

# **A Chasm underneath the Smoothed Consensus: A Note on Plato’s Idiosyncratic Use of ἀληθῆ λέγεις\***

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Some linguistic incongruities in ordinary language, even though harsh for an inquisitive audience, do not stop the flow of conversation. The participants seem to cooperate tactfully to keep to the subject-matter and to fill the gap instantly. For example, responding, “I agree” when asked a Yes-No question will not always invite a rebuke. So why should responding ἀληθῆ λέγεις (meaning “You say true things” or “You say truly”)\*<sup>1</sup>?

For most readers of Plato’s dialogues, the reply form ἀληθῆ λέγεις and the like\*<sup>2</sup>, at the first reading and even later, sounds like an established form

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Reference to classical authors and works is made according to the abbreviations listed in Liddell & Scott and Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. with rev. suppl., Oxford, 1996. Reference to Plato’s works is made according to Stephanus’ page and section and, for convenience’ sake, to Burnet’s line (J. Burnet, *Platonis Opera*, 5 tom., Oxford, 1900–1907).

\*<sup>1</sup> An alternative question is sometimes taken by the respondent as a simple question, or a statement, of the second alternative: *Cra.* 387b11–c5; *Tht.* 152b5–8; *Plt.* 281c7–d4.

\*<sup>2</sup> The evaluative ἀληθῆ, ὀρθῶς, sometimes δίκαια, καλῶς and εὖ, and their superlatives governed either by the infinitive λέγειν under the modals κινδυνεύεις, φαίνη and δοκεῖς or, elliptically or not, by any form of λέγεις in the second person; and the reply ἀληθὲς τοῦτο λέγεις.

in reply not only to a statement but even to a Yes-No question\*<sup>3</sup>. The conversation certainly does not stumble over it. Certainly, on the whole, this reply type, since it literally expresses the speaker's intended speech and the truth value of the proposition embodied, is used throughout the classical age as reply in the affirmative to a statement. However, as reply to a Yes-No question it is not established, even among or after Socratics. Therefore, despite the first impression the Platonic idiosyncrasy is worth putting under scrutiny.

In practice, by various forms of λέγειν in the second person singular such as εἶπες, εἶπας, ἔλεγες, ἔλεξας, εἶρηκας and in the perfect passive form λέλεκται, one can reply to any type of utterance, declarative\*<sup>4</sup>, interrogative\*<sup>5</sup> or imperative\*<sup>6</sup>, and also, by adding various evaluative words in the form of adverbs\*<sup>7</sup> or neuter plural or singular accusative adjectives\*<sup>8</sup>, one can evaluate any aspect of the utterance, even its implication and presupposition, intended or unintended\*<sup>9</sup>.

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\*<sup>3</sup> R. Kühner and B. Gerth (*Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache*, Hannover, 1898, II-2, 540) and H. W. Smyth (*Greek Grammar*, Cambridge, Mass., 1920, 606) support this impression.

\*<sup>4</sup> H 357, Σ 285; A. *Supp.* 246, 342; S. *Aj.* 94, *OT* 280, 322, 404–405; E. *Cyc.* 196, 569, *Alc.* 1104, *Med.* 354, 1128, *Heracl.* 333, 464, 726, 797, *Hipp.* 278, *Andr.* 909, *Hec.* 382, 670, 1007, *Supp.* 296, 332, *El.* 640, *HF* 606, *Ion* 648, 1022, *IT* 340, 597, 740, 766, 909, 1293, 1325, *Hel.* 125, 141, 772, 808, 1064, *Ba.* 823, 953, *IA* 504, 829, 975, 1024, 1347; *Hdt.* 5.50; *Ar. Eq.* 1364; reply to a rhetorical or biased question: ρ 381; E. *Hel.* 158; *Ar. Nub.* 1289.

\*<sup>5</sup> S. *Ant.* 771; E. *El.* 275, *IT* 1021, *Hel.* 1043, *Or.* 386, *IA* 1132; cf. A. *Eum.* 719.

\*<sup>6</sup> *Hdt.* 1.8; 9.111; E. *Or.* 638; *Ar. Eq.* 492; reply to a hortative: *Pax* 1051.

\*<sup>7</sup> E.g. τὸ πᾶν ἀτίμως ἔλεξας A. *Ch.* 434; ὡς εὖ καὶ ζῶως λέγεις σέθεν E. *Hec.* 990.

