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SUMMARY

PAPERS

I molti imprevisti del *Fedro* platonico

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ABSTRACT

The themes of the so-called Palinode have often produced different levels of disorientation. For this reason, I considered it necessary to start from the relationship between the Palinode and the three metaphysical dialogues par excellence (*Phd*., *R*. and *Smp*.). In this relationship, factors of discontinuity no doubt prevail, but the memorable creativity of the Palinode powerfully suggests not to dismiss the issue hastily. However, once the Palinode is concluded, why does the enthusiasm with which Platonic Socrates had evoked "World 2" in the Palinode dissolve in an instant? The sudden distancing that follows seems unmotivated and is therefore difficult to account for. In view of that, I argue that the post-Palinode section of the *Phaedrus* is marked by a very clear desire to look forward, to the present, and not back, so as to say things that are (or could be) significant for Plato's contemporaries. A special attention is then paid to the new, and impressively creative, idea of rhetoric that surfaces in *Phdr*. 261ab and 264c. A section on orality and writing follows. Here I maintain that this does not go at all in the direction indicated by the masters of the so-called Tubingen School. I then argue that the *Phaedrus* is aimed at several (but primarily two) different types of audience and that not every goal was fully reached by Plato – which, if you think about it, is not surprising.

Keywords: Plato, Plato's Metaphysics, Palinode, Rhetoric, History of Rhetoric

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1. INTRODUZIONE: UN PROBLEMA LATENTE

Il *Fedro* è, notoriamente, un dialogo dalle molte facce. Inizialmente sembra limitarsi a offrire una serie di innocue divagazioni sull'eros, mentre poi prende forma una presentazione descrittiva di ciò che si immagina possa accadere in un 'cielo' popolato da anime non esattamente immateriali e da una vasta gamma di altre entità 'celesti', ed è a questo punto che si passa al tema dei discorsi e dell'arte retorica. Mentre il primo leitmotiv (l'eros) può ben passare per un passatempo e un pretesto, il secondo (il mondo iperuranio) ha maggiori pretese per il fatto di rifarsi in modo inequivocabile a idee precedentemente svolte nel *Fedone,* nella *Repubblica* e in una piccola ma significativa sezione del *Simposio*, e non è certo casuale che l'excursus incluso nella Palinodia si sia storicamente imposto all'attenzione come uno dei testi platonici più significativi e importanti. Quanto poi al terzo e quarto tema (nozione di sapienza comunicazionale, discussione sui limiti del testo scritto), in prima battuta si può ben dire che siano stati oscurati dal secondo per secoli. A fare problema è, in particolare, il passaggio dalla Palinodia alla terza parte del dialogo perché qui si passa, come è noto, da una polarizzazione sul 'mondo 2' a una esplicita polarizzazione sul tema della scrittura come arte, grazie a una lunga transizione (256e-259d) che fa ben poco per giustificare il passaggio dalla Palinodia alla sezione finale.

Infatti, il grande mito cosmologico si conclude con una rassicurante rappresentazione delle aspettative per chi ha saputo amare almeno un po' (256a-d), e di aspettative non meno rassicuranti per Fedro e per chiunque coltivi relazioni amorose, quindi anche per la persona di Socrate. Poi accade che Fedro provi a dire (in 257c): "Socrate, io ammiro il tuo discorso e <quindi> temo che la reputazione di Lisia possa scendere. Forse non a caso <Lisia> è stato rimproverato di essere un logografo". Socrate coglie al volo questo spunto per mettersi a parlare dei politici che amano moltissimo scrivere discorsi (discorsi che, scopriamo non senza sorpresa, sono pensati come decreti da sottoporre all'approvazione dell'assemblea: 257e-258b), e ne deduce che essi non possono giudicare male Lisia in quanto sono persone che si mobilitano (non possono non mobilitarsi) per apprendere proprio la sua arte della comunicazione pensata per contesti assembleari o giudiziari (258c). Conclude Socrate: "È dunque evidente che l'arte di scrivere discorsi è una cosa bella, non brutta, sicché ha senso chiedersi come si fa scrivere bene oppure male" (258d).

Segue la fugace evocazione del mito delle cicale e delle muse, da cui si deduce che è bene coltivare la parola e chiedersi come ci si potrebbe regolare per pronunciare o scrivere bei discorsi (259a-e). Continua quindi Fedro: "Però chi sa ben parlare o scrivere (il buon oratore) si preoccupa di ciò che *sembra* buono e bello, non del vero" (260a). Partendo da questo passaggio Socrate si risolve ad avviare un discorso di maggior respiro – e noi capiamo che la transizione è ormai terminata e i due si sentono liberi di occuparsi dell'arte della parola e della scrittura (261b). Ma liberi solo perché ai due è venuto in mente, senza alcuna "necessità logografica" (264b7), di spostare l'attenzione sulla comunicazione intesa come arte.

Ora è pur vero che, in un certo senso "all lovers are a kind of rhetorician, in so far as they necessarily engage in verbal 'intercourse' with one another", che al *logos* viene riconosciuta una certa importanza anche nel corso della Palinodia e che pertanto "rhetoric and

the issue of *logos* are by no means confined to the second half of the dialogue" (Werner, 2007, 97 s.), ma non è certo questo ciò che il lettore è invitato a inferire dalla successione dei discorsi sull'eros. In tutta la prima metà del dialogo (Palinodia inclusa) questa dimensione era effettivamente 'nell'aria' ma, quanto meno, era lasciata ai margini. Anzi, lo slittamento da una tematica all'altra nel dopo-Palinodia sembra avvenire come per caso, per ragioni che danno l'impressione di essere del tutto estrinseche.

Infatti nel frattempo il tema dell'amore è diventato decisamente marginale, mentre il sapere sulle entità immateriali o semi-immateriali, così appassionatamente illustrato nella Palinodia, addirittura esce definitivamente di scena, e la decisione si rivela irreversibile, e non solo nel ristretto ambito di questo dialogo. Significativamente, infatti, in nessun altro dialogo post-trilogia[1] le congetture sul 'mondo 2' e sull'immateriale vengono riprese così pienamente e con un così grande investimento in termini di comunicazione di qualità come nel *Fedro*. È come se fosse giunto il momento di chiudere una volta per tutte, ma 'chiudere in bellezza', la stagione dei riferimenti espliciti al 'grande attore cosmico'. In altre parole: come se all'improvviso quel sapere 'metafisico' avesse perduto ogni interesse conoscitivo agli occhi di Platone, oltre che a quelli di Socrate e Fedro, ma avesse preservato intatto il suo fascino, diciamo pure, illusionistico.

Visto dunque che Socrate ne aveva parlato a lungo, con trasporto e con la consapevolezza di aver fatto un grande discorso, avremmo diritto di capire che fine ha fatto l'interesse, anzi, l'entusiasmo per il 'Mondo 2', che oltretutto era associato all'attesa di una risposta convinta (o almeno incantata) da parte di noi lettori. Per quale ragione tutta questa attrazione, che aveva dominato fino a cinque minuti prima, si è dissolta? Che senso ha questo improvviso volgere le spalle al 'Mondo 2' senza addurre la benché minima motivazione? Ci aspetteremmo delle spiegazioni, o almeno delle scuse, e invece niente.

Non è meno giusto chiedersi come mai, all'inizio della Palinodia (245c-e), il Socrate platonico abbia indugiato nell'evocare la 'dimostrazione' dell'immortalità dell'anima rifacendosi ad argomenti svolti altrove (sostanzialmente nel *Fedone*) e trattati come argomenti addirittura perentori. In teoria, dovremmo presumere che in questo caso egli abbia inteso dire che essi conservano tutta la loro validità, ma siamo sicuri che le cose stiano così?

Dissonanti appaiono anche alcune autovalutazioni. All'inizio della Palinodia si era parlato di "ciò che bisogna dire" (244a3), poi di una verità che "bisogna conoscere" (245c4), poi di ciò che "si deve dire" (246a3), solo che ci vorrebbe una esposizione di grandi dimensioni e che fosse in tutti i sensi divina (a4-5), cosa irrealizzabile. Più avanti, terminata l'esposizione, il Socrate platonico chiarisce che la palinodia ha offerto la più bella e la migliore esposizione di cui egli fosse capace (257a3-4) e, molto più avanti (265b8-c1), che "componendo un discorso non del tutto inattendibile, abbiamo cantato un inno in forma di racconto". D'altronde, se i temi svolti nella Palinodia avessero avuto uno status così alto, perché mai, una volta terminata, 'dimenticarsene' subito e del tutto (destino che *non* viene riservato anche al tema dell'amore)? Forse solo perché a Fedro è capitato due volte di attirare l'attenzione sul tema della comunicazione ma, apparentemente, senza secondi fini? Quello non sarebbe un buon motivo!

Se non altro per queste ragioni, trovo che un simile scompenso sia proprio enigmatico. Del resto è solo per via di questo scompenso

che si sono delineate due maniere diversissime di rendere conto del *Fedro*. Una più tradizionale, accolta massivamente dai neoplatonici (fino a Marsilio Ficino), e così pure da una minoranza di studi recenti (tra tutti spicca un vibrante libro di Anca Vasiliu del 2021) è orientata a prendere molto sul serio la Palinodia, quasi che lì si concentrasse l'insegnamento principe dell'intero dialogo. L'altra, che si è affermata e ha finito per imporsi, ma solo da alcuni decenni, è l'idea che la Palinodia *non si può* prendere sul serio in quanto, a ben vedere, il solo punto di vista apertamente accreditato da Platone è quello svolto nella sezione finale del dialogo. Tutto questo anche se, attorno al discorso di Lisia, si affacciano svariati riferimenti, anche espliciti e precisi, all'arte retorica[2] (ma sono flashes molto brevi e non sottolineati).

Intravedo una complicazione ulteriore. Chi ha capito qualcosa di questo dialogo probabilmente l'ha capito solo quando lo ha riletto e ha (correttamente) adottato come chiave di lettura dell'intero ciò che si riesce a desumere dalla sua sezione finale, accettando perciò di ripensare gran parte delle prime impressioni che il dialogo aveva potuto suggerire a chi lo stava leggendo *per la prima volta*. Chi, come Vasiliu, privilegia i temi della Palinodia dà invece tutt'altra impressione: è come se non avesse nemmeno completato la prima lettura. Osservo inoltre che la resistenza alle sirene della terza parte del dialogo trova quanto meno un appiglio quando il lettore nota che, lì, nessuna 'necessità logografica' entra in scena per dirci che la Palinodia andrebbe energicamente declassata.

Invece per chi ha effettuato una o molteplici *ri*letture, è difficile sottrarsi all'esigenza di gettare alle ortiche molte delle prime impressioni e intraprendere un ripensamento dell'insieme. Yunis (2011), in particolare, ha riconosciuto che la Palinodia "is so immaginative and large that it threatens to dominate the dialogue as a whole" e che "the dialogue is so rich and multifaceted that an account of its thematic unity continues to be elusive" (2011, 1-2); nondimeno è orientato a rileggere l'intero alla luce della sola sezione post-Palinodia. Comprendendo bene che non è la Palinodia il punto di vista finale di Platone, Yunis sembra non chiedere altro. Fra l'altro egli insiste nel sottolineare che il Socrate del *Fedro* investe molte energie nel distogliere Fedro da Lisia e avvicinarlo alla filosofia, ma nemmeno questa può essere la ragion d'essere del dialogo in quanto tale. Il dialogo è infatti rivolto non tanto a un Fedro sognatore e, in ipotesi, privo di solidi addentellati con la realtà, quanto a un pubblico effettivo, costituito per lo più da lettori che già conoscevano e ammiravano Platone.

Così facendo, Yunis ha scelto di adottare il punto di vista apertamente manifestato dall'autore verso la fine del dialogo. Ma questo Platone che così volentieri induce a concentrare l'attenzione su un aspetto per volta (di quella realtà complessa che è il *Fedro*) si direbbe un po' troppo ben abituato a far "leggere le sue opere secondo le sue intenzioni" (Gaiser 1984, 32 s.).[3] In questo caso, poi, la spinta a adottare il punto di vista tipico della terza parte si traduce in spinta a ignorare un altro punto di vista (quello della Palinodia) non perché venga suggerito a noi un buon motivo per disinteressarcene, ma solo perché vediamo che il Socrate platonico *finisce per* disinteressarsene di buon grado.

A queste condizioni l'esigenza di rendere conto degli entusiasmi che permeano la Palinodia e della 'minaccia' (così Yunis) che l'intero dialogo sia dominato dai temi della Palinodia, diventa una priorità. Del resto, rimane da capire perché mai, dai neoplatonici fino al recente libro di Anca Vasiliu, sia stato

possibile accreditare tante volte un'ottica completamente differente. Del resto, bisognerebbe anche rendere conto del cospicuo spazio che viene assegnato a più riprese al pur evanescente tema dell'amore.

Brevemente su quest'ultimo punto. L'argomento dell'amore è ricorrente[4] ma oserei dire che Platone si accontenti ogni volta di sfoderare 'pezzi di repertorio'. Nel discorso attribuito a Lisia si guarda agli innamorati, ma dall'esterno, offrendo solo astratte valutazioni su ciò che sarebbe meglio o peggio. Poi, nel primo discorso di Socrate, inizialmente si indugia sulla distinzione tra desiderio ed eros, finendo per accentuare la contrapposizione tra desiderio cieco e affermazione di *nous* e *sōphrosunē* (al posto di *erōs* e *mania*: 241a3-4): decisamente nulla di nuovo. Nella Palinodia, infine, ci viene offerta la rappresentazione dell'amore che fa rinascere le ali e di qualche forma di desiderio alquanto più discutibile – e sono tutte ovvietà che non recano traccia di nessuna ricerca o idea un po' nuova. In altre parole, sono tutte considerazioni che a Platone non 'costavano' nulla. Quindi si può capire che non siano queste le idee di punta del dialogo.

Rimane da capire la natura del solo vero 'concorrente' della sezione finale, la Palinodia e il suo singolarissimo modo di rifarsi alle mirabolanti idee lanciate a suo tempo, e con grande enfasi, in *Fedone*, *Repubblica* e una intensa sezione del *Simposio*. In nessun altro dialogo diverso dal *Fedro* queste idee, opportunamente ridisegnate, tornano a campeggiare di nuovo in maniera esplicita e ad essere presentate in positivo. Che d'altronde la Palinodia implichi un tacito rinvio ai contenuti 'metafisici' di quei tre dialoghi è del tutto intuitivo per chiunque non ignori la loro esistenza. Tuttavia la riluttanza dei commentatori a soffermarsi su queste connessioni è facilmente constatabile. Ma perché mai? A me pare che valga la pena di dissociarsi da tale uso e tornare a prestare la dovuta attenzione ai fattori di continuità e discontinuità da precedenti così illustri.

2. LA PALINODIA E LA SUA RELAZIONE PRIVILEGIATA CON *PHD.*, *R.* E *SMP.*

2.1. UNA RELAZIONE PIÙ CHE PRIVILEGIATA

Comincerò dunque col ricordare le due autovalutazioni concernenti la Palinodia: "questa è la più bella e la migliore delle Palinodie" (257a3-4) e "componendo un discorso non del tutto inattendibile, abbiamo cantato un inno in forma di racconto" (265b8-c1). Simili autovalutazioni si addicono a un sapere che ormai si è costituto e stabilizzato, e che continua a suscitare interesse o addirittura ammirazione. Invitano inoltre a pensare che la fase della scoperta (del 'mondo 2') sia terminata. In effetti, nel corso dell'affabulazione a capo scoperto, il Socrate platonico non prova nemmeno a sviluppare degli insegnamenti, nuovi o ripetuti che siano.[5] Al loro posto offre pressoché unicamente un elaborato flusso di immagini che, oltre a non essere pensate per insegnare argomentando, danno luogo a una narrazione e a una rappresentazione in cui tante informazioni si considerano ormai acquisite e tante ragioni di perplessità superate. Diviene con ciò possibile mettersi a sognare a occhi aperti, figurandosi un'inedita coreografia con carri, cavalli, cortei, ali e luoghi di fantasia (sopra la volta del cielo), amplessi e perfino un'isolata grandezza numerica (le undici schiere).

A prendere forma è infatti la descrizione di eventi ambientati in un articolatissimo

universo immaginario dove, del rigore argomentativo tipico della 'metafisica' di *Fedone* e *Repubblica*, rimane una traccia all'inizio e solamente all'inizio, mentre tutto il resto assume i tratti di una 'verità' narrativa'[6] che non ha *nessuna pretesa* di essere rigorosa. Giacché qui, a svanire è la domanda di conoscenza (oltre che la disciplina intellettuale), mentre si impone uno spettacolo che è in grado di far sognare almeno nel caso di un pubblico di lettori non troppo esigenti, offrendo loro una quanto mai rara opportunità di evasione dalla realtà e favorendo l'affermarsi di non poca confusione sulla fondatezza di quanto viene rappresentato (cosa che corrisponde bene all'idea di "inno in forma di racconto" che "non <è> del tutto inattendibile").

Con *Phd*., *R*. e *Smp*. **s**ussiste insomma una relazione più che privilegiata sia perché senza quel precedente nessuna Palinodia così concepita sarebbe stata immaginabile, sia perché ora la fertile fantasia di Platone si sente libera di scatenarsi senza remore. Si confermano, con ciò, sia la centralità del riferimento del *Fedro* – o almeno della Palinodia – a quelle elaborazioni, sia una distanza sufficientemente grande da permettere all'autore di non porsi nemmeno, ormai, il problema della fondatezza di congetture che possiamo presumere risalissero a non meno di vent'anni prima.

È verosimile che, all'epoca, *Phd*., *R*. e *Smp*. abbiano avuto un successo strepitoso per via dei loro molti meriti, ma in primis per via delle inaudite prospettive che essi ebbero il privilegio di delineare sul conto di un 'grande attore cosmico' totalmente insospettato: tutta una teoria di enti immateriali che non solo trascenderebbero i limiti dell'umano e si caratterizzerebbero per la loro non-fisicità, ma inoltre sovrintenderebbero al nostro mondo e lo governerebbero (tanto da giudicare noi umani). Ora il solo altro dialogo in cui questi temi vennero ripresi in maniera ampia e dimostrabilmente analitica (sia pure con innovazioni importanti) è il *Fedro* (nella Palinodia). E si è trattato di un caso isolato. Infatti solo qui accade che le esaltanti tematiche 'metafisiche' di quei tre dialoghi ricompaiano come tali (anche se con ben altri connotati) e in maniera così esplicita e compiaciuta.

La circostanza si traduce in potente indizio per presumere che il *Fedro* fosse animato (non soltanto, ma *anche*) dall'aspirazione a essere all'altezza di quei tre capolavori per via del confronto che implicitamente sollecitava. Per queste ragioni è pertinente indugiare ancora un poco sui punti di contatto e sugli elementi di discontinuità.

2.2. CIÒ CHE I QUATTRO DIALOGHI HANNO IN COMUNE

Che i tre dialoghi pre-*Fedro* siano cresciuti pressappoco insieme, che Platone abbia investito energie eccezionali nell'idearli e configurarli con ogni cura, e che i tre dialoghi abbiano effettivamente stupito, impressionato e spesso suscitato ammirazione tra i loro primi lettori (essendo stati concepiti in modo tale da suscitare ammirazione) è, si ammetterà, una virtuale certezza. Anche se *Phd*., *R*. e *Smp*. sembrano andare ognuno per la sua strada, l'insegnamento che lascia una traccia indelebile nel pubblico e che, anche agli occhi di Platone, conta davvero è quello che si è venuto strutturando nei tre excursus 'metafisici',[7] e che li accomuna. Del resto non furono proprio questi insegnamenti a fare di lui un filosofo agli occhi dei più, e della filosofia un sapere inaudito su ciò che c'è ma 'si vede' solo con gli occhi della mente?

In particolare il *Fedone* prende le mosse dal punto di arrivo costituito dal *Gorgia*[8] e assorbe

alcuni dei più vistosi cambiamenti introdotti in quel dialogo, ma per poi amplificarne enormemente la portata, in particolare per espandere drasticamente i primi flashes sull'universo parallelo che incontriamo alla fine del *Gorgia* e assicurare una più precisa configurazione dell'anima del filosofo, con specificazione delle potenzialità, forse di uno statuto e probabilmente di un destino molto speciali.

Nel *Fedone* il Socrate del *Gorgia* – un Socrate che quando ha cominciato a parlare aveva già elaborato un intero pacchetto di convinzioni che erano ormai ben ferme,[9] ossia di conclusioni già raggiunte, anche se raggiunte non da lui ma da quel Platone di cui egli era ormai diventato il portavoce e il testimonial[10] – si sente pienamente autorizzato a dar voce alle idee di Platone e vorrebbe che il suo fosse considerato un sapere in piena regola (ma non ne è del tutto sicuro e, significativamente, a volte – es. in 107c – trova il modo di riconoscerlo). Di conseguenza egli è impegnato a farsi – e a mettere noi in condizione di farci – un'idea non vaga di questo 'mondo 2', eminentemente immateriale, della cui esistenza ha appena scoperto indizi così promettenti da dedicare ad essi tutta l'attenzione di cui era capace.

Un tratto saliente del Socrate del *Fedone* è la sua propensione a riconoscere che vasti insiemi di entità immateriali esistono e che il nostro mondo si rapporta a queste entità in forme talmente significative da delineare, per chiunque si senta filosofo e provi a occuparsene, una più che onorevole ragione di vita. Accade dunque che una impensata verità si manifesti e si configuri immediatamente come dotata di rilevanza cosmica, per cui rispetto ad essa si può solo essere subalterni. Non entro in altri dettagli e sorvolo anche sulle sapienti mediazioni che, nel corso del dialogo, assicurano una transizione molto 'morbida' dalla vicenda personale di Socrate alla presentazione delle nuove certezze raggiunte da Platone (con Socrate che funge da suo portavoce) e da queste, di nuovo, alla vicenda personale del condannato a morte, perché si tratta di un aspetto che, pur essendo di per sé importantissimo, non è rilevante per la presente indagine.

Quanto alla *Repubblica*, l'articolata conversazione che vi si snoda fornisce al Socrate platonico un nuovo contesto in cui, oltre a illustrare con inconsueta ampiezza le 'sue' argomentate convinzioni sull'ipotesi di una radicale, quanto discutibile, riorganizzazione della vita pubblica, ha modo di immettere in circolo anche un'energica ripresa di quell'embrione di sapere sulle realtà immateriali (idee e anime) e sul loro destino che aveva cominciato a delinearsi nel *Gorgia* per poi conoscere sviluppi ben più importanti nel *Fedone*. Per il fatto di essere impegnato ad elaborare l'idea di filosofo, ad evocare idee riconducibili a Parmenide-Melisso (quando viene delineata la relazione fra scienza, opinione e ignoranza), a interiorizzare la tensione corpo-anima, tipica del *Fedone*, nell'anima e, contemporaneamente, esteriorizzarla nella società, a teorizzare l'attribuzione del potere ai filosofi, a svolgere l'idea di imitazione, l'idea del bene, il mito della caverna e l'embrione di epistemologia associata alla "linea quadripartita", a proporre una nuova versione del mito escatologico, e altro, il Socrate della *Repubblica* sembra voler prendere straordinariamente sul serio i riferimenti al sistema delle entità immateriali che egli stesso aveva cominciato a delineare, impegnandosi a dare una configurazione più strutturata almeno ad alcune di queste entità e al sistema di relazioni che si intravede.

La considerevole sicurezza di sé di cui dà prova il Socrate della *Repubblica* nel riprendere e sviluppare gli insegnamenti 'metafisici' pro-

spettati nel *Fedone* coesiste con il sospetto di non conoscere l'idea del bene a sufficienza (*ouk ikanōs*: VI 489cd); inoltre in VI 511a Socrate ammette che l'anima impegnata a raggiungere l'apice della conoscenza è costretta a servirsi di ipotesi ed è incapace di superare il livello delle ipotesi; che le potenzialità che verrebbero attribuite all'uomo della caverna qualora venisse sciolto dalle catene e costretto (*anankazoito*!) ad alzarsi etc. (VII 515c5-8) sono del tutto virtuali; infine che le intese da prendere con chi è diventato filosofo *par' hēmin* ("da noi": VII 520a7) si reggono sul presupposto che le loro qualità siano eccelse (ed è un presupposto tutto da dimostrare; per meglio dire, è una mera speranza). Di fatto, è mille volte operante l'idea che "sarebbe bello se fosse proprio così"[11] – e si tratta di una dimensione che, in seguito, venne amplificata dalla volontà di credere da parte di quei lettori (molti in ogni epoca) agli occhi dei quali riuscire a sentirsi platonici costituì un traguardo e un vanto.

La situazione peggiora almeno un poco con il *Simposio* perché, nella cornice di un incontro memorabile e di una superba offerta di discorsi, il punto di dottrina – il percorso ascendente che, partendo dalla bellezza dei corpi, si spinge fino al bello in sé – viene accreditato da un personaggio di pura fantasia, Diotima, che un Socrate un po' più riconoscibile del solito non esita a trattare come ampiamente credibile, ma senza nemmeno provare a sostanziare in qualche modo questa sua esibita presunzione di credibilità. L'insegnamento fornito da Diotima, inequivocabile nel richiamare *Fedone* e *Repubblica*, permette al Socrate platonico di rilanciare l'idea di universalità delle idee e accentua l'enfasi sull'emozione che il privilegio di accedere a questo sapere inaudito suscita. In compenso molte specifiche – l'idea del bene, il mito della caverna, la linea quadripartita, la dialettica, il giudizio post-mortem e numerose altre questioni più circoscritte – vengono come dimenticate. Può così accadere che chi legge il discorso di Diotima non possa propriamente sospettare che altrove si sia parlato, e a lungo, di molti altri aspetti di questo stesso mondo immateriale.[12]

Come ho precedentemente accennato, è impossibile che il sotto-insieme costituito da *Fedone*, *Repubblica* e *Simposio* non abbia avuto una grandissima risonanza. Tutto lascia credere che, quando i tre dialoghi vennero pubblicati, Platone fosse già un intellettuale affermato e ben noto. Nondimeno, la finestra da lui aperta sul 'grande attore cosmico', con immissione in circolo di uno strutturato insieme di 'verità' letteralmente inaudite, deve essere stata tale da sbalordire, e anche tale da marcare in modo indelebile la differenza tra lui e gli altri socratici così come tra lui e ogni altro scrittore o intellettuale dell'epoca.

Diventa secondario, di conseguenza, che la presentazione esplicita di idee così impensate sia stata associata alla vicenda 'patetica' della fine di Socrate, alla costruzione di una più che ambiziosa proposta di ridefinizione della vita pubblica (effettuata all'insegna dell'inedito sapere che soltanto la neonata o nascente comunità di filosofi capeggiati da Platone si presumeva fosse in grado di sfoderare) e alla rappresentazione di un evento simposiale incomparabile. In tutti e tre i casi, a occupare la scena e a impressionare è anzitutto la teorizzazione di un secondo livello di realtà.

Si direbbe, invero, che la dimensione 'metafisica' della *Repubblica* – un sapere orgogliosamente discontinuo rispetto a qualsiasi altro sapere – dia un contributo decisivo alla presunzione di autorevolezza dell'utopia politica fatti salvi i suoi non molti meriti intrinseci, e con il concorso dei riferimenti al sapere matematico (che proprio allora stava

conoscendo grandi progressi e acquistando grande prestigio), nonché dell'eleganza del testo.[13] Ma anche l'oggettiva ricchezza di tre opere che, se non fossero accomunate dallo 'zoccolo duro' dei tre affondi sull'immateriale, sarebbero tanto diverse, avrà sicuramente dato un contributo di prim'ordine alla fortuna dei tre dialoghi.

Venne con ciò a delinearsi un Socrate-Platone le cui risorse ideative erano ormai del tutto non paragonabili a quelle di qualunque altro *sophos*, anzitutto per il fatto di trasmettere un'idea molto definita di quelle realtà 'metafisiche' che nessun altro contemporaneo (di Platone) avrebbe saputo nemmeno lontanamente figurarsi. Il risultato fu l'allestimento di una cospicua, quanto inedita, 'lente di ingrandimento' che era, e ha continuato a essere, in grado di attirare ogni volta l'attenzione di uditori e lettori su annunci memorabili e chiaramente *pensati per* impressionare. Venne insomma aperta una finestra in grado di fare clamore, e di attrarre, non solo nel breve ma anche nel lungo periodo.

Fu così che a Platone accadde di acquisire i connotati (1) dello scrittore dotato di superiore talento, (2) del grande filosofo e (3) del capo riconosciuto di una scuola prestigiosa in cui già si faceva, immagino, un gran parlare di questi suoi 'insegnamenti superiori'. Non solo. Alla luce dei tre dialoghi, tutti quelli precedenti, incluso il *Gorgia*, poterono sembrare accantonabili come opere molto ma molto meno significative.[14]

Ed è con la sola dimensione 'metafisica' di questi tre dialoghi che il *Fedro* chiaramente mostra di volersi confrontare nella Palinodia. In effetti, il Socrate del *Fedro* riprende l'insieme dei riferimenti all'immateriale che erano stati elaborati in *Fedone* e *Repubblica* e procede a comporli in un quadro diversamente strutturato, con un iperuranio 'abitato' da anime, dèmoni e divinità; il tema delle tre classi sociali della *Repubblica* viene ripreso, ma per tradurlo nell'immagine dell'anima auriga di un carro in corsa, tirato da due cavalli molto diversi tra loro. La lista dei temi ripresi nel *Fedro* continua con l'opposizione verità-opinioni, il destino delle anime e il giudizio ultramondano (siamo già alla quarta versione del mito escatologico!), la metempsicosi, la nozione di idea, la reminiscenza, la dialettica. Ricompaiono inoltre l'idea che il filosofo sia profondamente diverso dagli altri umani, il tema della bellezza, l'idea di processo dalla molteplicità all'unità, un nuovo accenno alla terminologia eleatica (in particolare con l'espressione *ousia ontōs ousa*: 247c) e, naturalmente, l'evocazione di una componente erotica 'bella' perché non eterosessuale. Invece alcune tematiche che si sarebbero inserite a fatica nella nuova narrazione – il percorso ascendente che era stato tratteggiato da Diotima, l'idea del bene, il mito della caverna, la linea quadripartita – vengono semplicemente ignorate (e non è difficile intuire il motivo di simili scelte).

Chi ne dubitasse consideri cosa sarebbe accaduto se si fosse trovato a leggere la Palinodia senza avere idea della 'metafisica' elaborata negli altri tre dialoghi: in tale ipotesi troppe spiegazioni sarebbero mancate, col rischio di rendere la fantasmagoria pressoché incomprendibile perché troppe domande sarebbero rimaste senza risposta. Invece, avendo idea di quei precedenti, si intuisce subito che nel *Fedro* ha luogo una ripresa di idee già circolanti, un ripensamento intelligibile e fortemente innovativo, ma anche tanto lontano da quell'offerta di alcune ovvietà in materia di amore che ha avuto l'agio di campeggiare in tutta la prima parte del dialogo (finché nella Palinodia non accade che Socrate cambi decisamente passo).

2.3. SIMILI, MA CON PROFONDE DIFFERENZE

Ma i temi prescelti vengono manifestamente incardinati in un'ottica del tutto nuova. Dopo un breve excursus sull'immortalità dell'anima (245c-e) in cui l'atteggiamento è apertamente didascalico, il Socrate platonico introduce l'immagine del carro alato, immagine che in questa fase evolve rapidamente da rappresentazione del singolo essere umano (246a-c) a immagine cosmica (in breve si passa a parlare di un carro guidato da Zeus in persona e seguito da undici schiere[15] di altri dèi e anime: 246e-247a). Accade, in secondo luogo, che i carri siano concepiti come oggetti materiali in grado di poggiare sulla volta del cielo (dunque al di sopra del cielo, al suo esterno: 247bc). Segue un rifermento a chi vede l'Essere, la Giustizia, la Temperanza e la Conoscenza (247d). Si parla quindi dell'auriga che conduce i cavalli alla mangiatoria e dà loro da mangiare ambrosia e nettare (247e), e delle singole anime che aspirano a vedere (e possibilmente raggiungere) la Pianura della Verità (in quanto, leggiamo, le ali si nutrono de<i fiori d>el suo prato). Segue una fantasticheria sulla "legge di Adrastea" e sul diversificato destino post-mortem delle anime, dopodiché si torna a parlare di mania, poi della bellezza che emoziona e fa ricrescere le ali in analogia con i bambini cui spuntano i primi dentini (250e-251e).

