor will the human race." This thesis starts the discussion of the philosophers' nature, their upbringing and education through books VI and VII. A short summary of the upshot of the educational program must suffice here. The future philosophers, both women and men, are selected from the group of guardians whose general cultural training they share. If they combine moral firmness with quickness of mind they are subject to a rigorous curriculum of higher learning that will prepare them for the ascent from the world of the senses to the world of intelligence and truth, a distinction and ascent that Plato sums up in the similes of the Sun, the Line, and the Cave (508a-518b). To achieve this ascent, the students have to undergo, first, a preparatory schooling of ten years duration in the 'liberal arts': arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and theoretical harmonics (518c-531c). Afterwards they are admitted to the training in the master-science of 'dialectic', a science of which little more is said beyond the indication that it enables its possessor to deal with the objects of real knowledge, the Forms, and with the Form of the Good in particular, since it is the principle of the goodness of all else (531c-535a). This study is to last for another five

years. Successful candidates are then sent back into the Cave of ordinary political life as administrators for about 15 years. At the age of fifty they are allowed to return to the green meadow of philosophy, an activity that is interrupted only by periods of service as overseers over the order of the state. This completes, in a nutshell, the description of the philosopher kings' and - queens' education and activities (539d-541b).

Plato's autocratic rule by an aristocracy of the mind has received a lot of flak. An assessment of his politics must here be limited to the conception of happiness it contains. Regardless of whether or not we accept his overall principle of the Good as the basis of the political order, Plato's model-state has, at least in theory, the advantage that it guarantees external and internal peace. That is no mean feat in a society where external and civil wars were a constant threat and often enough ended in the destruction of the entire state. It also guarantees a high degree of efficiency, if every citizen does what he/she is naturally suited to do. But what about the citizens' needs, beyond those for security and material goods? Are they to find their life's fulfillment in the pursuit of their jobs? Plato seems to think so; he characterizes each class by its specific kind of desire and the respective good, 581c: the philosophers are lovers of wisdom (*philosophoi*), the soldiers lovers of honor (*philotimoi*), and the workers are lovers of material goods (*philochrêmatoi*). That human beings find, or at least try to find, satisfaction in the kinds of goods they cherish is a point pursued at length in the depiction of the decay of the city and its ruling citizens, from the best, the aristocracy of the mind, down to the worst, the tyranny of lust, in books VIII and IX. Is this a viable theory of political conditions and change that does justice to human nature? It concurs with the assumption that people are happy if they get what they want; 'preference-satisfaction' of the citizens is nowadays treated as one of the prime aims of every liberal state. But Plato's restriction of each class to one type of good seems quite 'illiberal', most obviously in the case of the citizens of the third class who supposedly covet nothing but wealth. This 'reductive' view of human nature militates not only against present-day intuitions, it also militates against Plato's own psychology in that all human souls consist of three parts, a rational, a spirited, and an appetitive part. Why reduce the third class to animals of low appetites, as suggested by the comparison of the people to a strong and big beast that must be placated (493a-c)? This comparison is echoed later in the comparison of the soul with a multiform beast, where human reason just barely controls the hydra-like heads of the appetites with the aid of a lion-like spirit (588c-590d). Is Plato merely giving vent to his anti-democratic sentiments and contempt for the rabble, as has often been claimed? He can be cleared of the suspicion that the workers are mere serfs of the upper classes, because he explicitly grants them the free enjoyment of all customary goods that he denies to the upper classes, 419a: "Others own land, build fine big houses, acquire furnishings to go along with them, make their own private sacrifices to the gods, entertain guests, and also, of course, possess what you were talking about just now, gold and silver and all the things that are thought to belong to people who are blessedly happy." But apart from such liberties, the members of the third class are utterly neglected in Plato's Callipolis; no education seems provided for them. He nowhere mentions whether they even participate in the guardians' musical and athletic training. Plato seems to sidestep his own insight that all human beings have an immortal soul and have to take care of it as best they can, as he is going to suggest in such a fanciful way in the Myth of Er at the end of *Republic* book X.

The life-style designed for the upper classes seems also open to objections. The soldiers' musical and physical training is strictly regimented; they must take satisfaction in the pleasures of preserving the city's inner and outer peace and in deeds of valor in war. Theirs is an austere camp-life. But even the philosophers' lives leave a lot to be desired, and not only because they have to starve their common human appetites and to devote many years to the administration in the 'Cave'. Their intellectual pursuits are also not entirely enviable, as a closer inspection would show. They are not to enjoy open-ended research, but a mental training that is explicitly designed to turn their thought away from worldly conditions and to the contemplation of the Forms. This is indicated in the injunctions concerning the study of astronomy (529a-530c). The students are not to crane their necks to watch the "embroidery in the heavens", but to concern themselves with the ideal motions of ideal moving bodies in a purely geometrical fashion. The universe is not treated as an admirable cosmos in the way Plato is going to treat it in the *Timaeus* and in the *Laws* with the explicit purpose of providing moral and intellectual support to the citizens. Given these limitations of the philosophers' mental exercises in the *Republic*, the claim that their lives are 729 times more pleasant than the tyrants' (587e) seems like a gross exaggeration, even if they enjoy the pleasures of being filled with pure and unadulterated truths, while everyone else experiences only semblances of pleasures (581e-588a).

To cut short the criticism of Plato's model-city and the lives of its inhabitants: His city resembles a well-oiled machine where everyone has their appointed function and economic niche, but its machine-like character seems repellent, given that no deviations from the prescribed pattern are permitted. If innovations are forbidden, no room seems to be left for creativity and personal development. Plato obviously presupposes, that every person has just one function and that its fulfillment is sufficient to secure her happiness. This at least is suggested by the 'functional' argument that leads to Thrasymachus' downfall (352d-354a). It states that every object, animal, and person has a specific function or work (*ergon*). If it performs its function well, it does well; for a living thing doing well means living well; and living well is tantamount to living happily. Though Socrates' refutation of Thrasymachus is found wanting as a proof of justice's superiority, the *ergon*-argument is nowhere revoked. On the contrary, it is affirmed by the principle of 'one person — one work' that is the basis of Plato's ideal city. It seems rather inhumane to confine everyone's activities to just *one* kind of work, even if such confinement may be most economical and efficient. These features suffice to make the alleged ideal life in Plato's city quite unpalatable to us, even apart from other features that have been put aside here, such as the communal life envisaged for the upper classes, and the establishment of lotteries for sexual partners that are rigged for eugenic reasons.

