INTERNATIONAL PLATO SOCIETY

23

MAR 2022

ISSN 2079-7567
eISSN 2183-4105

Established 1989
http://platosociety.org/

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PLATO JOURNAL

Société Platonicienne Internationale

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Internationale Platon-Gesellschaft

Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra

Coimbra Universiy Press

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CREDITS

EDITION
Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra
Coimbra University Press
http://uc.pt/imprensa_uc

PROPERTY
International Plato Society

DESIGN
Carlos Costa

INFOGRAPHICS
Mickael Silva

ISSN
2079-7567

eISSN
2183-4105

DOI
https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105

SUMMARY

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The Eleatic Stranger in *Sophist* dialogue: A Continuation of the Socratic Legacy

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ABSTRACT

Within the framework of the discussion about the existence of a spokesman in the Platonic dialogues, we look, in the first part, into the possible transfer of this spokesman's function from Socrates to the Eleatic Stranger, identifying the contact and divergence points between both characters. In the second part, we try to show that this transfer has a dramatic staging at the beginning of the *Sophist* dialogue, where Socrates makes a demand that enables the Stranger to demonstrate his genuine philosophical condition.

Keywords: spokesman, *Sophist*, the Eleatic Stranger, dialectic

https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_23_1

Following a traditional reading of the Platonic works that assumes that the author speaks through a spokesman (even though this approach has received criticism in the past few decades),[1] it can be said that Socrates embodies, in the early and middle dialogues, the philosophical perspective that Plato seeks to defend against that of various interlocutors. Does the same happen with the Eleatic Stranger, who replaces him as the main interlocutor in *Sophist*? Does he, like Socrates before him, represent a genuine philosophical perspective? Is he perhaps the spokesman for a late Plato? We shall try to answer these questions paying special attention both to the composition of the Eleatic Stranger character (I) and the architecture of the *Sophist* dialogue (II). In the first part, we shall offer a brief review of the coincidences and differences between Socrates and the Stranger and, in the second, we will focus on a key question Socrates makes to his interlocutor, which lays the foundation for the Stranger to demonstrate his true condition.

I.

In relation to that composition, the first thing to point out is the notable points of contact between Socrates and the Stranger which, we think, could evidence the legacy that the former transmits to his successor. This should attract our attention, insofar as Plato, free to build a character from scratch and completely distanced from his master, composes a new one following the guidelines of the Socratic model. Let us briefly review some of those shared traits. Already in his first speeches, the Stranger inherits from Socrates the question-and-answer format for organising the discussion –leaving aside the long speeches– (*Sph*. 217d-e);[2] resumes the typical Socratic formula of the early dialogues, i.e., the τί ἔστι, when beginning his research (*Sph*. 217b3, 218c1 and c6-7); and he pursues a definition of a universal type which, by pointing out essential features, separates the kind of objects to be defined from the rest (*Sph*. 232a and 240a). Also he displays a feature of his character which Socrates highlights as something fundamental of the philosopher: the handling of time, the lack of concern about the extent of reasoning (since, in the end, the most important thing is the search for truth), which the Stranger exhibits in the face of the repeated frustrations of his interlocutor (*Tht*. 172d, *Sph*. 261b-c, *Plt*. 268d and 286d-e).

By averaging the discussion of the dialogue, the Stranger takes a number of decisions that stress his affinity with Socrates. On the one hand, he postulates and analyses a group of eidetic entities, the so-called μέγιστα γένη (*Sph*. 254d4), which can be read as a renewed version of the Forms from the middle dialogues presented by Socrates.[3] In fact, numerous words that remind us of the introduction of the the Forms in *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Symposium* or *Republic* can be identified: the Stranger states that those γένη "definitely are" (βεβαίως ἐστὶ, *Sph*. 258b10), that they are "in themselves" (τὸ ὂν αὐτὸ, *Sph*. 257a1), they are "aeternal" (ἀεί, *Sph*. 254e4, 255c13 y d1), they have their own nature (*Sph*. 258a7), he adds the adverb ὄντως to signify that they "are really" (*Sph*. 256c8-9, 258e3, 268d3-4) and he even talks, when he refers to the Being's εἶδος, about a 'brightness' and about a 'divine' character (τὸ θεῖον, *Sph*. 254b1) which seem to evoke the characterisation of Good in *Republic*. On the other hand, the Stranger makes use of methodological tools that characterised the Socratic proposals both of the early and the middle dialogues. Without going into detail, it is sufficient to note that, in challenging certain opponents

who deny the basic principles he seeks to put forward, the Stranger appeals to the Socratic refutation in three occasions. Even when the appeal does not always respect the original format, it cannot be denied that, in the arguments against the dualist, against the monist and against those who deny the possibility of predication, the Stranger draws inspiration from that resource to show that those adversaries refute themselves when holding theses that contradict their very enunciation (*Sph*. 241c4-249d5 and 252d12-e7).[4] Moreover, connected to this use of refutation, an author like Baltzly has noticed that, in the passage where the Stranger deals with those who deny the possibility of predication, Plato reintroduces the hypothetical method that Socrates had presented in *Republic* (*R*. VI 510b4-9, 511b3-c2 and VII 533c7-d1).[5] After presenting the three hypotheses about combination (that things are unmixed and incapable of mutual participation, that all things are capable of mutual participation, and that some things are, but others are not, capable of such communication) (*Sph*. 251d-e.), the Stranger deals with refuting the first two and establishing the last one not hypothetically, an operation that seems to put into practice the famous proposal of *Republic* about dialectics as a method that cancels hypotheses.[6]

Having pointed out the coincidences between Socrates and the Stranger, our intention now is to indicate the differences between the two characters which, we understand, shall be read within the framework of that essential continuity.[7] Perhaps the great difference concerns their respective characterisations, since Plato's detailed description of Socrates throughout the dialogues contrasts with the almost non-existent portrait he gives of the Stranger. There is no mention of his name, no description of his appearance, no clarification of his family line, and no mention of any link to Athens' social fabric. The only links mentioned are the philosophical and the patriotic ones: Theodorus states that the Stranger is from Elea, 'different' (ἕτερον, *Sph*. 216a3) from Parmenides' and Zeno's companions, although a real philosopher (*Sph*. 216a).[8] It could be said then that if Socrates represents the individual at the expense of the generic, the Stranger represents the generic at the expense of the individual,[9] but what does this pre-eminence of the generic bring? Some interpreters see it as emblematic of a general decline in Plato's interest in dialogue as a form, which would also be seen in increasingly less vivid discussions.[10] We think that Plato's interest in that form is intact and that that pre-eminence can be read as a response of Plato's to two needs. On the one hand, the need to experience the limitations of his former spokesman, since the defense of philosophical theses is now free from a particular enunciator like Socrates.[11] On the other hand, the need to build a new character in such a way that his status is kept in suspense and is only determined by his actions in the development of the dialogue.

Let us begin with the first need, what new dimensions does the main interlocutor incorporate, freed from a personality as particular as that of Socrates? Unlike the dynamics of the dialogues conducted by Socrates where he confessed his desire to learn from others through conversation, since he ultimately knew that he knew nothing, in *Sophist*, the Stranger is responsible for guiding a docile and inexperienced Theaetetus towards results that he knows in advance and asserts with forceful authority (*Sph*. 239b-240a).[12] The Stranger deploys an argumentative machinery that allows him to offer, almost without hesitation, a range of resolutions from an appropriate definition and critique of the sophistic action to a map-

ping of the reciprocal relations between the greatest kinds.[13] A significant proof of these capacities of the Stranger could be his solution to the dispute between the "Somatists" and the "friends of the Forms" regarding the οὐσία. If we follow Cordero's proposal, we can state that the Stranger provides a definition of the Being that is unusual for the main interlocutor in a Platonic dialogue because it is decisive, categorical and unequivocal; namely: «I propose as a definition to define the beings that are nothing but δύναμις" (*Sph.* 247e3-4).[14] Faced with a question of such wide scope as this definition, the Stranger does not hesitate and seems to offer a real proclamation difficult to find in any other passage of the Platonic work.

However, what we would like to highlight is that the Stranger's confidence and authority also enable him to solve precisely those problems that had been urgent for old Socrates in chronological dialogues and dramatically linked to *Sophist*. We shall not go into detail here, but at least two solutions can be identified.[15] On the one hand, the question of false discourse which, formulated and not resolved in *Theaetetus*, is finally solved in *Sophist*. In fact, as there is neither a Form of Difference nor a postulation of not being as alterity in that dialogue, it is impossible to define false speech, as the Stranger does in *Sophist*, as saying things *different* from those that are (*Sph.* 263b-d).[16] On the other hand, while in *Parmenides* Socrates had warned that he "should be filled with admiration (θαυμαστῶς)" (*Prm.* 129e3-4),[17] if someone were to distinguish and separate the Forms and show that "these things among themselves can be combined and distinguished" (*Prm.* 129e2-3), the Stranger succeeds in fulfilling that desire in *Sophist*.[18] The positive knowledge about the eidetic field allows him to answer that question in the long passage dedicated to showing the relationships of mutual participation that the greatest kinds maintain (Being, Sameness, Other, Rest and Motion) (*Sph.* 254b-255c). Through a significant terminological coincidence,[19] Plato explicitly connects his two spokesmen in a path that goes from young Socrates, who wishes to instruct himself, to the Eleatic Stranger, who satisfies that desire by establishing incorrigible truths about the aforementioned combination.[20] A journey which also begins with an emotion which, for Plato, is the trigger to philosophise: θαυμαστός.[21] In fact, some interpreters assume that this astonishment into which Socrates would be finally falling in *Sophist* could explain his role as a silent witness throughout the dialogue.[22]

We had warned that the pre-eminence of the generic in the case of the Stranger could be due to an experimentation on Socratic limitations and it is time to wonder whether it proved fruitful. Given that Socrates returns as the main interlocutor in *Philebus*, a dialogue considered chronologically post-*Sophist*, and that the Stranger only reappears in *Statesman*, it might be thought that this Platonic operation is not entirely successful. For an interpreter like Rowe, Plato is still always Socrates and, by using the Stranger, he is only imagining what it would be like for the philosopher to possess at least some of that authority which his Socrates and he himself continue denying; in that sense, the Stranger would embody the very essence of the philosopher with the crucial exception of his magisterial stance.[23] In our opinion, it is not possible to evaluate that experiment without considering the meaning that the Socratic return in *Philebus* may have (a task that we cannot undertake here),[24] but neither is it possible without considering the connections and continuities between Socrates and the Stranger.

As we anticipated, the specific differences between these characters had to be read within the framework of a continuity that has been reinforced, since we have seen that the novelty brought by the Stranger allows him to respond precisely to what Plato's old master urged and which he was unable to resolve (the Stranger seems to represent the different from and the familiar with Socratic philosophy).[25] It is on this basis that the success of the Platonic experimentation must be measured. Likewise, this link between Socrates and the Stranger could represent an example of the plausibility of the spokesman's theory, since even though Plato incorporated a new main interlocutor, he decided to build him on concerns and methodologies similar to Socrates' and with capacities that do not enable him to say things contrary to Socrates', but rather to solve his unfinished problems. It would be very curious for Plato to insist time and again on starting off and reaching (or intending to reach) similar points were it not for the fact that, in some way, he sees these points in a positive light.

In defending the spokesman's theory, Rowe argues that it is difficult to give credit to those who question it, since it is always (or almost always) Socrates' opponents (and not him) who are defeated, humiliated or forced to think again, which would suggest that it is Socrates' position that Plato intends to support.[26] Following this reasoning, the truth is that, in the case of *Sophist*, the Stranger holds a group of theses, offers a series of solutions and is not either defeated, humiliated or forced to think again, either by his interlocutor Theaetetus or by a Socrates who decides to call for silence. It is therefore difficult to think that, without staging any kind of defeat (and composing a character that offers solutions to old problems), Plato seeks to distance us from the position and the theses defended by the Stranger. Evidently there is something in the position of that character that Plato esteems and considers pertinent to incorporate into the philosophical paradigm which, up to the moment and just before his death (if we take into account the dramatic context of the dialogue), Socrates had embodied.[27]

We considered earlier that another of the reasons for the pre-eminence of the generic in the construction of the Stranger as a character could well be the need to keep his status in abeyance so that he could, through his actions, particularise his identity. This is why, in the next section, we will seek to demonstrate that in *Sophist* the Stranger successfully orchestrates a genuine philosophical perspective, even though certain interpreters try to discredit his work by equating him with a Sophist or assuming that he does not even manage to satisfy Socrates' initial demand: that of distinguishing the philosopher from the Sophist and from the statesman.[28] And to achieve that goal we must start by reading the prologue to the dialogue.

II

In the first lines of *Sophist*, Theodorus notifies those present that he is accompanied by a stranger from Elea, clarifying that, although different from Parmenides' and Zeno's companions, "he's very much a philosopher" (*Sph.* 216a3-4).[29] Socrates doubts about that condition and asks if he will bring a god, but Theodorus answers that, in his 'opinion' (δοκεῖν, *Sph.* 216b9), he is only a divine being like all philosophers. Socrates in turn replies that the class of philosophers is not easier to 'discern' (διακρίνειν, *Sph.* 216c3) than the divine class, since "the genuine (ὄντως) philosophers 'who haunt our cities' –by contrast to the fake ones

(δοκοῦσιν)–" (*Sph*. 216c5-6) appear with various 'aspects' (φανταζόμενοι, *Sph*. 216c4) because of the others' ignorance and, looking down on life here below, "sometimes they take on the appearance (φαντάζονται) of statesmen, and sometimes of sophists. Sometimes, too, they might give the impression that they're completely insane" (*Sph*. 216c8-d2).

As we understand it, from reading these lines we can conclude that the inaugural problem of the dialogue is that of identifying the work of the Stranger. The data we have – Theodorus' general assessments and his appearance before the eyes of his interlocutors - are not conclusive.[30] And Socrates makes it clear that the problem of appearances is also a thorny one because it can happen that a philosopher (the class to which the Stranger belongs according to Theodorus) is a philosopher only in appearance or that, being a genuine one, he appears in another way, not by his own decision, but due to the ignorance of the majority who are unable to recognise one of his kind. This issue is key in the development of the dialogue because the Sophist will be characterised, quite the contrary, as an agent who intentionally projects deceptive appearances.[31] What interests us now, however, is Socrates' final reaction to the problem of identifying the status of the Stranger.

While Theodorus expresses his position in terms of δόξαι, Socrates rehearses some ironic conjectures,[32] avoids expressing opinions, and finally, in a momentous gesture of the dialogue, decides to question the Stranger and remain silent. Socrates asks him how those in his 'region' (τόπος, *Sph*. 217a1) conceive and call the sophist, the statesman and the philosopher, and indicates that he wishes to know whether they conceive them all as one, as two or "…they divide them up into three kinds (γενή) corresponding to the three names (ὄνομα) and attach one name to each of them" (*Sph*. 217a7-8).[33] Theodorus suggests that the Stranger will have no 'inconvenience' (φθόνος, *Sph*. 217a9) to respond, and he immediately notices that those in his region conceive them as three different kinds, although "distinguishing (διορίζειν) clearly what each of them is, though, isn't a small or easy job" (*Sph*. 217b2-3). It is in this exchange among Socrates, Theodorus and the Stranger that Plato reveals one of the central purposes of the dialogue and he does so through the first one. If it was Socrates who warned before about the impossibility to solve the thorny problem in terms of appearances, it is also he who now prepares the ground for its resolution through the two demands he poses to the Stranger: that he speak from his τόπος and that, in doing so, he operate distinguishing kinds.

What does the first demand involve? Some interpreters have pointed out that the term τόπος, central to Socrates' question, is loaded with ambiguity because it can refer to that character's land of origin or to the place of his kind, i.e., the place of the philosophers (if we respect the condition ascribed to him by Theodorus in the beginning).[34] However, this ambiguity can be dispelled if we take into account the immediate context in which the term is inserted. First of all, it is necessary to emphasise that what is at stake from the beginning of the discussion is not the land to which the Stranger belongs (nobody objects that he is from Elea and that if it were that which was in dispute, other terms would be relevant),[35] but rather his philosophical status. This being so, it is logical that Socrates seeks to test that status by asking him to speak from the 'place' of the philosophers, i.e. as a philosopher.[36] Secondly, it should be noted that, just before introducing the term τόπος, Socrates refers to a couple of spatial coordinates to talk about

the philosopher's task, who, from above, looks 'down' (καθοράω, *Sph.* 216c6). Therefore, the inescapable spatial dimension of the term –which has led translators and interpreters to think that it refers to the native land of the Stranger–[37] is safeguarded in our reading, insofar as Socrates poses the philosophical task precisely in spatial terms.[38]

Finally, Plato reinforces the idea that the Stranger should speak from the place of the philosophers, incorporating –now through the mouth of another interlocutor– the term φθόνος. This notion presupposes the existence of jealousy born from the envy which, in this case, would provoke the knowledge of others, which is why the jealous person retains information because he is concerned about turning the other into a connoisseur.[39] In this sense, Theodorus uses the notion to indicate that the Stranger will offer his interlocutors all his knowledge without reservation, since he does not feel jealousy of any kind. However, Plato's use of φθόνος is not innocent, since, in *Republic*, Socrates states that he who has his thoughts directed towards the things that are will not have time to "glance down (κάτω βλέπειν) at the affairs of men, or compete with them, and be filled with envy (φθόνος) and ill-will" (*R.* VI 500b9-c2).[40] As can be seen, Socrates suggests, in spatial terms akin to those of *Sophist*, that by looking down –towards the affairs of the city– the philosopher avoids the φθόνος. In fact, we could say, together with Brisson, that this feeling is incompatible with the philosophical dialogue, since he who knows something (even he who knows that he does not know) must put his knowledge at the service of the other in order to discover the truth together.[41] In this way, Theodorus insists on the philosophical condition of the Stranger, showing that, like everyone in his kind, this subject is free from φθόνος.

Taking into account the three issues mentioned above (the reason for the discussion about the Stranger, the spatial coordinates of the philosopher's work and the denial of that feeling that represents an obstacle to philosophical activity), we must opt for the second alternative that we put forward regarding the term τόπος and think that this notion refers to the philosophers' 'place'. Leaving conjecture aside and avoiding opinions, Socrates would be inviting the Stranger to intervene as a representative member of the philosophers' region and it is in this Socratic proposal that one of the central purposes of the dialogue is made explicit, namely, the demonstration by the Stranger of his condition.[42]

It is now time to ask ourselves about Socrates' second demand: what does his request imply that the Stranger should operate by distinguishing kinds in order to differentiate the sophist, the statesman and the philosopher? To answer this question, it is necessary that we first look at the general architecture of the dialogue. It is an extended topic in the interpretation of *Sophist*, from the readings of Schleiermacher, Gomperz and Diès, to speak of two great parts that compose the dialogue, metaphorically understood as a shell that covers and a coated nucleus.[43] Diès points out that the nucleus would be the demonstration of the possibility of error, while the shell would be the sophist's series of definitions.[44] Here we understand that it is possible, inspired by that metaphor, to speak of a first layer, an outer –let us call it that– layer of the dialogue, which would be the one in which the philosophical condition of the Stranger is discussed (the inaugural problem of the work) and of a series of successive inner layers which, starting with the sophist's definition, harbour the true core of the dialogue, the one that responds to the inaugural problem.[45] However, what keeps

these various layers together is precisely the operation of distinguishing kinds requested by Socrates.[46] Let us see how.

Having heard the Socratic demands, the Stranger chooses Theaetetus as his interlocutor and tells him that they must investigate the sophist together to give "a clear account of what he is" (*Sph*. 218c1). It is reasonable to wonder why the Stranger chooses the sophist over the statesman and the philosopher, for would it not make more sense to try to justify his status by precisely defining the philosopher? Taking into account our interpretation of the composition of the dialogue, it is possible to consider that the definition of the sophist is at the service of the inaugural problem for two reasons: not only because the said sophist can represent an *other* with respect to the philosopher, an *other* against whom the philosopher can be delimited by refusal,[47] but also and fundamentally because the operations used to define him and the difficulties that arise when attempting a definition lay the foundations for the Stranger to fulfil his maximal objective: to prove his condition.

The Stranger and Theaetetus are working on the definition of the sophist with the help of a procedure such as διαίρεσις. Through it they start from a 'genus' (Plato indistinctly uses the terms εἶδος ο γένος)[48] which contains the relevant and more general character of the object to be defined (a character that this object shares with others) and then they make a series of successive cross sections that separate kinds with different characteristics until they reach the *definiendum*. Starting from the genus τέχνη then, they distinguish among productive, separatist and acquisitive techniques, next, by selecting the acquisitive one, they distinguish between acquisition by exchange and by capture, and so on until they reach the sophist's first definition where the process stops momentarily.[49] Since this definition does not satisfy the interlocutors, the division resumes and the process continues until a greater difficulty assails them. As can be seen, throughout the passage from 218d to 231b, the interlocutors are responsible for distinguishing kinds, which was precisely what was at stake in the second Socratic demand (to determine whether or not the names 'sophist', 'statesman' and 'philosopher' corresponded to three different γενή, which means differentiating these γενή). The Stranger begins by warning that distinguishing what each one is is not an easy task, but then ends up exercising that distinction of kinds by defining the sophist (*Sph*. 217a-b). It should be clarified that, throughout the passage, the terms εἶδος and γένος are not given any specific technical meaning by Plato, so they can be understood as 'class', 'genus' or 'kind', without any metaphysical connotation.[50]

However, this is neither the only nor the most important distinction of γενή that the Stranger operates in the dialogue. Once the course of the Sophist's definition is interrupted because of the inconveniences of characterising him as a falsifier and the discussion is diverted towards greater difficulties such as those of the existence of non-being and the very definition of being (*Sph*. 236d-249d), he resorts to dialectical science. He then asks himself if it is not up to it "to divide by Forms (κατὰ γένη διαίρεσις) and not to consider that the same Form is different, or that a different one is the same" (*Sph*. 253d1-2) and, having listed a series of operations that this science must undertake,[51] he concludes that the dialectician "knows how to distinguish (διακρίνειν), with respect to Forms, how some are capable of communicating with others, and how they are not" (*Sph*. 253d8-e2).[52]

It should be noted that, in presenting the dialectic, the Stranger takes up again the title

of that procedure used to define the Sophist, but, in our opinion, the expression "κατὰ γένη διαίρεσις", even invoking those divisions practised from 219a to 231b, does not imply in 253d1 the task of "cleaving" Forms (in the sense of splitting a εἶδος in two lower ones as it happened in that passage), but that of separating *by* Forms: not to confuse one with the other and to distinguish those that are able to communicate from those that are not.[53] Following a series of authors for whom division and dialectics are not identified in *Sophist*, but the first one represents a necessary condition, which is not enough for its development, a kind of propaedeutic for the fulfilment of the dialectic,[54] here we think that this science is based on the capacity to distinguish γενή (capacity practised by the Stranger and Theaetetus in another sphere and in front of other objects), but it goes beyond.[55] If in principle the interlocutors distinguish εἴδη or γένη as "acquisitive technique", "hunting of domestic beings", "discussion technique" or "combat" seeking to define the sophist, what they now distinguish is something else: Being, Motion, Rest, Sameness and Other, entities that are called μέγιστα γένη, and which can be equated to the Forms as they are introduced in Plato's dialogues of maturity.[56]

We had anticipated that, like the first, the second Socratic demand pronounced at the beginning of the dialogue ultimately pointed to the demonstration of the philosophical condition of the Stranger and we are now in a position to justify our reading. In principle, it should be noted that, in implementing the dialectic just presented, the Stranger evokes the terms of that demand. In fact, within the framework of the distinction and identification of the μέγιστα γένη, seeking to prove that Being and Other are not a single thing, he consults Theaetetus if the Other is a fifth genus or if, in fact, the Other and the Being are two names applied to the same genus (*Sph*. 255c8-10). Read carefully, this question, through parallel terminological constructions, evokes that other one made by Socrates when he was trying to know whether or not Sophist, Statesman and Philosopher were three names of three different γένη.[57] Now, what is significant for our reading is that, according to the Stranger, that implementation of dialectics is a clear indication of the presence of a philosophical soul.

Flanking the presentation of dialectical science, two interventions by the Stranger point in that direction. Firstly, just before this presentation, he asks Theaetetus if "without realising it ... looking for the sophist, we run the risk of having found the philosopher first" (*Sph*. 253c6-9).[58] And, secondly, right after that presentation, he underlines that it is in that 'place' (τόπος, *Sph*. 253e8) that "both now and later, we will find the philosopher – if we look for him (ἐὰν ζητῶμεν)–" (*Sph*. 253e8-9).[59] This final clause that could be read as a foretaste of that never written, though announced, *Philosopher* dialogue (and, in that sense, translated as "when we look for him")[60] indicates, for us, that the appearance of the philosopher does not have to happen in an eventual future.[61] Understanding that the τόπος (and here the Stranger takes up the key term of the first Socratic demand) of the philosophers is the one from which the dialectic is practised, the truth is that every time that science is exercised, one of them can be found.[62]

While interpreters such as Cornford assume that the search for that subject is an unfulfilled promise in *Sophist* and others understand that the very existence of a *Philosopher* dialogue is impossible because it is not feasible to represent one of his kind,[63]

here we think that the philosopher ends up emerging in *Sophist* through the execution of dialectic. In fact, thanks to an absolute self-awareness of the tasks that define him, the Stranger answers the initial questioning about his status by executing the dialectic from his place as a philosopher. The inaugural discussion between the interlocutors showed that the vast majority were unable to recognise a philosopher because, if they were in front of one of them, they could confuse him with a sophist, a statesman or a madman. This is because the recognition of a subject of this kind cannot take place in terms of appearances, which is the level at stake in that discussion. However, there exists another level –that of the dialectical exercise– where the Stranger is capable not only of accrediting his condition before a fellow of his like Socrates, but also of pointing out to non-philosophers like Theodore or Theaetetus himself the place where one can find one of his kind, if he is sought. The emergence of such a subject in *Sophist* could well be one of the reasons why the *Philosopher* dialogue did not come to fruition.[64] Since the true philosopher emerges clearly through the use of dialectics, *Sophist* is already the *Philosopher* dialogue.[65]

From our reading of the prologue of the dialogue, we can then see that Plato composes *Sophist* as a dramatic staging of that legacy that Socrates would be transmitting to the Eleatic Stranger as a platonic and philosophical spokesman. A question, in principle innocent, enunciated by Socrates about the distinction between the sophist, the statesman and the philosopher, carries with it two triggers that ignite in the Stranger a complex machinery destined not only to define the sophist, but also, and fundamentally, to justify his philosophical status. This is how we can understand the silence that Socrates keeps, ready to listen to one of his own kind philosophising. And the Stranger responds to him, at the height of the dialogue, by warning that the philosopher's place is where dialectics is practised, nothing more Socratic than that.

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ENDNOTES

1 Among the defenders of the spokesman theory, we can mention Friedländer 1964, Vlastos 1991, Kraut 1992, Blondell 2002 and Rowe 2007. About the numerous currents inside this heterogeneous group, see Corlett 2005, 4-10. Regarding the dissident voices that question that theory from various fronts, see Frede 1992, 204-5; Tejera 1999, x-xi; Nails 2000, 23-4 and Press 2000, 30-2.

2 Gonzalez 2000, 163, understands that the choice of questions and answers is only an act of courtesy from the Stranger towards Socrates.

3 Cherniss 1962, 45-6; Dixsaut 2001, 125; Fronterotta 2001, xiv, and Kahn 2013, 112 think so. Regarding the characterization of the Forms in the middle dialogues, see, for example, *Phd*. 78d1-7, *Smp*. 211b1 and 211e1-3 and *Phdr*. 247c6-e2.

4 On this subject, see Wilmet 1990, 97-9; McCabe 2000, 60-92 and Zaks 2018.

5 See Baltzly 1996, 153-156; 1999, 171-174.

6 Bailey 2006, 102-12, and Castagnoli 2010, 231, opposed Baltzly's position.

7 Another possible difference that we are not discussing in this paper is that which arises from the fact that the Stranger's method is said to be value-neutral at *Sph*. 227b. About this topic, see Gonzalez 2009, 52-3.

8 On this subject, see Cordero 1991 and 2013.

9 See Blondell 2002, 318-30.

10 See Campbell 1867, xix-xxii, Bostock 1988, 12, and Gonzalez 2000, 163-4.

11 Blondell 2002 understands that, at the time of the writing of the late dialogues, Plato came to consider Socrates too individual and idiosyncratic a model to be successfully imitated, which is why he develops more generic figures that represent the essential elements of the philosophical character. Also, see Cotton 2004, 132-42.

12 On the knowledge of the Stranger, see *Sph*. 217b, 219a and 262e-263a.

13 Consider the security expressed by the Stranger at the end of the definition of the sophist in *Sph*. 268d3-4.

14 Translation based upon Cordero 1993 and 2016, 137. See Crivelli 2012, 88-90, who offers other interpretation alternatives.

15 One could add the solution to the problem of the relationship between the names and the things to which those names refer which arises in *Cratylus* and which the Stranger seems to solve in *Sophist* by incorporating the genus of the Other. See Zuckert 2000, 66-7.

16 See Palumno 1994, Marcos 1995 and Crivelli 2012. See Rudebusch 1990 who questions the commonplace that Plato resolves the puzzles about the false speech in the *Sophist*.

17 Allen's 1997 translation.

18 About that connection, see Allen 1997, 100; Brisson 2011, 259 n. 71; Gill 2012, 29, and Kahn 2013, 4.

19 See Allen 1997, 100.

20 In *Sph*. 259a, the Stranger seems to leave open the possibility that a refuter could question everything that was said until then, thus relativizing his "truths", even though he immediately dismisses those possible refuters, by admitting that they only like to "drag the arguments back and forth" (*Sph*. 259c1).

21 About that emotion, see Candiotto and Politis 2020.

22 See Márquez 2012, 18, n. 26, who claims that that silence could be interpreted as a positive or a negative judgement on the performance of the Stranger. On other possible reasons that would explain the Socratic silence, see Clanton 2007, 46-8.

23 See Rowe 2007, 19, n. 56. In contrast, Taylor C. 2006, 158, states that the impersonal figure of the Stranger is a direct representation of philosophical authority and, therefore, of the author's personal situation.

24 Bear in mind that Guthrie 1978, 212, suggests that the Socrates who appears in *Philebus* resembles more the Stranger of *Sophist* and *Statesman* than the Socrates of the early dialogues and Hyland 2015, 117, n. 16, states that the Socrates in *Philebus* combines methods of his own and of the Stranger's.

25 See Fronterotta 2020, 107-9.

26 See Rowe 2007, 15.

27 Let us remember that *Sophist* is a continuation of *Theaetetus* and that, in this dialogue, Socrates had warned that he had to appear before the King's Portico to face Meleto's accusation (*Tht*. 210d). In line with that, Hyland 2015, 106, points out that Socrates' concern to differentiate among the philosopher, the sophist and the statesman is not an abstract concern but a very concrete one, as he understands that his accusation is due to the fact that the rest confuse him with a sophist.

28 See Scodel 1987; Benitez 1996, 36; Howland 1997, 173-6; Zuckert 2000 and Hyland 2015. Gonzalez 2000, 163-8, states that the Stranger is not able to distinguish between eristic and ἔλεγχος in the fifth definition of the Sophist, nor is he able to distinguish between Socrates' own methods and those of the sophist in the sixth, nor does he manage to

separate the philosopher from the sophist in the seventh. In turn, Taylor, C. 2006, 159-62, understands that it is precisely the Stranger who can differentiate the Sophist from Socrates, whose Platonic portraits overlap in certain specific points. It is not possible for us to develop our position here, but we understand that, in the fifth definition, the Stranger is only reflecting a popular opinion condensed, reinforced and kept in the memory of the Athenians thanks to the theatrical representations that confuse Socrates with the sophist. See Trevaskis 1955, 48; Gill 2006, 11 and Konstan 2011, 76-88.

29 White's 1993 translation. Unless otherwise noted, I quote White's translation of the *Sophist*.

30 See Vasilu 2008, 112-4.

31 At the end of the dialogue, and after several attempts, the interlocutors come to the conclusion that the sophist is an "imitator of the wise man" (*Sph.* 268c1) who, thanks to the projection of deceptive appearances, manages to introduce himself to inexperienced young people as a wise man, even though he only manages to resemble the external 'aspect' (σχῆμα, *Sph.* 267a6-8) of the said wise man. In our opinion, this definition shows that the Stranger succeeds in clearly differentiating the sophist from the philosopher (whose eventual appearances are not intentionally projected by him), even though interpreters like Gonzalez 2000, 166, insist that the latter definition does not allow for such a difference.

32 The Socratic equation between philosophers and gods works in an ironic way, since it hides insurmountable differences between both classes and anticipates a contrast between sophists and philosophers. The Homeric gods to which Socrates refers are characterised by the voluntary projection of appearances that conceal the status of the agent and, at this point, are equated not with the philosopher, but with his adversary: the sophist. In *Sph.* 216a-d, Socrates could be referring to *Od.* IX 270-271 or XVII 484-487.

33 On Socrates' purpose of asking that question, see Palumbo 1994, 29, n.14, and Casertano 1996, 92-3.

34 See Benardete 1984, 72-3, and Scodel 1987, 22, n. 4. On other possible interpretations of the meaning of τόπος, see Nercam 2012.

35 See Nercam 2012, 5.

36 And that place cannot be restricted to Elea, for, if we are guided by Socrates' words, what happens is that philosophers actually go from one city to another (*Sph.* 216c).

37 See Campbell 1867, Diès 1925, Cornford 1935, Robin and Moreau 1942, Chambry 1969, Rosen 1983 and Notomi 1999, 22.

38 Bear in mind that Plato reinforces the locative sense of the term τόπος (οἱ περὶ τὸν ἐκεῖ τόπον, *Sph.* 217a1) by using the preposition περί with its term in accusative case and the spatial adverb ἐκεῖ. See LSJ *s.v.* 'ἐκεῖ' and 'περί'. Delcomminette 2014, 537, states that τόπος refers to Being as "home" of the philosopher.

39 See LSJ *s.v.* 'φθόνος' and Brisson 2000, 223. Sanders 2014, 38, n. 26, notes that out of the one hundred and twenty-nine occurrences of the term φθόνος in the Platonic dialogues, twenty-five of them refer to wisdom.

40 Griffith's 2000 translation.

41 See Brisson 2000, 227. Let us remember that by operating a total resignification of the religious tradition through which the gods are no longer prisoners of the φθόνος, Plato can consider the philosopher free from jealousy because of his closeness to these perfect gods. See Brisson 2000, 228-33.

42 We agree with Delcomminette 2014, 534-5, who, while comparing the situation of Odysseus in the Homeric poem and that of the Stranger in *Sophist*, states that both of them must reveal their identity through their actions.

43 See Schleiermacher 1836, 246; Gomperz 1896, 503; and Diès 1925, 267. Note Heidegger's 1992, 160-1, criticisms.

44 See Diès 1925, 267.

45 The existence of several layers in *Sophist* is not very different from the narrative technique Plato usually uses when presenting dialogues within other dialogues. See McCabe 2006, 40-2.

46 Zaks 2017, 70, holds a similar position.

47 Let us remember that the sophist is characterised as an agent who intentionally projects deceptive appearances, whereas, on the contrary, the appearances that the philosopher may have in the city are due to the ignorance of the majority. In this sense, the identification of a philosopher can never be made on the level of appearances, but, as we shall see, through a dialectical exercise.

48 Bear in mind that both γένος and εἶδος do not have fixed taxonomic references in Plato as the terms 'genus' and 'kind' do in modern taxonomies. See Henry 2012, 247.

49 See Philip 1966, 348-9.

50 See Henry 2012, 247-9.

51 On this controversial subject, see Gómez-Lobo 1977, 43-4; Dixsaut 2001, 221; Ionescu 2013, 41-64, and Teisserenc 2007, 244-5.

52 We translate the terms γένος and εἶδος, which Plato uses synonymously and indistinctly, by Form to differentiate them from the objects of the division. Translation based upon Cordero 1993.

53 See Gómez-Lobo 1977, 39-40, and Fronterotta 2007, 416, n. 221.

54 See Moravcsik 1962, 51; Bluck 1975, 125-7; Ackrill 1997, 108-9, and Movia 1994, 307-10. Also Fronterotta 2007, 414, n. 221 and Fossheim 2012, 107-10, seem to think of this division as a prominent part of the dialectic.

55 De Chiara-Quenzer 1998, 119, n. 39, notes these differences between the two uses of the division.

56 See Cornford 1935, 332-47; Ross 1951, 134-7; Lacey 1959, 43-9; Cherniss 1962, 45-6; Cordero 1993, 258, n. 292; Ackrill 1997, 95; Dixsaut 2001, 125, and Fronterotta 2001, xiv, and 2007, 423.

57 See Socrates' intervention at the beginning of the dialogue (*Sph*. 217a6-8) and the Stranger's question (*Sph*. 255c8-10), both structured with *verba sentiendi* and around the terms γένος and ὄνομα, passages that seek to point out that the names are not clear indicators of the kind of reality that concerns the things they designate.

58 Translation based upon Cordero 1993.

59 We follow here the translation proposed by Dixsaut 2000b, 215.

60 See Cordero 1988.

61 With regard to the alleged promises of the writing of *Philosopher,* see *Sph*. 216c2-217b4, 218b6-c1; 253b9-254b6 and *Plt*. 257a1-c2 and 258b2-3.

62 See Dixsaut 2000, 215.

63 See Cornford 1935, 330, and Miller 2004, 10.

64 Notomi 1999, 24, argues that there is no textual evidence to confirm with certainty that Plato intended to write such a dialogue and Gill 2012, 1, n. 2, warns against the impossibility that the dialogue was written and lost.

65 Similar theses are held by, among others, Blondell 2002, 324, n. 39, and Gill 2012. Griswold 1989, 163 n. 13, lists a number of problems with that reading.