L'affabulazione infine riparte con un cenno su *erōs* e *pterōs* (amore e ala) al termine del quale Platone procede a offrire una più articolata ripresa del racconto di molte bighe alate, con accurata visualizzazione di cavalli che è tanto difficile far andare di conserva e di aurighi che, tirando le redini, ottengono che i cavalli si fermino, ma non senza che uno dei due "bagni di sudore tutta l'anima" (254c4-5) e l'altro addirittura si ferisca a sangue per la forza con cui l'auriga gli ha tirato il morso (254e3-4). Ed ecco che l'anima dell'amante può finalmente avvicinarsi all'amato ed essere accettata da un amato "il quale si rende conto che, al confronto, amici e parenti non gli offrono niente che sia paragonabile all'amicizia di questo amico che è *entheo*s, posseduto dal dio" (255b5-8). Accade poi che, dopo carezze e baci, comincino a rinascere le penne (e dunque si riformino le ali) e, mente i due amanti si dispongono a concedersi (256a), accade che anche uno dei due cavalli avverta l'impulso amoroso più dell'altro (256a). Seguono ulteriori 'ricami' sul destino di chi coltiva amore e amicizia (a seconda dell'intensità e purezza di queste relazioni) e, di riflesso, sulle ali dell'anima. La supposta immaterialità di questo mondo, dèi inclusi, cede dunque il posto, *more Homerico*, a corpi non fisici ma con molti tratti assimilabili a quelli fisici (non soltanto una forma visibile, collocata nello spazio, ma anche relazioni tipiche dei corpi materiali, come sudare, ferirsi e mangiare erba o fiori), che il narratore osserva e ci fa 'osservare' con notevole realismo, specialmente quando Platone decide di indugiare sul tema dell'attrazione sessuale e dei cavalli.

Sono cambiamenti che vanno ben al di là dell'accantonamento di alcuni temi e dell'introduzione di altri, anche del tutto nuovi. Qui una fantasia sbrigliata procede senza esitazione a occupare la scena e 'dà corpo' a protagonisti e sensazioni, fino a rappresentare situazioni complesse (e talora ambigue) come se fossero fisiche. Quel che più conta, Platone appare seriamente impegnato a generare in noi lettori forti dosi di empatia, suggerendo l'idea che né Fedro né noi lettori in genere dovremmo limitarci ad assistere agli eventi rappresentati, perché il modello proposto è un modello anche per noi (per cui, se ci adeguas-

simo, vivremmo felici). Si vuole insomma che la lettura sia coinvolgente e lasci una traccia molto superiore a quella dei bei sogni.

In effetti, il Socrate platonico qui non prova nemmeno a sviluppare degli insegnamenti argomentati. Al loro posto offre, come dicevo, pressoché unicamente un elaborato flusso di immagini. A occupare la scena è infatti la descrizione di eventi ambientati in un complesso universo immaginario dove, del rigore argomentativo tipico della 'metafisica' di *Fedone* e *Repubblica*, rimane una traccia all'inizio (245c-e) e solamente all'inizio mentre, nel prosieguo, a dirigere i giochi provvede una 'verità' narrativa[16] che è tutto fuorché rigorosa. Mentre a beneficio di lettori *non* esigenti, prende forma uno spettacolo in grado di farli sognare (la sua unicità lo rendeva straordinario e memorabile) ciò che svanisce è soprattutto la domanda di conoscenza, insieme alla disciplina intellettuale. Una complessiva evasione dalla realtà, che può solo favorire la confusione sulla fondatezza di quanto viene raccontato, si afferma, e ciò corrisponde bene all'idea di "inno in forma di racconto" (265b8-c1) che "non <è> del tutto inattendibile", ma non pretende nemmeno di essere il suo contrario!

Noto, fra l'altro, che le anime vengono dichiarate non solo immortali ma anche incorruttibili (*adiaphthoron*: 245d4), tuttavia il vivente (*to zōion*: 246b5) viene poi detto mortale così come immortale, e il Socrate platonico ammette di non sapere perché mai le cose stiano in questo modo (elegantemente dichiara: "queste cose stiano come piace a dio": 246d2-3). In effetti, la ragion d'essere delle entità 'sovrumane' non viene né chiesta né offerta. Nel 'mondo 2' queste entità semplicemente ci sono e, a grandi linee, ci viene spiegato come si configurano, cosa fanno, come è fatto il loro mondo, cosa accade nel loro mondo. Accade inoltre che "l'âme … agit … comme si elle disposait d'un corps propre" (Vasiliu, 2021, 29) ma non emerge alcun interrogativo, nemmeno intorno a ciò che diverrebbe comprensibile (o almeno più comprensibile) grazie all'evocazione del 'mondo 2'. Il racconto si basa su azioni sceniche in un ambiente in cui ad agire sono anime, carri e cavalli i quali, *more Homerico*, coinvolgono corpi non fisici ma pur sempre visibili: ad essere menzionati sono i carri degli dèi (247b1-2), la mangiatoia dei cavalli (247e5), il sudore (248b2, 254c4-5), le penne che si spezzano (248b3), la pianura (b6), le radici dell'ala (251b6), le gengive (251c3) e molto di più a partire da 251e, allorché Platone decide di indugiare alquanto sul tema dell'attrazione sessuale e dei cavalli. Il tutto malgrado un precedente riferimento alle anime incorruttibili. Il narratore si figura immerso in quel mondo, parte di quel mondo, mentre lo osserva e ce lo fa 'vedere'.

Dall'autore del *Fedone* non ci saremmo mai potuti attendere che si facesse spazio a vistose e ripetute infedeltà dottrinali, come l'evocazione del cavallo che bagna di sudore l'anima (!) dell'amante in 254c4-5. Anche il male da sanzionare, di cui si parlava nelle precedenti versioni del mito escatologico, diventa, in maniera del tutto inattesa, qualcosa che *exechei*, si addice (248e1) a questo o quel tipo di anima in base a come ha vissuto la vita precedente. Tanto basta perché il giudizio perda la sua funzione sociale (riaffermare la giustizia) e si configuri, semmai, come una sorta di incongruo fatalismo a carico delle nuove generazioni.

Accade insomma che un insegnamento complesso e ambizioso si trasformi in una rappresentazione di eventi fantastici in cui le esigenze della spettacolarizzazione (a spese della credibilità dell'insieme) prevalgono e

di molto sull'aspirazione ad avanzare delle congetture credibili. Qui incontriamo, invero, un Platone che si propone quale creativo affabulatore, impegnato a riconfigurare il suo sapere 'metafisico' sotto forma di elaborata visualizzazione di qualcosa che accade 'in cielo'. Se nella *Repubblica* gli insegnamenti sulle prerogative da riconoscere ai filosofi (e, in verità, anche sul mondo immateriale in genere) erano già presentati come una speranza più che come una certezza (ed era inevitabile che fosse così), se nel *Simposio* era vistoso l'inquadramento degli insegnamenti sotto l'autorità, solo presuntiva, di una sacerdotessa immaginaria, ora troppi ingredienti dello spettacolo sono tali da lasciar intendere che stiamo assistendo a un'acrobatica successione di fantasie a vocazione divulgativa, non più conoscitiva. Capiamo infatti che l'esigenza primaria non è più l'offerta di un insegnamento rigoroso né la presunzione di importanza dell'insegnamento offerto, né il tentativo di dire un'ipotetica ultima parola sul 'grande attore cosmico'. Se Platone fosse stato ancora convinto della validità della sua intuizione 'metafisica', non si sarebbe permesso di renderla così irriconoscibile.

Pertanto è difficile non presumere che il principio ispiratore sia diventato di tutt'altra natura: non insegnare,[17] ma mostrare, 'far vedere' e addirittura adoperarsi per impressionare, colpire la fantasia, affascinare, *piacere* a una ben identificata categoria di affezionati lettori. In effetti il tipo di psicagogia di cui ha senso parlare qui non è una *psychagōgia tis dia logōn* (quella che Platone menziona con approvazione a p. 261a8), perché qui la funzione psicagogica non è affidata ai ragionamenti ma alla diretta sollecitazione di una risposta d'ordine emozionale ("È fantastico, vero?").

Dobbiamo chiederci, a questo punto, in quali altri scritti, platonici e non, troviamo pagine così intense, che offrano fantasie così elaborate e che ottengano così bene di sollecitare (e ottenere) una risposta d'ordine emotivo. Ve ne sono altre in contesto ateniese? Mi sembra di poter dire che no, che altrove non troviamo niente di comparabile. Ciò equivale a riconoscere alla Palinodia un livello di creatività non solo grande ma anche tipologicamente caratterizzata, ossia di un genere del tutto nuovo. O forse abbiamo motivo di negare che sia appena accaduto un evento significativo per la letteratura mondiale? Abbiamo o non abbiamo assistito a una fantasmagoria quanto mai eccezionale, sostenuta da un considerevole livello di pathos, con esplicito invito a immedesimarsi e a desiderare di essere parte di quel mondo? In altre parole, non ci è stato forse proposto un romanzo 'fantasy' ante litteram?

Certo, rispetto ai tempi del *Fedone* e della *Repubblica*, molta acqua era ormai passata sotto i ponti, al punto che ora l'autore non era più in grado di attribuire grande importanza (né un particolare valore conoscitivo) a quella rappresentazione del 'secondo' mondo che, a suo tempo, era stata presa terribilmente sul serio. Non a caso il 'mondo 2' è diventato l'oggetto di uno spettacolo in cui le esigenze conoscitive svaporano a favore dell'intrattenimento e una serie di antiche regole (il rigore occorrente per costruire un sapere meritevole di attenzione) sono state infrante con evidente nonchalance.

2.4. UNA TIPOLOGIA DI INTRATTENIMENTO INEDITA E IMPENSATA

Ma non per nulla Platone ha fatto tutto questo. Egli è riuscito a configurare un sogno del tutto nuovo e di raro pregio e porre

in essere una magia su cui è impossibile non soffermarsi ancora. Matura infatti l'esigenza di caratterizzare questa memorabile fantasticheria dal punto di vista tipologico, e basta chiedersi che tipo di narrazione sia per constatare la sua abissale distanza da tutto ciò che si sapeva fare all'epoca. In effetti non mi pare che l'Atene dell'epoca (o di altre epoche) abbia saputo minimamente avvicinarsi a un simile standard.

Un momento fa ho provato a dire che siamo in presenza di un racconto 'fantasy' ante litteram. Ho inteso dire che siamo in presenza di una tipo di narrazione inedita e da studiare. Possiamo forse parlare di fantasticheria credibile, ma la parola 'fantasticheria' rischia di darci un'idea banalizzata di ciò che accade sotto i nostri occhi. Ha risalto infatti la complessità di questa fantasticheria che davvero vola molto alto e propone un mondo regolato (le regole vigenti "sopra il cielo"!), anzi ce lo fa scoprire poco a poco mentre veniamo indotti a provare attrazione e aspirazione a imitare (o almeno propensione a imitare, se e per quanto possibile) quei modelli. D'altronde, non veniamo esortati a partecipare a un mero gioco, ma alla graduale configurazione di un complessivo stile di vita che a una robusta dimensione fantastica associa a una forte spinta a vivere e condividere nel migliore dei modi.

Come mai, nel fare questo, Platone è rimasto solo, fino al punto che la sua innovazione è stata avvertita, ma non ha ricevuto attenzione in quanto tale, ed è quindi rimasta senza nome (per cui non sorprende che se ne sia così largamente taciuto)? Posso certo sbagliare, ma il termine 'fantasy' mi sembra il solo che si addice. Dovremmo chiederci, d'altronde, quando, nel dopo Platone, l'umanità ha imparato di nuovo a comunicare in questo modo. A me sono venuti in mente l'*Apocalisse*, l'*Imitazione di Cristo* di Tommaso da Kempis e lo *Zarathustra* di Nietzsche, che perseguirono con successo obiettivi comparabili, non meno ambiziosi e non meno complessi. Dopo Nietzsche molti (non solo Tolkien!) hanno di nuovo imparato a ideare qualcosa del genere. Naturalmente non mi sfugge che più d'uno sarà incline a dissociarsi dalle connessioni appena suggerite, ma mi sia consentito di giudicarle, nondimeno, pertinenti. In un certo senso, sfido i miei cortesi lettori (se ve ne saranno) a individuare modelli alternativi con cui catturare lo specifico della Palinodia.

Trovo, invero, che con la Palinodia Platone si sia spinto terribilmente avanti e ci sorprenda non poco per la sua creatività. In effetti è difficile non ravvisare in queste pagine uno dei vertici della sapienza comunicazionale dei greci. Che poi nella *Retorica* Aristotele non abbia avuto niente da dire sul conto di questa così creativa sezione del *Fedro* e non sia stato in grado di ravvisare in essa una forma non tragica di catarsi o qualcosa del genere sorprende relativamente.[18] Sorprende di più che i moderni non siano stati pronti a cogliere la novità della Palinodia, ma forse non è un caso, perché le associazioni di idee sopra suggerite portano davvero lontano.

Il Platone della Palinodia è, d'altronde, un Platone che ci ha appena lanciato fili molteplici. Ma per farne poi che cosa? Bella domanda…

Non posso concludere queste riflessioni senza dedicare almeno un cenno al *Crizia*. Anche nel *Crizia* viene proposta un'affascinante rappresentazione fantasy: Atlantide. Anche qui Platone fa un investimento cospicuo, e non è senza significato che l'opera sia rimasta incompiuta per la difficoltà di mettere in bocca a Zeus un discorso che fosse all'altezza delle cospicue pagine che precedono. Dunque la lista degli antichi racconti fantasy incomincia con *due* testi platonici, non solo con quello di gran lunga più noto.

2.5. QUANDO PLATONE HA ABBASSATO LA SARACINESCA SU TUTTO QUESTO

Appena terminata la Palinodia, accade l'imprevisto: una pesante saracinesca viene manifestamente abbassata senza fornire nessuna vera spiegazione.

Con nostra sorpresa, a cambiare argomento è la stessa persona che aveva appena saputo montare una comunicazione scritta quanto mai suggestiva e coinvolgente. In effetti, si direbbe che Platone chiuda lo spettacolo dedicato al 'mondo 2' senza inviarci alcun particolare messaggio, come se la decisione di cambiare argomento in modo così netto non gli suggerisse proprio niente. Il nuovo Platone che si affaccia a partire dalla sez. 256e-259d è un Platone che non si volge più indietro,[19] a idee che siano state già elaborate e poi riprese, ma guarda avanti e solo avanti, a un presente da capire, e intanto, imprevedibilmente, lascia intendere che la Palinodia e la sezione finale del dialogo *non si parlano*.

Osservo inoltre che soprattutto il secondo *logos* di Socrate ha evidenziato un'attenzione per i contenuti che è stata predominante, fino a non dar luogo a nessuna particolare attenzione per la forma, le qualità, gli accorgimenti o il contesto in cui la Palinodia trovava posto. Invece, subito dopo, i due parlanti riscoprono l'interesse per un argomento che all'inizio era stato solo sfiorato: i discorsi in genere, argomento di cui Socrate e Fedro continueranno a ragionare nel prosieguo, fino alla fine del dialogo, recuperando una sostanziale continuità con la sezione iniziale (cf. p. 11 qui sopra). È questa la svolta che la prima parte del dialogo non lasciava intravedere e che la Palinodia ha chiaramente oscurato, mentre ora rivela la sua centralità, per cui la stessa Palinodia viene a configurarsi anzitutto come un gran bel discorso, una gran bella *epideixis*, un ampio momento di magia comunicazionale ma, agli occhi di Platone, non anche qualcos'altro.

In effetti, è un po' come se, ai nostri giorni, uscendo dal teatro o da altro luogo apposito dopo aver assistito a uno spettacolo bello e coinvolgente, la gente si mettesse a parlare di cucina o di sport, come se nulla fosse accaduto. Ma allora forse lo spettacolo non era né davvero bello né davvero coinvolgente? Come presumerei di aver mostrato all'inizio di queste pagine, le mediazioni offerte (da Platone) non forniscono in alcun modo una buona ragione per cambiare argomento, tanto meno per farlo in maniera così asciutta.

Come mai tutto questo? Che cosa sta dunque accadendo? Diciamo pure, a onore della prof.ssa Vasiliu, che si è venuta delineando una situazione inspiegabile. Platone avrebbe ben potuto – e avrebbe avuto motivo di – inventare qualcosa di molto più adeguato che non le mediazioni banalizzanti che ci accade di leggere in 257c-261a, ma il fatto rimane anche se 'veniamo' da una sorpresa proprio grande, e anche se la Palinodia ci ha fatto conoscere un Platone sorprendentemente creativo in quanto autore di forme inedite di intrattenimento che, se non erro, sono di altissima qualità (e mi chiedo se lo sapessimo già!).[20]

3. UNA VOLTA ABBASSATA LA SARACINESCA: UNA INIZIAZIONE ALLA RETORICA OLISTICA, PER COMINCIARE

Nelle pagine che seguono, dopo alcune frecciate contro il sapere apparente ma non sostanziale (spec. a p. 260), si fa notare la comparsa di una elaborata e senza dubbio inattesa definizione della retorica. La retorica, leggiamo in 261a7-b2, è un'arte di

influenzare le anime (*technē psychagōgias*) per mezzo dei discorsi (*dia logōn*), e la sua sfera di applicazione è potenzialmente universale: non riguarda solamente tribunali e assemblee, giacché una sola e medesima arte si manifesta in ogni discorso, inclusi i contesti non particolarmente impegnativi (*tois idiois*, grandi o piccoli che siano).[21]

Che qui prenda forma un'idea amplissima di sapienza comunicazionale, tale da non escludere nulla, è un fatto[22]. Platone è esplicito nel parlare di una sola arte, valida per ogni possibile tipo di discorso, un'arte che non esclude nessuna modalità. Una simile definizione descrittiva della retorica è competente, oltre che esente da sfumature spregiative. Che sia Platone a offrircela è significativo, specialmente se pensiamo al severo giudizio sulla retorica che era stato accreditato nel *Gorgia* e a quell'invito a diffidare dei sofisti (così come della retorica) che ha lasciato tracce multiformi in molti altri suoi dialoghi e, in seguito, nel lungo periodo.[23]

Mentre nel *Gorgia* ci era apparso un Platone impegnato in una vera e propria campagna di denigrazione della retorica (e della stessa sofistica), campagna che ha poi alimentato il cosiddetto 'corollario socratico',[24] qui, di tutto ciò, non sopravvive nemmeno la più labile traccia: significativamente, nella stessa p. 261 figurano degli inequivocabili riferimenti a Gorgia, nonché a Trasimaco e Teodoro (e, indirettamente, a Omero), ma in quanto autentici maestri di retorica nell'accezione che è stata appena definita.

È poi la volta della sofisticatissima nozione di "necessità logografica" (sofisticatissima malgrado sia introdotta fin troppo di passaggio in 264b7) e, subito dopo, l'idea che il *logos* è (potrebbe diventare, dovrebbe configurarsi come) una creatura vivente, che non può stare senza braccia o senza gambe, perché tanto il 'mezzo' quanto le estremità devono addirsi gli uni agli altri (264c): è questa un'altra incomparabile 'definizione' del discorso ben concepito e dei suoi più essenziali requisiti.

Un po' più avanti, viene poi annunciata una panoramica sulle "cose che si trovano nei rotoli scritti <finora> sull'arte dei discorsi" (*ta g' en tois bibliois tois peri logōn technēs gegrammenois*: 266d5-6), e questa panoramica si materializza in 266e-267d, allorché viene offerta una più che generosa carrellata su autori, titoli e temi trattati. Grazie a tale carrellata apprendiamo, non senza stupore, che all'epoca si allestì un numero più che considerevole di scritti 'tecnici' (meta-testi, scritti di secondo livello). Ad essere menzionati sono, nell'ordine, Teodoro di Bisanzio, Eveno di Paro, Tisia di Siracusa, Gorgia di Leontini, Prodico di Ceo, Ippia di Elide, Licimnio di Chio, Polo di Agrigento, Trasimaco di Calcedonia e Protagora di Abdera: un numero impressionante di personaggi, tutti approssimativamente contemporanei del Socrate che è storicamente vissuto ad Atene e, in molti casi, provenienti da sedi piuttosto lontane (fra loro ben tre siciliani). Notoriamente questo elenco costituisce un unicum e, sul conto dei meta-testi retorici dovuti ai dieci autori qui ~~qui~~ menzionati,[25] sappiamo di sapere pochissimo. Quanto poi a Platone, questi ci mostra un Socrate molto attento a far vedere che lui è ben informato sugli apporti altrui e non ha difficoltà a riconoscerne la sostanziale validità (v. inoltre 271c, 272c, 273ad). Il passo del *Fedro*, oltre a essere una fonte preziosa di informazioni per noi, ci parla anche dell'attenzione *e del rispetto* con cui Platone ha guardato a tutte queste pubblicazioni, con le quali evidentemente sapeva bene di scendere in competizione.

Il fatto poi che la collocazione cronologica dei dieci autori menzionati richiami più l'età di Socrate che non quella di Platone, è significativo

perché parliamo di un'età straordinariamente 'alta'.[26] Ha senso chiedersi, perciò, se, quando il Socrate platonico parla di coloro che *ora* redigono simili scritti (271c1-2: *hoi nun graphontes technas logōn*), si stia parlando di fine V secolo (età di Socrate) o di inizio IV secolo (età di Platone). Ripeto che le evidenze disponibili sono scarsissime, per cui qualche residuo dubbio può ben rimanere, ma molti indizi incoraggiano a presumere che almeno la maggioranza di questi autori sia vissuta (e sia stata produttiva) ai tempi di Socrate.

Questi prosegue osservando (268a-269c) che tra quei dieci autori di proto-trattati ci fu chi parlò di proemio e di ricapitolazione, chi di linguaggio sentenzioso, chi di correttezza del linguaggio, chi di ripetizione di alcune parole (e così via) obiettando poi che, di per sé, il saper trattare dell'uno o dell'altro di simili aspetti non offre nessuna garanzia di eccellenza per quanto riguarda il saper comunicare. "L'arte di colui che è veramente oratore" (269c9-d1) suppone che sia conosciuta "la natura dell'intero" (270c2). Invece il possesso di competenze settoriali non implica e non prova che uno conosca "la natura dell'intero" e sappia agire in modo appropriato in una situazione complessa, ad es. tenendo conto di quali tipi di anima, di discorsi e di motivazioni, combinati insieme, permettono di raggiungere la persuasione e quali no (271b). Infatti per il buon retore è importante sapere "quante forme ha l'anima" (ma non nel senso di saperle elencare) ed essere in grado di allestire discorsi appropriati ai vari tipi di anima (271d-272b) nonché – aggiungerei – ai vari tipi di situazioni.[27]

Platone ha appena detto, d'altronde, che le abilità settoriali rischiano di dar luogo a un'abilità solo apparente. Non a caso già in precedenza egli aveva scritto che ogni buon discorso si dovrebbe configurare "come un organismo vivente dotato di un suo corpo e non privo di testa e piedi" (264c). Per dominare l'arte della parola (e della scrittura) ben vengano, dunque, le competenze specifiche, settoriali, ma sia ben chiaro che ci vuole molto di più. Egli prova più volte a articolare questo "molto di più". Spicca in particolare il breve excursus di p. 271d-272b, che si conclude con parole inequivocabili: "se gli manca qualcuna di queste cose quando parla, insegna o scrive, e nondimeno sostiene di parlare con arte, vince chi *non* si lascia persuadere".

L'idea centrale è che si è o si può diventare abili/abilissimi nell'esercitare un'influenza sulle anime per mezzo della parola. Si tratta di un'altra idea dotata di potenzialità immense. Prendono forma qui i requisiti che connotano ogni iniziativa comunicazionale di pregio: deve diventare una sorta di essere vivente, deve costituire una unità organica, deve fare gran conto dei destinatari, e a queste condizioni può effettivamente configurarsi come arte *efficace* di influenzare le anime (*technē psychagōgias*) per mezzo dei discorsi.[28] Tutto questo è semplicemente strepitoso, e capiamo che qui il Socrate platonico è visibilmente impegnato a guardare avanti, in particolare a delineare un'idea globale della sapienza comunicazionale di altissimo livello, cosa di cui, per quanto si riesce a sapere, nessun altro aveva mai parlato prima. Apre insomma una prospettiva molto professionale e tutt'altro che velleitaria sull'arte del comunicare veramente bene, non importa se a voce o per iscritto, fra l'altro non esitando a chiarire che una simile arte la si acquista combinando insieme doti naturali ed esperienze diverse (dunque non necessariamente a scuola? Cf. 269d-270a e il già richiamato 271d-272b) e ad esprimere apprezzamento per le possibili scorciatoie (272c1-3), non senza prevedere che, all'occorrenza, si possa perfino prescindere dal vero in favore del convincente (272b).[29]

Siamo insomma in presenza di una pagina di primissimo ordine sulla complessità, le risorse e le insidie della comunicazione, per cui è tempo di soffermarsi su questo insegnamento così speciale.

Intanto abbiamo l'agio di 'scoprire' che questa sorta di definizione ampia della retorica costituisce una parte importante (e, senza dubbio, la meno effimera) dell'intero *Fedro*. Si apprezza, dicevo, che egli ora guardi proprio al presente e lo faccia senza bisogno di nessun particolare filtro. In altri dialoghi questo non è accaduto. Ma lo fa potendo lanciare un'idea strategica e così creativa da indicare *una volta per tutte* cosa si dovrebbe intendere per arte retorica, ossia per il "saper comunicare proprio bene". Mi sia consentito di osservare che le tante e tanto ricorrenti perplessità sulla retorica che più spesso si manifestano ai nostri giorni – es. quelle che si sono materializzate con l'invenzione di discipline e denominazioni come "pubblicità" (di un certo tipo, in un certo settore), "scrittura creativa", "comunicazione radiofonica, televisiva etc.", "comunicazione aziendale", "promozione del prodotto" et sim. – si manifestano nel non fare più nemmeno il nome di retorica,[30] perché la parola continua ad avere una pessima stampa. Orbene, simili timori troverebbero qui solidissime ragioni per venire meno.

Eppure, malgrado i suoi pregi (che a mio avviso – lo si sarà ben capito – sono superlativi), la sezione che il *Fedro* dedica alla retorica olistica non ha ottenuto nemmeno parte dell'attenzione che si meritava, tanto da passare inosservata fino a tutto il XX secolo e oltre. Nondimeno, che essa rappresenti un pazzesco, quanto inatteso, salto di qualità, mi pare proprio innegabile, perché sono stati identificati i tratti caratteristici di quando la comunicazione raggiunge i suoi obiettivi nel modo migliore, quindi l'ideale verso cui ha senso guardare e puntare. Ricordo infine che, nel lanciare queste idee, Platone accenna due volte alla novità di ciò che sta proponendo (261bc) e lo fa in maniera molto esplicita.

4. LA SCRITTURA, TEMA 'ALLA MODA'. L'EXCURSUS SU ORALITÀ E SCRITTURA

La strepitosa sub-trattazione sulla retorica olistica si conclude a p. 274b, allorché il Socrate del *Fedro* decide di aprire un altro capitolo, quello dedicato alla scrittura. Si tratta, devo proprio dirlo in apertura, di un capitolo funestato dalle fantasie dei maestri di Tubinga sulla supposta componente autoreferenziale delle dichiarazioni che seguono, quasi che Platone, nel segnalare la necessità di venire in aiuto (*boētheia*) della scrittura, avesse fatto riferimento alla sua propria scrittura.[31] Non mi pare proprio che di questo si parli qui! Mentre le considerazioni che scaturiscono dalla parabola di Theuth e Thamus non lasciano affiorare niente di autoreferenziale, si direbbe che qualche traccia di autoreferenzialità affiori, semmai, un poco più avanti, in 276cd. Ma per capire che la disponibilità di un testo scritto (o della versione scritta di qualcosa) non risolve *ogni* problema, non c'è bisogno… di niente: è semplicemente ovvio. Lo è a maggior ragione se facciamo riferimento, come dobbiamo, alle pratiche scrittorie dell'epoca. Quando Platone scrisse il *Fedro* (in anni vicini al 360 a.C.?) la dimestichezza degli intellettuali (e non solo) con la scrittura su papiro poteva contare, almeno ad Atene, su più di mezzo secolo di storia e si era venuta strutturando. Il lavoro di non pochi professionisti della calligrafia era ormai fiorente, il modo di confezionare i rotoli doveva essere ormai stabilizzato, anche le bancarelle specializzate nel commercio dei rotoli

di papiro contenenti testi (oltre che di quelli bianchi) doveva essere una realtà consolidata e possiamo ragionevolmente presumere che un Platone o un Demostene sapessero leggere senza eccessiva difficoltà (quanto meno senza bisogno di ricorrere a intermediari) i testi propri e altrui. Pertanto quel buon mezzo secolo dovette essere stato sufficiente a fare dell'interazione con i papiri la fatica quotidiana di un numero crescente di persone, un po' come accade ora a molti di noi (ma da quarant'anni soltanto!) con il computer da tavolo e una piccola stampante.

Non per questo può sorprendere l'eventualità che i testi scritti avessero comunque bisogno di un aiuto, perché la scrittura mette di fronte a un prodotto che, anche nella migliore delle ipotesi, non manca mai di evidenziare qualche limite. Oltretutto, che la pratica della correzione su papiro possa aver fatto parte delle consuetudini dell'epoca (un'epoca in cui la produzione di copie di copie di copie stava già facendosi largo) è improbabile: semmai erano i nuovi esemplari (alcuni di questi) a incorporare correzioni e ripensamenti. Di conseguenza, anche nel caso (probabilmente ancora raro) di una lettura molto fluida, dobbiamo mettere in conto le insidie di una parola trascritta male, di un rigo mancante, ripetuto o posposto, e perfino dell'insoddisfazione dell'autore per come aveva finito per presentare una certa idea o esprimersi in un punto particolare, ovvero per le precisazioni non introdotte a suo tempo: tutte specifiche che si applicavano a chiunque si fosse assunto la responsabilità di dettare a qualche scriba un testo ampio e complesso.

Senza dire che i testi, non troppo diversamente dai nostri file, bisognava metterli in condizione di 'parlare', perché da soli non parlavano nemmeno loro: solo preservavano qualcosa che *avrebbe potuto* rivelarsi significativo per alcuni. Non a caso ci sono state epoche in cui, per nostra fortuna, perfino Omero, Platone ed Euclide sono stati ripetutamente fatti ricopiare anche se, probabilmente, alcune copiature vennero commissionate allorché non c'era ormai nessuno che fosse in grado di apprezzare ciò che quei testi si adoperavano per raccontare, far rivivere o insegnare –solo perché si aveva a che fare con opere di grandissimi nomi come Omero, Platone ed Euclide. In assenza di persone che li sapessero far 'parlare' (es. in ambito bizantino), quei testi rimanevano implacabilmente muti e, di fatto, non significativi. È un miracolo, perciò, che ci sia stata un'epoca in cui prese forma l'esigenza (e la volontà) di far trasferire su pergamena, e con la necessaria cura, poco meno che 'qualunque cosa' malgrado i costi ai quali si andava incontro.

Se dunque consideriamo la frequenza con cui, anche ai tempi di Platone, si saranno incontrate, esattamente come se ne incontrano oggi, persone troppo impreparate per fare almeno il tentativo di gustare i poemi omerici o altro, arriviamo rapidamente alla conclusione che il contesto evocato dal mito di Theuth non fosse certo una supposta difficoltà di esprimersi con la necessaria compiutezza da parte dell'autore. Tanto meno da parte di uno che raggiunse vette altissime nel 'maneggiare' la scrittura con superiore maestria, e men che mai dall'autore di un'opera della levatura del *Fedro*.