What is perhaps strangest about Plato's depiction of his citizens' life is the fact that he does not even emphasize the *one* feature that could throw a more favorable light on his social order, namely that each citizen will take pride and joy in the products of their work, especially given that they are to be regarded — each in their own way — as a valuable contribution to the community's well-being. This applies especially to the members of the third class since they produce the city's material goods, the tailors, carpenters, doctors, architects, sailors, and all those who are summed up rather

ungraciously under the epithet of ‘money-lovers’. Has this fact escaped Plato's notice, alongside other deficiencies of his blue-print of an ideal city? Against all these complaints, justified as they may seem, it should be pointed out that Plato clearly is not concerned with all the conditions that would make his city ‘livable’. His aim is rather more limited. He wants to present a model, and to work out its essential conditions. The same explanation applies to his depiction of the city and the citizens' decay in books VIII and IX. Contrary to many critics' assumption, Plato is not there trying to explain the course of history. Rather he wants to explain the generation and decay of each political system and the psychopathology of its leaders, which is based on the respective constitution's characteristic ‘value’: honor, money, freedom, and lust. It is unlikely that Plato presupposes that there are pure representatives of these types, though some historical states may come closer to them than others. Given that his aim is to work out the model of a well-functioning state, he does not concern himself with softening the features of his austere sketch.

If concentration on the depiction of the model explains the ‘inhumanity’ of Plato's political vision, are there nonetheless indications that he was aware of the limitations imposed on his ‘political animals’ when he confines them to their functions in an efficiently run community? Was he aware of the fact that his black-and-white picture disregards the claim of individuals to have their own aims and ends and not to be treated like ‘blue ants’ with no thoughts of their own? Though the *Republic* contains some indications that would mitigate this bleak picture, it is more fruitful to look at other works of Plato's middle life that concentrate on the conditions of the individual soul rather than on the demands of the community. These works are the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*.

4. The later dialogues: Ethics and Dialectic

4.1 Happiness and the desire for self-completion

It should come as no surprise that in the two dialogues where Plato focuses on the individual soul he does not require a total submergence in the common weal. Instead there is a picture of self-improvement and self-completion. The *Symposium* is often treated as a dialogue that predates the *Republic*, most of all because it does not mention the tri-partition of the soul. But not only is its topic, the praise of Eros by all those present, ill suited to the period of the *Gorgias* and the *Phaedo* with their spirit of asceticism, but Plato has good reasons for leaving aside a separation of the soul's faculties and a compartmentalization of their aims and values in order to show that love is an incentive for all human beings. Contrary to the assumption of all other speakers in the *Symposium*, Socrates denies that Eros is a god since the gods are perfect; love, by contrast, is a kind of desire for the beautiful and the good (199c-201c). Thus, all previous speakers have confused love with the beloved. Socrates claims to have received this message from a “lecture on the nature of love by the wise Diotima” (201d-212b). The upshot is that Eros is but a powerful demon, a being between the mortal and the immortal, an eternally needy hunter for the beautiful. This is also the condition of all human beings — as such they are neither good nor bad, but owing to their needy nature all have a desire for the good and the beautiful, the possession of which would be

happiness for them. Because all people want happiness, they all pursue the beautiful to the best of their ability (205a-206b). In each case they desire the particular kinds of objects they take to provide the fulfillment of their needs. Such fulfillment is not a passive possession, it is rather productivity in the strife for self-completion, 207d: “For among animals the principle is the same as with us, and mortal nature seeks so far as possible to live forever and be immortal. And this is possible in one way only: by reproduction, because it leaves behind a new young one in place of the old.” Because all mortal nature is subject to constant change and wasting away, there is a permanent need for self-restoration and self-improvement. In the case of human beings this need to create expresses itself in different ways. There is the search for ‘eternalization’ by the procreation of children of the body or children of the mind, like the works of the arts and crafts, but above all there is the production of the kind of wisdom that orders cities in justice and moderation (209a-e). The Diotiman lecture is finally crowned with a description of the famous ‘*scala amoris*’, the explanation of the refinement and sublimation that a person experiences by recognizing higher and higher kinds of beauty (210a-212a). Starting with the love of one beautiful body, the individual gradually learns to appreciate not only all physical beauty, but also the beauty of the mind, and in the end it gets a glimpse of the supreme kind of beauty, the Form of the beautiful itself, a beauty that is neither relative nor a matter of degree.

Since the beauty of the highest degree that is discovered by the mind itself is tied to virtue and is attained by the comprehension of what is common in laws and public institutions, it is clear that Plato does not have aesthetic values in mind, but rather the highest principle of all that is good, namely the Form of the Good in the *Republic*. Where the *Republic's* and the *Symposium's* accounts differ is that the *scala amoris* regards physical beauty as an incentive to the higher and better, an incentive that in principle affects every human being. There is no talk of the need for a painful liberation from the bonds of the senses and a turn-around of the entire soul reserved only for the better educated. The difference of this account cannot be explained away as a kind of aberration, as might be suggested by the fact that it is not Socrates' but Diotima's story that is reported here. Socrates quite emphatically declares his own allegiance to the story's message by calling himself Diotima's disciple in matters of love, and there is indeed an important doctrine he owes to her. Brief as the *Symposium's* explanation of happiness is, it shows three things: First, all human beings are not only capable of, but also desire their own self-completion. Second, this drive finds its expression in the products of their work, in creativity. Third, the respective activities are instigated by each person's own particular desire for the beautiful. There is no indication that individuals must act as part of a community. Though the communitarian aspect is not excluded, it is also not emphasized, in spite of the fact that the products of statesmen receive particular — but not exclusive — attention (cf. “the children of Lycurgus and Solon's creation of laws”, 209e- 210a). The message of the *Symposium* is not a singularity in Plato's works. The *Lysis* shares its basic assumption about human nature, namely that humans are by nature ‘between’ goodness and badness, although in the *Lysis* it is friendship, not love, that provides occasion for the desired self-completion. Owing to the aporetic character of that dialogue, this consequence remains somewhat obscure, but it is obvious enough that it shares the *Symposium's* general anthropological presuppositions.