Self-Knowledge, Eros and Recollection in Plato's *Phaedrus*

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ABSTRACT

At the beginning of the *Phaedrus*, Socrates distinguishes between two kinds of people: those who are more complex, violent and hybristic than the monster Typhon, and those who are simpler, calmer and tamer (230a). This paper argues that there are also two distinct types of *Eros* (Love) that correlate to Socrates's two kinds of people. In the first case, lovers cannot attain recollection because their souls are disordered in the absence of self-knowledge. For the latter, the self-knowledge of self-disciplined lovers renders them capable of recollecting the Forms by ordering their souls naturally.

Keywords: Self-Knowledge, Eros, Recollection, Myth, Phaedrus

https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_23_2

INTRODUCTION:

The structural and thematic unity[1] of the *Phaedrus* has been a prominent topic among scholars. Most scholars divide the dialogue into either two[2] or three[3] parts focusing on the subjects of Love (*Eros*) and Rhetoric (*Logos*)[4] which, as I aim to show, are connected through the central myth of the dialogue.

In this paper, I suggest that Love serves as the thematic core of the *Phaedrus*; a subject which, based on my deductions, is developed at three different levels. In the first part of the dialogue (227a–243e), Love is presented as purely sensual; in the second part (244a–257c), it is equated with the fourth kind of divine madness which constitutes a soul process; and ultimately, in the third (257d–279c), Love is identified with the dialectic love of division and collection. Accordingly, I contend that the above gradations within the development of Love correspond to the cognitive process of recollection. Furthermore, I argue that self-knowledge constitutes a fundamental requirement for a lover to attain recollection. The main thrust of this paper is to illuminate how lovers' self-knowledge engenders unity and harmony within their souls and, thus, determines the type of Love that lovers espouse.

At the beginning of the dialogue, Socrates distinguishes between two kinds of people: those who are more complex, violent and hybristic than the monster Typhon, and those who are simpler, calmer and tamer (230a). I propose that there are also two distinct types of Love correlating to Socrates's two kinds of people, namely, the hybristic and the self-disciplined. In the first case, lovers have no self-knowledge in that they bestow control of their souls upon the inferior part thereof, i.e. the appetitive part of the soul. In such an instance, as evinced in the text (250e–251a), lovers cannot perform the act of recollection. In the second case, however, lovers do have self-knowledge and may thereby repress the violence dwelling in the inferior part of their souls and cede control over the soul to its superior constituents: the rational and the spirited. Only thus may a lover attain recollection of the Forms and lead a life of moderation and fulfilment—the philosopher's life.

This paper proceeds through five parts. The first deals with the subject of self-knowledge in Plato's early dialogues and the *Phaedrus*. The second section presents the transition from sensual to soul love and subsequently to the love of division and collection in the *Phaedrus*. The third section elucidates the dipoles of the text and the mediating function of the central myth of the dialogue, and the fourth sketches the relationship between Love, recollection and mythology. Finally, the last section illuminates how Socrates's interpretation of the central myth connects self-knowledge with Love and recollection.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

The concept of self-knowledge is both theoretically and practically examined in the Platonic corpus, which, according to Landazurri (2015, p. 128), shows that epistemology and ethics are combined in Plato's educational model. As Moore puts it, for Plato, to know oneself is to be aware of one's soul and character; a consideration which is primarily epistemological but practical as well, to the extent that this same consideration "can make oneself a better person" (Moore, 2014, p. 391).

Self-knowledge, as a Platonic concept, is mainly[5] employed in Plato's early dialogues such as the *Apology,* the *Charmides* and the *First Alcibiades*. More specifically, in the *Apol-*

ogy (see *Ap*. 21b), Plato defines self-knowledge as the awareness of ignorance and presents it as a cognitive state which makes its owner virtuous and prosperous.[6] In the *Charmides*, the philosopher enriches the definition of self-knowledge by defining it as "a science of the other sciences and its own self"[7] (*Chrm.* 166c). Self-knowledge, in the *Charmides,* is a science that makes its owner capable of being aware of what one truly knows and what one does not, on the one hand, and of examining the knowledge of others, on the other hand. Furthermore, self-knowledge is a prerequisite for someone to be self-disciplined (*sôfron*) (see *Chrm.* 167a). However, the questions remain: what is the 'self' and how can knowledge of it be reached? The *First Alcibiades* answers these crucial questions, firstly, by "identifying the self with soul and not with the body" (Tsouna, 2008, p. 47), and, secondly, by claiming that self-knowledge is achievable through reflectivity (*anaklastikôtita*), when a soul reflects in another.

Nevertheless, in the *Phaedrus*, self-knowledge is not associated – at least in an obvious way – with self-restraint (*sofrosŷne*) and reflectivity. This is the first and only dialogue in which Plato connects, in a negative way, the concept of self-knowledge with the rational interpretation of myths.[8] This correlation arises in the preamble of the dialogue when Socrates and Phaedrus arrive at the place where, according to the traditional myth, Boreas abducted Oreithyia. There, Phaedrus asks Socrates if he deems this myth real. Socrates responds that it seems ridiculous to him to investigate strange, inconceivable and portentous things, such as mythical monsters, since he is not yet able, as the Delphic inscription has it, to know himself[9] (229c–e). The philosopher further points out that he prefers to accept the customary belief about such matters, to spend his leisure time on self-investigation. Therefore, instead of attempting to interpret and explain traditional myths in a rational way,[10] he would rather investigate himself to become aware of whether he is "a monster more complicated and more furious than Typhon, or a simpler and gentler creature, to whom a divine and quiet lot is given by nature"[11] (230a). As Moore (2014, p. 414) correctly observes, the simile that Socrates uses pushes readers to think that knowing which of the two above-mentioned types one corresponds to constitutes a prerequisite for achieving self-knowledge, although it does not explain *why* Socrates does not know himself. In any case, "Socrates' question does not exhaust or close his inquiry, but rather keeps it alive" (Nichols, 2010, p. 97).

Dorter (2006, p. 262) argues that the first type of self, i.e. the more complicated and more furious than the Typhon monster, correlates to the bad horse of the palinode,[12] that is, the appetitive part of the soul. The second type of self, that is, the simpler and gentler creature, tallies with the good horse, namely, the spirited part of the soul.[13] However, if we accept Dorter's interpretation, we will have to identify the self with only a part within the soul, not with the soul as a whole. Contrariwise, if we identify, as I suggest, the first type of self with what is described as *hybris* (excess) and the second type of self with what is depicted as *sofrosŷne* in the first speech of Socrates, we might be closer to a more correct interpretation. At this point, it is pertinent to remember the relevant definitions. According to Socrates, there are two ruling and leading principles in each one of us; one is the innate desire for pleasure and the other is the acquired opinion that strives for the best. When the acquired opinion, which is true and guided by reason,

prevails, its power is called *self-restraint*, but when irrational desire dominates, its rule is called *excess* (237d–238a). Excess is depicted as multifarious and diverse; a depiction that, in my opinion, resembles the complexity of the monstrous self, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, makes the reader think that self-restraint, which is the opposite mental state of excess, should be simple, just like the second type of self is.

Griswold remarks that Socrates places Typhon amid two extreme self-types; the first one represents disorder, excess and destruction. Undoubtedly, such a monster, guided by irrational desire, cannot know itself because it is not capable of understanding its limits. Griswold argues that this monster corresponds to "the absolute tyranny of Eros deprived of intelligence" (Griswold, 1986, p. 41). The second self-type represents tameness and "seems to be a result of the domestication of an acquired recognition of *nomos* and *doxa*" (Griswold, 1986, p. 41), which makes one capable of not only knowing but also accepting one's own limits. Below, I will endeavour to demonstrate that the first self-type corresponds to the hybristic kind of Love, which is introduced in Lysias's speech and, accordingly, that the second self-type corresponds to the self-disciplined lover, which is initially described in Socrates's first speech and further illustrated in his second speech.

FROM SENSUAL TO SOUL LOVE AND THE LOVE OF DIVISION AND COLLECTION

Lysias's speech sketches *Eros* as something hideous, as a mental disease (231c–d) which makes its owner paranoid and as a purely lecherous desire (232e–233a) that lasts as long as bodily beauty lasts. Lysias claims that it is more proper to give one's favours to a non-lover than to a lover, since only the non-lover is self-dominant and, therefore, self-disciplined (232a–b). The rhetorician alleges that lovers are jealous and jealousy often leads to enmity. Thus, lovers' affection for young boys is harmful in that they obstruct the boys' spiritual development. On the contrary, non-lovers are not driven by their passions, so they are more useful than harmful to the boys, in that they establish a long friendship with them and lead them to better education. As we can see, Lysias's speech portrays Love as a completely sensual experience and degradation of reason, perceiving it merely as a servant of desire. Plainly enough, Lysias defines Love and the self-disciplined lover in a distorted way.

In contrast to Lysias's definitions, as we have seen above, is Socrates's definition of self-restraint in his first speech. Socrates defines self-restraint as a kind of love that occurs when the innate desire for pleasure is subjected to the acquired opinion which is true and guided by reason. In the *Republic,* we find a similar definition. There, Plato characterises the self-disciplined lover as one in whom the upper parts of the soul, the rational and spirited, cooperate to tame the appetitive part's extravagant desire for pleasures (*R.* 410d–412a). Self-restraint is a harmonious and sober mental state, in which the rational and the appetitive parts stipulate that, by nature, the superior part must rule, and the inferior must obey. Moreover, self-restraint is opposed to extravagant pleasure, which is a madness of spirit (*R.* 402d–403b).

Paradoxically, the self-disciplined lover of the *Republic* seems to correspond to the *Phaedrus*'s 'mad lover', who is introduced in the central myth of the dialogue. As we read at 256a–b, when Socrates interprets his

myth, divine lovers "live a life of harmony and happiness", in that the charioteer (the rational part of the soul) cooperates with the good horse (the spirited part of the soul) to restrict the bad horse's extravagant tendency towards pleasure.[14] As a result of the right order in their soul, those lovers become self-disciplined, virtuous and blissful. Counter to this kind of lover is the lecherous lover, who is corrupted and has surrendered to the innate desire for pleasures by giving control of his soul to the bad horse, the appetitive part of the soul (250e–251a).

In my opinion, two types of madness are introduced in the *Phaedrus*, respective to two kinds of *sofrosŷne*, namely the humane and the divine. The first type of madness "is caused by humane illness, the other by a divine release from the norms of conventional behaviour" (265a).[15] What is defined as 'conventional behaviour' in this case? As evinced in the text, conventional behaviour is the lecherous, hybristic love, or else the love of Lysias' non-lover which, mixed with 'mortal prudence', breeds in the boy's soul the quality of slavishness, which is commonly praised as a virtue (256e). Yet, we must define what 'mortal prudence' is and *why* that kind of *sofrosŷne* raises slavishness in the soul. It seems that the description of mortal prudence matches the description of *sofrosŷne* in Lysias's account, that is, the utilitarian subjugation of reason to the innate desire for pleasure. In this way, the natural order in the lover's soul is disturbed and, thus, the lover becomes a servant of the lowest part of the soul. Accordingly, divine *sofrosŷne* corresponds to the divine madness of love, which makes its owner self-disciplined by enslaving "the part which allowed evil in the soul" (the appetitive) and by freeing up the part which is the source of virtue (the spirited) (256b–c). In other words, the divine lover gains divine *sofrosŷne*, in that their soul is naturally ordered; the superior part rules and the inferior part obeys. Now, let us consider how the order or disorder in a lover's soul reflects the extent of the lover's self-knowledge.

The only things a non-lover knows, according to Lysias's account, are the object of their desire (Yunis, 2005, p. 112) and the means that are needed to conquer it (Griswold, 1986, p. 5). Such a "lover" does not have self-knowledge, and, further, does not teach us anything about theirs and our nature (Tsouna, 2008, p. 49-50). Lebeck (1972, p. 283) aptly points out that Lysias's rhetoric, which is harmful and does not purpose for the truth, introduces an analogous kind of lover: an excessively and extremely passionate and suicidal person, who seeks a similar lover (Griswold, 1986, p. 20-21). On the contrary, the lover in Socrates's first speech seems to have some kind of dialectical reasoning: the lover wants to know if love is something harmful or beneficial and also attempts to define the subject of investigation. In a few words, the lover cares for the essence of love (237c–d). After Socrates defines love as the desire for good things, he implicitly, yet certainly, distinguishes two types of love: the self-disciplined, which is good and useful, and the hybristic, which is excessive and harmful (237d–238c). Socrates declares that they will now investigate the hybristic type of love[16] and argues that a hybristic lover is harmful to the boy who is desired by the lover because the lover prevents the boy's engagement to philosophy; a divine engagement that could lead him to prudence (238b–241a). Furthermore, a hybristic lover contrives anything that could keep the boy ignorant of everything else (239b). Therefore, this lover doubly harms the desired boy, in that the boy is prevented not only from knowing himself but from knowing all other things as well.

But *how* does the divine Love of the self-disciplined lover guide its possessor to philosophy and knowledge? Socrates's second speech, the palinode,[17] answers the above question. The myth begins as an attempt to depict the nature[18] of the soul (246a). Every soul, humane or divine, consists of a charioteer (*logistikôn*) and two horses. In the case of gods' souls, both horses are good, but in the case of human souls, one horse is good (*thumoeidês*) and one is bad (*epithimitikôn*). This explains why gods' chariots confront no difficulties reaching the region above the sky, where "the colourless, formless, and intangible truly existing essence holds (...), visible only to the mind, the pilot of the soul" which is nurtured by it (247c–d). Every other soul that is capable of following gods' chariots pursues the revelation and raises the head of the charioteer to gaze at the things we call realities: absolute justice, temperance, knowledge and every other similar thing (247d–248a).[19] Every soul desires to reach the region above the sky and to be nourished by those things, but some souls lack strength and are left behind. Many of the souls lose their wings and become heavy because, through some mischance, they are filled with forgetfulness and evil. Thus, they fall to the earth without gaining a view of reality. These fallen souls, according to the Law of Destiny, are incarnated and start to feed upon opinion (248b–c). As indicated, the reality is divided into two different realms: the intelligible, at which souls are nourished by Forms and science, and the sensible, where incarnated souls are nourished by opinions, which according to Burger (1947, p. 57) are cultivated through arts. In other words, arts imprint acquired opinions on human souls. However, *how* are acquired opinions, art, love and soul interwoven in the *Phaedrus*?

In the third part of the dialogue, Plato states that rhetoric is an art that "leads the soul by means of words" (261a–b). The art of rhetoric, which is charming and persuasive, is used by rhetoricians either to imprint harmful (false) or beneficial (true) opinions on human souls. A counterfeit rhetorician, who is ignorant of the truth and cannot distinguish similar things, deceives people with false discourses (262a–b), whilst a true rhetorician, who has knowledge and science and uses the dialectical methods of *division* and *collection*, imprints beneficial opinions on human souls (263b–c). Socrates admits that he has used the two above-mentioned methods in his speeches[20] (264e–265a) and calls himself a *lover* of these processes (266b). Socrates, clearly enough, distinguishes his philosophical rhetoric from the conventional rhetoric of Lysias, by implying that he – through his discourses – instilled true and expedient opinions, whilst Lysias's speech imprinted a false and harmful opinion on Phaedrus's soul regarding Love. Otherwise stated, "Socrates establishes that True Rhetoric is indistinguishable from Philosophy. The philosopher is the real rhetorician and the only man who arouses and makes love in the truest sense" (Lebeck, 1972, p. 283).

THE DIPOLES AND THE MEDIATING FUNCTION OF THE CENTRAL MYTH

Based on what we have discussed above, it is clear that the *Phaedrus* stands on dipoles.[21] We first encountered the self-type dipole, that of the more complex and the simpler than Typhon selves; next, we encountered the dipole of the hybristic and the self-disciplined lovers; and finally, the dipole of conventional and true rhetoric. Kluge (2010, p. 347-371) sug-

gests that all of the dipoles could efficiently be consolidated into a single dipole, that of beauty and truth, which the central myth of the dialogue intercedes. Plato's poetic imagination portrays the bad horse's desire for sensual beauty pinioned with the charioteer's desire for real Beauty on the same chariot, inserting between those the good horse's desire for virtue and temperance (253d–e). Hence, the palinode sketches a mixed type of love, which mediates the lecherous, sensual love presented in the first part of the dialogue, and the love of division and connections illustrated in the third part of the dialogue. In other words, the myth adumbrates a kind of love that commences from sexual wistfulness whilst "its natural goal, as well its ultimate source, is communion with being" (Yunis, 2005, p. 113).

It seems that the central myth of the *Phaedrus* mediates all of the text's dipoles, intervening between the first and the third parts of the dialogue. It is placed in the middle of the *Phaedrus* because Plato employs it in an attempt to reconcile every above-mentioned dipole. The palinode, I argue, teaches us that true rhetoric interposes between the false rhetoric of Lysias and Socrates's dialectic method; that love as a divine madness interpolates hybristic love and love of division and collection; and, finally, that poetic imagery intervenes amid the discourses concerning the sensual and true beauty.

Further, what does the myth depict? Of which thing does it give us an image? As stated in the text, the central myth of the *Phaedrus* constitutes a plausible image, a likeness of the soul's nature (246a). According to Frentz (2006, p. 250), in Socrates's second speech, "most clearly in the famous chariot image, intellect and *eros* are fused in the pursuit of the truth about the soul". In this light, Socrates narrates this myth to depict the essence of the soul and imprint a true belief on Phaedrus's soul regarding the true nature of the self. This myth, we could say, imparts the opinion that the order or disorder in each person's soul determines their self-type and, subsequently, the kind of love that they embrace. We and Phaedrus are challenged by Socrates to either accept or deny this opinion.

Waterfield (2002, p. xxii) highlights that the fact that we only have two options, either to be or not to be convinced by the myth, denotes the weakness of myth, "that it is necessarily dogmatic". However, as we have seen in the preamble of the dialogue, Socrates declares that he prefers to be convinced by myths rather than attempt to interpret them rationally, in order to take advantage of this spare time to explore himself (229e). In my opinion, Socrates's declaration functions as a note to us: If we want to become aware of ourselves, we must be persuaded by his myth, not waste time in rational interpretations and doubts. Only the rustic people disbelieve in myths (229e); the truly wise accept them (245c).

We must also consider that myth, in this case, constitutes a helpful instrument for Socrates's rhetorical art, which is true and inspired unlike Lysias's. After all, rhetoric is the art of persuasion (260a) that speaks not for the truth but for the probable (*eikôs*), not for the actual facts but for the likely-to-be-done (272e). *Eikôs*, Socrates contends, is persuading in that it looks similar to the truth. Moore (2014, 413) aptly points out that Socrates presents *eikôs* as compatible and not in opposition with the truth. Unlike those who attempt to interpret myths rationally, adjusting their opinions to *eikôs*, people who are interested in learning about themselves adjust their opinions to the truth (Moore, 2014, p. 412). It appears that the purpose of Socrates's mythological narration is to provide a plausible image of the truth; a true

belief for the investigated object, which is love, but also a commensurate consideration of what the self really is. Given that self-type is directly related to the type of love that a lover espouses, Tsouna (2008, p. 49) claims that the understanding of love, humans and self, aggregate different aspects of the same philosophical inquiry.

Waterfield (2002, p. xxii-xxiii) observes that the incomplete picture of myth falls short of the absolute truth, in that it offers partial and, consequently, only temporary views of the truth. Alternatively stated, the true opinions that the myth instils in souls constitute imperfect pictures of the truth itself, in that they are only temporary if not fastened with truth through dialectic reasoning. Concerning the dialogue's context of recollection, I propose that the central myth of the *Phaedrus* has a function analogous to that of earthly beauty: it constitutes a copy of the absolute truth, in the sight of which the divine lover, through the cognitive process of recollection, ascends to the intelligible realm. From my perspective, Plato uses myth deliberately to imprint a true belief, that is – as we know from *Meno* – the prerequisite cognitive state for someone to attain recollection. However, myth as a dialectical instrument (Kluge, 2010, p. 359) is expedient only if addressed to those who are meant to be philosophers, since only they, as we will see, are capable of recollecting Forms.

LOVE, RECOLLECTION AND MYTHOLOGY

According to Socrates, when souls fall to the earth, they forget the realities that they contemplated in the region above the sky; some of them slightly, others considerably and some others completely. To obtain recollection of these realities, a human being "must[22] understand a general conception formed by collecting into a unity[23] by means of the reason the many perceptions of the senses" (249b). Only a philosopher's soul could attain recollection, for a philosopher's mind is always in communion with those things through memory and thus has wings (249b–c). Such a man is inspired by the fourth kind of madness,[24] the divine love, which makes him capable of remembering true beauty when he sees beauty on earth (249d).

Lovers of this category love beautiful things and, since they are recently initiated to the view of realities when they face a truly beautiful and godlike face, they are occupied by the passion of madness and cannot control themselves. Being in this condition, these lovers do not clearly perceive the cause of their passion (250a–b). The fact that, in this phase, lovers cannot rationally explain what happens indicates, I contend, that they are in the cognitive state of true belief. If we attempt to interpret the *Phaedrus* with the theory of recollection from the *Meno* in mind, we could assume that this type of lover is at the second of the three recollection stages.[25] The cognitive state of these lovers may reflect their endeavours to be eventually in communion with the Form of Beauty through reason and not just the automated way of true belief.

Dorter (2006, p. 266) correctly indicates that the madness of the *Phaedrus*'s lover corresponds to the blindness of the liberated prisoner in the allegory of the cave found in the *Republic*. In both cases, Plato depicts the transition from the sensible to the intelligible realm; a transition that cannot be achieved smoothly and without pain, as the two realms are so substantially different. According to Dorter (2006, p. 266), the transition from the hazy, empirical and physical world to the explicit world of Forms is signified by the ascension and the total turning of the soul to light and reality in the *Republic* (see *R.* 517c;

521c), whilst the same transition is denoted with recollection in the *Phaedrus*.

Socrates declares that only a philosopher who rightly employs the 'reminders'[26] is always being initiated into perfect mysteries and becomes truly perfect (249c–d). What are the 'reminders' and how should they be used in order to be beneficial to dialectical inquiry? In the third part of the dialogue, Socrates states that myths composed by dialecticians function as reminders, as they are beneficial to those who have written them when they come to the forgetfulness of old age, as well as to those who will follow the same path, namely future philosophers (276d–e). The discourses of a mythmaker who employs the dialectic method and, thus, has knowledge of the good, the just and the beautiful, become fruitful when they are being planted in a fitting soul. The sowing and the continuous reproduction of those intelligent words "make their possessor happy,[27] to the farthest possible limit of human happiness" (276d–277a).

Commenting on the above-mentioned passage, Dorter argues that dialecticians provide acquired opinions to their students through their myths. The seeds of the philosophers are transformed from opinion to knowledge *only* when a student understands the teachings thoroughly. The theory of recollection, which is initially introduced in the *Meno*, makes this transition possible, in that it indicates that we can discover truths that our senses alone could not discern. This is possible because those truths, which are inherent but forgotten, can be activated "by the right kind of reminders" (Dorter, 2006, p. 270).

Furthermore, if we combine two claims by Socrates when closing his myth, the possibility of the central myth of the *Phaedrus* being such a reminder seems more than plausible. Socrates, firstly, contends that he as a philosopher was initiated in the perfect mysteries of memory, in that he was following "in the train of Zeus" (250b7). Secondly, he claims that his mythological account was spoken "in honour of memory" (250c8). As we know from the Orphic hymn to the Muses,[28] Zeus (the king of the Gods) and Mnemosyne (the goddess of memory) were the parents of the Muses, who, according to the *Phaedrus*, are the inspirational goddesses of poetic madness. We could safely assume that these words of Socrates intimate that Plato considers this myth to be a divinely inspirational poem, as much as a reminder to Phaedrus about the nature of the soul and love.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE CENTRAL MYTH AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE SELF-KNOWLEDGE OF THE LOVER

The depiction of the soul as a complex entity that constitutes a unity despite its division into three distinct parts, admittedly, does not sufficiently illuminate the question of *what* the self is, which Socrates introduced at the beginning of the dialogue. Nevertheless, the manner in which Plato interprets his own myth outlines, in my opinion, two contrasting self-types corresponding to two lover-types. The first is the self-disciplined lover who is inspired by divine madness and gives control of the soul to its superior part, the rational, which is by nature designated to lead. This lover is capable of transitioning from the sensible to the intelligible realm, as a result of the lover's recent initiation into the perfect mysteries through which the lover is always in communion with the absolute beings or the Forms. The second type, contrariwise, is the hybristic lover, who yields to lecherousness and seeks unnatural pleasures. In this way, the hybristic lover concedes control of the soul to the appetitive part of the soul.

Since a lover of this type is corrupted and not recently initiated to the most blessed of mysteries, when looking at a beautiful person, they cannot perceive that earthly beauty is just a likeness of the absolute Beauty and do not revere it (250e–251a).

These two lover-types differ in the way that each soul is organised. The self-disciplined lover seems to know – even with the automated way of true belief – at least two things: Firstly, that beautiful bodies and faces are images of the absolute Beauty and, secondly, that the superior part of the soul must govern, since this part is by nature appropriate for the task. Knowing both the quality of each soul-part and how they interact with each other, a lover of this kind acquires self-knowledge. Tsouna (2008, p. 55). remarks that for someone to know himself is to know what soul substantially is and how it is organized. This kind of knowledge, namely self-knowledge, renders the lover capable of attaining the recollection of absolute Beings, whilst facilitating the transition from sensual and bodily love to the dialectical love of divisions and collections. Professedly, the psychic composition of the self-disciplined and virtuous lover looks similar to that of what Socrates has called the "simpler and tamer than Typhon animal" (230a) in the dialogue's preamble. Accordingly, the hybristic and lecherous lover, who does not know the two things that the self-disciplined lover knows, seems to correspond to the so-called second self-type that Socrates refers to, "the more complex, violent, and hybristic than Typhon beast" (230a). Due to ignorance, this type of lover bestows control of the soul to its inferior part, which constantly seeks excessive carnal pleasures. As a result of this disorder of the soul, this kind of lover is occupied by an external and frenetic *mania* that makes the lover offensive, violent and impertinent across beauty.

Only a lover who at least has a true belief regarding which soul-part is by nature equipped to lead and which is by nature constructed to obey – a lover who has self-knowledge – is capable of recollecting Forms in the gaze of their images. After all, there are two sorts of images that trigger the process of recollection for someone who is innately a philosopher and recently initiated to the mysteries of memory—beautiful bodies and beautiful discourses, which both participate in the real and absolute Beauty. Socrates's myth seems to be such an image through which the philosopher attempts to incite recollection in the soul of Phaedrus. The poetic beauty of the myth, says Lebeck, functions like the lover gazing upon the beloved: the lover is excited "by the iridescence of the language (...) and is initiated an experience which could be crowned with insight" (Lebeck, 1972, p. 290).

Besides, the central myth of the *Phaedrus* seems dissimilar to traditional myths, as it is already interpreted by its own narrator, such that it does not "need a great deal of leisure" (229e). Unlike traditional myths which delineate strange and inconceivable natures, such as Centaurs, Chimaeras, Gorgons and Pegasi (see *Phdr.* 229d) Socrates's myth imprints an image of the nature of the self or the soul. In particular, the interpretation of this myth delineates how the organisation of a lover's soul is closely related to the kind of *Eros* they engender and embrace.

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ENDNOTES

1 Due to the thematic and structural diversity of the *Phaedrus*, many commentators argue about the unity of the dialogue. See on this: Hackforth (1952), Plass (1968), Heath (1987), Rowe (1987), Brisson (1992), Werner (2007), Moss (2012) and Werner (2012). According to Werner, the so-called problem of the *Phaedrus* "has in fact been voiced ever since antiquity" and "this can be seen in Hermeias's discussion of the issue, as well in the plurality of subtitles that were given to the *Phaedrus* in ancient times" (Werner, 2012, p. 237). Nichols claims that *Phaedrus* "seems to fall short of the standard for good writing that is articulated in the dialogue itself" (Nichols, 2010, p. 91).

2 See, for example, Lebeck (1972), who assumes that the *Phaedrus* has the form of a diptych, particularly that of *Eros* and *Logos* around which the whole dialogue is constructed. See also: Yunis (2005), Larsen (2010) and Lorkovic (2014).

3 See, for instance, Tsouna (2008), who suggests that the dialogue is divided into three parts. The first part includes three speeches about homoerotic love; the second deals with the composition and the use of rhetorical discourses; and the third one deals with the comparison between oral and written discourses.

4 Larsen points out that "the first part of the dialogue seems preoccupied with the topic of *Eros,* the second with rhetoric and *logos*" (Larsen, 2010, p. 73). Larsen also claims that if we find a way to unite these parts, we might find the "overall question of beauty" (Larsen, 2010, p. 73). In this paper, I suggest that these two thematic parts of the dialogue are connected through the central myth of the dialogue.

5 Landazurri (2015) presents an interesting approach regarding the development of the self-knowledge concept in the Platonic corpus. By examining passages from the *Charmides,* the *First Alcibiades*, the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, he suggests that the concept of self-knowledge, though introduced in the early Platonic dialogues, is refined and articulated with the tripartition of the soul in the *Republic*. Regarding the topic of self-knowledge in early Plato, see Tuozzo (2012) and Leigh (2020). For the relationship between *aporia* and self-knowledge in Plato, see Nightingale (2010).

6 Nightingale claims that the "self-reflexive awareness" (Nightingale, 2010, p. 11), which is presented in the *Apology*, is a kind of wisdom.

7 Translation by Lamb (1955).

8 Four myths are presented in the *Phaedrus*: one is borrowed from traditional poetry – the abduction of Orethyia by Boreas – and three are Platonic compositions, namely, the palinode, the cicadas myth and the Theuth and Thamus myth. Werner suggests that the unifying theme of the dialogue is myth itself, in that "both by *using* myth throughout the dialogue and by offering an ongoing discussion *about* myth, Plato provides multiple layers on thematic and structural continuity to the text as a whole" (Wener, 2012, p. 238).

9 There are many interpretations about what 'self' actually is in the dialectical frame of the *Phaedrus*. According to Moore, "recent scholarship is split between taking it as one's concrete personality and as the nature of (human) souls in general." (Moore, 2014, 390).

10 According to Lorkovic, "Socrates who elsewhere expresses unconventional views about myth, including incisive criticism of mythic poetry and original storytelling that draws on but significantly transforms established myths, here suggests in passing – as if it were obvious – that he believes traditional myth and does so, even more strangely, out of convention" (Lorkovic, 2014, p. 464).

11 Unless otherwise noted, I am using Fowler's 1925 translation of the *Phaedrus*.

12 For a summary of the palinode see the next section. For an extensive account of the central myth of the *Phaedrus* see Lebeck (1972).

13 For a similar interpretation regarding the tripartition of the soul in the *Phaedrus*, see Lebeck (1972, p. 282).

14 Since Plutarch's *Platonic Questions* Ix.1, the prevailing interpretation of the tripartite soul's chariot in the *Phaedrus* is that the charioteer is the rational part of the soul, the good horse is the spirited, and the bad horse is the appetitive. However, there are many alternative interpretations. See, for instance, Carelli, who suggests abandoning the traditional interpretation and claims that "the charioteer and horses should be taken to represent the parts of the rational, disembodied soul" (Carelli, 2015, p. 97). Carelli's interpretation relies on his argument that the black horse's representation, specifically, in the *Phaedrus* cannot be matched with the depiction of the appetitive part of the soul in the *Republic*, since, in the former, this soul part is sketched as entirely bad, whilst in the *Republic*, it has also a good role in the soul when well-nourished. See also Ferrari (1987, p. 185–201) and Belfiore (2006, p. 187–194), who deny an exact correlation between the tripartite soul in the *Republic* and the tripartite soul of the *Phaedrus*. However, Belfiore (2006, p. 191) claims that all three capacities of the human soul, in the central myth of the *Phaedrus*, share divine and bestial characteristics as well.

15 Translation by Waterfield 2002.

16 See also *Phaedrus*, 266a, where Socrates states that his first speech "continued to divide this until it found among its parts a sort of left-handed love, which it very justly reviled".

17 According to Werner, there are "multiple palinodic discourses in the *Phaedrus* and the dialogue as a whole has a palinodic momentum" (Werner, 2012, p. 246). Specifically, Socrates's second speech super-

sedes the two earlier speeches, that of Lysias and the first of Socrates. Then, "the palinode itself is superceded by the discussion of rhetoric and dialectic; and that discussion – insofar as it is contained within a written dialogue – is superceded by oral, live dialectic" (Werner, 2012, p. 246).

18 Plato uses the term "ιδέα"; a fact that raised many controversial interpretations concerning the possible existence of a Form of the Soul. On this subject see Griswold (1981) and Griswold (1986, p. 5–7). I follow scholars who suggest that Plato uses the term broadly in order to speak about the essence, i.e. the nature, of the soul.

19 Ionescu correctly observes that passages 247d5–e2 and 254b5–7 of the *Phaedrus* indicate that the Forms "are not isolated independent of one another, but rather in some kind of network" (Ionescu, 2012, p. 6). In other words, Ionescu asserts that Forms are intrinsically related to one another, so if a Form is recollected, every other Form is possible to be recollected as well; this is a point of view that we first encounter in the *Meno,* 81c9.

20 Socrates claims that his two discourses conceived the madness of love as one principle (through the process of collection), whilst – using the method of division – the first speech conceived a harmful love which was "very justly reviled", and the second found a divine love which was correctly praised.

21 In a more composite interpretation of the *Phaedrus,* Dorter (2006, p. 263) detects the seven following dipoles: (1) natural world versus humanly constructed city, (2) savage beast versus tame animal, (3) Dionysiac divine madness versus sobriety under the auspices of Hera, (4) natural tendency to respond to love with sexual passion versus the 'citified' behavior that calculatingly trades sex as a commodity, (5) natural appetites versus acquired opinions, (6) natural tendency to hybris versus the effort to acquire self-control, and (7) natural living conversation versus artificial products of the acquisition of writing that are devoid of life.

22 Scott (1995, p. 79) remarks that the word 'must' in this passage is of high importance, in that it indicates that not every human being is capable of achieving recollection of Forms although they *ought* to.

23 Ionescu (2012, p. 8) argues that the passages 265d3–5 and 265e1–3 intimate that division is the complementary part of collection, since collection is the method of perceiving and bringing together in one idea the scattered particulars, and division is the method of dividing Forms along natural joints without breaking any part. In a different but equally interesting interpretation, Greene (1918, p. 60) suggests that collection is the lower form of dialectic and constitutes the antechamber for the higher form of dialectic which is division. According to Greene, the method of division presupposes the method of collection, provided that collection is the gathering of the dispersed particulars to conceptual unities which a philosopher uses in order to be initiated to the mysteries of perfection through the method of division.

24 The other three kinds of madness are: the gift of prophecy from Apollo, the mystic rites from Dionysus and poetry from the Muses. See *Phaedrus* 265b.

25 Scott (1999, p. 98–99) summarises the recollection stages in three parts: during the first phase, the student that is guided by the dialectician (in this case, Socrates) realises that the student's beliefs/opinions about the researched subject are not true. In other words, at this level, the student realises their ignorance. Progressively, in the second stage, the student is shifted from the mere realisation of ignorance to the acquisition of true belief(s) regarding the researched subject. Finally, in the third stage of recollection, the student manages to convert true opinion to knowledge, after interlacing a true opinion with a rational explanation.

26 The word in the ancient text is *hypomnêmata*. Many translators use the term 'memories' but I follow Kanayama (2012) in using the term 'reminders', which is closer to the meaning of the ancient Greek word and is used again and explained later in the same dialogue.

27 Lebeck (1972, p. 288) notes that the spoken *logoi* have the same effect with the true *Eros*: each makes its possessor *ευδαίμων.*

28 For the English translation of the hymn, see Athanassakis and Wolkov (2013, p. 261).

Causes in Plato's *Phaedo*

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ABSTRACT

As Socrates recounts his search for causes (*aitiai*) in the *Phaedo*, he identifies the following as genuine causes: intelligence (*nous*), seeming best, choice of the best, and the forms. I argue that these causes should be understood as norms prescribing the conditions their effects must meet if those effects are to be produced. Thus, my account both explains what Socrates' causes are and the way in which they cause what they cause.

Keywords: Causality, Causes, *Phaedo*, Plato, Forms, *Nous*

https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_23_3

INTRODUCTION

In the *Phaedo*, Socrates relates how his search for the αἴτιαι (causes, explanations) of things—why they come to be, pass away, and are (96a5 ff.)—eventually led him to posit the forms. The sense in which the forms are αἴτιαι, however, is not as obvious to we contemporary readers as it was to Phaedo and Echecrates, who claim that Socrates' account was "wonderfully clear to anyone with even a little intelligence" (102a4-5).[1] Part of the difficulty is that the way Socrates uses the word "αἰτία" and its adjective cognate "αἴτιον" in the *Phaedo* renders them notoriously difficult to translate. I will translate "αἰτία" and "αἴτιον" indifferently as "cause," "explanation," or "reason why," with the recognition that none of these capture the Greek without considerable ambiguity. Yet, even ignoring the problem of translation, the difficulty of understanding the specific notion of αἰτία or cause Socrates uses remains. In responding to this difficulty, scholars typically adopt one of three basic approaches. One approach is to claim that Socrates' account of causality is, as Ian Crombie put it, "simply a nest of confusions" (Crombie, 1963, 2:169; see also Taylor, 1969; Hackforth, 1955, 131, 161; Burge, 1971, 8; Stough, 1976; Annas, 1982; Ruben, 2015, 51–52). On this approach, the main philosophical interest of the passage is to determine what made such confused notions of causality seem plausible to Plato. For those who find this unsatisfying, a second approach is to argue that Socrates' account is not fundamentally misguided, but simply lacks helpful distinctions between different kinds of causes that we find in later philosophers, such as Aristotle (e.g. Zeller, 1888, 263, n. 110; Shorey, 1933, 179; Vlastos, 1969; Burge, 1971; Fine, 1987; Byrne, 1989; Mueller, 1998; Bolton, 1998; Dancy, 2004, 291–310; Shaw, 2013; Ruben, 2015, 45–76). According to this approach, the confusion we experience in reading Socrates' account can be cleared up by identifying the sorts of causality with which he is concerned at various stages in his story as formal, final, efficient, logical, teleological, etc. A third approach is to prescind from these sorts of distinctions and instead attempt to uncover a more basic notion of causality that renders what Plato has Socrates claim in the *Phaedo* both intuitive and plausible (e.g. Wiggins, 1986; Eck, 1994; Sedley, 1998; Kelsey, 2004; Sharma, 2009; Bailey, 2014). According to this approach, Socrates' account of causality is neither confused nor fails to make helpful distinctions.