In compenso, l'idea che i testi scritti potessero generare unicamente l'illusione di aver appreso, deve essere stata, per Platone, esperienza quotidiana: che né leggere, né capire e apprezzare qualcosa siano la stessa cosa del capir bene (e dell'appropriarsi di un certo sapere) è infatti esperienza universale. Del pari, che il medesimo scritto vada a finire talvolta nelle mani di chi ha competenze e interessi specifici e talaltra nelle mani di chi

non ne ha (275ab2, 275e) è perfino banale. Non a caso, nell'introdurre il mito di Theuth, dopo aver parlato della professionalità dei (o della mancanza di professionalità nei) discorsi, il nostro Platone aveva avuto occasione di scrivere che è tempo ormai di occuparsi di *euprepeia* e *aprepeia* degli scritti: della loro appropriatezza e bellezza, o meglio della loro funzionalità, non essendo per nulla automatico che uno scritto risponda meglio di ogni altra cosa alle finalità perseguite da chi lo prende in mano. Scrivere anche solo per gioco leggiamo in 276e-277a, è molto bello, e a maggior ragione lo è <scrivere>[32] avvalendosi dell'arte dialettica 'seminando', in anime preparate, "dei *logoi* che siano … *ouchi akarpoi alla echontes sperma*, non sterili ma fecondi e, di conseguenza capaci etc.".

Certo, il suo Socrate si è spinto anche a parlare dell'opportunità di diffidare della scrittura in quanto tale, perché gli uomini si abitueranno a ricordare con l'aiuto di segni esteriori, non "dal di dentro e da sé" (275a) e ad affermare che chi ha "solide conoscenze riguardo alle cose giuste, belle e buone … non scriverà *logoi* incapaci di difendersi da soli" (276c), esponendosi a una plateale contraddizione pragmatica. Platone si è anche spinto a ipotizzare (278a2-4) che si salvano, se non altro, "i discorsi scritti nell'anima, intorno al giusto al bene e al bello", come se la qualità della comunicazione potesse dipendere dai contenuti, e senza dirci che cosa potrebbe eventualmente significare l'espressione "scritti nell'anima",[33] ma cosa può mai significare tutto ciò? Piccole esagerazioni, piccoli passi falsi che semplicemente è capitato di fare, nient'altro. Rimane il fatto che qui Platone prova a dire cose interessanti per chi stava vivendo la sempre più massiva irruzione della scrittura nel quotidiano, cose che potevano interessare da vicino i suoi contemporanei quale aiuto per capire il presente ed orientarsi (solo che stavolta l'aiuto fornito era, ogni tanto, di qualità mediocre!).

Un po' di confusione continua a manifestarsi anche poco dopo, quando il Socrate platonico prova a dire che "abbiamo scherzato" (278b7) e subito dopo rilancia l'utopia: anche i più grandi, come Lisia, Omero e Solone, sappiano che, se loro e chiunque altro hanno saputo aderire al vero e difendere adeguatamente ciò che hanno comunicato per iscritto, allora meritano un nome particolarmente nobile, quello di filosofi (c1-d7) – beninteso, avendo cura di non equipararli a coloro che scrivono e riscrivono il medesimo testo molte volte (d8-e2) perché questo riscrivere ed eventualmente tagliare e incollare sarebbe un indizio di scarsa qualità del prodotto finale (altro passo falso, altra idea molto fragile).

Come si vede, le idee di Platone riguardo a che cosa fa sì, o potrebbe far sì, che una scrittura sia di alto livello evidenziano qualche circoscritta fibrillazione. Egli ha saputo additare l'ideale, ma non è arrivato ad elaborare il concetto di funzionalità delle parti. Avrebbe avuto un'occasione d'oro per teorizzare la ricerca sulla funzionalità delle parti nell'ottica del tutto (del progetto macro-retorico, come io direi[34]) e, se non l'ha fatto, vuol dire che *non seppe* farlo.

Segue il discorsetto, anch'esso molto effimero, su Lisia, Omero, Solone e la filosofia (279b-d) che presumo si possa ignorare. Non avendo altre idee abbastanza esplosive (o almeno abbastanza assestate) da offrire – e lo possiamo capire, perché si è messo a parlare di abilità che all'epoca avevano solo cominciato a dispiegarsi – Platone è ricorso a dei sostituti che rimangono appunto, effimeri. Ugualmente gli deve essere sfuggito che l'eccellenza non necessariamente viene raggiunta, se viene raggiunta, con la parola anziché facendo ricorso

alla scrittura, perché può darsi benissimo che accada il contrario. Si spiega solo così, mi pare, il passo immediatamente successivo (278de), in cui Platone prova a criticare chi avverte l'esigenza di rielaborare qualche frase di un suo scritto aggiungendo, tagliando o semplicemente riformulando. L'idea suggerita è che avvertire l'esigenza di riscrivere qualcosa sarebbe sintomo di non eccelsa professionalità, ma non potrebbe essere idea più sbagliata. Ciò significa che Platone ha saputo offrire un insegnamento di gran pregio nell'excursus sulla retorica (260-274), poi idee innovative, ma non sempre così solide, a proposito di scrittura.

Nell'insieme il dialogo dà l'impressione di un impegnativo (e talvolta faticoso) percorso a ostacoli retto dalla duplice esigenza di offrire comunque una degna ripresa dei dialoghi 'metafisici' e di intercettare il bisogno di idee strategiche' sui fatti nuovi del periodo: da un lato la retorica di cui già si doveva fare un gran parlare (occasione spendibile anche per far dimenticare certe iper-semplificazioni del passato), dall'altro quella scrittura che, almeno per le persone colte, costituiva ormai un'occupazione ricorrente, e che purtroppo dà modo a Platone di introdurre qua e là qualche osservazione decisamente fragile, come è quest'ultima.

5. PLATONE NON SCOPRE LE SUE CARTE. LISIA – ISOCRATE – PAN

Sulla base delle indicazioni così emerse si può ben dire che siamo in presenza di un dialogo alquanto faticoso – faticoso da scrivere (immagino) e faticoso da leggere e interpretare.

In effetti tale si direbbe la lunga preparazione della Palinodia, dove considerazioni di dubbio interesse sono lì a istituire una 'necessità logografica' in grado di giustificare la ripresa di temi 'metafisici' fuor di contesto e solo per poter dar vita a una forma alta di intrattenimento. A tale scopo viene 'scomodato' Lisia e sfoderato il tema dell'amore, ma per non dire niente di particolarmente significativo sui due argomenti, né di strettamente legato ai temi da trattare nel corso della Palinodia.

Anche la ripresa di temi 'metafisici' un tempo tanto cari all'autore deve dirsi piuttosto faticosa, quantunque gratificante, per l'investimento profuso allo scopo di trasformare un sapere che non era riuscito a giungere a maturazione in una rappresentazione fantastica che aveva ormai la pretesa di risultare perfino più coinvolgente e in un esercizio di scrittura creativa che dovette essere del tutto privo di precedenti specifici, così da essere percepito come una grande e felice innovazione quali che fossero i riferimenti a idee lanciate tempo addietro.

A sua volta, la decisione di mettersi a parlare delle sfide d'ordine comunicazionale del presente (molto più che di un passato relativamente recente) e di guardare avanti (non indietro) nella cornice di un dialogo socratico, avrà verosimilmente richiesto di prescindere totalmente da quelle polemiche anti-retoriche nelle quali il Socrate platonico si era cimentato a più riprese (in part. nel *Gorgia* e nel *Sofista*) proprio allo scopo di guardare al presente e al futuro con la più grande libertà intellettuale, e dire ai suoi lettori qualcosa che fosse in grado di risultare credibile e di toccarli da vicino.

Se queste congetture hanno qualche freccia al loro arco, come oso presumere, allora Platone si è proposto obiettivi particolarmente ambiziosi e difficili da raggiungere, e anche molto protetti, nel senso che gli obiettivi non vengono in alcun modo comunicati e spetta eventualmente a noi di identificarli. Guarda caso, si sarebbe trattato di un obiettivo mancato molte volte (la metafisica), eppure

è come se nel *Fedro* si fossero materializzate le statuine del sileno che Alcibiade menziona nel *Simposio*, come se il *Fedro* fosse un dialogo che mostra il suo valore solo se lo si riesce ad aprire e si ha l'agio di contemplare gli *agalmata theōn* racchiusi lì dentro. In effetti, non ci meraviglieremmo di scoprire (se questo fosse il caso) che l'insieme venne concepito *in modo da* rendere complicata la ricerca di una congrua chiave di lettura.

Proprio la tradizione esegetica dimostra che alcune tessere di questo 'mosaico' presentano una spiccata attitudine a esercitare un'attrazione profonda (e, non di rado, disorientante) anche da sole, anche prescindendo dalla loro collocazione in un insieme più vasto e ben più complicato. Qualcosa di analogo accade, notoriamente, anche altrove. Per esempio chi si occupa della *Repubblica* a titolo di utopia politica, finisce col prescindere completamente dagli excursus 'metafisici', ma notoriamente talvolta accade anche l'opposto, e altre chiavi di lettura sono ugualmente promettenti.[35] In questi casi si ottiene pur sempre un senso di appagamento, perché gli stimoli e le suggestioni che arrivano sono comunque molti e strutturati. Possiamo dunque capire che abbiano avuto fortuna anche delle interpretazioni fondate sull'individuazione di una sezione ritenuta talmente rappresentativa da poter passare per un ragionevole sostituto dell'intero, così da sentirsi autorizzati a non sobbarcarsi la fatica richiesta dal tentativo di rendere conto di un così complicato insieme.

Si direbbe che maturino, per queste vie, le condizioni per dare un senso anche ai riferimenti finali. Si può capire che il cenno su Lisia costituisca un atto dovuto per via dell'esordio del dialogo, ma che pensare del cenno su Isocrate, ossia su uno scrittore di successo dei tempi di Platone? Farne parola probabilmente significò sottolineare di nuovo che il dialogo non verte su un passato ormai lontano ma sul presente – quel presente di cui Isocrate era, a suo modo, rappresentativo – e sul futuro prossimo. Da qui la profezia *post eventum* su un giovane che era di buone promesse e che si poté ben considerare un astro dei tempi presenti. Quanto poi alla preghiera a Pan, non ci so vedere altro che l'ultima concessione al gusto di uditori tradizionalisti (ce ne sono sempre!), come se Socrate fosse stato uno di loro (e veniamo con ciò ai due o più uditòrii, su cui v. *infra*).

Ma è tempo, mi sembra, di dedicare una speciale attenzione all'articolo che, a mio giudizio, è il più rilevante di tutti tra quelli di cui sono attualmente a conoscenza: Werner (2007). Qui egli tenta di rendere conto del *Fedro* nel suo insieme, ed è magistrale. Ma sfortunatamente sottovaluta alcune variabili, principalmente il 'peso specifico' dei vari ingredienti. A Daniel Werner piace evidenziare che di un tema ci sono tracce anche laddove, a un primo sguardo, si direbbe che non ve ne siano. Tuttavia, riconoscere che ve ne sono non è la stessa cosa che stabilire quale importanza e quale'peso specifico' viene o non viene riconosciuto a un particolare ingrediente dell'insieme. L'arte retorica, per esempio, è certamente dispiegata al meglio durante la Palinodia, ma ciò non significa che lì la nostra attenzione venga indirizzata proprio sulla sapienza comunicazionale intesa come arte, e infatti non è questo ciò che accade. A occupare la nostra attenzione è piuttosto lo spettacolo iperuranico con il suo vorticoso evolvere, ma poi dobbiamo badare anche al modo in cui lo spettacolo giunge a conclusione e alla traccia (tanto lieve) che lascia. Per queste ragioni è troppo poco, a mio avviso, concludere affermando che "the contrasting halves of the dialogue are part of a strategic manoeuvre on Plato's part to make broader points regarding the nature of the soul and

the nature of the dialogue itself" (2007, 132). Una simile conclusione, non essendo provata da niente, è proprio debole. È di gran lunga più 'economico' presumere che Platone semplicemente *non sia riuscito* a fare di meglio nel tentativo di assicurare un bel livello di unità al suo dialogo. Avendo voluto abbracciare tante cose, soprattutto avendo voluto guardare sia indietro (l'eros, le idee…) sia avanti, molto avanti (finalmente un'idea proprio ben assestata dell'arte retorica, più uno sguardo a quella civiltà della scrittura che si stava delineando, e tutto questo subito dopo essersi avventurato in un tentativo letteralmente inaudito di 'fantasy'), come può sorprendere che qualche saldatura tra le tante si sia rivelata cedevole?

Oltretutto il dialogo mostra chiaramente di voler catturare l'interesse di tipi diversi di uditorio virtuale: i nostalgici del 'mondo 2' così come diverse avanguardie culturali – in particolare chi si intende(va) almeno un po' di arte retorica – e altri gruppi o gruppuscoli (tra questi ultimi, gli ammiratori di Isocrate). Che dunque un'opera di tali pretese non abbia raggiunto appieno i suoi obiettivi non può nemmeno sorprendere. Men che meno ci si dovrebbe azzardare a presumere il contrario. Platone è stato un grande (chi lo nega?), ma anche Platone sa essere imperfetto (v. sopra, p. 21), e infatti qui non ha raggiunto pienamente *tutti* i suoi obiettivi. Aggiungo, se posso, che non partire da questo presupposto è, a mio avviso, semplicemente impensabile. Se perfino *Homerus aliquando dormitat*, perché mai Platone avrebbe dovuto essere creativamente vigile 24 ore su 24?

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ENDNOTES

1 Intendo dire: dopo la trilogia 'metafisica' (sull'aggettivo v. la nota 7, più avanti) costituita da Fedone, Repubblica e Simposio. Una ripresa piuttosto importante di quei temi ha luogo, invero, in Timeo 27c-35e ma qui, di nuovo, ci viene proposto un embrione di sapere in modo vistosamente 'dogmatico' (v. spec. le pagine 34-35 sull'anima del mondo), senza una vera giustificazione (quindi senza troppa convinzione) e presupponendo elementi degli excursus presenti nella trilogia, ma senza rendere conto in alcun modo di questi presupposti.

2 Ne ricorderò soltanto due: tōi gar rhētorikōi autou monōi ton noun proseikon (235a1) e ou tēn heuresin alla tēn diatesin epaineteon (236a4).

3 Ricordo anche una frase di Wieland (1982, 10): "Der Interpret … muss auch sich selbst auf die Ebene begeben, auf der der Autor seine Überlegungen anstellt", e così pure gli sviluppi introdotti in Szlezák 1991. Che gli autori provino a mettersi 'così comodi' si può capire, ma perché mai assecondarli? Primo, non si può pretendere che tutti i lettori abbiano piacere di farlo; secondo, l'interprete impegnato a rendere conto di ciò che legge dovrebbe avere un preciso interesse a non assecondare aprioristicamente l'autore.

4 Werner (2007, 100-102) indugia nell'elencare anche i rari e dispersi riferimenti all'eros rinvenibili nella sezione finale del dialogo e conclude affermando che la loro presenza dimostra che "love-related motifs, language, and imagery occur frequently throughout the second half of the dialogue". Ma che questi riferimenti siano addirittura frequenti non lo possiamo proprio dire! Sono, per di più, quasi impercettibili, e a mio parere questo è decisivo.

5 Con una sola eccezione: l'iniziale offerta di argomenti sull'immortalità dell'anima.

6 Con questo termine intendo richiamarmi a tutte quelle 'verità' che si fondano su un racconto e un narratore (es.: è vero che Achille è il figlio di Tetide, perché l'ha 'insegnato' Omero). Ma anche la 'metafisica' di questi dialoghi è 'vera' solo perché la asserisce Platone. In particolare, la moltiplicazione dei riferimenti al nostro mondo (oltre a quelli già richiamati, ricorderò i riferimenti alla ginnastica e all'agricoltura in 248de e all'ala che si forma grazie al calore e al nutrimento in 251b) arricchiscono la narrazione per immagini, ma non conferiscono certo spessore dottrinale al pur suggestivo spettacolo. Qualche altra considerazione sulle cosiddette verità narrative figura in Rossetti (2023, sez. 02.2).

7 Qui e in seguito userò la parola tra virgolette per ricordare che la nozione di 'metafisica' si è venuta delineando solo a distanza di secoli dai tempi di Platone e di Aristotele. Sull'argomento si può vedere Napoli (2012).

8 Dove, nella rappresentazione del giudizio post-mortem viene inaspettatamente introdotta, alle p. 524-25, la nozione di anima, poi anche di anima spogliata dal corpo (quindi incorporea, immateriale) e di anima del filosofo.

9 Tutt'altra cosa, e per la prima volta, da parte del Socrate dei dialoghi non-dottrinali, che ancora non disponeva di simili pacchetti di convinzioni ben stabilite, ma era mosso dalla curiosità intellettuale e dall'aspirazione a inculcarla nei suoi interlocutori (cf. Rossetti, 2025, sez. 2 e 4).

10 Qualcosa in più sulla nozione di testimonial riferita a Socrate e al suo contesto figura in Rossetti (2025, sez. 3).

11 Questo vale in modo eminente per l'identità del filosofo e per la speranza che il filosofo si riveli buon governatore, ma anche l'idea del bene è un'idea ancora traballante, anche la linea quadripartita si limita a delineare uno schema che è ancora tutto da consolidare, e così via. In effetti, tutto il progetto politico si fonda sull'idea che "sarebbe bello se fosse così", idea che coesiste con il timore, spesso esorcizzato più che evocato, che la realtà si riveli ben deludente (v. ad es. IV 425). Ricordo anche il 'sogno' di cui si fa parola in IV 443b7 insieme alla speranza, formulata subito dopo, che qualche divinità intervenga a sostegno di questi desideri.

12 Ricordo che per Charles Kahn (1996) il Simposio non segue ma precede Phd. e R. Si tratta di un'eventualità molto improbabile, non solo perché la scoperta era tale da suscitare, e ha suscitato, potenti entusiasmi, ma anche perché, nell'introdurre la conversazione con Diotima, Socrate è esplicito nell'evocare un sapere già molto sttrutturato, che non viene (ri)costruito ma dato, che viene trattato cioè come se il corrispondente atto creativo appartenesse già al passato.

13 Parliamo, invero, di dialoghi che si avvalgono di una scrittura la cui perfezione formale fa venire in mente, talvolta, le tele e gli affreschi di Raffaello.

14 A maggior ragione i dialoghi non-dottrinali vennero accantonati come non rappresentativi perché lì la conversazione non si apre a un sapere che presuma di sapersi spingere immensamente al di là dei saperi mondani (non a caso, lì la stessa nozione di filosofia rimane ancora nel vago). Sull'argomento v. anche Rossetti (2025).

15 Così da evocare l'idea dei dodici dèi rappresentati, non a caso, in un apposito 'monumento' dell'agora di Atene.

16 Cf. nota 6, qui sopra.

17 Il fascino durevole della 'metafisica' non ha dunque impedito all'autore di rendersi conto che, fermo restando lo straordinario prestigio che gliene è derivato, non era più in condizione di consolidare le intuizioni 'metafisiche' che campeggiavano nella trilogia, per cui non ha mancato di lasciarci intendere che ormai egli non credeva più al valore conoscitivo e alla fecondità di quelle tematiche.

18 Un cenno fugace al Fedro compare in Rhet. III 7, 1408b20. La sua occasionalità conferma, se ce ne fosse bisogno, che veramente Aristotele non aveva notato nulla di rilevante in quel dialogo. Va molto meglio con Werner (2007), che è tra i pochi ad aver saputo scrivere, sia pure senza molta convinzione, che qui "we have one of the truly unforgettable moments in all of classical literature" (103) e che "we are apt to feel as if we are gaining entry into a special world, and that by penetrating into the imagery we can somehow 'get at' the very truth of all Platonic philosophy" (104). Tuttavia, a mio avviso,

dire questo è dire ancora troppo poco. V. più avanti, a p. 27.

19 Quel silenzio 'tombale' sui temi svolti fino a p. 256d, silenzio che si osserva nell'intera sezione successiva del Fedro, connota anche molti altri dialoghi, anteriori e posteriori, dove si osserva, certo qualche episodica ripresa dei temi 'metafisici' (v. nota 1), ma su altre basi e avendo cura di non evocare i dialoghi 'metafisici' per eccellenza, né la sezione centrale del 'nostro' dialogo.

20 Mi chiedo soltanto questo: il grande romanzo 'fantasy' non fa pensare alle attese di quei lettori che si erano appassionati all'idea di anima immortale e questioni connesse, come se Platone avesse provato a gratificare un gruppo di 'nostalgici della metafisica'? Nel prosieguo, Platone sembra rivolgersi a un gruppo molto diverso di potenziali lettori ma, stranamente, non fa nulla per far capire il senso delle sue scelte.

21 Viene in mente la tripartizione canonica in oratoria deliberativa, dicanica ed epidittica, ma qui Platone non è così didascalico (ce lo fa pensare, fra l'altro, l'introduzione di tis in 261a8 ed e2).

22 Fa una certa impressione constatare che nulla viene notato ad loc. nel pur autorevole Rowe 1986 (ma le cose vanno decisamente meglio in Rowe 2007) e che l'estrema novità del passo sia sfuggita anche a Yunis 2011. Forse per l'uso di leggere il Fedro con insufficiente attenzione al contesto non immediato? Sì, ma sospetto l'intervento di non poche altre concause.

23 Un'assurda diffidenza verso la retorica ha saputo produrre effetti di insospettata potenza. Ritornerò brevemente sull'argomento a p. 22.

24 Siccome era sempre e solamente Socrate a denunciare retorica e sofistica, a lungo si è pensato – la cosa può anche sorprendere, ma i testi che potrei citare sono molti – che almeno lui fosse esente da ogni forzatura retorica per definizione.

25 Sempre rimanendo tra i contemporanei di Socrate, la lista potrebbe e dovrebbe continuare con Antifonte e Alcidamante.

26 Ricordo, con l'occasione, le molteplici tracce lasciate dal processo di familiarizzazione di intellettuali e pubblico ateniese con i papiri.

27 Dire questo è rivolgere una critica ai dieci autori? Sarei prudente nel dirlo, perché Platone si limita a illustrare una produzione che egli, peraltro, contrappone alla sapienza olistica.

28 Il Socrate platonico chiaramente pensa agli esempi più alti a lui noti. Quali esempi egli avrebbe potuto addurre e quali autori egli seppe apprezzare più di tutti non lo sappiamo. Nondimeno ha senso ricordare che già Gorgia aveva avuto modo di caratterizzare l'arte della parola come psicagogia (chi ascolta, leggiamo in Hel. 9, "è invaso da un brivido di spavento, da una pietà che induce alle lacrime e dal desiderio di sfogarsi con il pianto") e, in Hel. 14, come pharmakon, e che Antifonte avrebbe escogitato la technē alupias, trasformando la sua sapienza comunicazionale in una professione esercitata per qualche tempo a Corinto sotto forma di "arte di stemperare i dolori percepiti come insopportabili" con una rappresentazione sufficientemente vivida di altre situazioni di grande sofferenza (Filostrato e lo pseudo-Plutarco in 87A6 DK = 37P9-10 LM). Come i due, anche Platone ora parla delle forme alte di psicagogia e così facendo si trova a riconoscere a Gorgia, sia pure solo di fatto, i meriti che nel Gorgia gli aveva spavaldamente negato.

29 Sorprende, ma possiamo capire, che Platone qui non provi nemmeno a dire "come ho fatto io in tanti dialoghi e in questo stesso Fedro": il racconto proposto lo colloca infatti totalmente dietro le quinte.

30 Premesso che qui sto facendo riferimento, in particolare, al contesto italiano, riferisco che qualche considerazione in più sull'argomento (considerazioni che tuttavia sono prive, ahimé, di ogni accenno al Fedro) è stata offerta in Rossetti (2016).

31 Spiace constatare che una traccia dei dogmi tubinghesi affiora perfino in un testo di pregio quale Werner (2007, 132): "written texts are 'dead' logoi".

32 Infatti, se prima si è parlato di scrittura, di scrittura si continua a parlare anche dopo, quando in 277b1-2 si torna a parlare di logoi scritti technēi kai aneu technēs.

33 Platone aggiunge: certi logoi, molto speciali, sono "come dei figli legittimi" (a6-7), mentre altri sono solo logoi simili, che nascono nelle anime degli altri, e sono anch'essi preziosi (278b2-3). Solo che ci sono anche logoi di qualità molto inferiore e anche i 'figli illegittimi' abbondano.

34 Cf. Rossetti (1994).

35 A questo riguardo è significativo quanto si legge in Werner (2007, 111).

Plato on Coming-to-Be: A Midway Path between Eleaticism and Creationism

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ABSTRACT

The *Parmenides* is the locus of Plato's *theoria motus abstracti* (that is, abstract kinematics) for it is here that Plato gives a mereological and locational analysis of motion (First Deduction: 138b7-139b3) and discusses the famous puzzle of the instant of change (Second Deduction: 156c1-157b5). But there is another scholarly very neglected text from this dialogue that provides us with great insights about Plato's theory of change: the Fifth Deduction (160b3-163b6) and its answer to the Eleatic argument against coming-to-be. I shall devote my paper to Plato's discussion of the coming-to-be (γένεσις) of beings from what is not; first, by expounding what Plato says in the Fifth Deduction, second, by putting his theory in a bigger philosophical ecosystem (the quarrel between Eleaticism and Creationism). Then, I shall argue for two points: first, coming-to-be as described in the Fifth Deduction is, at first sight, incompatible with Plato's account of motion given in the First Deduction; second, the logic behind the Fifth Deduction - if consistent - must be a non-classical temporal logic that restricts Leibniz's laws of identity to some but not all properties.

Keywords: Plato, Parmenides, Metaphysics of Change, Meta-ontology, Coming-to-be, Temporal Logic

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INTRODUCTION

The *Parmenides* is the locus of Plato's *theoria motus abstracti* (that is, abstract kinematics) for it is here that Plato gives a mereological and locational analysis of motion (First Deduction: 138b7-139b3)[1] and discusses the famous puzzle of the instant of change (Second Deduction: 156c1-157b5)[2]. But there is another scholarly very neglected text from this dialogue that provides us with great insights about Plato's theory of change: the Fifth Deduction (160b3-163b6) and its answer to the Eleatic argument against coming-to-be.

I shall devote my paper to Plato's discussion of the coming-to-be (γένεσις) of beings from what is not; first, by expounding what Plato says in the Fifth Deduction, second, by putting his theory in a bigger philosophical ecosystem (the quarrel between Eleaticism and Creationism). Then, I shall argue for two points: first, coming-to-be as described in the Fifth Deduction is, at first sight, incompatible with Plato's account of motion given in the First Deduction; second, the logic behind the Fifth Deduction - if consistent - must be a non-classical temporal logic that restricts Leibniz's laws of identity to some but not all properties.

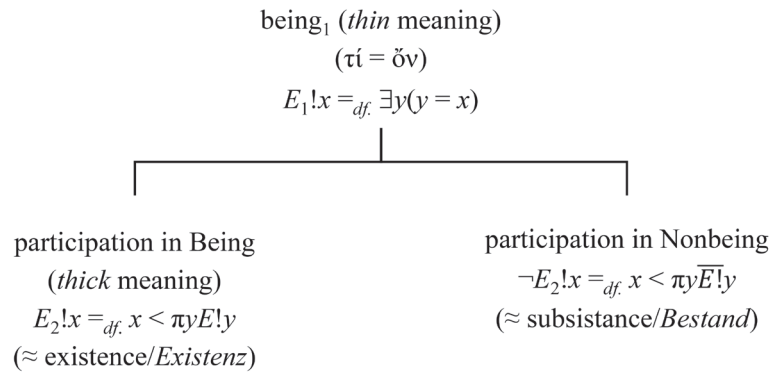
PART 1: PLATO'S FIFTH DEDUCTION AND THE ONTOLOGY OF COMING-TO-BE

Let us capture in a nutshell what Plato says in the Fifth Hypothesis/Deduction (in what follows, for reason of space, I shall quote Plato's text only if mandatory, and avoid as much as possible any philological discussion). To focus on my point, I will not enter in scholarly discussion on the general interpretation of the second part of the *Parmenides* (see Proclus, *Theol. Plat.* I 7-12, *In Prm.* I 630.37-643.5, VI 1051.34-1064.12 for ancient discussions, and Priest 2014: 118-121 for a very short overview of the modern exegeses), or on the relation between the Fifth Deduction and the other Deductions (especially the Sixth)[3]. I believe that sometimes it might be exegetically useful to 'naively' take the textual material at face value, without further assumptions about what the author would have had in mind while writing it. To allude to only one exegesis of the second part of the *Parmenides*, perhaps it might be the case that it was a mere piece of dialectical gymnastic (or, slightly differently, a training in dialectics), but that does not preclude that Plato's reasonings could be interesting and stimulating in themselves and, so, deserve a charitable and philosophically-loaded reading. I shall provide such a reading for the Fifth Deduction.

As pointed out by Diès (1923, p. 37), Cornford (1939, p. 217-231), Menn (1994, p. 74, 94-95) and Priest (2012, p. 43-47; 2014, p. 128-130), in the Fifth Deduction (which studies the assumption "the One is not"[4] taken as being extensionally tantamount to "the One is a nonbeing" and "the One partakes of not-being"), Plato mainly deals with the problem of non-being, that is both the ontological puzzle of the 'ontic status' of what is not (nonbeings as members of the ontology) and the semantic question of whether and how one can truly talk or think about what is not (nonbeings as intentional objects)[5]. In doing so, the whole Fifth Deduction, from its leading assumption to its arguments and conclusion, is reminiscent of Gorgias' claim "if there is what is not, it will both be and not be at the same time; insofar as it is considered as not being it will not be, but insofar as what is not is, it will on the other hand be" (Sext. Emp. *AM* 7.67, trans. R. Bett, see (Diès, 1923, p. 19, p. 108 n. 1; Cornford, 1939, p. 226)), and, as such, is a response to Eleatic ontology.

Indeed, the Parmenidean motto that anything one can truly think or speak about has being (since Parmenides supports a meta-ontology which states that intentionality yields ontological knowledge given that, first, meaning involves reference, and, second, reference implies existence/being[6] – both assumptions that forcefully Routley (1980), amongst other Meinongians, argues against) implies either that it is impossible to think about an object that is not since that object has no being at all and, consequently, is not something (Parmenides' own view: nonbeing is neither thinkable nor sayable, trying in this direction forms the 'False Path' or 'Doxastic Road' of *On Nature*, see Frg. 2, 6, 8 and *Sph*. 237b-239a), or that if one thinks about a nonbeing, that object must somehow *be*, that is, it must have some being after all. Plato chooses the latter path. To avoid the contradiction (thinking about an object that both is and is not), Plato – at least in the Fifth Deduction – distinguishes between a 'thin' and a 'thick' meaning of *being* (to borrow Fine (2009)'s terminology), in such a way that it is possible to think or speak about an object that is in the 'thin' sense, but is not in the 'thick' sense (such an interpretation of the Fifth Deduction can be traced back to Cornford (1939, p. 217-231) and, in recent times, is – albeit slightly differently – defended in (Menn, 1994, p. 74, p. 94-95; A&A, §IIIα2; Granieri, 2022; Marion, 2022, p. 17-31; 2023, p. 549-567); for reason of space, I refer the reader to these works for a meticulous defence of this exegesis since my paper aims at discussing other aspects of the Fifth Deduction – for other readings of the Fifth Deduction, see discussion on scholarship in endnotes[7]). Such a distinction is Meinongian in spirit[8], albeit not completely in letter (on this point, I agree with Granieri (2022) and Marion (2022, p. 19-31))[9].