\*<sup>8</sup> E.g. μέγα γ 227, π 243; βαρέα A. *Supp.* 342; αἰνικτὰ κάσαφῆ S. *OT* 439; ἄσημα E. *Alc.* 522, ἀμήχανα *Heracl.* 464, δίκαιον *IT* 740, Ἰλίου τ' οὐκ ἄξια *Hel.* 808, ἀδύνατον *Hel.* 1043; ὁμοιον *Ar. Lys.* 594; θαυμαστά X. *Mem.* 2.3.9; ἄτοπα *Mem.* 2.3.15; ἅπιστα *Hier.* 1.9; cf. *Hdt.* 2.119 εἶπας τὴν ἀληθεῖν τῶν πρηγμάτων.

\*<sup>9</sup> S. *Aj.* 1127, *Ant.* 282, 316; E. *Hel.* 1043, 1219, *Or.* 386; *Ar. Nub.* 204; cf. S. *Ant.*

In theory, therefore, one can reply to a Yes-No question by λέγεις and evaluate the truth value of the embodied proposition by ἀληθῆ<sup>\*10</sup>.

Also, with the verbs for asking a question various aspects of the utterance are evaluated (ὀρθῶς μ' ἐρωτᾷς E. Ph. 930; ὀρθῶς ... ἠρώτηκε Pl. Phlb.18a3; ἄτοπον ἦρου Lg. 658c4)<sup>\*11</sup> but the truth value of the embodied proposition is not. Hence, among the verbs for saying, if not by λέγεις, how else could one have evaluated it (cf. καὶ μάλα ἀληθῆς τὸ νῦν λεγόμενον Phlb. 46d3)?

However, using the reply type ἀληθῆ λέγεις in reply to a Yes-No question is, according to the extant literature, not practised before<sup>\*12</sup>, and almost never after Plato<sup>\*13</sup>. Only in his dialogues does there seem to be such.

1054, Ph. 1234–1237; Pl. Ap. 26d6–9. The frequent use of λέγεις to ask in response the meaning of part or the whole of the interlocutor's utterance of any type indicates this characteristic (e.g. S. Tr. 1220, Ph. 1384; E. Hipp. 921; Ar. Nub. 103, 768, Av. 57).

<sup>\*10</sup> At E. Ion 943 in response to a Yes-No question with simple ἄρα ἀληθῆ λέγεις occurs but in an additional remark, not as direct reply. It means the questioner's commitment to the embodied proposition but comes from the questioner's suggestion that from the respondent's previous description he has just recognized he already noticed the referent in question.

<sup>\*11</sup> E. HF 1137 ἐρωτᾷς δ' ἄθλι' ἐρμηνεύματα; Pl. Cra. 406b8 μεγάλη ... ἐρωτᾷς; Rp. 456d11 γελοῖον ἐρωτᾷς; Lg 685a5 οὐ πάνυ ῥᾶδιον ἐρωτᾷς.

<sup>\*12</sup> The reply form ἀληθῆς as question: S. Ant. 758, OT 350; E. Cyc. 241, Fr. 885.1; Ar. Ach. 557, Eq. 89, Nub. 841, Vesp. 1223, 1412, Av. 1048, 1606, Lys. 433, Ran. 840, Plut. 123, 429; the reply form ἀληθῆ λέγεις as question: Ar. Plut. 394; the reply type ἀληθῆ λέγεις in reply to non-interrogative force: S. El. 1040, Ant. 403, Ph. 341; E. Ion 745, Or. 100, 110; Ar. Ran. 672; the reply type ἀληθῆ λέγεις repeating the main clause finite verb λέγω in question: S. OT 1141; cf. S. OT 1476. Ὄρθῶς λέγεις is uttered in reply to a non-biased Yes-No question at Ar. Nub. 679 but the verb refers not to the embodied proposition but to the way of speaking grammatically.