This article takes the third approach. I will attempt to identify a single notion of causality that explains Socrates' initial attraction to Anaxagoras, his discussion of the causes of his sitting in prison, and the causality he attributes to the forms. The notion of causality Plato has Socrates employ in the *Phaedo* is remarkably strict. In order for Socrates to consider *C* a genuine cause of something's being *E*, (1) *C* must be such that it cannot be responsible for anything's being something contrary to *E*; and (2) anything that is contrary to *C* cannot be responsible for something's being *E* (cf. Burge, 1971, 4–5; Cresswell, 1971; Annas, 1982, 316; Matthews and Blackson, 1989, 584; Sedley, 1998, 121; Hankinson, 1998, 89–94; Kelsey, 2004, 23–24; Ebrey, 2014, 251–56). The sort of causal paradigm Socrates seems to have in mind is how the virtue courage, say, causes someone to act courageously. Courage cannot be the cause of someone's acting in a way contrary to acting courageously and anything that is contrary to courage, such as cowardice, cannot be the cause of someone's acting courageously (see 68d2-69a4). David

Sedley and others have, I think, convincingly shown how the various sorts of things Socrates identifies as genuine causes in the *Phaedo* fit Socrates' causal paradigm (e.g. Sedley, 1998; Kelsey, 2004; Ebrey, 2014; Bailey, 2014). The question that, to my knowledge, has not been sufficiently addressed in the literature is the manner in which the causes Socrates identifies as genuine produce their effects. Yet until this question is addressed, Socrates' causal paradigm in the *Phaedo* will seem implausible to many contemporary readers. My goal in this article is to address this question and offer an account of Socrates' genuine causes that explains the way they produce their effects.

One may object that the manner in which causes produce their effects is not addressed in the *Phaedo*. After all, Socrates explicitly claims that he does not confidently affirm how and in what way (ὅπῃ δὴ καὶ ὅπως) the Beautiful makes things beautiful (100d5-7). Yet although Socrates does not directly address the question of the way his genuine causes produce their effects, as interpreters of the *Phaedo* trying to determine the plausibility of Socrates' account, we must address this question. Addressing this question, however, does not require that we decide whether it is through its presence (παρουσία), communion (κοινωνία), or whatever else that the Beautiful causes beautiful things to be beautiful (100d5-6). All that is needed is a generic account of the way in which the kind of causes Socrates considers genuine cause what they cause.

I will argue that the causes Socrates identifies as genuine in the *Phaedo* produce their effects by being norms. By a "norm," I mean a principle that prescribes the conditions things must meet in order to be governed by that principle. There are of course different kinds of norms. Ethical norms, for example, prescribe the conditions that given actions in given contexts must meet in order to be ethically right, that is, in order to be actions governed by ethical norms. Likewise, social norms—such as standards for dress, for what sorts of conversations are appropriate in a given context, and so on—prescribe the conditions that must be met if one's attire, speech, comportment, and so on are to be "socially acceptable," that is, governed by the relevant social norms. Similarly, the words "intelligence" and "reason" in English, like the word "νοῦς" in Ancient Greek, sometimes indicate a norm. For instance, when Ismene says to Antigone, "τὸ γὰρ περισσὰ πράσσειν οὐκ ἔχει νοῦν οὐδένα (to do the excessive is not intelligent)" (S. *Ant*. 67-68), she is not saying that Antigone does not possess a faculty of thought or even that Antigone lacks the mental quality of "good sense." Rather she is saying that the act of burying their brother in violation of Creon's command is not an "intelligent thing to do," and thus fails to meet the conditions prescribed by the norm that determines which action in a given situation is "the intelligent thing to do." Phrases like "the intelligent thing to do" point to a norm that we could simply call "reason," "intelligence," or "νοῦς." While the nature and metaphysical status of these various kinds of norms are matters of controversy, that they are norms of the sort I have indicated is clear. Each is a principle that prescribes conditions things must meet if those things are to be governed by that principle.

The examples I have given so far are all norms that concern action or behavior. Yet, as I hope to demonstrate, in addition to these sorts of norms, Socrates posits ontological norms in the *Phaedo*: the forms. I will argue that each form, *F*, is an ontological norm that prescribes the conditions a thing must meet in order to be an *F* kind of being.[2] In this way, to be an *F* kind

of being is to be governed by the norm that is form *F*. The form Smallness, for example, is a norm prescribing the conditions a thing must meet in order to be small. It prescribes, for instance, that whatever is to be small must be exceeded by something else. Only insofar as a thing meets the conditions prescribed by Smallness can that thing be small.

As Socrates recounts his search for causes in *Phaedo* 96a5-102d4, the only things he identifies as genuine causes are intelligence (νοῦς) (97b8-99c8), seeming best (δόξα τοῦ βελτίστου) (99a2),[3] choice (αἵρεσις) of the best (99b1), and the forms (99d1 ff.). My contention is that each of these, insofar as it is a cause, is a norm. I will argue that Socrates characterizes (1) intelligence as a norm that prescribes the conditions things must meet in order to be arranged in the best way; (2) the seeming best of an action to person *P* as a norm that prescribes the conditions the potential doer of the action must meet in order to do what seems best to *P*; (3) a choice of the best as a norm that prescribes the conditions *P*'s actions must meet in order both to be actions that seem best to *P* and actions that are in fact arranged in the best way; and (4) the forms as norms that prescribe the conditions things must meet if they are to be the kinds of beings that correspond to the forms in which they participate.

CAUSES AS NORMS IN THE "FIRST SAILING"

When recounting his "first sailing" in search of the causes of why things come to be, pass away, and are, Socrates identifies intelligence (νοῦς), seeming best (δόξα τοῦ βελτίστου), and choice (αἵρεσις) of the best as genuine causes, while rejecting the materialist accounts of causation he found in the teachings of those who engaged in what he calls "inquiry into nature" (96a7; περὶ φύσεως ἱστορίαν).[4] Socrates' argument that materialist causal accounts posit things without which genuine causes could not cause, rather than genuine causes themselves, proceeds in three stages. In the first (98b7-d8), Socrates (i) compares Anaxagoras' claim that Intelligence is the cause of all things to the claim that "Socrates does all the things he does because of intelligence" (98c4); and (ii) compares materialistic causal accounts of natural phenomena to an account according to which Socrates' bones, sinews, and other parts of his body are the cause of his doing the actions he does, for example sitting in prison. In the second stage (98e1-99a4), Socrates identifies four true causes of his sitting in prison, all of which are various instances of a seeming or appearance of the best. In the third and final stage of the argument (99a4-b4), Socrates returns to the general claim that intelligence is the cause of all his actions and concludes that Anaxagoras' materialist causal accounts are inadequate.

If intelligence, seeming best, and choice of the best are understood as norms, the following reading of Socrates' argument results. In stage one, Socrates compares Anaxagoras' claim that Intelligence is the cause of all things to the claim that all the actions Socrates does are done because of intelligence. If intelligence is understood as a norm prescribing the conditions things must meet in order to be arranged in the best way (see 97c5-6), then to claim that all the actions Socrates does are done because of intelligence is to claim that all the actions Socrates does meet the conditions prescribed by that norm. Thus, if intelligence is understood as a norm, the claim that all Socrates' actions are done because of intelligence entails that all Socrates' actions are in

fact arranged in the best way, or rightly done,[5] just as Anaxagoras' claim that Intelligence is the cause of all things entails that all things are arranged in the best way.

In stage two of the argument, Socrates identifies four true causes of his sitting in prison and also what would have been the cause of his being in Megara or Boeotia, had he decided to escape at Crito's bidding. The following is the relevant text:

> Since (ἐπειδή) it seemed to the Athenians to be better (Ἀθηναίοις ἔδοξε βέλτιον εἶναι) to vote against me, therefore on account of these things (διὰ ταῦτα δή) it has also, in turn, seemed better to me (καὶ ἐμοὶ βέλτιον αὖ δέδοκται) to sit here, and more just, standing my ground, to undergo the penalty which they ordered. Since (ἐπεί), by the Dog, I suppose long ago these bones and sinews would have been in Megara or Boeotia, carried by a seeming best (ὑπὸ δόξης φερόμενα τοῦ βελτίστου), if I had not believed it to be more just and noble (εἰ μὴ δικαιότερον ᾤμην καὶ κάλλιον εἶναι), before fleeing and escaping, to undergo whatever penalty was ordained by the city. (98e1-99a4)

While Socrates names four different causes of his sitting in prison, the causal conjunctions ἐπειδή at 98e1 and ἐπεί at 98e5, taken together with διὰ ταῦτα δή at 98e2-3, indicate that two of the causes stand in an explanatory relationship to the other two. Socrates claims that (1) since (ἐπεί) it seemed to him more just and noble to undergo whatever penalty was ordained by the city (98e5-99a4) and (2) since (ἐπειδή) it seemed better to the Athenians to vote against him (98e1-2), therefore on account of these things (διὰ ταῦτα δή), (3) it seemed to him more just to undergo the penalty the Athenians ordered (98e4-5) and (4) seemed to him better to sit in prison (98e3).

If one were to ask why Socrates is sitting in prison, the immediate answer would be because it seems better to him to do so than to do any of the alternative actions he could be doing (=4). Further, his sitting in prison is part of his act of standing his ground and undergoing the penalty the Athenians have ordered, an act that seems to him more just than any of the available alternatives (=3). If one were to ask why it seems more just to him to undergo the penalty the Athenians ordered, the answer would be because he believes it more just and noble to undergo whatever penalty is ordained by the city (=1) and it seemed better to the Athenians to vote against him (=2). In this way, the seeming more just of undergoing the penalty and the seeming better of sitting are the causes of Socrates' sitting and undergoing, whereas Socrates' belief that it is more just and noble to undergo whatever penalty the city ordains and the seeming better to the Athenians of voting against him are the causes of the seeming more just to him of undergoing and the seeming better of sitting. Accordingly, I will call (3) and (4) the "immediate causes" of Socrates' sitting and undergoing, and (1) and (2) "mediate causes."

The immediate causes of Socrates' sitting can be understood as norms in the following way. The seeming more just to Socrates of undergoing the penalty and the seeming better of sitting in prison are norms prescribing the conditions Socrates must meet in order to do what seems better to him. Consider the seeming better of sitting in prison. This seeming better to Socrates prescribes various conditions he must meet if he is to sit in prison. Socrates himself expounds some of these conditions; for example, that his body must be "composed

of bones and sinews" (98c6-7), that the bones must be "firm and have joints separate from one another" (98c7-8), that the sinews must be "such as to contract and relax" (98c8-d1), and that "when the bones are hanging in their joints, the relaxation and contraction of the sinews" must make his "limbs able to bend" (98d3-5). Yet these are not the only conditions or even the most noteworthy. The most significant condition prescribed by the seeming better to Socrates of sitting in prison is that Socrates' limbs must bend into a sitting position there in the prison and maintain themselves in that position. This condition is what separates the seeming better of sitting in prison from, say, the seeming better of escaping. Both the seeming better of sitting and the seeming better of escaping require a body composed of bones and sinews such that the limbs are able to bend, but only the seeming better of sitting in prison prescribes that Socrates' limbs bend and maintain themselves in a sitting position in the prison.

A consideration of some ways Socrates' actions could have failed to meet the conditions prescribed by the seeming better of sitting in prison can help further elucidate its normative character. First, imagine a scenario in which Socrates agreed to Crito's proposal, successfully escaped, and ended up in Megara. Imagine, however, that on the day on which he was supposed to drink the poison he regretted his decision to escape. In this scenario, escaping seemed better to Socrates while he was escaping, but then, upon further reflection, after he is already in Megara, remaining and sitting in prison begins to seem as if it would have been the better course of action. In a case like this, however, the seeming better of sitting in prison on the day he was to drink the poison is not the cause of his sitting there. After all, he is not in prison and so is unable to sit there. One of the conditions prescribed by the seeming better of sitting in prison is being in prison. Consequently, being in prison is a condition without which the seeming better of sitting in prison cannot be a cause. The seeming better of sitting in prison in this scenario is a norm, but Socrates' bones and sinews, since they are in Megara instead of in prison in Athens, cannot conform to that norm. Thus, that norm is not the cause of any act of sitting in prison in this case.

Next, consider a scenario in which it seems better to Socrates to stand in his prison cell, but the jailer ties him down to the bench, forcing him into a sitting position. In this case, Socrates' bones and sinews would be in a sitting position. Thus, Socrates appears to meet the conditions prescribed by the seeming better of sitting, even though in this scenario sitting does not seem better to him. Further consideration reveals, however, that in this situation his sitting would not meet the conditions prescribed by the seeming better of sitting. If the ropes are forcing Socrates into a sitting position as he struggles to break free, then although his bones and sinews may be in a sitting position, the sinews are not meeting the conditions of relaxing and maintaining his limbs in a sitting position. Instead they are straining in resistance and struggling to break free of the ropes. Moreover, he is resisting and struggling precisely because resisting and struggling seems better to him than sitting. Hence, the seeming better of resisting and struggling is the norm to which Socrates' actions conform. If, by contrast, Socrates were to decide not to struggle to break free as he is tied down, but instead to sit as the jailer ties the ropes around him, then we are back to a scenario in which sitting seems better to Socrates.

These scenarios reveal how the seeming better of sitting in prison, understood as a

norm to which Socrates conforms when he sits in prison, produces its effect and meets the criteria for genuine causes Socrates identifies. As discussed above, Socrates assumes that if *C* is a genuine cause of something's being *E*, then (1) *C* must be such that it cannot be responsible for anything's being something contrary to *E*; and (2) anything that is contrary to *C* cannot be responsible for something's being *E*. The seeming better to Socrates of sitting in prison, understood as a norm prescribing the conditions Socrates must meet in order to do what seems better to him, cannot be the cause of an action contrary to sitting in prison, since any action contrary to sitting in prison would not meet the conditions prescribed by the seeming better of sitting in prison. Likewise, the act of sitting in prison will not meet the conditions prescribed by any norm that is contrary to or incompatible with the seeming better of sitting in prison. Thus, understanding the seeming better of sitting as a norm allows it to meet Socrates' causal criteria. Furthermore, understanding the seeming better of sitting as a norm reveals how it causes what it causes. The seeming better to Socrates of sitting causes Socrates' sitting by simply being the norm to which Socrates must conform if he is to do what seems better to him.

The other immediate cause Socrates identifies is that it seems to him more just to undergo the penalty the Athenians ordered. This cause can be understood as a norm in the same way. The seeming more just of undergoing the penalty is a norm prescribing the conditions Socrates must meet in order to do what seems more just to him. Moreover, given that Socrates thinks it is never good to do injustice (see esp. *Cri.* 49a4 ff.), any action that seems more just to him also seems better to him. Hence, the seeming more just to Socrates of undergoing the penalty is also a norm prescribing the conditions he must meet in order to do what seems better to him.

Having considered the immediate causes of Socrates sitting in prison and undergoing the penalty, we can now turn to the mediate causes of those actions, namely, (1) that Socrates believes it more just and noble to undergo whatever penalty is imposed by the city and (2) that it seemed better to the Athenians to vote against Socrates. Socrates' belief that it is more just and noble to undergo whatever penalty the city ordains is a norm prescribing conditions Socrates must meet in order to do what seems more just and noble to him. Yet the conditions prescribed by that belief will be indeterminate until what is ordained by the city is specified. The seeming better to the Athenians of voting against Socrates provides this specification. The seeming better to the Athenians of voting against Socrates is a norm prescribing the conditions Socrates must meet in order to do what seems better to the Athenians, which is to say, in order to do what is ordained by the city. Hence, when operating together, mediate causes (1) and (2)—Socrates' belief that it is more just and noble to do whatever is ordained by the city and the seeming better to the Athenians of voting against him—provide the normative force of immediate causes (3) and (4)—the seeming more just of undergoing the penalty commanded by the Athenians and the seeming better of sitting in prison. None of the true causes of Socrates' sitting in prison operate independently. Instead, they operate within a normative causal network in which various beliefs and seemings are norms and causes.

After describing the causes of his sitting in prison, in stage three of the argument Socrates explicitly contrasts genuine causes of actions with things without which the actions caused would be impossible:

> But if someone said that without having such things—bones, sinews, and whatever else I have—I would not be able to do the things that seem best to me (τὰ δόξαντά μοι), he would be telling the truth. However, saying that it is because of them that I do what I do, and that I do these things because of intelligence (καὶ ταῦτα νῷ πράττων), but not because of a choice of the best (ἀλλ' οὐ τῇ τοῦ βελτίστου αἱρέσει)—that would be a profoundly careless way of speaking. For it is unable to distinguish that what is the real cause is one thing while that without which the cause could never be a cause is another thing. (99a5-b4)

In this passage, Socrates differentiates causes from things that enable causes to operate as causes. Moreover, he introduces choice of the best as a cause that would operate along with intelligence if all Socrates' actions were caused by intelligence. A choice of the best should be understood as a norm that mediates between intelligence and seeming best. Actions can seem best to someone without in fact being best. Hence, actions can seem best without meeting the conditions prescribed by intelligence. I take it that, for Socrates, to do an action by choice is nothing other than to do an action because it seems best to one. Hence, when someone does what seems best to her, her choice is the cause of what she does. A choice of the best, however, is a choice that meets the conditions prescribed by intelligence, the norm that prescribes the best way to arrange things. A choice of the best, therefore, is a norm prescribing the conditions one's actions must meet if they are both to seem best to one and to be arranged in the best way.

Understanding intelligence, seeming best, and choice of the best as norms not only makes sense of Socrates' discussion of the causes of his sitting in prison, but also of his account of Anaxagoras' cosmic Intelligence. Just as with the intelligence that is normative for human action, Anaxagoras' cosmic Intelligence should be understood as a norm that prescribes the conditions that must be met by whatever is to be arranged in the best way. The hypothesis that Intelligence is the cause of all things amounts to the hypothesis that everything conforms to the norm that prescribes the conditions that whatever is to be arranged in the best way must meet (97c5-6). Hence, the hypothesis that Intelligence is the cause of all things entails that everything is arranged in the best way and presupposes that there is a best way to arrange everything. From the hypothesis that Intelligence is the cause of all things, therefore, Socrates infers that "if one wished to know the cause of each thing... one had to find what was the best way for it to be" (97c6-d1). Thus, if one, granting the hypothesis that Intelligence is the cause of all things, wanted to show that a claim such as "the earth is in the middle of the cosmos" were true, one would show why it was best for the earth to be in the middle of the cosmos (97e3-98a1). Socrates' descriptions of what he hoped for from Anaxagoras are both apt and clear if Anaxagoras' Intelligence is understood as a norm. Moreover, how cosmic Intelligence would cause all things if it were the cause of all things is also clear. Intelligence would cause all things by being a norm that prescribed the conditions all things would meet so as to be arranged in the best way.

On the reading I have been developing, Socrates' critique of Anaxagoras is that Anaxagoras moves from calling a norm—Intelligence—the cause of all things, to calling things causes that are not norms, but are rather objects in space—"airs, aethers, waters, and

many others" (98c1-2). Socrates thinks this is tantamount to a failure to distinguish a cause from a thing without which that cause could not be a cause (99b3-4). This is the same distinction one would fail to make if one were to claim that Socrates does what he does because of intelligence—a norm—and were also to claim that he does what he does because of his bones and sinews—objects in space and time rather than norms. Socrates' critique of Anaxagoras, then, is that Anaxagoras should have identified norms when enumerating the causes that worked together with Intelligence to produce all things, instead of identifying spatio-temporal objects. Socrates was originally excited about Anaxagoras because Socrates initially thought that by identifying Intelligence as the cause of all things, Anaxagoras had, in contrast to others among those engaged in the "inquiry into nature," identified a cause that was normative. As Socrates' discussion of his sitting in prison reveals, the causes Socrates considers genuine are normative. His subsequent disappointment arose because of the materialist account of causality Anaxagoras posited when explaining individual phenomena, an account in which the causes were spatio-temporal objects rather than norms.

CAUSES AS NORMS IN THE "SECOND SAILING"

When introducing his "second sailing," Socrates explains that he was neither able to find for himself nor to learn from someone else the truth concerning "such a cause" (99c7; τῆς τοιαύτης αἰτίας) as Anaxagoras' cosmic Intelligence would have been (99c6-d2). If what I said above holds true, Socrates means by this that he was unable to find one norm that by itself could explain why each and every thing comes to be, passes away, and is.[6] Thus, instead of identifying one cause that ordered all things, Socrates posited many causes: the forms (cf. Ebrey, 2014, 252, n. 19). My proposal is that a form, insofar as it is a cause, is a kind of norm. In this way, forms will be causes in the same sense as the genuine causes in Socrates' "first sailing" (Sharma, 2009, 141, n. 5; Ebrey, 2014, 250; *pace* Shorey, 1933, 179, 534; Vlastos, 1969, 297n15, 302–4; Burge, 1971, 1–2; Annas, 1982). The forms, on my reading, are ontological norms that prescribe the conditions a thing must meet in order to be the kind of being that corresponds to the forms in which it participates. Consider some object, *x*, that has some characteristic, *F*. Object *x* is *F*. Socrates wants to know the cause of *x*'s being *F*. So he asks, "Why is *x F*?" Socrates claims that the "safe answer" to questions of this sort is that *x* is *F* because *x* participates in the *F* itself—form *F*. By asking why *x* is *F*, Socrates is searching for the norm to which object *x* must conform in order to be an *F* object. Object *x* is *F* insofar as it conforms to that norm. That norm itself is the form *F*.

The forms Socrates focuses on and uses as examples when recounting his "second sailing" are the Beautiful, Greatness, Smallness, Twoness, and Oneness. My claim is that each of these forms is a unique norm that prescribes the conditions a thing must meet in order to be the sort of being that corresponds to each. The form Beautiful, for example, is a norm prescribing the conditions things must meet if they are to be beautiful things, the form Greatness a norm prescribing the conditions things must meet in order to be great things, and so on. Hence, when Socrates says that "if something is beautiful other than the Beautiful itself, it is beautiful because of nothing other than because it participates in that Beautiful

(οὐδὲ δι' ἓν ἄλλο καλὸν εἶναι ἢ διότι μετέχει ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ)" (100c4-6), I take him to mean that anything beautiful other than the norm prescribing the conditions a thing must meet in order to be a beautiful thing is beautiful for no other reason than that it conforms to that norm's prescriptions.

In the case of forms like Greatness (μέγεθος) and Smallness (σμικρότης), they should be understood as norms that exact a relational structure in their participants. Greatness is a norm prescribing that whatever is to be something great must exceed something else; while Smallness is a norm prescribing that whatever is to be something small must be exceeded by something else (see *Hip.Ma.* 294b2-4; *Prm.* 150c7-d2). Anything other than the form Greatness that is to be great must meet the conditions prescribed by the norm that is the form Greatness by exceeding something else; whereas anything that is to be small must meet the conditions prescribed by the norm that is the form Smallness by being exceeded by something else. Simmias, for example, instantiates the form Greatness insofar as he is taller than Socrates, that is, insofar as his height exceeds the height of Socrates (see *Phd.* 100e5-101b2, 102b3-d4).

What about forms like Twoness and Oneness (see 101c4-7)? If the forms are norms, then Twoness is a norm prescribing, in the conceptual schema of ancient Greek mathematics, that things that are to be two must be the smallest even number; and, in the conceptual schema of modern mathematics, must be the natural number between one and three. Similarly, Oneness is a norm prescribing, in Greek mathematics, that a thing that is to be one must be a unit, the element out of which numbers are composed; and, in modern mathematics, that a thing that is to be one must be the smallest natural number. Now it might sound strange to our ears to call one apple, for instance, a unit or two apples the smallest even number, but in Greek mathematics a number (ἀριθμός) is a composition of enumerable units and a unit is that "according to which each being is called one (καθ' ἣν ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων ἓν λέγεται)" (Euc. *Elementa*, VII, Def. 1-2). Hence, for the Ancient Greeks, an apple is a unit insofar as it is one, and two apples are the number two and the smallest even number insofar as they are two. Nor is it a problem that norms such as Twoness can be described in various ways, for instance in Greek and modern mathematics. The various descriptions are descriptions of one and the same norm. If the forms are ontological norms, they do not depend on how we describe them or the conceptual schema in which we place them.[7]

That forms do not depend on how we describe them is not the only way that understanding the forms as ontological norms makes sense of how they are characterized in the dialogues. Forms are characterized (i) as being causally prior to their participants, (ii) as being ontologically prior to sensible particulars, and (iii) as being a-temporal and a-spatial.[8] Let us consider how each of these characteristics fits with reading the forms as norms.

Something *A* is causally prior *B* if and only if *A* explains why *B* is the sort of thing *B* is, but *B* does not explain why *A* is the sort of thing *A* is.[9] Given that forms are norms prescribing the conditions a thing must meet in order to be a certain kind of thing, they are causally prior to their participants. Consider again the form Smallness. The norm that is the form Smallness explains why small things are small. They are small because they conform to the norm prescribing that whatever is to be a small thing must be exceeded by something else. It is not the case, however, that small things explain

why the norm that is the form Smallness is what it is. Thus, if forms are norms, they are causally prior to their participants.

Something *A* is ontologically prior to *B* if and only if *A* can be what *A* is whether or not *B* is what *B* is, but *B* cannot be what *B* is unless *A* is what *A* is. A thing's relation to its reflection in a mirror is a mundane example of ontological priority. There can be no reflection of my body in a mirror unless my body has the visible characteristics it has. Yet my body has the visible characteristics it has regardless of whether or not it is in proximity to a mirror in which it is reflected. Given that forms are norms that prescribe the conditions sensible particulars must meet, it follows that they are ontologically prior to sensible particulars. Consider, for example, the form Bed Socrates discusses in Book 10 of the *Republic*. If forms are norms, then the form Bed would be a norm prescribing something like the following: something that is to be a bed must be a piece of furniture designed for human beings to sleep on. That norm, however it is properly described, would be what it is even if there were no sensible particular beds. Yet no sensible particular could be a bed if there were no norm Bed prescribing the conditions a thing must meet in order to be a bed. The same point applies to the sorts of forms Socrates discusses in the *Phaedo*. The norm that is the form Equal, for example, is what it is even if there are no sensible particulars completely identical to one another in quantity. Likewise, the norm that is the form Beautiful would be what it is regardless whether or not there were any sensible particulars conforming to it. In this way, if forms are norms, they are ontologically prior to any sensible particulars that conform to them.

Given that forms, as norms, are ontologically prior to sensible particulars, their a-temporality and a-spatiality also becomes clear. Since the norm that is form *F* is what it is, regardless of when any sensible particulars that happen to conform to it come into being or pass away, the norm is a-temporal. Similarly, the norm that is form *F* is not spatially located. The norm applies everywhere and is not an object that could be located in some region of space. Consider the form Greatness. It is everywhere and at all times true that if object *A* exceeds object *B*, object *A* will be greater than object *B*. The reason for this is that the norm that is the form Greatness is operative everywhere and always, prescribing that anything that exceeds something else is something great relative to what it exceeds. The forms, as ontological norms, are operative at every place and every time. Yet they are not themselves the sorts of things that could be objects in space or subject to time.

My thesis that forms in the *Phaedo* are best understood as norms is of course independent of my thesis that intelligence, seeming best, and choice of the best in the "first sailing" should be understood as norms. One could reject my interpretation of causality in the "first sailing" and still grant that the forms are norms and that their causal power is their normativity, just as one could reject my interpretation of causality in the "second sailing" and still grant that intelligence, seeming best, and choice of the best in the "first sailing" are norms. While my readings of the "first" and "second sailing" stand or fall independently of one another, if both are correct we get an additional reason to accept each, namely that if they are both correct, Socrates is not simply recounting various views on causality he has considered during his life but is instead using his intellectual biography to develop a single notion of causality to serve as the basis for his final argument for the immortality of the soul.

THE MORE SOPHISTICATED ANSWERS (105B-C)

I will conclude by addressing an objection to my reading. If all the causes Socrates identifies as genuine while recounting his intellectual biography are norms, where does that leave the "more sophisticated answers" (κομψοτέρας ἀποκρίσεις) he proposes in 105b5-c10? These answers include things like fire, a fever, a unit, and the soul. According to most commentators, Socrates identifies these as causes (e.g. Archer-Hind, 1894, 115; Williamson, 1904, 214; Hackforth, 1955, 161; O'Brien, 1967, 224; Vlastos, 1969, 317–25; Burge, 1971, 10–12; Annas, 1982, 313, 317; Matthews and Blackson, 1989, 581–82, 584; Byrne, 1989, 14–15; Rowe, 1993b, 258–60; Mueller, 1998, 81–82; Sedley, 1998, 115, 121, 127; Dancy, 2004, 291, 310–12; Kelsey, 2004, 22; Menn, 2010, 54; Ruben, 2015, 48). Yet they do not seem to be norms. Is Socrates proposing that there are causes that are not norms? I think this question must be answered in the negative. Socrates does not intend his more sophisticated answers to identify causes at all. Rather he intends them to identify a certain sort of sufficient condition (cf. Sharma, 2009, 150, n. 27). And sufficient conditions are not causes for Socrates (see Sedley, 1998, 121; cf. Bailey, 2014, 28, 19, n. 10).

Nicholas Denyer and Dominic Bailey have pointed out that Socrates does not use any of his typical causal terminology when describing the things that the "more sophisticated answers" identify: fire, a fever, etc. (Denyer, 2007, 93; Bailey, 2014, 24–26; cf. Bolton, 1998, 111).[10] Socrates never refers to them with the word "αἰτία" or its cognates. Likewise, when discussing them, Socrates does not use causal datives, the "διά" plus accusative construction, "διότι," or "ποιεῖν" and its cognates. All the causal language from before is absent here. This should not come as a surprise, since the "more sophisticated answers" do not answer why-questions, but rather what-questions; for example, "what is such that any body in which it is present will be hot?" (105b8-9; ᾧ ἂν τί ἐν τῷ σώματι ἐγγένηται θερμὸν ἔσται).[11] Part of the reason so many commentators have missed this is that the Greek of 105b5-c10 is difficult to translate in a way that properly captures the sense of the kind of question to which the "more sophisticated answers" are answers. Socrates does not propose a new kind of αἰτία in 105b5-c10. Fire, a fever, a unit, and the soul (at least as Socrates considers them here) are neither norms nor causes.[12]

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Endnotes

1 Translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

2 My account of the way forms are normative differs significantly from that of Kelsey (2004, 22–23).

3 Most translators render "δόξα τοῦ βελτίστου" in the phrase "ὑπὸ δόξης φερόμενα τοῦ βελτίστου"

(99a1-2; carried by a seeming best) as "belief about the best" or "opinion about the best," instead of as a "seeming best" or "what appeared best" (e.g. Fowler, 1914, 341; Bluck, 1955, 110; Gallop, 1975, 50; Grube, 1997, 85; Brann, Kalkavage, and Salem, 1998, 78; Emlyn-Jones and Preddy, 2017, 453). I render "δόξα" here as a "seeming" in order to maintain continuity with literal translations of "ἔδοξε" and "δέδοκται" at 98e2-3 as "it seemed" and "it has seemed," respectively. Rowe (2010, 114) translates "δόξα" here as "what appeared."

4 Most commentators on the *Phaedo* argue that the causes Socrates characterizes as genuine in the "first sailing" are teleological causes, since these causes produce their effects with a reference to what is best (e.g. Archer-Hind, 1894, 91; Williamson, 1904, 195–96; Livingstone, 1938, 161; Bluck, 1955, 105; Vlastos, 1969, esp. 303, n. 37; Burge, 1971, 1; Gallop, 1975, 175–76; Annas, 1982, 314; Bostock, 1986, 142–45; Wiggins, 1986, 1–2, 9; Fine, 1987, 112; Matthews and Blackson, 1989, 582; Sedley, 1998, 125–26; Hankinson, 1998, 85; Mueller, 1998, 83–85; Rowe, 1993a, 69; Kelsey, 2004, 40, n. 7; Dancy, 2004, 292–94; Sharma, 2009, 139, 142–43, 169–70; Menn, 2010, 48; Shaw, 2013, 280). Yet commentators have generally left the question of the way such teleological causes produce their effects unaddressed. For example, they don't explain the way in which what seems best to Socrates has the power to set his limbs in motion.

5 Socrates presents this claim hypothetically—"as if someone were saying that it is because of intelligence (νῷ) that Socrates does all the things he does. . ." (98c3-4, cf. 99a5-b2)—in order to avoid claiming that all his actions are in fact arranged in the best way.

6 Socrates' claim here in the *Phaedo* that he was unable to discover for himself or learn from another the sort of cause that Anaxagoras' cosmic Intelligence would have been is compatible with Socrates' own account of cosmic Intelligence as a cause in the *Philebus* and with his approval of Timaeus' account of cosmic Intelligence as a cause in the *Timaeus*. In both, Intelligence is not the cause of all things without qualification, but only of good things or of all things insofar as they have measure and proportion (see esp. *Phlb.* 28d5-30e3, 64c5-e3; *Ti.* 47e3-5; cf. *R.* II.379b15-16).

7 This is where my reading differs most sharply from that of Vlastos (1969, see esp. 305–7).

8 For the claim that forms are a-spatial and a-temporal see esp. *Sym.* 211a1, a8-b1.

9 For this formulation see Wiitala (2018, 182); cf. Sedley (1998); Evans (2012).

10 For a discussion of Socrates' causal terminology, see Sedley (1998, 115).

11 The translation is that of Denyer (2007, 93); see also Bailey (2014, 25).

12 I owe a debt of gratitude to Colin Smith, Alex Bearden, and Eric Sanday for their comments on earlier versions of this essay, to Paul DiRado for sharing the inquiry with me into causality in Plato, and to Mitchell Miller, Ömer Aygün, Eve Rabinoff and many others in audiences at the SAGP, APA, Central States Philosophical Association, Ohio Philosophical Association, University of Minnesota Duluth, and University of Kentucky.

Socrates' defence of justice in the *Republic*: the dialogical dynamic and the importance of the consequences of justice

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the dialogical dynamic gives important information on the importance of, and the hierarchy between, the reasons illustrated in favour of justice in Plato's *Republic*. Despite his interlocutors' request to focus exclusively on the effect of justice in and by itself, Socrates indicates that the description of the consequences of justice included in Book 10 (608c2-621d3) is an integral part of his defence, and that some of these consequences, the rewards assigned by the gods in the afterlife, are more important than both the other consequences of justice and the benefit of justice in and by itself.

Keywords: Plato, *Republic*, Consequences of justice, Afterlife rewards and punishments, Dialogical dynamic

https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_23_4

INTRODUCTION

In recent years attention has been called afresh to the importance of the dialogical dynamic for the argumentative line followed in the Plato's *Republic*.[1] Rowe has highlighted the relevance of the role of Socrates' interlocutors, particularly Glaucon, in shaping the argument Socrates presents in the dialogue.[2] The acceptance of Glaucon's request to conduct the investigation into justice on the basis of the feverish city (372e8) marks in Rowe's view the moment from which Socrates develops his argument on his interlocutors' assumptions.[3] Ferrari too considers the consent to Glaucon's request an important juncture in the *Republic* as he identifies it as the point from which the control of the conversation starts to slip from Socrates' hands.[4] From the beginning of Book 5 Ferrari considers the transformation of Socrates' role in the conversation complete: thereafter Socrates is portrayed as a character no longer capable of steering a conversation that his interlocutors increasingly frequently direct to topics of their interest.

In this paper I will propose that the analysis of the dialogical dynamic can be fruitfully applied to assessing the importance of the rewards of justice described in the final section of *Republic*. Despite some contrary opinions,[5] it is now widely recognised that along with the lengthy and sustained description of the effect of justice in and by itself, the *Republic* also contains an account of the consequences arising from justice, but the importance of the latter is often consider marginal.[6] The analysis of the dialogical dynamic that I am proposing in this paper will show, or so I hope, that the description of the consequences of justice plays a crucial role in Socrates' defence of justice, and that a group of them, the rewards assigned to the just in the afterlife, is identified by Socrates as more important than the other benefits of justice. To corroborate my thesis, I will defend three claims: 1) in Book 2 Socrates remains committed to the view that the consequences of justice are a reason for its desirability as well as its effect in and by itself although Glaucon and Adeimantus repeatedly request him to focus his defence *exclusively* on the effect of justice in and by itself; 2) in the final passage of Book 10 (lines 608c2-621d3) Socrates confirms that a description of the rewards forming the consequences of justice is a constitutive part of his defence of justice; 3) Before illustrating them, Socrates announces that the rewards described in the myth of Er are more important than both the other consequences and the effect of justice in and by itself.

SOCRATES' COMMITMENT TO ILLUSTRATING BOTH REASONS HE HAS IDENTIFIED FOR THE DESIRABILITY OF JUSTICE

In the first part of Book 2 the agenda is defined that Socrates will follow in his defence of justice. At this stage a divergence becomes perceivable between Socrates' position and the interest of his interlocutors Glaucon and Adeimantus. While Socrates clearly identifies justice as a good desirable *both* in and by itself *and* for its consequences, Glaucon and Adeimantus underline that they are interested in an argument that *exclusively* explains the benefit of justice in and by itself.