The idea that *eros* is a means of sublimation and self-completion is worked out further in the *Phaedrus*. Though the close relationship between this dialogue's topic and that of the *Symposium* is generally acknowledged, the *Phaedrus* is commonly regarded as a much later work. Not only does it develop the *Republic's* psychological doctrine of a tri-partite soul, it also contains an argument for the immortality of the soul, an element that is conspicuously absent in the *Symposium*. But this difference is due to a distinction of perspective rather than a change of mind. The discussion in the *Symposium* is deliberately confined to the conditions of self-immortalization *in this life*; the *Phaedrus* takes the discussion beyond the confines of this life. If it shares the *Republic's* doctrine of a division of the soul into three parts, it does so for a significantly different reason. The three parts of the soul in the *Phaedrus* do not serve to establish three different classes of people. They explain, rather, the way in which the individual souls manage to travel upwards in their search of beauty and also the reasons for their possible failure. The *Phaedrus* goes beyond the *Symposium* in the attempt to show how the story of an enchantment by beauty can be combined with an element of Plato's philosophy that seems quite alien to the notion of self-improvement and sublimation through the love of beauty. That alien element is the method of collection and division that is characteristic of *dialectic* in Plato's later work. At first sight it seems that the combination of the picture of enchantment by beauty, expressed in a highly poetic and mythical form, in the dialogue's first part and the methodological explanations in the second part do not fit together well. It seems that Plato just barely manages to keep them together by making the treatment of 'eros' the test-case for good and bad *rhetoric*. Though the coherence of the *Phaedrus* cannot be argued for in full here, this diagnosis does not do justice to the dialogue's careful composition and overall aim.

The discussion in the *Phaedrus* starts with a recital of a speech by the orator Lysias, which pleads that it is better to favor a non-lover than a lover. To show its deficiencies, Socrates delivers his own, rather ironic, counter-plea (237b-242a). He bases it on the following definition of love: Love is a kind of sickness, an irrational craving for the pleasures of the body; its possessor tries to dominate and enslave the beloved one physically, materially and mentally, most importantly, to deprive him of philosophy; once restored to his senses the lover will shun his former beloved and break all his promises. About the non-lover Socrates claims there is no need to say much: the very opposite to all the lover's shortcomings apply to the non-lover, since he is in full command of his reasoning. The display of Socrates' superior rhetorical skill does not end here, however. He claims that his divine warning voice has indicated to him that his first speech was sacrilegious; a recantation is in order: Eros is a god, the son of Aphrodite, and not a diseased state of mind at all, but a kind of 'divine madness' (*theia mania*). Socrates' palinode is very elaborate (242d-257b). He distinguishes between four kinds of 'divine madness' or 'enthusiasm': besides love, there is the madness of divination, the madness underlying mystic purifications, and the madness of poetic inspiration. In order to explain the nature of love, Socrates first enters into a lengthy disquisition on the soul's nature, which can be summed up only very briefly here. As a 'self-mover', the soul must be immortal; in structure it resembles a charioteer with a team of two winged horses, a white one that is good and obedient, a black one that is wicked and unruly. The soul therefore has three parts, just as it does in the *Republic*, and its condition, likewise, depends on

their harmonious cooperation. The crucial difference is that Plato here does not speak of the liberation through education; instead he tells the story of the uplifting effect of — at least at first — physical beauty that makes the soul grow wings and soar up in the pursuit of a corresponding deity, until it attains godlike insights. Since the story is clad in highly metaphorical language, it cannot be fully unraveled here. Suffice it to say that the elevation to a place ‘beyond the heavens’, in the wake of the gods, where the best souls get a glimpse of true being, symbolizes the mind's access to the Forms, including the nature of the virtues (247c-e). Depending on the quality of each human soul, an individual will live either a carnal, earthly life and lose its wings, or it will live a spiritual, philosophical life in pursuit of beauty. In each case, the quality of the beauty pursued will also determine the cycle of reincarnations that is at store for each soul (248c-249c).

4.2 The quest for method

What is remarkable in the *Phaedrus*' picture of the uplifting effect of beauty is not only the exuberant tone and imagery that goes far beyond the *Symposium*'s simple *scala amoris*. There is also an intricate interweaving of the mythical and philosophical elements. For in the midst of the fanciful depiction of the fates that are in store for different kinds of souls Plato specifies, in quite technical terms, the ability to, 249b-c: “understand speech in terms of general Forms, proceeding to bring many perceptions together into a reasoned unity” as the condition for the reincarnation in a human form. It is this capacity for abstraction that he then calls “recollection of what the soul saw when it was traveling with god, when it disregarded the things we now call real and lifted up its head to what is truly real instead.” The heavenly adventure seems to be no more than an exercise in the dialectical method that Socrates is going to describe in the dialogue's second part without further mythical camouflage. The ability to establish unity in a given field and to divide it up according to its natural kinds is the art that the ‘scientific rhetorician’ must have mastered (265d-266b). Socrates professes the greatest veneration for such a master, 266b: “If I believe that someone else is capable of discerning a single thing that is also by nature capable of encompassing many, I follow ‘straight behind, in his tracks, as if he were a god’.” So the heavenly voyage has a quite down to earth counterpart in the dialectical method — a method that Plato regards as a “gift of the gods”, as he is going to affirm in the *Philebus*. Plato's esteem for ‘taxonomy’ explains at the same time the inner unity of the *Phaedrus*' apparently incongruous two parts as two sides of one coin, and also shows why Plato no longer sees the sensory as a distraction and disturbance of the mind. For the properly conditioned souls sensory impressions are an incentive to the higher and better.