<sup>\*13</sup> In a question-and-answer session at Mem. 4.2, Xenophon uses this reply form just once at 4.2.32, when Euthydemus replies to Socrates' magisterial exposition he previously requests. The reply type elsewhere (Mem. 2.8.3, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.8, 3.5.4, 3.6.7, 3.6.9, 3.10.2, 3.10.5, 3.11.12, 4.5.9; Anab. 5.8.10; Cyr. 8.3.44) is not

Even in Plato's dialogues, however, the reply type ἀληθῆ λέγεις is clearly not interchangeably used with normal reply forms such as ναί in question-

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used in reply to a Yes-No question, except to a rhetorical question at *Mem.* 3.3.4 (καλῶς λέγεις) and to a question with ἐντεθύμησαι at *Mem.* 3.3.13. In the spurious dialogues in the Platonic corpus, the reply type ἀληθῆ λέγεις is uttered in reply to a statement or, if the preceding utterance has no absolute mark for statement, is mostly reducible to the interlocutor's affirmative or exegetical stance (reference backward (or forward) to direct or indirect evidence, mainly main clause finite verbs implying, connectives referred back to, or interrogatives leading to, the discussion leader's affirmation or exegesis, is made here and below in the round bracket following the leading reference) (*Alc.* 1 112c1 (112a10), 112c7 (112c2, c1, a10), 120c3 (120a1), 120d8 (120d4), 126b7 (126b3), 128e9 (128e3), 129b4 (129b2), 130b13 (130b11), 131b3 (131a9–10), 131c4 (130c8–d1), 131c8 (131c5), 131e5 (131e1–2), 132e4 (132e2), 133a4 (132e7), 133b1 (132e7), 134c8 (134c4), 135b6 (135a6), *Alc.* 2 145a3 (144d4), 146d6 (146b1, 5), *Amat.* 138b9 (138b11; 137b6–7), *Thg.* 122c5 (122b7), 124e1 (124d10 rhetorical question; 123b3–8), *Hipparch.* 230c7 (c4 parenthetical οἶμα (see n. 17), 230a12), *Epin.* 981a10 (979e3)). At *Alc.* 1 120a4, a8 (120a2 οἶσθα, a1); 128e3 (128e1 ὠμολόγηται); 135a3 (135a2–3, 134e8); *Min.* 318b5 (318b3 ὑπομνήσω), ἀληθῆ λέγεις is uttered formally in reply to a Yes-No question but in the questioner's exegetical context. However, the reply type is irreducible in force to the questioner's affirmative or exegetical stance at *Alc.* 1 116a9, *Min.* 317b1 and *peri dikaiou* 375c1. In a dialogue by Alexander Aphrodisiensis six of 19 replies are the reply λέγεις ὀρθῶς, formally once to a rhetorical question, but, in intention, always to statement (*Alexandri scripta praeter commentaria minora reliqua*, ed. by Ivo Bruns (*Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, suppl. II-2) Berlin, 1892: 8–13). In Porphyrius' dialogue, the questioner confirms the expositor's answer by ἀληθές τοῦτο three times (63) (*Porphyrii in Aristotelis Categorias exposition per interrogationem et responsionem*, ed. by A. Busse (*Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* IV-1) Berlin, 1887: 53–182). The type ἀληθῆ λέγεις rarely appears in reply to a Yes-No question but only to a biased one: a question of an implication by *modus tollens* (Lucianus, *Solec.* 1.6); a rhetorical question by ἄρ' οὖν οὐ (Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 12.52.13); a question with οἶσθα (Galenus, *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 9.3.17).

and-answer sessions of each dialogue, which stylometric statistics have also indicated\*14. Meletus in the *Apology*, examined at Socrates' trial, does not use it to Socrates' questions. The slave boy in the *Meno*, when Socrates questions him with a series of biased interrogative sentences, in a way which is clear to his audience Meno, yet claims not to be teaching him (cf. *Euthphr.* 6d2, 9a1, 11e3, 12e1), uses it only once when his previous idea turns out to be wrong.

Among the descriptions, in indirect discourse, of the reply type ἀληθῆ λέγεις there is no case where the preceding utterance is described as a question (*Chrm.* 161b6–7; *Hp. Ma.* 300a3–4; *Rp.* 331e1–2, 4, 341e7–8, 392b8–9; *Lg.* 857e2, 901a6).

The reply ἀληθῆ λέγεις or ὀρθῶς λέγεις often has its meaning spelled out in a ὅτι clause (*Rp.* 338b4–6, 395a7; *Phlb.* 52b4; cf. *Cra.* 434c1).

However, once in reply to the explicit performative utterance [ἐρωτῶ] εἰ ... at *Rp.* 353c6–7, ἀληθές ... τοῦτό γε λέγεις is uttered. Yet in contrast with a similar previous exchange at 349b10–c3 one could not deny that in the context here from 350d6 the respondent takes care to find what proposition the questioner is potentially committed to, and perhaps, pretends to assent to it.