- 'Thin' meaning of being (being$_1$ thereafter): to be$_1$ is to be something or a 'that' (τι), that is, to be$_1$ is to have some distinctive characteristics, i.e., to *partake* of some characterizing ideas (i.e., every participation/true predication/true ascription of any property entails being$_1$). In other words, to be$_1$, an object must have an identity that sets it apart from everything else (160c5-161a5, see (Cornford, 1939, p. 219; McCabe, 1996, p. 36-37) for a short and efficient presentation of this idea). In Meinong (1907)'s dialect, being$_1$ is very close to the *Sosein* (= the bundle of characterizing properties) of something. To formalize the idea, to be$_1$ is to be selectable, recognizable or identifiable in the first-order domain of quantification (the basic criterion argued for in Quine (1948)), that is, to be a value of a bound variable: $E_1!x =_{df.} \exists y(y = x)$.
- 'Thick' meaning of being (being$_2$ thereafter): to be$_2$ is to partake of the idea of Being (161e3-162b8, esp. 162a4-b3[10]). In Meinongian words, being$_2$ is close to the *Sein* (= the non-characterizing and 'ontologically-loaded' properties[11]) of something. To formalize the idea, I follow Priest (2012): $E_2!x =_{df.} x < \pi yE!y$ where '<' is the asymmetric relationship of participation, and '$\pi x\Phi x$' is the idiosyncratic symbol that designates the idea of Φ-ness (in what follows, $\overline{\Phi}$ is the opposite/complement of Φ, i.e., 'to be $\overline{\Phi}$' means 'to be non-Φ', in such a way that 'to be $\overline{E}$' means 'to be a nonbeing$_2$' and '$\pi x\overline{E}x$' designates the idea of Nonbeing$_2$).



Hence a thing or 'that' can be$_1$ without being$_2$: such a being$_1$ is an intentional object of which one can think and speak of (in other words, this being$_1$ forms the extra-linguistic referent of any meaningful speech or thought about it, see Scolnicov (2003, p. 153) amongst others), albeit it does not exist in the strong sense since it is$_2$ not (it does not partake of Being). Such is the One (which is not) of the Fifth Deduction, and, more generally (of course, with the proviso that by 'One' Plato also, kantsciously and transcendentally, aims to refer to items in general – such an issue, what did Plato have in mind while saying 'the One' in the *Prm*.?, still remains a hot spot within scholarship on Plato's *Parmenides*), all non-beings (for instance: *ficta* like Tom Bombadil, mere *possibilia* like the possible bald man in the doorway, etc.).

From the point of view of metaphysical grammar, Plato marks the difference between the copulative or predicative meaning of the verb 'to be' captured by the verb of participation μετέχειν (see 161e3-162b8) insofar as any truthful characterization of the type '*x* is Φ' or '*x* partakes of Φ-ness' implies that *x* is in the thin sense (161e3-162a11)[12], and the verb 'to be' in its strictly existential meaning – which is captured by the synonymy between '*x* is', '*x* is a being' and '*x* partakes of Being' (see Granieri (2022) for a more detailed discussion on this point).

The first meaning equates *being* (ὄν) and *something* (τι) - to be something is to be$_1$ *simpliciter*[13] -, not the second. Both have an existential import however: a minimal (but non-null) import for being$_1$ (in agreement with the reversal of Quine's dictum: 'no entity without identity'[14]) and a full import for being$_2$. Plato states their independence: an object can be$_1$ without being$_2$. More importantly, to be$_1$ is a sufficient criterion for being an intentional object that one can truly talk or think of. In doing so, Plato foresees the Meinongian Thesis of *Außersein* between *Sosein* and *Sein*, that is, the independence between what is an object and its ontological status. The only slight difference with Meinongianism is that neither Meinong (1907) nor modern Noneists as Routley (1980) vindicate the equivalence of being and something (or the conflation between *Sein* and *Gegebenheit*). Quite the contrary, it is their key-idea to give up the troublesome oddities of classical 'Parmenidean' thinking by distinguishing what is something and what exists (on this point, they follow Gorgias' proto-Meinongian insights, see Sext. Emp. *AM* 7.78-82, *MXG* 6 980a8-19 and Priest, Routley & Norman (1989, p. 11-12); Gorgias is also followed by Aristotle, see *SE* 5 166b37-167a7, 25 180a32-38, *An. Post*. 2.7 92b29-30, *Metaph*. Θ.3 1047a33-b1 and (Menn, A&A, §Iγ1c; Marion, 2023, p. 567)).

Since my aim is not to provide a full analysis of the Fifth Deduction, I shall discuss neither the meta-ontological nor historical consequences of such a theory of nonbeing (that has be done

elsewhere by many scholars, notably in Marion (2022, p. 14-31)), but focus my discussion on an outcome that Plato explicitly draws from this theory: beings$_1$ that do not be$_2$ can *move* from not-being$_2$ to being$_2$ (162b9-162c6), although they cannot move in a more physical way (162c6-d6: they cannot be locally moved since they do not exist in the spatiotemporal world, i.e. they are nowhere, nor be altered since they would lose their identity, that is, their being$_1$).

Prm. 162b9-e4[15]

Οἷόν τε οὖν τὸ ἔχον πως μὴ ἔχειν οὕτω, μὴ μεταβάλλον ἐκ ταύτης τῆς ἕξεως; — Οὐχ οἷόν τε. — Πᾶν ἄρα τὸ τοιοῦτον μεταβολὴν σημαίνει, ὃ ἂν οὕτω τε καὶ μὴ οὕτως ἔχῃ. — Πῶς δ' οὔ; — Μεταβολὴ δὲ κίνησις· ἢ τί φήσομεν; — Κίνησις. — Οὐκοῦν τὸ ἓν ὄν τε καὶ οὐκ ὂν ἐφάνη; — Ναί. — Οὕτως ἄρα καὶ οὐχ οὕτως ἔχον φαίνεται. —Ἔοικεν. — Καὶ κινούμενον ἄρα τὸ οὐκ ὂν ἓν πέφανται, ἐπείπερ καὶ μεταβολὴν ἐκ τοῦ εἶναι ἐπὶ τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἔχον. — Κινδυνεύει. — Ἀλλὰ μὴν εἰ μηδαμοῦ γέ ἐστι τῶν ὄντων, ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν εἴπερ μὴ ἔστιν, οὐδ' ἂν μεθίσταιτό ποθέν ποι. — Πῶς γάρ; — Οὐκ ἄρα τῷ γε μεταβαίνειν κινοῖτ' ἄν. — Οὐ γάρ. — Οὐδὲ μὴν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ἂν στρέφοιτο· ταὐτοῦ γὰρ οὐδαμοῦ ἅπτεται. ὃν γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ ταὐτόν· τὸ δὲ μὴ ὂν ἔν τῳ τῶν ὄντων ἀδύνατον εἶναι. — Ἀδύνατον γάρ. — Οὐκ ἄρα τὸ ἕν γε μὴ ὂν στρέφεσθαι ἂν δύναιτο ἐν ἐκείνῳ ἐν ᾧ μὴ ἔστιν. — Οὐ γὰρ οὖν. — Οὐδὲ μὴν ἀλλοιοῦταί που τὸ ἓν ἑαυτοῦ, οὔτε τὸ ὂν οὔτε τὸ μὴ ὄν· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἦν ὁ λόγος ἔτι περὶ τοῦ ἑνός, εἴπερ ἠλλοιοῦτο αὐτὸ ἑαυτοῦ, ἀλλὰ περὶ ἄλλου τινός. — Ὀρθῶς. — Εἰ δὲ μήτ' ἀλλοιοῦται μήτε ἐν ταὐτῷ στρέφεται μήτε μεταβαίνει, ἆρ' ἄν πῃ ἔτι κινοῖτο; — Πῶς γάρ; — Τό γε μὴν ἀκίνητον ἀνάγκη ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν, τὸ δὲ ἡσυχάζον ἑστάναι. — Ἀνάγκη. — Τὸ ἓν ἄρα, ὡς ἔοικεν, οὐκ ὂν ἕστηκέ τε καὶ κινεῖται. —Ἔοικεν.

"Can something that is in some state not be so, without changing from that state?"—"It cannot."—"So everything of the sort we've described, which is both so and not so, signifies a change."—"Doubtless."—"And a change is a motion – or what shall we call it?"—"A motion."—"Now wasn't the one shown both to be and not to be?"—"Yes."—"Therefore, it appears both to be so and not so."—"So it seems."—"Therefore the one that is not has been shown also to move, since in fact it has been shown to change from being to not-being."—"It looks that way."—"Yet, on the other hand, if it is nowhere among the things that are – as it isn't, if in fact it is not – it couldn't travel from one place to another."— "Obviously not."—"So it couldn't move by switching place."—"No, it couldn't."—"Nor could it rotate in the same thing, because it nowhere touches the same thing. For that which is the same is a being, and what is not cannot be in anything that is."—"No, it can't."—"Therefore the one, if it is not, would be unable to rotate in that in which it is not."—"Yes, you're quite right."—"And, surely, the one isn't altered from itself either, whether as something that is or as something that is not. For the argument would no longer be about the one, but about something else, if in fact the one were altered from itself."—"That's right."—"But if it isn't altered and doesn't rotate in the same thing or switch place, could it still move somehow?"—"Obviously not."—"Yet what is unmoved must enjoy repose, and what reposes must be at rest."—"Necessarily."—"Therefore the one, as it seems, since it is not, is both at rest and in motion."—"So it seems."

Trans. Gill & Ryan

According to 162b9-c6, the coming-to-be$_2$ of a being$_1$ is a kind of *migration* within the ontological domain of quantification $\mathfrak{D}$, or to put it differently, a being$_1$ swaps its participation in nonbeing$_2$ for partaking of being$_2$. In a formal chronological language, the coming-to-be of *a* is encapsuled in the formula $(t < t') \wedge \langle \exists x(x = a), t\rangle \wedge \langle \neg E!a, t\rangle \wedge \langle \exists x(x = a), t'\rangle \wedge \langle E!a, t'\rangle$, i.e., $(t < t') \wedge \langle \exists x(x = a), t\rangle \wedge \langle \overline{E!}a, t\rangle \wedge \langle \exists x(x = a), t'\rangle \wedge \langle E!a, t'\rangle$, where $\langle \varphi, t\rangle$ is a *temporalized well-formed formula*, i.e., a pair ⟨well-formed formula, time of valuation⟩, see the following diagram:

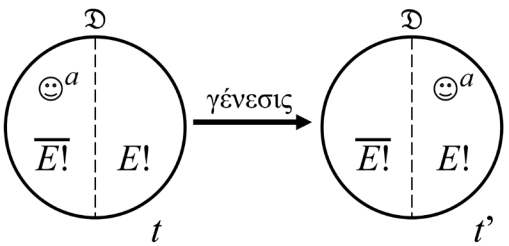


Figure 1. Plato's Migrationist Theory of Coming-to-Be

In other words again, for Plato, coming-to-be is a motion/change of something from a diminished sort of being (being$_1$ + not-being$_2$) to full being (being$_1$ + being$_2$) (it passes from the former to the latter, it passes into being$_2$). In doing so, Plato distances himself from the Abrahamic idea that coming-to-be is a creation *ex nihilo*, i.e., the generation of something from nothing (in formal setting, the formula: $(t < t') \wedge \langle \neg\exists x(x = a), t\rangle \wedge \langle \exists x(x = a), t'\rangle$), see the diagram:

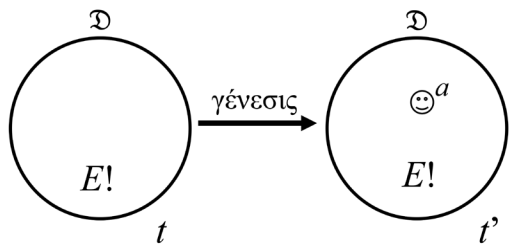


Figure 2. Creationist Theory of Coming-to-Be

Rejecting creationism but dealing with the analysis of coming-to-be, Plato meets another Eleatic challenge (ascribed by some to Melissus, to Gorgias by others), namely the dilemmatic argument that coming-to-be is impossible, i.e., that things cannot go in and out of being, given that something can come-to-be neither from being nor from non-being[16] (of which there are several variants in Sextus Empiricus, Gorgias and Aristotle, see DL 9.100 and *Phys.* 1.8 191a24-33[17] and, for a short discussion, Prior (1967, p. 138-143) and Brémond (2017, p. 45-47) - this argument can be seen as a gloss on Parmenides' discourse against the possibility of coming-to-be and passing-away in frg. 8.5-25[18]). Here, the texts:

Phys., 1.8 191a27-31

καί φασιν οὔτε γίγνεσθαι τῶν ὄντων οὐδὲν οὔτε φθείρεσθαι διὰ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον μὲν εἶναι γίγνεσθαι τὸ γιγνόμενον ἢ ἐξ ὄντος ἢ ἐκ μὴ ὄντος, ἐκ δὲ τούτων ἀμφοτέρων ἀδύνατον εἶναι· οὔτε γὰρ τὸ ὂν γίγνεσθαι (εἶναι γὰρ ἤδη) ἔκ τε μὴ ὄντος οὐδὲν ἂν γενέσθαι· ὑποκεῖσθαι γάρ τι δεῖν.

So they [the Eleatics] say that none of the things that are either comes to be or passes away, because what comes to be must do so either from what is or from what is not, both of which are impossible. For what is cannot come to be (because it is already), and from what is not nothing could have come to be (because something must be underlying).

Trans. R. P. Hardie & R. K. Gaye (slightly modified)

DL 9.100

οὐδὲ μὴν γένεσίς ἐστι, φασίν. οὔτε γὰρ τὸ ὂν γίνεται, ἔστι γάρ, οὔτε τὸ μὴ ὄν, οὐδὲ γὰρ ὑφέστηκε· τὸ δὲ μὴ ὑφεστὼς μηδὲ ὂν οὐδὲ τὸ γίνεσθαι εὐτύχηκε.

Nor, say they, is there any coming into being. For that which is does not come into being, since it *is*; nor yet that which is not, for it has no substance, and that which has no substance or existence cannot have had the chance of coming into being either.

Trans. R. D. Hicks (slightly modified)

In a nutshell, the Parmenidean *modus tollens* (whose the consequent of the conditional premise is taken to be an exclusive disjunction) is as follows (see (Prior, 1967, p. 139; Routley, 1980, p. 371)):

1. If something comes-to-be, it does so either from what is or from what is not
2. But it cannot come-to-be from what is already, for this is not a real coming-to-*be*
3. Nor it can come-to-be from what is not, for from what is not nothing can come-to-be

4. Therefore nothing can come-to-be

Premise 2 is on fairly safe ground, at least if - *contra* Aristotle - coming-to-be cannot be conceptually reduced to a mere transformation of something into something else (see below). As for the premise 3, it is nothing more than a question-begging rejection of creation *ex nihilo* that was a blind-spot for Greek philosophers before the emergence of Christianism[19] (on the claim '*ex nihilo nihil fit*', see Empedocles *apud MXG* 2 975b1-4 and *apud* Philo, *Aet*. 2.5, and Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, 1.148-173; as far as I know, *MXG* 1 974b19-975a21 was the early defense in a Greek and non-Christian philosophical text of the conceptual possibility of creation *ex nihilo*[20]). To be fair, Christian (and other Abrahamic) theologians have always had great difficulties to explain such a creation out of nothing, and, ultimately, either settle for the idea of a divine *fiat* (God is so powerful that Her will brings everything out of nothing), or provide a migrationist reading of God's creative act (Leibniz for instance: roughly, God creates or actualizes the best possible world amongst the many possible worlds that She scrutinizes in Her mind). Unlike the Christians that support a divine *fiat* who like to explain oddities with mysteries, Plato finds an acceptable understanding of the contradictory of the premise 3 by distinguishing two meanings of 'to be' (since he believes that this premise is

true if 'to be' means 'to be$_1$'): something can come-to-be$_2$ from what is$_1$ but is$_2$ not.

Of course, as is often the case, Aristotle forcefully criticizes such an *ontological motion* from inexistence/nonbeing to existence/being at several places (*Phys.* 5.1 225a20-b3, *Metaph.* Θ.3 1047a32-b2, see Menn (1994, p. 76 n. 5, p. 94 n. 29; A&A, §IIIα2)). He strongly disagrees with such an *ad hoc* distinction between two senses of 'to be' and with the idea that coming-to-be is a *motion* (κίνησις) in the narrow sense (on Aristotle's distinction between κίνησις and μεταβολή, see *Phys.* 5.1-2 and (Marion, 2023, p. 80-82): roughly, motion involves the persistence of what is moving, whereas change involves that what is changing does not remain the same). Then, Aristotle offers another account of coming-to-be based on the idea that something comes-to-be from something else, i.e., that a being comes-to-be from another being that already is potentially what it will actually become at the end of the process, that is, coming-to-be is a *transformation* rather than a *creation* or a *migration* within the ontology (*Phys.* 1.7-9, 5.1, *GC* 1.3-4, etc.) - therefore, coming-to-be, in the strictest meaning of these terms, is a *change* (μεταβολή) rather than a *motion* (κίνησις)[21]. In doing so, Aristotle answers to the Eleatic question 'whence do any being come from?' and neutralizes the Eleatic argument by supporting that the premise 2 is false for a certain understanding of coming-to-be, namely the transformationist one (and, therefore, unlike Plato, he unconditionally accepts the truth of the premise 3). In formal language, Aristotle says: $(t < t') \wedge \langle \neg\exists x(x = a), t\rangle \wedge \langle \exists x(x = b), t\rangle \wedge \langle \exists x(x = a), t'\rangle \wedge \langle \neg\exists x(x = b), t'\rangle$, i.e., *b* becomes *a* or *b* is transformed in *a* (transformation is akin to a *replacement* or a *substitution* of one individual constant by another in $\mathfrak{D}$).

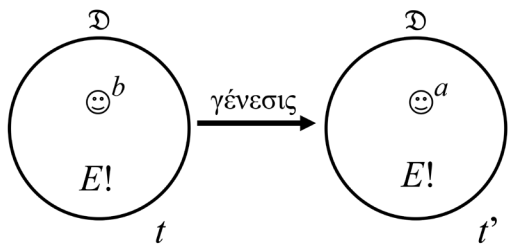


Figure 3. Aristotle's Transformationist Theory of Coming-to-Be

To sum up, let's summarize the three theories of coming-to-be and the temporal (both chronological and tensed) logics underlying their key-assumptions as follows (*a* is something iff *a* is selectable or recognizable in the first-order domain $\mathfrak{D}$; '$\mathcal{H}$' is the 'it has always been the case that' operator, '$\mathcal{P}$' the 'it was the case that' operator, and '$\mathcal{N}$' the 'now' operator of standard tensed logic)[22]:

- *Creationism*: something comes-to-be from nothing.
  a comes-to-be at *t'* iff $(t < t') \wedge \langle \neg\exists x(x = a), t\rangle \wedge \langle \exists x(x = a), t'\rangle$
  a comes-to-be now iff $\mathcal{H}\neg\exists x(x = a) \wedge \mathcal{N}\exists x(x = a)$
- *Transformationism*: something comes-to-be from something else.
  a comes-to-be at *t'* iff $(t < t') \wedge \langle \neg\exists x(x = a), t\rangle \wedge \langle \exists x(x = b), t\rangle \wedge \langle \exists x(x = a), t'\rangle \wedge \langle \neg\exists x(x = b), t'\rangle$[23]
  a comes-to-be now iff $\mathcal{H}\neg\exists x(x = a) \wedge \mathcal{P}\exists x(x = b) \wedge \mathcal{N}\exists x(x = a) \wedge \mathcal{N}\neg\exists x(x = b)$
- *Migrationism*: something that is already something (that is, a being$_1$) swops its property of nonbeing$_2$ for that of being$_2$.
  a comes-to-be at *t'* iff $(t < t') \wedge \langle \exists x(x = a), t\rangle \wedge \langle \overline{E!}a, t\rangle \wedge \langle \exists x(x = a), t'\rangle \wedge \langle E!a, t'\rangle$
  a comes-to-be now iff $\mathcal{H}\exists x(x = a) \wedge \mathcal{H}\overline{E!}a \wedge \mathcal{N}\exists x(x = a) \wedge \mathcal{N}E!a$

So, it appears that Plato's migrationist theory of coming-to-be is a midway path between Abrahamic creation *ex nihilo* and Aristotle's transformation of what it is in something else. Indeed, migrationism shares with creationism the idea that something could not formerly have been something else, but has in common with transformationism the same reluctance for the idea that ontology could vary in size over time, i.e., that the size of the ontological domain of quantification could increase or decrease (the view that the cardinality of the ontology does not vary over time was already expressed by Melissus, see *MXG* 1 974a4-6)[24].

To better grasp the difference between creationism and migrationism, it can be helpful, or at least informative, to locate these theories in the contemporary quarrel in quantified temporal logic that opposes *temporaryism/transientism* (ontology varies over time: some objects come into and go out of $\mathfrak{D}$, i.e., they are temporary in $\mathfrak{D}$, sometimes they fail to be) and *permanentism* (ontology does not vary over time: no object comes into and go out of $\mathfrak{D}$, i.e., the inhabitants of $\mathfrak{D}$ are always or permanently the same) discussed at length in Williamson (2013)[25]. More formally (where '$\mathcal{S}$' represents the 'sometimes' operator and '$\mathcal{A}$' the 'always' operator of standard tensed logic[26]):

- *Temporaryism*: sometimes, something is sometimes nothing.
  $\mathcal{S}\,\exists x\,\mathcal{S}\,\neg\exists y(x = y)$
- *Permanentism*: always, everything is always something.
  $\mathcal{A}\,\forall x\,\mathcal{A}\,\exists y(x = y)$

If ontology is assimilated to the domain of the unrestricted quantifiers (that is, if the quantificationalist meta-ontology of Quine (1948) is assumed), it straightaway appears that some migrationist theories as Plato's in the Fifth Deduction are versions of permanentism (since all beings$_1$ always are inhabitants of $\mathfrak{D}$, so to speak nonbeing$_2$ and being$_2$ are only two exhaustive and exclusive regions of $\mathfrak{D}$), whereas obviously all creationist theories are temporaryist. Of course, a migrationist theory might be temporaryist provided it abandons Quinean meta-ontology and replaces it, for instance, with a Meinongian one (for instance, Routley (1980, p. 361-394) defends a temporaryist migrationism with Meinongian unrestricted quantifiers - that is, ontologically unloaded quantifiers - against some versions of permanentism). Matters are not so clear as far as transformationist theories are concerned, but, at first sight, they are permanentist in spirit (or, at least, conservative on the question whether or not the size of the ontology can vary over time). Needless to say, Eleaticism (the view that there is no coming-to-be, i.e., that everything always is and never changes) is an extremist permanentism, whereas Heraclitean processualism (the view that there is no being but only becoming, i.e., that everything is always changing, in every respect) tends to be an extremist temporaryism (on the opposition between Parmenides' immobilism and Heraclitus' transientism as a paradigmatic antagonism in philosophy, see *Tht*. 179d1-181b5).

However, Plato's theory of coming-to-be is not unproblematic in the general economy of the *Parmenides*: such an account, at first sight, is in tension with Plato's account of motion as developed in the First Deduction.

In the First Deduction (138b7-139b3), Plato provides a mereological and locational analysis of motion and establishes that a moving item must have parts and at least two partial locations, it is partially in its *terminus a quo* and partially in its immediate *terminus ad quem*, and therefore it moves across them. The moving item is partially in the two neighbouring

places. Aristotle supports the same 'anti-atomist' idea in *Phys.* 6.4 234b10-20 and 10 240b20-241a6. Aristotle's testimonies suffice to answer to the objection that the analysis of the Firth Deduction holds only for local motions but not for other kinds of motions. Indeed, unlike Plato, Aristotle clearly states that such an analysis is *de jure* applicable for every sort of change, either local or not[27].

Accordingly, if coming-to-be is a genuine kind of motion, while moving, the object needs to partially partake of not-being$_2$ and to partially partake of being$_2$ at once. But, one can think that being$_2$ is not a property that allows a more-than-two discrete or continuous range of acceptable values, in such a way that it is impossible in fact to only partially partake of being$_2$, and so impossible to *move* from not-being$_2$ to being$_2$ (a dialetheist alternative is to claim that, while moving from not-being$_2$ to being$_2$, an item is in a contradictory state, viz. it is$_2$ and is$_2$ not at once - such a solution is in the vein of Priest (2012; 2014) – dialetheism is the metaphysical claim that some, but not all, contradictions are true).

Roughly, a simple solution consists in dropping out the absoluteness of participation, that is, in taking participation as a matter of (infinite) degree rather than as an absolute relation that either holds or does not hold (Miró Quesada-Cantuarias (2004, p. 28-30) and Fronterotta (2018) both suggest to use a $\aleph$-valued Łukasiewicz fuzzy logic to formalize such a claim). Since the idea of being$_2$ - at least in its behavior *qua* idea - needs not to be dissimilar to other ideas, one can partake of being$_2$ at an arbitrary degree from zero to fullness. Thus, in the process of leaving not-being$_2$ to obtain being$_2$, an object can progressively partake less and less of not-being$_2$ and more and more of being$_2$ (in a way, there are ghosts - not full beings$_2$ - in Plato's universe). I should confess that I do not see any good reason to forbid such a move.

PART 2: ROUTLEY'S MEINONGIANISM AND THE LOGIC OF COMING-TO-BE

Richard Routley/Sylvan was a Meinongian (a 'Noneist' to speak in his philosophical dialect, that is, he claims with force that there are items which do not exist like an ethical defense of capitalism, green ecological economic growth, the actual king of France, Tom Bombadil, and the round square cupola on Berkeley College, i.e., formally: $\exists x[\exists y(y = x) \wedge \neg E!x]$ where the particular quantifier '$\exists$' is ontologically unloaded or neutralized) and also, in the good sense, a systematic philosopher. Contrary to usual Meinongian manifestos, Routley (1980) (a 1000-page exploration of Meinong's Jungle) devotes a chapter to Meinongianism and philosophy of time (Routley, 1980, p. 361-409). In particular, Routley (1980, p. 371-374) challenges the Eleatic argument against coming-to-be. Against the modern Parmenidean anti-temporaryists who take reference to imply existence and follow, at best, Plato's migrationist insights about coming-to-be (sometimes, they non-formally try to follow Aristotle's transformationist path; often, they simply endorse the Eleatic rejection of change), Routley (1980) provides a Meinongian answer to the Eleatic challenge of the possibility of becoming-existent. In doing so, Routley (1980) unconsciously rediscovers the key-idea of Plato's migrationism *modulo* the crucial fact that, unlike Plato and some modern Parmenideans, Routley (1980) is truly Meinongian and believes that being$_1$ has a null existential import rather than a minimal one: something comes into being from something that is a nonbeing; so to speak, something swaps nonbeing for being.

Routley (1980, p. 361-394) (esp. p. 372-373 for the philosophical motive discussed below) points out that such a Meinongian theory of coming-to-be needs a non-classical (called 'neutral') chronological untensed logic that allows to

quantify over nonbeings, since it is the mistaken commitment to classical temporal logic and its ontologically loaded quantification (on which, see Prior (1967)) which grounds the Eleatic argument according to which nothing can come into or go out of being. Hence classical logicians are stuck either with Parmenides' changeless reality and no word can be said about what is not, or with the desperate help of some 'Platonizing' hypostatizing strategy which allows to give some positive existential import to beings$_1$ (insofar as, by anti-Meinongian and Quinean lights, every item that belongs to the domain of the quantifiers really is or exists)[28]. But such a strategy is done at the cost of ruling out all change features connected to being (like becoming, coming-to-be, dying, ceasing-to-be, persisting, and so on) from the realm of properties. For classical predicate logic which is ruled by Leibniz's laws of identity (identity is the *extensional* coincidence on *all* properties[29], i.e., identity means indiscernibility, an 'intuitive' definition that appears in Aristotle's *Top.* 7.1 152a30-38, *SE* 24 179a37-40 and should be shared by Plato and his followers; anyway, the argument against the alteration of nonbeings$_2$ in *Prm.* 162d5-8 (+ 163a7-b1) states that if a nonbeing$_2$ changes its properties, then it does not remain the same being$_1$, i.e., it loses its identity and comes to be different from what it was formerly, it is obvious that such a reasoning is implicitly based on a version of Leibniz's laws, see below) cannot be applied to these change features. Indeed, the two sentences 'Socrates is dying' and 'Socrates is a philosopher' do not speak about the same thing, namely Socrates, because the former can be false at a time while the latter being true: either these sentences do not state some properties of the same Socrates (by Leibniz's laws), or one of them - likely the first - is in fact not a well-formed sentence because the transient being-denying feature - dying - involved is not a genuine predicate/property. Such a classical constraint on the realm of well-grounded properties is - by McTaggart (1908)'s well-known regress machinery - only rendered more palatable if *tensed* predicates (like was-dying, is-dying, will-be-dying) are allowed (and so, despite the tactical moves done in Prior (1967, p. 1-19))[30].

More precisely, as far as coming-to-be$_2$ is concerned, a more sophisticated version of the puzzling argument that the hypostatizing strategy has to face runs as follows[31]:

1.	coming-to-be$_2$ is a genuine being$_2$-entailing property	*Hypothesis*
2.	a being$_1$ comes-to-be$_2$ iff it swaps its nonbeing$_2$ for being$_2$ a comes-to-be$_2$ at t_i iff $(\overline{E!}\ a_{t<ti} \wedge E!a_{t>ti})$	*df.* coming-to-be
3.	before its coming-to-be$_2$, something that is a being$_1$ has the property of non-being$_2$, but after its coming-to-be$_2$, is has the property of being$_2$ $\exists x(x = a \wedge \neg E!a_{t<ti} \wedge E!a_{t>ti})$	*first gloss on 2*
4.	before its coming-to-be$_2$, something that is a being$_1$ lacks the property of being$_2$ but has it after its coming-to-be$_2$ $\exists x(x = a \wedge \neg E!a_{t<ti} \wedge E!a_{t>ti})$	*second gloss on 2*
5.	to come-to-be$_2$, a being$_1$ must be identical to itself before and after its coming-to-be$_2$ if a comes-to-be$_2$ at t_i then $a_{t<ti} = a_{t>ti}$	*third gloss on 2*
6.	but, to be identical amounts to share all properties $\forall x\forall y\ [x = y \equiv \forall\Phi(\Phi x \equiv \Phi y)]$	Leibniz's law
7.	therefore, a being$_1$ before its coming-to-be$_2$ is and is not identical to itself after its coming-to-be$_2$ $(a_{t<ti} = a_{t>ti}) \wedge \neg(a_{t<ti} = a_{t>ti})$	first conjunct from 5 & second conjunct from 4+6, contradiction

To escape the contradiction 7, the supporter of the hypostatizing strategy should abandon one of the premises. The easy way is to drop out the premise 1 by arguing that coming-to-be$_2$ is not a genuine property, likely on the ground that being$_2$ is not itself a real property (if so, the tactical move is to introduce a dubious property-filter that discriminates properties and nonproperties). Of course, there are other ways to challenge the argument in a classical framework (especially by adding some extra-logical assumptions on the nature of individuals: fourdimensionalism, sequentialism, etc.), but making a survey of these tactics is not relevant for my actual enquiry, and, therefore, I refer the reader to Seibt (2008, p. 136-146) for a longer discussion on the incompatibility between Leibniz's laws and change. The point of interest is that, amongst these many options, Routley (1980) selects another way of understanding Leibniz's laws, and I shall argue that Plato either would follow him or would accept the contradictory claim 7.

The path taken by Routley (1980, p. 371-394) to avoid the difficulties of the hypostatizing strategy is to give up classical dogmas, especially the premise 6 of the argument presented above: the non-classical temporal logic must be a *chronological* one (that is: *tenseless* but such a feature is not mandatory at all, see Routley (1980, p. 385)) that replaces Leibniz's *extensional* laws of identity for things that change over time with a constrained variant of these laws that restricts the relevant properties only to *dated* or *time-indexed* properties as dying-at-*t* (where *t* is a constant, dying-at-seven-o'clock-on-the-fifth-of-June-399BC for instance) or being-a-philosopher-at-*t*. Identity over time is the coincidence on all dated properties (formally: $\forall x \forall y\ [x = y \equiv \forall \Phi_t (\Phi_t x \equiv \Phi_t y)]$ where 'Φ_t' is the dated property 'Φ-at-*t*'), undated temporary properties as being-a-philosopher and undated transient/processual properties as dying are dropped out: albeit they are well-grounded properties, Leibniz's laws do not apply to them[32]. Another fashionable version of the same strategy (modifying the premise 6) consists in restating Leibniz's laws in a temporalized way without introducing dated properties, that is: identity is the extensional coincidence-at-all-times on all properties (formally: $\forall x \forall y\ [x = y \equiv \forall \Phi \forall t\ (\langle \Phi x, t \rangle \equiv \langle \Phi y, t \rangle)]$)[33]. As points out by Rescher & Urquhart (1971, p. 242-243), the difference between the two versions is the following: the first retains the atemporal version of Leibniz's laws (given that there is no quantifying over time) but adopts a heterodox temporalized class of properties (the dated ones), whereas the second temporalizes Leibniz's laws but saves the orthodox atemporal and phenomenological conception of properties[34]. As it is often the case, beyond the estimation of theoretical cost and benefits, choosing between these two reformulations of Leibniz's law is *in fine* a matter of metaphysical aesthetics. In any case, to face in a satisfactorily way the troublesome problems of the hypostatizing strategy, I believe, Plato must follow a similar route of weakening Leibniz's law.