What kind of concept of happiness is contained in this ‘inspired’ view of human life and strife? As was pointed out earlier, the happy life is not here conceived of as a life subordinate to the well-being of the community. But it is not a lonely life spent in the pursuit of truth and one's own good either. The message of the two dialogues is two-pronged. (1) On the one hand, there is no permanent attainment of happiness as a stable state of completeness in this life. In the ups and downs of life (and the afterlife) humans are in constant need of beauty — in the sense of completion and self-completion. Man is neither a god nor wise, he is at best a god-lover and a philosopher, a demonic hunter for

truth and goodness. To know is not to have; and to have once is not to have always. Diotima makes it quite clear that humans stand in an eternal need to replenish what they constantly lose because they are mortal and changeable creatures. (2) On the other hand, the eternal pursuit of the good and the beautiful is not a lonely enterprise. As especially the *Phaedrus* makes clear, love for a beautiful human being is an incentive to search for a higher form of life, as a sacred joint journey of two friends in communion (255a-256e). The need for — but also the possibility of — constant self-completion and repletion is a motive that will also reappear in the ethical thought in Plato's late works, a motive he sometimes formulates as the maxim that humans should strive after a 'likening to god', a *homoioûsis theô* (*Theaetetus*, 176b; *Timaeus* 90c).

Sober philosophers have a tendency to bypass such visionary talk as too elevated and lacking in substance to be worth serious thought. That Plato, appearances notwithstanding, is not indulging in a god-besotted *rêverie* has been indicated already by his interweaving of the mythical description and the need for careful 'taxonomical' procedure. The importance of 'due process' is emphasized further in the determination of the use of scientific rhetoric in the second half of the *Phaedrus* (259e-279c). Artful speaking (and even artful deception) presupposes knowledge of the truth, especially where the identity of the phenomena is difficult to grasp because of deceptive similarities. This applies in particular to concepts like the good and the just, as can be seen by the manifold disagreements about their nature (263a-c). That the development of the 'sharp eye' that is needed for the assignment of the object in question to the right class is the aim of the method of dialectic by collection and division that Plato expounds at some length in the *Phaedrus* is well known. Plato there describes the care that is needed in order to, 265d-e: "see together things that are scattered about everywhere and to collect them into one kind (*mia idea*)" as well as "to cut the unity up again according to its species along its natural joints, and to try not to splinter any part, as a bad butcher might do." That this method is supposed to serve an overall ethical purpose is confirmed by the fact that scientific rhetoric must not only know the different types of souls and the types of speech that fit them (271d), but also the truth about just and good things (272d).

That dialectic is geared to this end is somewhat obscured in the subsequent discussion in the *Phaedrus*. First of all, Plato turns away from this issue in the long exposition of the iniquities of contemporary rhetoricians by comparison with 'scientific rhetoric' and in the discussion of speaking and writing that culminates in his famous 'critique of writing'. Second, the ample use Plato makes of the method of collection and division in later dialogues, such as the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*, seems to have little to do with ethical questions. That Plato's ethics employs the tools of dialectic to sort out the different kinds of goods in human life comes to the fore again in the late dialogue *Philebus*, but the aptness of the dialectical method to discern the nature of the good has been emphasized — albeit not demonstrated — already in the *Republic* (534b-c). The specifications Plato adds concerning the systematic character he expects from the dialectical procedure provide a clue about the otherwise puzzling fact that he nowhere seems to apply his own recipe where the Good as such is concerned. A collection and methodical division of all that is good would be a superhuman enterprise. It would presuppose nothing less than the knowledge of all kinds of beings — and the insight in what constitutes the goodness of

each of them. Already the investigation of a part of the good is an highly ambitious task, as the investigation of the human good in state and soul in the *Republic* shows. Though it is unclear whether he had already developed the dialectical method in the systematic way indicated in the *Phaedrus*, the hints contained in the *Republic* about a 'longer way' (435d; 504b) to determine the nature of justice and the other virtues seems to suggest that the systematic method of collection and division was already 'in the works' when he composed that dialogue. As a closer look at the *Philebus* will show, the determination of what is good presupposes more than a careful classification by collection and division. In addition, the internal structure of each kind of entity has to be determined. Knowledge is not only the comprehension of the entities' being, identity, difference and other kinds of external interrelations that exist in a given field. It also presupposes the knowledge of what constitutes the objects' internal unity and plurality. It would, of course, be rather presumptuous to claim that Plato had not seen the need to do ontological 'anatomy' as well as 'taxonomy' of the Forms from early on. But as the late dialogues show, it took considerable effort to develop the requisite conceptual 'tools' for such analyses.

Before we turn to that question, a final review of the kind of good life Plato envisages in the dialogues under discussion here is in order. In the *Symposium* the emphasis lies on the individual's creativity: the quality of life attainable for each person differs, depending on the kind of 'work' each individual is able to produce in its search for self-perpetuation. This is what the *scala amoris* is all about. In the *Phaedrus* the emphasis is more on the 'joint venture' of kindred souls. True friends will get to the highest point of self-fulfillment that their souls' conditions permit them to attain. Just as in the *Symposium*, the philosophical life is deemed the best. But then, this preference is not unique to Plato: all ancient philosophers are prejudiced in favor of their own occupation. If there are differences between them, they concern the kind of study that is deemed appropriate to philosophy.

5. The late dialogues: Ethics and Cosmology

5.1 Harmony and cosmic goodness

Nature and natural things are not among the objects that Plato pays much attention to in his philosophical investigations. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that in the *Republic* he dismisses the study of the visible heaven from the curriculum of higher learning along with audible music. But such generalizations about Plato's intentions may be dangerously misleading. What he denigrates is not the study of the heavenly order as such, nor that of harmonics, it is rather the reliance on our eyes and ears in that area. Students of philosophy are encouraged to work out the true intelligible order underlying the visible heaven and the audible music. Not only that: The ascent out of the Cave includes recognition of objects outside, especially "the things in the sky" (*R.* 516a-b). If Plato is critical of natural science, it is because of its exclusively empirical approach. This echoes the *Phaedo's* complaint that one ruins one's eyes by looking directly at things, most of all the sun (*Phdo.* 99d-e). Nevertheless, Plato already indicates in his critique of Anaxagoras that comprehension of the workings of the order of nature would be highly desirable if it contained an explanation of the *rationale* of that order, 98a: "I was ready to

find out about the sun and the moon and the other heavenly bodies, about their relative speed, their turnings and whatever happens to them, how it is *best* that each should be acted upon.” Anaxagoras had not fulfilled his promise to explain that mind is the cause of all things by showing, 99c: “that the truly good and ‘binding’ binds and holds everything together”, i.e. through a teleological rather than a mechanical explanation of the cosmic order. Plato himself does not, however, pursue this idea in the rest of the dialogue, but his fanciful ‘geographical’ depiction of the under-, middle-, and upper world in the final myth can be read as a model of such an explanation in mythological garb. The same may be claimed for the description of the heavenly order and the structure of the ‘spindle of necessity’ in the myth of Er at the end of the *Republic* (R. 616b-617d).