Τοῦτ' ἀληθέστερον εἴρηκας is uttered, definitely when asked in an alternative interrogative sentence (πότερον ... ἢ ...) in the *Gorgias* (493d4). The "questioner", nevertheless, doubts the first alternative in saying πειθῶ τι.

Certainly the Platonic idiosyncratic use gets a clean bill of health from the utterance ναί, οὕτως ἔχει ὡς σὺ λέγεις unbrokenly issued in reply to a Yes-No question at *Hp. Mi.* 367a5 but only if limited to this single exchange\*15. The whole context of the dialogue along with Plato's parallels points the other way. Hippias here, proud of winning any question-and-answer match, claims to answer any question. Therefore, he must be doing something

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\*14 C. Kahn, 'On Platonic Chronology', *New Perspectives on Plato, Modern and Ancient*, ed. by J. Annas and C. Rowe, Cambridge, Mass., 2002, 93–127.

\*15 The reply at *Euthphr.* 8e2–3, except its opaque demonstrative, also supports the propositional use of λέγεις.

tactically best. By the reply type οὕτως ἔχει ὡς σὺ λέγεις a respondent, even though the questioner is intending to examine the respondent's belief, may affirm what he regards as the 'questioner's' disguised statement as in *Hp. Ma.* 281a1–282a4, *Chrm.* 161a8–10 and *Men.* 78e6–79a2, 96c1–2, and even when asked an alternative question as in *Cra.* 387b11–c5.

Yet, the impersonal meaning of the reply type ἀληθῆ λέγεις might be a stipulation for the interlocutors in Plato's dialogues (*Chrm.* 161c5–8; *Prot.* 331c4–d1; *Grg.* 479e8; *Rp.* 349a9–b1), but where and until when is it operative and *cui bono*?

With all the dubious indirect evidence, the reply type ἀληθῆ λέγεις is, certainly, sometimes used in reply to grammatically genuine Yes-No interrogative sentences beginning with the particle ἄρα. However, there is no case of a simple ἄρα question without any bias<sup>\*16</sup>.

With closer observation of the context antecedent to the reply type ἀληθῆ λέγεις there are almost always, for the respondent, one or two, embedded, close, or remote, unmistakable markers for what his interlocutor is prepared to affirm. The antecedent conversation can be reduced mainly to two simplified types: Type A: “ P, I think<sup>\*17</sup> / do you understand / do you agree”,

<sup>\*16</sup> The reply type ἀληθῆ λέγεις in reply to a formally genuine Yes-No question with: main clause finite verb of opinion in the second person singular: *Phdr.* 263d1, *Lg.* 769c9 (cf. *La.* 199e2; *Rp.* 335b1; *Phlb.* 31d1; m.c.f. verb in the second person singular: *Ly.* 214b6; m.c.f. verb in the first person plural: *Lg.* 788d9, cf. *Rp.* 349d2, 5); τί δέ; + non-biased question followed by further explanation οἷον τοιόνδε λέγω: *Grg.* 464a6–7; simple ἄρα: *Plt.* 296d5 (biased question in sense) (cf. *Euthphr.* 12d4); πότερα ... ἢ ...: *Rp.* 331d1; πότερον οὖν: *Plt.* 281d4; ἄρ' οὖν+ alternative conjunction ἢ: *Rp.* 601c14; ἄρ' οὖν οὐ: *Phlb.* 53b3, *Lg.* 647b2, 657d7, 840b2, 896b9, 901e8, (cf. *Lg.* 666a1); ἄρ' οὐ: *Phd.* 66a9–10; *Plt.* 296c3, 300a8; *Phlb.* 36c2 (cf. *Phlb.* 26a5); ἄρ' οὖν: *Hp. Ma.* 281d8; *Lg.* 661e5 (cf. μῶν: *Lg.* 895a3); μῶν οὖν: 672a4; negative question introduced by τί δέ or τί οὖν: *Hp. Ma.* 284d5–6; *Rp.* 440c6, 519c7 (cf. *Phlb.* 23a9); οὐκοῦν οὐ: *Ly.* 220b5; *Phlb.* 59a10; οὐκ ἄρα: *Men.* 78a8–b1; οὐ: *Ion* 531d3; *Chrm.* 160a3, *Hp. Ma.* 284d5–6.