Indeed, Plato is aware of the puzzle of the incompatibility between the hypostatizing strategy pursued in the Fifth Deduction and Leibniz's unrestricted laws, for Plato argues that the One of the Fifth Deduction which is$_1$ but is$_2$ not, on the one hand, is altered (or, to speak *Hegelianese*, alienated) inasmuch as it moves from nonbeing$_2$ to being$_2$ (for motion/change necessarily implies a change in some property, i.e., the moving item modifies something in its original bundle of characteristics[35]), and, on the other hand, is not altered inasmuch as it keeps its identity which is its being$_1$, i.e., its distinctive bundle of characterizing properties that allows it to be recognized and identified amongst all other items (162e4-163b6). Indeed, there is a series of arguments in regard to the alterability of the One (for a detailed study on the logical structure of the Fifth Deduction, see Rickless (2007, p. 212-223)).

Prm. 162e4-163b6

Καὶ μὴν εἴπερ γε κινεῖται, μεγάλη ἀνάγκη αὐτῷ ἀλλοιοῦσθαι· ὅπῃ γὰρ ἄν τι κινηθῇ, κατὰ τοσοῦτον οὐκέθ' ὡσαύτως ἔχει ὡς εἶχεν, ἀλλ' ἑτέρως. — Οὕτως. — Κινούμενον δὴ τὸ ἓν καὶ ἀλλοιοῦται. — Ναί. — Καὶ μὴν μηδαμῇ γε κινούμενον οὐδαμῇ ἂν ἀλλοιοῖτο. — Οὐ γάρ. — Ἧι μὲν ἄρα κινεῖται τὸ οὐκ ὂν ἕν, ἀλλοιοῦται· ᾗ δὲ μὴ κινεῖται, οὐκ ἀλλοιοῦται. —Οὐ γάρ. — Τὸ ἓν ἄρα μὴ ὂν ἀλλοιοῦταί τε καὶ οὐκ ἀλλοιοῦται. — Φαίνεται. — Τὸ δ' ἀλλοιούμενον ἆρ' οὐκ ἀνάγκη γίγνεσθαι μὲν ἕτερον ἢ πρότερον, ἀπόλλυσθαι δὲ ἐκ τῆς προτέρας ἕξεως· τὸ δὲ μὴ ἀλλοιούμενον μήτε γίγνεσθαι μήτε ἀπόλλυσθαι; — Ἀνάγκη. — Καὶ τὸ ἓν ἄρα μὴ ὂν ἀλλοιούμενον μὲν γίγνεταί τε καὶ ἀπόλλυται, μὴ ἀλλοιούμενον δὲ οὔτε γίγνεται οὔτε ἀπόλλυται· καὶ οὕτω τὸ ἓν μὴ ὂν γίγνεταί τε καὶ ἀπόλλυται, καὶ οὔτε γίγνεται οὔτ' ἀπόλλυται. — Οὐ γὰρ οὖν.

"Furthermore, if in fact it moves, it certainly must be altered; for however something is moved, by just so much it is no longer in the same state as it was, but in a different state."—"Just so."—"Then because it moves, the one is also altered."—"Yes."—"And yet, because it in no way moves, it could in no way be altered."—"No, it couldn't."—"So insofar as the one that is not moves, it is altered, but insofar as it doesn't move, it is not altered."—"No, it isn't.—"Therefore the one, if it is not, is both altered and not altered."—"Apparently."—"Must not that which is altered come to be different from what it was before, and cease to be in its previous state; and must not that which is not altered neither come to be nor cease to be?"—"Necessarily."—"Therefore also the one, if it is not, comes to be and ceases to be, if it is altered, and does not come to be or cease to be, if it is not altered. And thus the one, if it is not, both comes to be and ceases to be, and does not come to be or cease to be."—"Yes, you're quite right."

Trans. Gill & Ryan

First, the *modus ponens* (162e4-163a3, 163a4-5, premise 2 from 162b9-c6):

1. If the One is moving, then it is altered
2. The One is moving (it comes-to-be and passes-away)

3. The One is altered

Second, the *modus tollens* (163a3-4, premise 1 can also be found in 162d5-8 and 163a7-b1, such a premise amounts to the claim that every alteration - that is, every change/motion - is both a coming-to-be and a ceasing-to-be[36]; premise 2 is implicit in 162d5-e2):

1. If the One is altered, then it does not remain the same
2. The One remains the same

3. The One is not altered

Then, Plato puts the conclusions of the two arguments together, and concludes - as usual in the Fifth Deduction - that the One both is altered and is not altered, both comes and ceases to be and nor comes neither ceases to be.

As these arguments show, Plato - at least in the *Prm*. - takes every change feature to be an alteration that entails coming-to-be a new being$_1$ and ceasing-to-be the old being$_1$. Need-

less to say, such a view involves an obvious commitment to Leibniz's extensional laws of identity. Thus, Plato is stuck with the troublesome oddities of the hypostatizing strategy.

To avoid the difficulties of the hypostatizing strategy, Plato has two options: either, as Routley (1980) does, he weakens Leibniz's laws by restricting them to *dated* properties (therefore, an alteration or another change feature needs not to be a coming-to-be$_1$, albeit it can be a coming-to-be$_2$), or he accepts the contradictory claims - as 'the One is both altered and not altered' - that conclude the text of the Fifth Deduction (in a similar way, as regards the argument against the hypostatizing strategy presented above, Plato would have accepted the contradictory conclusion 7), that is, he assigns a contradictory bundle of properties to the One, that is, a paraconsistent being$_1$ (in which case he supports a dialetheist position, the one attributed to him by Priest (2012; 2014, p. 118-139) and, therefore, takes the opposite stance of Gorgias' anti-dialetheist position vindicated in Sext. Emp. *AM* 7.67). For philosophical and textual-trust reasons (see the last sentences of the Fifth Deduction, at *Prm*. 163a6-b6, but also the very last sentences of the dialogue in *Prm*. 166c2-5 - on this point, see (Priest, 2014, p. 101-104; Marion, 2022, p. 27-31)), I tend to believe that Plato has *esoterically* chosen the latter path (and his choice, perhaps, has been more explicit in his oral lectures than it is in his transmitted exoteric dialogues[37]).

To end this paper, let's point that the hypostatizing strategy alluded above offers many mappings from the Fifth Deduction to modern non-Meinongian views, especially in the area of modal metaphysics. To just introduce to them (which are, by the way, stuck with classical quantified logic since they defend that being$_1$ has a non-null existential import and that Leibniz's laws are unrestricted to dated properties; therefore they face the aporia mentioned above[38]): some variants of possibilism (beings$_1$ ≈ mere possible items that are but do not exist, and beings$_2$ ≈ actual items that both are and exist, a position defended by the strawman Wyman in Quine (1948, p. 2-5) and, historically, by the Leibnizian-Wolffian tradition, see Baumgarten (1757, §61-63)) and contingent non-concretism (Williamson (2013)'s for instance: beings$_1$ ≈ contingently non-concrete beings, and beings$_2$ ≈ concrete beings). Despite their differences, these positions share the same Platonist understanding of coming-to-be as a motion from one area of the domain of quantification to another. For instance, Williamson (2013, p. 28-29) explicitly states, while arguing for permanentism (the view that ontology does not vary over time), that dying is just to become non-concrete as a living person, and, conversely, that birth is the obtaining of the property of concreteness as a living person[39] (however, Williamson (2013) makes no attempt to explain how such a thesis can be compatible with classical Leibniz's laws once concreteness is taken to be a genuine property): something that is well characterized comes-to-*X* from something that *is* but is not *X*.

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ENDNOTES

1 On Plato's analysis of change in the First Deduction, see Marion (2023, p. 207-225).

2 On the puzzle of the instant of change in Plato's *Prm*. and its legacy in the Platonic Tradition, see Marion (2018; 2023, p. 225-254).

3 On these questions, I refer the reader to Marion (2022, p. 24-31).

4 Where the verb 'to be' has an existential meaning, see (Cornford, 1939, p. 230-231; O'Brien, 2005, p. 235-241).

5 For another recent reading, see Tuozzo (2021) who defends that, here, the One refers to an arbitrary *Form* and that the problem of the Fifth Deduction is the fact that Forms are contingently in space and time (sometimes they are spatiotemporally instantiated, sometimes not). I prefer to remain neutral on the question of the identity of the One (whether it is the first principle, the Forms, or any non-existent object). Everything I'm about to say seems compatible with Tuozzo's hypothesis (since Tuozzo, as myself, supports that the Fifth Deduction is concerned with spatiotemporal existence rather than negative predication).

6 Frg. 3, 6.1. On the Parmenidean meta-ontology (which is the same as the meta-ontology defended by the strawmen McX and Wyman in Quine (1948)), see Marion (2022, p. 14-18).

7 Migliori, 1990, p. 324-340; McCabe, 1996, p. 36-37; Fronterotta, 1998, p. 97-98; Scolnicov, 2003, p. 147-157 (amongst many others) have followed Damascius, *in Prm*. II.291 Ruelle (= Westerink & Combès, 2003, p. 82.1-6) in believing that the Fifth Deduction anticipates the discussion on negation and non-being in the *Sph*. (to not be Φ is to be other than Φ), i.e., they think that saying 'the One is not' is equivalent to 'the One is other than everything else' (Cornford, 1939, p. 231 makes the same point, but his exegesis avoids the problems raised by such an idea). Granieri (2022) has successfully argued against such a reading. His arguments, I believe, definitively establish that this interpretation is not defendable.

8 On the Meinongian tendencies of some Greek philosophers (especially the Stoics who distinguish between *being* and *something*, between *existence* and *subsistence*), see (Long & Sedley, 19871, p. 162-165; 19872, p. 166-168; Brunschwig, 1988; Dancy, 1991, p. 63-76. Allen (1983, p. 284-285) briefly and unsuccessfully argues (from a Quinean point of view, see Quine (1948)) against the 'Meinongian' reading of the Fifth Deduction by Cornford (1939, p. 217-231) (philosophically speaking, for a well-argued defence of Meinongianism against Quinean orthodoxy, see Routley (1980)).

9 There is another defensible (which, it should be noted beforehand, is quite compatible with mine) reading of the Fifth Deduction implicitly defended by many scholars (it is towards this reading that Gill (2002) - whose exegesis was anticipated by the 13th-century Byzantine scholar George Pachymeres, see in *Prm*. 1304.4*sq*. in Gadra *et al*., 1989, p. 52-53, p. 110-111 - and Granieri (2022) seem to go, I believe, for instance). To put it in the more efficiently way: the distinction is not between two sorts of being (being^1 *vs*. being^2), but between two sorts of participation in Being. The first that corresponds to being^1 is that by partaking of any idea, a thing *indirectly* or *mediately* partakes of Being because every idea directly partakes in Being (if so, in the Fifth Deduction, Being has a function akin to Being as a 'vowel-kind' in *Sph*. 253a1-c3), while the second which corresponds to being^2 is that a thing *directly* partakes in Being without any mediation. Such a reading is well-supported by the fact that Aristotle taught us that Plato admits two kinds of participation: 'horizontal' participation between ideas, and 'vertical' participation between an idea and a sensible particular (see *Metaph*. A.9 991a29-30, M.5 1079b33 and the fragments of the Περὶ φιλοσοφίας (coll. II of the papyrus of Aï Khanum in (Auffret, 2019)), this idea appears in Plato in the *Sophist*, but also in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*). In other words, a thing can mediately partake of Being because it 'vertically' partakes of another idea which itself 'horizontally' partakes of Being (to translate in Gill (2002)'s words: '*x* vertically partakes of Φ which itself horizontally partakes of Being' amounts to '*x* partakes of being in regard to <being a> Φ'); but the thing can also additionally directly or 'vertically' partake of Being. Therefore coming-to-be is the motion from 'vertically' partaking of non-Being from 'vertically' partaking of Being. Note that, usually, since Damascius' commentary, scholars are quick to link the Fifth Deduction and the negation *qua* difference/otherness from the *Sph*. (to not be Φ is to be other than Φ), in such a way that saying 'the One is not' amounts to 'the One is other than everything else', see Damascius, *in Prm*. II.291 Ruelle (= Westerink & Combès, 2003, p. 82.1-6), Migliori, 1990, p. 328; McCabe, 1996, p. 36; Fronterotta, 1998, p. 97-98; Scolnicov, 2003, p. 147, p. 150, etc., I agree with Granieri (2022) that it is not the more accurate reading of the Fifth Deduction.

10 The passage is highly convoluted and difficult to understand. I keep the text of the manuscripts, and, therefore, follow Gill 2002 in her rejection of Shorey (1891)'s emendations at 162a6 and 162a8 and deletion at 162b2 (Shorey's suggestions at 162a8 and 162b2 were adopted by John Burnet in his OCT edition, but already discarded by Diès (1923, p. 108)). Philological affairs do not matter for my purpose in this paper, since it is clear that, here, Plato distinguishes between two sorts of being or - that is equivalent from some point of view - two sorts of participation in Being.

11 On the difference between *characterizing* and *non-characterizing* properties, see Routley (1980, p. 2-3, p. 45-52, p. 180-187).

12 On the veridical meaning of 'to be' in *Prm*. 161e3-162b8, see Kahn (1981, p. 115-117).

13 On the equivalence of *being* (ὄν) and *something* (τι) in Plato's *Sph*., see Aubenque, (1991).

14 Quine, 1981, p. 102; 1992, p. 52-53.

15 I borrow the Greek text from the OCT edition (Burnet).

16 On the Fifth Deduction as Plato's answer to the Eleatic challenge of the impossibility of coming-to-be, see (Cornford, 1939, p. 230; Menn, 1994, p. 74, p. 112).

17 Other texts: Sext. Emp. *PH* 2.243, 3.104-105 and *AM* 7.378-379. For Melissus, see *MXG* 1 974a1-6 and Simpl. *in Phys*. 103.13*sq*., 162.24*sq*. + (Barnes, 1982, p. 184-185; Brémond, 2017, p. 70)); and for Gorgias' variant, see Sext. Emp. *AM* 7.71 and *MXG* 6 979b26-34. For a scholarly discussion of the Eleatic challenge as it appears in *Phys*. 1.8 and Aristotle's solution, see Clarke (2015).

18 On Parmenides' reasoning against coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, see Barnes (1982, p. 184-190).

19 On Aquinas' departure from Aristotle on the theory of coming-to-be and creation *ex nihilo*, see *Sum. Theol*. Ia, q.45, art.2 and, for a very short discussion, (Barnes, 1982, p. 197-198).

20 On this text, see Brémond (2017, p. 82-85). The Peripatetic author of the MXG quotes Hesiod's *Theogony* v.116-117 and v.120 to sustain the intelligibility of creation *ex nihilo*, note that these verses are those that are parodied by Epicharmus in his pastiche of Xenophanes' denial of coming-to-be (argued for in *MXG* 3 977a14-22: there are no divine births, gods do not begin to be), see DL 3.10 and (Barnes, 1982, p. 86-89).

21 Note that Aristotle's view is just one kind of transformationism amongst others. For instance, the position of Ionian physicists and Anaxagoras who reduce coming-to-be and passing-away to mere qualitative changes (that is, alterations), Empedocles' theory of ceasing-to-be as dissociation and coming-to-be as association, and Democritus' theory of coming-to-be as atomistic reconfiguration are other versions of transformationism. Therefore, in arguing against them, Aristotle's *GC* 1.1-4 forms a debate that occurs only within the transformationist framework. On Aristotle's reply to the Eleatic puzzle about coming-to-be in *Phys*. 1.7-9, see Clarke (2015).

22 Note that an A-theorist can generally translate the coming-to-be of the individual *a* (Socrates for instance) by the tensed formula $E!a \wedge \mathcal{P}\neg E!a$ ('Socrates was not before but he is now' or 'it is now the case that Socrates is, and it was previously the case that Socrates is not) or - if nothing can be born again after its death - by $E!a \wedge \mathcal{H}\neg E!a$ ('Socrates is now but it has always be the case before that Socrates was not'), and its ceasing-to-be by $E!a \wedge \mathcal{F}\neg E!a$ ('Socrates is now but will not be after') or $E!a \wedge \mathcal{G}\neg E!a$ ('Socrates is now but it is always going to be the case after that Socrates will not be'), whether or not tense operators have prophylactic effects of de-ontologizing what is within their scope (i.e., they are 'anti-Quinean' devices that block unwanted ontological commitments to merely past or future objects, and so do not satisfy Barcan-style formulas, see Prior (1967, p. 137-174, esp. p. 142-162) and its awkward system Q whose formal oddities are notably discussed in (Williamson, 2013, p. 69-71)), and whether or not the property of being *E*! is understood in a quantificationalist way or as a genuine property.

23 Note that given Simplification, Transformationism entails Creationism, but not the reverse.

24 On these three theories of coming-to-be, see Marion (2023, p. 562-564).

25 To avoid any confusion: the opposition between permanentism and temporaryism is reducible neither to that of eternalism and presentism (of course, eternalism entails permanentism, but not the reverse), nor to that of A-theory and B-theory. Note also that Williamson (2013) is primarily focused on the opposition between *necessitism* (ontology is necessary: it is necessary that everything is such that it is necessary that something in the domain of quantification is identical with it - in short: necessarily everything is necessarily something) and *contingentism* (ontology is contingent: it is possible that something is such that it is possible that everything in the domain of quantification is distinct from it) that belongs to modal metaphysics, but devotes some developments to the analogical opposition between *permanentism* (encapsuled in the thesis that it is always the case that everything is such that it is always the case that something in the domain of quantification is identical with it - in short: always, everything is always something) and *temporaryism*/*transientism* (sometimes, something is sometimes nothing) that belongs to temporal metaphysics.

26 For any well-formed formula φ, these operators can be defined as follows: $\mathcal{S}\varphi =_{df.} \mathcal{P}\varphi \vee \mathcal{N}\varphi \vee \mathcal{F}\varphi$ and $\mathcal{A}\varphi =_{df.} \mathcal{H}\varphi \wedge \mathcal{N}\varphi \wedge \mathcal{G}\varphi$.

27 On the analysis of motion in the Firth Deduction and its parallels in Sextus Empiricus (Diodorus Cronus' account of change) and Aristotle, see (White, 1992, p. 69-72; Marion, 2023, p. 210-225; 2025). A simple way to object to Plato's and Aristotle's theory is to state that, according to Standard Analysis and Cantor-Dedekind axiom, there are no neighbouring locations or directly successive locations in a densely ordered continuum; therefore, there is no motion from a location to the next adjacent one. On the mereo-locational logics of change (in Plato and Aristotle, but also in Hegel and beyond), see Marion (2025).

28 Quite fortunately, Routley (1980, p. 366-367, p. 373, p. 398) labels such a hypostatizing strategy "chronological platonism". Some variants of the hypostatizing view (namely, the free quantified tensed logics of Rescher and Cocchiarella) are shortly discussed in Prior (1967, p. 158-162, p. 173).

29 A VI.4 746 and Russell & Whitehead (1910, p. 176-180).

30 For a logical approach on tenses as *predicate modifiers* (rather than *sentence operators* as in Prior (1967)), see Sullivan (2016) and the objections to Sullivan's proposal raised by Williamson (2016) (especially the objection that "a sentence operator can always be dressed up as a predicate modifier" in such a way that, *in fine*, Sullivan's approach makes no substantive difference with Priorian orthodoxy).

31 More generally, on the tension between Leibniz's laws of identity and change, see (Rescher & Urquhart, 1971, p. 241-243; Routley, 1980, p. 369-372; Rescher, 1996, p. 64-65; Bottani, 2003, p. 160; Seibt, 2008, p. 136-146). Leibniz's law is the following formula: $\forall x \forall y\, [x = y \rightarrow \forall \Phi(\Phi x \equiv \Phi y)]$. Let be $x = a_{t<ti}$ et $y = a_{t>ti}$, and assume the change from Φa to Ψa at *ti*. By the non-identity of the discernibles $\forall x \forall y\, [\exists \Phi(\Phi x \wedge \neg \Phi y) \rightarrow x \neq y]$, both $(\Phi a_{t<ti} \neg \Phi a_{t>ti}) \rightarrow a_{t<ti} \neq a_{t>ti}$ and $(\neg \Psi a_{t<ti} \wedge \Psi a_{t>ti}) \rightarrow a_{t<ti} \neq a_{t>ti}$ obtain. Therefore, change is incompatible with Leibniz's laws and the idea that individuals persist (in the sense of *endurance*, that is, an object perdures by being wholly present at many times) through change. Such an argument obviously grounds Plato's *Prm*. 162d5-8, 163a7-b1. Note that this argument seems to have been anticipated by Gorgias, see *MXG* 6 980a1-4. For convenience, I opt for the idea that what is temporally qualified is the individuals rather than the predicates or the copula (on these three options, see (Bottani, 2003; Varzi, 2005, p. 118-123)), but, here, such a device should not be read as implying a particular metaphysical view (namely fourdimensionalism, as it is the case in Lewis (1986, p. 202-204) and Sider (2001, p. 92-132)).

32 Such a strategy had already been defended by Wilson (1956), but in a classical framework (see (Rescher & Urquhart, 1971, p. 242; Seibt, 2008, p. 138-139) for some alleged difficulties of this strategy in a classical framework).

33 This tactical move is notably favoured by Rescher & Urquhart (1971, p. 242-243).

34 To be exhaustive, there is a third way to modify Leibniz's laws that consists in introducing a time-variable rather than a time-constant (as Routley (1980) does) in the expression of the predicate (formally: $\forall x \forall y\, [x = y \equiv \forall \Phi \forall t(\Phi_t x \equiv \Phi_t y)]$ where '*t*' is a variable and 'Φ_t' means 'Φ-at-*t*'). But, *in fine*, at least from a logical point of view, such a formula can be taken to be tantamount to $\forall x \forall y\, [x = y \equiv \forall \Phi \forall t\, (\langle \Phi x, t \rangle \equiv \langle \Phi y, t \rangle)]$.

35 Note that, the 13th-century Byzantine scholar George Pachymeres, in his commentary on *Prm*. (which is a sequel to Proclus' transmitted commentary, it should be remarked that the non-Neoplatonizing and 'Aristotelian' commentary of Pachymeres is undoubtedly more helpful than Proclus' and Damascius' baroque and fantasist exegeses - anti-logical readings that are ideologically and deceptively defended in Proclus, *in Prm*. 630.27-635.27 and *Theol. Plat*. I.9 by the way - for understanding Plato's letter), objects to Plato that, from an Aristotelian point of view, the sentence 'if it moves, it alters' is false, while the converse 'if it alters, it moves' is true (*in Prm*. 1306.17*sq*. in Gadra *et al*., 1989, p. 55, p. 113 and Diès, 1923, p. 110 n. 1). Of course, in *Prm*. and in other places (*Tht*., *Sph*., etc.), Plato understands 'alteration' in a broader sense than Aristotle's change in *sensible qualities* (see *Phys*. 7.3): alteration is a change in property broadly understood.

36 Again, an Eleatic-style idea, see Routley (1980, p. 372).

37 Don't look at this footnote if you want some new insight on the difference between the philosophy defended by Plato in his exoteric dialogues and in his esoteric lectures (the most famous: the lecture *On the Good*). I shall not try to give a bibliography on this vexed question. The issue is well-known by every scholar since, at least, two centuries. However, I just wish to confess that I'm not a Tübingen's zealot. I only believe the following 'might'-conditional: if Plato were a good philosopher, then he might be a dialetheist one (that is, Platonism and classical consistency can walk hand in hand only with great difficulties).

38 For instance, following some Russellian and Quinean insights (see (Russell, 1903, §442-447; Quine, 1960, p. 172-173), Williamson (2013, p. 402-422) who defends a hypostatizing strategy in a classical framework suggests to explain or to paraphrase a tensed object-language with an untensed meta-language which uses time-indexed and dated formula (tensed operators in the object-language are paraphrased by quantification over times). Therefore, because there are no undated properties in the metalanguage, Leibniz's laws are restricted to dated properties. In doing so, 'what appears as transience in the object-language is treated in the metalanguage as a mere difference between times' (Williamson, 2013, p. 408). Thus, there is no real radical change (and, therefore, no real change features like dying or coming-to-be). Such a reduction of a transient-full language to a transient-free metalanguage is severely judged in Routley (1980, p. 366-368, p. 389-394).

39 Such a view is reminiscent of the theory of *Phd*. 70d-72e (the so-called 'cyclical argument'), 102d-106e according to which birth and death respectively are, for the former, the gain of the participation in Life and the loss of the participation in Death, and, for the latter, the loss of the participation in Life and the gain of the participation in Death (it is obviously an instance of the general scheme argued for in the Fifth Deduction). On Plato's account of change in the *Phd*., see Sedley (2013) (in which the criticisms of Aristotle's *Phys*. 1.9 are debunked).

From *chorismos* to *epekeina tes ousias*: mathematics and hermeneutics in Plato's philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a reading of Plato's *Republic* and *Theaetetus*, so as to analyze the three levels of transcendence in which our cognitive experience unfolds. First, it is necessary to overcome the doxastic plane: therein an *ens* may be and not be within an equal respect, generating a contradiction that can only be resolved through hypotheses. However, hypotheses produce an indefinite regression: a hermeneutic step toward Forms is thus needed. The *alogon* is interpreted as the transcendent and luminous source of every subsequent discourse. Ultimately, the case of the *epekeina tes ousias* reveals that transcendence depends on a hermeneutic activity aimed at saving the phenomena.

Keywords: Chorismos, Epekeina tes Ousias, Hermeneutic in Plato, Mathematics in Plato, Saving the phaenomena

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1. INTRODUCTION: AN OVERVIEW OF *CHORISMOS*

The term *χωρισμός* occurs only a few times in Plato's dialogues. Far more often it is used in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, where it indicates the ontological status of *σύνολα* or pure Forms. Both are independently subsistent, since they, in a respectively relative or absolute sense, do not require further support in order to exist (Chen, 1972, 3-11; Fine, 1984, 20-30). A similar definition applies also to Plato. Nevertheless, subsequent philosophical developments would have another exegesis to prevail: "separate" is the *ens* transcending and founding the material dominance as a mixture of potency and act, so that it comes to signify the immaterial supersensible world.[1] Even if this interpretation could be correct to a certain degree, it has the defect of shifting the focus to the results of the *ἔκθεσις* process (White, 1971, 164-168) rather than to its purposes and means. Moreover its specificity cannot be that of immateriality. For example, it is surely true that Beauty in itself is neither visible nor touchable, yet this also applies to the beautifulness of the beautiful things that everybody can admire. Additionally, Plato mentions the Forms of the bed and of the table (Resp. X, 596b4), that is of physical objects constituted by matter (Pitteloud, 2015, 51-58).

On the other hand, Aristotle himself seemingly supports the abovementioned reading, given the usage he makes of the vocabulary of *χωρισμός* within his criticism of Plato's hypothesis of Forms. Plato is said to have separated the universals discovered by Socrates from their particular instantiations (Metaph. M, 1086b4), making of them transcendent Forms (Metaph. Γ, 1078b30-32; Fine, 1980, 197-240; Hasper 2019, 544-581). Separation indicates the ontological priority of the Ideas as their independence from any contingent instantiations, which on the contrary surely depend upon the formers.[2] Understanding this definition of an asymmetrical relationship isn't straightforward. In the first place, Aristotle does not positively clarify what he means by independence and he rather indicates the limits of his master's position: *χωρισταὶ ἰδέαι* are incapable of inducing sensible things to any sort of movement, nor they can give them being and intelligibility (respectively see: Metaph. A 991b 4, 992a 9; A 991b 1, M12 1079b 37; A 991a12).[3] But Plato never presents the Forms as utterly irrelated, and an argument can be raised that he explicitly negates this outcome (Par., 137c4–142a8).[4] Ironically enough, it is precisely to solve the internal aporias of the sensible realm that Forms are introduced, as several readers have not failed to recognize (Zeller, 1922, 687 n.1; Vlastos, 1969, 291-325; Pitteloud, 2017, 77-82). Aristotle apparently is not among these shrewd interpreters, as he states Forms to be situated *παρὰ τὰ αἰσθητὰ* (Metaph. A, 987b14) and depicts a local separation which implies mutual indifference. While it is not our intention to read Plato in the light of Aristotle, we shall not ascribe a complete misunderstanding to the Stagirite with such ease. If that was the case, Plato's disciple could very well be the polemical target of the *Parmenides,* where a hyperphysical interpretation of the Forms leads to several aporias which neither Socrates nor Parmenides are able to solve (Ferrari, 2018, 56-63).[5] Still, it is not probable at all that Aristotle would have kept on committing the same hermeneutical error when rebuked. It is more plausible that he rejects an asymmetrical relationship, for it is not able to accomplish the task for which it is introduced without incurring several aporias.

Following this path, the easiest way to comprehend what Aristotle means by *χωρισμός* would be to investigate its recurrences in Plato's complete works. Unfortunately, its usage is both rare and problematic (Candiotto, 2015, 73-93). The term is widely used only in reference to two passages from dialogues belonging to different periods of the philosopher's production. In the *Phaedo*, it denotes the symmetrical condition in which a man's body and soul find themselves at the moment of death (Phd., 64c2-9), which also implies a spatial distinction for the soul to survive in another dimension (Phd., 107d-114c). However, this notion is introduced as a widespread opinion and as a religious belief from ancient tradition, which means it cannot but be imprecise. More importantly, the body cannot exist without the soul, while the aim of the dialogue is to demonstrate that the opposite is at least possible. Such an asymmetrical relation might seem closer to that between the Ideas and the particulars; yet the soul is said to be merely similar to the Forms, rather than a Form itself (Phd., 79b15; see Trabattoni, 2011, 107; Cornelli, 2019, 23-31; Matoso, 2017, 184-188). Ultimately, Plato introduces a second sense of separation achievable through ethical effort, while he seldom mentions *χωρισμός* and rather states the soul to be *αυτή καθ›αυτή* (Phd., 65d2). This shift may not be accidental: no local separation is involved here, and *χωρισμός* is etymologically linked with *χῶρα* implying a spatial hiatus between different entities (Vlastos, 1987, 187-190). Provided that Plato undoubtedly prefers the pronominal form when he positively speaks about his theory, we might deduce that Forms are not locally separated while they are indipendent from their instantiations. We shall nevertheless insist on a principle of hermeneutical charity and note that Aristotle explicitly reprehends the *χωρισταὶ εἶναι* of the Ideas. A topological distinction is not impossible, at least if we take into account the notorious syntagmas *ὑπερουράνιον τόπον* (Phdr., 247c3) and *ἐν οὐρανῷ παράδειμα* (Resp. IX, 592b1). To recapitulate: the Forms do separately reside within an intelligible realm different from the sensible one, yet in a condition which ascribes them a multiform causation on the phenomena.