What kind of ‘binding force’ does Plato attribute to ‘the Good’? His reticence about this concept, despite its centrality in his metaphysics and ethics, is largely responsible for the obscurity of his concept of happiness and what it is to lead a happy life — apart from the fact that individuals are best off if they ‘do their own thing’. In what way the philosophers’ knowledge provides a solid basis for the good life of the community and the — perhaps uncomprehending — individual remains an open question. What, then, is ‘the Good’ that is responsible for the goodness of all other things? A lot of ink has been spilt over the much quoted passage in *Republic* book VI, 509b: “not only do the objects of knowledge owe their being *known* to the Good, but their being (*ousia*) is also due to it, although the Good is not being, but superior (*epekeina*) to it in rank and power.” The analogy with the sun’s maintenance of all that is alive suggests that the Good is the inner principle that determines the nature of every object capable of goodness in the sense that it is able to fulfill its function in the appropriate way. How such a principle of goodness works in all things Plato clearly felt unable to say when he wrote the *Republic*. That he was thinking of an internal ‘binding force’ is indicated, however, in book X when he elucidates the ontological difference between the Forms, as the products of a divine maker, their earthly copies, and the imitation of these copies by an artist (R. 596a ff.). In that connection he explains that in each case it is the use or function that determines its goodness, 601d: “Aren’t the virtue or excellence, the beauty and correctness of each manufactured item, living creature, and action related to nothing but the use (*chreia*) for which each is made or naturally adapted?” Since he does not limit this account to instruments, but explicitly includes living things and human actions in it, it seems that he has a specific ‘fittingness’ in mind that constitutes each thing’s excellence. A similar thought is already expressed in *Republic* I (353a-e) when Socrates in his refutation of Thrasymachus employs the argument that the ability to fulfill one’s own task (*ergon*) well constitutes the excellence of each object. In the case of human beings this means ‘doing well’, and ‘doing well’ means ‘living well’, and ‘living well’ means ‘living happily’. The stringency of these inferences is far from obvious; but they show that Plato saw an intimate connection between the nature, the function, and the well being of all things, including human beings.

What determines the ‘use’ of a human being and in how far can there be a joint principle that accounts for all good things? In the *Republic* this question is answered only indirectly by a depiction of the isomorphism of the just state and soul, as a harmonious internal order. The postulate of such an orderly structure is not here explicitly extended

beyond the state and the soul. In the later dialogues the Good clearly operates on a cosmic scale. That such is Plato's intention comes to the fore already in the excursus on the philosopher's nature in the *Theaetetus* (173c-177c). Contrary to Socrates' denial in the *Apology*, the philosopher now is to pursue both what lies below the earth and the heights above the heaven, 173e: "tracking down by every path the entire nature of each whole among the things that are." He also concerns himself with the question: "What is man? What actions and passions properly belong to human nature and distinguish it from all other beings?" In that connection he ties the need to discover the true nature of things with the 'likening to God' (*homoioûsis theô*) and indicates that there is a unitary principle of goodness. The ability to achieve this superhuman state depends on the readiness to engage in strenuous philosophical discourse (177b).

If in the *Republic* the goodness of the individual soul is explained as that of a 'smaller copy' of a harmonious society, in the *Timaeus* Plato leaves out such a 'middle-size' model. The universe now supplies the 'larger text' for deciphering the nature of the human soul. The structure of the world-soul that Plato is going to design will be replicated in the nature of the human soul. That there is, nevertheless, a close affinity between the *Republic* and the project Plato meant to pursue in the *Timaeus* and its intended sequels is clearly indicated in the preface to the *Timaeus*. The tale of the origin of the universe and that of human nature is presented as a reply to Socrates' wish to see his own best city 'in action' (*Ti.* 19b-c). From antiquity on this introduction has created the impression that the *Timaeus* is the direct continuation of the *Republic*, an impression that is witnessed in its juxtaposition in the *Corpus Platonicum*. Strong indications speak, however, for a much later date of the *Timaeus*. If Plato establishes a link between these two works his intent is to contrast as well as to compare. The continuity consists in the fact that Socrates reaffirms that he considers the same social order as best (*Ti.* 17c-19b); it is this order that his friends promise to put in action in the history of the war between Pre-historic Athens, a city with the ideal order, and Atlantis, a powerful tyrannical superpower (*Ti.* 20d-26e), a project that Plato did not carry out, because the *Critias* breaks off after 15 pages in mid-sentence and the third dialogue, *Hermocrates*, was never written at all.

The difference between the *Republic's* and the *Timaeus's* philosophical approach lies in the fact that Plato is now occupied with the structure of the visible heaven as a model for the human soul and also with the material conditions of human physiology. What is confined to the myths in Plato's earlier work is here worked out — with some *caveats* concerning the mere likeness of the account — in a cosmological and physical explication. Plato's choice of presenting his explanation of the order of the universe as a story of creation by a 'divine workman' is certainly no accident. It is a kind of 'revocation' of his depreciation of the divine workman's product in the *Republic*, because of its inferiority to a purely theoretical model. To be sure, the *Timaeus* presupposes the Forms as the divine workman's unchanging models (27d-29d; 30c-31b) and he resorts to mathematical principles in the explanation of the cosmic order, but the focus is almost exclusively on the construction of the visible heaven. Plato now seems to follow the insight that in order to explain the nature of a living being it is necessary to show what factors constitute such a live organism.

This intention explains the peculiarities of the *Timaeus* that make the dialogue hard to penetrate. For the dialogue falls into three rather disparate parts. The first part describes the structure of the world-soul and its replication in the human soul in a way that combines mathematical and harmonic principles with fantastic imagery (29d-47e), the second consists of a rather meticulous account of the elementary physical constituents of nature on the basis of geometrical constructions (47e-69a), the third part combines elements from the first and the second part in a lengthy explanation of the human physiology and psychology (69b-92c). Both the physical and the physiological explanations strain the readers' attention by their very concern with detail. The first part greatly taxes their ability to fit together the notion of a divine creation of a world-soul with the bare hints at an intelligible, mathematical, and harmonic structure that supposedly explains the astronomical system of the heaven.