<sup>\*17</sup> The parenthetical use of οἶμαι is not entirely a marker for an affirmative or

“Yes”, “Then, Q<sub>1</sub> (?)”, “Yes”, “Then, Q<sub>2</sub> (?)” ...\*<sup>18</sup>, e.g. *Euthd.* 307b2; *Hp. Ma.* 297c3; *Ion* 535a8\*<sup>19</sup>; Type B: “P, I think”, “How?” “Q”, e.g. *Euthd.*

exegetical stance (See A. Taki, “A Thorn in the Flesh of Doctrinal Readers of Plato: a note on an οἴμαι sentence at *Rp.* 335d”, 『フィロロギカ——古典文献学のために』 古典文献学研究会, 3 (2008), 79–87. ).

\*<sup>18</sup> ‘P’ and ‘Q’ are variables for propositions. The part “Yes”-“Then, Q(?)” is sometimes dispensed with and sometimes repeated. Whether the intention of Q is question or not cannot simply be determined except where explicit performative verbs, interrogative particles, or question-introducing sentences are used without any structure of rhetorical question.

\*<sup>19</sup> *Ion* 535a8 (Q (= in reply formally to an interrogative sentence)) (533c9–d1); *Chrm.* 160a3 (Q) (160a1), 160d4 (160a8), 161b3–4 (161a10), 164a1 (163e9–10), 168b1 (168a10–11), 168c8 (168c2), 171a2 (170e5); *Cri.* 48b2 (48a5–6, 47c8); *La.* 185a8 (184d8), 190b2 (189e7–8), 191c6 (191b8), 192b4 (192a10), 193e5 (193e3); *Euthphr.* 13d3 (13c11–12); *Ly.* 216e5 (216d3), 220b5 (Q) (219d5), 221c5 (221a5–6); *Prt.* 340c1 (Q) (340b2), 352d4 (352d1), 354e2 (354e1), 359e7 (359e5), 360b2 (360a8); *Men.* 84b2 (84a3), 85c3 (85c2), 98b6 (98b5, 1); *Hp. Ma.* 285e9 (285e8), 288c4 (288c2), 297c3 (297b9); *Euthd.* 307b2 (Q) (307a8); *Cra.* 386d7 (d3 parenthetical οἴμαι, 386c6), 404e3 (404e2), 414b5 (414a8), 414e1 (414c4, e2), 418a4 (418a2–3), 435e5 (435e3), 438e10 (438e8, 6); *Phd.* 63b1 (63a5), 70b5 (70b1), 74c10 (73c4), 102a2 (102a1), 102c5 (Q) (102b8), 103e1 (103c10), 104c10(104b6), 107b10 (107b7); *Smp.* 194c8 (194c7), 200b8 (200a8–b2), 202a10 (202a5–6), 206a13 (206a6, a1); *Phdr.* 238d4 (238c9), 260a8 (260a7), 268e6 (268d6 (d6, d3 parenth. οἴμαι)), 272b7 (b5–6, 271c9), 275d3 (275b5–c1, 274c5); *Prm.* 135c4 (135c2–3), 149a6 (149a4); replies to the question about the validity of the inference (137c2ff.): 137d1, 137d6, 138a1, 138e4, 139c5, 139d1, 139d5, 140b1, 140d2, 141e7, 148d7, 149c2, 152c6, 153e5, 155d8, 156a1, 157c1, 158a3, 159b1, 159d7, 160a3, 160d6, 160e7, 162b3, 162d8, 163e2, 164c6, 164d4, 165e1, 166b7; *Rp.* 329e6 (329e1), 330c9 (330b8), 336a8 (336a5), 370d4 (370d3), 374a7 (374a4), 375c5 (375a12), 377a11 (377a9), 387e2 (387d5), 388e1 (388a5), 389c7 (389b9), 391c7 (390d2), 395a7 (395a7, 5), 395a9 (395a8), 395b7 (395b3), 396a7 (396a2 parenth. οἴμαι, 395d1), 398d7 (398c1), 402b4 (402b2), 408c5 (408c1–3, a1), 410b9 (409e3), 413d6 (413d4, 2), 425a7 (424e5), 428a7 (428a3–4, 427e6), 430c1 (430b6), 431b8 (431b4–5), 431c8