In the second place, it should be helpful to dwell our attention on another dialogue where the vocabulary of *χωρισμός* is quite frequent: the *Parmenides*. An interpreter of Plato may feel uneasy to extract a positive thesis on Forms from a dialogue which somebody dared to define "the enigma of all the enigmas of Platonic hermeneutic" (Wyller, 1963, 207). Our intention is certainly more modest, and for our purposes it is now sufficient to observe a few simple things. In an argument Parmenides gives to reject Socrates's theory of Forms, transcendent Ideas and particulars are depicted as reciprocally *χωρίς*. His claim is however aporetic, as it understands their link in a symmetric way. On the contrary, Socrates's anti-mereological account suggests only the Forms to be separated with regard to their instantiations, which take part to them in their entirety just as things benefit from the sunlight (Par., 130b2-3; cf. Lewis, 1979, 105-127 for a different account). Parmenides then misunderstands Socrates's analogy and raises the bar comparing the Ideas to a veil which is not exhausted by the many things it covers. The parallel does not fit, as the sun is incommensurable to sensible things while the veil is not (Ferrari, 2018, 212-213, n.45). Therefore local separation seems to be eliminated, as it gives birth to an unsustainable mereological reading of the *μέθεξις*. Still, there is a chance to understand the topological distinction in

a non-physical way: a physical coincidence should be reconcilable with a metaphysical distinction, which would then be the target of Aristotle's criticism. However, Socrates is too young to defend his hypothesis against the confusion made by Parmenides, so that the master of Elea can easily refute his theory of Forms one more time. The noteworthy aspect of this failure is what Socrates is suggested he should do to be proficient in his own theory.

> «Socrates, the fact is that you try to define prematurely what is beautiful and right and good and each of the Forms before you are properly trained. […] train yourself while you are still young; drag yourself through what is commonly considered useless, which most call idle talk. Otherwise, the truth will escape you» (Par., 135c8-d6).

The *γυμνασία* Parmenides is telling about is that used by Zeno at the beginning of the dialogue, except for its scope is not the visible but the intelligible realm. Immediate access to the latter is, however, not granted and it is rather necessary to examine the consequences which derive from the hypotheses, both in the positive and in the negative case. Furthermore, those who happen to have a true opinion do not have intelligence of it without «passing through all the hypotheses (Par., 136e1-2).[6] Immediately after, Parmenides associates this challenge with *τὸν ἔρωτα* (Par., 137a4) and with *τοσοῦτον πέλαγος λόγων* (Par., 137a6). A similar expression can be found in *Symposium*, when Diotima invites Socrates to turn his love and gaze towards the sciences which produce several *λόγους* and *διανοήματα* (Symp, 210d3-4), so that passing through them he will finally be able to seize Beauty in itself (Symp., 210d7; Cattanei, 2015, 113-115). Which sciences is she talking about? In the VII book of the Republic, the term *διάνοιαι* is employed with reference to mathematics, despite the fact its common translation is "discursive thinking" (Resp. VII, 511d4-5; cf. also Resp. VI, 503e3, where Socrates mentions the necessity of *ἐν μαθήμασι γυμνάζειν*). The bond between the discursive thinking and mathematics is not obvious, and a reference to the term *ὑποθέσεις* is required as a defining medium to shed some light on it. If our reading is correct, the well-known saying *ἀγεωμέτρητος μηδεὶς εἰσίτω* would be confirmed in its starkest sense: no one who is not well prepared in mathematics can ever aspire to understand what Ideas truly are, nor how their transcendence should be conceived. Before we thematize *διάνοια* as a necessary step towards the attainment of philosophical *νόησις*, it behoves us to elaborate further on the first movement of transcendence in which we are engaged: namely, the overcoming of the doxastic plane through hypotheses.

2. THE GNOSEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE: AN APORIA WITHIN THE *DOXASTICON*

As once noticed by Heidegger, the central books of the *Republic* represent a turning point in the way of conceiving the essence of truth. This results in a renewed view of *παιδεία* as an itinerary into knowledge aimed at a complete possession of truth, which is possible only through a noetic view of the transcendent Ideas (Heidegger, 1987, 188-189). For the purposes of our enquiry, it should be worth emphasizing our focus on this dialogue, as we examine the reasons that highlight the insufficiency of the opinative status and the necessity of a cognitive education. The last section of Book V presents a programmatic dichotomy be-

tween those who are awake and those who, by contrast, remain asleep: "dreaming is nothing more than to believe, both in the dream and in the wake, that something similar to another is not exactly similar but identical to what it resembles" (Resp. V, 476c1ff.; Cristal and Polansky, 1996, 351-363). In sleep, we dwell in a dreamlike world, while mistakenly believing it to be true and authentic. Conversely, those who are awake do not surrender to blind faith but rather retain the cognitive certainty needed to build an incontrovertible science, which is essentially different from any form of opinion. In *Meno* 96d5-97c11 right opinion is said to be identical to knowledge insofar as the practical results of an action guided by its means are concerned, yet it remains different due to its lack of rational justification. Similarly, in *Resp*. X, 619b7ff. a righteous man who has no certainty about justice can easily fall into error and make a dreadful choice.

These passages find a dual resonance in the *Theaetetus*, where the gnoseological hiatus between appearance and being is first to be established and then to be overcome. However the distinction between dream and wake is not considered a probing argument anymore since no proof can be given to distinguish the one from the other, apart from their different temporal length (Theaet., 157e1-158d12). This necessitates a stronger defence of the reality of *ψεῦδος*. It is sufficient to mention a compelling line of reasoning, which would be taken over by most of the anti-relativistic attempts in the history of philosophy, starting from Aristotle: "As for his own opinion, since he recognizes all men's opinions to be true, Protagoras is forced to admit that it is true also the opinion of those who oppose him and think his opinion to be false by virtue of theirs" (Theaet., 171a6-9; see also *Metaph*. Γ, 1012b14ff. claim that every Protagorean doctrine eventually self-destructs). If knowledge is meant to be right opinion accompanied by epistemological certainty, it is necessary to explain how to gain the latter. But the gnoseological path is here taken with an ontological concern, requiring a further emphasis on the phenomenological discrepancy outlined above.

In a precious commentary to the V book of the *Republic*, M. Vegetti remarks how the existence of *δόξα* is both the *ratio cognoscendi* and the *ratio essendi* of the lower level of reality, which is by its virtue called *δοξάστον*. As far as complete knowledge and utter ignorance are concerned, the *ratio essendi* is instead to be found in a polar opposition between being and non-being (Vegetti, 2003, 13-33). Total ignorance, however, is not possible, since non-being, according to the Parmenidean principle, cannot be. The polarity is thus developed in a way that is no longer tautological, namely as the gap between what is and what appears. This separation reveals an asymmetrical structure identical to that of the relationship between Forms and particulars. Moreover, it intertwines this relationship in such a way that particulars are to be understood as manifestations of the Forms, which serve as their inexhaustible origin. Eventually, a hermeneutical role seems to be played by the observer, who is granted a more or less complete access to them according to his cognitive status. In other words, the object of opinion seems to partially overlap with that of knowledge, as the intelligible world constitutes the truth of the sensible one. The main obstacle to this reading arises from certain emphatic statements that underscore the distinction between the objects of different faculties (Resp. V, 477b8-9; 478b8-9). Still, the interpretative impasse is weakened whether we seriously take Socrates's example into account, for sight and hearing, though faculties with different objects of

inherence, refer to the same reality (Resp. V, 477c2-3).[7] Furthermore, on an ontological level, the *δοξάστον* is described as that which can both be and not be: it can be true in one respect while false in another. Provided that nothing can be and not be in itself, the verb *to be* here needs to be understood in a predicative sense (Fine, 1990, 85-115; Ferrari, 2003a, 379). Therefore, "x is F" is equal to "x appears to be F in my actual perspective but may happen to appear ¬F in another one". Conversely, there is no way for F to be ¬F, so that acquisition of knowledge implies an intentional movement from the F-ness of the F-phenomena to F separately considered, with no regard to its contingent manifestations nor variations.[8] In summary, Forms exert a formal causation on their instantiations as partial manifestations. The observer acts as an adumbrative filter, who somehow takes part to the causal process of the phenomenic plane. The *δοξάστον* is to be overcome as the shadows cast upon it often generate false beliefs, and even true ones remain relatively instable. Not to mention that on an immanent ground it enables the same thing to be x and ¬x at the same time and within an equal respect. But how to go beyond it? In Resp. VII, 521d4-5 Socrates mentions a *μάθημα* with the psychagogic *δύναμις* of towing the soul from the becoming to being. As the indication of its utility in war implies, this knowledge ought to be operative also in the sensible realm and hence institutes a continuity between the two planes of reality.[9] The key to its identification is given by an aporetic condition which is transcendental to the sensible word, that is the previously mentioned copresence of contrary.

> "If you look well, among the sensible things there are some which do not require further investigations, for they are already distinguished enough by the sensation; others absolutely oblige it to indagate, as the sensation does not produce anything sane" (Resp. VII, 52a10ss.).

One thing in this section apparently does not fit with what we said before, that is the restriction of the problematic feature to a limited set of sensations. If the aporia were to be accidental, then the itinerary into knowledge might be too. Socrates's examples fortunately make things a little clearer. The lack of distinction is not that of an object seen in a far distance or of an optical illusion, and it rather concerns a sensation which "does not show a certain thing more than its contrary" (Resp. VII, 523c2). While optical illusion is a mistake rooted in one's insufficient view and solvable within its immanence, copresence of contraries points to a structural error which requires a first level of epistemic transcendence. A situation where x is simultaneously F and ¬F is tolerable only if x is referred to F within different respects, whereas if the respect is the same, the simultaneity must be rejected. Even so, a structural error is not necessarily a transcendental one. That is why an additional instance is introduced, for the soul is properly awakened when the unity is perceived simultaneously with its contrary, prompting us to question what the unity in itself could actually be (Resp. V, 524d8ss.). No wonder that the knowledge Socrates is seeking is found in arithmetic and the art of calculation, as they respectively study the numbers themselves and their reciprocal relations and properties. Plato does not explain on what grounds the unity can appear to be its contrary, nor how these disciplines unravel the problem. He instead insists on the refinement of the latter and he exhorts to master it not as laypeople would do but "up to reach with the *noesis* a sight on the

numbers' nature" (Resp. VII, 525c1-3). Yet, a negative suggestion is shortly afterward given: "if somebody tries to nominally divide the unity itself, the experts of this field […] multiply it as they don't want the unity to appear no more as such but as a sum of several parts" (Resp. VII, 525d8-e3). Plato is here echoed by Euclid's *Elements* VII deff. 1-2, where unity is defined as "that by whose virtue every existing thing is said to be one", whereas numbers stand for "a multiplicity composed by unities" (Cattanei, 2003, 493-494). The impossibility of fractionating the unity is thus derived from its definition, for if that were not the case, it would lead to an infinite regress and obliterate the identity of everything. As a matter of fact, things are numerable and therefore distinguishable thanks to their unity. If unity were to be fractionable in a concrete way, then the sensible world would be contradictory in every sense but one.[10] For this reason, the aporia is a transcendental one: entity goes with identity, which is not without enumerability. Yet, there is no clear evidence of how the unity appears to be its contrary. In addition, we have partially lost sight of the aforementioned hypotheses. In contrast, a first level of transcendence has been here evoked, enabling the shift from an opinative to an epistemic plane that resolves the contradiction of the phenomenon. What, then, is its fate with regard to the paradox of unity? How can we truly move beyond the doxastic plane?

3. THE UPLIFTING POWER OF MATHEMATICS: ABOUT HYPOTHESES

The art of calculation deals with a reciprocal relationship among numbers, the nature of which, however, remains unclear (Charm., 166a7). The already quoted study by Cattanei has the great merit of individuating the only passage where Aristotle likely refers to it, at least according to the commentary of Alexander Aphrodisiensis (Cattanei, 2003, 501; see also Wallies, 1981, I 545). In *Topic* VIII, 158b29-35 the Stagirite mentions an archaic *λόγος*, namely the *ἀνταναίρεσις*, which describes the relationship between the base and the surface of a parallelogram divided in two by a straight line parallel to one of its sides. On an etymological account, the term evokes "an antagonism (*anti*), a reciprocal comparison of two sizes, and a resolution of this comparison via a process reward (*ana*) of dissolution" (Zellini 1999, 179). More precisely, it is an algorithmic process which consists of a reciprocal subtraction of the same quantity to different sizes, if that is the case establishing their incommensurability or calculating numerical approximations of their *λόγος*. The most controversial instance of its application is probably that of the side and the diagonal of the square, laterally mentioned in the metaphor of the divided line (*Resp.* VI, 510d7-8). In our attempt to commensurate them, we find out that the *ἀνταναίρεσις* must be repeated an infinite number of times. Otherwise, their unity of *ratio* would be shattered into an indeterminate multiplicity (Toth, 1998, 42-45; Cattanei, 2003, 509). It is precisely this unity which generates the abovementioned impasse of a transcendental copresence of contraries, as it seemingly entails the possibility of its indefinite parcelling.

One thing to note here is that in DK 18A4 Iamblichus testifies of someone who was expelled from the Pythagorean school and died in a shipwreck for revealing the existence of irrational numbers. This evidence aligns well with that of Aristotle, who in DK 58B5 states that, for the Pythagoreans, numbers represented not only the formal but also the

material cause of everything. His source is probably Philolaus, who in DK 44A13 presents a theory of figurate numbers that accounts for the connection between arithmetic and geometry. Unity is physically represented as a point in space, providing the ground for a strong justification of the defining powers of numbers, which ideally allow for a complete knowledge of nature. Hence, unity has to be safeguarded, unless we accept that numbers lose their power and acknowledge a definite divorce between thinking and being. Here we find another variation of the aforesaid hiatus, which calls out for its positive overcoming. The duty to carry out this task is assigned to the art of calculation, which reconstructs unity at a lower level every time it is divided. To calculate thus means to institute or rather to recognize a *ratio*. In the *cursus studiorum* described in *Leg.* VII 817e5ff. Plato invites his readers to deal in a tirelessly dialogue with the problem of commensurable and incommensurable sizes, thus integrating the *Republic*'s version of the mathematical curriculum with a starker reference to the *λογιστική τέχνη*. Nonetheless, the here exposed art of calculation is still not able to properly deal with the contradiction engendered by an infinite regress and needs a further succour, as entailed by the introduction of the *Theaetetus*. This section leads us to understand the overcoming of the dianoetic. Before delving deeper into the details, it will be helpful to clarify the correspondence between *διάνοια* and mathematical thinking, with particular regard to the art of calculation.

> "In the first section [*διάνοια*], resorting as images to those things which in the other segment were imitated, the soul is compelled to conduct its research starting from hypotheses, and proceeds not towards a principle but towards a conclusion; in the second section [*νόησις*], moving from the hypothesis towards an unhypothetical principle, and without making usage of those simulacra which were previously used, it completes its path in its entirety and it methodically establishes itself solely on Forms and through Forms" (Resp. VI, 510b4-8).

The dianoetic segment therefore proceeds via hypotheses, and it is shortly afterwards identified with "the intellectual *habitus* peculiar to the geometers and their peers" (Resp. VI, 511d3-4). A moderate account would suggest reading *ὑποθέσεις* in the weakest sense of postulates,[11] but that would probably institute a strong dichotomy between *dianoia* and *noesis*. Pure thought does not give rise to a regional ontology capable of grounding the postulatory nature of mathematics. On the contrary, discursive thinking is naturally propelled in the direction of its own overcoming, at least with reference to a glance interested in the entirety of truth (Resp. V, 474c8; 475e4). This point becomes clearer in the *Phaedo* 100a., where the hypothetical method is explicitly discussed. Here, Plato refers to *λόγοι*, a polysemic term that Reale suggests translating as "hypotheses", since Forms are not yet at issue in this context. The focus, rather, is on "the mental process that allows to gain the Idea" (Reale, 1995, 150 n. 62), and *λόγοι* are described as shields that allow an indirect gaze at the sun, preventing the observers from ruining their eyes. Those who directly look at the sun take an inconvenient gamble, ending up confused and losing faith in knowledge. This section of *Phaedo* runs parallel to the abovementioned passage of *Parmenides*, where the necessity of a *γυμνασία* through the hypotheses is established in order to comprehend the nature of Forms. Here the dianoetic

procedure is further illustrated: it is said to draw all the consequences from a given hypothesis and only afterward to give account of the hypothesis itself. The hypothesis is in fact to be justified by positing another one before it, and so on "until a fully satisfactory one is reached" (Phd., 101e1). A terminological analysis assists us not to lose the link with the mathematics, which we should now be able to fully explain.

The term *ὑπόθεσις* literally means to place something under something else in order to explain it: a practice well-documented within the Pluralist school. In DK 59B21a Anaxagoras states that phenomena are "the visible aspect of non-appearing things", forerunning a discrepancy between appearance and being later on discussed by Plato. A note should be made here, for it could be wrong to talk about Anaxagoras as a precursor of Plato, given that such a hiatus could very well find its explanation in the shipwreck of Pythagorean mathematics. More importantly, Leucippus had "hypothesised atoms as infinite and always moving elements" (DK 67A8); subsequently, "having hypothesised the substance of atoms to be solid and full, he called it being". The same did his disciple Democritus, who deems these substances to flee our sensations due to their smallness so that only a genuine knowledge can hope to grasp them (DK 68A37). In an insightful research, V. Alfieri establishes a connection between atoms and Forms, suggesting a continuity between the Pythagoreans and Plato, mediated through Democritus (Alfieri, 1953, 8-10; cf. also Nikolau, 1998, 128-204). Alfieri believes atoms to be a follow-up of the Eleatic concept of being, as an attempt to pluralize it. Pythagoreans' *ψῆφοι* and figurate numbers should also be taken into account, hence describing an ideal axis which links Pythagoras to Democritus through Parmenides as their antithesis. Even though atoms are hypotheses and share most of their features with Plato's Forms, they are not completely identifiable. Their difference becomes intelligible if we amend Reale's translation of *λόγος*, which cannot be equated with hypothesis but rather indicates a *ratio*. In the concluding section of *Theaetetus* three insufficient concepts of *λόγος* are discussed, as knowledge is said to be "truthful opinion accompanied by *λόγος*" (Theaet., 201c9-d1). *Λόγος* signifies either to express our own thoughts by names and verbs (206d1ff.), to allocate a thing's elements within a line (207a1ff.) or to display its identifying mark (208c7-8). M. Burnyeat noticed how all these definitions raise the issue of the infinite regress, and the same can be said about *Meno* 97c-98a, where knowledge is given by correct opinion supported by a casual reasoning (Burnyeat, 1990, 237). We have eventually seen a compound word similarly linking *λόγος* to the infinite regress, that is *λογιστική* with reference to the incommensurable sizes.

To sum up, it is safe to assume this controversial and polysemic term has something to do with a unity of relation and at least in this context with an infinite regress. Hypotheses and atoms both provide a unity of relation, with the only difference that atoms candidate for putting an end to the regress as ultimate elements. Being no more divisible, they play a role analogous to that of Forms. Still, their introduction seems unjustified, and there is a chance they are the polemical target of the so-called "dream theory" (Theaet., 201d9-206b11; Morrow, 1970; Oksenberger Rorty, 1972, 227-238). According to it, the first elements of every whole are irrational and unknowable, even if they can still be named. As a matter of facts they cannot be related with anything else, for they are first and founding every forthcoming relation. However, if no knowledge of the primordial elements is given, there is no chance to apprehend the entire system of relation-

ships engendered by them and thus there is no knowledge at all (Theaet., 205e2-4). Experience conversely offers a probing example of a knowledge which takes its cue from a basic apprehension of elements, that is how to read or to write each letter by its combinatory rules in a sentence (206a6-8). Here three aspects are noteworthy. First of all, primordial elements are vitiated by an insufficient conception of λόγος. In the antanairethic process, λόγος is a mathematical binding which runs through the hypotheses and provides a connection among them. Discursive thinking is therefore a consistent translation of *διάνοια*, for in its etymology it indicates a *medium currens* movement, articulated through several passages. However, a perspective shift is needed when there is nothing more to run through, as all grounding elements have already been reached. In the second place, a complete identification with atoms is not possible as these elements are said to be sensible (202b6). Still, the exemple of reading may serve a heuristic role for our enquiry, as it offers a paradigm to deal with the first elements (cf. also Pol., 277e6-8). If we want to halt the regress, it is not sufficient to postulate defining elements. It is instead necessary to expose their justifiability and knowability. And a precious indication is here given, for Socrates implies their definition to come from their rules and possibilities of composition. These lines are paralleled by *Resp.* VI, 509b6-8, where the Form of Good is described in the light of its effects as it is *ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας*.[12]

4. A HERMENEUTICAL REVERSAL: ON *CHORISMOS* AND *EPEKEINA TES OUSIAS*

We have already noted how Plato is not completely satisfied with the first level of transcendence achieved through the classical version of the art of calculation. Hence, the reform introduced by Theaetetus is well-praised at the beginning of his dedicated dialogue, for it is said to be somehow a philosophical response. As we have seen, *λογιστική* is flawed as it perpetuates the contradiction in a bad infinity, girdling the *ἄλογος* in a never-ending dance around the abyss. Toth resembles such an irrational abyss to the irrational Minotaur, who is besieged in an ever more tightening rational order, much like Zeno's Achilles, who infinitely approaches the fleeing tortoise (Toth, 1998, 84). This problem is implicitly identified and further developed by Theaetetus, who offers a solution to halt the regress:

> "Theodore was writing out for us certain roots [*δυνάμεων*], such as the roots of three or five foot, showing that they are incommensurable by the unit of the foot: he selected other examples up to seventeenth and here he stopped. Now as there are infinite roots, the notion occurred to us of attempting to include them all under one name or class of roots" (Theaet. 147d3-e1).

Theodore's disciple is capable of encompassing every case of incommensurable relation within a single definition. Given that an irrational number signifies an incommensurable unity of relation, represented by an irrational line segment (148b1-2), it is sufficient to square it in order to make it commensurable with the unity. Theaetetus divides numbers within two classes: square numbers are those whose roots are rational numbers, constructed by a relation among numbers of equal values; rectangular numbers are those whose roots are instead irrational, formed by a *ratio* among

numbers of different values (147e5-148b2). In the latter case, the lines are not commensurable, while their squares are. Therefore, not only does Theaetetus define linear incommensurability by a synoptic gaze on its structural features, but he also exorcises it through a shift of perspective to plane geometry. And indeed it is precisely this algorithmic method that permits to define them, i.e. to control them. The serial infinite employed by Theodore in the antanairethic process is turned upside down, so that the incommensurable becomes standard of measure. Moreover, it is hinted that a similar procedure is appliable to solid geometry (148b2), for incommensurable figures are to be proportionated too. This should establish a continuity within the curriculum of mathematical studies, given that solid geometry is oriented to its own overcoming into astronomy as the soul is levelled up towards the truth. Ultimately in *Resp.* VII, 531a4ff. the attempt to find ever smaller intervals among musical chords is said to be ridiculous, for the musicians pointlessly torture an instrument's strings losing their focus on the harmonic rules. This is nothing but a stark criticism towards an unintelligent usage of *ἀνταναίρεσις*.

One more fundamental point is here to be made as for the language employed. The term *δυνάμις* is usually rendered by "root", as it indicates entities which are roots with respect to their squares. However, it might also be translated with "powers", for the irrational number is defined by its rationalised or squared form. In both cases a relational definition is given, with the result that the incommensurable abyss is no more perceived as a danger for a relational identity, but rather as its luminous source. Such a reversal finds several parallels throughout the text: the second one is that of the dream theory and the first one that of the definition of clay given by Socrates. Clay is said to be earth mixed with water: a compound of materials (material cause) ordered in a precise way (formal cause), so that the given definition manifests a relational character (Theaet., 147c5-6). Here we are offered a methodological indication to pass from the dianoetic to the noetic segment of the divided line: that is, to subtract hypotheses from their hypothetical character and to convert them into Forms (Resp. VII, 533c8-9). Mathematics ideally pertain to what completely is, albeit in a dreamlike state, as long as they employ undiscussed hypotheses (533c1-3). In Resp. VII, 516a9-b1 astronomy is associated with an oblique view of the sky light and is propaedeutic to a clear vision of the sun. Thereafter, its ultimate purpose is described as "the pursuit of the Beauty and of the Good" (531c6-7; cf. also 526e1; Ferrari, 2003b, 287-326). This, together with the previously quoted passage, offers a new perspective on the metaphor of the sun. Being *ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας*, the Form of Good cannot but be defined obliquely or in the light of its effects. Furthermore it is not only a matter of definition, because the recognition of its reality is here at stakes. As the unity halting the antanairethic process is nowhere to be found within the series, the Good remains unknowable in a linear process and rather requires a reversal of perspective. Here, we shall set apart the ethical path to its justification, for it would be too complicated to follow in its connection with the epistemic side[13]. As for the latter, the Athenian philosopher explicitly states that "in our attempt to seize the Good in itself, it takes refuge in Beauty" (Phil., 64e5). It is plausibly in reading this passage that Plotinus describes the universe as beautiful: "for it was not permitted to flee to infinity and it embraced the Unity, and not thanks to its bigness but to its beauty since it needed its

beauty for it became big" (Enn., VI 6, 1, 23ff.). Beauty signifies order, and order, in turn, is a disposition aimed at a greater unity: hence, it constitutes the manifestative filter of the unity and "the progeny of Good" (Resp. VI, 508c13), absent father whom we are allowed to talk about by virtue of his son's presence. In other words, to grasp the visage of the One, one must examine its effects, since – as Jakob Klein observes in his masterpiece on Greek logistics - it eludes the grasp of discourse, which is structurally dyadic (Klein, 2013, 79-99). In a similar manner, Beauty in itself is not visible until after the mathematical path has been fully covered, as hinted by *Symp.*, 210d3-7 and *Resp.* VII, 531c6-7. Surprisingly, Aristotle makes a similar point when he criticises those who believe that mathematics has nothing to say about beauty and good.

> "The mathematics do actually speak of good and beauty and make them knowable to the highest degree: as a matter of facts, even if it is true that they do not mention them directly, however they produce knowledge about their effects and reasons. […] The supreme forms of beauty are: order, symmetry and definition, which mathematics makes knowable more than every other science" (*Metaph.* M, 1078a34-b2).[14]

To summarize, the immense effort required in the antanairethic process leads to the recognition of ordered series of numbers which converge toward an ever-smaller relational unity. However, it is not fitting for a philosophically mature gaze to endlessly dissect a proportion, as the *λογιστική* seems to do. A hermeneutical reversal is needed, for it interpretates the unreachable focus as the luminous source of every forthcoming measurement.[15] We are nearly ready to take a panoramic view on the theme of transcendence, while this *μακρότερος ὁδὸς* hopefully gave us the means to a deeper comprehension. What still remains non-transparent is the intra-eidetic relationship, and particularly that covering the multiplicity of Forms and the Form of Good. On a methodological account, the way the latter is achieved is apparently identical to that of other Forms. Conversely in Resp. VI, 509b6-7 the objects of knowledge do not only derive their knowledgeability from the un-hypothetical principle, but also their being and essence. Moreover, the Form of Good is given an active role, while transcendent Ideas are actively pursued by the philosopher; already in *Resp.* V, 490b5-7, the philosopher is depicted in a passive role, for it is by being impregnated with Being that he gives birth to truth and thought. His erotic tension is in a responsive position with respect to the Form of Good, which at the very least plays an indirect efficient role while properly being a final cause.[16] For these reasons, it is safe to assume that the same recursive method applies also to the Noetic, thereby engendering an ulterior level of transcendence on an ontological account.

We can now try to schematize the results of our enquiry, distinguishing a gnoseological and an ontological sense of transcendence. As for the first one, the divided line has a programmatic role since it illustrates an important gap between a phenomenic and an inferential access to reality. The phenomenic plane is here constituted by both sensations and thoughts, as it encompasses the opinions and is therefore equivalent to the *δοξάστον*. Yet, the opinative plane is contradictory in its immanence, at least if we take out the possibility of a non-predicative ontology.

The relational unity is fractioned into the various instances of a non-commensurable relation and an overcoming via hypotheses is needed. This represents, strictly speaking, a first level of transcendence, which is not definitive, since hypotheses are insufficient to halt the infinite regress. If a hermeneutical reversal does not occur, we fall into the absurd error of dissecting the *ratios* in search of an ever-smaller unit of measurement. Here we come across a second level of transcendence, according to which the transcendent unity is interpreted in the light of its effects. It is hence more correct to ask what a Form actually does rather than what it is, for the latter point depends upon the former, at least in the gnoseological order. Ultimately, there seems to be another level of transcendence concerning the Form of Good. Nonetheless the process which leads to its attainment is in a partial overlap with that allowing to achieve every other Ideas, which may all be said good or even Good with reference to their own effects (Erbert, 1974, 133-146; Ferrari, 2003b, 293-294). There are several and conflicting interpretations on this matter, yet it cannot be denied that the Form of the Good plays an important causal role, which is ontological in the first instance

As for the ontological path, we found out that the noetic realm is not irrelated and it is indeed the truth of the opinative one: Forms are somehow immanent to their particular instantiations; still, they remain incommensurable to them, as they are sources of measure known by the variations of their measurements. The sensible *κόσμος* is therefore a variation of its noetic paradigm, albeit in a sense which permits a scientific recognition and even an ethical institution of a progressive correspondence of the two. That being said, if the sides of a polygon were to increase infinitely, it would still not become a circle and our only possibility to reach the truth would still depend upon an interpretative or inferential act. Along these lines, a remarkable study on *χωρισμός* by D.T. Devereux draws a distinction between transcendent Forms and immanent characters, showing they share opposite features (Devereux, 1994, 63-90). This division finds support in a passage of *Phaedrus* where the soul is said to

> "contemplate Justice and Wisdom and Science in themselves, not those to which the becoming gets attached nor certainly those which change whether a thing happens to change among those which during our current existence we qualify as real, but rather those which pertains to what the reality really is" (Phdr., 247d6-e7).

The present passage identifies different ways of understanding justice, wisdom, and knowledge: in themselves (1), as they are participated in through becoming (2), and as they are predicated in an arbitrary manner, based on an opinion unsupported by any criterion, of the changing and contingent circumstances in which our sensible life unfolds (3). Devereux's reading is consistent, despite not being perspicuous as for the modalities of participation between either Forms and immanent characters or immanent characters and sensible things. This distinction also provides a useful key to understanding *Parmenides*'s second section from a "neo-platonic" perspective, for the first hypothesis would be interpreted as referring to separated Forms, while the second one would concern instantiated Forms. The theoretical issue hinges on the case of non-instantiated Forms, which Plato

does not explicitly address but whose reality we are nevertheless compelled to acknowledge if Aristotle's criticism is to be meaningful.

5. CONCLUSION: AN ARISTOTELIAN ACCOUNT

It is the Stagirite himself who testifies Plato's fellowship with the Pythagorean school, with the plausible intent to oppose against the doctrine of Cratylus, whom he followed before encountering Socrates. For he believed a stable definition not to be appliable to the sensible realm, he then proceeded to postulate entities which exist alongside the becoming things. The latter derive from the former not only their denomination but also their reality, so that separation does not exclude an asymmetrical kind of participation. Indeed the Pythagoreans had already stated things to exist *μιμήσει τῶν ἀριτμῶν* (Metaph. A, 987b11-12), so that according to Aristotle only the name of the relation would have been changed by the Athenian philosopher. Nonetheless we have seen that a certain progression exists between numbers and Forms. Moreover Aristotle traces a distinction among ideal numbers and mathematical intermediates, posing the first ones outside of the sensible things whereas the second ones possibly within (A, 987b27-29; M, 1080b11-23; N, 1090a35-b5; on this topic cf. Annas, 1975, 146-166; Cattanei, 1997, 169-188; Younan, 2019, 644-663). This doctrine surely differs from that of Pythagoras, who is praised for not having separated numbers from things on several occasions by contrast with the Platonists (Metaph., M 108b8ff.; N 1090a30ff.), even if other aporias arise from the Pythagorean doctrine, such as the indivisibility of every sensible thing (M, 1076b5-11). We cannot provide an exhaustive account on Aristotle's interpretation of his master's ontology; we should be satisfied with indicating few helpful points to comprehend his criticism toward separation. The foundation of mathematics seems now stable enough to derive a few conclusions. First of all, an economic principle is invoked as it would make no sense to duplicate the sensible world merely to be able to count it (M, 1076b28-29). However, our objective compels us to give much greater consideration to the following criticism:

> "If we admit mathematical objects to exist in this way, i.e. as separated realities, consequences contrary to truth and to common opinion do follow. Indeed, mathematical magnitudes should be prior to sensible ones, by virtue of this existing modality of theirs. Conversely, according to the truth they are posterior. An imperfect magnitude is in fact prior with respect to its generation while posterior according to substance, as it goes for the inanimate with reference to the animate" (M, 1077a14-20).