This is not the place to describe the complex structure of the world-soul. Suffice it to say that this structure combines three features. (1) The ingredients of the soul are the essential tools for *dialectic*: the soul is composed of being, sameness, and difference, i.e. three of the 'most important kinds' discussed in the *Sophist* as the objects of the philosopher's art of combination and separation (*Sph.* 253b-254b). Each of the three concepts that constitute the world-soul do so in a mixture of their unchangeable and their changeable types (*Ti.* 35a-b): it is a combination of unchangeable and changeable being, of unchangeable and changeable sameness, and unchangeable and changeable difference. What is the use of this strange concoction? As Timaeus points out, the combination of the eternal and temporal versions of the formal concepts allows the soul to comprehend both unchangeable and changeable objects in the world (37a-c). In other words, the soul has 'unchangeable' tools to identify the Forms, and 'changeable tools' to deal with the objects in the physical realm. By 'mixing together' the two versions of the formal concepts Plato maintains the unity of the soul. There is not a *world-mind* dealing only with eternal being, sameness and difference, separate from the *world-soul* that is concerned with the temporal and changeable, their being, sameness and difference; there is, rather, one mental force that does both — resulting in either knowledge or true opinion. *Nous* and *psuchê* are united in the *Timaeus*. (2) The 'mixed tools' of dialectic are at the same time depicted as extended 'bands' making up the soul in order to receive a mathematical structure by a division in a complex set of proportions (35b-36b). The portions (1 - 2 - 4 - 8 - 3 - 9 - 27) of the mixture, with further subdivisions according to the arithmetical, geometrical and harmonic means, are those that are necessary to demarcate the intervals of harmonic sounds in theoretical harmonics (1 : 2 is the division that forms an octave, 3 : 2 the fifth, 4 : 3 the fourth, 9 : 8 the major second, etc.). As these harmonic divisions suggest, the world-soul is at the same time a kind of musical instrument. No heavenly music is mentioned in the *Timaeus*, however, though Plato may have at least wanted to imply such a musical capacity. (3) Instead, the mathematical proportions are applied to explain the order and the motions of the heavenly bodies (36b-d). For the soul-bands, divided in different proportions, are then tied together in circles and ordered in a complicated system of combinations that represent a mechanical model of the motions and distances of the stars revolving around the earth.

Why does Plato burden himself and his readers with such a complex machinery — and what does this heavenly instrument have to do with ethics? Since the human soul is formed from the same ingredients (albeit in a less pure form) and displays the same structure as the world soul (41d-e) Plato cannot be just concerned with explaining the order of the universe. He clearly presupposes that the human soul must be in possession of the kinds of concepts that it needs in order to understand the nature of all things, both eternal and temporal. He limits the soul's ingredients to purely formal conditions, however; a theory of recollection of the essence of all things is no longer presupposed. There are (a) the most important concepts to identify and differentiate objects in the way necessary for dialectical procedure; there are (b) the numbers and proportions needed to understand numerical relations and harmonic structures of all sorts; and there is (c) the capacity to perform and comprehend harmoniously coordinated motions. This, it seems, is all the soul gets and all it needs in order to perform its various tasks. The eccentric and fanciful depiction of the soul's composition makes it hard, at first, to penetrate to the rationale of its construction, and it must remain an open question to what extent Plato expected his model to be taken in a literal rather than in an allegorical sense. His message should be clear, however: the soul both is a harmoniously structured entity, that can in principle function forever, and it manages to comprehend the corresponding structures in other entities and therefore has access to all that is good and well-ordered. Especially the latter aspect has consequences for his ethical thought that are not developed in the *Timaeus* itself, but that can be detected in other late dialogues.

5.2 Measure for Measure

Plato's concern with 'right measure' in a sense that is relevant for ethical thought is, of course, not confined to his late work. It shows up rather early. Already in the *Gorgias* Socrates blames Callicles for the undisciplined state of his soul and attributes it to his neglect of geometry, 508a: "You've failed to notice that proportionate equality (*geometrikê isotês*) has great power among both gods and men." But it is unclear whether this expression is to be taken in a more than figurative sense; it is, at any rate, not repeated anywhere in Plato's earlier work. And though numbers are treated as paradigmatic entities from the middle dialogues on and in the *Protagoras* Socrates suggests as a definition of virtue that it is an 'art of measuring' (*metrêtikê technê*) pleasure and pain (*Prt.* 156c-157e), nothing is made of that suggestion; for the dialogue ends in an *aporia* about the nature of virtue (161c-d). Nor does Plato take up the notion of quantification in his discussion of the nature of the virtues in his middle dialogues. If mathematics looms large, then it is as a model science on account of its exactness, the stability of its objects, and their accessibility to the mind. Such scattered occurrences apart, a systematic exploration of the notion that measure and proportion are the fundamental conditions of goodness is confined to the late dialogues. Apart from the *Timaeus*' emphasis on a precise cosmic and mental order there is a crucial passage in the *Politicus* where the Eleatic Stranger distinguishes two kinds of the 'art of measurement', *Plt.* 283d-285c. The first kind is the ordinary measuring of quantities relative to each other ('the great and small'), the second kind has a normative component; it is concerned with the determination of 'due measure' (*to metrion*). The latter kind is treated with great concern, for the Eleatic Stranger claims that it is the basis of all expertise, including the

art they are looking for, namely statesmanship, 284a-b: “It is by preserving measure in this way that they produce all the good and fine things they do produce.” The point he is trying to make is that all good productions or all processes of generation that come to a good end presuppose ‘right measure’, while arbitrary quantities (‘the more and less’) do not constitute such entities. Because of this distinction the ES suggests the separation of the simple arts of measuring from the arts concerned with ‘due measure’, 284e: “Positing as one part all those sorts of expertise that measure the numbers, lengths, depths, breadths and speeds of things in relation to what is opposed to them, and as the other, all those that measure in relation to what is in due measure (*to metrion*), what is fitting (*to prepon*), the right moment (*to kairion*), what is as it ought to be (*to deon*) — everything that is removed from the extremes to the middle (*meson*).” Not much is made of this distinction in the *Politicus* itself, except that due measure seems to be presupposed in the final definition of the statesman as a kingly weaver who possesses the expertise of weaving together the fabric of the state, most of all by combining the aggressive and the moderate temperaments of the population in such a way as to produce a harmonious citizenry (305e- 311c). In the *Politicus*, no actual use is made of the ‘art of due measurement’ in a literal sense of ‘measure’. No arithmetic is applied in the ‘mixing of the citizens characters’.