(431b8), 440c6 (Q) (440c1), 444a3 (443c8, 441d12), 445d7 (445d3), 452c3 (452a10), 454e5 (454e1), 460d11 (460d8), 464c4 & 464e7 (464b8, b4), 468d6 (468c5), 470a4 (469e7), 476a8 (475e6–7), 478d10 (478d5), 489c8 (489b3, a9), 501a7 (501a4), 501b8 (501b1 parenth. οἰμαί, a4), 503b2 (503a7–b1, 502e2–503a1), 503d10 (503d7), 505c5 (505c1, b5), 511a2 (510d5, c2), 519c6 (Q) (519b7), 520a5 (519e1), 521a9 (520e4), 525e5 (525d8), 526e5 (526e2, d9), 528e2 (528d7), 539c4 (539b1–2), 539d2 (539b1–2), 540c8 (540c6), 543c4 (543b7), 548b3 (548a5, 547d1), 564b3 (564a10), 564b8 (564b4), 578c8 (578c5), 579d3–4 (579b3), 581d5 (Q) (581c8), 600e3 (600c2), 607a8 (607a1–3), 610a4 (609e1), 611a9 (611a7); *Tht.* 143a6 (143a4–5), 143b4 (143b2), 146e11 (146e10), 154d7 (154d3), 158a4 (157e4), 158d10 (158c8), 169e6 (169e4), 174b7 (174b6), 179a4 (178e9), 183a8 (183a4), 188c8 (188c5), 190b9 (189e7), 190d9 (190c8), 193a5 (193a3–4), 193a11 (193a6), 195b1 (194d7–8), 195d11 (195d10), 196c3 (196b4), 197b2 (197a8), 197b11 (197b8), 201a3 (200e8), 206e3 (206d4–5); *Sph.* 243e7 (243d6), 244a3 (243d6), 246c4 (245e8), 248e5 (248e1), 256b8 (Q) (256a10–11), 256c10 (256b8); *Plt.* 260a8 (260a4 parenth. οἰμαί, 259d6–7), 268b7 (268b6), 276a1 (275e2), 296c3 (Q) (296b8–c1, b4), 296d5 (Q) (296d2–4), 300a8 (Q) (300a6, 298e11), 302b4 (302a2–3, 301e6), 305d5 (305c8); *Phlb.* 12b1 (12a9–10), 12b10 (12b7), 17b10 (17b6), 19b5 (19b2), 24b3 (24a8), 26d3 (26c8, 4), 27d11 (27d7), 29d1 (29c9), 29e4 (29e1–3), 31e1(31d9), 32d7 (32c6), 33c4 (33c1), 35d4 (35c3–4), 35d7 (35c3–4), 36c2 (Q) (35c3, 35d8), 36d5 (36d3), 36d11(36d9), 47d4 (47d1), 49c6 (49c1, b6), 52b4 (52b2–3), 52d2 (52b7), 53a9 (53a8), 54a7 (54a6), 57a5 (57a3–4), 59a10 (58e4), 59c7 (59c6), 61a6 (61a5), 61e5 (61e4), 62e2 (62d7), 63c5 (63c4), 64d1 (64c7–8), 65a6 (64e9), 67a4 (67a2), 67a9 (67a5); *Lg.* 625c3 (625b8), 627d5 (627d1, c8), 634c9 (634c9), 634e7 & 635a2 (634d6–7), 644b5 (644a1, 643d8), 644b8 (644b6), 647b2 (Q) (647a8, 7), 661e5 (Q) (661c8–661d4), 665b8 (665b3), 667e8 (667e6), 673c8 (673c5), 673d6 (673d1–2, c9), 690c4 (690c1–2, b4, 689c4–5), 690c9 (690c8), 690e6 (690d1), 769c9 (Q) (769c3), 783c5 (782d7–8), 788d9 (Q) (788d4), 812b1 (812a7–8), 819a7 (819a1), 821e7 (821e1), 822c6 (822a4), 837e8 (837e7), 840b2–4 (Q) (839e5), 842a10 (842a8), 853b3 (853b2), 863e1 (863d6), 869e9 (869e8), 892c8 (891d5), 893d6 (893c7), 896b9 (Q) (896a5, 895e5), 896c4 (896b10), 896e7 (896e4–5), 900c6 (900c4–5, c6–7), 969d2 (969c4–7).