Despite the temporal priority of mathematical entities, physical things hold a primacy within the ontological order because they are more perfect. Here, the full extent of the divergence between the two philosophers becomes apparent, provided that an axiological inversion implies distinct ontological perspective. Aristotle is thereby stating the axio-ontological priority of the *μεταξύ*, at least to the extent it is conferred the capacity of realising a whole coincidence of thought and being within a teleological perspective. According to the Stagirite "substantial priority goes with all those things which, separated from the others, detain a

major quantity of being" (M, 1077b2). On the other hand, "the *λόγοι* which go to compose other *λόγοι* have a priority in the concept" (M, 1077b3-4). These two kinds of priorities are self-implicated in Plato, whereas they are not in Aristotle. For instance, a man's mankind surely comes first as far as knowledge is concerned, but it would not be what it is if no concrete men existed as its teleological reference. Furthermore, in the introduction, the non-physical topological distinction between Forms and particulars was identified as the plausible polemical target of the Stagirite. Now we are able to better understand the implications of such a relationship, namely, both the incommensurability of Forms in relation to their instantiations and their ulteriority as the source of commensuration. If this leads to a distinction between a causal transcendent character and an immanent character as its effect, then it is precisely the former to be criticised, as its causation is poorly justified. The ulteriority of the Forms would introduce a meontological hiatus between the actuality and the possibility of their instantiation, thereby portraying *φύσις* as not fully rational by its own means. This is likely the meaning of the well-known argument asserting the priority of *ἐνέργεια* over *δύναμις* in *Metaph*. Θ, 1049b4ff., which is furtherly clarified by the subsequent statement:

> "If there is a principle which is capable of moving things or acting on them, but it is not actually doing so, there will be not necessarily movement; for that which has a potency may not exercise it. Nothing then is gained even if we suppose eternal substances, as the supporters of the theory of Forms do, unless there is to be in them some principle which can cause change" (Λ, 1071b12ff.).

These conclusive suggestions are far from enough to shed a light on the extremely complex relationship between Plato and Aristotle, but they might be sufficient to underline the viewpoint from where the Stagirite hurls his barbs. It is safe to assume that in Plato's thought the sensible realm is a defective variation of the noetic, and moreover has the duty of an infinite strain to reach its height. Aristotle rather thinks the *λόγος* to be fully exhaustible within a teleological perspective on the phenomenon, despite a still needed transition from physics to metaphysic. It is instead to be seen whether this later transition actually leaves behind the philosophy of Plato and develops the consequences of a new-gained point of view or if it recovers it to an extent which is scarcely highlighted by Aristotle. A further enquiry is needed, not only for a historiographical reason. The principle of non-contradiction is not thinkable without Plato's revolution, at least in the relational formulation given in *Metaph*. Γ, 1005b19-20. Provided that the Stagirite's philosophy rests on this principle, it is not a stretch to view it as a variant of Plato's. Meanwhile our two authors deal with the theme of transcendence, they put up a laboratory of mobile borders where the fundamental categories of our history are defined with chemical precision. This is where predicative logic finds its foundation. Whether this is a constructive or a recognitional process, it is precisely within the path toward transcendence that it has to be decided.

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ENDNOTES

1 Cf. for example Aquinas, ST I, Q. 84, A. 1: "Plato, ut posset salvare certam cognitionem veritatis a nobis per intellectum haberi, posuit ista corporalia aliud genus entium a materia et motu separatum, quod nominabat species sive ideas, per quarum partecipationem unumquodque istorum singularium et sensibilium dicitur vel homo vel equus vel aliquid huiusmodi".

2 In Metaph. Δ, 1019a 2-4 anteriority and posteriority "are said, according to nature and substance, about all the things which are able to exist without anything else, while the latter cannot exist without the former". And immediately after it is said that "Plato has used this division" (my translation, as always below if not specified).

3 Cf. Cherniss, 1936, 445 on the accusation that Forms are mere doppelgängers of reality, as if it were necessary to duplicate it to count it (Metaph. M, 1078b34-36).

4 The reference goes to the first series of consequences developed on the hypothesis that the unity is. So do Meinwald, 1991, 63-70 and Ferrari, 2018, 130-137 read this passage.

5 Migliori, 1990, 380-84 has pointed out that Aristotle probably joined the Academy in the same period the Parmenides was being written. As Ferrari suggests, it is yet more believable that Plato thinks of Eudoxus of Cnidus, whose thought is synthesized in Metaph. M, 1079b 18-20.

6 I agree with Ferrari, 2018, 239, n. 85 that τὰ πάντα cannot but refer to the hypotheses. The syntagma «διὰ πάντων διεξόδου» is echoed by Resp. VII, 534c where Socrates describes the dialectic method which leads to know the Good in itself.

7 Noteworthy is Parmenides's remark at the end of its first objection towards Socrates's theory of Forms, specifically the question on the intelligible world's population: "philosophy has still not captured you as it will do, according to me, when you will not despise any of these realities" (Par., 130e1ss.). Hence, a mature commitment to philosophy shall consider each reality as noetically seizable or νόησις as a transcendental point of view.

8 Although the erotic tension implies the F-property to be abstracted from its instantiations (Phdr., 249b6-c1), at the same time knowledge of Forms precedes that of the particulars since it is impossible to know the F-ness of x without a concept of

F, as Allen, 1959, 168 and Heidegger, 1997, 82-83 have pointed out. These two points are however compatible, for the concept of F can be read as a pre-comprehension which still has to be explicitly recognized throughout its manifestations.

9 I believe this passage suggests that the internal division in the metaphor of the divided line should not be taken as stark separations and rather depicts shifts in perspective on the same reality. Hence, the dianoetic order is operative at a doxastic level, even if not recognized (Trabattoni, 2003, 360; 403).

10 That is Heraclitus's doctrine, which parcelizes reality in an infinite sequence of irrelated entities and does not allow any kind of predications. I propose to read the first part of the Theaetetus (in part. 179e6-183c7) as a fierce resistance to this outcome, even if it does not seem to be conclusive. A Parmenidean account may also take this path, and moreover render the same results of Heraclitus more coherently, as Chiurazzi, 2017, 25-36 suggests.

11 In this sense Taylor, 1927, 201-202 emphasizes how Plato's proposal is to start from unproven principles deemed satisfactory and to draw consequences and implications in a deductive way. See also Ross, 1951, 28; Trabattoni, 1994, 140-147.

12 According to Vegetti, 2003, 281 here happens a transfiguration of the Socratic question "what is it?" into the more dynamic "what does it do?". Cf. also Dixsaut, 2000, 121-151.

13 But see Lysis, 219b8-220b7. This section is the subject of a detailed commentary in Pitteloud, 2017, 48-53. This path is followed also by Aristotle's EN I 1094a18-22, where a supreme purpose is admitted due to the impossibility of an infinite regress in intentional actions. Cf. Flashar, 1965, 223-246 for a critical enquiry of Aristotle's account on Plato's idea of Good in EE I 1217b; EN I 1096a-1097a.

14 See Cattanei, 2015, 116-120 for an accurate comment to this passage with reference to the Symposium. The characteristics of beauty listed here, moreover, explicitly follow Phil. 66b1ff.

15 The vast presence of the hermeneutic theme in Plato's works was accurately studied by Camera, 2011, 15-32 whose results should be brought together in a profitable dialogue with those of the present research.

16 The relationship between eros and mathematics is crucially illuminated by Krüger, 1973, 259-279, who situates Klein's reflections on numbers and eidetic numbers within a reinterpretation of the second section of the *scala amoris*. It would be worth exploring the erotic implications of the connection between eros and the identity of beings (understood as objects of eros).

BOOK REVIEWS

Linda Napolitano. *Platone e la cura di sé e dell'altro*. Mimesis: Milano, 2024, 408 pp., ISBN: 9791222308951

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Is there a philosophical practice of "care of the self" in Plato? Can a less intellectualistic image of this philosopher be reconstructed? And can it prove fruitful to contemporary philosophical practices? L. Napolitano in her new study aims to show that philosophical practices are central to Plato's philosophy and still relevant to modern thought. She offers a meticulous examination of the concept of philosophical care in the controversial *Alcibiades I*, relating it to both ancient and modern philosophical contexts. Her work consists of two parts: the first explores ancient and contemporary philosophical practices, while the second provides analysis, commentary, and a new translation of the dialogue.

Napolitano's primary aim is to advocate for an experiential, practical reading of Plato's philosophy, challenging intellectualist interpretations still prevalent in contemporary scholarship. Her reading highlights the importance of the non-rational aspects of the mind, known through lived experience, and the praxes used to direct them wisely. It is grounded in a historical framework championed by Foucault, Hadot, and Patočka (p. 25-31), which identifies the care of the self (*epimeleia heautou*), a practical exercise of self-transformation (*askesis*), as the foundation of pre-modern efforts to attain truth, by contrast with the purely intellectual model of modern, post-Cartesian views. In addition to the rational (*logistikon*) dimension of human nature, Napolitano underscores the significance of emotional and relational dimensions as integral to Plato's philosophy. Two crucial aspects are the embodied relational dimension in which virtues are cultivated and exercised (p. 129-147), and the formative role of well-directed desire (p. 147-177). Other aspects include pleasures and pains, the enchanting power of words, the meek disposition ground-

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ing dialogical praxes, and especially our relation to death (p. 177-199). The pervasiveness of practical concerns supports Napolitano's argument that these elements are not merely ancillary to Plato's philosophy, but rather integral to his philosophical project. The mutual implication of philosophy as theoretical enterprise and as practical endeavour is best encapsulated by Napolitano's observations on the Socratic dialogue: Plato considers thought as an inner dialogue with oneself, and self-examination as a dialogical practice directed at one's best possible development, the explication of teleologically oriented natural potentials for a rational and wise existence (p.114-129, 324-333). Therefore, subjects can position themselves as their own interlocutors and as their own objects of examination, and they can orient their actions towards their best possible development. Napolitano proposes to take this conception as the foundation of the very dialogical practice promoted by Plato, rendering the theoretical and practical dimensions inextricable: philosophical dialogue is a practice of self-care, and self-care is the foundation of philosophical wisdom. Thus, she provides concrete methodological guidelines and a reasonable theoretical framework for a reading of Plato attentive to his engagement with the human self, as experienced in its affective and relational aspects.

Regarding the problem of authenticity, Napolitano argues that the form and contents of the *Alcibiades I* are consistent with Plato's corpus, thereby establishing it as a crucial text for understanding Plato's philosophical practices. She briefly mentions the state of the question and the hermeneutical problems caused by a text that likely underwent several interventions and interpolations (p. 217). Napolitano's main purpose, however, is not to take a definitive stance on this issue but rather to highlight the coherence of this dialogue with Plato's philosophy, and particularly its great philosophical value. After a section dedicated to exploring the coherence of Plato's representations of the character of Alcibiades, she addresses the objections that have been raised against this dialogue's authenticity. While it has been judged as anomalous and at times even simplistic, she observes, it does not present any extraneous doctrine or element, and its seemingly simplistic arguments are part of a more complex dialogical and educational process, through which the protagonist, Socrates, guides the deuteragonist, Alcibiades (p. 219-221). Even its most controversial passages, where the daimonic sign to Socrates is identified as divine (105d-e, 124c), are read as consistent with Plato's corpus, since similar conflations of the daimonic and the divine appear in the *Apology* and several other dialogues (p. 223-224). Napolitano refutes other alleged anomalies such as its apparent dogmatism, its more didactic and less dialogical tone, its less 'embodied' or concrete characters, and its less explorative nature. She makes a compelling case for considering the *Alcibiades I* as a genuine Socratic dialogue, written either by Plato or by a faithful imitator, and as fully compatible with the philosophy that emerges from Plato's corpus. This consistency is crucial for her to legitimately identify philosophical praxis as a core aspect of Plato's philosophy. Napolitano thus offers a fresh reading of the dialogue as a valuable model for understanding the care of the self in Plato. She favours the thesis of authenticity, but she maintains a non-committal position. Her emphasis on intertextual coherence is instrumental to regarding it as a useful interpretive key. Her work shows that if we consider this dialogue as aligned with Plato's authentic thought, we gain greater clarity on the practical ends

and methods of Plato's philosophy. Aspects from disparate dialogues such as the practice of inner dialogue (*Soph*. 263d-264b), the knowledge of oneself acquired through an erotic relation (*Phdr*. 255d-e), or the power of beauty and Eros to engender inner growth and generative force (*Phdr*. 249d-e, *Symp*. 206c-e) acquire further intelligibility when viewed through this lens.

The experiential framework constitutes the unifying thread between Napolitano's two lines of inquiry, the examination of philosophical practices and the philological close reading of the dialogue. On one hand, she examines the ancient Greek concept of *askesis*, which Plato elaborates starting from a pervasive cultural and religious background (p. 31-50), as well as the contemporary philosophical elaborations about "care", focussing on Gadamer, Foucault, and Heidegger (p. 51-90). She shows that in Plato we can find an *askesis* modelled upon athletic training and spiritual practices, extending beyond personal discipline to encompass ethical, political, and cognitive dimensions that are still relevant today (p. 91-114). According to this concept, care is not an isolated, medicalised technique but a dynamic and open-ended practice that defines the entire human sphere. It is a practical kind of knowledge, more akin to artful expertise than abstract theoretical models. The ambitious scope of this work may appear disorienting to readers less familiar with her approach, and it suffers from a lack of focus on the historical developments of the concept of the self. Nonetheless, her overall contribution is enlightening as it opens new avenues of research that put ancient philosophy at the heart of contemporary interests.

The main strength of Napolitano's work is her rigorous, well-documented challenge to the intellectualistic interpretation of Plato and of his representation of Socrates, which she considers a prejudice (p. 147). This view found its staunchest defender in Vlastos, who argued that the core tenet of Socratic philosophy, as presented by Plato, was the sufficiency of knowledge to engender virtuous behaviour (Vlastos, G. (1995). *Studies in Greek Philosophy, Volume II: Socrates, Plato, and Their Tradition*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, p. 43-59). This typically analytical position might still influence current interpretations of Plato's works that focus almost one-sidedly on cognitive skills. Napolitano's aim is to dismantle this view from its foundations, showing how emotional and relational skills are central to the care of oneself as a composite whole. The strongest point Napolitano makes concerns relational skills that are necessary to the intellect itself: self-knowledge (*synnoia*) and inquiries (*skepseis*) accomplished through shared dialogue constitute the primary act of care for one's intellectual faculty, taking precedence even over the knowledge of intelligible realities (p. 146). This consideration is followed by an extensive examination of the various desires that need philosophical care, some of which pertain to cognition, such as questioning wonder (*thaumazein*), which stimulates philosophical research, and love of wisdom (*philosophia*) itself (p. 176-177). By supporting her claims with abundant textual evidence and careful theoretical analysis, Napolitano succeeds in showing that the very cognitive effort to attain knowledge and wisdom is supported and even inherently constituted by emotional and relational factors. Her study aligns with current research focussing on the multifaceted nature of human experience and on ancient philosophical care such as that carried out by Migliori, Fermani, Stavru, and Candiotto. It also follows a trend of the last two decades

whereby more attention has been paid to emotional aspects (Rowe, Erler, Hobbs) and to the nature of the self (Sorabji, Gill, Remes, Mortley) in Plato and Platonic philosophy, even within more analytical traditions. What is unique in Napolitano's work is the abundance of textual evidence and the force of the philosophical reasons she provides for embracing a more "practical" Plato.

A limitation of her study is its lack of elaboration on the epistemological and metaphysical outcomes of a non-intellectualistic and non-dogmatic reading of Plato. Following Foucault, she observes that the care of the self is intended as the development of structural cognitive skills which are initially present only as potentials, and which can give access to true knowledge and wisdom once adequately developed. The prerequisite for such development is feeling one's own cognitive lack and desiring the object or state which one does not possess. However, it is necessary to know one's soul and its good in order to take care of it correctly. We face here the risk of logical circularity: care is a prerequisite for knowledge, but knowledge is a prerequisite for care. Two opposite views might resolve this aporia: either a wider, ontologically grounded intellectualism (1) or a pragmatic regulative approach (2). On one hand, we might conclude that Plato's care of the soul is situated within a broader ontological framework, which grounds the reality and structure of the soul in the world of Forms depending upon the Good, objects of pure intellectual acquisition (1). For the direction of emotions and desires towards a good inner condition and towards the transcendent truth to be possible, both must be ontologically real. This would be consistent with the paradigm of a progressively less Socratic and more dogmatic Plato. On the other hand, we could construe Plato's metaphysical conception as the tentative pragmatic result of a practical evaluation, based on the successful development of the soul as a whole enabled by this conception. The noetic vision of the Forms and the Good might be inferred pragmatically as the regulative condition for the development of one's soul, the acquisition of more wisdom and a more solid foundation to navigate the moral and cognitive complexities of embodied life (cf. *Phd*. 85c-d). Trabattoni, for instance, has identified a "metaphysics of experience" in Plato, whereby his metaphysical principles, albeit conceived as ontologically real, furnish the necessary conditions to understand and justify our embodied experience rather than just an alternative, transcendent world (Trabattoni, F. (1994). *Scrivere nell'anima. Verità, dialettica e persuasione in Platone*. Firenze, La Nuova Italia). No definitive answer is present in Plato's dialogues, and cautious readers must acknowledge that his Forms are both an ontological ground and the source of an attractive, transformative force. Napolitano's questioning attitude is therefore reasonable, but a tentative resolution of this problem would make her argument stronger. Her forceful stance against intellectualism points toward a wider theoretical framework that requires further development.

Another limitation is the scarce attention paid to the problem of authenticity from a historical, not merely inter-textual approach. This obscures its rich, productive relation with ancient thought, especially with the Orphic-Pythagorean and later Platonic traditions. For example, Napolitano does not directly respond to Renaud and Tarrant's recent work on the *Alcibiades I* and its ancient reception (Renaud, R.; Tarrant, H. (2015). *The Platonic* Alcibiades I. *The Dialogue and its Ancient Reception*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press). Therefore, she misses the chance of

engaging with an "ancient approach" that would enable her and her readers to reflect more explicitly on their own hermeneutic presuppositions and on the relation between the ancient conception of "soul" and the modern conception of "self". In addition, Napolitano downplays the fact that the care of the soul is often situated within a broader aspiration toward assimilation with the divine in Plato's works. This emerges clearly in the most problematic section of the *Alcibiades I* (132c-133c), which includes a clear Platonic or Christian interpolation. Examining the historical reasons for this interpolation and how later interpreters view this text through a theological lens would not obscure its human and relational aspects, but it would clarify them by locating them in their teleological context. Napolitano devotes some attention to the thorny issue of the Pythagorean tradition (p. 33-35), albeit always with the purpose of examining their spiritual practices rather than reconstructing historical developments. Despite these limitations, her approach remains defensible and scholarly sound, if considered as an effort to highlight the practical value of Plato's philosophy.

Overall, Napolitano's new study achieves its goal of fostering a productive, well-informed dialogue between academic philosophy and philosophical practices. It should not be read either as a study in the history of thought or as a modern reinterpretation of ancient ideas. Rather, it is aimed at presenting an understanding of Plato that can be fruitful even today, while remaining textually grounded. It succeeds thanks to a well-documented close reading and a cautious positive evaluation of the value of the *Alcibiades I*. Its questioning angle is adequate to the complexity of its subject. Its main limitations are the disorienting effect of shifting between contemporary and ancient perspectives, its limited focus on historical developments, and its lack of a larger theoretical framework for the problem of intellectualism. These flaws are compensated for by a rich and textually sound articulation of frequently overlooked elements of Plato's philosophy, as well as clear philosophical reasons for their persistent relevance. This study thus represents a stimulating contribution to the fields of ancient philosophy and philosophical practices, offering indispensable insights for scholars engaged in these domains.

Marcelo D. Boeri, *¿Serías capaz de hablar si nadie te respondiera? Filosofía y drama en Platón*. Berlin: Logos Verlag, 2023, 332 pp., ISBN 978-3-8325-5714-0

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In this book, Boeri offers a reading of selected passages from Plato, striving to honour both the philosopher and the literary artist. He emphasises the intrinsic—and indeed almost natural—interaction between the dramatic and philosophical elements that constitute the essence of the dialogues. As the author acknowledges, approaching Plato from this perspective is certainly not a new hermeneutical stance (cf. pp. 58-59). Consequently, his ambition is modest: to illustrate not how one ought to read Plato (a goal he deems both arrogant and unattainable), but rather how he endeavours to engage with Plato's texts (p. 10).

The book contains eight chapters, a prologue, a list of abbreviations, bibliographical references, and an index. The chapters are not logically sequenced (except for Chapter 5 and 6), meaning each can be read independently. This might be due to the compiled nature of the book, in which Boeri has gathered, in some cases with modifications or expansions, his published works from the last fifteen years. Nevertheless, the text maintains unity through Boeri's reading approach, which effectively integrates dramatic and philosophical dimensions of the dialogues.

Throughout the introduction, Boeri explores the Platonic dialogue as both a literary work and a philosophical argument, reviewing the divergent modes of interpreting the Platonic corpus. He also considers the well-trodden question of why Plato chose the dialogue format to convey his philosophical message. Boeri is interested in highlighting the fact that dialogue seeks to actively engage the reader in philosophical discussion—this is the second pillar upon which the author's interpretation rests. Finally, he provides two examples concerning the characterisation of paradigmatic figures (Callicles and Pro-

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tarchus) to illustrate how this literary aspect enhances the philosophical discussion.

Chapter 1 ("Platón como artista literario y como filósofo") articulates the argumentative axis of the volume. By analysing the advantages and disadvantages of both analytical and non-analytical readings of Plato, Boeri demonstrates that these approaches are complementary, using dramatic elements from the *Parmenides* as illustrative examples. Without conducting an exhaustive analysis, which the selected texts would warrant, Boeri merely points out the connection between certain dramatic details—often found in introductory pages or prologues, as in the case of the *Philebus*, *Statesman*, *Protagoras*, *Lysis*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic*, or elsewhere, such as in the so-called "Defence of Protagoras" in the *Theaetetus*—and the subsequent philosophical discussions.

Chapter 2 ("Filosofía y drama en el Teeteto y el Sofista") examines two complex dialogues. In addressing important philosophical issues such as knowledge, opinion, and error, Plato illustrates in the *Theaetetus* how its dramatic structure clarifies the philosophical method, particularly the Socratic dialectical technique. Boeri demonstrates that attempts to define *epistēmē* often fail because they overlook the personal disposition of the interlocutors and their capacity for self-transformation, as self-recognition of one's ignorance is essential to knowledge. The author also analyses the *Sophist*, emphasising the discussion on the "Sophistry of noble lineage," which reveals the legitimate techniques—dialectical or sophistical—for argumentation and indicates that proper refutation can transform the soul of the refuted (including the reader's), allowing for clearer discernment between knowledge and ignorance.

In Chapter 3 ("Broma, sentido del humor y argumento en Platón"), Boeri highlights certain passages from *Protagoras*, *Euthyphro*, *Meno*, *Statesman*, *Philebus*, *Theaetetus*, *Gorgias*, and *Republic*, where humour plays a crucial role in the development of the argument. The author focuses on the 'ridiculous' yet fundamentally serious theses posed by Socrates and the 'mockery' he directs at his interlocutors, particularly those who exhibit excessive arrogance. This mockery serves as a corrective mechanism, as it compels interlocutors to alter their presumptuous epistemological status and adopt a more conducive attitude for collaborative inquiry.

Chapter 4 ("Teeteto y Protarco: dos personajes filosóficos") examines Theaetetus from the eponymous dialogue and Protarchus from the *Philebus*, whom Boeri describes as 'ideal interlocutors.' Plato skilfully portrays these characters to emphasise that the attitudes of interlocutors are crucial in our interpretation of the texts. While some resist dialogue, Theaetetus and Protarchus actively seek collaboration to uncover the truth. They are open to changing their viewpoints when mistaken and prioritize honest responses over pleasing Socrates. Additionally, they sense progress in their discussions, even if a clear resolution is not reached.

The next two chapters explore the character of the Platonic Socrates. Chapter 5 ("Sócrates, Platón y el problema del conocimiento, la ignorancia y el autoengaño") focuses on 'Socratic intellectualism,' which refers not only to propositional or theoretical understanding but also to practical knowledge. This is illustrated through the dramatic traits in *Charmides*, where Socrates embodies *sōphrosynē*, highlighting the coherence between thought, discourse, and action. Chapter 6 ("La ignorancia socrática como virtud epistémica") examines the link between Socratic-Platonic epistemology and contemporary theories of ignorance.

It argues that Socratic ignorance, distinct from obstinate ignorance or "illusion of knowledge", is essential for gaining knowledge, especially in social contexts where individuals depend on one another and no one possesses complete knowledge. This perspective portrays knowledge acquisition as a collaborative and social endeavour, reflecting modern epistemic labour division.

Chapter 7 ("Poetología y filosofía en el *Simposio*") examines the interplay of poetic and philosophical elements in Plato's *Symposium*, focusing on the nature of Eros. The author argues that the successive speeches represent stages toward philosophical understanding, culminating in Diotima's speech, which epitomises philosophical insight. This contrasts with Alcibiades' emotional perspective, who fails to translate the concept of inner beauty into action. Boeri emphasises that, despite its rich literary imagery, the dialogue reveals a deeper philosophical discourse on the link between beauty and goodness. Through the development of Alcibiades and Socrates, the chapter illustrates their transformative journeys in understanding love, evolving from superficial attraction to a rational appreciation of true beauty and wisdom.

In Chapter 8 ("Poetología, persuasión y conocimiento en el Fedro"), the author emphasises Plato's literary skill, noting the rich prose and character development in the *Phaedrus*, despite criticisms regarding its alleged compositional flaws. Boeri suggests that these perceived defects may serve a pedagogical purpose, encouraging readers to engage more deeply with the text. The chapter explores the philosophical foundations of true persuasion, arguing that it must be rooted in knowledge and truth. In particular, the discussion of the cicadas acts as a dramatic prelude to the philosophical discourse, illustrating the interplay between rhetoric and dialectic. The author also examines the complexities of persuasion, emphasising that effective rhetoric requires both knowledge of the truth and an understanding of the audience's cognitive capacities.

In the conclusions, Boeri summarises the key outcomes of his interpretative approach: a) both interpersonal and intrapersonal dialogue—conceived as *thought*—serve as pathways to self-knowledge; b) dialogue involves collaborative inquiry, requiring participants to openly express what they truly think about a given point, respect established *homologíai*, demonstrate epistemic humility, and be willing to modify their beliefs if necessary; c) dialogue has a therapeutic function, transforming an individual's soul; d) knowledge should be viewed as connected to action rather than merely "theoretical"; e) finally, the interplay between the dramatic and philosophical elements in Plato's dialogues enhances the reader's appreciation of the profound richness of Platonic texts.

I would now like to address two points that I find contestable. Firstly, there are several assertions that require qualification. a) Regarding Platonic dialectic as a method of questions and answers, Boeri states: "se trata de un procedimiento *que no acaba jamás*", and "el modo platónico de hacer filosofía se encuentra *en las antípodas de cualquier forma de dogmatismo*" (p. 62). Furthermore, he later writes: "El diálogo platónico permite tratar los temas de una manera *siempre abierta* y, de este modo, *nunca establece 'doctrinas' de una manera definitiva*". (p. 107) [my italics]. While these assertions, which are partly true, have been endorsed by many scholars for centuries, I believe Boeri could have acknowledged that such claims might still be subject to question today. The issue of the seemingly never-ending dialectical procedure can be traced back to F. Schlegel, who, drawing from J. G. Fichte,

interpreted Plato as a "progressive" philosopher, perpetually advancing in the pursuit of knowledge and continually questioning various topics without ever reaching a definitive conclusion.[1] However, it is essential to distinguish between the *image* that emerges from the dialogues (see p. 59) —that of a constant questioning that appears endless (compare Theaetetus' disquiet in *Sph*. 261b3)—and the crucial matter of whether Plato, who constructs this *image* and intends to communicate it, truly had anything more substantive to convey, something "more valuable" (*Phdr*. 278d8) that could support the arguments or ideas partially outlined in his texts. I find myself inclined to an affirmative response (see, e.g., *R*. 506e2, *Lg*. 969a2) and believe that Plato's philosophical efforts were not endless (cf. *R*. 532e3). The fact that he refrained from more openly communicating his thought is another matter. b) Boeri concludes his book by rightly asserting that Plato provides "un monumental testimonio de que el diálogo es una manera apropiada para hacer filosofía y, a la vez, para mostrar su carácter 'comunitario'" (p. 301). However, he is mistaken in claiming that Plato never wrote a work "sobre estas cosas (esto es, sobre su filosofía), pues ella no es expresable en modo alguno." [To maintain coherence in Spanish, the parentheses must be removed here]. The text of *Ep. VII* 341c4-6, which Boeri references, is controversial and remains so, but it seems reasonable to me to interpret that it is not "his philosophy" that Plato leaves unwritten, but the most significant aspects of it (see *Ep. VII* 341b; 344d5)—those "things" he was serious about (341c2), ultimately what he would have considered of greatest value.[2] Whether this treasured core of his philosophy is expressible or not is one of the most contentious points that continues to divide Platonic criticism.

Secondly, it would have been interesting to include the perspective of the Tübingen-Milan School and its reference to the "unwritten doctrines" as an additional level of depth in our reading of the dialogues (the author is aware of this interpretative line; cf. p. 13). I refer to the possibility of clarifying certain passages of the corpus by, albeit hypothetically, appealing to the pair One (unity)-Indefinite Dyad (multiplicity),[3] which Plato may have posited as the first principles of his philosophy. Allow me to elucidate this with just two examples.

Towards the end of Chapter 1, the reference to the subjectivity of the boys in the *Lysis*, each of whom has a different opinion on who among them is the best-looking (*Ly*. 204b3), suggests a depth in the discussion that eludes Socrates' interlocutors, who remain ensnared in the (physical) surface of the issue. The Platonic Socrates' focus is not merely on the most beautiful but on beauty itself. His pivotal question, "who among you is ὁ καλός?" (*Ly*. 204b), steers the conversation towards the essence of friendship and a foundational principle, πρῶτον φίλον (*Ly*. 219d). When Socrates struggles to recall the previous discussion on friendship due to its many facets (*Ly*. 222e6), he implies that the investigation should refocus on unity rather than multiplicity. This suggests that the conversation's limitation lies in the multiplicity that distracts or diverts from the objective, necessitating a return to a unified principle that encompasses all perspectives. This idea is foreshadowed in the opening scene, where the lads accompanying Hippothales and Ctesippus, "standing in a group", divert the solitary Socrates from his intended path (*Ly*. 203a-b). In this regard, it is significant that Socrates confesses, before concluding the conversation, that he intended to engage another boy, one from the group of older ones (*Ly*. 223a), but was interrupted. What did Plato mean by this dra-

matic hint? Would a more mature treatment of the "first friend" be possible? I believe so, and such a treatment would involve a discussion at a deeper level of investigation addressing the interrelation between multiplicity and unity, the principles that the "unwritten doctrines" postulate.

In Chapter 3, it would have been intriguing to include an analysis of Glaucon's humorous (and emblematic) exclamation in *Republic* 509c (Καὶ ὁ Γλαύκων μάλα γελοίως, Ἄπολλον, ἔφη, δαιμονίας ὑπερβολῆς), a fundamental passage from a philosophical standpoint. The argument pertains to the good itself, which transcends οὐσία, and is simultaneously imbued with a jest that alludes to non-multiplicity (Ἄ-πολλον). It does not appear to be mere coincidence—and I cannot believe that it is—that Plato has Glaucon utter the only exclamation in the *Republic* that mentions the god Apollo at this crucial moment in the dialogue. Is this a profoundly serious jest that those closest to the Academy would have read and associated with the supreme principle of Platonic philosophy, namely, the One?[4] This question is difficult to answer, although the idea is most suggestive. Regardless, if we wish to avoid being overly pretentious, it seems to me that the point here is that this jest aims to draw our attention to the extreme separation of the idea of good, to its unity, which transcends being itself, that is, the multiplicity of all things that are.