When Glaucon invites Socrates to present a fresh argument for the desirability of justice (357a2-b2), he asks him to clarify what type of good he deems justice to be. To facilitate this task, Glaucon operates a division of the goods based on the identification of two different reasons why a good can be desirable: in and

by itself, and for its consequences. Depending on whether they contain goods desirable for only one or both of these reasons, he defines three categories. The first comprises goods desirable in and by themselves and not for their consequences,[7] such as enjoyment and harmless pleasures; the second includes goods desirable both in and by themselves and for their consequences, such as thinking, seeing and being healthy; the third contains goods desirable only for their consequences, such as physical exercise, medical treatment, the practice of medicine and other business activities.

Socrates promptly places justice in the second of these three categories: "I myself think [that I will include justice] in the finest one, which the person who is going to be blessed should welcome both in and by itself and for the consequences arising from it"[8] (358a1-3). By announcing that he considers justice a good desirable both in and by itself and for its consequences, Socrates elicits the reaction of his interlocutors, who indicate that they are exclusively interested in why justice in and by itself is desirable and injustice in and by itself damaging.

Glaucon is the first of the two brothers that delivers a speech to communicate his wishes to Socrates.[9] While the ultimate goal of his speech is to persuade Socrates to limit the focus of his defence to the description of the effect of justice and injustice in and by themselves, two passages contain a particularly explicit formulation of this request. The first one is at 358b4-7:

> ἐπιθυμῶ γὰρ ἀκοῦσαι τί τ' ἔστιν ἑκάτερον καὶ τίνα ἔχει δύναμιν αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ ἐνὸν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, τοὺς δὲ μισθοὺς καὶ τὰ γιγνόμενα ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἐᾶσαι χαίρειν.
> I desire to hear what each of the two [justice and injustice] is and what power it has in and by itself when it is present in the soul, and to leave aside the rewards and the things resulting from them.

Glaucon indicates both the reason on which Socrates' argument should focus and the one that he wishes to be left out of consideration. Socrates should elucidate the nature of justice and injustice by illustrating the power (δύναμιν) that each of them has in and by itself (καθ' αὑτὸ). This power should be illustrated through the analysis of how justice and injustice affect the soul (ἐνὸν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ). What Glaucon requests Socrates to leave out of consideration is the description of the consequences arising from justice and injustice (τὰ γιγνόμενα ἀπ' αὐτῶν).[10]

Glaucon restates the reason he is interested in hearing Socrates defend in lines 358c6-d4:

> I am at a loss because I am talked deaf by Thrasymachus and countless others, but I have not yet heard from anybody the argument in favour of justice, that it is better than injustice, in the form I wish – and I wish to hear it praised in and by itself (αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ). – But I think that I would learn this especially from you.

This limitation in focus is also requested by Adeimantus in the speech he delivers after Gluacon.[11] In passage 366e5-367a1 he identifies the same gap that Glaucon already lamented: no author "has ever yet sufficiently developed the thesis, in poetry or in prose, that the one [injustice] is the greatest of evils that the soul has in itself while justice is the greatest good" (365e7). Without making a direct request to Socrates, Adeimantus suggests that the focus of a convincing argument in favour of justice should be on the effect justice and injustice have on the soul of those who choose to turn

to them. In lines 367b3-6 he openly asks Socrates to offer an argument adopting this exclusive focus:

> Don't show me with words that justice is superior to injustice, but show that the one is an evil and the other a good by explaining what each of the two does (τί ποιοῦσα) in and by itself (αὐτὴ δι' αὑτὴν) to the person who has it. Leave out the reputations as Glaucon requested.

Along with the restatement of this same request, lines 367c6-d3 contain Adeimantus' admission that Socrates considers justice desirable for more reasons than he and Glaucon are interested in hearing:

> Since you have agreed that justice is among the greatest goods, those which are worth acquiring for the consequences ensuing from them but much more in and by themselves, like sight, hearing, understanding, health, and all the other goods fruitful by their own nature and not for the reputation, praise the aspect of justice in respect of which it benefits by itself the man who has it and injustice damages him, leaving it for others to praise good reputation and rewards.

Before reiterating that he is interested only in the analysis of the effect of justice in and by itself, Adeimantus refers back to Socrates' categorization of justice, distorting his view in some respects. Although he acknowledges that Socrates affirmed that justice is also desirable for its consequences, he falsely claims that Socrates attached more importance to the effect of justice in and by itself than to its consequences. As we have seen, however, in lines 358a1-3 Socrates included justice in the category of goods desirable both in and by themselves and for their consequences without establishing a hierarchy between these two reasons.

Given this divergence between Socrates' position and Adeimantus and Glaucon's interest, what reason(s) Socrates should be expected to illustrate in his defence of justice will depend on whether he accepts their requests. Lines 368c5-8 suggest a negative answer to this question:

> Both Glaucon and the others asked me to give aid in every way and not to give up the argument but to examine both what each of the two [justice and injustice] is and what the truth is about the advantage (περὶ τῆς ὠφελίας) of each of them.

In this passage Socrates does not explicitly mention any of the two reasons he previously identified for the desirability of justice. The phrases "what each of the two [justice and injustice] is" and "what the truth is about the advantage (ὠφελίας) of each of them" are unspecific and clearly different from those previously used by Socrates and his interlocutors to identify the effect of justice and injustice in and by themselves or the consequences arising from them. Rather than containing an answer to Glaucon and Adeimantus' request to limit the focus of his defence, this vocabulary suggests that Socrates is declaring his willingness to present a defence of justice without clarifying what reason(s) he will illustrate in it. In the absence of a sign that Socrates is willing to accommodate Glaucon and Adeimantus' request, no indication warrants the assumption that he has accepted to omit one of the reasons he identified at the beginning of Book 2 when he placed justice in the category of the goods desirable both in and by themselves and for their consequences.

THE STRUCTURAL ROLE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF JUSTICE IN SOCRATES' DEFENCE OF JUSTICE

The analysis of the passages in which the agenda of Socrates' defence of justice is defined has shown that Socrates remains committed to the idea that justice is desirable both in and by itself and for its consequences. I will now show that in the final passage of Book 10 Socrates confirms that the description of the consequences of justice is an integral part of his defence.

At the beginning of passage 608c2-612e1 Socrates announces that the most valuable rewards of justice have yet to be described: "We haven't illustrated the greatest rewards of excellence and prizes available for it" (608c2-3). By announcing the existence of a set of rewards that have not been described yet, Socrates confirms that his argument in favour of justice is not exhausted by the description of the effect of justice in and by itself. At this stage it is not entirely clear what these "greatest rewards" are or why they are deemed of the greatest importance, but we shall see below that they will be identified with the rewards of justice assigned by the gods in the afterlife and their value will be justified on the basis of the fact that they belong to a higher temporal dimension.

After announcing the existence of rewards previously unmentioned, Socrates highlights that he has so far described only one of the two reasons initially identified for the desirability of justice, and he hints at the cause for this limitation of the focus of his defence.

> Have we not […] both redeemed the other points in the course of the argument and refrained from praising the rewards and the reputations of justice, as you said that Homer and Hesiod did? But have we not found that justice is the very best thing for the soul and that the soul has to do what is just, whether or not one has Gyges' ring and Hades' helmet next to it? (612a8-b4)

Glaucon's positive reply to this twofold rhetorical question (612b5) confirms that Socrates has so far illustrated *only* the reason for the desirability of justice that was of interest to Glaucon and Adeimantus. That the phrase "the other points" refers to the effect of justice in and by itself is signalled in the second colon of this question where Socrates identifies the soul as the area in which justice produces its benefit as Glaucon and Adeimantus asked him to do at 358b4-7 and 366e5-367a1 respectively.

Socrates also remarks that the consequences of justice have not yet been described and hints at the cause for the omission. The mention of Homer and Hesiod and Gyges' ring calls attention back to the speeches Glaucon and Adeimantus pronounced to ask Socrates to limit the focus of his defence. In Book 2, Adeimantus mentioned (363a8-b1) and quoted (363b2-4, 363b6-c3, 364c8-d2, 364d8-e2) these two poets to denounce that tradition praises justice only for its consequences. This complaint was functional to encouraging Socrates to present an argument supporting justice exclusively on the basis of the effect it produces in and by itself. A similar function was fulfilled by the story of Gyges' ring (359b6-360d7) in the speech Glaucon gave.[12] By imagining a situation in which a person can enjoy the benefit deriving from injustice without suffering the consequences arising from it,[13] this story contributed to rendering more pressing Glaucon's request for Socrates solely to focus on the beneficial effect produced by justice in and by itself. Socrates' mention of Homer and Hesiod and Gyges' ring

in Book 10 establishes a link with the sections of Book 2 and reinforces the suggestion that the adoption of an exclusive focus on the effect of justice in and by itself was caused by the brothers' request.

After accommodating his interlocutors' request, Socrates is confident that it is "without reproach to give back" (612b6-c1) to justice the rewards that constitute the consequences arising from it. He then proceeds to demand that the brothers restore the condition granted to them and causing the adoption of the exclusive focus on the effect of justice in and by itself. The vocabulary he uses clearly suggests that he considers this description an integral part of his argumentative line: "Will you give me back (ἀποδώσετε) what you have borrowed (ἐδανείσασθε) in the discussion?" (612c5). The occurrences of the verb δανείζειν in a middle form and of the verb ἀποδιδόναι in an active form reinforce the language of debit and credit that was introduced first at 612c1 by the use of the verb ἀποδιδόναι and will be used again in the following lines. This vocabulary creates a metaphor that presents Socrates as the creditor of a loan that the brothers have raised and are now requested to repay.[14]

What the loan granted to Glaucon and Adeimantus consists in is immediately explained by Socrates. He conceded (Ἔδωκα, 612c7) that "the just man appeared unjust" (612c7-8), when the brothers requested that the reputations of the just and the unjust man be exchanged. The link with the speeches held by the brothers is clear in this case too. Glaucon was the first to introduce and develop the idea that the reputation of the just person should be attributed to the unjust and vice versa (360d8-362c8). To direct Socrates' attention to the investigation of the effects justice and injustice produce in and by themselves, he claimed that they would have to be compared in their extreme forms and that their extreme form is reached when the respective reputations are exchanged. A very similar position was adopted by Adeimantus in his speech.[15] As he suggested, Socrates would not be able to illustrate the effect of justice in and by itself unless he would exchange the reputations of the just and unjust person (367b7-c1). Only if the just person is imagined to suffer the consequences deriving from the reputation of the most unjust one, the effect of justice in and by itself could be evaluated.

While what Socrates is ultimately interested in reintroducing is the rewards and the honours granted for the reputation of justice, he first needs to restore the condition allowing them to be assigned. Using a language less technical but still ascribable to the semantic areas of credit and debt, Socrates demands back (πάλιν ἀπαιτῶ, 612d4) from his interlocutors that they accept that the reputation of the just person is recognised by gods and people. In taking this step, he both paves the way for the description of the rewards and the honours provided by justice and confirms that this description is a constitutive part of his argument in support of justice. The financial metaphor he deploys is a clear sign that the exclusive focus on the effect of justice in and by itself was due to a concession to his interlocutors.

Glaucon consents to the request for restitution (612e1) and agrees that justice and injustice do not escape the gods' notice (612e7). His approval restores the gods to the function of guarantors of a just order which administers punishments and rewards according to authentic ethical principles. This notion of the gods is fully consistent with the theology previously embraced by Socrates in the *Republic*. In the discussion of the stories admissible in Callipolis he and Adeimantus

hold in Book 3, Socrates sets three requirements for the representation of the gods:[16] the gods are exclusively source of good while evil has to be traced back to another origin (379c15-16); the gods never deceive other gods or human beings; the gods never undergo a change of shape or deceive human beings into believing they have (382e8-11). Glaucon's agreement in Book 10 that the gods recognise the moral quality of human behaviour and assign punishment or reward accordingly allows Socrates to enrich the notion of the gods already formulated in Book 2 by adding a further facet fully consistent to it.

After obtaining the restoration of justice to the reputation it deserves, Socrates is in a position to complete his defence by addressing the second of the two reasons why he deems justice a good. The description of the rewards of justice is articulated in three subsections, each of which describes a different set of rewards along with the corresponding set of punishments. The first two subsections illustrate the rewards and the punishments people receive during their earthly life. In the first (612e2-613b7) Socrates describes the benevolent attitude of the gods towards the just and their punitive approach towards the unjust. In the second (613b8-614a4) he lists the rewards people grant to the just and the punishments they inflict on the unjust. The third section (614a5-621b7), mostly occupied by the myth of Er (614b2-621b7), describes what the gods hold in store for the just and the unjust in the afterlife and, as we shall see in the next paragraph, it is preceded by the statement that these rewards are more important than both the other rewards and the effect of justice in and by itself.

Socrates' description of the rewards that living just people are granted by the gods is centred on the observation that by practicing virtue a person "approximates to god as far as humanly possible" (613b1).[17] Such a person is held dear by the gods (θεοφιλής, 612e5) and receives "all the best possible rewards that come from the gods" (612e8-613a1). By formulating a principle that vaguely reminds modern readers of Christian providence, Socrates explains that this promise entails that even seemingly difficult conditions such as poverty, illness or other misfortunes will turn out well for the just. In the case that a "previous mistake" (613a2) looms over a just person, he or she will not achieve the prosperity and happiness that the gods assure to the other just people. Rather than introducing a real exception, this warning suggests that the moral quality of a soul is evaluated on the basis not of one single earthly life but of all the lives that a soul lives. With an indirect reference to the doctrine of reincarnation,[18] Socrates clarifies that the soul of a person who has chosen to serve justice is not excluded from the benevolence of the gods even if it is stained with an evil committed in a previous incarnation. The hardship in which he or she may happen to live is not a divine punishment but a trial by the gods for his or her improvement.

Socrates only suggests how the gods punish unjust people when they are still alive by drawing a contrast with how they treat just people. Contrary to the just person, the unjust is hated by the gods (θεομισής, 612e6). Accordingly, such a person receives the opposite treatment to that reserved to the just (613b5-6). Specifically in which punishments this divine attitude results is not clarified by Socrates, who proceeds to describe the next type of rewards without adding further details.

The tone of the description of the rewards and punishments assigned by other people is set by a twofold comparison. Socrates likens unjust people to runners capable of quick

sprints but having little endurance and just people to skilled runners who ultimately win their race. Like long-distance runners, just people eventually become successful and are rewarded and honoured when they reach a mature age. The rewards and honours they will earn at this stage are the same, Socrates stresses, that Glaucon invited him to imagine granted to unjust people who achieve the reputation of being just as a result of his extreme injustice (362b2-5). They will hold high offices in their cities, be able to choose their spouse from the families they want, give their children in marriage to whom they wish. By contrast, the life of unjust people resembles a race run by the first type of runners. Even if unjust people manage to deceive their fellows and take advantage of the situation when they are young, they will face poverty and misery in their old age. Then they will be abused and maltreated by their fellow citizens and foreigners alike and suffer those evils that Glaucon imagined inflicted to just people mistaken for unjust ones.

THE SPECIAL IMPORTANCE OF THE REWARDS ILLUSTRATED IN THE MYTH OF ER

In the previous section we have seen that Socrates considers the description of the rewards of justice a constitutive part of his defence. Now I will turn my attention to the evidence showing that Socrates attaches more importance to one set of them, those granted by the gods in the afterlife, than to both the other two sets of rewards and the effect of justice in and by itself.

We have already seen that lines 608c2-3 contain Socrates' announcement that the most valuable rewards of justice have not yet been illustrated, but they do not clarify over which items they are declared pre-eminent or why. The following lines signal that these rewards are in his view more valuable even than the effect of justice in and by itself. Surprised by the announcement of the existence of such valuable rewards, Glaucon observes that Socrates must be referring to "something extraordinary in size […] if there are other things bigger than those mentioned" (608c2-3). The natural referent of the phrase "those mentioned" is the harmony and the happiness that justice produces in the soul as at this stage of the *Republic* no reason for the desirability of justice has been discussed other than the benefit it produces in and by itself.

It may seem surprising that Socrates introduces rewards of higher value than the benefit of justice in and by itself, which he has described in great detail in a discussion that has occupied an important part of the previous eight books, but he proceeds to illustrate to surprised Glaucon what reason justifies this hierarchy.[19] His explanation is centred on the polarity between the limited time of human existence and the unlimited extension of eternity. The dismissal of the former as a time in which anything of high relevance can take place (608c6-8) introduces the theme of the immortality of the soul. To convince Glaucon, Socrates provides an argument intended to prove the immortality of the soul (608d11-611b10). Glaucon's approval of the argument enables Socrates to formulate the expectation that the soul will inhabit a time dimension in which truly valuable experiences occur, and it justifies assigning higher importance to the rewards granted in that time span.

Agreement that the soul is immortal may seem to suggest that Socrates is going to identify the rewards introduced in lines 608c2-3 with the projection onto eternity of

the benefit that justice in and by itself has been shown to produce in the embodied soul. As harmony and happiness result from the good order produced by justice in the soul when it is associated with the body, so they may be expected to continue to be enjoyed by a just soul after separation from the body once the soul has been proven to be immortal. It would accordingly seem plausible to identify the greatest rewards of justice with the harmony and happiness that a just soul would enjoy after disembodiment.

However, the words Socrates pronounces after convincing Glaucon that the soul is immortal cast a very serious doubt on the viability of this hypothesis. The proof of the immortality of the soul is followed by Socrates' warning about the possibility of making safe inferences on the true nature of the soul from the analysis of its characteristic in incarnate state. As Glaucus is covered in debris and incrustations when he emerges from the see, so is the soul "damaged by its association with the body and other evils" (611b10-c1) when it departs from the body. To see the true nature of the soul, attention has to be focused on its "love for philosophy" (611d8) and consideration has to be given to its kinship with "the divine and the immortal and what is always existing" (611e1-2). Along with its nature, Socrates is careful to underline that the forms of justice and injustice will become more easily identifiable (611c3-4) once the soul is observed in its discarnate state. Whether these forms will be different from those justice and injustice assume in the incarnate soul is not clarified by Socrates, who adds a further layer of complexity to the question by leaving it open whether after separation from the body the soul will have one or more parts (612c3-4).

Whether the comparison between the soul and Glaucus is intended to warn of the methodological limitations of the analysis Socrates carried out in Books 4, 8 and 9[20] or to suggest that the soul shows a tripartite structure when its analysis is conducted under the premises negotiated by Glaucon and Adeimantus,[21] Socrates invites caution in making assumptions about the disembodied soul. Due to the lack of conclusive evidence that the soul will be tripartite after separation form the body, it is arbitrary to assume that justice will continue to create harmony and happiness in the afterlife by promoting an orderly relation among three parts that the soul has been shown to possess in its embodied state. Socrates' expressed uncertainty about the true nature of the soul undercuts the expectation that justice produces the same effect in an embodied and in a disembodied soul, and it renders the identification implausible between the greatest rewards announced at 608c2-3 and the effect that justice produces in and by itself in the soul after it has departed from the body.

While the benefit of justice in and by itself is unlikely to be perceived by a soul in its discarnate state, the rewards that gods and people assign to the just when they are alive do not belong to the dimension in which truly valuable experiences occur. The most valuable rewards are assigned post mortem and can be correctly identified with those awarded by the gods in afterlife. When he introduces the section dedicated to their description, he singles them out and underlines their pre-eminence over the rewards the gods assign to living just people, those humans give to living just people and the benefit produced by justice in and by itself: "these […] are nothing in number and size comparing to those awaiting each person after death" (614a5-6). While these lines show that Socrates assigns a pre-eminent place to the rewards granted by the gods in the afterlife,

they are not specific about the term ("these," 614a5) with which these rewards are compared. His immediately preceding statement helps to clarify it: "these [the rewards assigned to just people when they are still alive] would then be the things […] that come as prizes, rewards and gifts for the just person, when he is still alive, in addition to those goods that justice itself provides" (613e5-614a3). In this statement both the rewards assigned by gods and people to the just when they are still alive and the effect of justice in and by itself are considered. Since the term "these" at 614a5 looks back to the items mentioned in the previous sentence, it is natural to take it to refer to all items mentioned in that sentence. Accordingly, lines 614a5-6 contain a statement in which Socrates asserts that the rewards granted by the gods to the just in the afterlife occupy a pre-eminent place over both the two other sets of rewards and the benefit of justice in and by itself.

The importance Socrates attributes to the rewards assigned in the afterlife reverses rather than simply corrects the statement made by Adeimantus at 367c6-d3. We have seen that in these lines he misrepresented Socrates' position. He falsely claimed that Socrates had attached more importance to the effect of justice in and by itself than to its consequences although Socrates had not established a hierarchy between the two reasons for desirability of justice he identified in Book 2. What Socrates says in lines 613e5-614a6 rectifies Adeimantus' statement: not only does he not subordinate the value of the consequences of justice to that of the effect of justice in and by itself, but he states that one set of the rewards that come as consequences of justice carries highest importance.

After indicating the special importance carried by the rewards awaiting the just in the afterlife, Socrates illustrates them and the corresponding punishments in the myth of Er.[22] Their description is part of the report that Socrates claims to contain information overheard by Er from the souls gathered at the miraculous place and waiting to be reincarnated in a new body.[23] The details given on the rewards are less precise than those on the punishments but they afford a glimpse at how souls fare after they have departed from the body.

Just souls ascend to the heaven where they are said to experience "pleasures and spectacles of extraordinary beauty" (615a3-4). Due to the brevity of the description it is not immediate to explain what the "spectacles of extraordinary beauty" are. A parallel has been suggested between them and the forms,[24] but the analysis of the information given on the forms in the *Republic* and in the *Phaedrus* does not confirm the existence of this parallel. In Book 6 of the *Republic* no definitive statement is made about the beauty of the form of the Good.[25] The *Phaedrus* does make mention of the form of Beauty and its brilliance,[26] but, unlike the myth of Er, it includes an account of the recollection doctrine that links the metempsychosis with the forms and helps the reader understand why ontologically perfect entities feature in an eschatological myth. By contrast, the myth of Er does not provide indications suggesting a possible connection between the forms and the journey undertaken by the souls after separation from the body.

The expression "spectacles of extraordinary beauty" is rather reminiscent of the characteristics attributed to the outer surface of the earth in the *Phaedo*. When Socrates introduces the description of the earth, he announces to surprised Simmias that "there are many wondrous regions" (108c6).[27] After stressing the rather unattractive appearance

that nature has in the cavities where humans live, Socrates contrasts it with the splendour of the outer surface of the earth, which is "in no way worthy to be compared with the beauties in our world" (110a7). The colours that can be admired there are more glowing and brilliant, covering a part that is "purple, marvellous for its beauty" (110c3) and one that is golden. The parallel between the place where Er reports that souls enjoy "pleasures and spectacles of extraordinary beauty" and the outer surface of the earth is also supported by the analogous function that these two regions are said to fulfil. In the *Phaedo* Socrates explains that "as for those who are found to have lived exceptionally holy lives, it is they who are freed […] and who attain to the pure dwellings above, and make their dwellings above the ground" (114b6-c2). In the *Republic* "pleasures and spectacles of extraordinary beauty" are what "the souls from the heavens" (615a3) report to have experienced after separation the body. Both the "wondrous regions" described in the *Phaedo* and the places of "marvellous beauty" mentioned in the myth of Er are the dwellings assigned to just souls as a reward for their virtuous conduct on earth.

Like the rewards, the afterlife punishments are described in the report of the conversations Er overhears when he joins the other souls in the miraculous place. From this report it can be inferred that the types of punishment are at least two: one is inflicted to the souls that will be reincarnated after serving their time in Tartarus and another to the souls that have committed incurable evils during their earthly life. On the first type of punishment only two brief remarks inform the reader: the souls awaiting reincarnation begin "bewailing and crying when they recall how many and how big punishments they suffered and saw in their journey beneath the earth" (614e6-615a2); being forbidden to leave Tartarus was their biggest angst, "although they experienced many fears of many different kinds there [in Tartarus]" (616a4-5). While these lines point to the harsh character of the punishments administered in Tartarus, they do not allow hypotheses to be formulated about their exact nature.

More details are given on the particular punishment incurably evil souls receive if they attempt to leave Tartarus. How these souls, which in most cases belonged to tyrants and less frequently to particularly evil private citizens, are prevented to escape Tartarus is illustrated by the example of Ardiaeus the Great. Carrying the same name as an Illyrian tribe inhabiting the Eastern cost of the Adria, this imaginary figure is given the same appellation as the Persian king and is presented as a cruel tyrant who killed his father and his elder brother.[28] When he undertakes to emerge from the channel leading out of the inner earth after a millennium of punishments, the channel's mouth gives a bellow. At this sound the severe guardians of Tartarus intervene chaining and dragging away Ardiaeus and other criminals of a similar sort. Once out of the channel, the guardians flay them and tear their skin before throwing them in Tartarus again. To the other terrified souls they clarify that this is the deserved punishment for the crimes such as those committed by Ardiaeus.

The myth of Er contains a description of the afterlife punishments and brief but relevant information on the afterlife rewards. The "pleasures and spectacles of extraordinary beauty" held in store for the just are considered by Socrates more valuable both than the other rewards of justice and the effect of justice in and by itself. By being awarded in the afterlife, these rewards belong to a time dimension that he considers of higher value

than human life and they carry therefore higher importance than the benefits enjoyable during life on earth.

THE DIALOGICAL DYNAMIC AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONSEQUENCE OF JUSTICE TO SOCRATES' DEFENCE

I hope that the analysis of the dialogical dynamic I propose in this paper shows that the description of the consequences of justice given in the final section of Book 10 is an integral part of the defence of justice presented in the *Republic*: Socrates openly states that his defence would not be complete without illustrating the second of the two reasons for the desirability of justice he has initially identified and he singles out one set of consequences, the rewards assigned by the gods in the afterlife, as the most important among all the benefits of justice. Immediately after he is persuaded by his interlocutors to present a fresh argument in favour of justice, Socrates places justice in the category of goods desirable both in and by themselves and for their consequences. Glaucon and Adeimantus repeatedly ask him to focus exclusively on the first of the two reasons he has identified, but Socrates gives no sign that he is willing to limit the focus of his defence. When he proceeds to provide the description of the consequences of justice, he confirms that their description is an integral part of his defence. Among the three sets of rewards that come as consequences of justice, Socrates singles out those granted in the afterlife and affirm that they carry higher importance than both the rewards assign to the just when they are alive and the effect of justice in and by itself.

Despite being an integral part of Socrates' defence, the description of the consequences of justice receives a significantly smaller amount of attention than the effect of justice in and by itself. Although the repeated requests presented by Glaucon and Adeimantus in Book 2 fail to convince Socrates to limit the focus of his defence, they seem to have an effect on the distribution of attention dedicated to each of the two reasons for the desirability of justice. While Socrates relegates the description of the consequences of justice to the final section of Book 10, his illustration of the effect of justice in and by itself extends from Book 2 to the end of Book 9. He does not openly state that this distribution of attention has been directly determined by his interlocutors' requests, but the high level of detail reached by the description of the effect of justice in and by itself is in line with their requests. There is however no match between the amount of attention and the level of importance attributed to the consequences of justice. Socrates clearly indicates that the consequences of justice are no less important, and some of them even more important, than the benefit of justice in and by itself.

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ENDNOTES

1 An important impulse to the study of the reflection of the dialogical dynamic on the development of the argument in the Platonic works was given by Stokes 1986.

2 Rowe 2007.

3 All quotations of the *Republic* are from the text established by Slings 2003.

4 Ferrari 2010.

5 Reeve 1988, 25 and 33, Pappas 2006², 52, Payne 2011, 58-78 maintain the *Republic* exclusively contains a description of the effect of justice in and by itself.

6 White 1979, 75, Annas 1981, 60-68, Heineman 2002, 314-315, Anderson 2020, 1-26 argue that both the effect of justice in and by itself and the consequences arising from it are described in the *Republic* but they disagree on the importance carried by the description of the latter for the argument developed in the *Republic*.

7 The phrase "in and by itself" translates the Greek αὐτὸ αὑτοῦ ἕνεκα/χάριν (357b6, 357c1, 357c9); "consequences of justice" translates what the Greek text renders through either of the participles τὰ γιγνόμενα (357c2-3) or τὰ ἀποβαίνοντα (357b5-6) in conjunction (357c2-3) or not (357b5-6) with the phrase ἀπ'αὐτοῦ, or through the corresponding relative clause (ὅσα γίγνεται ἀπ'αὐτῶν, 357d1-2). What the phrase αὐτὸ αὑτοῦ ἕνεκα/χάριν on the one hand and the phrases τὰ γιγνόμενα (357c2-3) or τὰ ἀποβαίνοντα (357b5-6) on the other identify is a matter of a long-lasting debate. The interpretations of the notion of justice in and by itself have followed two main lines: Foster 1937, 386-93, Sachs 1971, 35-51, White 1979, 78-79, White 1984, 393-421, Annas 1981, 348-9, Pappas 2006², 54-55 argue that an account of justice in and by itself includes the description of some of the causal consequences of justice; Kirwan 1965, 162-73, Mabbott 1978, 57-65, Reeve 1988, 28-33, Irwin 1995, 189-191 contend that justice is conducive to happiness because the former is a component of, or consists of the same basic elements as, the latter. The notion of consequences of justice has attracted less interest and has been sometimes left unconsidered. Proposed interpretations vary from consequences other than those directly depending on the causation of justice (Annas 1981, 60-68), consequences that arise when certain factors are at play (White 1979, 78-79), consequences that depend on the response of society (Pappas 2006², 54-55).

8 Translations of the *Republic* are my own.

9 Glaucon is described as a sophisticated member of the aristocracy with a love for culture, a competitive attitude and a high sense of morality. For a detailed description of Glaucon's character see Ferrari 2011, 116-124 and Vegetti 1998a, 152-154.

10 Anderson 2020 argues that consequences of justice exclusively consist in the rewards for the just described in Book 10 (6-10). More generally he argues that the consequences of any of the goods considered in the tripartite division proposed by Glaucon at the beginning of Book 2 always depend on recognition by society (10-14).

11 For an analysis of the religious and traditional background of Adeimantus' speech see Vegetti 1998b, 221-232.

12 The identification of the owner of the ring featuring in Glaucon's story is not straightforward. In Book 10 he is called Gyges (612b3), but in lines 359d1-2 of 2 Book, a place generally considered corrupted, he is referred to as "the ancestor of Lydian man." If the information given in Book 10 is accepted, the protagonist of Glaucon's story is likely to be Gyges, the founder of the Mermnadae dynasty and king of Lydia, of which Herodotus speaks in the first book of the Histories (1.8-1.13). For a concise but clear overview of the scholarly debate on the issue see Emlyn-Jones 2007, 175. For a study of the origin of the motives recurring in the story see Calabi 1998, 173-188.

13 The function performed by the story of Gyges' ring has been explained in different ways. According to Irwin 1999 the story is consistent with the view that "justice has some slight intrinsic value in addition to the value that depends on its consequences" (73). Paytas and Baima 2020 contend that Gyges' behaviour is evidence "none of us value justice for its own sake at all" (8). But by becoming invisible, Gyges makes sure that he will not suffer the consequences of his unjust actions rather than taking advantage of some consequence of justice without accepting to suffer the supposed burden of serving justice in and by itself. On this basis it seems more plausible to accept Heineman 2002's view that the aim of the story of Gyges' ring is to show that people consider injustice a good in and by itself (320 n. 23).

14 Morgan 2000, 204-207 compares this financial metaphor with the one used in Book 6 to introduce the image of the sun (506e2-507a5) and notes that in the former Socrates is presented as the creditor while he features as the debtor in the latter.

15 Emlyn-Jones 2007, 188-189 observes that Adeimantus' speech (367a5-e6) ends with the formulation of the same idea proposed by Glaucon at the conclusion of his speech (360d8-362c8) and reflects on the function that this idea performs in the speech of the former.

16 The section (376e1-392c7) in which Socrates discusses the content of poetic (and prose) discourses suitable for Callipolis is part of a larger passage that includes an examination of typologies of narrative (392c7-398b9). See Giuliano 2005 for a comprehensive analysis of the attitudes Plato adopts towards poetry in the *Republic* and beyond. See Halliwell 2009 for a study attentive to the difficulties of extracting

a Platonic stance about poetic discourse from the *Republic*.

17 Sedley 1999 notes that the assimilation to the gods was considered the main moral aim pursued in the Platonic dialogues during the Roman Empire. To demonstrate the relevance this principle had for Plato, Sedley identifies it and explains its application in the *Republic*, the *Symposium*, the *Phaedrus*, and the *Theaetetus*. The results of his articles supplement those he reached in Sedley 1997 which is dedicated to the investigation of the relevance of this principle in Plato's *Timaeus* and in Aristotle.

18 Halliwell 2005, 167.

19 Recent scholarship has not systematically discussed the question of whether the rewards granted in the afterlife are given higher value than the benefit produced by justice in and by itself. While Annas 1981, 349 seems to assume that these rewards occupy a pre-eminent place only among the consequences of justice, Vegetti 2015[8], 226 maintains that the rewards granted in the afterlife are ranked higher than both the other rewards and the benefit of justice: "to Glaucon's surprise he [Socrates] considers the rewards he is going to speak about "far greater" (608c) than those discussed in Books 4 and 9: and yet in them it had been argued that justice is for the soul what health is for the body, i.e. a harmonious disposition able to bring individual and collective happiness [my translation]." An interpretation along these lines had already been proposed by Adam 1902, 421-2: "there is no reason why τῶν εἰρημένων should not, like ἐκείνοις in 612 B, refer to what Plato in 612 A calls 'those goods which Justice by herself supplied' (ἐκείνοις τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς οἷς αὐτὴ παρείχετο ἡ δικαιοσύνη): and it is much more natural to assign this meaning to τῶν εἰρημένων […].

20 Woolf 2012, 150-173.

21 Rowe 2007, 167-175.

22 The myth of Er is one of the four narratives found in the Platonic corpus that scholars commonly consider eschatological myths, the other three being included in the *Gorgias*, the *Phaedo* the *Phaedrus*. A considerable impulse to their study has been given by Annas 1982. More recent analyses of these narratives are collected in Partenie 2011 and in Collobert, Destrée and Gonzalez 2012. Each myth is usually studied in the context of the dialogue of which it is part. A notable exception is Inwood 2011, which undertakes to extrapolate eschatological beliefs from the information disseminated in these myths and in relevant sections of the *Laws* and the *Timaeus*.

23 Like many of the myths that Socrates is portrayed to retell in the Platonic dialogues, the myth of Er is presented not as a story invented by Socrates but as a report originating from another source. Most 2012 considers this feature one of the narratological criteria identifying Platonic myth. For an analysis of the narratological structure of the myth see Halliwell 2007, 449-450.

24 Halliwell 2007, 451 suggests that the wording "spectacles of extraordinary" seems to be "echoing the form of the good, 509a."

25 Although Glaucon postulates that Socrates is referring to "an extraordinary beauty" (509a6) in relation to the form of the Good, Socrates invites him to proceed to the next point without confirming or denying his hypothesis (509a9-10).

26 The form of Beauty is mentioned at 249d5, 250d7, 250e2, 251a3, 251b2, 254b6, 255c6; its brilliance at 250b5-6 and 250c8-d1.

27 Translations of the *Phaedo* are from Gallop 1975.

28 See Halliwell 2005, 175.

Plato, Isocrates and Epistolary Literature: Reconsidering the *Seventh Letter* in its contexts

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ABSTRACT

Working against the recent arguments against Plato's authorship of the *Seventh Letter* in the Anglophone scholarship, this paper demonstrates the historical possibility that Plato wrote his letters for philosophical purposes, most likely in competition with Isocrates, who skilfully used the literary genre of letters for his rhetorical and philosophical purposes. Because Isocrates and Plato experimented with various writing styles in response to each other, letters and autobiographies may well have been their common devices. The paper concludes that we should respect the tradition that had included and respected the *Seventh Letter* as Plato's own writing.

Keywords: Plato, Isocrates, Letter, Style, Autobiography

https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_23_5

1. ISSUES ABOUT THE *SEVENTH LETTER*

In understanding Plato's philosophy, it matters quite a great deal whether the so-called *Seventh Letter* was written by Plato or not. Indeed, still important is whether it represents Plato's ideas and experiences, whoever may have composed that letter, if not by Plato. This is so for the letter informs us of much about his thoughts and activities and, more importantly, about the relation between these, of which we know little from the dialogues. Therefore, it is one of the most important issues for Plato scholars to reconsider how to deal with the works transmitted to us in the name of Plato's *Letters*.

Recent attacks on the authenticity of this letter in the Anglophone scholarship seem to go too far and to have brought about unsound views of Platonic philosophy. In the current paper, I'll demonstrate that it is likely that Plato wrote letters, in particular the *Seventh Letter*, in addition to dialogues, as a form of competition with Isocrates; taking the letters into consideration will broaden our perspective of Plato's philosophical activities far beyond the dialogues.

Plato's *Seventh Letter*, addressed to the associates and friends of the late Dion, has long been a focus of scholarly controversy concerning its authenticity. Up until the late twentieth century, most scholars agreed that this letter, among the total thirteen letters that have been attributed to Plato, was genuine or, if not, had been written by a close follower of Plato who knew his Sicilian visits very well (Guthrie, 1975, p. 8). Over the last few decades, however, a new trend has appeared in Anglophone scholarship: Julia Annas and Malcolm Schofield have argued against Plato's authorship of this letter, suggesting that we should not take the *Seventh Letter*—including the biographical implication of any commitment to Sicilian politics—into consideration when we interpret Plato's philosophy (Annas, 1997, p. 154-157; Annas, 1999, p. 74-77; Schofield, 2006, p. 13-30).