279c7\*<sup>20</sup>. Which means that almost all the antecedent contexts can be referred to an exegetical, not non-committal, stance, even when a battery of

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\*<sup>20</sup> *Chrm.* 161c7 (161c3–4); *La.* 185d4 (Q) (185b6–7), 186a2 (185e7); *Euthd.* 279c8 (279c5–6); *Cra.* 393e9 (393d5), 398a7 (398a3), 407a5 (406d9), 417d7 (417d4), 423c7 (423c3); *Phd.* 83e4 (83d3); *Smp.* 205c3 (205b7, 204d1–2), 205c10 (205c4, b7), 205d9 (205b7); *Phdr.* 266b2 (265d8); *Prm.* 148c7 (148c4), 157c4 (157c2), 165b4 (165a7); *Rp.* 379a5 (378e4–6), 379c8 (379b11, a5–6), 381c3 (381b10), 392c5 (392a12), 408e6 (408e2 parenth. οἱμοι, 408d9), 409d5 (409a1, 408d9, 7, 4–5), 422c10 (422b2, a8–b1), 459c7 (459c1), 459d3 (459c7), 459e4 (459d6), 460a7 (459d6), 460b6 (459d6), 461b3 & b8 (460e3, 1–2), 461e4 (461d1), 467e8 (467e1), 485c9 (485c2), 486a7 (486a3), 490c7 (490c4), 498c5–6 (498b2), 503c8 (503c1), 507e5 (507e3), 535b10 (535b4), 535d7 (535c9), 536e5 (536d9), 554c10 (554c6), 562b8 (562b2), 571d5 (571c2), 578c4 (578b12), 581a2 (580d9), 584b9 (584b4), 597c10 (597c6), 602d5 (602c6), 606c1 (606a2); *Tht.* 164b3 (164a4), 164b6 (164a4), 189c5 (189b11), 206a9 (206a4); *Sph.* 219b7 (219b3), 224a8 (223e3), 225c5 (225b4), 229c7 (229c4), 238c7 (238b9), 241e6 (241d2), 246e1 (246d3), 249d5 (249a5), 250a7 (250a3), 251b4 (251a7), 252b7 (251d4), 252d1 (252c1); *Plt.* 260d10 (260d3), 261d2 (261c6), 263a2 (262c8–9), 263c8 (263c2), 264e7 (264e5), 275a7 (274e9), 275b7 (274e9), 275e2 (275d7), 276b6 (276a8), 276c2 (276a8), 276d7 (276d4), 276e5 (276d10), 280a6 (279c4), 281c6 (281a7, 2), 281d4 (Q) (281c7), 282e10, 283a2 & 283a9 (282e3), 286d3 & 287b9 (286c4), 292a4 (291d11), 292c4 (292b5), 294c5 (294a9), 295a8 (295a4 parenth. οἱμοι, 294d9), 307b4 (307a6), 309a7 (308b11), 309d9 (309c4); *Phlb.* 34a6 (33e9), 34c3 (34b5), 39d6 (39c9), 42b1(42a6), 42d8 (42c8), 43c12 (43c10), 44d6 (44c3–4), 47a2 (46c5), 52e5 (52d9), 53b3 (53a1), 55c10 (55a13), 56a8 (55d12), 64e4 (64d8), 65e8 (65e1), 67a4 (66d6); *Lg.* 640d3 (639e4), 647a7 (646e6, 4–5), 656a6 (655d4), 657d7 (Q) (657d1, 656d3–4), 669a7 (668e6), 672a4 (Q) & 671e4 (671a4, 670c7, c5–6), 673a2, 673a6 & 673a11 (672e4), 679e5 (678e8), 684e6 (684d3), 692c8 (691d7), 701b3 (700a5), 702a1 (701d6), 709c10 (709b6), 714c10 (714c5), 715e2 (715a7), 719b8 (719a6, a4–5), 719e6 (719b10), 723d5 & 724b5 (722c5), 754a3 (753a5–6), 778a6 (777b1–3), 781e4 (780d2–3), 788c5 (783d7), 790c4 (790a4), 791c3 (790e7), 792a7 (791e1–3), 798e8 (Q) (797a6), 799b9 (799a3), 799d9 (799c3), 806d3 (806c8–9), 812c8 & 813a4 (812b8), 831e3 (831c3), 833c3 (832b9, 7–8), 837b1 (837a5), 838b6 (838a8), 838c8 & 839d6

questions go on as in Type A. Accordingly, our reply type is almost always used in response to what the respondent regards as an explicitly or implicitly intended statement.