The importance of measure in a literal sense becomes more explicit, however, in the *Philebus*. In that dialogue number (*arithmos*), measure (*metron*), and limit (*peras*) play a crucial role at various points of the discussion. First of all, the *Philebus* is the dialogue where Plato requires that numerical precision must be observed in the ‘divine gift’ of dialectical procedure by collection and division (16c-17a). The dialectician must know precisely how many species and subspecies a certain genus contains; otherwise he has no claim to any kind of expertise. Despite this emphasis on precision and on the need to determine the numerical ‘limit’ in every science, Socrates does not provide the envisaged kind of numerically complete division of the two contenders for the rank of highest good in human life, pleasure and knowledge, because he suddenly remembers that neither of the two contenders suffices for the good life, but a mixture of the two is preferable. To explain the mixture Socrates introduces a fourfold division of all beings (23c-27c), which uses the categories of ‘limit’ and ‘measure’ in a different way than in the ‘divine method of dialectic’. As he now states, all beings are in the class of either (a) limit (*peras*), (b) the unlimited (*apeiron*), (c) the mixture (*meixis*) of the unlimited and limit, or (d) the cause (*aitia*) of such a mixture. As his subsequent explications concerning the four classes show, unlimited are all those things that have no exact grade or measure in themselves, such as the hotter and colder, the faster and slower; though at first only relative terms are used as examples, the class of the unlimited is then extended to things like hot and cold, dry and moist, fast and slow, and even fever and frost. Mixture takes place when such qualities take on a definite quantity (*poson*) or due measure (*metrion*) that puts a stop to such vagaries. That only stable entities qualify as mixtures is not only suggested by the examples Socrates refers to: health, strength, beauty, music, and the seasons, but much later in the dialogue he asserts that a mixture without due measure or proportion does not deserve its name, 64d-e: “it will necessarily corrupt its ingredients and most of all itself. For there would be no blending in such cases at all but really an unconnected medley, the ruin of whatever happens to be contained in it.” The upshot of the discussion is that all

stable entities (mixtures) consist of a harmonious equilibrium of their otherwise unlimited ingredients. Since indeterminate elements usually turn up in pairs of opposites the right limit in each case is the right proportion necessary for their balance. In the case of health there must be the right balance between the hot and cold, the dry and moist. The cause of the proper proportion for each mixture turns out to be reason; it is the only member of the fourth class. As Socrates indicates, divine reason is the ultimate source of all that is good and harmonious in the universe (26e-27c; 28a-30e), of which human reason is just an inferior replica.

This decision on a fourfold ontology allows Socrates to assign the two contenders for the highest good in life to two of the four classes: pleasure turns out to be unlimited since it allows for various degrees. Reason, by contrast, belongs to the fourth class, it is the cause of good mixtures. On the basis of this classification the investigation continues with a critical assessment of the different kinds of pleasures and different kinds of knowledge (31b-59d). It turns out that pleasure is at best a remedial good: pleasure is always the filling of a lack or the restoration of a harmonious state and therefore presupposes some kind of disturbance of the physical or mental equilibrium. Pleasures may be false, harmful and violent if the pursuer is mistaken about the object's identity and quantity, and if there is no real cure for the irritation. Pleasures may be 'true and pure' if they are compensations of a harmless and unfelt lack and their possessor is not mistaken about the object's nature (31b-55c). The rival of the pleasures, the different intellectual disciplines, also vary in quality; in their case the difference in quality depends on the amount of mathematical precision they contain (55c-59d). The decision about the right mixture that is to make for a happy life leads to a combination of the true and pure pleasures with all the kinds of knowledge and disciplines that are necessary to fulfill life's needs (59d-64b). In the final ranking of goods, unsurprisingly, measure and due proportion get the first rank, things in proper proportion come in second, reason is ranked third, the different sorts of arts and sciences obtain fourth place, and the true and pure pleasures get the last place on the scale of goods (64c-67b). If Plato in the *Philebus* is more favorably disposed towards a hedonist stance, he is so only to a quite limited degree: he regards pleasure as a necessary ingredient in human life because both the physical and the psychic equilibria that make up human nature are unstable. There is always some deficiency or lack that needs supplementing. This includes, of course, such processes as learning and the pursuit of the virtues. Hence there are some pleasures that are rightly cherished. What are we to make of this conception of happiness as a mixture of pleasure and knowledge that is based on 'due measurement'? There are two points worth noting here. (1) There is the question of the role Plato assigns to measure in his late concept of ethics. (2) There is the question of how serious Plato is about the 'mathematization' of his principles, quite generally.

(1) Though harmony and order are treated as decisive principles in Plato's metaphysics and ethics from early on, in his late dialogues he seems to envisage right measure in a literal sense. This explains Plato's confidence that even physical entities can attain a relatively stable state as specified both in the *Timaeus* and in the *Philebus*: not everything is in a hopeless constant flux, but those things that possess the right measure for their type are stable entities that can be objects of 'firm and true opinions and convictions' (*Ti.*