Annas tries to keep Plato out of political philosophy, and Schofield emphasises Socrates' quietist influence on Plato. Their claims are closely connected with the "unpolitical" reading of the *Republic*, which must be a reaction to Karl Popper's criticism of Plato's political philosophy. Mario Vegetti, editor of the monumental Italian commentary of the *Republic*, clearly analyses the rise and development of the "unpolitical" reading of that dialogue in the Anglophone scholarship in his De Vogel lecture given at the IX Symposium Platonicum in Tokyo (Vegetti, 2013). He sees the main cause of this trend as a strong reaction against Popper, who claims that the ideas of the ideal state in the *Republic* were a dangerous source of totalitarian ideology, which Plato attempted to put into practice in Sicily. Scholars of an "unpolitical" reading now turn to the *Seventh Letter*, which is believed to give strong support for the ordinary assumption that Plato conceived the idea of a philosopher-ruler and tried to put it into practice.

Vegetti concludes his lecture with a memorable message against the unpolitical reading: "The *Republic* is then a political dialogue, a dialogue in which Plato expounds his 'most striking ideas in political philosophy' (R. Bambrough). One may share or reject these ideas, and above all, one should try to understand them. But denying their existence and power in the attempt to protect Plato from himself even more than from his critics, is not a good historiographical strategy, and, as Bambrough had already warned, proves 'unprofitable' on the level of critical thought. It would be better to do without the *Republic* if it is regarded as unacceptable, than offer an

edifying and enfeebled image of it, one that is "normalised" from the point of view of the common sense of our times." (Vegetti, 2013, p. 15) I wholeheartedly agree with Vegetti's conclusion and believe that his suggestion can also be applied to the recent discussion on the *Seventh Letter*.

After Annas and Schofield, Myles Burnyeat and Michael Frede have cast serious doubts on the attribution of the letter to Plato when they published *The Pseudo-Platonic Seventh Letter* in 2015, which is based on their joint seminar held at Oxford in 2001 (Bunyeart; Frede, 2015).[1] Their arguments are influential (for example, Nick Denyer, a former colleague of Burnyeat, reviews and supports their arguments in Denyer, 2016), but I find them unconvincing. Here, I put aside Burnyeat's claim that the author was philosophically incompetent because I interpret the philosophical digression of the *Seventh Letter* differently so that we can avoid the difficulties he raised. Instead, the current paper will focus on one of Frede's two primary claims: the strong claim that there are no existing philosophical letters from the fourth century BC. I'll touch upon some other points of criticism that Frede and Burnyeat present, but a fuller examination of their arguments will be given at another occasion. The present paper aims not to cross-examine and reject my teachers' views, but rather to make a constructive contribution to understanding Plato's philosophy in response to their courageous challenge.

2. DID NOT PLATO USE THE FIRST PERSON IN HIS WRITINGS?

To consider Plato's letters, we should consider the styles of writing in Plato as a whole. Let us first compare two statements, in each of which the first person "I" puts forward his own idea:

> Well, I've now come to what we likened to the greatest wave. But I shall say what I have to say, even if the wave is of a wave of laughter that will simply drown me in ridicule and contempt. (ἐπ' αὐτῷ δή … εἰμὶ ὃ τῷ μεγίστῳ προσηκάζομεν κύματι. εἰρήσεται δ' οὖν, εἰ καὶ μέλλει γέλωτί τε ἀτεχνῶς ὥσπερ κῦμα ἐκγελῶν καὶ ἀδοξίᾳ κατακλύσειν.)

> So, in my praise of the right philosophy I was compelled to declare that by it one is enabled to discern all forms of justice, both political and individual. (λέγειν τε ἠναγκάσθην, ἐπαινῶν τὴν ὀρθὴν φιλοσοφίαν, ὡς ἐκ ταύτης ἔστιν τά τε πολιτικὰ δίκαια καὶ τὰ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν πάντα κατιδεῖν.)

These statements introduce the same thesis pertaining to "philosopher-rulers". Both statements also present this thesis in the first person, "I", and the author of both statements is Plato. However, the speaker in each statement is not the same: in the first statement, the speaker is the dramatic character Socrates, who is the main speaker in the *Republic* (V. 473c, trans. G. M. A. Grube, revised by C. D. C. Reeve). The latter statement, however, is made (if we believe the tradition) by Plato himself in his *Seventh Letter* (326a, trans. R. G. Bury).

Some may assume that it matters little whether "I" is a dramatic persona or the author himself, so long as the same philosophical thesis is presented, but others may find a crucial difference. One might, for example, wonder whether the dramatic character in the first statement represents the author's ideas. On the

one hand, we are almost sure from the other works of Socratic literature that the historical Socrates did not conceive of the idea of the "philosopher-rulers". However, on the other hand, we have no licence to assume that the Socrates in the dialogue is a spokesman or "mask" of the author Plato.

In contrast, the second statement should not raise any difficulty because the author is purportedly speaking as himself. Strangely, however, scholars never doubt the attribution of the thesis in the former statement to Plato, but some scholars reject the attribution of the thesis in the latter statement to him. Why? It may be because they feel uneasy when they hear Plato speaking in the first person "I". However, this uneasiness raises its own questions: Did Plato not have any ideas of his own? Did he always put his words into someone else's mouth?

With reference to the specific statements cited above, Malcolm Schofield casts doubt on the authenticity of Plato's *Seventh Letter* regarding this point; he writes, "For Plato now in the *Seventh Letter* to merge authorship with the authorial 'I', and imply that *he* made that remark, would constitute an abrupt lurch out of his own carefully constructed literary persona." (Schofield, 2006, p. 17) Schofield, in other words, expresses scepticism about Plato's use of the first person "I" in the letter because it contrasts with the careful statements delivered in the fictional voices in the dialogues.[2]

What, then, is the expected effect when using the first person in philosophical writings? Usually, when in the first person, a philosopher's words are believed to be derived from his or her own thoughts, particularly in scientific treatises. The prose style, called Ionian inquiry (*historia*), was an innovative invention of early Greek philosophers (starting with Anaximander), allowing them to reject divine authority that relies on poetic utterances and instead display their own process of inquiry (e.g. Hecataeus, *FGrH* 264, 1a, 1, F; Herodotus, I.1.0). This style of scientific treatise was developed in the sixth to forth centuries BC, including in lectures, such as Aristotle's. Plato, however, adopts a different style: all of his dialogues deliberately hide the author (cf. *Phd*. 59b). This style, though, was shared by the other pupils of Socrates. For in the Socratic literature, an author plays little role, as we can observe in Xenophon's works.[3] Close consideration of these problems raises the question whether scholars should focus on theses when reading philosophical texts, regardless of who the speaker might be. For example, the goddess in the poem of Parmenides speaks the Truth, in the form of "I'll tell you (ἐγὼν ἐρέω)" (DK 28 B2.1). Can we treat the message as the author's?

Here, we should widen our scope and consider a style other than dialogues. Although modern readers tend to believe that Plato wrote the dialogues only, this view comes from the history of our reception of Plato. The *Corpus Platonicum,* edited by Thrasylus in the first century, contains thirty-five dialogues and a set of letters, of which medieval manuscripts transmitted his writings to our modern period. However, in his lifetime, Plato must have written more, most of which was not included in the Platonic discourse. Ancient Greek people already used letters for correspondence with those who lived far away, and Plato was no exception. In particular, the members of the Academy, including the earliest headmasters, Speusippus and Xenocrtes, had a great deal of contact with statesmen in other countries, for example, Macedonia, Sicily, South Italy and Cyprus. The political interest was strong in the Academy, which was widely known in antiquity.[4] Naturally, the communication was done by letter.

Plato may also have written other literary compositions. Although it is doubtful that he abandoned his goal of writing tragedies when he met Socrates and burned his works, it is not unlikely that Plato occasionally composed short poems: we have thirty-three pieces of love epigrams in the name of Plato (Diehl, 1949, p. 102-110). Even if many of them were later attributed to this famous philosopher, we have no reason, as John Cooper (1997, p. 1742) suggests, "to doubt that some of these poems … are actually by him".

Apart from private writings, philosophical thoughts must have been given in other forms than dialogue. In the Academy, Plato discussed a wide range of topics with his colleagues and pupils, and we can naturally expect that he presented some other ideas and raised questions not included in the written dialogues. What Aristotle called "the unwritten doctrines (ἄγραφα δόγματα)" testifies that at least he presented some other ideas to his colleagues. It is our modern prejudice (since Schleiermacher) that Plato's philosophy was expressed solely by dialogues. In his lifetime, Plato pursued philosophy in many ways, of which the dialogue form was but one.

Now, we should ask whether Plato wrote letters for philosophical purposes as well, here by looking at the historical context of the fourth century BC.

3. DID NOT PLATO'S CONTEMPORARIES WRITE PHILOSOPHICAL LETTERS?

Michael Frede considers the *Seventh Letter* within its historical context and suggests that we should examine the whole collection of letters instead of examining each letter individually (Burnyeat; Frede 2015, p.6). To this end, he critically examines a few letters purportedly written by Plato's contemporary philosophers: Archytas and Speusippus.[5] He concludes that "it is because all these collections of letters are spurious that *eo ipso* Plato's letters are suspect, and this all the more so since they would antedate any clearly authentic letters of philosophers by sixty to seventy years. Also, they would constitute one of the earliest collections of letters of which at least some were genuine (Isocrates and Demosthenes)." (Burnyeat and Frede, 2015, 11) By "sixty to seventy years", he refers to three letters of Epicurus written in the early third century BC.

This is the strongest of Frede's arguments because it is free from any subjective judgements about the quality of the philosophical arguments, the style of the text or the political attitude toward the Sicilian situation. Nevertheless, it contains a crucial defect: Frede ignores the letters of Isocrates and Demosthenes, probably because he does not think of these writers as philosophers.[6] Although many scholars assume (Trapp, 2003, p. 12; Ceccarelli, 2013, p. 286-287, n. 70), as Frede does, that we have no philosophical letter before Epicurus, this is not true, at least as far as Isocrates is concerned. Nine letters by Isocrates exist, most or all of which are regarded as genuine by modern commentators. Furthermore, Isocrates firmly considered himself to be a philosopher as well as an orator. Therefore, Isocrates is a decisive counterexample to Frede's claim that we have no set of clearly authentic letters by philosophers from the fourth century BC, or the contemporaries of Plato. The burden of proof, therefore, lies with those who insist that the letters are not authentic[7] because the tradition since antiquity has been *not* to doubt the authenticity of the Platonic letters.[8]

Taking the letters of Isocrates into consideration illuminates the Platonic letters. Isocrates'

letters were addressed to Dionysius I (*Ep. I*), to Philip II, King of Macedon (*Ep. II, III*), to Antipater (*Ep. IV*), to Alexander III (*Ep. V*), to the children of Jason (*Ep. VI*), to Timotheus (*Ep. VII*), to the rulers of the Mytilenaeans (*Ep. VIII*) and to Archidamus (*Ep. IX*).[9] Although controversy over their authenticity arose in the nineteenth century, recent editors and commentators (Mathieu; Brémond, 1962, p. 166; Van Hook, 1945, p. 368; Papillon, 2004, p. 246) treat all the nine letters as genuine. In particular, a monograph of L. F. Smith (1940), which defends the authenticity of *Ep. IX* and *III,* concludes that all nine letters must be genuine.

In addition to the letters included in Isocrates' corpus, he also composed several rhetorical works similar to letters, that is, works addressed to specific persons. *To Demonicus* [1], *Evagoras* [9] and *To Nicocles* [2] are addressed to friends in Cyprus, and *To Philip* [5] is addressed to the Macedonian King. Also, *Busiris* [11] speaks to the sophist Polycrates. These five works are particularly important for understanding his letters as a genre available to philosophers at the time.

First, *To Demonicus* is a speech, written between 374 and 372 BC and that takes the form of advice offered to Demonicus, the son of his friend Hipponicus in Cyprus. The author starts with the personal address "Oh Demonicus" and declares that he has not invented a protreptic exercise but has instead written moral advice (5). The memorial service address, *Evagoras*, written around 370 BC, also starts with a call—this time to Nicocles, son of the Cyprian King Evagoras (1, 73)—and encourages the addressee to engage in philosophy, using his father as a model (76-81). *To Nicocles*, written around 370 BC, likewise starts with the address "Oh Nicocles".

This kind of personal address is typical in the style of his rhetorical speeches, in which the author gives advice and persuades friends to undertake particular actions; when sent to the addressee, however, it is not substantially different from a letter. For example, his *Ninth Letter* starts with the address "Oh Archidamus", just like the opening call "Oh Philip" in the speech *To Philip*. These letters and speeches may not have been actually delivered to their addressees but may instead have circulated among the author's friends and pupils. *To Philip* was written in the style of an address to Philip II when Macedonia and Athens signed a peace treaty in 346 BC. The author clearly states that he is "sending an address" (17) to praise the king's past achievements (153). Therefore, we may take this as a letter (ἐπιστολή) even though the author explicitly calls it a "discourse (λόγος)" (*Phil.,* 1, 11, 16, 17, 18, 23) or "book (βίβλιον)" (*Phil.,* 21).[10]

In the middle of the speech (81), Isocrates mentions his *First Letter,* describing it as "my letter to Dionysius after he had made himself master of Sicily". The reference to *Ep. I* (9) guarantees the authenticity of the *First Letter*, which is addressed to Dionysius I,[11] and that clearly shows that there is no fundamental distinction between letters and rhetorical speeches (cf. Livingstone, 2001, p. 6, n. 5). The *First Letter* is treated in this speech as a document circulated in public (cf. Ceccarelli, 2013, p. 288).[12]

The scholion in *To Philip* tells us that Philip received and read the speech without being persuaded, although modern commentators (cf. Papillon, 2004, 16) suspect that the speech was never sent. Letters were important communicational tools for delivering messages to people at a distance and offered the advantage of allowing the sender to deliver timely advice without travelling in person (29). Isocrates often used old age as an excuse for sending letters (*Ep. I*, 1, 3.4, 5.1, 6.1-2). He also clari-

fied that this writing was intended to appeal to his associates and pupils, as well as to the addressee, Philip II (*Phil.,* 12).[13]

Similarly, the epideictic work *Busiris* pretends to be a letter sent to Polycrates, the author of *Defence of Busiris*.[14] Isocrates skilfully uses the literary genre of the letter for rhetorical and philosophical purposes: in the disguise of a private letter, he criticises Polycrates and presents his own piece of epideictic defence to show his superiority. In the beginning, Isocrates calls out "Oh Polycrates" (1) and speaks to the addressee in the second person. However, he writes in the style he uses when responding to someone he is acquainted with only in writing:

> But since we have not yet met one another, we shall be able, if we ever do come together, to discuss the other topics at greater length; concerning those suggestions, however, by which at the present time I might be of service to you, I have thought I should advise you by letter, though concealing my views, to the best of my ability, from everyone else. (*Busiris,* 2, trans. G. Norlin)

Because a letter depends on the understanding that it is addressed to a particular person, it can, on the one hand, avoid uncertainties about the context, against which Plato raised critical points in *Phaedrus*. On the other hand, we do not have to take the messages to be the author's ideas, even if expressed in the first person. Instead, the author can propose any idea more freely in the form of a private letter. According to Yun Lee Too, "Writing a letter, if only a fictional one, is one of the primary ways in which a Greek author dramatises a relationship with an individual in power". (Too, 1995, p. 198)

In *On Style*, Demetrius introduces the idea that a letter is one of two sides of a dialogue (223)[15] and adds his comment that "a dialogue reproduces an extemporary utterance, while a letter is committed to writing and is sent as a gift" (224). In antiquity, letters and dialogues were coupled and deemed to be relatives. In the age of Isocrates and Plato, using the letter form was probably much easier and more natural than we may suppose. His pupils at the Academy seem to have written some works in the form of letters.[16]

This consideration supports the authenticity of Plato's *Seventh Letter*. Because letters and rhetorical works in the epistolary style are genuine in Isocrates, we can suppose that the letter form was also used by other contemporary philosophers as an effective method of expressing their ideas. The adoption of this style by Plato might also be explained in terms of his rivalry with Isocrates. Hence, Frede's strong argument against the authenticity turns out to be invalid, and the denial of his claim, on the contrary, provides us with a plausible argument that Plato may well have written philosophical letters, just as Isocrates did.

If Plato's *Seventh Letter* is genuine, it is neither an ordinary correspondence nor a work of a rhetorical exercise but must instead be considered a much refined and well-planned work of philosophy (if we understand philosophy as a way of living well, rather than systematic doctrines). Yet the intention behind the writing of the letter need not be simple; for example, we may suspect that the letter was never sent to Sicily but was intended for public circulation, just as Isocrates' *Busiris* was.

Isocrates had a particular reason for adopting this style: it was said that his voice was so weak that to make a good performance of speeches in front of a large audience was difficult. Hence, whereas the main activity of

rhetoricians, such as Gorgias and Alcidamas, was to give extempore speeches, Isocrates carefully composed written speeches over a long time. Therefore, it was natural that he adopted the epistolary style in *writing* speeches, for letters are sent to their recipients and read out by someone other than the writer. Isocrates was keen on trying various styles to create new speeches, but the epistolary style was particularly suitable for his writing. However, it is not certain whether this combination of rhetorical speech and letter was original to him or whether it was already in use by others at the time (cf. Sullivan, 2007, p. 16).

How does this lead back to Plato? I am suggesting that it is possible, or even likely, that Plato, like Isocrates, used letters (or at least the *Seventh Letter* and *Eighth Letter*) for philosophical purposes. We should surmise why these letters survived and were included in the *Corpus Platonicum*. Plato's letters must have been collected and carefully preserved, along with the other dialogues in the Academy, perhaps from Xenocrates on. The ancient tradition clearly shows that the letters were read as Plato's writings and respected as such.[17]

We must remember that later philosophers also used the style of letters effectively, from Cicero, Seneca and St. Paul in the Roman period, to modern thinkers, such as Descartes, Leibniz and Voltaire.

4. DID NOT PLATO WRITE AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY?

The rivalry between Plato and Isocrates, in particular regarding the educational views of their schools, is normally assumed in modern scholarship, but we scarcely find a direct testimony. Diogenes Laertius reports one anecdote of their friendly relationship (3.1.8; cf. Riginos, 1976, p. 118, Anecdote 74). Plato mentioned Isocrates only once in his dialogues: in the closing conversation with Phaedrus, Socrates expresses a positive view and expectation of the future of young Isocrates, hoping that he will excel in rhetoric in the spirit of philosophy (*Phdr.* 279a-b). On the other hand, there is no explicit reference to Plato in Isocrates' works, though we may find many allusions in several works. This silence on both sides makes our objective judgements difficult, but we have to observe their relationship by using plausible evidence. Above all, it is often pointed out that Isocrates' main work, *Antidosis* [15], composed in 353 BC, is somehow related to the *Seventh Letter*.[18] We find six points of correspondence between them.

First, Isocrates' *Antidosis* intends to defend the author against criticisms in the form of forensic speech. He needed to explain his lifelong activity of teaching rhetoric to remove the ungrounded prejudice and slanders of his opponent. The *Seventh Letter* is to explain Plato's thought and intention concerning the recent Sicilian issues but actually contains defences and apologies for Plato's political activities. Both writings are a self-defence of one's engagements.

Second, both *Antidosis* and the *Seventh Letter* were written when their authors were senior in age—*Antidosis* when Isocrates was eighty-two and the *Seventh Letter* when Plato was around seventy-four years old—and both reflect the authors' lives and activities. Therefore, they can be read as a form of autobiography (as discussed below).

Third, both works present the authors' philosophical ideas in the middle of long pieces. *Antidosis* inserts some arguments in praise of philosophy, which clarifies his own position in contrast to Plato and others (167-214, 243-309). Similarly, the *Seventh Letter* includes a famous digression focused on philosophical

discussion (342a-344d). The author initially explains how and why Dionysius failed to do philosophy as he had expected, but he then found it necessary to clarify some core ideas of his philosophy. In this way, both use long works to express their notions of philosophy.

Fourth, both authors justify their relationship with their closest friends in these works: Timotheus and Dion. For Isocrates, to defend the Athenian statesman and his pupil Timotheus was a main purpose of this speech (102-139). Also, for Plato, it was his main aim to defend Dion's political position by narrating the details of what happened between Dion, Dionysius and himself. Both friends were dead and were severely criticised by many.

Fifth, both transcend a particular genre by using different styles. *Antidosis* is a forensic speech, far longer than ordinary speeches, and contains many citations from Isocrates' own past works, as if it were a work of meta-rhetoric. The *Seventh Letter* is also far longer than an ordinary letter (about twenty-nine Stephanus pages, i.e., as large as the *Meno*) and can be considered a philosophical treatise or political pamphlet presenting a vision on how philosophers live. In other words, *Antidosis* is no ordinary oration, nor is the *Seventh Letter* a letter.

Sixth, it is well-known that *Antidosis* responded to Plato's *Apology of Socrates* and opposed the notion of the philosophy in the *Republic* (cf. Too, 2008, p. 24; Ober, 1998, p. 260-263). We should note that Isocrates was influenced by Socrates just as Plato was.[19] In this respect, the relation between the two works is not symmetrical because I find no clear allusion to Isocrates in the *Seventh Letter*.

With these points in mind, it is natural to assume that Plato and Isocrates competed with each other in these literary and philosophical experiments. If Plato wrote the *Seventh Letter*, the date of composition would be somewhere between 354 and 352 BC,[20] so we may assume some implicit responses between the two works (cf. Harward, 1928, p. 154; Post, 1930, p. 115), although it is uncertain which responded to which. It is usually supposed that Isocrates responded to Plato, but the suggested date of composition allows the reverse. They might even have been mutual responses.

To compare the *Seventh Letter* with *Antidosis* is particularly interesting for the history of autobiography. By examining the ancient tradition of biography, Arnaldo Momigliano (1993, p. 60-62) regards the *Seventh Letter* as "the greatest autobiographical letter of antiquity". The fourth century BC was "the century of biography", particularly because Socratic literature attempted various depictions of Socrates. In this context, Momigliano defends the authenticity of the *Seventh Letter* and sees it as a forerunner of this new genre.

If this view is correct, what role do autobiographical works play in philosophy? Because we see no autobiography of Plato in the dialogues (except a few references in the *Apology* and *Phaedo*), it may look attractive to consider the *Letters* as counterparts to Isocrates' works. Here we should add that autobiographies need not be spoken in the first person: Xenophon, in the *Anabasis*, for example, reports his own experiences in the third person.[21] Later, in the history of philosophy, there are many examples of philosophical ideas expressed through an author's autobiography: Augustine, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Kierkegaard are well-known examples.

5. PLATO'S EXPERIMENTS ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL STYLE

The assumption that Plato only wrote dialogues but never expressed his ideas in

the first person in his writings is too narrow and may prove wrong when we consider the various writing styles of his contemporaries. Indeed, Plato experimented with different styles within his dialogues.

The literary forms that Plato used include oratory ones. The *Apology of Socrates* is, strictly speaking, not a dialogue (though it contains a short dialogue with Meletus) but a forensic oratory, and the *Menexenus* presents a funeral oration within the dialogue. We know that speeches were a fashionable style exploited by the sophists: for example, Antiphon's *Tetralogies*, Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen* and *Defense of Palamedes*, Antisthenes' *Ajax* and *Odysseus* and Alcidamas' *Odysseus*. These fictional speeches indirectly deliver the author's ideas. In addition, the *Phaedrus* contains epideictic speeches, and the *Symposium* presents several extempore speeches. In addition, the main part of the *Timaeus* is a scientific treatise, and the *Laws* introduces preambles of laws. Various myths, stories and histories are included in the dialogues. Thus, Plato made full use of a range of different literary genres and sometimes combined them to advance philosophical discussions.

In the fourth century BC, writing was controversial, so when Plato wrote his criticism of writing both in the *Phaedrus* (274b-278b) and the *Seventh Letter* (341b-d), he must have had his contemporary critics, especially Isocrates and Alcidamas, in mind. A prominent pupil of Gorgias, Alcidamas wrote a treatise entitled *On those who Write Written Speeches, or the Sophists*, in which he severely criticised Isocrates' style of written speeches as a secondary activity. However, he also had to apologize and explain why he *wrote* this criticism (29-32). Probably Plato responded to this treatise in the argument against writing in the *Phaedrus*, but again he was obviously aware that this dialogue itself was a writing. It is probably in response to the *Phaedrus* that Isocrates defended writing in *First Letter* (2-3) and *To Philip* (25-26).[22] Particularly in this letter to Dionysius, he contrasted the written letter with the spoken advice, and emphasized the role of the former. Thus, without mentioning each other, they competed and collaborated with each other to develop philosophical styles in writing.

Although neither Alcidamas nor Plato said anything about letters in their arguments, they might have thought that writing a letter can somehow avoid the flaws of normal writing in that it is addressed to a particular person and set in a particular context. If the fourth century philosophers and rhetoricians considered the epistolary form as effective style, it is likely that Plato also used it for philosophical activities. In each style, Plato's words were directed carefully at his colleagues and all the people of Greece, including his rivals: his aim was not so much to construct a system of doctrines as to discuss philosophical questions. Writing a letter was arguably one of the powerful methods to do it.

Coming back to the two statements quoted in Section 2, we can once more attempt to answer whether we should see any difference between the same idea presented as either a dialogue or a letter. In a sense, the answer is yes because the dramatic context of the *Republic* fixes the meaning of the philosopher-ruler thesis as the only possible answer to the realizability of the ideal state and is described in words alone. This can be interpreted as a purely theoretical proposal, and the speaker's mocking introduction might even hint at the implausibility of its application to real-life society. However, the autobiographical letter locates its thesis quite differently. It indicates that Plato conceived this idea in his youth

and eventually found a good chance to put it into practice later in his life. In this context, the thesis was taken to be a serious proposal for creating a just and happy society. The authorial "I" seems to indicate the original intention of the thesis.

However, we know well that autobiographies do not always represent historical facts or even the author's own ideas. Authors often make apologetic excuses, ignore inconvenient truths or even distort memory, whether consciously or not. Even the *Seventh Letter*, written some forty years after his disappointing experiences of the Thirty and the trial of Socrates, may be unconsciously creating a story consistent with his later activities. He may equally have changed his ideas gradually. In this sense, we cannot take the autobiographical nature of the writing to be decisive evidence. This type of writing is, however, one of the most effective ways of presenting philosophical ideas; therefore, the ideas should be examined by themselves and alongside other works, although we often put too much emphasis on the biographical context.

I believe that the genius of the Greeks lay in inventing philosophical styles, and I consider it crucial to understand how ancient philosophers experimented with various styles, such as poetry, treatise, aphorism, dialogue, speech and letter, in their writings. Although we modern scholars take it for granted that philosophers write academic treatises (namely, articles, books and lectures), we can see in ancient philosophy that this was far from the only way of expressing philosophical ideas. Ancient writers scarcely believed that we could easily engage in philosophy without making conscious attempts at speaking and writing. It is far from obvious that speaking in the first person presents a sincere profession of one's thoughts or that writing in the third person guarantees an objective inquiry into truth. Instead, both methods of delivery are philosophical performances (speech acts), hence requiring hermeneutical skills to be understood and used philosophically. We can learn this from the epistolary literature produced by Isocrates and, most likely the case, by Plato.

By considering the historical and literary contexts of writing letters in the fourth century BC, I find no clear evidence or definitive argument against the authorship of Plato' *Seventh Letter*. Therefore, the burden of proof still lies with those who deny authenticity. Now we should respect the long and ancient traditions that had included and respected the *Seventh Letter* as Plato's own writing.

Finally, we must remember that Plato used to engage in dialogue with Socrates, who did not write anything but always directed questions at his friends: "Do say what *you* think". Plato wrote down Socrates' dialogue in his absence by making himself absent. We should try to solve the mystery of his philosophical styles to better practice philosophy ourselves. The *Seventh Letter* should be the basis of our understanding of Plato's philosophy together with the dialogues.[23]

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ENDNOTES

1 Burnyeat criticises the consensus of Guthrie, 1975, p. 8 (mentioned above), in p. 121-122.

2 For the relation between *Rep. V* and *Ep. VII*, 325d-326b, see Schofield, 2006, p. 15-17, 44, n. 20.

3 Xenophon, the author himself, participated in only one dialogue with Socrates in *Mem.* 1.3.9-13. He also suggested anachronistically that he was present at the symposium of Callias in *Symp.* 1.1. In this respect, Xenophon's style is different from Plato's. We can see that Plato paid more attention to hiding.

4 Cf. DL. 3.1.23, Plutarch, *Against Colotes*, 32, 1126C-D. Brunt (1993) directs a more cautious consideration against the alleged political activities but never denies that Plato engaged in political theory.

5 As for *Letter to Philip II* (*Socratic Epistle 30*, attributed to Speusippus), Frede does not consider the most recent study of Natoli (2004), which concludes that the letter is genuine. Hence, the controversy is still open.

6 The initial agenda of Frede's examination includes a reference to Isocrates: "The question of the authenticity of letters or letter-collections handed down from antiquity quite generally – philosophers' letters (Aristotle, Speusippus), rhetoricians' or orators' letters (Isocrates, Demosthenes) – all sorts of problems about ancient epistolography." (Burnyeat; Frede, 2015, p. 3-4) The editors of Frede's lectures, namely Carol Atack and Dominic

Scott, add endnote 13 to this point and explain the scholarly discussion on the authenticity of the letters of Demosthenes and Isocrates (Burnyeat; Frede, 2015, p. 103), but they scarcely contest Frede's exclusion of them from the table of philosophical letters (p. 8). The six letters of Demosthenes tend to be regarded as spurious by modern commentators.

7 *Pace* Frede, who insists that the burden of proof lies with those who believe in the authenticity (Burnyeat; Frede, 2015, p. 33; cf. p. xiii, xiv). The same claim is made by Edelstein (1966, p. 2).

8 See note 17 below.

9 The *Tenth Letter to Dionysius* used to be included in the collection, but obviously, it is spurious and excluded from modern editions.

10 It is usually difficult to distinguish between letters and books: see Trapp, 2003, p. 1, n. 3.

11 Commentators assume Dionysius I (tyrant, 405–367 BC), who regained the power in 368 BC.

12 For how to understand the sudden lapse in the middle of *Ep. I*, see Too, 1995, p. 194-198. This letter became a forerunner to the later works addressed to Philip II; cf. Smith, 1940, p. 19-21.

13 Sullivan, 2007, p. 8, emphasises their role of display for pupils.

14 *Busiris* is a highly intertextual work. This speech was thought to respond to Plato's idea of the ideal city in the *Republic* and to the theory of rhetoric in the *Phaedrus* and had some correspondence to the Atlantis story in *Tim.* and *Critias*: cf. Eucken, 1983, p. 183-195, 208-212; Livingstone, 2001, p. 48-73. In this period, competitive discourses were written by Xenophon, Plato and others concerning the ideal *politeia*, with both Persia and Sparta as models. Isocrates wrote this epideictic speech in the context of a controversy with Gorgias, Polycrates, Alcidamas and Plato.

15 This idea is suggested by Artemon, who edited Aristotle's letters.

16 Cf. Speusippus: *A reply to Cephalus*, *A reply to Gryllus*, *A reply to the anonymous work* (DL. 4.1.4-5); Xenocrates: *To Arybas*, *To Hephaistion* (DL. 4.2.14).

17 Early references are found in Demetrius (*On Style*, 228, 234, 290) to *Ep. VII*, 349b, of the second century BC (?) and in Cicero (*Tusc.* V.100) to *Ep. VII* (326b) and *Fin.* II (92), of the first century BC. Aristoxenus' "wander (πλάνη)", in Fr. 64 (Wehrli) may be an allusion to *Ep. VII* (350d) and *XI* (358e). Given these early references, I wonder when and how the letter, *if* it was forged late by someone, came to be included in the *Platonic corpus*.

18 Even Burnyeat contrasts the *Seventh Letter* with *Antidosis* and suggests some intertextual relationship (Burnyeat; Frede, 2015, p. 140, 143, 148).

19 [Plutarch], *Lives of Ten Orators, Isocrates*, 838F; Photius, *Codex 260, Isocrates*, 487B; cf. Ober, 2004.

20 Hackforth, 1913, p. 84, suggests 353-352 BC; Nagasaka, 1975, p. 236-237, January of 352 BC.

21 Cf. Momigliano, 1993, p. 57: Xenophon's *Anabasis* is "a model both for its autobiographical character and for the effort to disguise it".

22 Cf. Sullivan, 2007, p. 9. See also, *Ep. VII*, 341a, 342a.

23 The earlier version of the paper was read at the 3rd International Conference on Classics: Texts, Thoughts, and the Self in the Ancient World, at the Department of Philosophy, Peking University, China, on 23 November, 2019. I thank Wu Tianyue for organizing the conference, and the participants, in particular Anna Marmodoro and Victor Caston, for their valuable comments. The section on Isocrates was revised and extended from my Japanese paper: Reconsidering the Platonic *Seventh Letter*: In the context of Fourth Century BC Epistolary Literature. *Journal of Classical Studies* 66, The Classical Society of Japan, 2018, p. 23-34.

Ἀνα τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον
The Divided Line and Allegory of the Cave Revisited

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ABSTRACT

Answering articles by Smith (*PJ* 18) and Matoso (*PJ* 22) about the Divided Line, I argue that the problems Smith raised and Matoso took himself to be solving don't exist in a proper reading of the analogy and the ensuing allegory of the cave in light of one another and stem from a misunderstanding of the expression ἀνα τὸν αὐτον λόγον at *Rep.* VI, 509d7: the λόγος to be used to split both segments is *not* the one used to split the line in the first place, and it is *not* a numerical ratio, but a logical rationale.

Keywords: Plato, Plato's Republic, Divided Line, Allegory of the Cave, Forms, Ideas

https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_23_6

In an article published in volume 22 (2021) of *Plato Journal*, Renato Matoso (2021) claims to provide a solution to a problem raised by Nicholas Smith (2018) in an earlier article published in volume 18 (2018) of *Plato Journal* about the Divided Line. The problem appears, according to Smith, when trying to make sense of what the respective lengths of the four subsegments of the line are supposed to illustrate while taking into account what Socrates says about the proportions between these subsegments, which, so he claims, change between book VI and book VII, causing him what he calls a "nightmare". In this article, I intend to show that the problem raised by Smith stems from a faulty understanding of the expression ἀνα τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον at 509d7, common to most if not all scholars, including Matoso, regarding the meaning of both αὐτὸν and λόγον, and that the conclusion drawn by Matoso from his argument to solve the non-existing problem raised by Smith, that "the mathematical property of the line that [Smith] considers troublesome [is] entailing one of the most important pieces of doctrine behind this passage. This is the idea that the world of sensible things holds a dependance upon the world of Forms in the same way the shadows and reflections depend on the things that are shadowed and reflected." (Matoso 2021, p. 26), is unwarranted by a proper reading of both the Divided Line and the Allegory of the Cave in light of one another, because the reason why Socrates chooses shadows and reflections as *examples* of what he calls "images" in introducing the bisection of the segment of the visible is not the fact that "shadows and reflections depend on their models for their existence in a manner that statues and paintings do not depend" (Matoso 2021, p. 23) but the fact that they are *natural*, as opposed to man-made, and *moving* images, preparing us to generalize to the fact that *all things* sight allows us to see, represented by the shadows in the Allegory of the Cave, are *images* formed in the eyes of what we see, be it an "original" or a shadow or reflection or a statue or painting.

Before addressing the problems posed by the expression ἀνα τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον, I will first provide an outline of my understanding of the Divided Line and Analogy of the Cave to serve as a needed background for my line of reasoning in this article.

THE ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE

The key to understanding the Allegory of the Cave lies in the four occurrences of the word ἄνθρωπος,[1] always in the plural (ἀνθρώπους, 514a3 and 514b8; ἀνθρώπων, 514b5 and 516a7), to which should be added the ἀνδριάντας of 514c1. According to what Socrates tells Alcibiades at *Alc.* 1, 130c5-6, that "ἡ ψυχή ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος", ἄνθρωπος in the allegory refers to the human soul, either as capable of learning and possibly knowing or as object of knowledge for those learning souls supposed to abide by the Delphic precept γνῶθι σαυτόν dear to Socrates. The learning souls are depicted by the prisoners (ἀνθρώπους, 514a3) presented as spectators of some sort of puppet show (the world) when Socrates likens the wall above which objects project shadows to "the fences put in front of men (ἀνθρώπων, 514b5) by wonderworkers, above which they display their wonderworks".[2] The souls as objects of knowledge are, within the cave but hidden by the wall, the "men (ἀνθρώπους, 514b8) carrying implements of all kinds rising above the wall and statues of men (ἀνδριάντας) and other living animals made of wood and stone and fashioned in all possible ways", invisible

to the learning souls inside the cave (souls are not visible to the eyes), and, outside the cave, the ἄνθρωποι (ἀνθρώπων, 516a7) whose shadows and reflections on waters the freed prisoner just out of the cave would first look at before being able to see them αὐτά (516a6-8). The bodies that these souls use as tools (σκεύη, 514c1) are depicted by the ἀνδριάνται listed among the objects that the aminating souls hidden by the wall raise above it, using a word, ἀνδριάς, the root of which, ἀνήρ, hints at the distinction of sexes, which is relevant only to material bodies, not to souls as such. A clear distinction between the learning souls and the souls as objects of possible knowledge is made by the verb used by Socrates in each case to refer to their ability to talk: for the prisoners, that is, the learning souls, he uses the verb διαλέγεσθαι (515b4), implying λόγος conveying meaning, whereas for the hidden souls as objects of possible knowledge, he uses the verb φθέγγεσθαι (φθεγγόμενους 515a2; φθέγξαιτο, 515b8; φθεγγόμενον, 515b9), the primary meaning of which is "utter a sound" and which can be used about human beings as well as animals and inanimate things, that is, a verb depicting speech as a mere physical phenomenon implying only sound.