It will be risky, though, to try to reduce every case to a simple exegetical context. In some cases, however remotely referred back to an exegetical stance, the interim context still proceeds with some non-biased questions embedding clear marks for examining the respondent's belief such as alternative interrogatives\*<sup>21</sup>. In those cases, one intends to ask a question whereas the other intends to reply to a statement; whereas the former implies

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(838b9), 860a3 (859d2), 861a3 (860d4), 895b8 (894e3), 897c10 & 897d2 (897c3), 898b4 (898a7), 901e8 (Q) & 901e11 (901d5, b7), 962c3 (962b3), 963e9 (963d11), 965b11(964d8–9, d3–7).

\*<sup>21</sup> Reference in the round bracket here mainly concerns marks of diagnosing the respondent's belief. *Ion* 531d3 (531c1–2, a1–2), 538b1 (538a1); *Hp. Mi.* 375a1 (375e3–5, d6–7, d2–5, 374b7); *Cri.* 49c9 (49c4); *La.* 192d9 & 193b4 (193a8, 192d10, c7, c3–6); *Euthphr.* 7e5 (7e2, c12–d1), 8d3 & d7 (8d1 & c10 parenth. οἴμαι, c6, b10), 8e2–3 (8d9–10), 12d4 (Q) (12d3), 14e5 (14d6–7); *Ly.* 210a5 (210a4 parenth. οἴμαι, 209e6–210a1, 209d1), 214b6 (Q) (214b2–4, b1); *Grg.* 450e3 (450e1–2), 454a5 (454a3, 453d7–10), 454d8 (454d6, d1–3), 459a6 (Q) (459a1–3), 464a6–7 (Q) (464a3–4, a2); *Men.* 74e10 (74e8, 4, 2), 78a8–b1 (77e5–7), 83c2 (82e14–83a4); *Hp. Ma.* 281d8 (281c3–8), 284d5–6 (Q) (284d3–5, d1–2), 299e6 (299e2, d9); *Euthd.* 280d7 (280d5, d3, c6, b4–6); *Phd.* 65a8 (64d11), 65c1 (65b1–2, a9–b1), 66a9–10 (65d4–5), 106a7 (105e8); *Smp.* 205a4 (205a1, 204d5–6, 3, 1–2); *Prm.* 132a5 (130e4–5), 133a4 (132c10); *Rp.* 331d1 (331c1–2), 332a6 (331e7–8), 332e8 (332c7–8), 334d4 (334c1, d5), 335d13 (335d3 parenth. οἴμαι, 335a6), 341d4 (341d1 parenth. οἴμαι, 341c4), 353a6 (353a4 parenth. οἴμαι, 352d8), 353c8 (353b2, a12, a9), 397e9 (397d10), 404e6 (404d11 parenth. οἴμαι, 404d5, d1–3), 429a3 (428d11–428e1), 435b8 (435a5–7), 463e6 (463c9), 475b10 (475b4), 478c5 (478b12–c1, a11–12), 479d2 (479c6–7, b9–10), 524c2 & c9 (524b10–c1, 523e7, e3), 590d7 (590c8, 588b6–8), 598d6 (598c6 parenth. οἴμαι, b1, a5), 601c14 (Q) (601c10–13, b9–c1), 604b2 (604b6 parenth. οἴμαι, 604a1); *Tht.* 144e7 (Q) (144e2–3), 198d9 (198d2, 197b6, b3), 208b7 (208a2); *Phlb.* 49d10 & 50a10 (49c6–7); *Lg.* 646e1 (646c3–8), 668b3 (667e10, c9, a6).

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intending not to commit himself to the proposition embodied in the question, the other implies intending to commit the former to the proposition and to agree with him (cf. *Ion* 539d4–5; *Alc.* 1 112e1–113b7). Accordingly, if the former does not rebuke the latter’s misunderstanding on the spot, then the latter’s intention is fulfilled while the former’s botched. Therefore, if the former in asking a question is prepared to accept this failure, he is not asking for the asking’s sake (cf. *Rp.* 392b8–9, 422c10)\*<sup>22</sup>. And yet the agreement is still under, and perhaps merely on, the latter’s belief. This conclusion leaves open the possibility that a systematic difference in belief is running deep between the interlocutors.

Closed readers of Plato might have smoothed away this idiosyncrasy but there is opened a chasm underneath.

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\*<sup>22</sup> For the questioner’s *ex post facto* remark of prejudgements, *Euthphr.* 12c10, 13c12–d2; *Hp. Mi.* 369e2 ff.