37b-c). This obviously applies to the nature of the visible universe and also to the human body and mind, as long as they are in good condition. Plato seems to have been encouraged to embrace such theories by the advances in astronomy and harmonics in his own lifetime, so that he at least postulates 'due proportion' in an arithmetical sense as the cause of all harmony and stability. This confidence seems to have extended not only to the physical, but also to the moral state of human nature. This assumption is confirmed not only by the emphasis on right mixture in the *Philebus*, but also by the tenet of the *Laws* about the way it is the law's task to achieve peace in the state and harmony in the soul of its citizens. It emerges that Plato now regards the emotions no longer as alien to the virtues, but sees it as the lawgiver's obligation to provide an adequate balance of pleasure and pain by habituating citizens in the right way (632a-643a). It is crucial for obtaining the truly free soul through *paideia*, 636e: "Pleasure and pain flow like two springs released by nature. If a man draws the right amount from the right one at the right time, he lives a happy life." This is not the place to introduce the project Plato pursues in the *Laws* as a whole. For our purpose it suffices to notice that the discussion of the right measure of pleasure and pain forms the preface to the entire project. This indicates a considerable shift of emphasis in the *Laws* in comparison with Plato's treatment of the emotions in the *Republic*. That education should provide the right habituation (*éthos*) concerning the measure of pleasure and pain is the topic of the *Laws*' second book. The emphasis put on the right measure and the right object of pleasure and pain in the *éducation sentimentale* is a tenet that seems to some extent to anticipate the Aristotelian conception of the moral virtues as the right mean between excess and deficiency, 653b-c: "Virtue is this general concord of reason and emotion. But there is one element you could isolate in any account you give, and this is the correct formation of our feelings of pleasure and pain, which makes us hate what we ought to hate from first to last, and love what we ought to love." Plato's confidence in the *Laws* in the power of due measure in all matters finally culminates in the famous maxim that God is the measure of all things, 716c-d: "In our view, it is God who is preeminently the 'measure of all things', much more so than any man, as they say. So if you want to recommend yourself to someone of this character, you must do your level best to make your own character reflect his, and on this principle the moderate man is God's friend, being like him, whereas the immoderate and unjust man is not like him and is his enemy; and the same reasoning applies to the other vices too." Since Plato — just like Aristotle after him — carefully refrains from any kind of specifications on actual right measures we may treat the 'arithmetic' of the good life with more than a pinch of salt. That individuals differ in their internal and external conditions is as clear to Plato as it was to Aristotle. This does not shake the faith he expresses in the *Laws* that right habituation through the right kind of education, most of all in the arts, will provide the right inner equilibrium for the good citizen.

(2) As stated earlier, Plato's confidence in a mathematically structured order of the universe that also includes human nature was greatly enhanced by the progress of the scientists of his day. This seems to be the rationale for his depiction of the world's creation as a construction by a divine craftsman in the *Timaeus* that makes use of proportion and also takes care to give a geometrical construction to the four elements (a factor left out of consideration here). This conception is echoed in the *Philebus*' emphasis on measure and proportion as the ultimate criteria of goodness. It should be noted,

however, that Plato carefully refrains from going into any specifics about concrete mathematical relations; even in the *Timaeus* he does not apply his complicated system of proportions when it comes to specify the actual size, distance and speed of the heavenly bodies. Nor does he indicate in the *Philebus* how an art of establishing the limits of good mixtures should be obtained. It therefore remains an open question to what extent he regarded as viable the project of doing mathematical physics and metaphysics. That he went some way in that direction seems to be indicated by claims in later reports on Plato's theory of Forms, that he either treated the Forms as numbers or associated numbers with them. Since Aristotle is quite vociferous in his criticism of this theory in *Metaphysics* A 6 and 9 and elaborates the criticism of ideas as numbers or idea-numbers in books M and N, there must be some substance to that claim. This is not the place to enter the controversy about the nature and extent of Plato's 'unwritten doctrine' that has been the focus of the so-called 'Tübingen School' of interpreting Plato. As the uncertainties in Aristotle's various reports indicate, the doctrine cannot ever have reached a definitive stage, for at one point he complains that Plato's theory relied on too few numbers (*Met.* 1084a10-27), elsewhere he objects that, 1073a20: "they speak of numbers now as unlimited, now as limited by the number 10." That Plato never presented this theory in a definite form is confirmed by the reports on his 'lecture on the good' that scandalized a general audience because Plato, instead of speaking about ordinary goods of fortune, as expected by the uninformed public, spoke about mathematics and "finally, that the Good is one" (cf. Aristoxenos, *Harmonica*, II, 30). But it was not just the audience who found the message hard to comprehend. As Simplicius reports, Plato's mature students such as Aristotle, Heraclides Ponticus, and Hestiaeus took notes "because it was stated enigmatically" and then reports that Porphyry, his own source, used the *Philebus* to unravel the enigma (*In Aristotelis physica* 453,29). Given the disagreements in our sources, it may forever remain a matter of debate how far Plato went in his mathematization of metaphysics. It seems clear, however, that he must at least have entertained the hope that all that is good rests on 'due measure' in a more than metaphorical sense.

If Plato's thought remained somewhat speculative in that respect this explains why in his late works his ethical thought strikes us as less rigid and more ready to come to terms with the complexity of human nature and with the conditions for a satisfactory life. Signs of a more conciliatory stance can be seen in the depiction of a mixed life in the *Philebus*, as well as in the conception of a second-best state as more in accordance with human nature in the *Laws*. Not only did Plato see that persons of super-human virtue are not easily found and that education and philosophy alone are no warranty of goodness, he no longer expects humans to be immune to the temptations of power. Therefore he recommends a mixed constitution in a nomocracy as more appropriate than a monarchy of the best minds in *Laws* book V. Humans are to be servants of the laws, not masters of each other. It may seem paradoxical that Plato became more conciliatory towards the conditions of the best human life at the same time as his confidence in scientific rigor increased. But there actually is no paradox. His conciliatory stance seems, rather, to reflect his insight that, the more complex things get, the less precision is to be attained. Therefore no mathematical precision is to be expected in the ordering of as complex mixture as human life. 'Due measure' as applied to the human condition must therefore

be given some leeway, “if ever we are to find our way home”, as Plato lets Socrates' partner conclude in the *Philebus*. That ethics cannot be done with the same precision as mathematics is not, then, an insight that occurred only to Aristotle. But Plato must have thought that precision should at least be aimed for if life is to be based on a harmonious order.

Did Plato, then, become more democratic with his concept of happiness in his latest works? If we follow the indications about the best state of the human soul as ‘orderly circles’ in the *Timaeus*, he seems to be as elitist as he ever was. He no longer puts so much emphasis on the distance between the best and the worst, however. As he states in the *Politicus*, even the most gifted statesmen don't stick out from the rest of humankind like queen-bees from ordinary bees. All human beings have only ‘second best souls’ when compared to the world soul. If all human beings have to see to the best mixture of life they can obtain, and even the best of them can be no more than servants of the laws, then one may say that Plato has become more democratic in the sense that he sees the ‘human herd’ as a more uniform flock than he used to in his earlier days.