If we relate this to the Divided Line, the cave corresponding to the segment of the visible, and the outside to the segment of the intelligible, we see that in both there are two stages, a first stage dealing with shadows and reflections, a second one dealing with their originals, but all relating to the same "objects", primarily ἄνθρωποι, only considered under different guises which shed light on the four παθήματα associated by Socrates with the four subsegments of the Line. Focusing on ἄνθρωποι, the shadows of the ἀνδριάνται inside the cave correspond to the visible *images* of their material bodies produced by sight in their eyes, object of εἰκασία, and this should make us understand that what Socrates had in mind in talking about images for the first segment of the visible was not limited to shadows and reflections in the usual sense, but was primarily meant to prepare us to understand that *all* that we see with our eyes, shadows, reflections, statues, paintings, as well as their originals, are (natural) *images* formed in the eyes of what we are looking at.[3] Regarding reflections, the allegory switches to a different kind of reflections, no longer in the visible register, but in the audible register with the echo (ἠχὼ, 515b7) of the sounds produced by some of the bearers behind the wall, that is, the physical manifestation of the λόγοι of these ἄνθρωποι, inviting us to generalize and understand that everything that we grasp with our senses is but an "image" of sorts of that from which it comes. The visible originals, objects of πίστις, are the material objects above the wall producing shadows on the wall of the cave, including, regarding ἄνθρωποι, the ἀνδριάνται, and what makes the difference between εἰκασία and πίστις is whether we have come to realize that *everything* we grasp through sight is but an *image* of what acts on our eyes (the πρᾶγμα causing the πάθημα), in which case we are at the level of πίστις,[4] or we "hold as the true nothing but the shadows of the implements" (515c1-2), that is, we think that things are exactly as we see them, in which case we are in εἰκασία. Outside the cave, everything that could be seen inside the cave, that is ἄνθρωποι and the rest (τῶν ἄλλων, 516a7), is replicated, but now as intelligible and no longer visible, and it can be grasped first through shadows and reflections, then directly.[5] Intelligible shadows and reflections, objects of διάνοια, refer to words and λόγοι, as the mention of the echo inside the cave has prepared us to understand, shadows being the words and λόγοι uttered

by the person whose "shadow" they are, and reflections being the words and λόγοι uttered or written by others about this person. In other words, words in the intelligible realm are the equivalent of images in the visible realm, in that words are not what they are supposed to name, but something standing for them.[6] And it is only at the level of νόησις that we can grasp the ἄνθρωποι and the rest "*themselves*" (αὐτά, 516a8), but on this, Socrates doesn't elaborate since elaborating could only be done with words, which means falling back at the level of διάνοια. Thus, moving from διάνοια to νόησις implies understanding "what λόγος itself can reach through the power of τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι" (511b4), that is, understanding how the λόγος can give us access to more than words, what it gives us access to and what are its power *and limits*.[7] This is the δεύτερον πλοῦν Socrates refers to in the *Phaedo* (*Phd*. 99d1) when he says that, for fear of being blinded by "looking πρὸς τὰ πράγματα with the eyes and each one of the senses trying to grasp them" (*Phd*. 99e3-4), he felt obliged, "taking refuge εἰς τοὺς λόγους, to examine in them the truth about beings" (*Phd*. 99e5-6), after having been deceived by Anaxagoras who, after stating that "νοῦς is what brings order and [is] cause/responsible of everything" (*Phd*. 96c1-2), was leaving no place for the good in his explanations, that is, had been unable, "going all the way to τὸ ἀνυπόθετον (that is, the idea of the good), toward the (leading) principle of the whole (ἡ τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχή), having grasped it, [to]deriv[e] in return from it all that can be derived" (*Rep* VI, 511b6-8).

ἌΝΙΣΑ

But, before going further about εἴδη/ἰδέαι, we must return to the cave and what's left to be seen outside, namely the heavens and the stars, the moon and the sun. This pictures in the allegory the ἰδέαι, which cannot be reached by the senses, not only the ἰδέαι of such abstract notions as "good", "just", "beautiful" and the like, but the ἰδέαι, as principles of intelligibility, of everything there is in the cave as accessible to sight and the other senses, which is replicated outside the cave as intelligible. In other words, it pictures "things" that can only be "seen" outside the cave. This means that the intelligible includes both an intelligible counterpart of all that's inside the cave (in the visible) *individually* (each one of the ἀνθρώπων mentioned at 516a7, each horse, each bed…) *and* "things" that can *only* be "seen" there, and thus, is "larger" than the visible. Accordingly, Socrates doesn't have to know what their respective size or the proportion between both are to ask Glaucon to divide the line into two *unequal* (ἄνισα) segments. This confirms once and for all the reading ἄνισα.

ΑΥΤΆ, ἸΔΈΑΙ, ΕἼΔΗ

If I used the word ἰδέαι and not the word εἴδη to characterize what the stars stand for in the allegory, it is because, in my opinion, these two words are not synonymous for Plato, at least in certain contexts, especially this one, and are not synonymous with αὐτό τὸ *** (the *** itself) or, in the plural, τὰ αὐτά. The best place to start an investigation of the meaning of these words is *Rep*. X, a6-7, the preamble to the discussion about the three (in fact four) sorts of beds:[8] "we are, methinks, in the habit of positing some εἶδος, unique in each case, for each of the many [things] upon which we impose the same name" (εἶδος γάρ πού τι ἓν ἕκαστον εἰώθαμεν τίθεσθαι περὶ ἕκαστα τὰ πολλά οἷς ταὐτὸν ὄνομα ἐπιφέρομεν). Socrates

introduces this as a starting point for an investigation of μίμησις for which the discussion about the various sorts of beds which follows immediately is only a prelude, calling it not "his", but "*the* usual manner of proceeding" (ἐκ τῆς εἰωθυίας μεθόδου, 596b5-6), and it can almost be seen as a "definition" of what he means by εἶδος, the first word of the sentence. An εἶδος is what we assume to be common to all things we call by the same name. But then, we must remember what Socrates says in the Allegory of the Cave about the chained prisoners: "now, if they were able to διαλέγεσθαι with one another, don't you think that, the same [things] being around [again], they would take the habit of giving names to those [things] they see?" (εἰ οὖν διαλέγεσθαι οἷοί τ' εἶεν πρὸς ἀλλήλους, οὐ ταὐτὰ ἡγῇ ἂν τὰ παρόντα αὐτοὺς νομίζειν ὀνομάζειν ἅπερ ὁρῷεν, 515b4-5, reading of manuscript A).[9] In other words, some names are given by chained prisoners based only on what they deem common to a plurality of *shadows*, that is, based only on *visual* resemblances in the outer appearance of what they name.[10] And this is no surprise if indeed, as ἄνθρωποι, they are able to διαλέγεσθαι, since they need words to do it. But then, should εἶδος be understood here in its usual, not supposedly "technical",[11] meaning? That would be strange in an introduction to a discussion dealing with εἴδη and ἰδέαι of tables and beds where these words seem to be used in what scholars would consider a "technical" sense, even though some of them have a hard time accepting an εἶδος or ἰδέα of table or bed in that "technical" sense. Besides, in the Divided Line, Socrates uses successively within a few lines the words ὁρωμένοις εἴδεσι (510d5) and νοητὸν εἶδος (511a3), suggesting that he is talking about two kinds of *the same thing*. Some light might be shed on these two kinds of εἴδη by the choice of examples made by Socrates in the ensuing discussion: at first, at 596b1, he mentions two types of furniture, κλῖναι (beds) and τράπεζαι (tables), and he associates what he now calls a unique ἰδέα rather than εἶδος with each type, one for tables and one for beds (596b3-4), which the maker of such objects looks at, though he is not their maker (meaning it is not the blueprint he or someone else has made in advance to guide his work), when making either a table or a bed (596b6-9); but then, he abandons tables and keeps only beds for the rest of the discussion. Now, if we notice that τράπεζα means etymologically "having four feet/legs" while κλίνη is derived from the verb κλίνειν, meaning "make (someone) to lie down" and in the passive "lie down", we realize that τράπεζα suggests *visual* features of what it names, while κλίνη suggests what the *function* of what it names is.[12] Now, the ἰδέα the maker is looking at to design an item of furniture (or whatever he intends to make), if he truly is a maker and not simply a copier or a subordinate working from blueprints drawn by someone else, is not something which only suggests its external appearance and says nothing of its intended purpose, but something which tells him what the thing is supposed to be used for, what its ἀρετή ("goodness/excellence/perfection") is, thus making him able to make beds (or whatever) resembling none of those he has seen so far and yet usable as beds. Thus, κλίνη (bed) is a better pick than τράπεζα (table) to make the point about ἰδέαι since the ἰδέα associated with κλίνη is almost built into the word, which is not the case with τράπεζα (a bed too may have four legs).

Following these leads, I suggest that Plato specialized the word ἰδέα, whose usual meanings are very close to those of εἶδος, to refer to a kind of εἴδη (in the sense of *Rep.* X, a6-7) exclusively based on criteria of intelligibility.[13]

Thus, ἰδέαι in that sense are a subset of εἴδη, what Socrates calls νοητά εἴδη in the analogy of the line at 511a3. And if Socrates doesn't call them ἰδέαι right away, it is because he is more concerned at this point with stressing the *continuity of meaning* from the sensible to the intelligible than with highlighting the difference, which is sufficiently outlined by the contrast between ὁρώμενα and νοητά εἴδη and wouldn't appear if he changed words at once from the one to the other. Yet neither the εἶδος nor the ἰδέα is the *** itself (αὐτό τὸ ***): they are what an ἄνθρωπος can grasp from the world around with one's senses and νοῦς, with their built-in limits and the specific limits they further have in each individual and thus, there is no way we can know for sure that we grasp them as they are: if ἄνθρωποι had no sense of smell, they couldn't know that flowers and other things have a distinctive smell![14] But this doesn't mean that they are totally subjective since they are determined by the objectivity of what acts (πράττειν) upon them, the πράγματα, so that there is on the one hand objective εἴδη and ἰδέαι, which depend only on the πρᾶγμα and the power of the specific human sense or νοῦς designed to grasp it supposed at its best, and on the other hand, subjective εἴδη and ἰδέαι, which are what a specific individual at a given time of one's life can grasp from these objective εἴδη and ἰδέαι based upon the specific limitations of one's senses (for instance being color-blind or myope in the case of sight, or being hard on hearing in the case of hearing) and intelligence (νοῦς). These "subjective" εἴδη/ἰδέαι are all that is available to us as individuals different from one another in the quality of their senses and intelligence. They evolve all through our life from the exclusively visual/sensible εἶδος we associated with each word we learned as young children learning to talk toward ἰδέαι devoid of sensible references as we grow and better understand the world around us. The "objective" ἰδέαι are the upper limit of what we can grasp as embodied souls. It is precisely the fact that knowledge is the result of a *process* taking place all through life, which is used by the Stranger from Elea in the *Sophist* to counter the Friends of εἴδη. Indeed, he shows them that, if they grant οὐσία only to "some intelligible (νοητά) and incorporeal εἴδη" (*Sph*. 246b7-8), refusing them "the ability to be affected (πάσχειν) and act (ποιεῖν)" (*Sph*. 248c7-9), they are throwing the baby with the bathwater by making knowledge of οὐσίαι impossible. Indeed, "if to get to know (γιγνώσκειν) is some sort of acting (ποιεῖν), the [fact of] being known (τὸ γιγνωσκόμενον) necessarily on the contrary turns out as being affected (πάσχειν), so that the οὐσία, according to this λόγος, being known (γιγνωσκομένην) through the investigation leading to knowledge (ὑπὸ τῆς γνώσεως), to the extent it is known (γιγνώσκεται), to this extent is moved (κινεῖσθαι) by the fact of being affected (διὰ τὸ πάσχειν), which we say cannot occur along with the [fact of] staying put (τὸ ἠρεμοῦν)" (*Sph*. 248d10-e5).

This means that, as I said earlier, there is continuity of meaning for εἶδος from the visible to the intelligible. The key difference in meaning is between an individual meaning (its primary sense) and a derived *collective* meaning, *not* between a meaning or range of meanings both individual and collective restricted to the visible/sensible and another dedicated to the intelligible. In the individual meaning, εἶδος refers to the outward appearance of some *unique* thing or person, a meaning in which, as we have seen, it comes close to that of εἰκών once we have understood that sight only grasps *images* of what is seen (the shadows in the cave). In the derived *collective* meaning,

it refers to what is common to a plurality of things sharing a similar visual/sensible appearance or, by generalization, having something, sensible or intelligible, in common, hence the meanings of "form, sort, kind, class, species". In the meaning supposedly dedicated to the intelligible (the "technical" meaning it takes in the so-called "theory of Forms"), it would end up meaning the exact opposite of what it originally means in the visible/sensible realm: what is the ultimate unchanging "reality" as opposed to what is a mere appearance, something having no more consistency than shadows and reflections.

In this perspective, it is worth looking more closely at *Rep.* X, a6-7. An εἶδος is associated with a name and refers to something common to the πάντα to which this name applies. Socrates doesn't say what is common to them all, if that's purely sensible features or intelligible ones or a mix of both, but we know from the Cave that names given by the prisoners can only be based on features of the shadows, that is, on the visible/sensible appearance of what the name applies to. He doesn't even say that the εἶδος is assigned to the name by the initial creator of the name alone. In fact, the "we" of "we are in the habit of positing some εἶδος" (εἰώθαμεν τίθεσθαι…) suggests the opposite, that all of us are doing this for all the names we are using. And indeed, this is the case since it is the unconscious process through which we are making sense of the words we use from the time in early childhood when we learn to speak[15] on, starting, as chained prisoners inside the cave, with εἴδη relying exclusively on the visible/sensible appearance of that to which the name applies (the primary meaning of εἶδος), and enriching and correcting these εἴδη as we grow and move toward the outside of the cave and the light of the sun, until they become, outside the cave, ἰδέαι giving us access to the intelligibility of what we are talking about, even if the names don't change through this process. And in this process of carving (διατέμνειν, *Phdr.* 265e1) εἴδη from the mass of what we perceive through the senses and mind, especially in the early stages, we may behave like the bad butchers Socrates alludes to at *Phdr.* 265d3-e3, who don't do it "along the natural joints" (κατ' ἄρθρα ᾗ πέφυκεν), as might be for instance the case with a young child using the word "dog" for both dogs, wolves and coyotes before learning the difference among them because they are so close from one another in outward appearance.[16] It is only through the complementary "synthetic" process (συνορῶντα, *Phdr.* 265d3) of bringing together scattered particulars under what can only be an ἰδέα if it is to give us the intelligence of them that we might eventually correct the bad carving with which we started.[17]

A confirmation of the subjective character of this carving of εἴδη is found in the verb used by Socrates, τιθέναι, which implies not the discovery by some smart name creator of transcendent unmovable external "beings" which require to be named in a process devoid of errors, but a willful action on the part of the one assigning an εἶδος of one's own making to a name (preexisting in most cases), further stressed by the use of the middle form τίθεσθαι.

But, once again, this "subjective" character of εἴδη and ἰδέαι for each one of us doesn't mean that Protagoras is right when stating that things are for each one as one "sees" them, because, for Plato's Socrates, they are produced by the αὐτά acting upon us through senses and mind, but fully "visible" only by the gods in the ὑπερουράνιον τόπον (*Phdr.* 247c3) he describes in the myth of the winged chariot at *Phdr.* 246d6-249c1, which means that they

are not perceived in a completely different manner from the one to the other[18] and are "regulated" by the πράγματα at the origin of the παθήμάτα they impose upon us.

In fact, what Socrates hints at in this description of the role of εἴδη is a process which is at the root of λόγος, the ability of the human mind (νοῦς) to selectively recognize resemblance ("same") and difference ("other") in what it grasps by senses or by itself, in a recursive process in which sensible resemblances lead to εἴδη which may in turn be subjected to the same process of finding resemblances and differences between them recursively (for instance, red, blue, green, yellow… being recognized as colors, or horse, cow, dog, cat… being recognized as animals, or as mammals which along with fish, birds, insects…, are recognized as animals). And this process is selective in more than one sense: not only does it select what it considers as *one* element to be isolated from the rest, but it also selects which criteria are to be taken into account to evaluate relevant resemblances and differences and is capable, from the *same* such element to isolate simultaneously multiple "components" leading to different εἴδη, for instance, from a single sequence of sounds when hearing an opera aria, to distinguish melody, lyrics, rhythm, performer, individual instruments or groups of instruments, each one with its own melodic line, and so on. It is this process and the importance of the role the notions of "same" (ταὐτόν) and "other" (θάτερον) play in it that Plato has in mind when he makes them part of the μέγιστα γένη, which the Stranger from Elea uses along with ὄν, κίνησις and στασίς in the *Sophist* (*Sph*. 254b8, ssq.) to demonstrate that not all combinations of words/εἴδη are acceptable, thus opening the door to ψευδής λόγος.[19] And it is that same process which he has in mind when he has Timaeus describe in his likely myth the manufacture of the human soul by the δημίουργός from, among other components, "same" (ταὐτόν) and "other" (θάτερον) (*Ti*. 35a1-b4; 41d4-8).

And the first thing that should be noticed regarding this process of carving εἴδη and associating them with names by identifying resemblances and differences is that what is *always* ignored is position in space and time: resemblances and differences are either between perceptions coming from different places at the same time or from the same place at different times, or from different places at different times, or between εἴδη that are already devoid of references to space and time and, to recognize them, position in space and time must be ignored. Thus, it is *by construction* that εἴδη and ἰδέαι are "outside" space and time. Not eternal, which still implies time everlasting in the mind of most people, but *outside* space and time, which simply means that location in space and time have no place in them, are irrelevant to what they are. When Socrates says a god is the maker of "what is bed" (ὃ ἔστιν κλίνη, *Rep*. X, 597c9), what he means is that the ἰδέα/notion of "bed" is implied in his making of ἄνθρωποι needing rest regularly in a lying position on some roughly horizontal surface proportionate to one's size and having smooth enough a texture to allow them to fall asleep. In other words, the demiurge doesn't make a bed independent of everything else as would a human bed-maker, but makes a whole in which the ἰδέα /notion of bed finds its logical place in relation with other parts of this creation which give it intelligibility, independent of the fact that actual human beings have already appeared in this creation at that time and have come up with the idea of manufacturing actual beds for their use rather than resting on the ground, and have decided to give these artefacts the

name "κλίνη", or "κοίτη", or "εὐνή", or "*cubile*", or "bed", or "couch", or "*lit*", or "*couche*", or "*cama*", or "*bett*", or "*letto*", or some other name still.

THE HEAVENS AND STARS

With this in mind, we may return to the last steps outside the cave, the sight of heavens and stars which represent ἰδέαι. Only two stars are identified by name: the sun, which, by Socrates own "decoding" of the allegory, pictures the idea of the good (ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα, 517b8-c1), and the moon. Noticing that the only kind of beings mentioned by name in the first part of the progression of the freed prisoner outside the cave, when he is only faced with the intelligible counterpart of what is inside the cave, are ἄνθρωποι (ἀνθρώπων, 516a7), considered first through their shadows and reflections, next in themselves, we may make the assumption that the moon stands for the idea of Ἄνθρωπος, which indeed should be the one occupying the largest place in our thoughts if we abide by the γνῶθι σαυτόν, as does the moon in heaven at night. But this is only guess-work and there is much more to be learned from the image of the heavens and stars picturing ἰδέαι. One is that, aside from the sun and the moon, all stars look alike, as tiny dots of light, in much the same way as ἰδέαι, when we envision them one at a time, independently from one another, end up being nothing at all: if we are trying to figure out what the ἰδέα of square is independently of the ἰδέαι of "figure", "side", "angle" "surface", "plane" and the like, since an ἰδέα is nowhere in space and has no specific dimensions or color, there is nothing left for us to think about and we are left with only a name, which tells us nothing by itself about what it names. And there is no difference in this respect between the ἰδέα of square and the ἰδέα of circle, or that of horse or of dog or you name it, except for the name, which is different by our own choice. In much the same way we cannot recognize a star while ignoring all the other stars, but can only recognize it through its position relative to other stars grouped in constellations, we can only understand ἰδέαι (and the words they are associated with) through the *relations* they entertain with other ἰδέαι (and words), which indicates that names taken individually teach us nothing or next to nothing (in the case of derived words like φιλό-σοφος) about what they name and start producing meaning only when assembled together in "constellations" called λόγοι, abiding by certain rules imposed by the πράγματα they purport to describe. This is the reason why, in the allegory, Socrates is careful to mention not only the stars, but also the heavens, that is, the whole of which stars are parts. But in most cases, due to the innumerable number of stars in the heavens and the fact that most of them don't shine brightly, locating one star by simply mapping its position relative to two or three neighbor stars as difficult to precisely identify as the one we are trying to locate is not enough and we need to map more precisely its whole environment to locate it with precision This is what Socrates does in the so-called "aporetic" dialogues, where he is not looking for an Aristotelean "definition" replacing one word by a few words as problematic as the one being defined, but exploring neighbor ἰδέαι through multiple examples to better understand the boundaries (the original meaning of ὅρος, the word also meaning "definition") between them. This is why it is a mistake to think that those dialogues fail. What Socrates is after is not words but a clearer mental representation of the ἰδέα in discussion and, from this standpoint, they

are all successful, even if this representation remains fuzzy in certain corners.

In the allegory, stars produce reflections (explicitly mentioned about the sun at 516b5) but no shadows. It is because they don't talk and can only be talked about: these reflections are the λόγοι produced by cities and individuals about them (for instance the λόγοι produced by a city about the good, or the just, or man), which can be reproduced by citizens who don't understand them and stay at the level of διάνοια, thinking that words alone make us know what they designate.

ΑΥΤΟΝ

We may now return to the expression ἀνα τὸν αὐτον λόγον at 509d7. What scholars seem not to have seen is that αὐτον ("the same") can be understood in two ways: it may mean either (1) "along the same λόγον as the one used to split the line into two segments" or (2) "both along the same λόγον but not necessarily the one used to split the line". If (1) implies (2), the reverse is not true. And it is important to notice that the proportions that Socrates states at *Rep.* VII, 534a4-5, that what νόησις, here associated with the segment of the intelligible (I) is to δόξα, here associated with the segment of the visible (V), ἐπιστήμη (I2) is to πίστις (V2) and διάνοια (I1) to εἰκασία (V1),[20] that is, $\frac{I}{V} = \frac{I2}{V2} = \frac{I1}{V1}$, which gives nightmares to Smith, is true in both (1) and (2) no matter what the ratio used to split both I and V is, so long as it is the same! Indeed, let *r* be the ratio used to split both I and V in two. By hypothesis, I2 = r.I1 (r is the ratio used to split I) and I2 + I1 = I (the two subsegments add up to I) on the one hand, V2 = r.V1 (r is also the ratio used to split V) and V2 + V1 = V (the two subsegments add up to V) on the other hand. Now, I2 + I1 = I leads to I1 = I – I2 and, replacing I1 in I2 = r.I1 by I – I2, we get:

I2 = r.(I - I2) = r.I - r.I2, hence
I2 + r.I2 = (1 + r).I2= r.I, thus
$I2 = \frac{r}{1+r} I$.

The same reasoning on V2 relative to V leads to:

$V2 = \frac{r}{1+r} V$, hence

$\frac{I2}{V2} = \frac{\frac{r}{1+r} I}{\frac{r}{1+r} V} = \frac{I}{V}$.

A similar reasoning to express now I1 in proportion of I and V1 in proportion of V leads to

$I1 = \frac{I}{r+1}$ and $V1 = \frac{V}{r+1}$ hence

$\frac{I1}{V1} = \frac{I}{V}$.

Most, if not all, scholars understand the expression in sense (1), as does Smith when he writes on page 102 of his paper

I1 + I2/V1 + V2 = I2/I1 = V2/V1,

but now that we know that Socrates doesn't know what the numerical ratio between V and I is, but only that I must be larger than V since everything sensible in V is replicated as intelligible in I, which also includes ἰδέαι found only there, there is no reason to assume that the two segments have to be split ἀνα τὸν αὐτον λόγον *as the* λόγον *used to split the line*. Hence, ἀνα τὸν αὐτον λόγον must be understood in sense (2): the same λόγον must be used to split both segments, but it is not the one used to split the line. Hence, we are left with two sets of equalities:

(1) $\frac{I2}{I1} = \frac{V2}{V1}$ ($\neq \frac{I1+I2}{V1+V2}$)

(2) $\frac{I1+I2}{V1+V2} = \frac{I}{V} = \frac{I2}{V2} = \frac{I1}{V1}$

and Smith is wrong when he writes "Plato has interchanged the place of I1 and V2 in the proportions given" and everything he deduces from this falls apart, ending his "nightmare".[21]

ΛΟΓΟΝ

But then, what is this λόγον? The second mistake which must be avoided here is to think that, since the analogy uses a geometrical guise, λόγον must be understood as meaning "numerical ratio". In fact, this geometrical guise is a trick to give the analogy a scientific touch, but λόγον must be understood as meaning "logical rationale". The "logical rationale" used to split the line into two unequal segments in the first place, no matter in what proportion, has been given in the previous section, and the "logical rationale" to be used to split each segment in two is given early in the analogy, at 510a9-10: it is the relation between what is made similar (τὸ ὁμοιωθὲν) and what it is made similar to (τὸ ᾧ ὁμοιώθη), in other words, the relation between an image/resemblance (in a broad sense) and its original. And indeed, we have seen that in the visible, the split is between the images produced by sight (and the other senses) and what they are images of, and in the intelligible, between words, considered as a kind of "image" of what they name, and what they pretend to represent. And this has nothing to do with the logical rationale which presided over the splitting of the line, the one justifying Socrates' "ἄνισα" as explained above.

And when Socrates tells us that the split "will be according to the σαφήνεια καὶ ἀσάφεια of the ones with regard to the others" (509d9) and that "it's divided with regard to ἀλήθεια τε καὶ μή" (510a8-9), another source of Smith's concerns when he tries to "measure" theses and comes to the conclusion that "Plato seems to be somewhat less than clear in telling us precisely what truth and clarity are supposed to measure", he doesn't mean that we should come up with some "unit" of measurement for σαφήνεια (whatever exact meaning we give to this word) or truth that we could then use to measure the amount of σαφήνεια and/or truth of each "thing" we want to ascribe to one or the other of the four subsegments, since this would imply that all four subsegments are populated with different "things" and that a "thing" can only be in one subsegment, whereas we have seen that the same "things" are found (under different guises) in either the four subsegment (all the visible/sensible) or two of them (the ἰδέαι, found only in the two subsegments of the intelligible). What he means is that, *for any single "thing" that we consider*, the "view" we have of it gets clearer and clearer, or more and more distinct, and closer to the truth as we proceed from subsegment to subsegment, starting, for visible/sensible "things" with εἰκασία all the way to νόησις/ἐπιστήμη and getting help, once outside, from the ἰδέαι they relate to: we have a very limited understanding of an ἄνθρωπος when all we know of him/her is his/her visual appearance (the shadow inside the cave in the allegory, the stage of εἰκασία in the Line) ; we get a better understanding once we realize an ἄνθρωπος is more than his/her visual appearance and we take into account the whole of his/her material bodily nature (the ἀνδριάντας of the Cave; the stage of πίστις in the Line); we get a still clearer and more complete "view" of him/her when we take into account what he/she says and what others say about him/her (shadows and reflections outside the cave; the stage of διάνοια in the Line); and we get still closer to the truth about him/her if we can "see" his/her soul itself (the ἄνθρωποι

outside the cave; the stage of ἐπιστήμη in the Line); and all that progress, once outside the cave, can be helped by the "sight" of ἡ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἰδέα, either through its reflection in the words of other ἄνθρωποι (the stage of διάνοια for this idea) or, closer to the truth and clearer, directly as the moon (or some star) in heaven (the stage of ἐπιστήμη for this idea). When read this way, none of the problems raised by Smith about "Plato's proportions" exist since he is not interested in "proportions" in the mathematical sense. Taking two subsegments at a time simply means that we have moved from one to the next and *added* the extra information grasped in the second one on top of what we had grasped in the first one, which doesn't disappear because we have moved upward, but can be better understood in light of what we grasp in the second one and put at its proper place (the shadows look dimmer once we have looked at the ἀνδριάντες in the light of the fire, and the ἀνδριάντες dimmer once we have seen the ἄνθρωποι or even only their shadows and reflections outside). So, yes, V1 + V2 is indeed clearer and also truer than either V1 or V2 *with regard to any given "object"* which can be grasped in all four segments (that is, all the visible), but not because of "the specificities of the kinds of images that Plato uses to populate V1", as Matoso claims, not because "the objects of V2 are direct cause of the objects of V1", which implies that there are different objects in V1 and V2, but because V1 and V2 (and I1 and I2) are different *and complementary* ways of grasping *the same objects*.

ἌΝΘΡΩΠΟΙ

Regarding Matoso's claim that "the world of sensible things holds a dependance upon the world of Forms in the same way the shadows and reflections depend on the things that are shadowed and reflected", the problem is that, with this reading of the Line and Cave, we don't know which question he claims to answer. Indeed, reformulated in the terms of the Allegory of the Cave, there are three questions his claim might seem to answer: (1) Are the ἀνδριάντες(-bodies of ἄνθρωποι) an image of the ἄνθρωποι(-souls), invisible inside the cave but visible outside ? (2) Are they an image of sorts of the moon or some star(-ἰδέα of ἄνθρωπος) ? (3) Are the ἄνθρωποι(-souls) "visible" only outside the cave, that is, in the intelligible realm, directly or through shadows or reflections, an image of sorts of the moon or some star(-ἰδέα of ἄνθρωπος) ? Which leads to a fourth question: (4) In what sense can shadows and reflections of ἄνθρωποι(-souls) outside the cave, that is, if I am not mistaken in my interpretation, λόγοι, be said to be "images" of ἄνθρωποι(-souls)? Tackling these questions would lead us beyond the limits imposed on such a paper, but as a first step through an example toward answering the fourth one, I suggest tackling the following question: are Plato's dialogues a faithful reflection (in the sense of φαντάσματα at 510a1 and εἴδωλα at 516a7)[22] of Socrates' soul or a shadow of Plato's soul, or both?

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ENDNOTES

1 I prefer not to translate controversial words such as ἄνθρωπος, λόγος, εἶδος, ἰδέα, διάνοια…and let their meaning(s) come out of the argument.

2 All translations of Plato are mine.

3 If Plato doesn't use the word εικών in the physical explanation of sight at *Ti.* 45c2-d3, it is because he soon after (46a2-c6) proposes an explanation of visible images as opposed to originals so that using the same word in both cases would have been confusing. But its explanation implies something which materializes at the level of the eyes, different from what causes it but having some likeness/resemblance (ὁμοιότητα, *Ti.* 45c7) with it.

4 Πίστις, that is, "trust/confidence", indicates that, though we have come to realize that our senses only give us an "image" of the world around, we deem these images good enough for us to trust them in everyday life to find our way in this world without bumping into walls or falling into pits.

5 That it is indeed *everything* seen in the cave which can also be found outside the cave, in the intelligible, is confirmed in the recall of the allegory at VII, 532a1-d1, first at 532a3, where ζῷα replaces ἄνθρωποι, then at 532b9, where φυτὰ are added to ζῷα. And the discussion about the three sorts of beds at the beginning of book X confirms that there are also εἴδη/ἰδέαι of such σκεύη as tables and beds, implying they are also intelligible individually.

6 In the *Cratylus*, the word εικών is used 19 times by Socrates to refer to the relation between a word and what it designates.

7 The important part in διάνοια is the prefix διά, which disappears with νόησις: in διάνοια, we wander through (διά) thought and λόγοι without the compass of the idea of the good, without which no true knowledge and understanding are possible.

8 It is quite easy to relate each of the three kinds of bed to one of the four segments of the line: the bed itself, unique and work of a god relates to the segment associated with νόησις; the beds manufactured by bed-manufacturers relate to the segment associated with πίστις, and they are part of the σκεύη (514c1) raised above the wall and projecting shadows on the wall of the cave; the images of beds painted by a painter relate to the segment associated with εἰκασία. The problem most scholars see there is that, if such a parallel were intended by Plato, one sort of beds is missing, the one to be associated with the segment associated with διάνοια. But if Socrates doesn't list it, it is there all along in plain view for us to find by ourselves: it is the *word* "κλίνη"!

9 A justification of my choice of this reading can be found in Appendix 4.1, pp. 178-182 of my *Plato (the Philosopher): User's Guide* at https://plato-dialogues.org/pdf/Plato_user_s_guide.pdf.

10 To be exact, the names given by the chained prisoners may not be "based *only* on *visual* resemblances": Socrates' next line deals with sounds and their association with shadows by the prisoners. So, differentiating voices and other sounds (of animals, for instance) may participate in the distinction of εἴδη leading to choices of names. And by generalization, data from all the other senses (touch, smell and taste) may participate in these distinctions for the chained prisoners, who, even chained, can make use of all their senses.

11 By « technical », I mean the meaning it's supposed to have in the so-called "Theory of Forms" attributed to Plato by scholars, whatever that may be, roughly speaking, what would constitute the everlasting "reality" as opposed to the world of becoming, of which its constituents only "partake".

12 To preserve this feature in a translation into English, one might replace "table" by "tripod" and "bed" by "seat".

13 Specializing ἰδέα rather than εἶδος was easier for him since ἰδέα was more recent and less frequent: in the Greek texts available at Perseus, there are 313 occurrences of ἰδέα overall, none in Homer, 1 in Pindar, 55 in authors prior to or contemporary with Plato, 97 in Plato's dialogues and 136 in the works of Aristotle available at Perseus, which are far from including all his works, while there are 1044 occurrences of εἶδος overall, 42 in Homer, 6 in Hesiod, 121 in authors prior to or contemporary with Plato, 413 in Plato' dialogues and 659 in the works of Aristotle available at Perseus. One indication that the specialization works this way is that Plato uses the expression ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα, never τὸ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ εἶδος.

14 We know nowadays that human eyes react only to a subset of "light" frequencies and the human ears only to a subset of "sound" frequencies.

15 This is the process Socrates pictures in the *Theaetetus* with the image of the aviary (*Tht.* 197c1-200d4), which fails only because Socrates assumes (deliberately in my opinion to put Theatetus, and the reader, to the test) birds to stand for items of knowledge (ἐπιστήμας, 197e3), but would have worked perfectly well had he assumed they stand for *words*, which don't imply perfect unchanging knowledge of what they designate from the start on, but only their

association with evolving "subjective" εἴδη that may be ill carved at first.

16 The Stranger from Elea uses this resemblance between wolf and dog at *Sph*. 231a6 when trying to characterize the sophist as a practitioner of the art of διακριτική and reluctantly ascribing him a method resembling like a wolf a dog that of Socrates.

17 This explains why Socrates, in the quoted section of the *Phaedrus*, speaks of εἴδη for division and of ἰδέα for synthesis in a manner consistent with the distinction in meaning I suggest Plato makes between these two words.

18 This is what Socrates means when he says in his opening remarks to Calliclès in the *Gorgias*: "if something of what human beings feel (πάθος), different for the ones, different for the others, was not the same, but one of us felt (ἔπασχεν πάθος) something peculiar to himself different from the others, it would not be easy [for him] to make plain to others his own feeling (πάθημα)" (*Grg*. 481c5-d1).

19 This "demonstration" is grounded in the fact anticipated by the Stranger from Elea that nobody, whether a son of the earth or a friend of εἴδη, no matter what meaning one gives to the words "movement" (κίνησις) and "rest" (στασίς) and whether one considers them to be φύσεις, γένη (words favored by sons of the earth), εἴδη, ἰδέαι (words favored by friends of εἴδη), οὐσίαι or some other name still, will accept as true the sentence "movement is the same as rest", but only the sentence "movement is other than rest". And if he uses these words interchangeably there, it is not because they are synonyms for him but because the name one gives to what they refer to in this discussion is irrelevant to the demonstration.

20 For ease of comparison, I use the same notations as Smith.

21 Regarding the replacement of νόησις by ἐπιστήμη at 533e8 as the name of one of the four παθήματα, the reuse of νόησις at 534a2 to designate διάνοια and what is now called ἐπιστήμη taken together and the introduction of δόξα at 534a2 to designate πίστις and εἰκασία taken together, it's a trick of Plato to make sure that we are not prisoners of words but can grasp the ἰδέαι behind the words: in the Divided Line, he has introduced notions, especially the four παθήματα, which were new but he had to use existing words to talk about them. This is the reason why he keeps the four names for the end and gives them all at once, inviting us to adapt their usual meaning in the light of what has been said earlier and in relation to one another. But when he returns to the divided line, he deliberately changes some names to make sure that we follow and are not prisoners of *words*. And he does this with the name of the πάθημα corresponding to the stage where we can see τὰ αὐτά behind the words!

22 Another trick of Plato with words: he changes the word meaning "reflection", but the use of ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι in both cases makes perfectly clear that he is talking about the exact same thing.

"Meddling in the work of another": πολυπραγμονεῖν in Plato's *Republic*

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ABSTRACT

The second conjunct of the *Republic's* account of justice—that justice is "not meddling in the work of another"—has been neglected in Plato literature. This paper argues that the conjunct does more work than merely reiterating the content of the first conjunct—that justice is "doing one's own work." I argue that Socrates develops the concept at work in this conjunct from its introduction with the Principle of Specialization in Book II to its final deployment in the finished conception of justice in Book IV. Crucial to that concept's development is the way in which the notion of "another" comes to refer to members of distinct classes or parts, i.e. takes on an *inter*-part connotation beyond a mere *intra*-part connotation. The first conjunct—that justice is "doing one's own work"—does not connote the same divisions, and so the conjuncts should not be understood as equivalent or mutually entailed.