Finally, let me note a few corrigenda that could improve the manuscript for any future reprint. The table of contents lacks corresponding page numbers. Additionally, there are errors in Spanish hyphenation (e.g., p. 155, n. 13; p. 287, lines 27 and 29; p. 298, lines 16, 20, and 22). Chapter 3 exhibits inconsistent spacing between footnotes, and Chapter 5 has the highest number of misprints. Lastly, inconsistencies exist in the list of cited authors, particularly Allen, McCoy, Santas, Sorabji, Spinassi, Szaif, and Tigerstedt. I only point out two inaccuracies on the part of the author. On p. 82, Boeri attributes a statement from *Sph.* 230d5 to the anonymous Visitor instead of Theaetetus, who actually claims that recognising our knowledge limits is "the best and wisest of states." Plato may be encouraging readers, especially novices like the young mathematician, to adopt a moderate stance toward philosophical discussions, acknowledging both their intellectual strengths and limitations. Furthermore, on p. 147, there is a mistranslation regarding Theodorus' withdrawal from dialogue. Boeri translates, "no (me) arrastren a la arena, que suele ser dura," while the original Greek states "no (me) arrastren a la arena, a mí que ya estoy rígido."

Despite such observations, Boeri's book represents an intelligent reading of Plato's work. Its main virtues include: a) clear, accessible prose that encourages a positive reader attitude and a desire to explore the selected passages in greater depth; b) the author's effort to blend dramatic elements with philosophical interpretation; c) consistent emphasis on philosophy as a collaborative activity, highlighting the importance of interlocutors' dispositions; and d) measured use of secondary literature.

ENDNOTES

1 Cf. e.g. Krämer, H. J. (1988). Fichte, Schlegel und der Infinitismus in der Platondeutung, Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte 62, pp. 583-621.

2 See Szlezák, Th. A. (1985). Platon und die Schriftlichkeit der Philosophie. Interpretationen zu den frühen und mittleren Dialogen, Berlin-Boston, Walter de Gruyter, p. 399.

3 The literature on this topic is extensive. I only refer to Gaiser, K. (1968). Platons ungeschriebene Lehre. Studien zur systematischen und geschichtlichen Begründung der Wissenschaften in der Platonischen Schule. Stuttgart, Ernst Klett Verlag, pp. 441-557.

4 Reale, G. (2010) [21 ed.]. Per una nuova interpretazione di Platone alla luce delle "dottrine non scritte", Milano, Bompiani, pp. 338-339, noted this point, perhaps drawing on the anonymous Prolegomena de Philosophia Platonica, 1. 52 ed. Westerink.

John Lombardini, *Plato's Political Thought*, Leiden: K. Brill, 2024, 120 pp., ISBN 978-90-04-69221-3

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There are few introductory text dedicated exclusively to Plato's political thought. Prof. Lombardini's book addresses this task, offering topics for discussion and basic bibliographical guidance of contemporary interpreters. The work consists of a general introduction (1–7), four thematic sections (7–101), and a conclusion (101–103). The cross-cutting theme that unites the different sections is Plato's relationship to Athenian democracy. He does not present an exhaustive review of each topic, but distinguish the "standard" interpretations of scholarship with some challenging works and novel research approaches.

The section "Plato, the Academy and the *Seventh Letter*" (7–30) addresses the debate surrounding Plato's political praxis, according to historical grounds. Lombardini adopts a skeptical position, stating that there is no conclusive evidence for Plato's direct involvement in Greek politics, nor that the Academy ever had as its main objective the promotion of a political agenda. There are different interpretations on this question, but given the scarcity of reliable evidence, these depend more on the position taken regarding the dogmatic or non-dogmatic nature of Platonic thought (16). Although we have a record of some political academicians, this alone is not evidence to declare an institutional objective of the Academy, since they could be *outsiders*, interested in practical studies, but without interest in theoretical studies or a strong commitment to the Academy (18).

One of the main sources for this discussion is the *Seventh Letter*, since it narrates a biography supposedly written by Plato, in which his political intentions are made explicit. But the authenticity of the letter has been a subject of great dispute. The standard view is that "Plato may have written the *Seventh Letter*, but even if he did not, it still must have been written by

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someone familiar with his philosophy and his interventions in Sicilian politics" (19). Lombardini counters this view with the work of Michael Frede and Myles Burnyeat, who not only deny Plato's authorship of the letter, but also (esp. Burnyeat) deny that the letter was written by anyone truly competent in Platonic philosophy. Lombardini values the arguments of Frede and Burnyeat as the best ones against the standard view, but they remain questionable arguments, and, in short, it seems that the discussion will never be settled (28–29).

It is interesting noting Lombardini's point about how Burnyeat's work has marked a shift in the focus of scholarly research. Without considering the *Seventh Letter* as written by Plato, but rather as a "tragic prose" (cf. *Laws* 817b1–5) written later, this opens the possibility of analyzing how attempts have been made to adapt Plato's political thought to the new realities of the Hellenistic world. Other scholars have pursued this line of research with other letters attributed to Plato or other classical authors (30).

Without any reliable evidence concerning Plato's political praxis, Lombardini moves on to reconsider the problem of his political thought in light of the influence that Socrates may have had on him. He addresses this in the section "Socratic Politics and the Socrates Problem" (31–57). As is well known, the reconstruction of Socrates' thought is also a contentious issue. The standard view has antecedents in Schleiermacher and others, but its most influential representative in the 20th century is Gregory Vlastos, who sees in Plato's early dialogues a portrait of the historical Socrates. In these early dialogues, in Vlastos's view, Socrates is a "friendly critic" of Athenian democracy, since—as in the *Crito*—he is committed to obedience to the city and shares certain Athenian values, although he criticizes others (38). It is noteworthy that Vlastos, like others, rejects the historical authenticity of Xenophon's Socrates, whose thought is oligarchic—since the Xenophonian Socrates maintains that philosophy is incompatible with democracy—considering Xenophon an incompetent philosopher and historian.

Although there are precedents in Strauss and others, Lombardini highlights Louis André Dorion as a 21st-century interpreter who has played a leading role in vindicating Xenophon and his portrait of Socrates. Dorion has argued against the standard view, without being able to settle the discussion about the Socratic Problem. Nevertheless, Dorion's work has allowed the research to shift towards a comparative analysis of the sources, where what is sought to reconstruct are rather "the debates surrounding the legacy of Socrates among his immediate successors" (44). Following this approach, Lombardini argues that both Plato and Xenophon in their own way address the Aristophanic criticism according to which Socrates mocks Athenian democracy (50). Where Plato writes about Socrates with his own irony—a point Lombardini does not develop, but presumably he is in line with Vlastos's treatment of it—Xenophon presents Socrates' more direct mockery of his interlocutors (e.g., of Euthydemus in *Memorabilia* 4.2), but which also has a pedagogical function (52–54). What both would like to safeguard is the political utility of spending time with Socrates.

Lombardini notes how Dorion's approach has opened up new types of research, incorporating other sources commonly excluded from the Socratic Problem, such as the Minor Socratics or later sources. However, it should be noted at this point that the approach commented by Lombardini, like that of the previous section, while interesting in itself and contributing to

Classical Studies, is clearly outside the scope of the book, i.e. *Plato*'s political thought.

The section "Plato as Social Critic: the *Republic*" (57–82) primarily addresses the discussion surrounding Plato's critique of democracy in this dialogue. While in the previous section Lombardini considered the dominant view of Socrates as a friendly critic of democracy, in the case of the *Republic*, he maintains that the usual interpretation is that of a radical critic, among other reasons because in this work he supports the expulsion of adult citizens to make way for a completely new regime (61–62). This difference has been thematized by Josiah Ober, who argues that Socrates' condemnation would have convinced Plato that it is impossible to improve the Athenian people and, consequently, he would become a "rejectionist critic" of democracy, i.e. someone who rejects that society can improve based on its own values, and instead advocates for a refoundation (63–65).

A view like Ober's has been disputed by different interpreters. Lombardini highlights two sets of alternatives. The first set—the author comments on the work of Sara Monoson and Danielle Allen—does not deny that Plato is a critic of democracy, but argues that he is not a rejectionist critic, given his commitment to some principles and institutions of Athenian democracy, which would have had repercussions for posterity (66–68). The second set—he comments on the work of Peter Euben and Jill Frank—attempts to offer more democratic readings of the *Republic*, emphasizing the freedom of expression and non-dogmatic inquiry inherent in the dialogue, as well as certain signs—such as the structural similarity between the philosopher-kings and -queens with the tyrant—that would leave the attentive reader of the *Republic* with questions. Rather than affirming that Plato is a democrat, these interpretations rely on the idea that Plato encouraged his readers to think for themselves and not rely on his arguments (71–77).

This second group of alternative readings depends on the distance between Plato as a writer and what his characters say. The emphasis on the interpretation of dramatic and poetic aspects has been elaborated upon by various scholars in recent decades. Along these lines, Lombardini primarily comments on the works of Andrea Nightingale and Christopher Bobonich. The creation of the philosophical dialogue as a genre does not necessarily imply that the arguments presented are backed by Plato's authority (79–80). Furthermore, Platonic epistemology—the difference between knowledge and opinion—as well as the reception of Aristotle and other Platonic disciples on political matters confirm that Plato could not possibly intend his readers to take the positions established in his writings as a final solution, which would save them the research effort necessary to be true philosophers.

Finally, the section "Beyond the *Republic*: The *Statesman* and *Laws*" (82–101) is devoted to a discussion of whether there is a shift in Plato's political thought in his later work, particularly regarding his assessment of Athenian democracy. Lombardini presents opposing interpretations and argues that there are no definitive arguments for interpreting a shift, even though Plato develops new arguments in which it seems that Plato values more a certain ideal concept of democracy (83). In the case of the *Statesman*, the specificity of political knowledge is better addressed, i.e. the knowledge of *kairos*, the "opportunity" for all the other arts to unfold harmoniously (85–86). In addition, more attention is paid to imperfect regimes, which imitate the ideal, where democracy appears to be relatively valued. However, Plato's assessment of Athenian democracy is

discussed. There are two contrasting interpretations: Melissa Lane argues that Athens would not be an example of good democracy because the assembly makes and unmakes the laws (89–90); on the other hand, Anders Sørensen rescues the history of Athens at the end of the Peloponnesian War, with the search for the reconstitution of the *patrios politeia*, which would be seen by Plato as an example of good democracy (92–94). Lombardini insists with Allen on how Plato's dialogues helped to establish a vocabulary favorable to the figure of Solon and the *patrios politeia*.

There is a similar situation in the *Laws*, since democracy appears as one of the pure constitutional models, and even Plato seems to have in mind the risks of democracy in light of the history of Athens. There is a discussion here as well. André Laks represents a unitarian reading, since he argues that the *Laws* is a complementary work to the *Republic* insofar as it would attempt to make the project of the ideal polis more practical; on the other hand, Bobonich represents a developmentalist reading, for whom the *Laws* confirm a change in Plato's political thought. The discrepancies between the two authors are partly explained by considerations about moral psychology (97): for Laks, Plato's moral psychology does not fundamentally change, but with the exception that in the *Laws* the irrational elements of the soul are stronger—since this project would be adapted for humans rather than gods—which would explain the institutional adaptations. Instead, Bobonich argues for a shift in Platonic moral psychology toward a view in which all parts of the soul somehow understand the Forms and work together to generate desires, leading to greater optimism among the majority and, consequently, the adoption of more democratic institutions (98–99). Lombardini does not take sides with either interpretation, but when it comes to assessing Athenian democracy, he discusses the implications of both readings for the Magnesia project as if it were a Platonic proposal inspired by Solon's democracy.

Prof. Lombardini's book may be misleading given its title, since while it addresses some problems in Plato's political thought, the focus is on the question of Plato's commitment to politics and his assessment of Athenian democracy. The book does not dwell into philosophical discussions concerning the intellectual categories with which Plato conceives politics, except for some brief mentions in the final section on *technē politikē* or moral psychology. In the first two sections, the author highlights some new areas of academic research, as I have explained above, but them do not specifically address Plato's thought. Therefore, it seems to me that this is a text for a classicist or a historian. That said, the book manages to present a useful and up-to-date introduction to the problems it addresses. The four sections include a reasonably varied bibliography. It is commendable that it manages to do all this in just over 100 pages. Reasonably the author adopts a generally skeptical position on the matters he deals with, since the evidence of Plato's assessment of Athens is uncertain.

IN MEMORIAM

In Memoriam: Thomas More Robinson (1936-2023)

Address given at the solemn Opening Session of the International Plato Society XVI Symposium Platonicum, held at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, May 5, 2025, to honour the memory of Professor Thomas More Robinson.

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More than two years have passed since his death, and it still feels wrong not to have Tom with us today. And deeply despairing. He was always here, from the very beginning of the Society, in 1986, at the first Symposium Platonicum, held at the UNAM in Mexico City, along with Livio Rossetti and Christopher Rowe here.

Not only was he a founding father, but Tom has been also president of the IPS twice: the first time was in 1995-98, when he held the Fifth Symposium Platonicum at the University of Toronto, in August 1998. The second was with me and Francisco Bravo, when we organised the Eleventh Symposium Platonicum in Brasília, in July 2016.

His dedication to animating the community of scholars of ancient philosophy, his truly transcultural understanding of teaching and research in Ancient Philosophy has clearly been one of the hallmarks of his life and career.

Tom also served as president of the Canadian Federation for the Humanities (1988–1990) and the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy (1993–1995). He held a honorary doctorate in Humane Letters from the University of Athens in 1998, and the Greek government bestowed on him the Aristotle Award, an honour reserved for non-Greek nationals in recognition of significant contributions to the understanding of Greek thought and culture.

Many among us retain deeply fond, heartfelt memories of him. His enduring joy and

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warmth, his smile with which he used to greet us all, remain indelible. Moreover, his unwavering dedication to advancing Platonic scholarship across the globe deserves particular recognition, as does the exceptional attentiveness he demonstrated in mentoring and supporting new generations of Plato scholars. On a more personal note, he served as the foremost inspiration and driving force behind the founding of our Brazilian Plato Society—a society that remains active to this day and continues to honour his inspiration with profound gratitude.

We all know Tom was a tireless and quite enthusiastic traveller, a real globetrotter. I must confess: more than once I found myself dreaming of his Frequent Flyer benefits. We used to laugh about this silly dream of mine. Naturally, he took great pleasure in recounting his early experiences as a tour guide in his youth.

No matter where in the world he was, he would always make a point of meeting up early in the morning with his binoculars to watch his beloved warblers. But one could also find him with the same energy enjoying himself dancing after dinner at night, with that style of him, unmistakably free and unapologetic.

A true mirror of the impact and relevance of his long and fortunate career is certainly the *Festschrift* in Tom's honor edited now more than 20 years ago by Luc Brisson, Livio Rossetti, Rafael Ferber and Christopher Rowe: *Greek Philosophy in the New Millenniun* (2004). The volume includes a unique collection of essays by a number of distinguished scholars, from a quite impressive number of countries, on current changes in the field of ancient philosophy. If you just look at the volume's table of contents, you are immediately faced with Tom's broad and international academic career. Both in terms of the topics covered and the geographical dimension of the impact of his work.

Tom spoke nine languages, so I was told. I never got round to counting them. He was a man of our globalised times: respectful, sympathetic and always attentive to new interpretative challenges and recent hermeneutical schools, which emerged from the frank globalization of current Platonic studies.

His lifetime dedication to Plato's psychology started with his celebrated doctoral dissertation, supervised at Oxford by David Rees and entitled "Individual and Cosmic Soul in Plato", later published as *Plato's Psychology* in 1970. The volume is still a central landmark for Platonic scholarship.

Somewhat in keeping with the maturity of an intellectual who has studied Plato for several decades, Tom has devoted himself to writing plays since 2006, inspired by classical culture and – more directly – by the model of Plato's own dialogues. The plays were staged in the four corners of the world by disciples and colleagues who were always very enthusiastic about the results.

One day, asked in an interview about why he had spent so much of his life studying Plato in particular, he replied: "Probably because I like the dialogical nature of his mind. In saying this, I take into consideration all those who claim to find a 'doctrine' in Plato, with which one can agree or disagree, in part or in its totality. My own vision is that he was a 'philosophical researcher' for his entire life, and that he felt that the best technique for doing philosophy was to use the form of dialogue."

In one of these plays, entitled "Remembering Socrates", Tom stages Plato, Antisthenes, Crito and others together at the 396th BC Olympic Games, shortly after the death of Socrates. This is the opening of his play:

> Antisthenes starts saying: When I was a child, I often heard older people talking about the pain of loss. I didn't understand what they were saying - until now'.
> To what Crito replies: 'Me neither. It's been three years, but it feels like three hundred years'

Indeed, Tom: it does seem like three hundred years have passed. *Te extrañamos.*

In Memoriam: Tomás Calvo Martínez (1942-2023)

Address given at the solemn Opening Session of the International Plato Society XVI Symposium Platonicum, held at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, May 5, 2025, to honour the memory of Professor Tomás Calvo Martínez.

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It is a wonderful honour for me as a student of Tomás Calvo Martínez to be able to say a few words in honour of a distinguished professor and scholar. Firstly, I would want to express my gratitude to Beatriz Bossi for providing me with this chance. When I first met Tomás Calvo as a student in 1977, he had just arrived in Granada from his stay at Harvard University's Center for Hellenic Studies. He was appointed to publish the General Introduction to the translation into Spanish of the *Complete Works of Aristotle*. I would say that one of his mayor achievements was his participation in this *magnus opus,* translating first Aristotle's *De anima* and years later the *Metaphysics*, which has been considered a great contribution to the study of Greek philosophy in Spanish. He wrote books on Plato and the Sophists and on Aristotle and Aristotelism, and many articles and chapters on the Presocratics and Greek Philosophy. In 1992, at the III Symposium Platonicum held in Bristol, he was appointed as President of the International Plato Society, so he organized the IV Symposium Platonicum held in Granada in 1995. His work as a professor was not restricted to his academic activities, initially at the Universities of Granada and later at the University Complutense of Madrid, but at numerous other universities where he was invited to give lectures and courses. As the founder of the Sociedad Ibérica de Filosofía Griega, he promoted ancient philosophy

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studies throughout the entire academic community of Spain and Portugal. When Socrates in the *Republic* wants to define the most characteristic feature of the philosopher, he says that he is a lover of wisdom, not of one kind of wisdom, but a lover of all wisdom. I remember this because Tomas Calvo's "insatiable appetite" of wisdom in the realm of philosophy was not only focused in ancient philosophy, but he gave lectures and courses, wrote books and chapters on P. Ricouer, K.O. Apel, N.Quine and J. Ortega y Gasset among many other philosophers, and I would like to remember that his *History of Philosophy* (written with J.M.Navarro) was once the best seller handbook of philosophy known in all the Spanish departments of philosophy in high schools. Finally, I would like to praise his moral and intellectual attributes even more than his scholarly contributions, which explains why so many pupils and disciples have declared a profound and sincere sense of affection and admiration for him.

In Memoriam: Giovanni Casertano (1941-2023)

Address given at the solemn Opening Session of the International Plato Society XVI Symposium Platonicum, held at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, May 5, 2025, to honour the memory of Professor Giovanni Casertano.

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È un grande onore per me ricordare in questo contesto così importante la figura del mio maestro, Giovanni Casertano, nato presso Santa Maria Capua Vetere il 6 marzo del 1941, e venuto a mancare a Napoli il 21 dicembre del 2023. Grande studioso, infaticabile lettore, brillante scrittore, uomo di grande intelligenza e potenza comunicativa, ateo e comunista, egli ha educato generazioni di allievi al pensiero critico e alla comprensione filosofica e letteraria dei dialoghi di Platone.

Giovanni Casertano non amava le celebrazioni alla memoria e dunque qui, nel contesto del Simposio platonico, di cui lui è stato tra i membri fondatori, io vorrei ricordare solo alcuni punti e restare nei cinque minuti: innanzitutto il suo profilo umano. Nessuno può dimenticare la straordinaria simpatia di Giovanni Casertano e dei suoi occhi lucenti mai fuggitivi.

Voglio ricordare il suo insegnamento all'università di Napoli dal 1980 al 2009, che ha dato alla filosofia antica a Napoli, per la prima volta, un profilo internazionale. Voglio ricordare anche le numerose onorificenze che ha ricevuto per la sua importante produzione scientifica dedicata soprattutto a Platone.

Voglio ricordare che tenne la relazione di chiusura dell'XI Simposio, in Brasile, sul *Fedone* e quella volta fu la prima volta che si parlò in portoghese a un Simposio platonico. Casertano ha studiato a lungo il *Fedone*, che per lui era un testo antimetafisico sulla vita, la morte e l'immortalità della filosofia.

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Casertano aveva cominciato a studiare Platone per individuare – e contestare – le forzature ermeneutiche che Platone impone al pensiero dei sofisti. Lui amava Gorgia e intendeva mostrare come il pensiero di Gorgia sia stato manipolato da Platone. Ma quello nei Dialoghi fu un viaggio senza ritorno e, seppure cominciato con intenti polemici, divenne ben presto compito quotidiano e definitivo, teso a rintracciare i legami di continuità nascosta, dietro la rottura apparente, tra i sofisti e Platone. Per Casertano Platone è il più grande dei sofisti e se è vero che molti studiosi, nell'interpretare Socrate, gli hanno prestato i tratti di Platone, finendo per attribuire al maestro tutta intera la metafisica dell'allievo, è vero che invece Gianni nei suoi anni di studio ha compiuto piuttosto l'operazione inversa: egli ha letto Platone socratizzandolo, sottraendogli ogni metafisica, attribuendogli tutto quel che i dialoghi dicono del filosofo come uomo del dialogo, dell'interrogazione, della discussione.

La lettura di Casertano ha sempre combattuto quell'immagine della filosofia di Platone che stabilisce nettamente confini tra anima e corpo, tra sensi e ragione, tra cose e idee, tra opinione e conoscenza, tra vero e falso. E nei suoi scritti ha sempre mostrato come una lettura contestualizzata della pagina platonica non confermi mai quell'immagine. A noi allievi diceva di leggere e rileggere i dialoghi, non per ripeterli, ma per avere un'idea di che cosa sia la filosofia, che è sempre oltre ogni testo. Comprende tutti i testi, ma è sempre oltre. La lettura dei dialoghi – diceva - non ha mai termine, si è sempre all'inizio. Quando pensiamo di aver colto il senso di un dialogo e di averlo trasferito nella nostra interpretazione, infatti, scopriamo sempre poi di esserne insoddisfatti. «Quando pensiamo di aver raggiunto un punto fermo nella comprensione, sentiamo che, al di là di ogni punto fermo, c'è un altro discorso che può, che deve cominciare», perché l'importante non siamo noi che interpretiamo, ma è la filosofia, la quale si serve di noi per comporre un discorso infinito. Questo – diceva – «si trova nei dialoghi di Platone. Non bisogna attaccarsi alle proprie interpretazioni, per quanto tecnicamente riuscite possano essere, perché tutti noi spariremo e quel che resta è la filosofia, e non chi l'ha scritta».

In Memoriam: Maurizio Migliori (1943-2023)

Address given at the solemn Opening Session of the International Plato Society XVI Symposium Platonicum, held at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, May 5, 2025, to honour the memory of Professor Maurizio Migliori.

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Maurizio Migliori died at the age of 80 on November 10th, 2023.

After graduating at the Catholic University in Milano in 1968 under the supervision of Giovanni Reale, he has been working all his life long at the University of Macerata, where he served as Full professor of History of ancient Philosophy, growing an excellent group of students.

Migliori has been a member of the ExCom of the IPS from 2001 to 2007, he took part at every *Symposium Platonicum* from Granada onwards, he was in many ways a strong supporter of the IPS: many of its members were invited by him, learning thanks to him where Macerata is located.

It's not easy to say in few words what kind of Platonist Maurizio was. You know that his books – often commentaries to single dialogues (*Parmenides, Philebus, Politicus*) – are extremely voluminous and any synthesis cannot do them justice (cf. Platone, *Parmenide*, Nuova traduzione e commento a cura di M. Migliori, Brescia 2025). Maybe we can consider at least one concrete reason why they have so many pages, so many and so long footnotes: none of us is forgotten or neglected by him; he quotes and critically discusses everything the Scholarship has produced in the last century on Plato. In the last ten years Migliori tried to explicit the criteria of his way of working on Plato and ancient philosophy in general: Migliori spoke of a "multifocal approach",

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which consists in identifying and respecting all the perspectives in which a problem can be discussed – even contrary, conflicting if not contradictory perspectives (cf. E. Cattanei, A. Fermani, M. Migliori [eds.], *By the Sophists to Aristotle through Plato: The Necessity and Utility of a Multifocal Approach*, Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin 2016). Maurizio sees in ancient philosophy an extraordinary exercise of "multifocality" and pretends from the interpreter an analogous posture. This is something to which Maurizio was led not only by Zeno's paradoxes (cf. M. Migliori, *Unità, Molteplicità, Dilaettica: contributi per una riscoperta di Zenone di Elea*, Milano 1984), Plato's dialectic, and Aristotle's debate in the *De generatione et corruptione* (cf. Aristotele, *La Generazione e la Corruzione*, a cura di M. Migliori e L. Palpacelli, Milano 2013), but also by his first love ever, together with Plato: politics. I've remembered that he graduated in 1968 at my University, the Catholic University in Milano, that was the first University in Italy where students joined the *Mai francais*. The excellent situation of a confusion under the sky is in Migliori's view an excellent starting point to read Plato too (let's think to the title of his 2-volumes book: *Il disordine ordinato. La filosofia dei dialoghi di Platone*, Brescia 2013). However, Migliori is convinced that Plato gives a metaphysical foundation of the historical and political pluralism – of its chaos and conflicts. How? Through dialectic and thorough the unwritten doctrine of principles. Migliori can be considered a Tübinger Schüler, but he's surely much more a fan of the Dyad, than a fan of the One. Because everything – his most beloved books as well (Gospel and Mao Zedong's Little red book) – is divided in a multiplicity of polarities. Like us, now here: like Socrates' young friends in the *Phaedo* we feel at the same time joy and sadness – joy for having had Maurizio as colleague, friend and IPS member, and sadness because we cannot see him among us anymore.

In Memoriam: Holger Thesleff (1924–2023)

Address given at the solemn Opening Session of the International Plato Society XVI Symposium Platonicum, held at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, May 5, 2025, to honour the memory of Professor Holger Thesleff.

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Dear colleagues and dear friends,

It is my solemn honour to commemorate the remarkable life and enduring legacy of our esteemed colleague, mentor, and friend, Holger Thesleff, who passed away on October 3rd, 2023, just a few months short of his one hundredth birthday.

Holger Thesleff's scholarship fundamentally reshaped our understanding of Plato's dialogues. He guided Platonic studies away from the rigid dilemmas that had long dominated the field—the so-called "either-or" questions about authenticity and chronology—and championed instead what he himself termed a "both-and" approach, attentive to the complex literary, historical, institutional, and even material dimensions of Plato's philosophical work.

Holger's was a profoundly dialectical vision, one that refused to accept simple dichotomies—not only with regard to questions of authenticity or chronology, but also to ontology itself. He was a critical voice against the so-called "Two-World Model" of Platonic interpretation, arguing persuasively that Plato's world was not constructed around polar opposites. As he wrote, Plato's "view of the world as a whole is not dualistic. His is not a 'white/black' world. There is no pointed existential or ontological opposition in it between, say, light and darkness, good and evil, or truth and falsity. Even the prisoners in the Cave at least see reflections of light." Holger's attention to nuance and gradation urges us all to

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reach a deeper, more generous understanding of Plato's thought.

Thesleff's pioneering research into the process of revision within the Academy brought our attention to the essentially collaborative nature of philosophy. His work on the phenomenon of "school accumulation"—both in Plato's Academy and in Hellenistic Pythagoreanism—remains foundational to our field. Through his research, he illuminated the ways in which philosophical traditions are shaped through ongoing dialogue, transmission, and creative reinterpretation.

To those who had the privilege of working with him, Holger was much more than a scholar of rare insight and formidable erudition; he was a true bridge-builder, always eager to foster connections across countries, disciplines, and generations. As a founding member of both the Nordic Plato Society and the International Plato Society, he played a decisive role in cultivating an international community of Platonic scholarship.

Colleagues remember him as both a brilliant debater and a generous companion. He had an extraordinary capacity to listen, to challenge, and to inspire, nurturing an environment in which intellectual exchange flourished. It has been a great honour to work with Holger in recent years as he finished his final publication, "Afterthoughts on School Accumulation in Plato's Academy,"—now included in the volume *The Making of the Platonic Corpus*, published shortly after his death. It brings some solace to know that, in his final months, Holger was aware that his latest work would continue to reach scholars both old and new, spurring further dialogue in the fields that he so passionately loved.

Many here will also remember that Holger's life, before his academic career, was marked by extraordinary adventure. After World War II, he embarked on an epic maritime journey, serving aboard a four-masted ship that rounded Cape Horn. Today, as we commemorate Holger Thesleff's legacy, let us honour not only his scholarly achievements but his ever-renewed quest for new horizons, both real-life and philosophical.

Thank you.

In Memoriam: Thomas Alexander Szlezák (1940-2023)

Address given at the solemn Opening Session of the International Plato Society XVI Symposium Platonicum, held at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, May 5, 2025, to honour the memory of Professor Thomas Alexander Szlezák.

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On 18th October last, Thomas Alexander Szlezák, Thomas to his friends, left us at the age of 83. It is well known that Szlezák was one of the most distinguished classicists of the last half century for his wide knowledge of Greek literature and culture, as well as for his broad culture and his defence of philological rigour. It is not my intention here to repeat his academic career, but I cannot fail to point out some of his most important scientific accomplishments

His seminal 1985 work, *Platon und die Schriftlichkeit der Philosophie*, argued that Plato's dialogues are not self-contained but require supplementation through Plato's unwritten teachings. This perspective became a cornerstone of the Tübingen School's interpretation of Plato. Szlezák's 1993 publication, *Platon lesen*, originally commissioned as an introduction to Plato's philosophy, achieved remarkable success and has been translated into 17 languages. In this work, he defended and expanded upon the interpretative approach of the Tübingen School, making complex philosophical ideas accessible to a broader audience. It is impossible to review his more than 150 contributions, which develop his understanding from classical thought to contemporary philosophy. His last remarkable work was his impressive book on Plato, published in 2021. In it, Prof. Szlezák offers a hermeneutically momentous panorama of Plato's life and work.

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Szlezak's most relevant contribution to Plato's interpretation was his discovery of a substantial hint to the connections between written and unwritten doctrines, between the *Dialogform* and the indirect tradition, in the idiom "to help the discourse" (βοηθεῖν τῷ λόγῳ), with which Plato indicates the necessity of resorting to personal, oral contact with a philosophical guide beyond the written work.

Szlezák was very active in the academic world and had a deep sense of personal friendship. A founding member of the IPS, he was always concerned with the diffusion of classical culture. In his 2010 book (*Was Europa den Griechen verdankt*), he clearly set out the fundamental values of the Western tradition, the importance of notions such as freedom, democracy, equality before the law, and the rule of law. His defence of the critical approach and freedom of speech remains an inspiring example for all freedom-loving people in a Europe endangered by the resurgence of bureaucratic totalitarianism after its collapse i 1989.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

ANCIENT AUTHORS AND WORKS

When referring to Platonic dialogues by their full title, use the title that is customary in your language (italics), e.g. *Phaedo*, *Phédon*, *Phaidon*. When using abbreviations, please use this standard set:

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Plat., *Tim.* 35 a 4-6.
Arist., *Metaph.* A 1, 980 a 25-28.
Simpl., *In Cat.*, 1.1-3.17 Kalbfleisch (CAG VIII).

MODERN AUTHORS AND WORKS

In the footnotes:
Use the author/ date system:

Gill 2012, 5-6.

In the list of bibliographic references:

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