Keywords: Plato; justice; ancient ethics; virtue; meddling; Principle of Specialization

https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_23_7

1. TWO CONJUNCTS

In Plato's *Republic,* Socrates has the objective of formulating a conception of justice and defending the just life as always being better, i.e. happier, than the unjust life (2.358b–c). He articulates his conception of justice variously in the following ways:

> [T1] "We've heard many people say and have often said ourselves that justice (δικαιοσύνη ἐστί) is doing one's own work (τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν) and not meddling with what isn't one's own (μὴ πολυπραγμονεῖν)." (4.433a)[1]
> [T2] "Then, it turns out that this doing one's own work (τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν)—provided that it comes to be in a certain way— appears to be justice (κινδυνεύει […] ἡ δικαιοσύνη εἶναι)." (4.433b)[2]
> [T3] "Is it (the thing that will make the city good by its presence), above all, the fact that every child, woman, slave, freeman, craftsman, ruler, and ruled each does his own work (ἔπραττε) and doesn't meddle with what is other people's (οὐκ ἐπολυπραγμόνει)?" (4.433d)
> [T4] "Exchange and meddling is injustice. Or to put it the other way around: For the money-making, auxiliary, and guardian classes each to do its own work (τὸ αὑτοῦ πράττοντος) in the city, is the opposite. That's justice, isn't it, and makes the city just?" (4.434c)
> [T5] "One who is just does not allow any part of himself to do the work of another part (μὴ ἐάσαντα τἀλλότρια πράττειν) or allow the various classes within him to meddle with each other (μηδὲ πολυπραγμονεῖν)." (4.443d)

The variations here are curious. Though all are ostensibly, per Socrates' choice of words, specifications of what justice is, they feature varying combinations and omissions of two distinct conjuncts, *a* and *b*—let *a* be the claim that justice is "doing one's own work" and let *b* be the claim that justice is "not meddling with what isn't one's own." We see that T1 and T3 refer to justice with both *a* and *b*. But T2, T4, and T5 make reference to only one of *a* or *b*. We should wonder, then, what work is being done by conjunct *a* in the formulation provided at T1 and T3 if *a* is not called upon to do any work in T5, and, likewise, what work is being done by conjunct *b* if it is left out of T2 and T4. Deciding these questions is no trivial matter. Justice—the answer to the *Republic*'s τί ἐστι question—hangs in the balance.[3] What role does each of these conjuncts play in the *Republic*'s ultimate account of justice? [4]

The vast literature on the *Republic* is quiet on this issue of what separate work may be done by *a* and *b*. General consensus seems to be that conjunct *a*—'doing one's own work'—exhaustively accounts for Socrates' working definition of justice. We see this consensus not in any explicit statement, but in the way that Plato scholars regularly omit—without comment—the second conjunct. Bernard Williams states that the "λόγος" of justice is captured in the formula "each of the elements (λογιστικόν, θυμοειδές, and ἐπιθυμητικόν) does its job" (1973, p. 257). Nicholas Smith argues to the conclusion that "the having of one's own is justice and the doing of one's own is justice" (1979, p. 381). Nicholas White says, "[Socrates] is asking us to accept [the word justice] as an appropriate one to attach to the notion that he has developed, of the performance of its own task by each of the classes in the city" (1979, p. 119). Rachana Kamtekar lays out the account of justice in the following way: "When Socrates

says that an individual is just in the same way in which a city is just—namely, when each part of *him* (or his soul) does its own work—he invokes the account of what it is for each part of the soul to do its own work, and this involves the rational part ruling with knowledge of what is good for the whole" (2001, p. 4). The list goes on and on.[5]

Julia Annas does acknowledge the second conjunct. In the course of pointing out that Plato's notion of justice appears, at first glance anyway, to be made redundant by all the work done by the other virtues, Annas says, "Justice, after all, requires no new range of actions other than what is required by the other virtues, only a refraining from certain things" (1981, p. 119). The "refraining from certain things" is a bit understated. The word "certain" might be taken to imply that the rule applies across only a limited range of "things," but we should be mindful that the wording of conjunct *b* forbids engagement in an extensive list of activities, exhaustively accounting for every activity that registers as belonging to "another." Nevertheless, Annas might have alit upon the unique work of the second conjunct: It could be that conjunct *b* is what enables the notion of justice to count as a unique aspect of the city and the soul's goodness. But this is dismissed by Annas as an overly negative way of conceiving of justice, and she emphasizes that Plato appears to think of justice as consisting in nothing over and above what is already achieved through the other three virtues (1981, p. 119, 132). Effectively, we should not construe justice's contribution according to its negative conjunct because its positive conjunct already makes a significant contribution. From here, Annas consistently specifies justice according to conjunct *a*: "Why, however, should doing one's own have anything to do with *justice*?" (1981, p. 119); "the 'doing one's own' principle" (p. 120, 122); "the 'doing one's own' formula" (p. 121); "the person is just because of the fact that each of his or her parts is functioning properly and 'doing its own'" (p. 132). And in one place she paraphrases T1 above as saying that "Socrates says that they have heard many people say, and have often said themselves, that justice is doing one's own" (p. 120). She fully omits conjunct *b* in discussion of a passage where it is explicitly mentioned.[6]

Needless to say, the literature has not yet produced a thorough account of the second conjunct in Plato's account of justice—that justice consists in "not meddling with what isn't one's own." Somehow it has been lost or underappreciated or underscrutinized. Extensive discussion has been devoted to making sense of how to predicate one and the same conception of justice of both cities and souls, in line with the city-soul analogy.[7] And careful consideration has been paid to distinguishing strict justice—conceived as the condition belonging exclusively to composites whose parts are each doing their own work (and not doing the work of the other parts)—and a different notion of justice that describes the behavior of each part in its contribution to the justice of the whole.[8] But all of these discussions have focused on the appropriate subject of predication to the neglect of Socrates' formulation of the account of justice itself. In this paper, I aim to investigate that neglected facet of justice: its consisting in *not* being something, the meddlesomeness.

2. THE ORIGIN OF THE CONJUNCTS

Socrates first introduces the conjuncts in Book II when he sets out to describe the origin of cities in building his city-soul analogy. It is mutual need that gives rise to cities, he says.

"I think a city comes to be because none of us is self-sufficient, but we all need many things" (2.369b). By coming together to live in close proximity, we are able to divide our labor in such a way that each specializes in the production of a particular good. This specialization directly optimizes both the quantity and the quality of goods produced, with the result that our needs are not only met, but they are met in a maximally efficient way. The organizing principle of this division of labor is what has come to be known in Plato literature as the 'Principle of Specialization.'[9] Socrates formulates this principle in the following way:

> "More plentiful and better-quality goods are more easily produced if each person does one thing for which he is naturally suited, does it at the right time, and is released from having to do any of the others." (2.370c)

Two conditions are presented as essential to the maximization of productivity: each member of society must (i) perform the one task that is proper to their nature and (ii) leaves alone any other tasks. Accordingly, the Principle of Specialization (PoS) appears to have both conjuncts *a* and *b* at its core. "Doing one's own work" and "not meddling in the work of another" are drawn together and promoted as the arrangement that will, in every case, best ensure that our needs are met.

The PoS is grounded in two observations. The first of these observations concerns the natural aptitudes of human beings. "Each of us is not entirely like the next in nature (ἡμῶν φύεται ἕκαστος οὐ πάνυ ὅμοιος ἑκάστῳ), but differs somewhat in nature (διαφέρων τὴν φύσιν), one being suited to one task, another to another" (2.370a–b).[10] With this observation, Socrates does not mean that one person is a born farmer, and the next is a born carpenter, and the next a cobbler, and so on. The point is not about our birthright at all. Rather, in saying that we differ in our nature, he is referring to the nature that we come to possess as a result of our upbringing and education. The person who endures the years of training and apprenticeship requisite for becoming a blacksmith is "by nature" a blacksmith. And the person who endures the training that endows a person with skill in baking is "by nature" a baker. The differences between us that result from our cultivating distinct skillsets makes it the case that we are suited to this task rather than that one. What is important to our city's well-being is that we do that work that we were trained to do and let others do the work that they were trained to do. That is, we must do the work that is our own and let others do the work that is their own.

The second observation that fills out the PoS is that our productivity, construed in terms of both quantity and quality of our production, depends on our ability to apply ourselves to one occupation only. When we mind a single occupation, we devote our cognitive energies to it in such a way that the work will be executed optimally. If we spread our energies across two or more tasks, we fail to properly prioritize the work that is ours and, therefore, run the risk of overlooking what needs doing. "If one misses the right moment (καιρόν) in anything, the work is spoiled" (2.370b). We must not take up any work beyond our own, then, because in taking up other work, we miss our opportunity to do our own work well. Hence, we must both do our own work and leave other work alone.

Both observations—the one concerning natural ability and the one concerning productivity—function as sources for the two conjuncts. That is, each of them independently

grounds both conjuncts. That we are naturally suited to a particular work makes it the case that we should both do our own work and leave other work alone, and that our productivity increases when we specialize makes it the case that we should both do our own work and leave other work alone. Socrates is committed to the two conjuncts twice over, then.

As the argument of the *Republic* proceeds, the PoS comes to play a pivotal role in filling out the ultimate account of justice in Book IV. As the texts discussed in my introduction indicate, Socrates ends up insisting that the two conjuncts at the heart of the PoS are central to the account of justice. They do not exhaustively fill out that account—that is, justice is not simply the PoS—but it is the PoS that Socrates refers to when he says that he and his interlocutors had struck upon an "image" of justice earlier in their conversation (4.443c). "The principle that is it right for someone who is by nature a cobbler to practice cobblery and nothing else, for the carpenter to practice carpentry, and the same for the others is a sort of image of justice—that's why it's beneficial" (4.443c). Toward the end of the next section, we will return to this qualification that justice is not exactly the PoS but "something of this sort" (4.443c). We will understand Socrates' qualification only if we appreciate how he conceives of the conjuncts, though, and so we must first examine the logic of the conjuncts and what argumentative work Socrates understands each of them to be doing.

3. MUTUAL ENTAILMENT?

We should wonder why Socrates needed to make the point about justice consisting in not meddling in the work of another. *Prima facie,* it looks as though that ground is already covered by the stipulation that justice consists in doing one's own work. If justice is "doing one's own work," then it is needless to say that justice involves "not meddling with what isn't one's own." There are two ways of construing this interpretation. On an analytic construal, Socrates is only varying the *description* of justice when he includes both conjuncts or only one or the other, but he is not varying the definition itself. We might think of the two conjuncts as two sides of the same coin, two aspects of a unified concept, or two descriptions of one and the same form. On the synthetic construal, he means something separate by the two conjuncts, but he conceives of them both being realized by the same conditions. When a city or soul realizes conjunct *a,* they will also realize conjunct *b.* After one has grown accustomed to doing their own work, there is no additional work necessary for avoiding meddlesomeness; it will be avoided as a matter of course. And, *vice versa,* if one is avoiding meddlesomeness, they will be minding their own business, that is, doing their own work.

Thinking conceptually about the conjuncts, it is not clear why either mutual entailment or mutual realization should be necessary. The realization of conjunct *b*—avoiding meddlesomeness—strictly requires *not* doing something. It does not at all require or entail the doing of any particular thing. It is compatible with idleness, even death. A class in a city or a part of a soul may achieve a gold star in the realization of conjunct *b* without making any progress whatsoever toward doing their own work. Likewise, it seems perfectly possible for a person to carry out their own responsibilities, complete all their tasks, and still have time left in the day to engage in activities that are not "their own." This is what we all do when we invest time in hobbies or recreational pastimes. Not only do we think

that such use of our time does nothing to interfere with our ability to be good citizens and productive members of society, but we often think that such activities are a necessary part of any person's life if they are going to sustain such good standing.

The ideal city in the argument of the *Republic* might not be a place that permits leisure activities, though. What is paramount in that city is that the citizens perform the work that belongs to them, and as Socrates says when laying out the PoS, "the thing to be done won't wait on the leisure (σχολὴν) of the doer, but the doer must of necessity pay close attention to his work rather than treating it as a secondary occupation" (2.370b). It is difficult to imagine how this dictum could be compatible with hobbies. If the citizens must always be poised to perform their work, they cannot also have immersive, distracting recreational pleasures. Any pleasurable activity that might lure them, even for a time, to treat their true occupation as if it were "secondary" will be prohibited. If this is the correct understanding of Socrates, then we could take conjunct *b* to be entailed by conjunct *a* insofar as it is a given that everyone will be engaged in *some* activity. With only one choice of activity and the enforcement of the rule that that one activity must be one's own work, it will necessarily be the case that no one performs the work of another.

The way that Socrates utilizes conjunct *b* in the course of his argument supports this reading. At 4.433a (just before the appearance of T1), Socrates reminds his interlocutors that they had earlier agreed that it is best if everyone in the city "practice[s] one occupation among those in the city (ἕνα ἕκαστον ἓν δέοι ἐπιτηδεύειν τῶν περὶ τὴν πόλιν), the one for which his nature is best suited (εἰς ὃ αὐτοῦ ἡ φύσις ἐπιτηδειοτάτη πεφυκυῖα εἴη)."[11] When Glaucon confirms this earlier agreement, Socrates then points out that a common saying among "many people" as well as "ourselves" is that "justice is doing one's own work and not meddling with what isn't one's own" (4.433a). Taking the two ideas as premises, Socrates draws a conclusion: "Then, it turns out that this doing one's own work—provided that is comes to be in a certain way—appears to be justice (κινδυνεύει […] ἡ δικαιοσύνη εἶναι)" (4.433b). The necessity of performing only one job together with the dictum that justice requires conjuncts *a* and *b* amounts to conjunct *a* alone appearing to be justice. Socrates seems to be saying that conjunct *b* is achieved automatically if these other conditions are successfully enforced. This implies that the conjuncts are mutually entailed or, at least, that conjunct *a* entails conjunct *b*.

Of course, he does say that this turns out to be the case—that is, conjunct *a* captures the whole of justice—only "provided that it comes to be in a certain way" (τρόπον τινὰ γιγνόμενον). This is a significant qualification.[12] Mere realization of the conjunct is not sufficient for justice. Rather, that realization must arise in a particular way. What way is this? What are the ways in which a thing *comes to be* doing its own work?

As Socrates advances from here, we see him repeat this logical move of drawing a conclusion that features only conjunct *a* from premises that posit conjunct *b*. At 4.433e, he asserts that the city's guardians will function as judges in the city and that their principal aim in this work is to ensure that "no citizen should have what belongs to another (ἕκαστοι μήτ' ἔχωσι τἀλλότρια) or be deprived of what is his own (μήτε τῶν αὑτῶν στέρωνται)." There are two parts to this premise. The first part is a version of conjunct *b* that substitutes *having* for *doing*. That is, it is not only the *doing* of what is properly another's, but also the *having*

of what is another's that will be prohibited in the ideal city. The second part of this premise seems to be a version of conjunct *a*. It is also cast in terms of possession, but instead of stating the affirmative—that the citizen must have what is their own—it asserts a ban on deprivation of what it one's own. From this premise that encompasses *a* and *b*, Socrates concludes, "Therefore, from this point of view also, the having and doing of one's own would be accepted as justice" (4.433e). This new conclusion echoes the previous conclusion that "doing one's own work—provided that is comes to be in a certain way—appears to be justice" insofar as both are restricted to a conjunct *a* formulation. The difference between them is only that the previous conclusion focused on *doing* while the new formulation focuses on both *having* and *doing*. It is interesting that Socrates twice relies on premises that feature a version of both conjuncts in reaching the conclusion that conjunct *a*. If conjunct *a* is in the premise and conjunct *a* is the conclusion, then it seems that there is no true impact of conjunct *b* on the argument and the conception of justice.

Or maybe we are misunderstanding the argument. Here is the point where we must consider carefully what Socrates intends with his qualification that justice is doing one's own work "provided that it comes to be in a certain way (τρόπον τινὰ)." The τρόπος that he has in mind for this becoming is one of doing the work that belongs to oneself and simultaneously leaving alone all work that belongs to another. That is, the kind of "doing one's own" or "having one's own" that he has in mind is not the kind that is captured by the sentiment of conjunct *a* alone, but the kind that is captured by both conjuncts together, both the imperative to do and the imperative not to do.

This integration of the conjuncts is on full display just a few lines on:

> Consider, then, and see whether you agree with me about this. If a carpenter attempts to do the work of a cobbler, or a cobbler that of a carpenter, or they exchange their tools or honors with one another, or if the same person tries to do both jobs, and all other such exchanges are made, do you think that does any great harm to the city?
>
> Not much.
>
> But I suppose that when someone, who is by nature a craftsman or some other kind of money-maker, is puffed up by wealth, or by having a majority of votes, or by his own strength, or by some other such thing, and attempts to enter (ἐπιχειρῇ ἰέναι) the class of soldiers, or one of the unworthy soldiers tries to enter that of the judges and guardians, and these change their tools and honors, or when the same person tries to do all these things at once, then I think you'll agree that this sort of exchange and meddling (ταύτην τὴν τούτων μεταβολὴν καὶ πολυπραγμοσύνην) brings the city to ruin.
>
> Absolutely.
>
> Meddling and exchange (πολυπραγμοσύνη καὶ μεταβολὴ) between these three classes, then, is the greatest harm that can happen to the city and would rightly be called the worst thing someone could do to it.
>
> […] Then, that exchange and meddling is injustice. Or to put it the other way around: For the money-making, auxiliary, and guardian classes each to do its own work in the city, is the opposite. That's justice, isn't it, and makes the city just? (4.434a–c)[13]

Many of the claims in this passage demand attention. Let us begin with noting what Socrates takes to be the upshot. Justice is again understood to consist in "doing one's own," but whereas before he qualified this by saying that it must "come to be in a certain way," here he finally discloses what that "certain way" is: Justice is not each *individual* doing their own work, but it is each *part* in the city doing its own work. Justice comes to be in an entity when (i) that entity has parts, (ii) the parts have their own work, and (iii) each of those parts does their own work.[14]

Once we see the qualification that Socrates puts on the simple "doing one's own" formulation, it is easier to appreciate the role that conjunct *b* is playing as a premise and, ultimately, its contribution in shaping the conclusion. Conjunct *b* conveys both (i) that there is a meaningful sense in which occupations that are not one's own really do belong to another and (ii) what that sense is. The passage above makes this function of conjunct *b* clear by laying out two senses of "another" and two corresponding kinds of "meddling in the work of another," and then isolating just one of them as being the concern of justice. The first sense of "another" and corresponding kind of meddling in the passage are described with "a carpenter attempts to do the work of a cobbler." The cobbler is "another" to the carpenter in the sense of belonging to the same class in the city but having been trained in a distinct skillset. Like the citizens of the first city who are naturally suited to their respective occupations because of differences in their training, the carpenter and the cobbler in the ideal city are differentiated by training alone. The kind of meddling that occurs when people differentiated only in this way trade their work, Socrates and his interlocutors agree, presents little or no risk to the city.

The second sense of 'another' and corresponding kind of meddling is dangerous, though. These are observed when "someone, who is by nature a craftsman or some other kind of money-maker, is puffed up by wealth, or by having a majority of votes, or by his own strength, or by some other such thing, and attempts to enter the class of soldiers, or one of the unworthy soldiers tries to enter that of the judges and guardians." The relevant sense of 'another' is no longer the person within the same class who is differentiated only by training. Now it is a person in a *different* class, differentiated in a more fundamental way by the natural characteristics that determine one person to belong to one class and another to another. Whatever it is in a person's physical and psychic composition that makes it important that they live their lives as producers and leave philosophy alone and, likewise, makes it important than another person take up philosophy and leave craft activities alone, that difference is what informs this second sense of 'another.'[15] And Socrates says of the kind of meddling that corresponds with this sense of another that it "brings the city to ruin."

There are two kinds of meddling, then, built on two different senses of 'another.'[16] Let us call the first of these kinds *intra*-class meddling because it involves doing work that is (i) not one's own and (ii) belongs to someone within one's same class in the city. The second kind is *inter*-class meddling because it involves doing work that is (i) not one's own and (ii) belongs to someone in a class different from one's own. The difference hangs entirely on the sameness or difference between the one's own class and that of the person whose work is meddled in. When Socrates says that *intra*-class meddling does "not much" in the way of harming the city, he certainly does imply that such departures from natural suitedness

are not entirely innocuous. When a natural carpenter makes shoes, those shoes will not be of the quality we could expect from a natural cobbler and, likewise, we are deprived of the high-quality tables that this carpenter might have produced if only he had not engaged in this intra-class meddling. But as disappointing as this sacrifice in productivity may be, there is no reason to fear that the city's justice is compromised by it. Inefficiency is not desirable by any stretch, but it is not necessarily destructive of goodness.

It is worth noting that intra-class meddling appears to be possible only for the producer class. Such meddling for the auxiliary and ruling classes is never described in the dialogue, and by insisting that the guardians "will think of the same things as their own, aim at the same goal, and, as far as possible, feel pleasure and pain in unison," Socrates seems to suggest that there is no meaningful difference in work or in life among the rulers or among the auxiliaries, conceived as distinct classes (5.464d). They are brought up in the same way, trained in the same skills, and end up undifferentiated with respect to their natural suitedness for their occupation.[17] This entirely eradicates the chance of intra-class meddling for these classes. Accordingly, the inefficiencies that are possible through intra-class meddling among the producers will never arise among the guardian classes. This seems likely to be by design since such inefficiencies in the work of the guardians would be much more impactful than the disappointments of shoddy tables and shoes.

Inter-class meddling is an entirely different problem, though. Socrates says that the justice of the city so much depends on the prohibition on inter-class meddling that even an *attempt* to enter (ἐπιχειρῇ ἰέναι) a class that is not one's own will ruin the city, i.e. dissolve its justice and goodness. Of course, his examples of dangerous meddling in the passage above depict only *upward* attempts at mobility. That is, he imagines a producer attempting the work of the warriors and a warrior attempting the work of the rulers. The restriction, in these illustrations of the dangers of inter-class meddling, might mean that it is only *upward* meddling that presents a great harm. Indeed, in the Myth of Metals passage, Socrates warns that the city will be ruined "if it ever has an iron or a bronze guardian" (3.415).[18] But, due to Socrates' insistence on ensuring that the rulers also never be permitted to partake of activities that are not their own, I hesitate to draw the conclusion that it is upward meddling alone that concerns him. For example, at 3.417a–b, Socrates says that if the guardians of the city handle money or come into possession of private property, "they'll be household managers and farmers instead of guardians. […] they'll hasten both themselves and the whole city to almost immediate ruin."[19] This *downward* meddling leads to the same destruction as upward meddling, then. But it is only these varieties of meddling—the *inter*-class varieties—that do so.

There are two kinds of meddling, then, and both have undesirable consequences, though one is vastly more dangerous than the other. Which of these kinds does Socrates mean to prohibit when he says that justice involves not meddling in the work of another? Given the undesirability of both, we could understand him as meaning to take both kinds within the scope of the prohibition. That is, conjunct *b* could be a strict prohibition on *intra*-class meddling as well as *inter*-class meddling. As such, we should understand justice as being, in its essence, a condition that not only guards against dangerous disruptions to the natural hierarchy of ruler and ruled, but also guards against relatively small inefficiencies.

An alternative conception of conjunct *b* is possible though. We can understand Socrates as saying that it is only *inter*-class meddling that matters. On this reading, the carpenter's meddling in cobblery is not violating conjunct *b* because she is not crossing class lines in her meddlesomeness. Violation of conjunct *b* is an *inter*-class matter, not an *intra*-class matter. Justice, on this conception of conjunct *b*, guards against disruptions to the natural hierarchy of ruler and ruled, but it does not do anything to guard against small inefficiencies.

This reading carves out distinct work for each conjunct. Conjunct *a* is construed along both *intra*- and *inter*-class lines, insofar as what it is to do one's own work is defined in terms of both (i) which class is one's own and (ii) which occupation one has been trained in. The carpenter does her own work by (i) keeping to her own class, which is the producer class, and (ii) doing the work that she was trained to do, which is carpentry. Of course, if the second of these conditions is achieved, then *a fortiori* the first is achieved. But the point is that conjunct *a* does seem to take even the second condition within its scope. What it is for the carpenter to 'do her own' is not satisfied by (i) alone. As such, conjunct *a* requires each citizen to do the very particular work they were trained to do. Its purpose is to promote maximal efficiency Conjunct *b*, however, permits exchange of very particular work and prohibits exchange only at the more general level that violates the class divisions. Accordingly, conjunct *b* seems not to aim at efficiency at all, but instead operates as a final safeguard against destruction. Even if the city faces a drought of warriors and rulers, conjunct *b* prohibits the carpenter and the cobbler from reaching beyond the producer class to do work that is not their work. Such meddling can only hasten destruction, never resolve it.[20]

Ultimately, Socrates endorses the latter reading. He says that "the principle that it is right for someone who is by nature a cobbler to practice cobbler and nothing else, for the carpenter to practice carpentry, and the same for the others is a sort of image of justice" (4.443c). True justice, he continues, is "something of this sort," but strictly it is achieved as the internal condition of a composite when the parts of the composite are each disallowed from doing the work of another part (μὴ ἐάσαντα τἀλλότρια πράττειν ἕκαστον ἐν αὑτῷ) or from meddling with one another (4.443d).[21] Strict justice is not the carpenter doing carpentry rather than cobblery. It is the class of producers doing the producing rather than ruling or enforcing rule, and *mutatis mutandis* for the other classes.

The impact of each conjunct in the account of justice is quite distinct, then, and each is necessary but not sufficient for justice. Conjunct *a* is necessary for ensuring that efficiency is optimized in the just entity, but it fails to be sufficient for justice because it is possible for a person to satisfy conjunct *a* and nevertheless do other work in addition to their own. Conjunct *b* is necessary as a safeguard against total destruction, but it is not sufficient for justice because it is technically compatible with doing no work at all. Justice requires that everyone in the just city do some work. Specifically, they must do the particular work for which they are naturally suited, and they must avoid any work that belongs to individuals of a different class. That is justice.

We can now see that conjunct *a* is not able to convey both necessary conditions of justice on its own. Only in specifying that justice further consists in "refraining from certain things"—to borrow Julia Annas' phrase—is Socrates able to fill out the full essence of the

concept. Conjunct *b* specifies what must be refrained from and, in so doing, conveys an aspect of justice that is not conveyed by conjunct *a*. Thus, we must understand the conjuncts as doing separate work in the argument.

4. CONCLUSION

The two parts of Socrates' conception of justice in the *Republic* are not variations on the same idea. They each specify a distinct aspect of the nature of justice and, accordingly, each should be specified in any discussion of the account of justice on offer in that dialogue. The insistence that justice consists, in part, in "not meddling in the work of another" has much greater force than first appears. It is built on the observation that justice is found in entities that have parts and that these parts are themselves distinguished through their each having a unique work that is proper to them. 'Not meddling in the work of another' is a prohibition on any part taking up work that is proper to another. The prohibition turns a blind eye to any meddlesomeness that may occur inside of a part, taking inter-class or inter-part meddling to be the activity that is essentially inconsistent with justice.

'Doing one's own' does not capture the scope of that prohibition. It may be that in doing their own, the parts of a just entity are able to satisfy justice's requirement that they not intrude on the work of the other parts. But that circumstance does nothing to diminish the necessity of specifying the prohibition in the account of justice itself. This is because "doing one's own" does not itself conceptually necessitate not meddling, and so the specification of the prohibition as well as the clarification of its scope are both crucial to the project of building an account of justice.[22]

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ENDNOTES

1 Translations of the *Republic* are from G.M.A. Grube, revised by C.D.C. Reeve, in *Plato's Complete Works,* ed. John Cooper, 1997. Where I have modified Grube's translation, I make note and explain why.

2 Grube elides the κινδυνεύει and translates this as "this […] is justice."

3 Socrates demonstrates the centrality of this question when he says, "Glaucon and the others begged me not to abandon the argument but to help in every way to track down what justice and injustice are (τί τέ ἐστιν ἑκάτερον) and what the truth about their benefits is. So I told them what I had in mind…" (2.368c). Whether or not Plato intends any account of justice in the *Republic* to amount to a full-fledged definition is a contentious matter. Rowett, for example, argues that the descriptions of justice in the soul and in the city should neither be generalized nor "equated with 'what justice is' in the abstract" (2018, p. 112). Instead, she argues, Socrates utilizes philosophical images for helping us to conjure a conception of justice that makes us knowers of justice even without definitional knowledge. Dominic Scott has provided extensive treatment to Plato's distinction at 4.435d between the "longer and fuller road" to an account of justice and the shorter one which evidently is on display in Book IV (2015). The former yields a proper definition, and the latter only a less precise, though still useful, conception. I will not enter this treacherous sea of argument in this paper, except to concede that there is good reason to think we likely are not given a *logos* of justice in this dialogue. I will, however, proceed on the assumption that justice in the city and in the soul is of one form, and I will treat as the account of justice the form that Socrates discerns in Book IV (4.434d).

4 Also confounding is that collectively these formulations suggest indecisiveness about whether justice is predicated of composites whose parts are behaving in the requisite ways or else predicated of the parts themselves or even partless things. T3, T4, and T5 support predicating justice of composites since, in each of those texts, it is the composite that bears the name just in case the parts of that composite meet the condition specified. T2 is ambiguous between these readings, since the qualification—'provided that it comes to be in a certain way'—may very well be reference to the idea that is the behavior of parts that makes the whole just, an idea I will defend in the next section. And T1 makes no references to parts or composites whatsoever, leaving us with the impression that such distinctions are irrelevant to the nature of justice. Because these texts occur sequentially in the dialogue, we can assume that Plato presented T1, the simplest—literally, having no reference to parts—first because of the pedagogical advantage of beginning with simple formulations, and that he advances through evermore specific formulations until he reaches, at T5, the most qualified and truest formulation. In the end, the argument of the *Republic* figures justice as predicable only of composites, and not just any composite, but composites whose parts are like those found in cities and souls (4.435b).

5 Ferrari says, "Justice is doing one's part, and a just city is so constructed that each person in it does his part" (2003, p. 41). Singpurwalla explicitly identifies conjunct *a* with the definition of justice: "Plato defines justice as a state of an individual's soul or psyche where each part of the soul performs its proper function, with the result that the individual attains psychological harmony" (2006, p. 264). Shields includes conjunct *b* in his exposition, but only on the way to concluding (prematurely, I think) that the definition boils down to "harmony" among three parts (2011, p. 94). John Cooper seems to register the second conjunct when he says that justice is "the condition of a person in which each of these three [soul parts] plays always and only a certain single role, one for which it is naturally suited" (1977, p. 151). The "only" here is surely intended to encompass conjunct *b*'s prohibition on alternative work. Nevertheless, Cooper begins from this formulation and does not explain how he understands the separate conjuncts.

6 An exception can be observed when Annas specifies not what justice is, but the conditions of its successful predication: "the state is just when each of the classes so conceived is performing its own task—that is, when members of the classes do not do what members of the other classes are supposed to be doing" (1981, p. 150). Annas takes conjuncts *a* and *b* to be equivalent to one another, perhaps as a result of understanding the conjunction between them—the καὶ in "τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν καὶ μὴ πολυπραγμονεῖν" at 4.433a, for example—to be an epexegetical. Indeed, many scholars may be proceeding on the basis of this thought, that the second conjunct further explicates the first and so is superfluous in specifying the *Republic*'s account of justice. But this reasoning is never

disclosed, neither by Annas nor any others, and so should not be assumed.

7 See Williams's, 1973, seminal article on this topic as well as Ferrari's, 2003, comprehensive response.

8 See, for example, Brown, 2011, who distinguishes "psychological justice" from "just acts," observing the epistemic gap between the philosophers who are motivated by their own knowledge and strict justice to do their own work and the non-philosophers in the city who manage also to do their own work, but without the same motivational explanation. See also Kamtekar, 2001, on the performance of these "imperfect virtues." The handling of this distinction is fumbled on occasions when scholars do not observe that strict justice is predicated of the city when each *part* (not each *citizen*) does its own work and does not meddle. See, for example, Smith, 1979, and Ferrari, 2003, who insist that "justice is primarily to be found not within society but within the soul," on the basis of misreading 4.443c-d.

9 For excellent and divergent discussions of the principle, see Greco, 2009; Meyer, 2004; Sawatsky, 2017; and Reeve, 1988, p. 172–176.

10 Grube translates this as "we aren't all born alike, but each of us differs somewhat in nature from the others." By construing φύεται as "born," Grube forces us to read Socrates as asserting that we are farmers or carpenters or cobblers by birth. This does not comport with his presentation of the PoS, as I explain presently.

11 Grube translates this as "practice[s] one of the occupations in the city for which he is naturally best suited." This is suboptimal because nested the relative clause within the genitive phrase suggests that there could be more than one occupation to which an individual is suited. In fact, the text emphasizes the singularity of occupation to which a nature may be disposed. The earlier agreement was the introduction of the Principle of Specialization at 370c, discussed in my previous section.

12 I will leave aside that he has committed to this being only an approximation or, at best, a probable account (κινδυνεύει […] ἡ δικαιοσύνη εἶναι). There may be additional qualifications to explore in the semantics of his assertion, but I believe that this is not the more significant of the qualifications at work here.

13 Grube translates ταύτην τὴν τούτων μεταβολὴν καὶ πολυπραγμοσύνην at line 4.434b6–7 as "these exchanges and this sort of meddling."

14 I have argued for this specific conception of justice more extensively in McDavid, 2019.

15 In Book IX, Socrates suggests that what explains the differences are deeply rooted desire orientations when he says that "there are three primary kinds of people (ἀνθρώπων λέγομεν τὰ πρῶτα τριττὰ γένη): philosophic, victory-loving, and profit-loving (φιλόσοφον, φιλόνικον, φιλοκερδές)" (9.581b–c)

16 We can be sure that Socrates considers them different kinds because he refers to the second as "ταύτην τὴν τούτων μεταβολὴν καὶ πολυπραγμοσύνην." The ταύτην is a demonstrative that picks out the second kind and isolates it for analysis in a way that implies a sufficient difference between the two kinds for allowing differential treatment.

17 To be clear: The auxiliaries are undifferentiated among themselves and the rulers are undifferentiated among themselves, but each of these is different from the other. Interestingly, though, they will all be mixed together and share their earliest years of education. This is because the children who have an inborn capacity for philosophy are undifferentiable from the children who have an inborn capacity for being warriors. It is only when the children are given an opportunity to exhibit their unwavering love of truth, or lack thereof, that they will be sorted into the programs that suit their different potentials.

18 'Iron' and 'bronze' refers to the idea, conveyed in the "Myth of Metals" or "Noble Lie," that each citizen is born with a type of metal in their soul and that this metal determines the class to which they belong. Iron and bronze souls are producers. Strictly, the passage warns of the horrors of a producer attempting to enter the class of "guardians," but the guardian class, at that point in the dialogue's argument has not been divided into the auxiliary (warrior) and ruling classes.

19 We see similar warnings against downward meddling at 3.397e–398b and 5.464b–d.

20 Socrates describes the inevitable result of a drought of appropriate rulers in his Book VIII description of how the city will ultimately meet its ruin (8.546a-d). Even the slightly less "good natured" and "fortunate" offspring of the rulers are incapable of righting the ship, and the problem is precisely that "intermixing of iron with silver and bronze with gold that results will engender lack of likeness and unharmonious inequality, and these always breed way and hostility wherever they arise" (546e-547a). For a carpenter to attempt filling the vacancy would mean only a more rapid descent.

21 Socrates describes true justice in terms of psychic parts here, which has prompted a lively debate in literature around Plato's argumentative purpose in excluding reference to city-parts, a seeming violation of his assertion that justice will be the same, i.e. have the same form, in both souls and cities. See Irwin, 1995, p. 205 – 212, and Sachs, 1963. I am content with extrapolating from this passage that Plato wants to emphasize that justice is a condition concerned with "what is inside" the composite, whether soul or city, and not with "someone's doing his own externally."

22 I am grateful to Emily Hulme, Jeremy Reid, John Proios, J. Clerk Shaw, and Josh Wilburn, for providing constructive and even transformative feedback on various drafts of this project. Any errors in my argument are no doubt due to my misunderstanding their sage advice.

BOOK REVIEWS

L. Candiotto – O. Renaut (eds.), *Emotions in Plato*, Leiden-Boston, Brill 2020

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1.

Il libro inizia con queste parole: *Emotions have become an important topic of research in Classics*. Saltiamo qualche riga e leggiamo che *This is the first edited volume entirely dedicated to emotions in Plato's philosophy*. In effetti, anche se il tema delle emozioni è diventato di grande attualità, lo studio del modo in cui Platone tratta le passioni non ha, ancora, un grande passato, tutt'altro. Ancora qualche riga e, sempre in prima pagina, Laura Candiotto e Olivier Renaut ci ricordano che *There is no such thing as a concept of emotion in Plato*. Manca dunque il concetto ma, ovviamente, le emozioni ci sono. Resta da capire in che modo vengono rappresentate e divengono oggetto di discorso.

L'orientamento prevalente è di individuare gli embrioni di concettualizzazione che affiorano qua e là. Laura Candiotto e Vasilis Politis ('Epistemic Wonder and the Beginning of Enquiry: Plato's *Theaetetus* (155d2-4) and Its Wider Significance') evidenziano la dimensione epistemica delle emozioni nella cornice del metodo dialogico e aporetico. Hanno così occasione di asserire che *Plato said that the beginning of enquiry is wonder, that is, wonder comes first* (35), ma non senza ricordarci che anche eros è una tremenda forza motivazionale e, in secondo luogo, che per David Halperin Platone ha delineato una metafisica del desiderio proprio avvalendosi della sua teoria erotica. Chiaramente qui il focus è su ciò che Platone ha almeno cominciato a teorizzare.

Analogamente Olivier Renaut, discutendo delle passioni con riferimento al *Timeo* ('Emotions and Rationality in the *Timaeus*'), ha modo di riprendere il tema di un altro suo libro, *La médiation des émotions. L'éducation du thymos dans les dialogues*. Qui egli osserva che Platone ravvisa nelle emozioni, almeno

https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_23_8

in prima approssimazione, delle affezioni irrazionali, ma per poi precisare che alcune emozioni aiutano la ragione a comandare e con ciò rivelano una sorta di razionalità derivativa degna di nota. Viene da chiedersi: ma come mai si può parlare di razionalità derivativa e di una irrazionalità di base che sa perfino 'dare una mano' alla ragione? Che significa tutto questo? Poiché Platone ebbe il merito storico di aver orientato la filosofia verso il sapere, dove si colloca la dimensione emotiva? E che legittimità le viene riconosciuta? Renaut sottolinea che non sempre le emozioni si collocano nel polo opposto rispetto alla razionalità, ma sanno assolvere a funzioni diverse, per esempio rendendo il corpo più sensibile e acuto in alcune percezioni.

Karine Tordo-Rombaut ('The Dialogue between the Emotions in the Platonic Corpus') ha modo di ravvisare nelle emozioni qualcosa che interagisce con differenti parti dell'anima. A suo avviso, la parte direttiva dell'anima comunica con esse e può anche esercitare un controllo su di esse. Infatti per Platone i πάθη non sono semplicemente le componenti irrazionali dell'anima umana di cui occorre liberarsi; piuttosto, costituiscono le condizioni di possibilità senza delle quali attività fondamentali non potrebbero dispiegarsi: la meraviglia, per esempio, funge da fase iniziale precognitiva della riflessione filosofica; l'avversione al dolore aiuta a identificare l'oggetto di piacere e di dolore, favorendo la comprensione del bene del male; l'assenza di turbamento davanti ai pericoli può diventare una guida per l'azione morale del legislatore; la vergogna contribuisce alla coesione sociale. Le emozioni svolgono anche il compito di garantire unità all'uomo, poiché mettono in dialogo le differenti parti: o fra anima e corpo, o fra le differenti parti dell'anima. Sono dotate di una componente doxastica e prerazionale.

Muovendosi su un registro non troppo dissimile, Chiara Militello (*Aischunē* and *Logistikon* in Plato's *Republic*') si sofferma sul modo in cui, nella *Repubblica*, la vergogna sa essere di aiuto alla ragione, per esempio quando la gente vi trova uno stimolo a accettare l'ordinamento prescritto dalla ragione, e in nota riferisce, approvandola, una osservazione di Douglas Cairns: gli atteggiamenti spontanei su ciò che è onorevole e ciò che è disonorevole, anche se possono essere resi compatibili con i giudizi razionali grazie a una educazione appropriata, non sono suggeriti dalla ragione. Militello può così concludere che *the relationship between the feeling of* aischun*ē and reason is an important feature of Plato's theory expressed in this dialogue*. È come se le emozioni, cacciate dalla porta, rientrassero dalla finestra, e viene da chiedersi cosa si nasconde dietro la fragilità del cacciare le emozioni dalla porta per poi vederle rientrare dalla finestra.

Anche Simon Scott ('Loving and Living Well: the Importance of Shame in Plato's *Phaedrus*') esordisce osservando che il Platone del *Fedro* ha scoperto il desiderio razionale configurato come amore, cioè in qualche modo riscattato. È degno di nota quel suo parlare di desiderio razionale, nozione che avrebbe meritato degli approfondimenti. Lo stesso Scott, con riferimento al mito della biga alata, dapprima ricorda che, secondo Platone (237d), in ognuno di noi ci sono due forze primarie, una è il desiderio innato dei piaceri, l'altra un modo di pensare acquisito, tendente a ciò che è meglio, e prosegue: *Desire is opposed to judgement and sometimes these two work together harmoniously, but sometimes they conflict*. In altre parole: se domina la razionalità (es. se la vergogna permette di sublimare il desiderio erotico), si raggiunge l'autocontrollo; in caso contrario cominciano gli eccessi.

Dopodiché Scott si sofferma sul modo in cui la vergogna aiuta ad amare nel giusto modo e giunge alla conclusione che le emozioni hanno, per Platone, un contenuto cognitivo. È infatti nell'anima, egli ricorda, che il retore si sforza di far nascere la convinzione. Con queste considerazioni Scott finisce per concentrare la sua attenzione su come si fa a contenere e incanalare le emozioni (che di per sé sarebbero pericolose), cioè per constatare quali sono gli equilibri dinamici tra spinte che di per sé sarebbero contrastanti. Non per questo egli si misura con il quesito filosofico sulla natura dell'anima umana e sull'origine della dimensione emozionale dell'uomo secondo Platone, e questo malgrado Platone si sia quantomeno posto il problema.

Qualcosa di analogo fa Freya Möbus nel soffermarsi (in 'Why Do Itches Itch? Bodily Pain in the Socratic Theory of Motivation') sull'avversione al dolore fisico, avversione che sa manifestarsi come una risposta irriflessa o anche dar luogo a condotte meditate e pianificate (ma poco a poco l'autrice abbandona Platone per soffermarsi sulla generalità di queste condotte meditate e pianificate).

Myrthe Bartels ('Plato's Seasick Steersman: On (Not) Being Overwhelmed by Fear in Plato's *Laws*') si occupa, in particolare, della regolazione dei simposi e indugia sull'esigenza che al simposiarca non manchi *the emotional capacity of remaining* athorubos *in order to meet the increasingly rowdy and noisy gathering of the symposiasts*, dove il verbo *meet* ci parla non semplicemente dell'esigenza di fronteggiare, ma anche positivamente di contenere il chiasso e, più in generale, la propensione dei simposiasti prossimi all'ubriachezza a dare libero corso alle loro emozioni. *Only if properly regulated*, ricorda Bartels, *can a symposium make its participants friends instead of enemies.* Bartels osserva inoltre che Platone sembra parlare di *addestramento a resistere* alle emozioni così come si può imparare a reggere il mal di mare con l'esperienza.

L'impressione che si ricava da questi e altri contributi è che il volume persegue l'obiettivo primario di veder bene come si orienta Platone quando ha occasione di evocare le emozioni, come le inquadra, cosa ha occasione di dire sul loro conto. E spesso emerge, per queste vie, il Platone che ha cercato e trovato modi plausibili di individuare il lato positivo di specifiche emozioni, quindi le modalità in cui passioni e altre emozioni non rappresentano unicamente un pericolo da cui guardarsi, ma sono o sanno essere di aiuto. In effetti è sul lato positivo di alcune emozioni che la maggior parte dei contributi accolti in questo volume si sofferma, peraltro senza porsi problemi ulteriori (per esempio: che pensare delle emozioni se l'anima immortale viene giudicata in base a come ha saputo governare proprio le passioni?). L'idea è che, prima di misurarsi con simili interrogativi, che comunque richiederebbero di essere a loro volta debitamente contestualizzati, bisogna acquisire tutta una serie di dati e capir bene come in concreto Platone 'ragiona' allorché il discorso scivola sulle emozioni.

2.

A ben vedere c'è anche un altro percorso che, almeno in teoria, potrebbe meritare non poca attenzione. Mi riferisco al modo in cui le emozioni vengono incarnate nei personaggi e prendono forma via via che la conversazione con Socrate si snoda. Non è in questa direzione che va, di preferenza, il volume di Candiotto e Renaut. In questo libro accade più spesso di soffermarsi sui tentativi di dire che posto le emozioni occupano *a giudizio*

di Platone. Ma le emozioni non sono solo 'cose' di cui Platone di tanto in tanto parla e sul conto delle quali finisce per elaborare delle opinioni. Specialmente (ma non solo) nei dialoghi aporetici, sono anche oggetto di rappresentazioni dinamiche. A Platone accade infatti di rappresentare persone nell'atto di vivere delle forti emozioni, ora in positivo ora in negativo, e non di rado Socrate appare impegnato nel 'gestire' le emozioni altrui, nel senso che le suscita e magari trova il modo di sopirle, oppure di indirizzarle da qualche parte. Accade cioè, che di tanto in tanto l'attenzione venga portata sulla risposta emotiva che si manifesta e su come essa si manifesta, eventualmente su un Socrate impegnato a a sottolineare o stemperare, a amplificare o sminuire specifiche risposte emotive dei suoi interlocutori.

Nitidamente in questa direzione va Carla Francalanci ('Love Speech in Plato's *Charmides*: Reading the Dialogue through Emotions'). Francalanci individua il suo obiettivo nelle strategie retoriche che permettono al Socrate platonico di generare la persuasione e il convincimento nella persona (o nelle persone) verso cui queste strategie sono dirette. Nel *Carmide* le emozioni abbondano e non svolgono funzioni meramente ancillari, anzi *Socrates proceeds explicitly in order to operate a substitution of emotion*s. Si può ben comprendere, perciò, che la sfera emotiva non sia oggetto dell'aspirazione a conoscere ed eventualmente definire, ma sia una cosa che si fa, divenendo l'oggetto di un'*attività* di tipo psicagogico, volta a governare le emozioni altrui. La ben condotta indagine cui si è dedicata Francalanci avrebbe attitudine a spingersi molto lontano per più ragioni. Una possibilità sarebbe di rappresentare la gestione delle emozioni proprie e altrui indipendentemente dal proposito di rimpiazzarle con dei sostituti. Ma sarebbe ugualmente possibile speculare sulle ragioni non dichiarate che inducono Socrate a rapportarsi con i suoi interlocutori in un modo o in un altro modo. Non meno attraente sarebbe osservare da vicino, per esempio, l'inquietante traballare dell'immagine di sé di questo o quell'interlocutore di Socrate, oppure indagare sulla condotta degli interlocutori in cui Socrate genera un severo imbarazzo per poi governare l'uscita condizionata da tale imbarazzo, e non solo[1]. Indagini analoghe, d'altronde, potrebbero essere utilmente condotte anche su alcuni testi non platonici, ad es. nell'*Alcibiade* e nell'*Aspasia* di Eschine di Sfetto, e così pure nei più elaborati testi dialogici di Senofonte (in primis *Mem.* IV 2) e, perché no, in Diog. Laert. II 66-83 (su Aristippo). Se mi è consentito, esprimo l'auspicio che Francalanci, avendo mostrato di muoversi scioltamente nel *Carmide*, investa ancora in simili esplorazioni sulle tante e tanto varie occasioni in cui Platone e altri socratici si dedicano a rappresentare la non facile gestione delle emozioni. Che una cultura delle emozioni (dunque una sorta di sapere sulle emozioni, anche se concepito diversamente dal sapere sulle emozioni su cui vertono molte delle indagini accolte in *Emotion in Plato*) si delinei anche per queste vie, mi pare infatti un dato obiettivo.

Se ho visto bene, anche Candiotto e Politis dicono qualcosa sui dialoghi aporetici, ma un po' di passaggio. Stefano Maso ('Emotions in Context: "Risk" as a Condition for Emotion') si sofferma sul coraggio nel *Lachete* e sull'amore nel *Simposio* per poi chiedersi quando e perché le passioni si manifestano. Egli osserva che, per Platone, accettare di correre dei rischi alimenta il desiderio di uscire da una situazione critica e questa condizione sa scatenare forti emozioni in quanto il rischio non è uno stato in cui si può rimanere: o la passione esplode oppure si

afferma il controllo razionale. In questo modo, peraltro, l'attenzione torna verso l'ennesimo embrione di assestamento concettuale.

Analogamente Rachana Kamtekar (in 'Platonic Pity, or Why Compassion Is Not a Platonic Virtue') si sofferma, fra l'altro, su alcuni passi rilevanti di *Apologia* e *Fedone* in particolare su quelli in cui Fedone dichiara, all'inizio del dialogo omonimo, che non ha provato compassione (58e2) e, alla fine, che se ha pianto, ha pianto per sé, non per Socrate (117c5-d1), e su quello in cui Socrate rimprovera lui e gli altri proprio per aver ceduto alle emozioni "manco foste delle donne" (117d7-e2). La sua indagine va nella direzione indicata nel titolo, e infatti Kamtekar si premura di convenire con David Konstan nel non ravvisare tracce di pietà o compassione in Platone. Al loro posto compare, leggo, *some more familiar Platonic virtue, such as wisdom, or some less familiar quality, such as the philanthrōpia*, cosa di cui possiamo quanto meno prendere atto.

Intanto si conferma la legittimità delle scelte che hanno ispirato questo bel libro. La gestione delle emozioni costituisce una dimensione su cui si è solo cominciato a indagare, e se il filone 'Francalanci' meriterebbe non pochi sviluppo ulteriori, intanto un altro tipo di scavo è stato condotto con mano sicura da due studiosi che hanno già dato priva di avere una consolidata esperienza specifica, e con risultati decisamente degni di nota.

Concludo constatando con rammarico di non essere riuscito a soffermarmi, come avrei voluto, anche sui contributi di Beatriz Bossi, Luc Brisson, Pia Campeggiani, Marta Jimenez, David Konstan, Lidia Palumbo e Anna Motta, Frisbee Sheffield, malgrado la speciale autorevolezza di alcuni tra loro. Esiste peraltro una legge non scritta la quale stabilisce che i recensori non dovrebbero pretendere di dire tutto tutto.

ENDNOTES

1 In anni lontani, lavorando sull'*Eutifrone*, mi accadde di constatare che il lettore medio di quel dialogo in una prima fase confida di poter condividere le posizioni di Eutifrone, e solo in un secondo momento scopre che no, non le può proprio condividere, anzi può solo premurarsi di prendere le distanze da lui. Il Platone dei dialoghi aporetici si è forse organizzato anche per gestire la risposta emotiva dei suoi futuri lettori?

Altman, W. (2020) *Ascent to the Beautiful: Plato the Teacher and the Pre-Republic Dialogues from Protagoras to Symposium*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2020.

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This book is the conclusion of a series, *Plato the Teacher*, initiated in 2012 with a homonymous work on Plato's *Republic*. Published after four other volumes – the whole series exceeds two thousand pages – it is intended nevertheless to be read first. In five chapters and seventeen sections – plus preface, introduction, and epilogue – it deals with nine dialogues prior to the *Republic*: *Protagoras, Alcibiades Major, Alcibiades Minor, Lovers, Hippias Major, Hippias Minor, Ion, Menexenus and Symposium*. "Prior" is understood here not in the sense of the alleged order in which Plato wrote his dialogues, but in the sense of a reading order: Altman claims that Plato designed these dialogues to be read first, for they are relatively simple and serve to introduce the reader/student to Platonism.

Altman's whole project, magnificently mirrored by this book, depends heavily on the idea that Plato wrote his dialogues to be taught. Since Plato was a teacher and his dialogues are eminently teachable – he argues in his *Curricular Hypothesis* (Preface xv)– it is likely that they were somehow read, discussed, and taught in the Academy. The goal of Altman's project is to present a possible order in which this teaching process was (and still possibly is) carried out. Thus, the image of Plato as a teacher of turbulent and talented adolescents is persuasively hammered throughout the book. Plato is neither a professor nor a mystic, but rather a playful, humorous, and very humane teacher. Predicated on the idea that Plato needed to entertain in order to capture the attention of his audience (Preface, xx), Altman considers the purpose of these dialogues within an amusing and encyclopedic structure. He uses a concept operational since Schleiermacher and sees them as *Jugenddialoge,* but the meaning of *Jugend* shifts from a compositional to a pedagogical perspective: they are

https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_23_9

not youthful because Plato wrote them earlier in his career, but because they were composed for youngsters (p. 125; 210). Altman often goes into detail and discusses at length the reception of the dialogues, exhibiting an enviable erudition, albeit he is primarily focused on the connections between these works and the big curricular picture they create. His new authenticity principle – "a dialogue is authentic when it fits snugly, in accordance with sound pedagogical principles, between other two" (Preface, xxii) – saves from excision all the dialogues transmitted as genuine by Thrasyllus.

The chapter on *Protagoras* develops the idea embraced by Guthrie, Snell, and other scholars (p. 35) that this dialogue was designed to be staged. Altman emphasizes the theatrical features of the dialogue – the movement of the chorus, the furniture, the internal applause (p. 43-48) etc. – but his real goal is to interpret *Protagoras* as the gateway of Plato's curriculum. Plato gives us some hints to think so: the emphasis on the word gateway (θύρα) (p. 50); the ideal story overture of a before dawn scenario (p. 31); the elementary presentation of the most brilliant minds of that time (p. 35); Socrates' descent into the cave (p. 39); and, finally, the important fact that *Protagoras,* in some way or another, anticipates or alludes to every of Plato's dialogues (p. 37). However, the idea that *Protagoras* comes first in the reading order is not obvious, since its undeniable difficulty invalidates the pedagogical principle (Preface, xxii) that simpler dialogues should precede harder ones. Altman argues nevertheless that *Protagoras* is the best example of Plato's proleptic pedagogy: "it effectively confuses the student on matters of critical importance, whetting their interest without satisfying it, and creating the kind of wonder that all the great Socratics used to educate their audience (…) (p. 36)". Therefore, he proposes that the student should "see" *Protagoras* more than one time and after the study of other works: it would illuminate its content every time the student returns to it.

In Chapter Two (The Elementary Dialogues), Altman analyses the *Alcibiades* dyad and the *Lovers* and shows how they change the interpretation of the *Protagoras:* they begin with what Altman calls the Reversal of the *Protagoras* and, consequently, they indicate that Plato deliberately erred in this dialogue (p. 142). Given due to ancient theories that put *Alcibiades* at the beginning of the reading order, Altman argues that *Alcibiades Major* follows the *Protagoras* because, among other reasons, the youngster Alcibiades uses an argument he learnt with Protagoras the other day: Alcibiades claims that he knows what justice is, for he has learnt it from the many in the same way people usually learn their native language (p. 27). In the *Introduction*, a deep discussion with Schleiermacher and other scholars proved the importance of *Alcibiades Major* for Altman's view (p. 2). *Alcibiades Major* is where Plato begins the deconstruction of the εὖ πράττειν fallacy embraced by Socrates, i.e., that one can slide from to do [things] well to fare well. Altman criticizes the Socratists (Vlastos, Penner and Rowe) who use Aristotle's testimony to find in the *Protagoras* a historical Socrates for whom the practice of justice makes you happier and is also more pleasant than its opposite (p. 143). According to the author, just as the problem of the One and the Many is the Ariadne's thread to guiding us through the difficulties of the post-*Republic* dialogues, so too the εὖ πράττειν fallacy is the best guide to disclose the meaning of the pre-*Republic* series. This fallacy reappears in the *Republic*'s Shorter Way (p. 164) and contradicts the fact the Guardians must return to the Cave not because this is good, pleasant, or beneficial for

them, but because they act in accordance with Justice. Thus, *Alcibiades Major* proves that there is a gulf between the καλῶς πράττειν – namely, the courageous willingness to face death and wounds for the sake of our friends – and the individualist view of an εὖ πράττειν in which one does what is advantageous for him (p. 154). It dismisses Alcibiades' egoistic view in accordance both with Socrates' *Heldentod* and the proverbial χαλεπὰ τὰ καλά.

As for the *Alcibiades Minor*, it is a gymnastic dialogue where Plato teaches a logical lesson that contradicts *Protagoras*' principle that each thing has only one opposite (*Prt.* 139b11; 332c8-9) (p.186). It also contributes thereby to the Reversal of the *Protagoras*. But it is important as well because it teaches crucial facts about theology, and it captivates the attention of Plato's readers through the love affair between Socrates and Alcibiades. For Altman, Plato has excited from the outset the curiosity of his teenager students about the nature of this relationship, and the culmination of this pedagogic trick will be found in *Symposium's* most vivid speech (p. 189-9). Before that, however, there is a small dialogue that fits snugly into this problematic: although its discussion of πολυμαθία points to the *Hippias* dyads, it is the discussion of the μεταξύ that both makes the *Lovers* indispensable and contributes to save it from excision, let alone the fact that its title clearly alludes to the aforementioned affair. It also suggests the deliberate error of *Protagoras*' one-thing-one-opposite principle and emphasizes a crucial term for the description of Love and philosophy in the *Symposium*.

Chapter Three is devoted to *Hippias Major* and contains an interesting discussion of reading order and authenticity. Two points must be underlined about Altman's views on authenticity. His argument on the simple dialogues that have raised the harshest philological suspicion seems very original and persuasive: those dialogues, such as the *Lovers,* illustrate Plato's generosity as a teacher, for they patiently instruct and playfully entertain the readers (p. 209). In most cases, they were taken to be inauthentic because of their very simplicity – and they are indeed simple, if a professor reads them, but they can be incredibly challenging for a neophyte. Second, if we consider the testimony of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, according to which Plato was working in his dialogues and tinkering them with details until the very end (Preface, xvii), it is likely to assume that they must always be read in the context of their neighbors, especially in the case of doubtful dialogues (p. 225). The *Echtheitskritik* of individual dialogues (or letters) loses the larger structures that Plato created until his last breath through thematic, dramatic, and pedagogic parallels (p. 215).

As to the *Hippias Major,* Altman takes it as Plato's *pons asinorum*, for it prepares the student in every possible way to comprehend the *Symposium*: "it is the necessary and well-designed literary, pedagogical, and ontological preparation for the Diotima-discourse in *Symposium,* and thus for the 'great ocean of Beauty' (*Smp.* 210d4) that we will see from its mountain peak (p. 239)". This is written at the very core of the book, section 9, which is also the most breathtaking one. Undoubtedly funny, *Hippias Major* is nonetheless a difficult dialogue, for it forces the reader to abandon his allegiance to the sensible world (p. 239). By jettisoning the equation between χρήσιμον and καλόν – the first one is always relative (πρός), whereas the second is in itself (αὐτό) –, it not only anticipates *Symposium's* Idea of Beauty, the last scale in the first ascent, but also the disjunction of ὠφέλιμον and Good that appears in the *Republic* (247-250). Moreover, *Hippias Major* is crucial because it reveals Plato's deliberate use of deception:

Socrates' Double shows that Plato intends to teach the truth and concomitantly to test the reader about the false (p. 270). This is what Altman calls "basanistic", namely, the testing element of the dialogues that is used by Plato as a pedagogic tool (p. 277). *Hippias Major* teaches that Socrates can be deceptive and, simultaneously, it increases the confidence of the student by telling him a joke about Socrates' Double that the "wise" Hippias does not get. In doing it, Plato also entertains the juvenile sensibility of his students (p. 269). Such a reading is an example of the fact that, for Altman, the dialogue between Plato and the reader is at the heart of his ideas (p. 276).

Chapter Four (The Musical Dialogues) deals with *Hippias Minor, Ion, and Menexenus*, all of them are somehow related both to poetry and rhetoric. In the first work, Plato teaches the reader how to read Homer and, consequently, how to read his own dialogues (p. 288). The same concern is present in the *Ion,* which forces the reader to think about Homer's intention (διάνοια) and to continue the exercise of poetry interpretation begun in the *Protagoras* (p. 298). In addition, *Hippias Minor* deals with deception and depicts a Socrates who undermines the most Socratic ethical tenet, exposed in the *Protagoras*, that no one errs voluntarily. By deliberately misinterpreting Homer, and preferring Odysseus to Achilles, Plato creates what Altman calls the Aristotelian Paradox: the reader must choose between the Aristotelian version of Socrates or rejecting Aristotle's own testimony that the Hippias Minor is genuine. Furthermore, the discussion of the techniques, which describes them as morally neutral – they can be used for good and bad purposes as well – suggests that the reader must confront Aristotle's version of Socrates, according to which Plato's teacher defended that virtue is knowledge (p. 295). The Reversal of the Protagoras is again *en marche.*

The *Ion* underlines the centrality of Homer to the understanding of Plato's dialogues. The minimum that it accomplishes is to transform the reader into a eulogist of Homer (p. 335): it invites the reader to break the the silence that Socrates imposes on Ion, and to say "many fine things" about Homer, especially about the *Litai* just evoked in the *Hippias Minor*. In the discussion of the secondary literature, Altman restores the beauty and importance of this small dialogue and shows that deadpan readings of it miss several relevant points, such as the fact the Ion is not as brainless and full of himself as he appears, since he is outside of himself when he recites, and is able, like Proteus, to become other people (p. 327).

Although *Menexenus* is the subject of the last section, its real meaning is analyzed in the chapter devoted to the *Symposium,* where Altman shows that its deliberate falsifications of Athenian history constitute both an invitation for the student to read the three great historians (Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon) and a revelation of the tragic temper of *Symposium*, staged on the verge of the Sicilian Expedition. Here, Altman draws attention to other features of the dialogue. For example, the fact that Plato is teaching us rhetoric throughout, since the *Protagoras* and the *Alcibiades Major* (p. 351), and that in this dialogue he deploys the rhetoric of wartime heroism to remind his students of what ἀρετή in action looks like" (p. 369). *Menexenus* also introduces another major pedagogic trick that pops up in the Symposium, namely, what Altman calls *Socrates schooled*. Depicted as someone who is ignorant but wants to learn, Socrates teaches the students how to learn and, more important, that there is no shame in being taught (p. 253).

Chapter Five is solely dedicated to the *Symposium*, and Altman shows now how several themes of the preceding dialogues are

addressed in a new light or finally solved. The silent characters of *Protagoras*, Agathon, e.g., now deliver speeches of their own (p. 377); the ability to memorize speeches, once represented by Ion, reappears with Apollodorus (p. 378); the affair of Socrates and Alcibiades reaches its climax (p. 396); etc. *Symposium* and *Protagoras* are the bookends of a series and, therefore, they refer to each other in many possible ways: two journeys to different houses that begin with a "let us go"; Flute Girls sent away; allusions in both works to their gathering as συνουσία and the word συμπόσιον; descriptions of conversations that the readers are not allowed to hear etc. (p. 395). Leaving aside the lesson on the Beautiful, *Symposium* is really about speeches and depends therefore on *Menexenus.* The main connection between them is the absent guest in the former: the Sicilian Expedition. By showing how the reading of Xenophon and Thucydides is primordial to Plato (p. 355), Altman proves that *Symposium* itself carries out its final challenge: it is both a comedy and a tragedy (p. 401).

As for the Beautiful, Altman argues that Diotima deceives the reader as she reinterprets Phaedrus' speech and claims that Achilles, Alcestis and Codrus died for the sake of fame, not because of a willingness to help their beloved ones (p. 429). The idea, then, is to read again Phaedrus's speech and realize that Diotima partly acts as a sophist (p. 431). This fact also proves that Achilles, contrary to what the deceitful Socrates defended in the *Hippias Minor*, is better than Odysseus, for he chose to die for his beloved in the same way Socrates will die for Athens (p. 447). Therefore, Altman criticizes the eudaemonist reading of the *Symposium* that accepts "the Symposium Substitution" and the Equation of the Good and the Beautiful at 204e, also presented in *Protagoras*' final argument. For Altman, the reader must reject this substitution and see ἔρως as a power that makes us able to nurture virtue and to sacrifice ourselves for the others (p. 455).

Two other aspects of this book and its companions must be mentioned, although briefly. First, Altman often deploys other Greek authors to confirm his ideas. For him, Plato not only depended on the survival of Thucydides, Homer, and Xenophon, but he also learned with them how to compose his immortal dialogues. Xenophon provided several literary strategies that Plato employs: Plato's Socrates schooled has an analogue, for instance, in *Oeconomicus,* and the hunt for Alcibiades in *Protagoras* is better understood with the aid of *Cynegeticus* and its critique of sophistry (p. 67). Posterior authors, allegedly Plato's students, also confirm some of Altman's positions. In many passages he brings up the minor Attic orators, such as Lycurgus and Hesperides, to illustrate Platonic ideas, let alone the still unorthodox thesis that Demosthenes was Plato's student. For Altman, they all embraced the eminently political lesson of the Academy and returned to the Cave of political life.

In the Epilogue, Atlmans indulges in imagining what the Academy was like. He stresses the fact that, given the lack of sound historical evidence, his description of the Academy is as speculative as those of his adversaries (p. 481). He then depicts how a typical freshman, like Hippocrates, would watch *Protagoras* in his first year, and would then see it again at the start of each new academic year, after having read and studied other dialogues (p. 484). At the end, he would be able to see the dialogue for what it really stands for. Although speculative, Altman's attempt at imagining the Academy is incredibly valuable: breaking the image of Plato the professor that scholarship has, as it were, uncritically assumed for centuries, he makes us conscious of a myriad of non-discussed subjects that, in one way or another, happen

to shape most of our interpretations. His Plato the teacher often seems more plausible than the image that tradition offers.

The main problem with Altman's creative hypothesis is not the lack of historical evidence, but the deadpan reading of the *Protagoras* that, according to him, Aristotle embraced. As briefly mentioned above, Aristotle took *Protagoras* literally and defined the positions that the "historical Socrates" would have endorsed. However, if the dialogues are so capable of teaching deception, prolepsis, basanistic pedagogy and so on, how would it be possible that Aristotle never understood them properly? Apparently, this is a one of two possibilities: either Aristotle was too blockheaded to understand the *Protagoras,* even after he watched it repeatedly, or Altman's hypothesis must be somehow improved. In fact, Altman provides an answer that could serve here as well: for him, some students, and Aristotle is the best example, did not want to cross the bridge of Platonism in *Hippias Major* and separate the forms with all consequences it involves, such as the rejection of the Equation of the Good and the Beautiful. They simply refused the *pons* Plato generously offered them (p. 244).

Despite this, the book is elegant, undoubtedly erudite, and captivates the reader in a way that he becomes eager to see the next scenes of the bigger story Altman is telling. Therefore, it is effective as the first book of a long series on Plato. Even the readers who do not accept Altman's critical rejection of the order of composition paradigm (the majority of them, I suspect), can profit from his perspicacious ideas on Plato. More important, for the ones who are interested in teaching the dialogues, this book and the series to which it belongs present a creative and sound reading order that certainly benefit non-isolationist interpretations of Plato.

[Platone], Assioco. Saggio introduttivo, edizione critica, traduzione e commento a cura di Andrea Beghini, (Diotima. Studies in Greek Philology, 4), Baden-Baden: Academia Verlag 2020. Pp. 395.

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How can we be both happy and aware of the fact that one day we will die? And how can we overcome the unhappiness caused by the fear of death? These are some of the crucial questions addressed in the pseudo-Platonic *Axiochus*. Indeed, one of the most astonishing and intriguing features of this dialogue is the interweaving of themes and incompatible theses from different philosophical traditions. Held together within a consolatory framework, these arguments bring about Axiochus' evolution from his initial fear of death to complete acceptance of it. A comprehensive and accurate analysis of this enigmatic dialogue is now offered by Andrea Beghini (henceforth B.). His book, *[Platone], Assioco* (Baden-Baden: 2020), consists of a critical edition and a new Italian translation, with an extensive introductory essay and a thorough commentary. A wide-ranging bibliography and an index of names and subjects complete the work. This study is part of a recent revival of studies on the *Axiochus*[1] and introduces innovative elements both on the critical-textual level and in the relation to the dialogue's chronology and structure.

The critical edition (p. 169-183) is based on a survey of 37 manuscripts and is the most extensive collation available to date. It significantly improves upon the two currently authoritative editions, that by John Burnet (1913) and that by Joseph Souilhé (1930). This new edition largely confirms the stemmatic reconstruction by Levi A. Post (1934), while better defining the relationship between the manuscripts at each level of the stemma. The text mostly relies on A (Parisinus gr. 1807, saec. IX, post med.) and Vv (V: Parisinus gr. 2110, saec. XIV; v: Laurentianus plut. 11.13, saec. XIV), whose variants are fully recorded. The work also has the merit of taking the indirect tradition systematically into account, with particular attention to Stobeus. Based, as

https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_23_10

it is, on a new critical edition, B.' translation represents a step forward compared to the two previous Italian translations,[2] both of which relied on Burnet (1913).

As regards the date of composition and the authorship, B. places the *Axiochus* within the framework of the sceptical Academy. More precisely, he argues that the dialogue was composed between 88 and 45 BC by an Academic author belonging to Philo of Larissa and Cicero's circle. He does not rule out that Philo himself may have written it (p. 84-85). Characterised by complex spiritual dynamics, in which pessimism, scepticism and faith coexist, the dialogue would reflect the last phase of the Academy, i.e. the end of an era and a metamorphosis within the Platonic tradition (p. 85).

B.'s hypothesis is supported not only by linguistic evidence, but also by Pseudo-Plato's methodological approach, which is labelled as "empirical-pragmatic" (p. 67). In an attempt to console Axiochus and banish his fear of death, Socrates resorts to different arguments, whose soundness is not assumed *a priori*, but concretely shown in their effectiveness. In other words, the main arguments against the fear of death – the insensibility of the soul and its immortality – are evaluated not on the ground of their truth and logical strength, but on that of their practical outcomes and consolatory efficacy. In this sense, Axiochus' endorsement of the second argument is not primarily rational, but rather intuitive and instinctive (p. 67-72, on this point see also p. 86, 231, 312, 314). In this context, B.'s remarks on the *modus operandi* adopted by Pseudo-Plato in composing the dialogue are also interesting. The author presumably collected arguments from various sources, and then rearranged them into the argumentative-conceptual sections of his dialogue (p. 39). Such a way of proceeding – as B. suggests – would fit well with the hypothesis of a work written within the sceptical Academy, whose chief aim was not to demonstrate any specific thesis, but rather to test the persuasiveness of different philosophical views on a certain issue (p. 40). This hypothesis, according to B., would also explain the striking proximity between the *Axiochus* and Cicero's *Tusculanae*, both of which may be traced back to Philo of Larissa' school. More specifically, both the pragmatic-empirical method and the moderate scepticism attested in Pseudo-Plato and Cicero would stem from Philo (p. 75-81). On the basis of a close analysis of the several continuities between the *Axiochus* and the first book of the *Tusculanae*, B. rules out both Cicero's direct dependence on Pseudo-Plato and their derivation from a common source (p. 30-38, see also p. 72-81). Rather, the proximity between the two works would be due to the fact that they reflect the same cultural *milieu* (p. 75, 81).

It is now worth dwelling on B.'s innovative view of the dialogue's structure (p. 42-67). After identifying twelve thematic sections into which the dialogue is articulated,[3] B. carefully examines the points of transition between them and highlights a number of textual anomalies, including the abrupt passage from section 8 to section 9, and from 9 to 10 (see *Ax.* 370b1, 369b5). It is noteworthy that B. explains these and further textual problems not by postulating lacunae, but by arguing that the *Axiochus* is an unfinished work (p. 46). According to B., Pseudo-Plato first worked on each thematic section separately, without being able to put the finishing touches to the junctions between them. For this reason, the sections sometimes seem to be poorly juxtaposed. More generally, this reading allows B. to reject the view that Pseudo-Plato was an incompetent writer. As a result, the dialogue should not be dismissed as a literary work of poor quality, but simply

regarded as somewhat flawed in its structure inasmuch as – being unfinished – it could not be refined in detail (p. 42-48).

Moreover, B. suggests that a number of argumentative inconsistencies in the dialogue (p. 48-51) may be due to textual disorder and may be overcome by moving section 9 (369b5-370b1) between sections 3 and 4 (at 365e2), thus obtaining the order 1), 2), 3), 9), 4), 5), 6), 7), 8), 10), 11), 12). In this way, the argumentation would develop as follows: a) argument of the soul's insensibility (sections 3 and 9); b) first argument for the immortality of the soul (sections 4-5); c) Prodicus' *epideixis* on the miseries of corporeal life (sections 6-8); d) second argument for the immortality of the soul, which proves to be persuasive (sections 10-12). The main advantages of this rearrangement are that: i) the two passages of the dialogue in which Socrates defends the Epicurean thesis of the soul's insensibility (sections 3 and 9) are joined together in a consistent way; ii) the sequence from 4) to 12) is more coherent (although not entirely without problems) once section 9 is moved above; iii) Axiochus' "conversion" occurs gradually and seems more realistic (see p. 51-57 for further advantages of this rearrangement).

An additional remarkable feature of this book is its thorough exploration of sources. Besides Philo of Larissa and Cicero – already mentioned above – B. detects in the dialogue a rich variety of sources, including Homeric reminiscences, Platonic eschatological myths, the Ancient Academy, Hellenistic philosophies, comedy, scientific and medical literature, consolatory repertories, moralistic writings ascribable to the "Cynic-Stoic diatribe", and forensic oratory (see p. 30-42 and commentary, *passim*). Finally, the book contains extensive and detailed information on the several topographical and historical allusions made in the dialogue. As far as historical information goes, a number of anachronisms are appropriately noted.

All things considered, B.'s hypothesis on the dialogue's chronology turns out to be well supported and generally persuasive. Also convincing are B.'s strategies in reconstructing and rearranging the text, which significantly improve the dialogue's argumentative structure. Nonetheless, some issues leave room for further investigation. How are we to reconcile the view that the *Axiochus* was written in the sceptical Academy with the dialogue's epilogue, which does not sound sceptical at all? Secondly, why did Pseudo-Plato choose precisely Prodicus as a source for his consolatory arguments? What is more, how are we to explain Prodicus' being credited with two incompatible theses, i.e. the souls' insensibility and its immortality? And how, if at all, should we distinguish Socrates' view from Prodicus' reported arguments? Although addressed in B.'s reconstruction, such questions may be worthy of further examination and discussion.

In conclusion, this book stands out for its methodological rigour and philological accuracy. Moreover, it devotes much attention to the dialogue's lines of arguments and consistency. All in all, not only does it provide a much valuable analysis of the *Axiochus*, but surely represents a pivotal contribution to the wider field of pseudo-Platonic studies.

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ENDNOTES

1 See Döring-Erler-Schorn (2005), esp. the contributions by Erler (p. 81-95), Joyal (p. 97-117), and Tulli (p. 255-271); Männlein-Robert (2012), Irwin (2015), Menchelli (2016) and Beghini (2021). For further recent publications both on the *Axiochus* and on pseudo-Platonica in general, see Donato (2021).

2 Sillitti (1966), and Aronadio (2008).

3 *Axiochus*, 1) 364a1-364c8; 2) 364d1-365c7; 3) 365d1-365e2; 4) 365e2-366b1; 5) 366b2-366c5; 6) 366c5-367b7; 7) 367b7-368a7; 8) 368a7-369b5; 9) 369b5-370b1; 10) 370b1-370e4; 11) 371a1-372a3; 12) 372a3-372a16.

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